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Bruno Munari and the invention of modern graphic design in Italy, 1928 - 1945

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In addition to serving as a model of mass-communication techniques for Futurism's self promotion, the advertising world had a profound influence on the nascent movement, forming a close relationship that operated on two levels: on the one hand it provided elements of the advertising language which were incorporated in the *parolibere* compositions, and on the other it led to the creation of artistic products conceived of as consumer products.[1] From another point of view, from a substantially subordinate relationship in which Futurist poetics took on the world of advertising, from the late 1920s on that relationship was reversed, or at least rebalanced, through the Futurists' contributions to advertising's formal language and practice. For many of the movement's proponents—Prampolini, Pannaggi, Paladini, Depero, Diulgheroff, and almost all the Milanese, Munari first and foremost—graphic design was not only their main activity

1. Cf. Fanelli, Godoli 1988: 119–21. On the other hand, the fact that advertising's novelty struck the Futurists as 'an epi-phenomenon representative of the new industrial and urban reality' (ibidem: 119), in a country like Italy, which under Giolitti's rule had just begun to experience such phenomena, is to a certain extent symptomatic of the country's backwardness: cf. Anceschi, who—in a rather optimistic take on the situation of artists in other European countries—read Marinetti's desire to 'fight Mallarmé's static ideal' as the 'position, tinged by a perhaps legitimate envy, [of a cultural worker who lives in] a backward situation, compared to other intellectuals, who are instead organically integrated into the formulation and realization of concrete marketing, productive, and cultural strategies.' (Anceschi 1981b: 6).

and source of income, there was often a substantial coherence between their advertising work and their artistic work. This continuous osmosis between the two areas could be seen, for example, in their tendency to recycle iconographic themes; in Munari's case, his experimentation with artistic expression not only had natural repercussions, but also led to parallel pursuits in the field of graphic design.[2]

After World War I Italian graphic design still reflected the situation that had existed at the turn of the century, not only in stylistic terms, but also in terms of work scope, and therefore the kind of work itself, which remained focused primarily on posters (linked to the development of major colour-lithography printshops, such as Ricordi in Milan) and magazine publishing. Posters were a large part of the advertising industry, heralding the first consumer products targeting a middle-class public, and on the cultural side covering opera and film. In publishing, literary and artistic magazines—and to a lesser extent children's illustration—were the sectors most influenced by the work of commercial artists. Although it was stylistically linked to European Art Nouveau, the Italian school of poster design—represented by Adolpho Hohenstein, Leopoldo Metlicovitz, Aleardo Terzi, and Marcello Dudovich, among others—had developed a visual language quite different from the formulas of the French *affiche* (typified by the work of Leonetto Cappiello) and the German *Sachplakat*. This was largely thanks to its emphasis on realism and the strong symbolic connotations of representation, which, through a refined sense of color as well as high technical quality, resulted in some of the best specimens of striking belle époque elegance, ensuring its widespread popularity.[3] Paradoxically for a country like Italy, which was still socially and geographically so disjointed, the spread of advertising had created a sort of unifying visual *koiné*.[4]

The advertising of the time, tied to a consumer market that had yet to develop, had neither coordinated national campaigns nor a significant number of advertisements in the press; above all, it lacked integration between the various means of communication. While poster design, addressed to the widest public, was entrusted (with the mediation of printers and dealers) to renowned poster designers, commercial printed matter was instead left to the printer. The former were painters or other specialized artists with a background in the fine arts (though in many cases such studies were spiked with the artist's personal communicative intuitions), whereas the latter were more technical laborers who dealt with the production of commercial printed matter, from letterheads to price lists, catalogues, and promotional announcements in the press. Munari recalled:

> At the time, publishers asked painters to do some sketches for book covers. Only a sketch, an illustration, not the graphic part, with titles and everything else. That work was left to the printers (…) The resulting product suffered from this design done by two people, neither of whom knew what the other would do. But that's how it was done.[5]

2. Fanelli, Godoli 1988: 129. Regarding Futurist graphic design in advertising, see also Salaris 1986.
3. Baroni, Vitta 2003: 52, 54; Hollis 1994: 13–4.
4. Scudiero 1997: xvi.
5. Bruno Munari, 'Grafica editoriale tra le due guerre' in *Editoria e Cultura a Milano tra le due guerre (1920-1940)*. Milan, 19–21 February 1981. Conference records. Milan: Fondazione Arnoldo e Alberto Mondadori, 1983: 163–4.

This was an increasingly evident gap, and in the 1930s it fueled a major debate about a rethinking of the graphic arts; the field's renewal took place in Italy as well, through a dialogue with the more advanced visual arts.[6] The Italian poster tradition, however—apart from formal postcubist stylistic elements (already widely accepted, following the French example) and, in step with the regime's iconographic choices, elements of the Novecento movement's visual vocabulary—remained essentially unchanged by the innovations of modernism.[7]

Compared to the reassuring iconography of poster design, the graphic contribution of Futurism—which had initially remained confined to the typographic compositions of *paroliberismo*—from the late 1920s, coinciding with a new openness toward the applied arts, sped up advertising design's gradual transition from an artisanal realm to a markedly technical and vocational one, more up-to-date and informed by European functionalism. Of course, in 1920s Italy the graphic arts in general did not much reflect the Futurist innovations, whose most radical and innovative printing solutions are found solely in published material linked directly to the movement. And it is equally true that, with few exceptions (Campari for Depero, Cora for Diulgheroff), an ongoing relationship between Futurists working in advertising and any stable industrial patronage was generally lacking. Yet it was in advertising production (and exhibition installations) that the Futurist language—characterized by its symbolic representation of the product, its diagonal composition, the integration of text and image, and the figurative styles of mechanical art—gradually established itself as the Italian version of modern aesthetics. This development typified the work of artists like Araca, Nizzoli, and Garretto who, although not part of the Futurist movement, adopted more than a few of its formal solutions.[8]

It is also worth noting that the nascent Italian graphic design owed its modern reconfiguration—that is, the development of an autonomous language in both the pictorial poster and the typographic tradition, which through its integration with imagery acquired an aesthetic value and became a 'spectacle' in and of itself [9]—not so much to a shared aesthetic or social vision (as in Germany and the USSR), but rather to the initiative of individuals who, in lieu of adequate training, developed a personal sense of experimentation fueled by examples from architecture and the visual arts.[10] The work of this first generation of Italian

6. Fossati, Sambonet 1974: 9–10, 13. Cf. Baroni, Vitta 2003: 130–1. Speaking about the conditions surrounding the origins of a distinctly Italian approach to graphic design, Antonio Boggeri recalls: 'The reign of the typesetter lived on—that of the typsetter who'd always, and quite comfortably, set one line of lead next to another, to which he then added the image, in a sort of graphic declamatory that ended up being a schematic addition of various marks that were close to one another, but neither integrated nor organized' (cit. in Cremaschi 1967: 15).

7. Cf. Hollis 1994: 41.

8. Cf. Fioravanti, Passarelli, Sfligiotti 1997: 8; Salaris 1986: 18–9; Vinti 2002: 10; Priarone 1988: 8.

9. This expression (taken from the title of a collection of [work by Adolphe Mouron] Cassandre *Le Spectacle est dans la rue*, 1935) is Antonio Boggeri's: '[graphic design as a cultural product] was born the moment in which technical advances in printing challenged the traditional printer with new problems (…) as illustration was coming to the fore, with its visual values, its suggestive power (…) graphic design became spectacle' (cit. in Cremaschi 1967: 16).

10. As was shown by the leaders of the time, especially Boggeri, who felt the best Italian graphic design was 'initially carried out as an almost private type of experimentation, one not yet integrated into advertising production' (cit. in Cremaschi 1967: 17). Elsewhere Boggeri again affirmed: '(…) Italians owe their creation of a cultural heritage founded on the right choices to themselves alone—they chose their path in full autonomy. Carboni and Grignani were absolute autodidacts (…) as were Nizzoli, Munari, Ricas, and Muratore' (Boggeri 1981: 21). Cf. also Fioravanti, Passarelli, Sfligiotti, according to whom Italian graphic design of the time owed everything to a 'precise type of communicator, which is not the result of

graphic designers, who were invariably self-taught (and Munari was part of that group), was followed in the mid-thirties, and especially in the immediate postwar period, by the more technically advanced contributions of a few foreign graphic designers who passed through Milan. The work of Swiss designers like Xanti Schawinsky, Max Huber, and Carlo Vivarelli laid the groundwork for the emergence of a mature Milanese graphic design scene in the 1950s.[11]

The relative lateness of graphic developments in Italy compared to the rest of Europe was the result of two factors: the widespread unpreparedness of workers—which was in turn attributable to the inadequate training offered in vocational schools, the shortage of trade journals, and scarce exchange and exhibition opportunities; and the continuation of the poster's figurative tradition, which in turn reflected the public's and clients' substantial indifference to new artistic languages and advertising efforts.[12] The essence of Italian graphic design has been attributed to this backward situation, exemplified by the designers' autodidactic condition. It has been interpreted as a strongpoint and read as an inclination for 'experimentation, exploration, and an attempt at renewal' (Boggeri), while the Italian tendency to 'force technical means to the limit' has been emphasized, and considered the result of an inveterate bent for bricolage, 'a habit of competing with products made in other contexts, by appropriate technologies, and having to make do with archaic tools and technologies (...), and the habit of making up for the lack of normal working conditions with the substitute of creative imagination (...) (Anceschi).[13] Munari confirmed this reading, recalling with hindsight how the Futurists worked primarily at home, with modest means and cheap materials.[14]

Overall, the modern evolution of Italian graphic design in the 1930s resulted in a cross-pollination of various factors which, albeit belonging to different contexts, deeply innervated it into a complex interplay of reciprocal influences: advertising, which by then had all the characteristics of a substantial economic organization; the most advanced artistic movements, Futurism and Abstractionism, which were the avant-garde realms in which Munari worked quite freely; and the theoretical debate surrounding Rationalism, which—while primarily relating to architecture—was also reflected in the neighboring fields of art and typography.

study in the specific field of graphic design, but is rather the fruit of a stylistic, cultural, compositional maturation; a maturation whose most fruitful background is found in the worlds of art and architecture' (id. 1997: 11).

