

Left: Gio Ponti's flatware for Krupp includes unconventional butter spatula.
Below: Fornasetti's secret process for permanent printing on numerous materials makes it easy to apply decoration to dishes, among other surfaces.

industrial design

ITALY'S BID ON THE WORLD MARKET



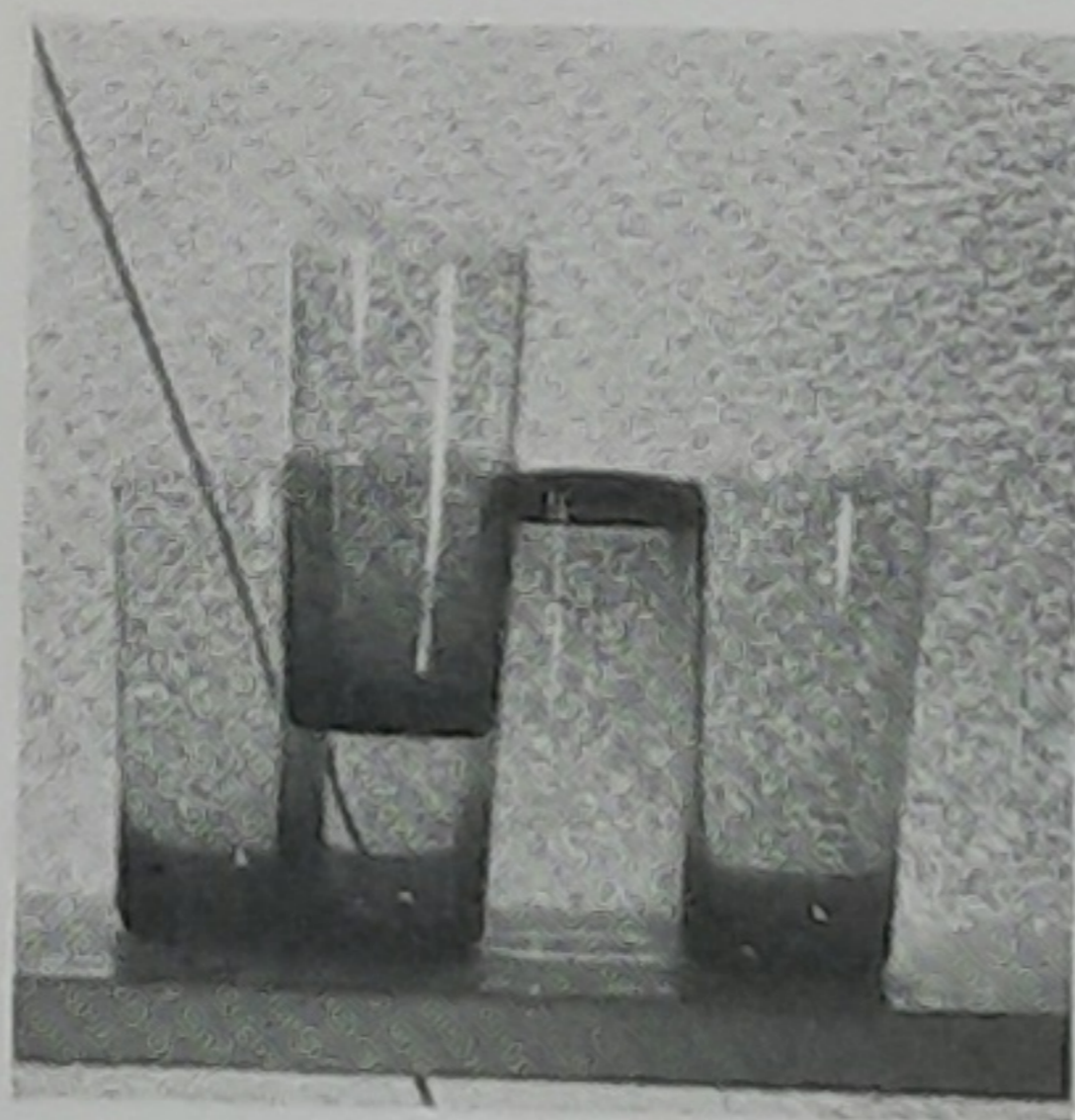
Mirazon
 sleds 28-
 100 St. Louis
 Louis Costanzo
 chandler Jan-Columbia



