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A Tradition of Experimentation

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Danese

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By Virginio Briatore & Porzia Bergamasco

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trays, a wastepaper basket, umbrella stand, etc.). The home collection includes lamps, flower vases, picture frames, trays, coat racks, magazine stands, clocks, glasses, peppermills and fruit bowls, as well as an art edition (such as silkscreen prints). Objects are made in 26 different materials, from porcelain to ABS, anticorodal to alabaster.

Today Danese-Milan, headed by de Bevilacqua, with her idiosyncratic vigor and vitality, operates under such key words as Fast/Slow-Individual/Social, and with conceptual frameworks like: care, move, sense, information. The research focuses on the design of workspaces that are increasingly open to the intermingling of public and private space. Alongside historic objects such as the *In Attesa* wastebasket (1971) by Mari, revised with an added compartment for paper recycling, or his desktop accessories and the *Tino* and *Milo* clocks (1986) by Prey, the catalogue has been enriched with new inventions by Paolo Rizzatto (*Pin Up*, a magnetic white-board), Andrea Branzi (*Tano*, a movable top, fitted with a clamp) and James Irvine (*Archivivo*, a multi-use lectern for table and wall).

"We have an excellent, well-balanced team of designers who, with great commitment to the revival of the Danese trademark, have formed around Enzo Mari. The designers do not just come proposing finished ideas. We study the project together, in keeping with the fundamental notion that the company is a communal organism in which every individual must express themselves," de Bevilacqua explains. Eating in the workplace, continuous mobility within offices, organization of mobile information and connectivity are many of the themes the company is investigating with a passion, and through significant partnerships with Illy-Caffè, Bticino and 3M.

"We're interested in making objects with multiple performance options, and therefore we have combined our expertise with that of other companies. In terms of quality, promotion and business, this approach has worked well." Projects of this type include the cre-

ation of the Riflesso and Paletta coffee trays, designed by Mari, in collaboration with Illy-Caffè; research on electrical connections underway with Bticino, a producer of control systems for electrical plants; the design of containers for Post-Its together with 3M; the use of Command™, an adhesive strip, for new Danese objects such as the *Bigsuperhook* by Irvine; and the Rizzatto shelves and organizers. More of these collaborative innovative projects are planned in the near future.

But are there any plans to collaborate with Artemide? "The small size of Danese-Milan doesn't fit with the lighting dimension of Artemide. The syntax of each product line is quite different from one another. Of course we are part of the same family. If it is mutually beneficial, collaboration may be possible in some cases."

In two years the new company has been able to revive Danese-Milan and triple their sales. "Small companies (Danese has 10-15 employees) can take off quickly (a 60% growth rate compared to last year) but at this point we need to see how we settle into the market. We are developing our market with companies that generate business, and this will help us achieve a new visibility for our products," says de Bevilacqua. "In a way we don't have competitors: we think durability, not consumerism. There are more businesses around that produce low-priced, interchangeable products, while we focus on quality. Our products are perhaps more expensive but they wear well. We want the people to buy our products because they like Danese, not because the object bought yesterday is out of fashion today," she concludes.

The Danese story is one of a very particular trade that has not so much as created a style, but rather a philosophy. Fifty years later, Danese starts a new season with a "new and improved" creative mission, which shall open new prospects in contemporary design.

Credits & Comments

Pg.88 Portrait of Bruno Danese and Jacqueline Vodoz, founders of Danese. Courtesy of the historical archives of the JVBD Association.

Pg.91 Falkland, 1964. Designed by Bruno Munari.

Pg.92-93 Cubo, 1957. Designed by Bruno Munari.

This table ashtray is made with a melamine base and a sheet of aluminum which was bent in such a way to hold the cigarette. The aluminum ashtray on the inside can be removed for cleaning. Tobacco ashes alone on a pretty yellow majolic plate, might be considered nice to look at, but what ruins the picture is the inevitable addition of the cigarette butt. It tends to look more like a little trash can which doesn't look nice atop a neat desk (for sale at Moss NYC, for \$ 40).

Pg.94, 98-99 Flores, 1992. Designed by Enzo Mari.