11. The historic judgment regarding the influence of the Swiss tradition on early Italian graphic design swings between two different positions: one recognizes its importance (be it substantial or merely accessory); the other claims Italian rationalist architecture had a decisive role. Boggeri, for example, spoke of the 'determinant character of foreign designs imported here in Italy' and at the same time recalled the pioneering role of 'some graphic designers, naturally very few (...) [who,] spurred on by the graphic bases brought to light by the Bauhaus, (...) reworked them, shaped them to our own tastes and needs' (cit. in Cremaschi 1967: 15). Conversely, in reexamining (albeit with a few inaccuracies) the national context—from the Futurist work of the teens through the Triennale exhibitions in the 1930s—Carlo Belloli links the advent of a modern Italian graphic design to the contributions of people like Persico and Pagano, and Italian Rationalism in general. Remarkably, Belloli mentions neither the Studio Boggeri nor the Swiss designers who were working in Milan (Belloli 1959).

12. Pigozzi 1982: 472.

13. Respectively, Boggeri cit. in Cremaschi 1967: 1; Anceschi 1981b: 5.

14. Bassi 1990, interview with Bruno Munari (unpublished typescript). Paola Ricas also highlighted how many of the drawings from those years (by both her father and by Munari) were often done in tempera on paper or small-format board, not so much as a stylistic choice, but rather because of a real state of destitution (author interview, 12 July 2006). This trait might have a direct bearing on Munari's later minimalist attitude to design problems.

The macroeconomic context

The painful victory in World War I, while strengthening the country's international position, had left behind an unstable domestic situation both politically and economically. The difficulties of recovery, the consequent stagnation of industrial production, and the collapse of public finances had resulted in unemployment, inflation, and waves of strikes, all of which exacerbated the social tensions resulting from the disorderly development of the previous decades.[15]

The Fascist regime's rise to power coincided with a favorable economic situation reinforced by public finance reform.[16] The liberal and protectionist economic policies of the late 1920s led to significant growth in industrial and agricultural production. However, that development occurred under 'maximum exploitation of labor at the lowest cost,' through wage freezes and fiscal pressures that particularly affected the poorest workers, farmers and laborers.[17] In this context, between 1923 and 1925, the Fascist government transformed into an outright dictatorship through a series of laws that suppressed political freedom and expression, limited local autonomy, put the head of government above legislative powers, and established an efficient repressive apparatus.[18]

Despite the dissatisfaction of the proletariat, the March 1929 elections established a broad consensus and the regime enjoyed the support of Italy's main powers—the Catholic Church, the monarchy, the armed forces, the industrial confederation (Confindustria), and the rentier class.[19] Positive signs were ably amplified by the regime's propaganda to fuel the nationalistic pride of a poor nation.[20] But the Italians' daily reality was far more prosaic and duller than the bombastic tones of official propaganda, and constituted, if anything, a 'modest, circumspect prosperity.'21 The initial spread of consumer goods, popular activities (sports, theater, cinema, popular songs, and escapist fiction), and leisure time (organized by the Opera nazionale dopolavoro, the National Recreation Institute) was accompanied by the usual phenomena of corruption and speculation.

It did not take long for the consequences of the Depression to reach Italy. To address reductions in production and consumption, the government relied on extensive state intervention to help industries in need, through the creation of new institutions,[22] direct commissions and public-works campaigns, and (in the latter half of the decade) autarchic policies.[23] The expansion of public spending paralleled a reduction in private consumption caused—despite many initiatives to mitigate the crisis, ranging from public assistance to

15. Castronovo 1995: 237.
16. Procacci 1975²: 507.
17. Procacci 1975²: 508; Castronovo 1995: 251, 325. Italy was the only industrialized nation to experience a fall in wages between 1921 and 1939 (Castronovo 1995: 327–8).
18. Procacci 1975²: 508–10.
19. Procacci 1975²: 511–12; Guerri 1982: 19.
20. The transatlantic flights of De Pinedo and Balbo (1925, 1930, 1933), the national football team's victory at the World Cup (1934), Primo Carnera's world heavyweight championship, the launch of the transatlantic liner 'Rex' (1931), Luigi Pirandello's Nobel Prize in literature (1934), the first Venice film festival (1932), just as on an international political level the Fascist model was viewed as an instrument for resolving class conflict in the face of the threat posed by a potential spread of the Leninist revolution (Guerri 1982: 20–1).
21. Procacci 1975²: 515.
22. The Italian Industrial Finance Institute (IMI, Istituto Mobiliare Italiano), the Institute for Industrial Reconstruction (IRI, Istituto per la Ricostruzione Industriale), and General Italian Oil Agency (AGIP, Azienda Generale Italiana Petroli).
23. While the Italian state was, among capitalist nations, the one with the greatest government control over its productive sectors, it was also a deeply 'feudalized' state beholden to the large economic, industrial, and financial groups (Procacci 1975²: 515–20). Autarchy was decreed as a response to the economic sanctions of the League of Nations following the war of conquest in Ethiopia (1935–36).

more demagogic programs—by lower earnings without any reduction in tax burdens. Economic growth during the Fascist period was 'extremely bumpy and geographically uneven as ever,' and produced no real improvement in living standards, such that the majority of Italians were forced to 'tighten their belts.' Statistical data and other evidence converge to paint a picture of significant poverty, insecurity, and frustration.[24] As for the middle class, apart from the constant growth of government staff, the tertiary sector of new communications professionals (like Munari) offered the most new career possibilities.[25]

Milan as industrial and cultural capital

Locally, expectations of a 'second industrial revolution' that would have bolstered Lombardy in the period following WWI were shattered by the Great Depression of '29. Between the wars Milan did not have the unique characteristics of an industrial or labor metropolis, but rather became 'the managerial and business-oriented heart of the city of Lombardy,' a multicentered territory in which industrial and residential zones were broadly and evenly spread.[26] During the two decades of Fascist rule the city, whose population exceeded one million inhabitants in 1936, 'continued its economic development, as well as its cultural and welfare activities, in the social groupings allowed or tolerated by the regime.'[27]

In addition to its status as a dynamic industrial city 'enriched by a pragmatic spirit, and amongst the most modern cities in terms of work organization,' in the early 1930s Milan was Italy's third cultural center, after Rome and Florence, and welcomed a variety of artists, writers, and intellectuals who came from all over the country and considered Milan its most 'avant-garde city' steeped in cultural fervor. The intellectual air of the time had nothing anti-conformist about it; rather, it was quite laboriously focused on work or, to put it better, on the need for sustenance, for employment—be it journalism and publishing for writers, or applied arts and advertising for artists: 'Milan guaranteed an income and, anyhow, a collaboration here and there that allowed you to keep going.'[28] Undoubtedly, amongst its most dynamic cultural factors were the new architectural and typographic paradigms promoted by the magazines *Casabella*, *Domus*, and *Campo grafico*, as well as the artistic and literary circles linked to the journal *Corrente* (hermeticism) and the Galleria del Milione (abstraction). It was also a leader on the industrial front, through the work of figures like Adriano Olivetti and, in the related advertising industry, the critical reflections carried out by Guido Mazzali's *L'Ufficio Moderno*. In a cultural climate receptive to European interest in the fine and applied arts a solid association formed between the literati, artists, architects, and exponents of advertising. This triggered a utopian culture

24. Procacci 1975[2]: 519–20; Castronovo 1995: 324–8. The average per-worker income for the 1935–38 period was the equivalent of 410 dollars in Italy, compared to 804 in France, 1206 in Great Britain, and 1309 in the USA; private consumption in Italy for the 1936–40 period was below that of 1926–30. The details of everyday life during the twenty-year Fascist rule as told by Gian Franco Venè in his book *Mille lire al mese* (1988) are particularly convincing.

25. With an annual growth rate of 1,8%, in 1936 this sector included four and a half million workers (Castronovo 1995: 327–8).

26. Vercelloni 1994: 181, 184.

27. Compared to a national and regional growth rate of approximately 10–12% (from 37.9 to 41 million), during the 1921–31 period Milan's population went from 700,000 inhabitants in '21, later integrated with the 100,000 inhabitants of the surrounding townships, to 961,000 in '31, and exceeded a million in '36, with an urban growth rate of 37.1% (Vercelloni 1994: 183–4).

28. Cf. Vergani 1989: 16–7.

characterized by a neo-humanistic quest for synthesis between arts and economics, formulated not in the academy, but rather in a more informal context.[29]

This cross-cultural movement's meeting places were: the Galleria del Milione, the heart of abstract art;[30] the editorial offices of *Casabella*, directed by Persico and Pagano; the Café Craja and the Trattoria All'insegna del Pesce d'oro; Olivetti's advertising office on via Clerici; and Antonio Boggeri's studio on via Borghetto.[31] The dialogue between Futurism and Rationalism, for example, took place through collaborative installations for exhibitions, trade fairs, and shops, allowing for the realization of innovative projects that would have been unfeasible in more traditional artistic contexts.[32] Moreover, the bond that united architects, abstract artists, and graphic designers, who shared the theoretical premise of a geometrical conception of space and representation, took shape early in January 1933 with the appearance of *Campo grafico*. This magazine launched the debate surrounding the renewal of Italian graphic design following European examples related to constructivist typography and, through Persico and Pagano, even the rationalists' claims. Not surprisingly, amid all this—it was a rather restricted environment, after all—Munari was, if not the only, one of the important elements that brought together the various powers at play.