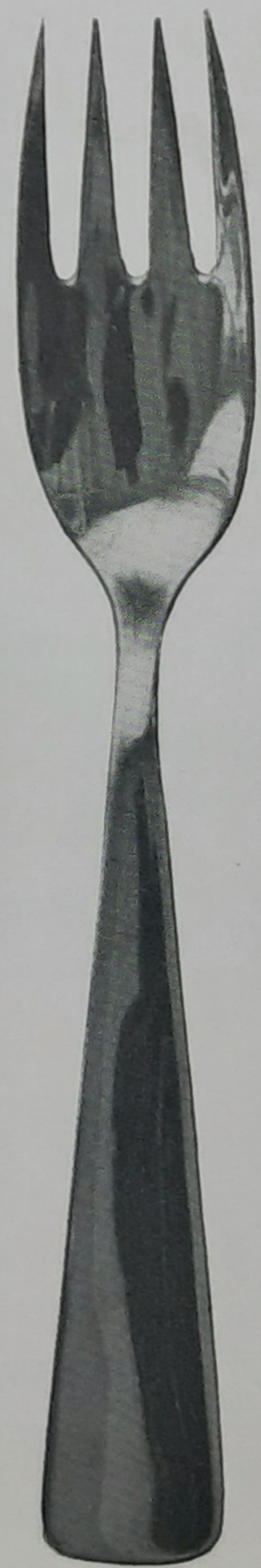
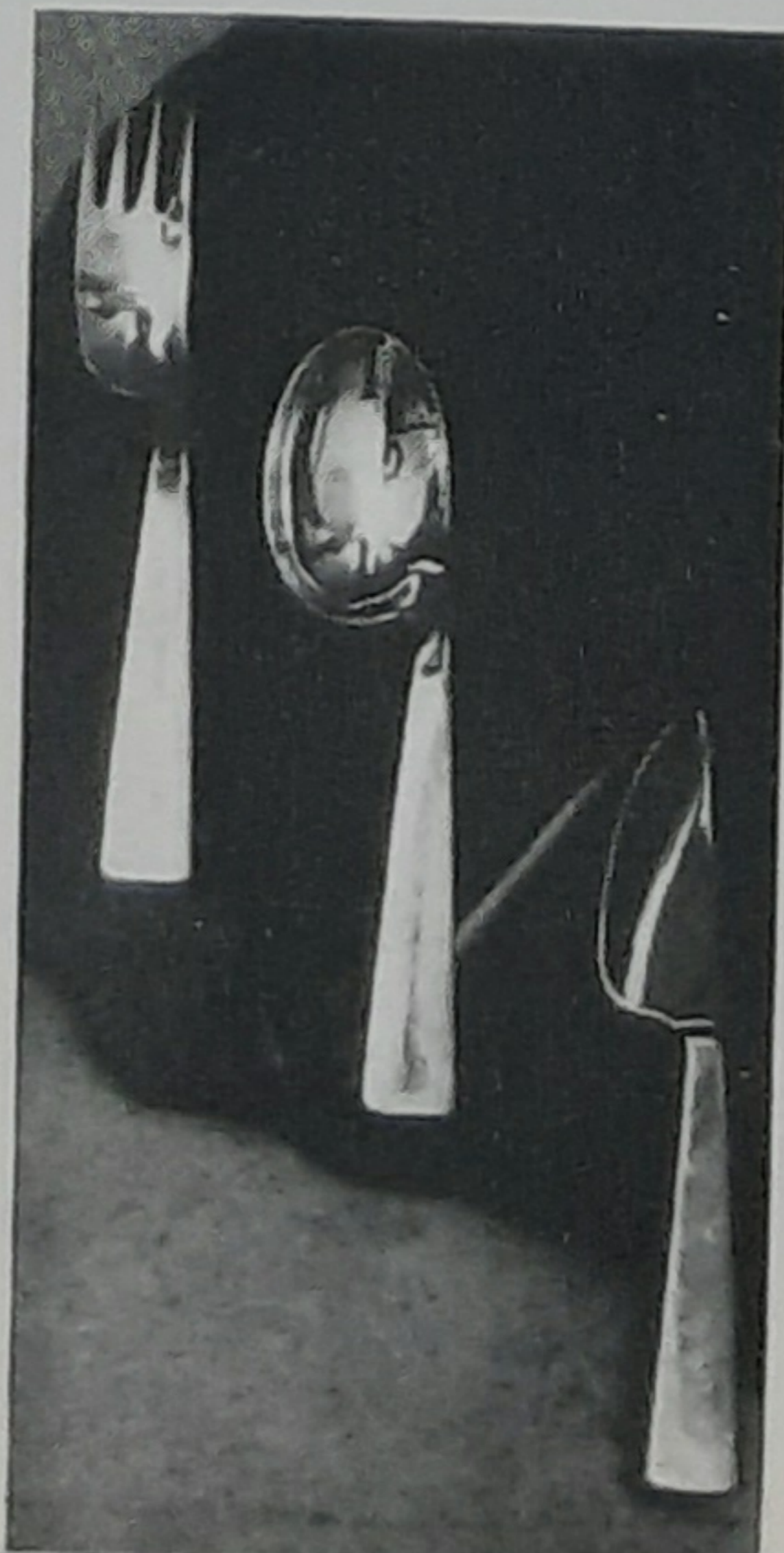
photographs: casali