Winner of the Compasso d'Oro: this versatile box, made in semi-transparent technopolymer, is an ideal container for pencils, felt-points, pens, letter-openers, etc. The lateral hinges, easy to engage and elementary in movement, are part of the invention of this design. Without any screws, the articulation of the cover rotates around the molded hinge (for sale at Moss NYC, for \$ 60).

Pg.95 (top) Portafotografie, revival 2001. Designed by Enzo Mari.

A picture-frame of metal originally designed by Enzo Mari in 1965.

Pg.95 (2nd from top) Pin Up, 2001. Designed by Paolo Rizzatto.

This magnetic board is a system of accessories conceived to hold, organize and communicate notes, useful in the workplace to bring organizational efficiency and design quality to daily information management. It includes a magnetic board with an object-holder shelf; an organizer from which to take notes; and a support for postcard, photos or for meeting charts. The color of the four panels not only offers an aesthetic, emotional quality, but also a functional, communicative value in managing the priorities of daily "Things to Do."

Pg.95 (3rd from top) Scomparto In Attesa, 2001. Designed by Enzo Mari.

Section for the wastepaper basket *In Attesa* (originally designed in 1971). Mari updates the *In Attesa* basket and introduces a new element: a semi-cylindrical compartment for diversified waste collection.

Pg.95 (bottom) Bambù, revival 2001. Designed by Enzo Mari.

Flower vase design, 1969: the molding relates to vegetable morphology.

Pg.96 (top, left) Riflesso, 2001. Designed by Enzo Mari.

A tray for the management area in partnership with Illy Caffè: the coffee ritual—which disappeared with the development of cheap materials such as paper and cardboard—must satisfy expectations of images and elegance.

Pg.96 (top, right) Guadalupa, 1967. Designed by Enzo Mari.

A table ashtray: the two raised edges prevent cigarettes from falling off.

Pg.96 (middle, left) Canarie, 1967. Designed by Enzo Mari.

Desk set: a pencil-holder, pin-tray and two ash-trays enclosed by two aluminum containers can be arranged in either one or both of the two holes according to one's taste.

Pg.96 (middle, right) Aluminum desk set. Designed by Enzo Mari. [Ventotene memo and pencil holder (1962), Citera box, Tino table-clock (Design: Kuno Prey, 1986), Guadalupa table ashtray (1972), Ameland paper-knife (1962), Chio wastepaper basket (1987)]

Pg.96 (bottom, left) Citera, 1967. Designed by Enzo Mari.

This box can hold cigarettes, playing cards, business cards, pens, pencils or anything else that is required on a desk.

Pg.96 (bottom, right) Glass desk set. Designed by Enzo Mari. [Salina desk set (1985), Delos table ashtray (1980), Ameland paper-knife (1962), Tarawa desk pad (1991)]

Pg.97 Salina desk set, 1985. Designed by Enzo Mari.

Paper & pencil holder, table calendar, tray for correspondence in pressed, frosted glass.

