Featuring Max Lamb, Nathalie du Pasquier, Patricia Urquiola, Haas Brothers, Alex da Corte, Eva Franch i Gilabert, Studio Formafantasma, Luigi Caccia Dominioni, Francesco Vezzoli, and more...
Politically, 1968 was a tumultuous year in Italy, and naturally the design world reflected all the upheaval. Avant-garde journals like Casabella or Pianeta Fresco splashed their pages with designs that heralded bold new thinking in realms as disparate as architecture, furniture design, and urban planning. Brash, ironic, figurative, and sometimes cynical, the resulting Radical Design movement influenced popular taste, both good and bad, for years to follow. An avid collector of design born of that short-lived time of utopian idyll, DESTE Foundation founder Dakis Joannou has joined forces with TOILETPAPER masterminds Maurizio Cattelan and Pierpaolo Ferrari to create a book entirely dedicated to the period. The 120-page tome strikes the perfect tone for its subject, with each full-color spread popping in acid hues and featuring compositions full of cheeky humor, sex, and the occasional gross-out, with key pieces from Joannou’s collection playing both starring and supporting roles. The antithesis of stuffy design volumes dedicated to placing objects in their proper historical context, 1968 revels in the pleasures of form and texture, giving both iconic and less-well-known pieces by the likes of Cini Boeri, Ettore Sottsass, and Superstudio a fresh and alluring gloss, and providing delights galore for design novices and seasoned furniture hounds alike.

Kevin Greenberg

Mark Robbins has a way of speaking that puts the entire corpus of Western civilization to work. In just one conversation he will reference Walter Benjamin, bell hooks, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Charles Dickens, Orson Welles, Federico Fellini, Sixtus V (the 16th-century pope who redrew the urban plan of Rome), and even Patty Duke descending the staircase in her 1960s sitcom. This trade in cultural knowl-
edge is, after all, his job. "You always need someone who believes in architecture and design, but who can speak about it beyond our own network," he explains.

Since January 2014, 57-year-old Robbins, a trained architect and former dean of the architecture school at Syracuse University, has been president of the American Academy in Rome, the 120-year old institution for research in the arts and architecture. Housed in the 17th-century Villa Aurelia atop the Janiculum hill, the Academy has seen a panoply of scholars, artists, and architects pass through the gilded turnstile that is its residency program. "If you look at who’s been there, it’s everybody from Louis Kahn to Samuel Barber to Thom Mayne," says Robbins. Seventeen years ago, he himself was awarded the Academy's Rome Prize. "I’d like to broaden the scope even further with regard to those who come to the Academy as fellows and associates. If you bring somebody from Shanghai, from Amman, from Palestine, they will each see Rome in a different way. I want it both ways: I want to bring the world in and also to better export the things we do in terms of making ideas."

One of Robbins's lasting accomplishments at Syracuse was overseeing construction of the architecture school’s new building, which he commissioned Richard Gluckman to design. The task of communicating with architects, artists, academics, and administrators to equal effect has made him fluent in a range of professional languages. "I think about a stronger presence for the Academy in New York, and I wonder about the ways that I could speak about this to the mayor so that he could understand why this would make a difference one way or another," he says. And Robbins’s timing has been impeccable, for in both Rome and New York — the Academy’s two host cities — new mayors have recently taken office, allowing him to establish a working relationship right from the outset. On his second day on the job, Robbins presided over a symposium on land use in Rome where he and Ignazio Marino, the city’s mayor, signed a letter of agreement that their two institutions will collaborate in the future. "In my remarks, I managed to squeeze in Benjamin thinking about the Angel of History piling up debris as it looks backward. I said, ‘Maybe we can clear some of that debris and look forward to a more productive moment.’"

Glasser, the solo pop project by New York-based singer/songwriter Cameron Mesirow, combines musical alchemy with an infectiously quirky onstage presence that she honed during tours with The xx and with Jónsi of Sigur Rós. But Mesirow's main instrument is her crystalline, elastic voice, which emerges from elaborate layers of bleepy electronic sounds. On her second full-length Glasser album, Interiors (released last October by New York City-based True Panther), Mesirow evokes an idiosyncratic world of sonic structures translated into built forms, creating a landscape of musical architectures. "I always think about music in terms of

Nicholas Boston

"Two videos explore ideas about space, both internal and external, aural and physical, personal and shared."

"An idiosyncratic world of sonic structures translated into built forms, creating a landscape of musical architectures."

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