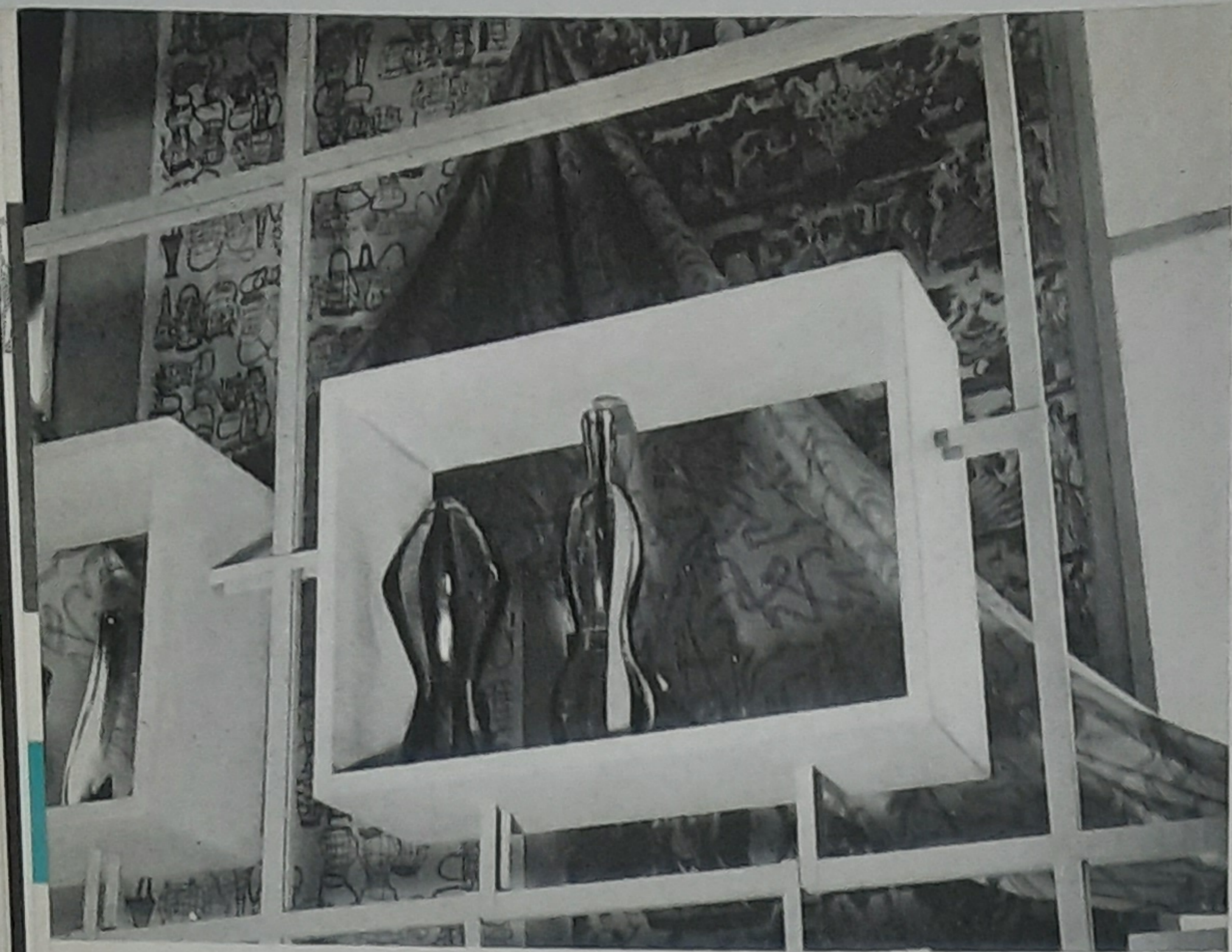
Plagued by unemployment, poor in food-bearing land as in natural resources, Italy is making her bid for prosperity and for life itself with the workmanship and design of her products. Design is as inherent an element as craftsmanship in her automobiles, typewriters, and precision instruments and in less mechanical art objects also. But both the mechanical and the handicraft categories were represented in the exhibition of "Italian Quality" in Milan from which a few items have been selected for illustration here. Leather, straw, ceramics, textiles, prints, lamps, furniture, glassware, silverware, jewelry, typewriters, and precision instruments were on hand to appraise buyers the world over of what Italy has to offer.