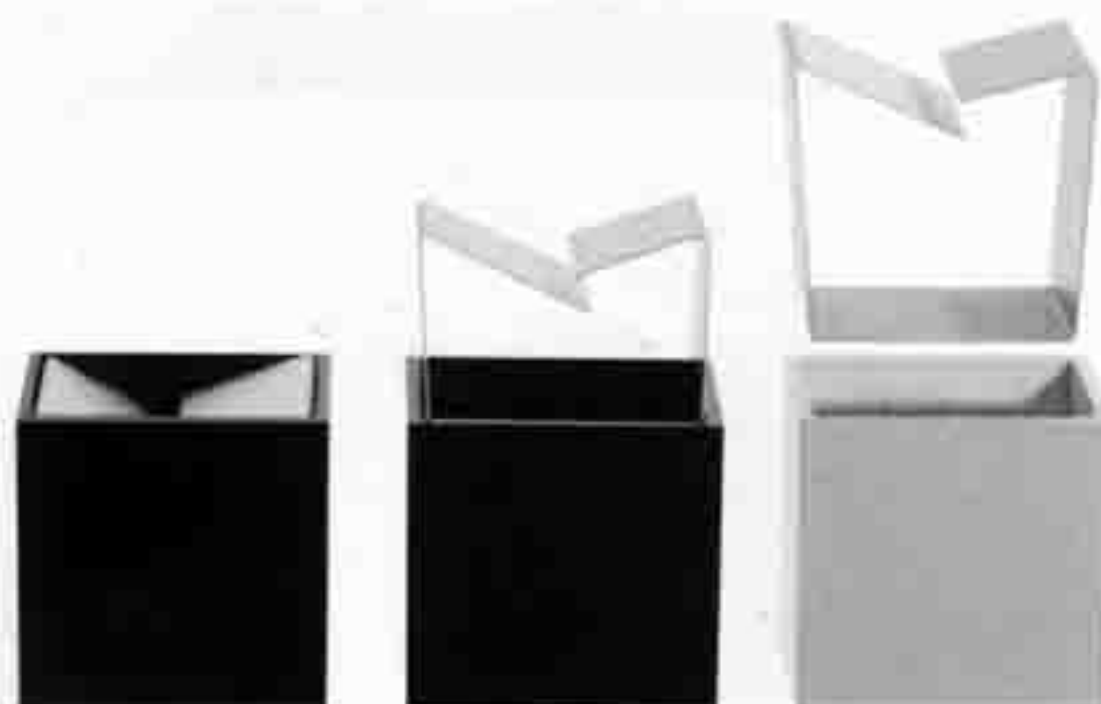
Pg.100 Timor, 1967. Designed by Enzo Mari.

A table calendar: the slats with the date, months and days of the week are turned on a pivot to form the date.

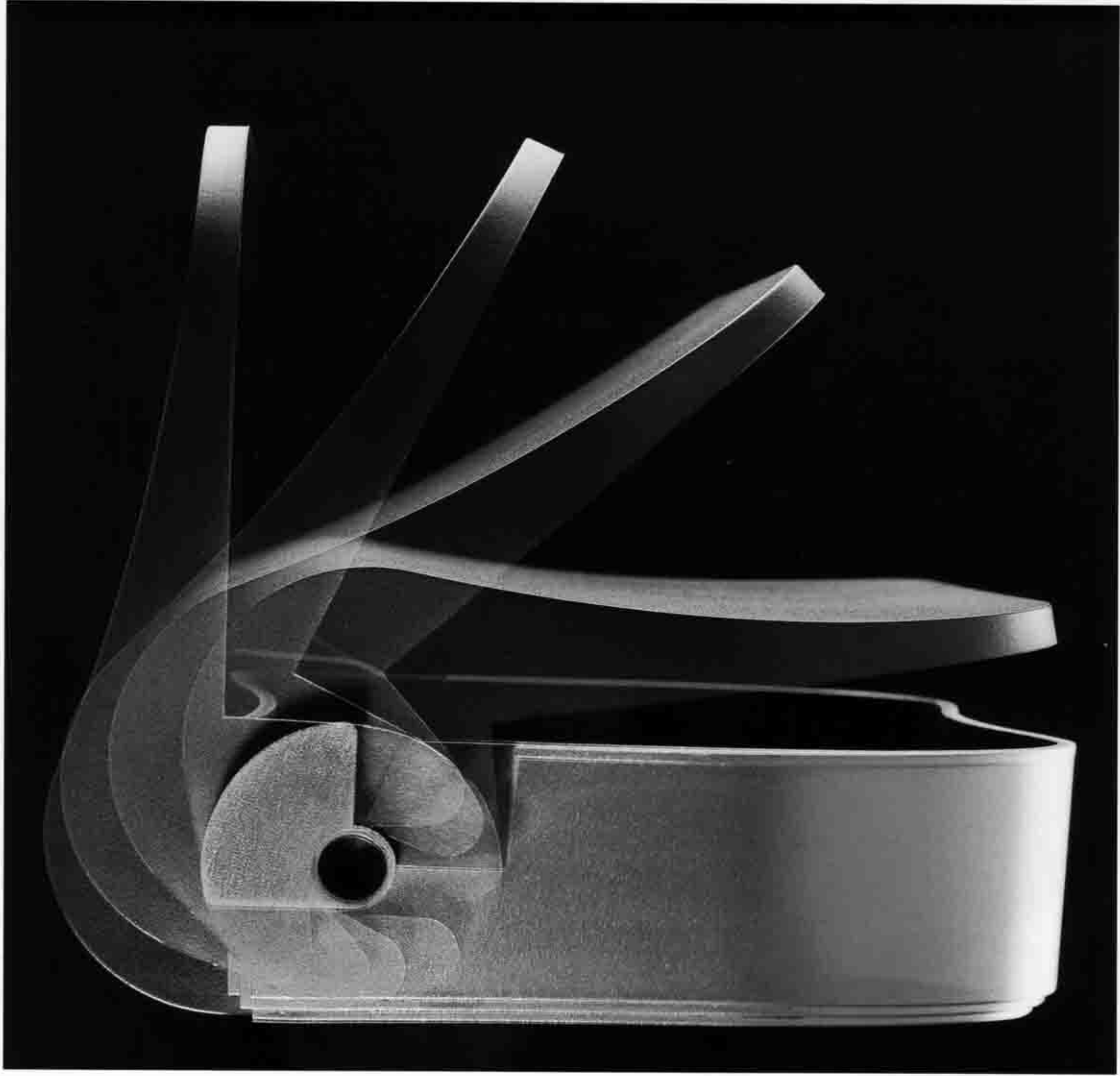
Pg.101 Formosa, 1963. Designed by Enzo Mari.