Campari

Munari seems to have deliberately worked on two tracks at once, engaged as a visual artist in both art and graphic design, driven not only by economic needs, but above all by a spontaneous interest in all forms of artistic intervention. As early as the late 1920s, as we have seen, in addition to his activities with the Milanese Futurist group, Munari was also pursuing a technical apprenticeship at the Mauzan-Morzenti studio and animating short advertisements with the Cossio brothers.

> [In the 1930s I made my living] working as a graphic designer, and it was my salvation. While other artists were bound to some dealer (…) I worked as a graphic designer for magazines (…) I also did comics, but with a very different sense of humor. (…) I also worked with them [the rationalists], but I was a graphic designer—both to earn a living as well as to have freedom in other areas.[33]

His debut in graphic design was related to illustration, a genre well suited to his painting skills and the market's demands. His first works date back to 1927/28 and signal the beginning of an intense collaboration with several magazines and some important Milanese advertising firms, which lasted until the early 1940s. As an illustrator Munari was able to freely experiment with visual languages and themes ranging from caricature to comics, collage, photomontage, and the occasional layout.

In the advertising world of the 1920s, still characterized by a lack of attention to the latest American marketing techniques, Campari was among Italy's first

29. Lupo 1996: 7–8, 55. This particular link between the business and intellectual worlds was the most original aspect of a certain type of Italian capitalism in the postwar period (after 1945) through the early sixties: see the detailed analysis of that 'industrial style' in corporate design from companies like Olivetti, Pirelli, and Italsider in Vinti 2007.

30. Where you could 'even smoke while looking at a painting, without being bothered, or read a rare architectural magazine while stretching out on comfortable sofas, enjoy a wall [of art] all afternoon while relaxing in the breeze of a fan' (from 'Mostre milanesi' in *L'Italia letteraria* x; 23, 1934: 5; cit. in Lupo 1996: 11).

31. Lupo 1996: 11–8. Other meeting places were cafés—Tre Marie, Cova, Donini, Campari, and Savini after dinner (ibid: 12–3).

32. Fochessati, Millefiore 1997: 47. Cf. Salaris 1986: 19–20.

33. Branzi 1984: 42.

companies to create an in-house publicity office.[34] The management of Davide Campari, who directed the ad office (until his death in 1936), was distinguished by an unusual openness to avant-garde artists, be they illustrators or graphic designers.[35] Moving beyond the elitist tone of the belle époque, in the period following WWI the company's advertising strategy had expanded, reflecting changes in social structure: this differentiation affected not only the messages' means, but also their visual language and form.[36] While Campari's posters highlighted the product, its print ads—as newspapers and magazines had become the favored media—launched a brand name campaign carried out in several series of black-and-white ads unified by an ironic tone and the emphatic repetition of the company's signature.[37] The relevance of promotional gadgets at the time is reflected in the ads' offers for various objects, such as calendars and date books,[38] as well as literary publications, short stories or poems featuring the brand or product, often entrusted to well known writers.

A typical ad from a literary culture like the Italian one at the time, Campari's |1| *Cantastorie* (Storyteller) were light poetry collections, anonymously written by playwright and critic Renato Simoni, which appeared weekly in the *Corriere della Sera* beginning in 1927.[39] Its numerous issues were periodically collected into single volumes, which Campari published as a limited edition between 1927 and 1932, illustrated in turn by Ugo Mochi, Sergio Tofano, Primo Sinopico and, lastly, Munari.[40] The fifth collection, which Munari illustrated, consists of 27 love poems and literary parodies of various types of love, all of which invariably conclude with the praise of Bitter Campari, as the drink is widely referred to; each poem is accompanied on the left-hand page by artwork inspired by the right-hand composition's theme. The publication as a whole is elegant and modern, with an ideal balance between the simple layout, classic typography—doubtless attributable to Raffaello Bertieri, who was also responsible for its impeccable production quality[41]—and the unique creative flair of Munari's illustrations, a refined synthesis of his previous work which highlight his mastery of the aeropictorial style assimilated into a personal, articulate language. Like

34. Valeri 1986: 68–70.

35. Sinopico, Dudovich, Nizzoli, and Depero all produced both posters and print ads for Campari; the illustrators included Tofano, Guillermaz, Rubino, Negrin, Mochi, and Munari. Depero was a special case, as he took an increasingly important role, and went on to do packaging (he designed the unique Campari Soda bottle), vending-machine design, and promotional gadgets (Pitteri 2002: 20).

36. Vergani 1990: 17.

37. Vergani 1990: 1, 29 (quoting Ferrigni 1937). Cf. Falabrino 2001: 95.

38. Like the *Prezioso Campari Vademecum per tutti*, launched in 1922. Pitteri 2002: 20.

39. Similar initiatives included Sem Benelli's *Sonetti Campari*, Corradino Cima's *Cento e più sonetti*, and the poetry in Milanese dialect published in *Meneghin Campari Seltz*, illustrated by Daniele Fontana (1932) (Falabrino 2001: 95–6). Renato Simoni (1875–1952) was a journalist, playwright, and theater critic. He wrote some popular comedies, and for many years was the theater critic of the *Corriere della Sera*, as well as a director and screenwriter.

40. *Il Cantastorie di Campari. Con 27 figurazioni grafiche di Bruno Munari*. Milan: Campari, 1932. Printing: Raffello Bertieri, Milan. 23.5×31.5 cm, pp.64 (n.n.), board covers and metal spiral binding (Spiralblock); edition of 1000 numbered copies (NFS). The first *Cantastorie* collection, with illustrations by Mochi, was published in 1927; the second, with a cover and plates by Tofano, was pubished in 1928; in 1930 the third collection was published; in 1932 the fourth, illustrated by Sinopico, as well as the fifth and last, illustrated by Munari, were published. All editions had the same format; the first was printed by Bestetti e Tumminelli, Milan/Rome; all the rest (except the second, whose printer was uncredited) were printed by Raffaello Bertieri, Milan.

41. Speaking at a conference in the 1980s, Munari explicitly confirmed that attribution: 'Of these typesetters, there were some really good ones: Bertieri, Lucini, Modiano, and a few others. They were the ones who focused more on quality than on quantity; people who were passionate about their work, who talked about type the way people today talk about sports. One day Bertieri triumphantly showed me a face inspired by Bodoni, which he had found: a Bodoni that, as a slight variant, had rounded tops. With that face he printed a book for Campari, and I did the illustrations for it' (in *Editoria e Cultura a Milano*

the previous volumes, Munari's collection boasts the modern forms of spiral binding and sheets printed on the recto and folded at half width. An article in the November issue of *L'Ufficio Moderno*, accompanied by an overview of graphic work by Ricas and Munari as well as a few illustrations from the recently published *Cantastorie*, commented:

> These illustrations are lovely, unconventional, and marvelously mischievous (...) The irony, though held in check by his unfailingly gracious visual style, clearly asserts itself. With his truly personal talents, Munari comments upon and highlights the issues Simoni narrates, bitterly and in good humor. He comments and highlights, but also adds irony to its irony, and spirit to its spirit. And without resorting to caricature, with a considered dryness of visual mark and tone—and it is a genuine, spontaneous transposition of an intense reality, penetrated to its essence, into the realm of fantasy.[42]

Although Munari's collaboration with the Campari ad office was intermittent, his work with them probably dates back to the beginning of his career as graphic designer if, as it seems, a few illustrations identified in ads from 1927–28 actually are his.[43] Aside from posters, print advertisements in the form of black-and-white classifieds were the main advertising vehicle at the time, as evidenced by the vast repertory of bianchi e neri (black-and-whites) conceived for Campari. Artists with deliberately different styles were commissioned to create the ads—Guillermaz, Sto, Nizzoli, Depero, Brunetta, Mochi, Rubino, Roveroni, Conalbi, Fontana, Negrin and Munari[44]—but all ads shared an emphatic repetition of the brand name and an amusing, often ironic tone. One of the most common formulas was the discursive ads, based on short literary or cultured compositions in the form of advice, Wellerisms, or verse compositions (which invariably end with the product name, Bitter and Cordial Campari), accompanied by a visual interpretation. Although that was a predominant advertising model in daily newspapers at the time, in Campari's case the ads featured not only stylized graphics associated with the expressive possibilities of lettering, but they were also organized in coordinated series.[45] As for Munari, chronologically speaking, his first ads belong to one of the best-known and longest series, |2| the *Memoranda* (which in turn included other series): the two examples found are from *I sei aforismi sull'appetito* (Six aphorisms on the appetite) and are signed by two studios—SAPPI and APRI, names not yet otherwise identified—while the drawings

tra le due guerre (1920-1940), 1983: 163). The typeface in question—which was used for the cover, the frontispiece, and the headers, paired with a classic Bodoni for the poetic texts—is difficult to identify, but has characteristics similar to Alessandro Butti's *Quirinus* (Nebiolo, 1939), which was in turn inspired by Imre Reiner's *Corvinus* (Bauer, 1929).

42. Noi due, 'Il futurismo alla pubblicità' in *L'Ufficio Moderno* VII, 11 (November 1932): 662. Di Corato (2008: 219–20) attributes the article to Ricas and Munari. However, the signature 'Noi due' (Us two) which takes up Mazzali's practice of signing 'Noi' (Us) under the brief editor's note that opened each issue. The article was most likely written by the magazines two directors, Mazzali and Villani, as can be inferred by the tone of the prose, which seems to be penned by an author with a more literary background; nor does it seem logical that the positive comments came from the artists themselves.

43. The Campari ads are reproduced in Ferrigni 1937, a deluxe celebratory volume published by Campari, edited and printed by Raffaello Bertieri. Although the text does focus on various aspects of the company's ads (from posters to interior fliers, ads, and objects), it does not provide any information regarding the artists or dates of the works' production.