Gio Ponti, the architect, designer, and editor of *Domus* is an ardent drummer for the cause, and it is interesting that in addition to exhorting the nation's talents to pitch in, he never ceases to warn them against permitting sudden success to make them relax their standards of either design or workmanship. The world audience which has come to expect so much of Italy should not, he says, be let down. Incidentally, neither the exhibition nor our report differentiates between hand-made and machine-

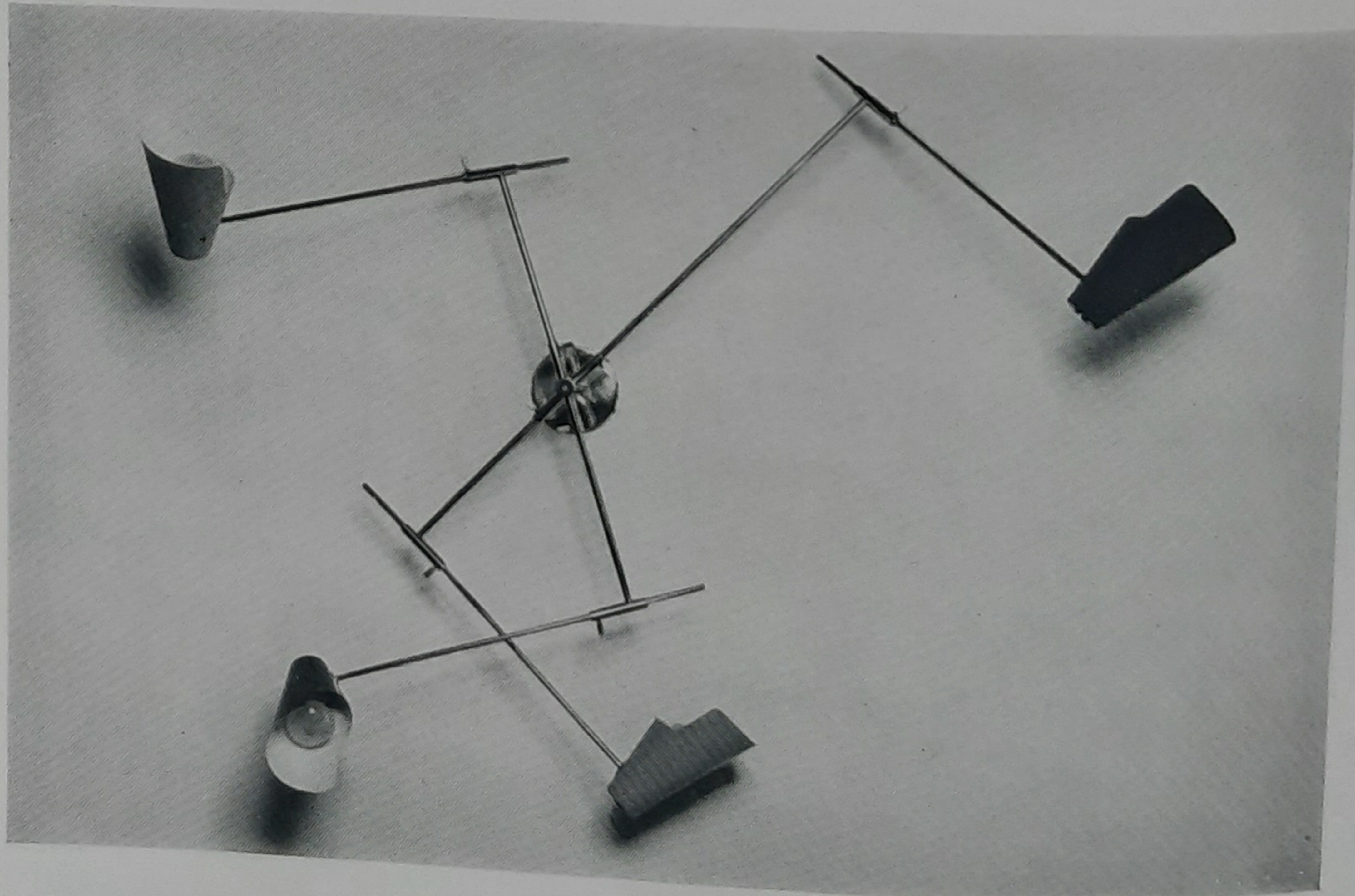
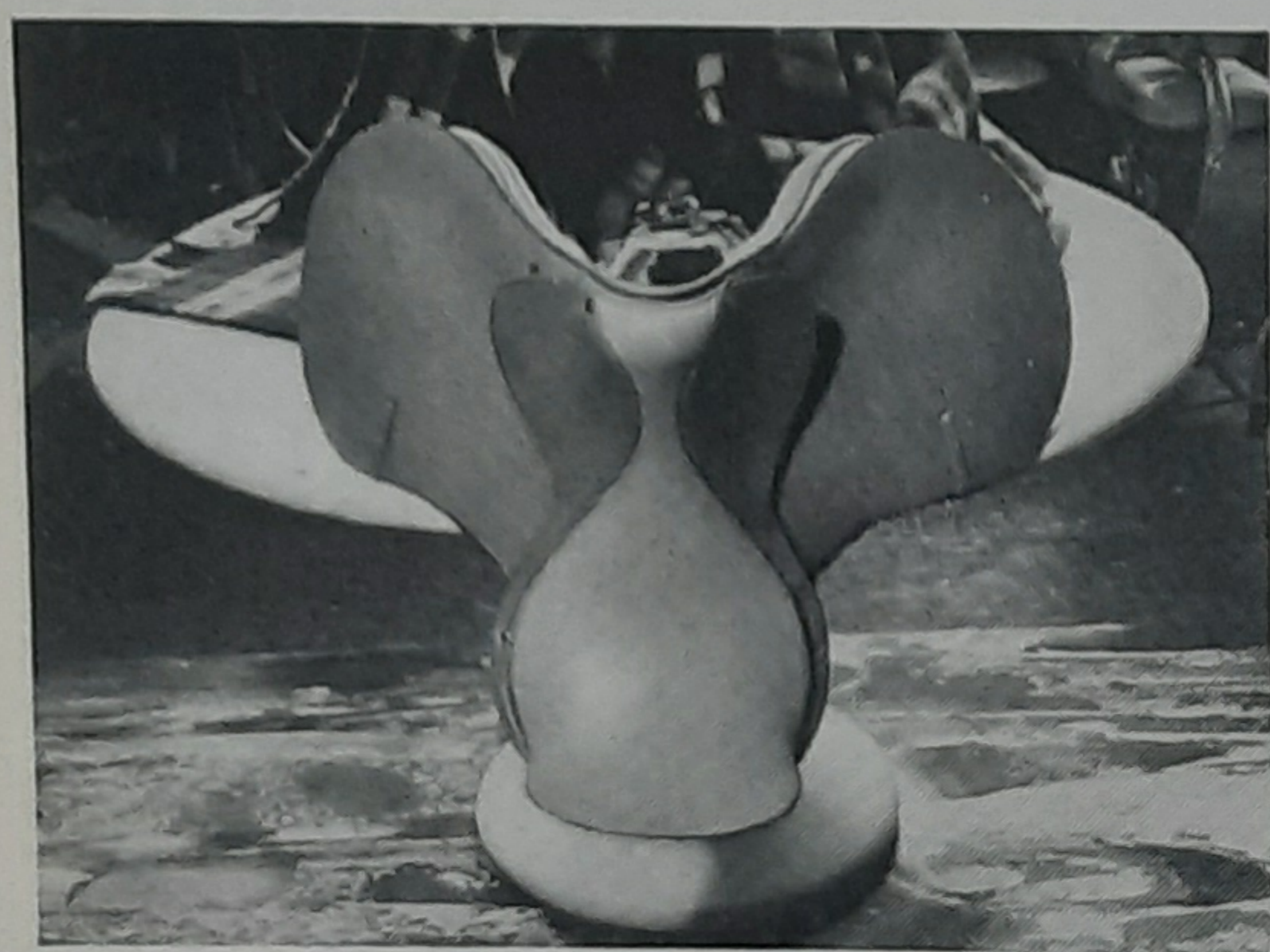


Archimede Seguso's glassware has more to it than mere "simplicity." The crackly texture belongs to the background. Below: Gio Ponti's Krupp ware has fixed handle dimensions, several off-center pieces. The fork doubles as a spoon.