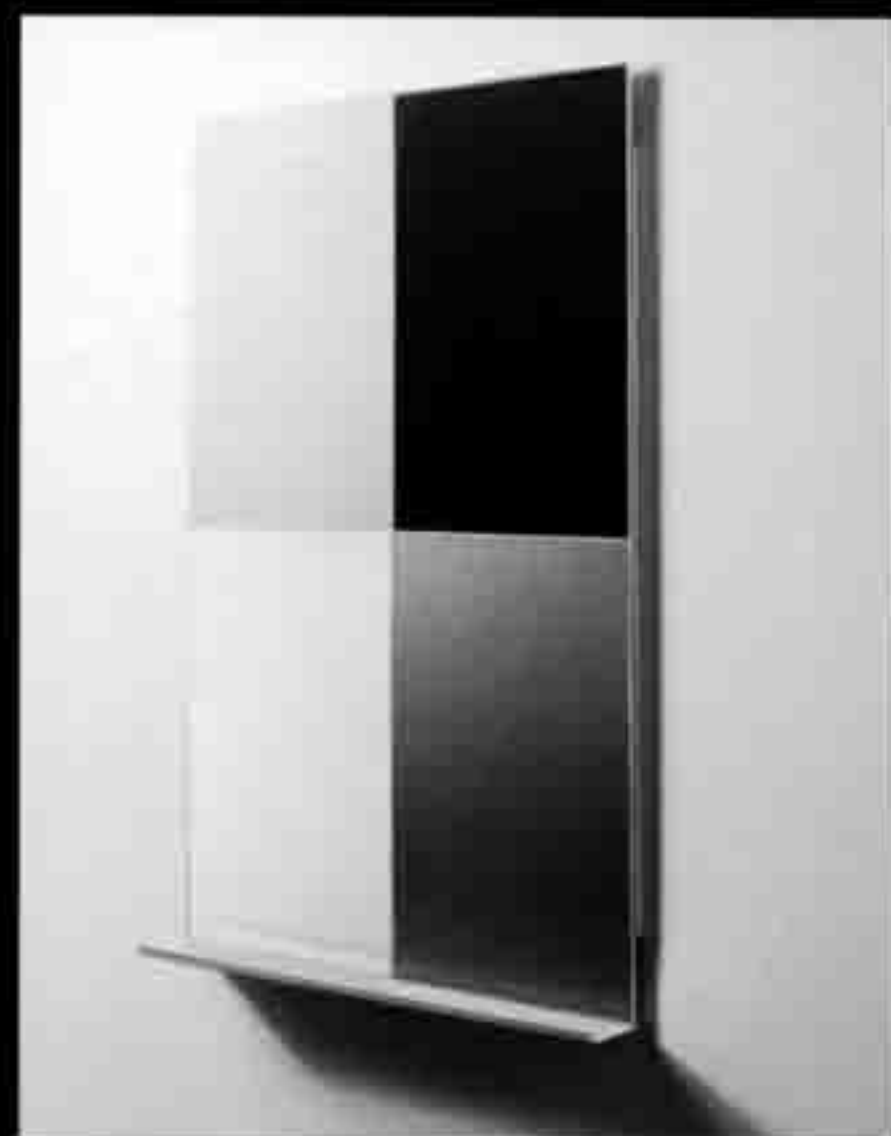
A wall calendar: the numbers, months and days of the week are printed on sheets that hang from a support. They are changed by hand, day by day to form the correct date.

