

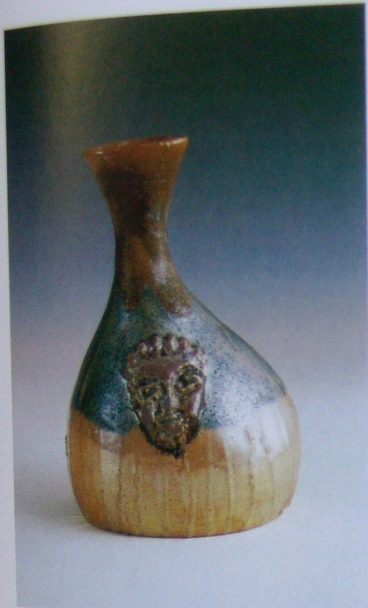
*(Luca Francesconi)*

**That afternoon I realized we were in the first day of spring. I went to the library, not only because I'm preparing this series of conversations, but rather because the sun was out and for me the sun means going into a "beautiful" place, where I'm at ease. A place full of volumes is an ideal place, maybe homier than my own home. I borrowed a book that I've known for years, a great volume on Giò Ponti published by Rizzoli and edited by Ugo La Pietra. I look at it often before preparing a show for reasons that would lead us far from the theme of this project, namely objects and life.**

**A few paperweights designed by the great Milanese architect seemed to me eminently suitable to this conversation. Anything that has weight is potentially a paperweight. And in all my life I've never thought of acquiring something for that odd end, I mean the idea of preventing sheets of paper from blowing away. What do you think of these objects, or better still, what do you think of this function of objects?**

*(Emanuele Marcuccio)*

I've never even needed a paperweight. On my writing desk I accumulate objects and books only if I like looking at them. Often I arrange them along two axes and try to create good combinations among the various cover colors, typefaces and materials. No doubt objects that were not designed for that purpose have often become paperweights, or I can hypothesize that somebody happens to want to hold papers in place with something they simply want to have nearby. The paperweight is probably less useful than it seems; I would have happily mentioned it if somebody had asked me to talk about decorations. I find right now I'm forgetting the idea of decoration more and more to make room for need. I find I'm at peace in that camp, I mean, I'm looking to find the harmony that decoration gives in the function of a form in an almost natural sense. Nature is made in a rather simple way, and often each form is directly connected with a specific need. In this sense, the paperweight is surely an odd, alien product.



313



314

OGGETTI MELANDRI, 1966  
PICCOLI VASI in maiolica a lustri  
metallici, altezza cm 11, (foto Bersa-  
ni) 313-314



FERMACARTE in maiolica a lustri  
metallici, dimensioni cm 22 x 5 (foto  
Bersani) 315

315

**(LF) Sheets of paper then aren't so light and interiors aren't normally so windy. Now that I think about it, the idea of paper and documents flying around a room reminds me of something surreal, though in a tragic sense, like a film by Fellini. I recall you had a huge desk in Milan that you shared with Lorenzo Senni, practically a sheet of etched iron, very linear, beautiful. If I had to imagine that ample surface cluttered with sheets of paper needing to be "held down," I don't know why but I see it arranged in small piles in any case. The only kind of possible "paperweight" for me would be various dumb stones, more or less similar. Maybe because I never saw that great table as a "table," but rather as a "demonstrational" surface, really like a counter for displaying something. On a plane surface overflowing with paper, what should paperweights be like?**

(EM) I can't really imagine my ideal paperweight—maybe I find it hard to concentrate on a single form and would probably use something heavy near that plane overflowing with sheets of paper, while continuing to prefer windless rooms. The desk I shared with Lorenzo, I think, didn't need paperweights. Papers were held in place with what we had available on the desk, books and cans of Red Bull mostly, but I wouldn't call those objects paperweights. Everything worked with extreme order on that desk and periodically I needed to substitute something new for a "component." In so doing, I was sure that my influences would change.

**(LF) Ponti—in the same book still—speaking of architectural elements, says with respect to aluminum, "It is a very beautiful material. It has added a new color to exteriors, a color that didn't exist before, namely, silver; when properly anodized it is velvety." Today I think aluminum has a completely different value, whether it is used in a work of art, or as part of our experience. Even you make frequent use of it. For me the message given off by this material has nothing to do with Ponti's idea, which now goes back decades. Today aluminum suggests cleanliness and refined precision, making the idea of the purity of a metal an empirical reality, almost as if the "thing" and its representation were superimposed over one another. Do you think this meaning of a "screen image," of a computer rendering, that gets transmitted to aluminum can be carried over to other materials?**

(EM) I certainly use aluminum for those reasons, but also because works that I find interesting are often associated with that material. There isn't always a direct connection between the computer-generated effect of this material and my way of using it. However, if I had to bet on a material that can be compared with aluminum in these terms, considering the constant evolution in three-dimensional modeling software, I would probably begin by studying water.

**(LF) You have used mass-produced objects as works of art. Do you think they become functions on a single plane in that case? Losing each and every one of its own characteristics to become “bodies without ideas” in a blank space? This can work in a digital image but not in life. Is that why your works are always untouched and never “lived”?**

(EM) I don't like the idea of separating a digital image from life; after all is said and done, I think a point of view can include another point of view. In my case, in a simpler way, I'm more interested in “bodies” than “ideas.” I'm not absolutely certain how one possibly manages to get to a finished work of art, I don't completely believe in the creation of an object, and currently I find the image that is devoid of every component I devote myself to very interesting. I enjoy the smell of the new, I like polishing up and dusting off what I acquire. In one way or another, even when I'm designing an object, I am looking for its solitude. It's only right to be wary with respect to what I propose, I'm interested in the least noise, the noise of an animal hiding behind a shrub, it's a noise that is full of information.