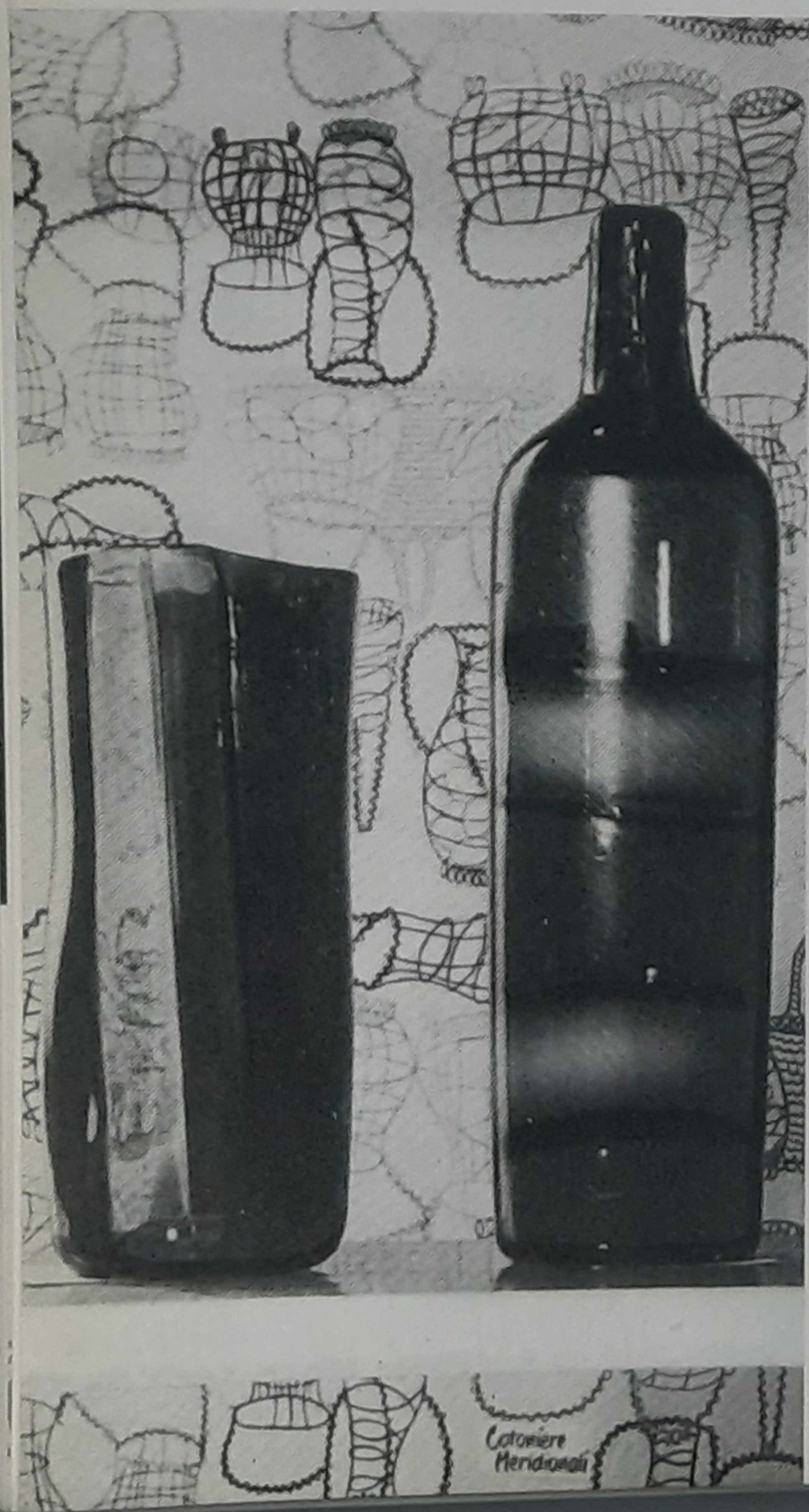


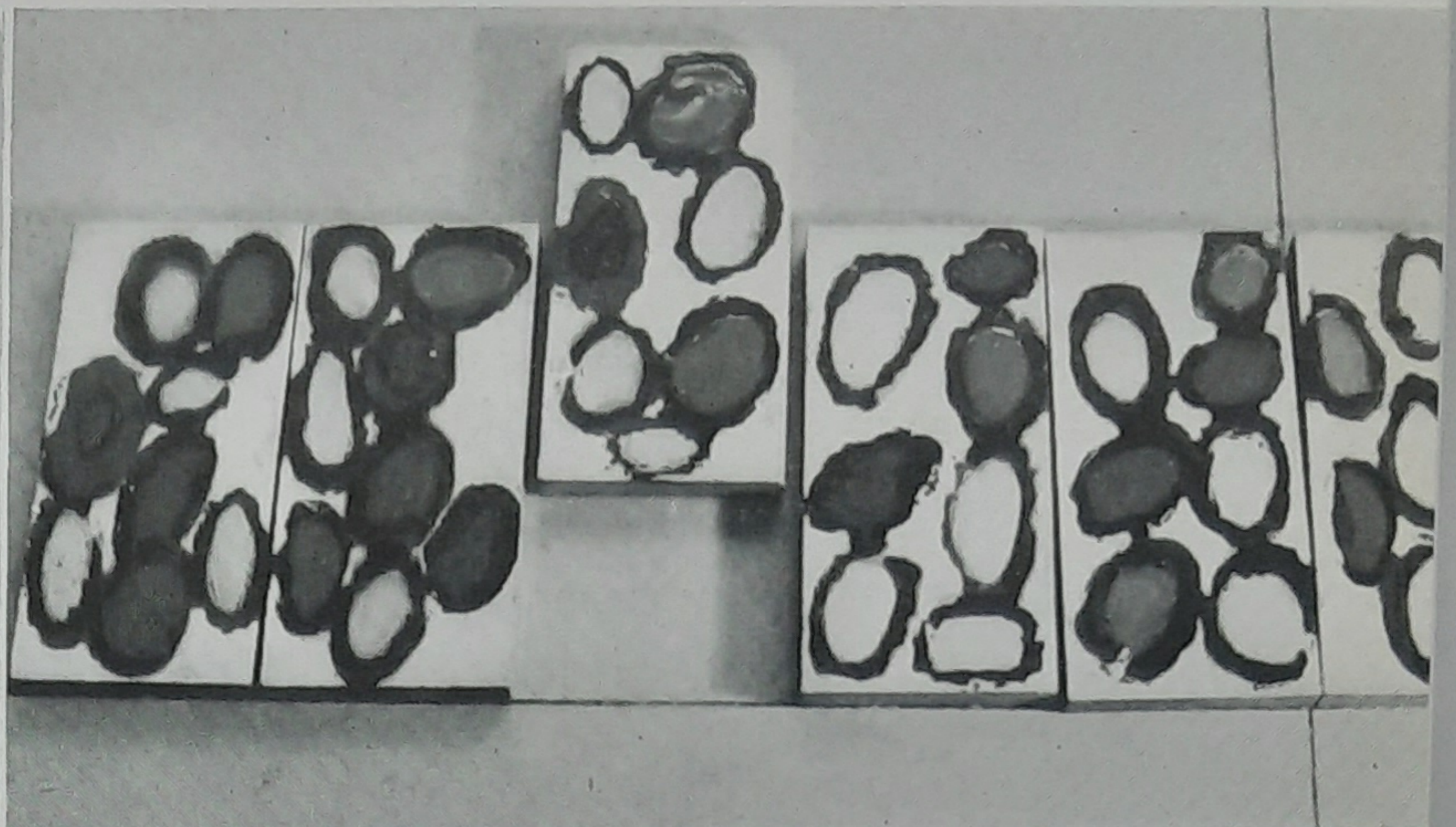