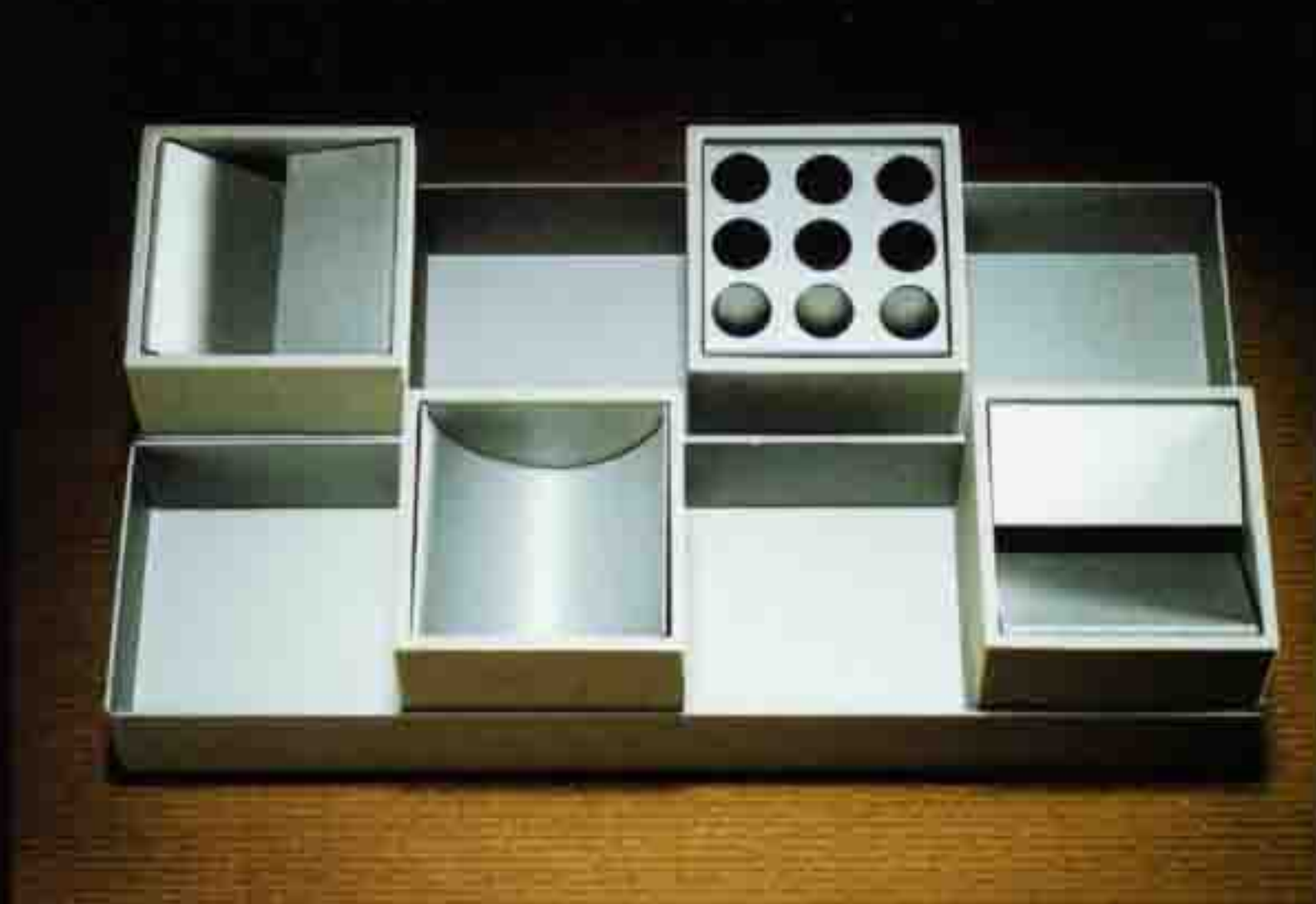
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