**GIO PONTI**

(1891 - 1979, Milano)

Gio Ponti was born on 18th November 1891 in Milan, where he graduates in architecture in 1921. In the same year he opens a studio with the architects Lancia and Fiocchi, taking part into "Neoclassical" group. The constructions of the house in via Randaccio in Milan and of the Villa Builhet in Garches, Paris, are of those years.

In 1927 he founds "the Maze", collective of architects, with Lancia, Buzzi, Venini and Chiesa, group that proposes objects and furniture of vanguard.

From 1923 to 1930 he is the artistic director of Richard Ginori, for which he designs one collection of ceramics, rewarded to the exposure of Paris in 1925. At the same time he designs for Christofle, Krupp, and Venini. In 1928 he founds the Domus review that he will direct for all the life making it an instrument of spread of new projects in architecture, in the design of furnishings, in the decorative arts.

The first "typical houses" are of the end of the 20s and they are emblematically called "Domus", where the interest for the rationalist theories goes near to the concept of the way of being Italian.

In 1933, the association with Lancia finishes with the Rasini house in the Bastioni di Porta Venezia in Milan.

We have to remember in these years the engagement in the Triennale of Milan (1930, 1933, 1936, 1940 and 1951) and, with the Ponti-Fornaroli-Soncini studio until 1945, the Montecatini Palace, Palace RAI, the Rettorato of the University of Padova, the Institute of Mathematics of Rome, Marmont House and Laporte House in Milan, Donegani Villa in Bordighera. From 1936 he becomes university professor in the faculty of Architecture of the Polytechnic of Milan. In 1941 he founds the review Style, that he will direct until 1947 and in 1954 invents the "Compasso d’oro", prize for the design which is awarded still today.

Since the first ‘50s Ponti, associated from 1952 with engineer Fornaroli and architect Rosselli, starts an extraordinary series of projects, expression of the theory of the "ended shape", in the field of the furnishings with the "organized walls" (autoilluminating furniture, furnished windows, dashboard panel), in the design of which here we remember furniture for Cassina (from the Light chair of the ‘51, to the Distex and Round armchair of the ‘56...) in the architecture with the villas Planchart and Arreaza in Caracas and Nemazee in Teheran. At last in 1956 he projects the Pirelli tower and in ’57 the « Superleggera » chair.

In the ‘60s, the attention of Ponti moves on surfaces, colour and light.

The project of the Hotel Park of the Principles to Sorrento, the churches of Saint Francisco and San Carl in Milan, the facade of the Bijenkorf in Einhoven Holland, the facade of Palace INA in via San Paolo in Milan, Pakistan House Hotel in Islamabad are of these years, until arriving, in the ‘70s, to the Museum of Denver in Colorado and to the Cathedral of Taranto where the job on the surfaces is emphasized until the de-materialization and the architecture becomes an open-work sheet, that in its game with the light, with folds and transparencies, it dissolves the volumes. Gio Ponti dies in Milan in September of 1979.