44. Cf. Ferrigni 1937: 171–8; Vergani 1990: 21, 27–30; Falabrino 2001: 93–5. Among the more well know series: *Memoranda (Aforismi, Didascalie, Concludendo); Diario di Petronio and Petronius Dixit; il Decalogo nuovo; il Decamerone; i Proverbi; le Massime celebri; le Sintesi parolibere (parole Grego, grafica Nizzoli), le Sintesi pericolose; Nostalgie novecentiste; Campari, perché?; Concludendo; Talismani; Amari; il Consumatore è re; Libri; Opere liriche; Monumenti antichi; Problemi nuovi; Quattro stagioni* (Ferrigni 1937: 171–7).

45. For an overview of the various types of 'black-and-whites' of the period, see Bauer 1998a: 160–1.

humorously illustrate some rather banal food hygiene tips and are signed with an unusual B (like the pseudonym Munari adopted at the time, BUM). The handwriting and the comic strip–like hatching (the depiction is also reminiscent of American cartoons, and is a recurring feature in Munari's illustrations even after 1930) seem hesitant, as does the title lettering, reflecting the fact that they are the work of a novice, and may even predate the robotic 'mechanical' forms of the caricatures he began publishing in 1928.[46]

Some small drawings on the cover and
|3| inside one booklet, titled *Amare gli amari* (Loving Bitters) by one Dottor G. Ellas, are from the same period, if not earlier.[47] The author behind that pseudonym was Emilio Grego, a physician who became an advertising consultant to the Italian Government's General Staff during WWI and owned an ad agency. He had already worked with the Campari publicity office, and in the mid-twenties Campari hired him for a campaign aimed at spreading scientific word of bitters' health benefits (even with doctor endorsements, following the American hard-sell model), supported by a trilingual pamphlet distributed for free.[48] Munari can be identified as the illustrator because of the work's striking stylistic similarities to his first illustrations, published in magazines at the end of the decade, and based on those two black-and-white *Memoranda*—which would date the work toward 1927, when Munari had already settled in Milan.[49]

The dating and attribution of two other ads for Campari are less uncertain, as they were published in 1930–31, and were signed by Munari and Studio CREA. One, titled *I classici* (The Classics), was purely illustrative, and depicted some books held up by two classical bookends with two bottles—Bitter Campari and Cordial Campari—enthroned in the middle; it differs from his previous ads in that the illustration, in grisaille, is of a higher quality. The other ad instead falls fully within the tradition of figurative lettering (already widely used by Guillermaz, for example) and is based on the slogan 'Campari apre e chiude ogni banchetto' (Campari begins and ends each banquet), which Munari ably fit into a key/bottle opener–shaped logo. This attribution is based on the fact that the acronym CREA (Create) was actually an advertising initiative of the Milanese Centrale Futurista (Futurist HQ), which existed between roughly 1930 and '32, and was likely directed by Munari before he opened his own studio with Ricas.[50]

The two bottles reappear in a different project, in which Munari built on his polymaterial experience in painting. It is an
|5| interior/exterior sign titled *Carta di Identità Campari* (Campari ID), and features

46. The unusual B form shows up, for example, in his signature (ing. BrUNo/mUNari) in the drawing 'Progetto di locomotiva per la nuova stazione di Milano' published in the *Almanacco letterario 1933*; Munari was still using it in 1941, as proved by one of his letters to Zavattini (from the Archivio Zavattini, Biblioteca Panizzi, Reggio Emilia, M844/1).

47. Dottor G. Ellas [Emilio Grego], *Amare gli amari. Il breviario di chi vuol viver sano* [Milan:] Edizioni Campari, n.d. [c.1927], [Printing: Bertieri, Milan]. 11.8×16.2 cm, pp. 32. This pamphlet was printed in multiple languages: in French (*Aimer les amers, le breviaire de la bonne santé*, printed by Garagnani, Paris) and in German (*Du sollst das bittere lieben: amare amara*, printed by Grafica Nazionale, Milan). The Italian edition was reprinted by Edizioni Campari in the '60s. The original is in the Archivio Storico Campari, Milan (Vergani 1990: 27; Ferrigni 1937; Villani 1964: 171–2; Eligio Bossetti, author correspondence, autumn 2010).

48. Vergani 1990: 16, 27.

49. Ibid. This booklet is usually dated to 1925, which can either mean it is one of Munari's early debut pieces (done during a stay in Milan before he went to Naples) or that the dating is incorrect. The latter hypothesis seems more likely.

50. Both reproduced in Ferrigni 1937. The first (*I classici*) is signed M at lower right, while the CREA mark is visible at lower left; the second (*Campari apre e chiude...*) only carries the CREA mark at lower right.

an image created by skillfully combining cardboard silhouettes and elements of the bottles (labels, bands, cork seals) into a cubist-type collage. Optical play between orthogonal planes gives the composition a depth that, photographically reproduced, highlights the visual characteristics of the two products in a sharp, intriguing image. Munari began to experiment with multimaterial collage techniques around 1932, which allows us to date this work to that period.[51]

If Campari's only interlocutor thus far seems to have been Munari, his 1935 ad
|4| series titled *Dal diario di Petronio* (From Petronio's Diary) was entirely conceived, written, and drawn with Ricas—even if the signature 'Munari+R' seems to indicate who had the greater role. Like the others, this was a series of newspaper ads, worked into at least 10 different compositions based on reflections attributed to the author of the *Satyricon* (whose scholastic reputation as *arbiter elegantiae* is associated with worldliness) commented upon through vaguely surreal illustrations.[52]

As evidence of their lasting relationship with the company, the two also designed an ad for Bitter Campari, which—although it was rejected—is included as
|6| a sketch in an overview of the studio's projects published in *L'Ufficio Moderno* in 1935.[53] From a graphic point of view, this ad seems much more sophisticated and up-to-date, as it played with the integration of typography and photography in a clever, balanced way. It is hard to see why the proposal was rejected, as the company also used a typo/photographic language in its press ads from that period: perhaps it was not considered dynamic enough, or was too similar to other ads.[54]

Magazine publishing

In the 1920s, before the advent of rotogravure in Italy, although the range of illustrated periodicals offered a greater variety than the 'omnibus' newspaper formula accessible to a differentiated readership,[55] it was nevertheless still linked to the models of the period immediately following WWI. The illustrated weeklies founded at the dawn of the century were the Milanese *L'Illustrazione italiana* (1873), aimed at a middle-class readership, and popular illustrated newspaper supplements like the *Domenica del Corriere* (1899), aimed at an audience in the process of broadening its cultural horizons. However, despite the inclusion of photographs and color plates and their continual success, these

51. Specimen reproduced in Ferrigni 1937. The signature is visible at upper right.

52. The total can be deduced from the ads' numbering (cf. Ferrigni 1937; Vergani 1990). The Campari historical archives have 7 original ink drawings: (1) Dubbi (260×165 mm) [895]; (2) Intermezzo od epilogo (166×132 mm) [896]; (3) La greca (167×130 mm) [893]; (4) Novecento (165×130 mm) [894]; (5) L'Ora del thè (165×130 mm) [891]; (6) Distinzioni (165×130) [892]; (7) Gusti e paesi (165×128 mm) [889].

53. L'Ufficio Moderno x; 5 (May 1935): 252–3.

54. See, for example, the many Campari ads by Negrin (reproduced in Ferrigni 1937) and Carboni (in *Guida Ricciardi* 1936: 82); regarding the Ricas+Munari collaborations, see the ad for Indirizzi Delfini, c. 1935 (in *L'Ufficio Moderno* x; 5, May 1935, cit).

55. Murialdi 2000: 95. '(…) Italy [being] a country with a prevalently literary culture, with a very limited literary market, created the conditions for the so-called *omnibus* formula, meaning a newspaper for everyone, a newspaper that contains subjects that interest not only all members of a given family, but targets the kids through sports and theater, and the parents through other things—as well as different [social] classes. (…) The newspaper was created with the idea of the elementary-school teacher in mind—the high-school teacher or other cultured people. But within that same newspaper there was also something for their doorman. At the time almost all dwellings had a concierge who was interested in major court cases, which were big news, as well as minor local current events stories. The professor, the teacher, or other readers, all had the third page. That page, created in Italy, (…) was one of the literary pages' (Paolo Murialdi, interview 3 June 1998, titled 'L'evoluzione del giornale in Italia' available at www.mediamente.rai.it).

current-affairs weeklies remained largely unchanged in both content—world events, travel stories, political notes, cultural reviews, entertainment columns, advice, and quotidian curiosities—as well as in graphic layout, modeled on the historic illustrated magazines of France (*L'Illustration*) and Britain (*Illustrated London News*).[56]

While social and structural factors at the turn of the century—population growth and urbanization, the rail networks' extension, postal service improvements, the advent of the telegraph—enabled magazines to broaden their market despite widespread illiteracy (48.7% of the total population of 32 million in 1901), what most influenced the Italian publishing industry after WWI were economic changes: the abolition of duties on paper imports (1921), reduced postal rates (1922) and a new copyright law (1925), along with new concentrations of capital, created favorable conditions for publishing's expansion.[57] Milan in particular became 'the city that produces and consumes the most printed paper in Italy'; it was home to historical publishers like Treves, Sonzogno, Vallardi, Hoepli, Mondadori, and Rizzoli, for a total of 86 publishers, 75 printing plants, 455 typesetting printshops, and 18 gravure plants.[58]

Within a national landscape dotted with regional centers,[59] Milan gained supremacy between the late 1920s and early 1930s with the rise of new publishing companies, especially Mondadori and Rizzoli (focused on the book and magazine sectors, respectively). Their transformation from traditional small businesses to mass cultural industries had a major influence on illustrated periodicals.[60] Similarly to developments in the book sector, where the market's expansion into emerging demographics relied on a broad range of entertainment literature (romance, mystery, stories of major feats) and international fiction, the periodicals sector also expanded its genres and readerships, with a proliferation of new offerings aimed at the average reader (employees, shopkeepers, teachers, soldiers, professionals).[61] Despite the regime's official reticence toward new forms of commercial culture, during the Fascist period the number of registered publications went from 3,859 in 1921 to 4,927 in 1941, a figure that, despite its generality, indicates how readers' habits shifted in favor of magazines.[62]

Publishing's dynamism was also closely related to the 'conditioning presence of

56. Murialdi 1986: 102–3.

57. Murialdi 2000: 89, 121, 125; Tranfaglia, Vittoria 2000: 24–5.

58. *Annuario della Stampa 1924–25*, cit. in Lombardo, Pignatel 1985: 38.