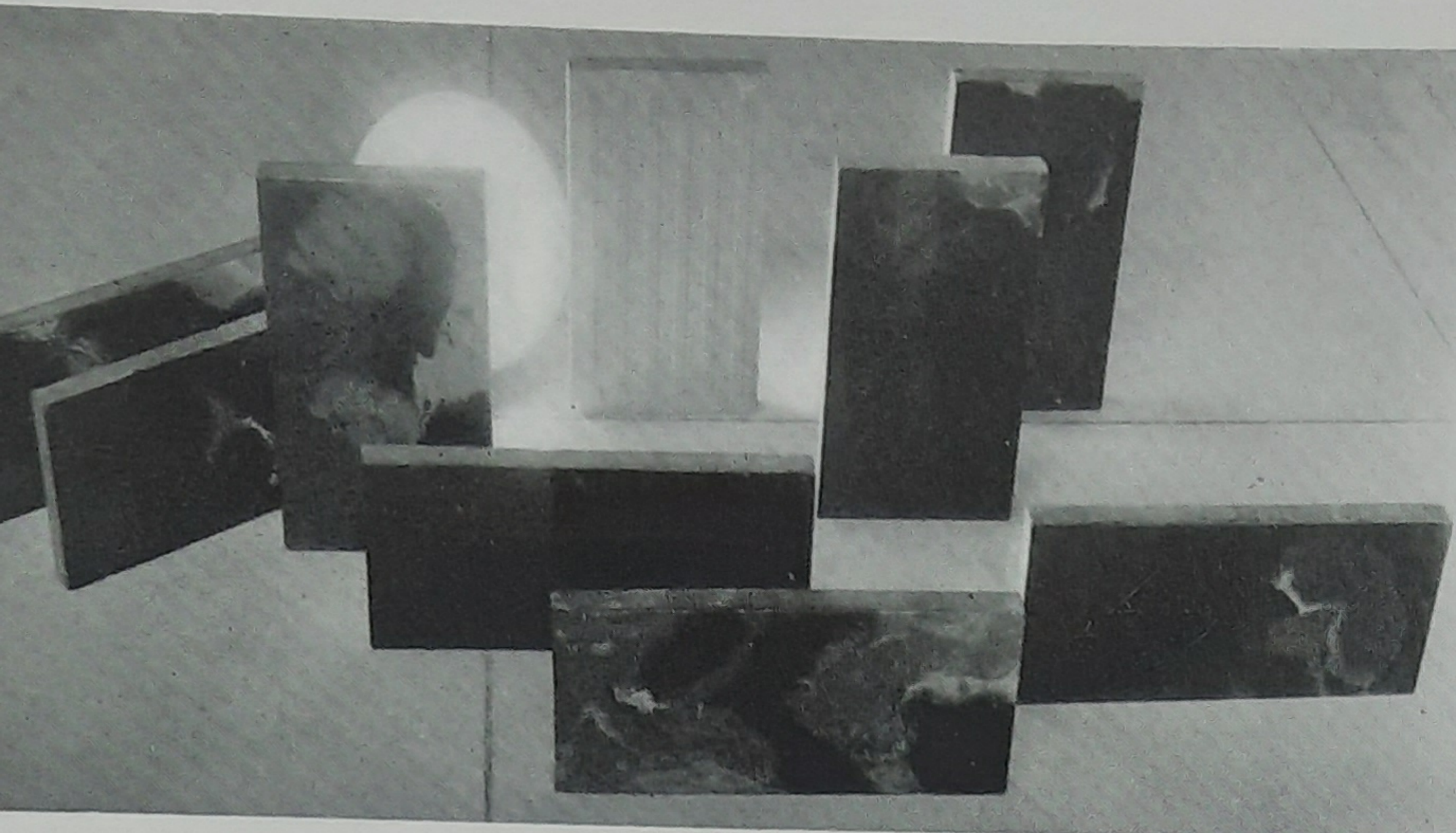