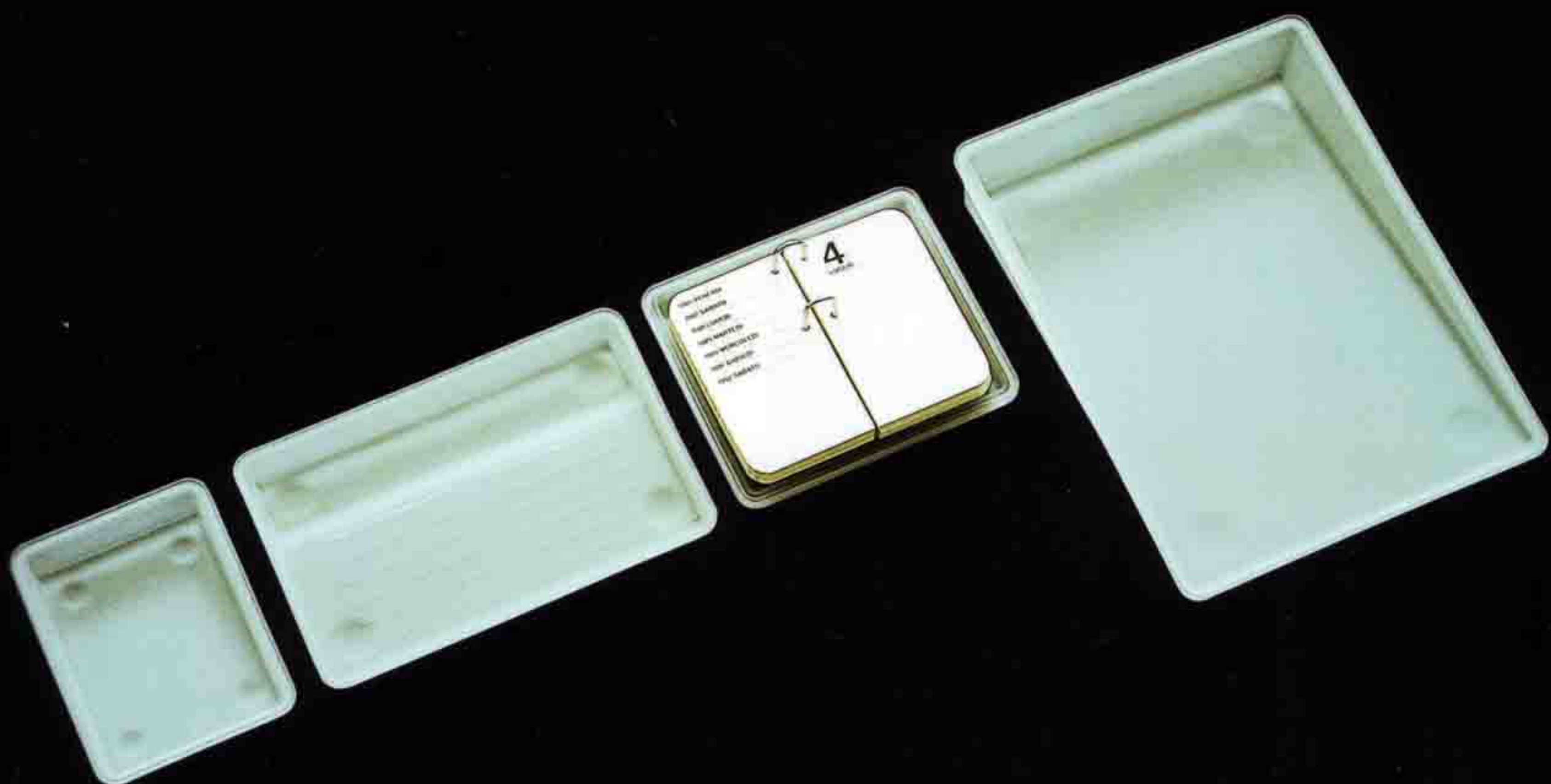