59. The main regions and cities related to publishing included: Piedmont (De Agostini, Utet, Lattes, Sei); Florence (Vallecchi, Le Monnnier); Bologna (Zanichelli, Cappelli); Bari (Laterza); and Rome (tied to the government, Provveditorato dello Stato, and Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana) (Pedullà 1997: 350–5).

60. Forgacs, Gundle 2007 maintain in a recent study (based on oral accounts) that, despite Italians' scarse propensity for reading, during the 1930s there was a broad public that read periodicals—particularly sports, illustrated, and comic magazines: 'overall, weekly magazines had sales far larger than those of newspapers or books' (ibid.: 36).

61. Despite the progress schooling had created by enlarging the base readership, illiteracy (21.1% in 1931, with the usual imbalances from region to region) remained a major problem: from 1931–40 the average titles published annually was 10,947 (compared to approximately 9,000 before the war)—a level still quite far from the averages in France and Britain (registered around 16,000 titles) and Germany (c. 23,000). Cf. Pischedda 2001: 74; Pedullà 1997: 374–5; Lombardo, Pignatel 1985: 42; Tranfaglia, Vittoria 2000: 24–5.

62. Cf. Forgacs, Gundle 2007: 37, 96. Although the national statistics ignore publications' regional, social, and typological variations, the growth rate of individual periodicals (27%) in this period was higher than that of annuals (21%). Further confirming this fact, during wartime, despite stric quotas on paper, the number of periodicals in circulation remained formidable (3,978 publications in 1943, of which 79 were dailies) compared to the understandable reduction in book publishing (Pedullà 1997: 374, 380; cf. Tranfaglia, Vittoria 2000: 300).

Fascist power.'[63] Following the laws of 1925–26 and faced with full State control over the media,[64] the magazine industry was actually censored to a lesser extent than other sectors and, thanks to the regime's protection, experienced substantial growth in both supply and circulation.[65] Furthermore, the suppression of freedom of the press was countered by other significant compensations offered to publishers and journalists (subsidies and secret funding from the Government press office, and a journalists' association). All of this sparked, in response to the economic crisis as well, a strengthening of the Italian press from both a technological (modernization of production facilities) and editorial (increase in the number of pages, of editorial staff, and of special editions) point of view, enjoyed equally by newspapers and magazines.[66]

In the early 1930s, when Rizzoli brought rotogravure[67] printing to Italy, it was first used to produce magazines. That particular market was dominated by fiction and lifestyle (*La Lettura*, 1901 and *Le Grandi Firme*, 1929), popular science (*Natura*, 1928), travel and tourism (*Rivista mensile del Touring Club Italiano*, 1895), and technical periodicals; while the women's, sports, and young adults' sectors were still in their infancy.[68] The sudden success of the new rotogravure weeklies sped up the current trend toward a more mass-oriented cultural production: thus, over the course of the decade the periodicals sector grew and print runs were updated so as to supply readers in all classes and at all cultural levels, with particular success in women's magazines and comics—which, taken together, were perhaps the most significant phenomenon in Milanese journalism between the two world wars.[69] While the traditional French cultural hegemony was gradually giving way to the more pervasive American culture, in terms of graphics there was an explosion of color: between the mid-twenties and the early thirties nearly every magazine updated its look and layout, starting with the cover.[70]

Stile meccanico, Mechanical style

As an illustrator, over the span of a decade Munari worked exclusively with magazine offices based in Milan—both small and large publishers, covering various types of publication, ranging from literature to

63. Pedullà 1997: 357.
64. Carried out through property transferrals and managerial appointments at all major newspapers, as well as sequestrations and intimidations; from 1926 this was done through the regulations of the Government press office (from 1937 on known as the Ministero della cultura popolare, or Ministry of Popular Culture), whose ordinances controlled press content in an increasingly rigid fashion (Cambria 1994: 134–5, 141).
65. Lombardo, Pignatel 1985: 41. Cf. De Berti, Mosconi 1998: '(...) the popular press was a kind of duty-free zone compared to [those more rigidly controlled under] the regime's directives, at least up until World War II' (ibid.: 149). The relative tolerance of consumer-press censorship does little to minimize the fact that during the twenty-year Fascist period Italian culture 'existed in a substantially provincial realm' (Pedullà 1997: 361).
66. Murialdi 2000: 136–7, 146–8, 150–1.
67. The last printing technique to become mechanized, rotogravure (or photogravure/photoetching) was discovered in 1878 in Vienna (and later perfected in England, ca. 1895) by Karel Klíč (Karl Klietsch, 1841–1926). This procedure was used primarily for newspaper and periodical printing: in 1904 a section of the Berlin newspaper *Der Tag* was printed in rotogravure, followed in 1910 by the *Freiburger Zeitung*. With the development of reel-fed rotogravure and mixed reels (with both typographic and intaglio printing) after World War I the new procedure (capable of simultaneously printing recto and verso, and up to 3,000 copies per hour) led to the development of new journalism outlets, such as illustrated periodicals aimed at wider readerships (Twyman 1998[2]: 59; Lombardo, Pignatel 1985: 36–7).
68. Murialdi 2000: 95; Ajello 1976: 186n. The situation at the end of the 1930s: of 4,987 magazines in circulation in 1941, 2,388 could be traced back to the Catholic sector, 280 to Fascism and current politics, 353 to the technological and industrial realms, and the remaining 1,800 to other sectors; their publication was centered mainly in Lombardy, Piedmont, and the Veneto regions, followed by Lazio, Emilia Romagna, and Tuscany (Pedullà 1997: 374).
69. Cambria 1994: 142.
70. Pischedda 2001: 74–5; Pallottino 1988: 260.

current events, women's issues, humor, and specialized sectors like aeronautics. Conversely, Munari did not work with sporting magazines, nor those closest to the regime (dealing with politics), nor with the Catholic press (which occupied a substantial share of the market)—all of which implies an evident, not necessarily ethical, but rather aesthetic and commercial choice. As might reasonably be expected, Munari's illustrations and other graphic contributions were commissioned by those publishers who were sympathetic to Futurism and more or less open to modern visual culture, or at least the type of new visual culture most acceptable to the general public.[71]

> Bum is only nineteen years old and is from Milan, and his real name is bruno munari... with a lower-case *b* and *m*, as you can see on his business card. As a mechanical draughtsman enamoured of technique, about three years ago he began to extract, from the simplicity of lines he saw in complex contraptions, the elements of an art that, while still classifiable within the vein of Futurism, has already acquired a delightfully personal expression through a clear, humorous sensibility, coherent with the kind of life unfolding before the artist's observant eyes.[72]

In its initial phase, which ran from roughly 1928 to 1930, his magazine work consisted largely of line drawings—often but not always humorous—that reflected his Futurist 'mechanical' influences, as well as his interest in comics, whose popularity was rapidly on the rise in Italy. Such references are unmistakably clear in the first caricatures he published, which date to the summer of 1928 and appeared alongside a lifestyle

|7| article in the elegant fashion magazine *Lidel*.[73] Caricatures published the following year in two quite different magazines show similar characteristics. A short article on Munari's artistic experience, published in

|8| the *Rivista Illustrata del Popolo d'Italia* (a current events monthly from the eponymous Fascist newspaper in Milan[74]) and a dedication penned by Marinetti in *L'Ala d'Italia*, a technical aviation journal,[75] were illustrated with prominent literary figures' portraits (the writer Orio Vergani, and Futurist artists Marinetti and Azari), executed in an elementary reduction of geometric features and generally depicted in profile.

A few unpublished aeronautics-themed drawings, whose current whereabouts are unknown, probably date to the same period. The first, chronologically, would ap-

|9| pear to be an ink drawing on a collage of aluminum foil and colorful papers, signed BUM with collaged letters from a typewriter: both the drawing's rough execution and imprecisely traced Bodoni-style and English cursive letters suggest it was a very

71. Cf. Meneguzzo 1993: 30.

72. From a review published in the Milanese press in 1927 on the occasion of the Futurist group exhibition at the Galleria Pesaro, which was also Munari's public debut (cit. without sources in Lichtenstein, Häberli 1995: 275).

73. Arturo Lanocita, 'L'arte di sembrare intelligenti' in *Lidel* IX; 7 (July 1928): 48–9; even the geometric lettering of the title and the article's closing can be attributed to Munari. *Lidel* was a fashion monthly, founded in 1919 by Lydia de Liguoro (an Italian journalist who adhered to Fascism from its very beginning and became known for her nationalistic campaigns). The title was taken from a derivation of the founder's pen name (Lydel), adapted as an acronym of Letture Illustrazioni Disegni Eleganze Lavoro (Readings, Illustrations, Drawings, Elegances, Work), the main themes the monthly dealt with. Because de Liguoro had a hand in Lydel Film, a production house in Turin specialized in film advertisements, it is possible she met Munari around 1928, as he was working with the Cossio brothers on animated shorts; it is also plausible that de Liguoro brought Munari into the editorial staff of the magazine she'd founded and then directed up until 1927 (cf. Vergani 2009: 'de Liguoro' and '*Lidel*').