To the Italians, the "quality" they stress is compounded of design and workmanship. The latter is easily recognized, and incidentally the saddle at left reminds us that Florentine gold tooling is not all there is to Italian leatherwork. The qualities of the Venini glass are not so easily analyzed, though the nature of Italy's national genius is easily discerned when one compares these pieces with well-known Swedish types illustrated elsewhere in this issue. At once more playful, more sophisticated, and more masculine, these examples remind us of the total inadequacy of such words as "simple" or "clean" about a genuine style.



Lamps by Sarfatti for Arteluce—a typical combination of utilitarian ingenuity, exquisite workmanship, and fantasy of conception. Miniature dimensions of working parts and extreme attenuation of all elements economizes on materials and reduces weight, and also contributes to that peculiarly Italian air of luxury—smooth and perfect as fine jewelry or fine machinery.





Ceramic tiles by Fausto Melotti

made objects if they are made in quantity. In modern civilization, says Ponti, there is no such thing as a separate problem. Our ideal of the "good" life, and the level of taste and thought expressed by our homes and manner of living are all part of the same thing—and one also with our methods of production.

Though she has no organized "industrial design" profession as such, Italy boasts world famous personalities: Pinin Farina, Mario Boana, and Mario Revelli, now consultants for, respectively, Nash, Chrysler, and General Motors. Ravelli, formerly with Fiat, is also collaborating with Farina on Bristol Airplanes. The Pavoni coffee machines (there's one at each bar on the liner *Andrea Doria*) have won prizes in international as well as Italian exhibitions. Then there are the popular Piaggio scooters, trucks by Renzo Orlando and Viberti, metal chairs and office furniture by Rima (shown in Zanuso's linoleum shop in December), rubber flooring by Pirelli, packaging by Grippa, bus berths by Camp and Graffo, double-decker trucks by Zavanella, clocks by B.B.P.R., furniture by De Carli, Romano, Vigano.—O. G.

Admirable both visually and mechanically, Italian sewing machines have become as famous as Italian business machines. Gio Ponti designed the new Borletti.