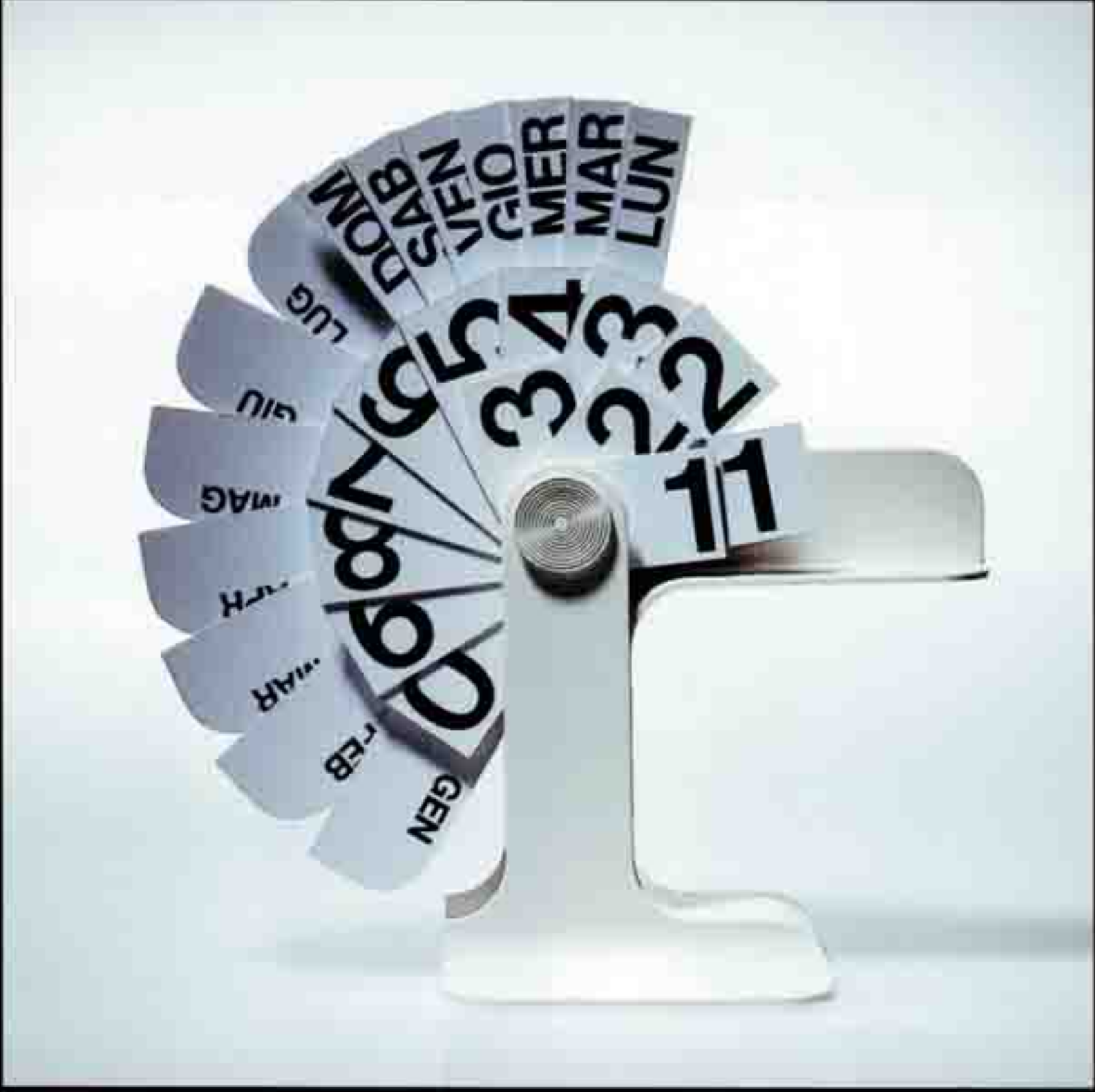








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