74. (Manlio Morgagni) 'Un pittore futurista: Munari' in *La Rivista illustrata del Popolo d'Italia* VII; 6 (June 1929): 57. The text highlights how his caricatures are 'curious because of the sheer ability with which their creator made use of geometric elements—but especially interesting because of the artist's sure intuition in capturing the most characteristic and expressive lines of the physiognomy.'

75. The portraits of Marinetti and Azari appeared in *L'Ala d'Italia*, VIII; 10 (October 1929): 916.

early attempt or, more likely, a sketch for a primer (abecedarium), similar to others he made in the 1940s—which would make it the first evidence of Munari's recurring
|10| interest in the alphabet.[76] Two illustrations in tempera on cardboard for the aviation company Caproni, dating back to 1928–29, show a higher level of graphic design sensibility: the first depicts the famous Caproncino biplane; the second an imaginary aircraft labeled Caproni 3000 HP, and the third the twin-engined Ca.103. Although the circumstances surrounding their creation are unknown, it is conceivable they were meant to be reproduced as postcards.[77] In addition to the geometric decomposition and vivid background color (in keeping with Futurist stylistic elements), their typical art nouveau–style lettering is noteworthy, as it is quite different from the more immediate, geometric forms of art deco alphabets extensively used in advertising of the period, and suggests these may have been an apprenticeship exercise.

A portrait of the Futurist composer Luigi Russolo,[78] perhaps dating back to 1927, is perhaps an extreme case of such geometric minimalism in the vein of mechanical art, which over the 1920s had left behind the study of movement to become the dominant aesthetic of Futurist painting.[79] Beginning with the 1922–23 manifesto *Arte meccanica* (Mechanical Art) coauthored by Vinicio Paladini, Ivo Pannaggi, and Prampolini—who, alongside Depero, were its most significant proponents—exaltation of the machine as a visual analogy for states of mind tended toward a 'mechanical' depiction of figures composed of basic volumes (cones, cylinders, spheres). This aesthetic's most emblematic iteration was in theatrical sets, where the

76. The drawing, in the collection of the Massimo and Sonia Cirulli Archive, New York/Bologna, is dated c.1927 and is reproduced with the title *rRrR, Rumore di aeroplano* (rRrR, the Sound of an Airplane) in Pellegrini 2009: 121. 38×27 cm. The 1927–28 dating is also confirmed by the BUM signature, which can be traced back to the late 1920s. Even if, compared to the noteworthy quality of the drawings Munari did as an adolescent in Badia Polesine (a few are in the Jaqueline Vodoz and Bruno Danese collection, others in the possession of the Munari family), the possibilty that this is a childhood sketch cannot be excluded; the most probable hypothesis seems to be a parody of a childhood drawing (Antonello 2009: 7). Munari actually did do a series of abecedaria in the early 1940s and later on in the postwar years, a few of which were published by Einaudi (*Abecedario*, 1942 and *Alfabetiere*, 1960), while others remained mere tryouts or personal exercises (*ABC dadà*, 1944, coll. Hajek-Zucconi, Novara; and an untitled one made for Anna Boggeri's fourth birthday, 1944, coll. Boggeri-Monguzzi, Meride). These were followed by the book *Munari's ABC* (Cleveland/New York: The World Publishing Company, 1960), the educational game *ABC con fantasia* produced by Danese in 1973, and an installation Munari curated for the printer Lucini (*Alfabeto Lucini*, Milan: Lucini, 1987).

77. The signature Bruno, identical in all the drawings, allows us to hypothesize a similar date, around 1928–29. The drawings are now in the Maria Fede Caproni collection, Rome. 22×12 cm, 23.5×29 cm, and 22×12 cm, respectively. The Caproni Ca.100 aircraft, designed in 1928, was a commercially succesful single-engine aircraft that remained in production through 1938 in several variants: the dating of the drawing, therefore, is not problematic. The same cannot be said of the second case, insofar as the aircraft name seems to refer to the design of a hydroplane design for the Ca.60 Transaereo, created for transoceanic flight, a prototype of which was tested (but destroyed after the first flight) in 1920–21; it was a massive aircraft, capable of carrying 100 passengers, with three groups of triplane wings on which 6 motors were mounted for a total of 3,000 Hp. Yet Munari's drawing depicts a single-winged aircraft, with two motors and landing gears that do not match reality, except for their large size. The Caproni Ca.103 was a light-bomber biplane (derived from the Ca.73, developed between 1922 and 1924), known for being the first Italian aircraft built with an entirely metal structure.

78. Coll. Bruno Munari, Milan, riproduced in Lichtenstein, Häberli 1995: 26. The signed drawing is dated 1927. However, if one considers that none of Munari's compositions from this period—reproduced plates, illustrations, and photomontages—carries a date, while sketches given to collectors were almost always dated, it is logical to deduce that the date was added only later, and can therefore be taken with the benefit of the doubt. In this specific case, such suspicion is reinforced by the fact that the signature appears along the border of the sheet, not within the drawing itself, as was Munari's usual practice.

79. See Lista, Masoero 2009) in which the period divisions between early and late (primo and secondo) Futurismo are supplanted by the use of dominant aesthetic: mechanical art in the 1920s and aeropainting in the 1930s (ibid.: 19). Cf. Crispolti 1980: 149–51; Lista 2001a: 132–45.

body/machine made its most convincing appearance in costumes for the balletti meccanici (mechanical ballets).[80]

> WE FEEL MECHANICALLY. WE FEEL WE'RE BUILT OF STEEL. WE, TOO, ARE MACHINES. WE, TOO, ARE MECHANIZED! (…) WE FUTURISTS WANT: 1st, that the machine's spirit, not just its exterior form, be rendered (…); 2nd, that these expressive means and mechanical elements be coordinated by an original lyrical law, and not by some learned scientific law; 3rd, that, by 'essence of the Machine,' one understands the strengths, the rhythms, and the infinite analogies the Machine evokes (…)[81]

Because Munari's earliest works were so strongly shaped by both Depero and Prampolini, that impact was reflected not only in the works made for gallery settings, but first and foremost in his daily work as graphic designer and illustrator—which processed those influences into freer, more accessible, often ironic work.[82] Although its chiaroscuro volumes still followed in Prampolini's tracks,[83] this different approach was characteristic of a series of illustrations Munari did in 1929–30, which also responded to specific editorial criteria. These illustrations had two key features: affinities with comics, as was the case with those done for the *Corriere dei Piccoli*;[84] and a visible quest for an immediate, graphic signature with modern connotations, as was the case with those that accompanied sentimental short stories or entertaining pieces in *Lidel*.[85] Yet with respect to the theoretical assumptions of the manifesto, in his illustrations of this period Munari uses a 'mechanical' visual language while omitting all its 'cosmic' connotations.[86]

The illustrations accompanying Marinetti's theatrical text *Il suggeritore nudo* are done in the same style, and were reproduced in *Comoedia* on the occasion of its run at Rome's Teatro degli Indipendenti in December 1929.[87] The line drawings

80. From Pannaggi and Paladini's *Balletto meccanico futurista* (Casa d'Arte Bragaglia, Rome, 1922) to Depero and Casavola's ballet *Anihccam del 3000* (Teatro Trianon, Milan, 1924), Ruggero Vasari's *L'angoscia delle macchine* (performed in 1926, with costumes by Pannaggi and music by Casavola), and Prampolini's *Théatre de la pantomime futuriste* (Paris, 1927). Cf. Lista 2001a: 146.

81. From the *Arte meccanica* manifesto, signed by Enrico Prampolini, Ivo Pannaggi, and Vinicio Paladini, published in *Noi*, second series, 1; 2 (May 1923): 1–2; text reproduced in Birolli 2008: 194–8.

82. À propos of similar illustrations also published in *Lidel* during the summer of 1930, Di Corato writes of an 'ironic translation of Prampolinian aeropainting' (2008: 213). In fact, the playful tone also came from the Futurists' 'mechanical' theatrical works.

83. Crispolti 1992: 193. Within Prampolini's mechanical period, which went from 1924 to '28, Crispolti specifies two phases: the first characterized by planar geometric depictions, the second by an 'accentuated plasticity (…) of an almost "purist" order' in which the color is overlayed with chiaroscuro modeling. For a more in-depth discussion of the mechanical theme in Futurist art see Masoero 2009.

84. *Corriere dei Piccoli* XXI; 23 and 25 (9 and 23 June 1929, respectively), cit. in Di Corato 2008: 210. The weekly supplement of the *Corriere della Sera*, launched in December 1908 (conceived of by Paola Lombroso Carrara, but entrusted to the oversight of Silvio Spaventa Filippi), is considered the first Italian comic. Compared to North America, where comic strips were aimed at adults, within Italian culture they were generally seen as children's products and adopted for educational purposes. In addition to images created by American artists, acquired with exclusive rights, the *Corrierino* (as it was also known) featured numerous characters created by Italian artists—often major illustrators (like Sergio Tofano, who created the famous *Signor Bonaventura*, the character associated with the weekly for the longest period). Luigi Albertini, historic director of the *Corriere della Sera*, decided to replace the characteristic nuvolette (balloons) with rhyming lines of text (underneath the vignettes), which were considered more in keeping with middle-class tastes. Cf. Bona 1998; Santoro 1998b: 82–3).

85. *Lidel* X; 8 (15 August 1929): 22–3. For the story 'Fra due mantelli' by Lyana Cambiasi Munari made 3 line illustrations plus the title; the layout of text and images appears rather conventional, based on the page's central symmetry, and does not seem to reflect (as maintained in Di Corato 2008: 210) 'an initial intervention in terms of editorial graphic design.' Liana Cambiasi Negretti (1897–1995) adopted the pseudonym Liala for her first novel, *Signorsì*, published in 1931 by Mondadori, and became a very prolific author, as well as the uncontested queen of the romance novel.

86. Contrarily, this aspect was present not only in the pictorial works but also in the complex illustrations and photomontages created for the press during the 1930s, once again influenced by a 'cosmic realism' (a spiritual variant of aeropictorial poetics) Prampolini championed during that same period.

87. This work debuted 12 December 1929, directed by Carlo Ludovico Bragaglia, with set designs by Anton Giulio Bragaglia, and

illustrating a few of the play's scenes seem like preparatory sketches, or drawings obtained from the set curtains Munari (in his first theatrical experience) prepared, along with costumes, for the stage.[88] The experimental theater directed by Anton Giulio Bragaglia—who, alongside his brother Arturo, was a key exponent of Futurist photography—in Rome was one of the major reference points of avant-garde theater, and presented a broad range of domestic and foreign experimental, scenically innovative works.[89] Marinetti's text, considered among his best contributions to the genre, is a more balanced summary of earlier Futurist stagings,[90] constucted as 'a series of comic skits' of stereotypical characters based on the Pirandellian theme of the author's disappearance.[91] Although it is difficult to assess Munari's scenographic work without the help of contemporary documents, we can get an idea of it from published illustrations: the automaton-like figures, while lacking color, nevertheless show an unmistakable similarity to Depero and Pannaggi's mechanical costumes and stage sets,[92] which allowed Munari to come up with similar solutions—so much so that they are replicated on the promotional postcard.[93] Yet his fourth stage curtain is more interesting: built upon a typographic collage of letters with vaguely parolibero (albeit not particularly dynamic) compositions, it may have become the recurrent motif for the show's other curtains. Ultimately, the show met with a warm welcome from both critics and audiences.

A different approach, leaving behind geometric rigidity in favor of a more fluid mark making, characterized a series of illustrations published alongside lifestyle articles in *Lidel* in the summer of 1930.[94] These were small, hatched drawings, synthetic little pictures that drew literally, and sometimes jokingly, from the text, winking at the cosmic atmospheres of aeropainting through a play of perspectival planes. Printed in plain black or another color, set in the margin or within the text column, they helped animate the page, creating a unity with the headlines. More than the art deco geometric patterns predominant in French and Italian posters of the period, the titles' lettering (aside from their still uncertain outcome) recalled the stencil typefaces in vogue at the time and the deconstructed forms of Cassandre's *Bifur*.[95]

|12|

scenery curtains and costumes by Munari. The text 'Il suggeritore nudo. Simultaneità futurista in undici sintesi' appeared in *Comoedia* XI–XII; 1 (15 December 1929–15 January 1930): 38–44, with 5 drawings by Munari depicting the first, fourth, sixth, eighth, and eleventh scenes. For Marinetti's text, see Schnapp 2004: 381–408.

88. Schnapp 2004: 407

89. Like the Casa d'Arte Bragaglia gallery, an important center of the capital city's artistic scene, the Teatro sperimentale degli Indipendenti opened in 1922. Anton Giulio Bragaglia (1890–1960) managed it as a private club, where he staged (with his brother Carlo Ludovico as director) works by playwrights who were under-represented in Italian theaters (Campanile, Pirandello, Svevo, Shaw, Jarry, Apollinaire, Strindberg, Brecht), as well as pantomime, marionette, and dance performances. Marinetti's works staged there included (in addition to shorts and *Il Suggeritore nudo*)—*Bianca e Rosso* and *Fantocci elettrici* (Verdone 2005: 22). The theater's intense period of activity ended in 1931 because of serious financial problems and Mussolini's direct repression of the endeavor. Cf. Cappa, Gelli 1998; Archivio della Scuola Romana at http://www.scuolaromana.it; and http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teatri_di_Roma.

90. Verdone 1988: 173; cf. Girolami 1993: 1125; and Schnapp 2004: xxvi–xxvii.

91. Schnapp 2004: xxxvii. The opera's thematic core could be summarized as a series of characters who refuse their own author (Verdone 1988: 174).

92. In addition to the *Balletto meccanico futurista* of 1922, Pannaggi's book cover and costume designs for Ruggero Vasari's *L'Angoscia delle macchine* (1925–26) are also worth mention, as are the sculptural costumes designed for a dance set to music by Stravinsky at the Teatro degli Indipendenti in 1927 (reproduced in Lista 2001a: 147–9)—examples Munari was certainly aware of.

93. Example reproduced in Fanelli, Godoli 1988.

94. Luciana, 'Bibite estive' in *Lidel* XI; 7 (15 July 1930): 25; Lucio Ridenti, 'Sotto il tetto di un amico' in *Lidel* XI; 8 (15 August 1930): 50–1; Luciana, 'In cerca di funghi' and Dancing, 'Quest'inverno balleremo…' in *Lidel* XI; 9 (15 September 1930): 23 and 47 respectively; 'Cantano i bimbi' and Luciana, 'Trofei di caccia' in *Lidel* XI; 10 (15 October 1930): 20 and 26–7 respectively.

95. The Deberny & Peignot foundry, Paris, 1929.

The intensification of Munari's collaboration with *Lidel* is indicative of his early, increasing professional autonomy; during this period he expanded his network in Milan's publishing world, and began to collaborate with other periodicals, all while developing his illustration skills. Some caricatures published in 1930 in the current-events weekly *Il Giovedì* can be traced back to the previous period[96]—a small caricature of Buster Keaton, and another, fairly large series of 'synthetic' portraits published in the May issue of *L'Ufficio Moderno*,[97] a monthly business publication that became the forum for an intense debate on economic rationalization.[98] The magazine became a promotional voice for the GAR or Gruppo amici della razionalizzazione (Group of Rationalization's Friends), and Munari's personal involvment in their activities brought him into contact with the economic leaders most sensitive to new developments in advertising—a step that also coincided with his professional partnership with Ricas.

This openness of interests also led to a transition in his work. His stylistic sensibilities became more sophisticated, as can be seen in his cover for the July/August 1930
|14| issue of *L'Ufficio Moderno*, wherein two mechanical figures move within a rudimentary urban scene. The innovative touch with respect to earlier illustrations in the same genre comes from his accentuation of the two mannequins' volumes and their insertion in a scenographic space (however schematic), in which the magazine's title, reduced to basic forms, also appears.[99]

The cover for the November 1930 is-
|13| sue of *Lidel* was the last work Munari published with the magazine before their collaboation drew to a close,[100] and marked a definitive change in his visual language— noticeable also in his paintings of the same period, which fell decidedly within the cosmic vein of aeropainting (evident in the works shown in 1931 at the Galleria Pesaro). A stylized portrait of a woman, in a hybridized manner between abstract and art deco, appears to hover in a cosmic space shaped by the play between perspectivally projected planes and geomorphic shapes rendered in a strong chiaroscuro that accentuates the work's depth.[101]

Presented in no.9 (January 1929) of *Arts et métiers graphiques* (578–9), the graphic arts magazine published by the foundry itself. *Bifur* is an ornamental alphabet composed of deconstructed uppercase letters reduced to their minimal elements, which can be variably combined through four different variants with different parts fo the letter in black or hatched (cf. Wlassikoff 2005: 84–5). In addition to the obvious influence of Renner's *Futura Black* (Bauer, 1929), other stencil alphabets Munari was certainly aware of included Albers's experimental type (c.1925), used on the cover of one of the Bauhausbücher (Walter Gropius, *Bauhausbauten Dessau*, 1930) and lettering on a cover Prampolini designed for the Italian-American magazine *Broom* (no.3, October 1921).

96. M. Serandrei, 'Buster l'impossibile' in *Il Giovedì*, cit. without further reference in Di Corato 2008: 213.

97. *L'Ufficio Moderno, La pubblicità* v; 5 (May 1930), cit. in Di Corato 2008: 213.

98. Magazine conceived of and directed from 1926 on by Francesco Muscia, and (from 1929) by Guido Mazzali. *L'Ufficio Moderno* was the first Italian magazine dedicated to modern business office organizational systems, sales, and advertising. Cf. Valeri 1986: 60–3; Bauer 1998b: 162–4; Carotti 2001: 67–72.

99. *L'Ufficio Moderno, La pubblicità* v; 7–8 (July/August 1930). As was custom for most magazines up until the 1930s, aside from the background color, the cover remained the same, and was 'distinguished by a symbol—Mercury seated atop a line of books inside a gilt tondo set between the title (...) and the subtitle' (Bauer 1998b: 162–3). In 1929, when Mazzali took the lead, the magazine renewed its graphic layout and began to vary the color of the cover with each issue, entrusting the design to various commercial artists (Carotti 2001: 71).

100. Di Corato 2008: 214. Munari's collaborative relationship with *Lidel*, intermittent as it was, was tied to the management of Gino Valori, a journalist and comedy writer who had succeeded de Liguoro in 1927. Under his lead, the magazine's graphic look was entrusted to art director Francesco Dal Pozzo, who welcomed the contributions of young illustrators like Renato Gruau, Brunetta, Giorgio Tabet, and Munari, whose work with the magazine ended in late 1930, when Valori left the editorial team (Vergani 2009: '*Lidel*').

101. *Lidel* XI; 11 (15 November 1930). For the cover, Di Corato records the title *Futurismo* (2008: 214). In that same issue, Munari illustrated and likely did the layout for a brief article

The novelty of the illustration, which was a personal version of aeropictorial poetics, was also featured in similar solutions Munari adopted in some of his graphic work of the same period, directly related to Futurism: two published covers, a theater poster, and his participation in a disputed (it failed in the end) advertising project.

Munari's graphic design debut in the pub-
|15| lishing realm came in 1929 with *Aquilotto implume*, Giuseppe Romeo Toscano's adventure novel for young-adults, for which Munari made the cover and illustrations throughout.[102] The cover, in two colors, refers to the storyline celebrating the Italian exploration of Africa. Composed according to aeropictorial ideas, it depicts an aerial view of the African continent against a skewed blue background, against which the silhouette of an aircraft in flight stands out, done with the characteristic airbrushed gradient. Below, the novel's title appears in sturdy geometric lettering, and is integrated with the rest of the composition through its angled layout, echoing the airplane's orientation. The black-and-white illustrations accompanying the story appear more coarsly drawn, but are still interesting because of the contrast between elements, as well as their accentuated perspective.

Shortly afterward, yet with dissimilar effects, Munari designed the cover of a collection of theatrical works by the poet Pino
|16| Masnata titled *Anime sceneggiate,* published in 1930 by Marinetti's Edizioni futuriste di «Poesia».[103] In this case the illustration is unadorned, and plays upon a more allusive, raw composition, with a greater emphasis on the alphabetic elements (in keeping with contemporary art deco models) which close two stage curtains around two synthetic winged figures. Bare-bones as it is, the image successfully evokes the irrational dimension of Masnata's theatrical works, focusing on a scenic visualization of the characters' inner worlds (akin to the cinematic flashback).

The poster Munari created for the the-
|17| atrical run of *Simultanina* (1931), one of Marinetti's last plays, stylistically belongs to the same group of works.[104] Compared to their collaboration two years before, for Munari this was a more demanding test: it was the first time he had worked on a poster (a format he seldom returned to in later work), and on the one hand it affirmed the growing recognition he was gaining among the Milanese Futurists, while on the other the sheer visibility of the event served as validation for the artist. During the spring and summer of '31 the tour traveled to

on women's fashion, 'Sera' (60–1)—a drawing of two female figures, rather linear with the exception of the background, extended over a two-page spread, allowing for the inclusion of some photographs as well—and drew the headline for a serial novel 'La triste vittoria' (62), which featured the same design solutions he had previously used.

102. Giuseppe Romeo Toscano. *Aquilotto implume. Avventure di terra e di cielo*. Milan: Casa Editrice Gianbattista Rossi, 1929. The book was issued in another—identical and simultaneous—edition published by Ambrosiana Editoriale, Milan. 22.5×15.5 cm, paperback, pp. 178 (6); duotone cover, 4 b/w illustrations, 2 geographic maps. Printed by Officine grafiche Schor SA, Milan. Giuseppe Romeo Toscano (1895–1981), popular young-adult fiction author, teacher, and writer.

103. Pino Masnata. *Anime sceneggiate*. Rome: Edizioni futuriste di «Poesia», 1930. 13.5×20 cm, paperback, pp. 326; preface by F. T. Marinetti; duotone cover. A collection of the texts *La moglie infedele, Colori di laboratorio,* and *Francesca da Rimini* (written in 1927). A tempera sketch (not the final version) of the cover is in the Casaperlarte Fondazione Paolo Minoli collection, Cantù (reproduced in the catalogue *Mostra di Bruno Munari. Artista, designer, architetto, grafico, scrittore, inventore gioca con i bambini.* Mantua: Corraini/Cantù: Associazione Amici dei Musei Cantù, 1995). Pino Masnata (1901–1968) poet, playwright, and radio author (in collaboration with Carmine Guarino). Author of the *Manifesto del Teatro Visionico* (1920) and, with Marinetti, of the *Manifesto della Radia* (1933) (Bassi 2001d: 712–3; Bossaglia Zatti 1983: 85–7; Verdone 1988: 405–15).

104. *Marinetti/Simultanina/Tournée Teatro Futurista*. 100×140 cm. Printed by Industrie Grafiche N. Moneta, Milan. The image was also reproduced as a postcard (cf. the specimen at Mart, Archivio del 900, fondo Giannina Censi: Cen 5.01). Marinetti's text was published in Milan by A. & G. Carisch (1931).

many Italian cities, and was accompanied by the usual notoriety Futurist soirées garnered.[105] Recalled Ricas:

> At the time, the Teatro Manzoni was across the street from San Fedele and the police precinct, and was later wiped out by bombs. [In '31] a heartbreaking *Simultanina* (played by the marvelous Anna Fontana, whose back was bare all the way to her buttocks) had two types of audience—those who admirered the show, and those who were shocked by it—and ran from 8 in the evening to 10 the following morning, with shouts, tossed tomatoes, and repeated intervention by the cops.[106]

The poster composition centers on the contrast between stylized airplane silhouettes and a synthetic female bust—a direct reference to the play's two main characters (Simultanina and the aviator), whose diversity is further emphasized by the background's contrasting colors and shapes. The aeropictorial stylistic elements not only allow for an immediate association with the Futurist world, but also, thanks to the image's allusiveness, relate to the symbolism of Marinetti's theatrical characters. Although it does not yet include references to the cosmic and surreal atmospheres that distinguished Munari's illustrations for most of the decade, the poster nevertheless shows a degree of maturity in the handling of the figurative and typographic elements, especially his ability to control different letterforms and visually articulate various levels of information in a striking image.[107] Note the presence, next to Munari's signature, of the acronym CREA, the advertising studio linked to the Milanese Futurists Munari was affiliated with.

|18|

Continuing with Munari's theatrical work, during 1931 he developed the set designs for the Futuristic drama *Dottor Mattia* by Angelo Rognoni,[108] staged for the first time on 10 May 1931 at the Sala Bossi in Milan by the experimental company Teatro Nuovo dell'Arte Drammatica, directed by Ettore Gian Ferrari.[109] Gian Ferrari chose Munari to design the sets, which were particularly well adapted to the Futurist text, and was completely satisfied with them: 'I love Munari's sketches. They are absolutely beautiful!'[110] Only four sets sketches are known of (created by the Milan-based Ercole Sormani company), and they confirm the maturity of Munari's pictorial style—even when, as in this case, the representation is more realistic, all the

105. The Compagnia del Teatro Futurista staged *Simultanina* at the Teatro Manzoni in Milan, opening on 10 May 1931. It was directed by Marinetti and Piero Cornabuci, with stage sets designed by Benedetta (made by Gino Galli), and music by Carmine Guarino with lyrics by Marinetti. The tour ran through August, with stops in Turin, Gorizia, Fiume, Trieste, Rome, Bari, Lecce, Brindisi, Potenza, Foggia, Padua, Modena, Mantua, Reggio Emilia, Ferrara, and Lugano (Schnapp 2004: 441, 821; Crispolti 1980: 566). Among the 'clever touches' that enlivened the show were interventions by Escodamè before and after the performance, the presentation of a *carneplastico* (a meat-based Futurist recipe) in the middle of the audience, a Futurist dance (performed by Giannina Censi), perfume wafting throughout the theater (a scent created by Gi.Vi.Emme), and an exhibition of aeropaintings in the foyer (cf. the show poster in Apice, fondo Reggi: 0003-0522).

106. Ricas in Lopez 1994: 8.

107. From the poster it is clear that the tour's ad campaign included other materials: 'Advertising material created from sketches by Benedetta and Munari (...)' (Apice, Fondo Reggi: 0003-0522). There is also a promotional postcard (in addition to the one reproducing Munari's poster) that draws upon one of the graphic syntheses in Benedetta's book *Le forze umane* (1924) (reproduced in Lattarulo: 1995).

108. Angelo Rognoni, *Il Dottor Mattia. Tre atti*. Pavia: Edizioni S.U.P.E.R., 1931, reprinted in 1942. Teatro series. Angelo Rognoni (1896–1957) was, alongside Masnata, a proponent of the Futurist group in Pavia; he was a painter, poet, and prolific playwright (Zatti in Godoli 2001: 979–80; Verdone 1988: 417–8; Bossaglia, Zatti 1983: 15–7, 28, 80–1).

109. Rognoni's work, which dates back to 1929/30, gained a degree of notoriety (for its opening night, Marinetti gave a presentation as well) thanks to the Gian Ferrari company's staging. The following season they staged another play by Rognoni, *La gelosia di Alfredo Rossi* (Bossaglia, Zatti 1983: 16n, 28). In addition to theatre, Ettore Gian Ferrari was also an art patron, and opened his eponymous gallery in 1936 (Grazia Gian Ferrari, email communication to author, 31 August 2010).

110. From a letter to Rognoni, cit. in Bossaglia, Zatti 1983: 80.

while maintaining his illustrations' synthetic line quality and rich colors.[111]

Futurist publishing

The context surrounding the ambitious |19| publishing project for the *Almanacco dell'Italia veloce*, an advertising publication, was more complex. Alongside Depero's *Numero unico futurista Campari* (1931), it was the Futurists' largest promotional project of the 1930s, and Munari not only took part in it, but he was also instrumental in its organization.[112] The idea of a Futurist annual summarizing 'all the arts, inventions, award winners, and industries' of Fascist Italy[113] aimed at the international luxury tourist circuit was launched by Oscar Fusetti, who founded the Edizioni Metropoli in Milan for that express purpose.[114] Announced several times over the course of 1930 to spread word of Marinetti's art direction and Fillìa's technical consultation, advance promotional copies designed by Diulgheroff began to circulate: these were done in the form of a brochure index[115] (of the first subscribers and collaborators) and a foldout flier116 for recruiting new subscriptions; this was followed by a lengthier specimen (program), presented at the IV Triennale di Monza[117] in May 1930, as well as the book pavilion of the Fiera di Milano in July, announcing a 30 December publication date. In his introductory text, Marinetti proclaimed:

> The typographic look will be entirely original: nothing ever seen or foreseen before. [It will include] a selection of papers and inks that can be compared only to the changing colors of airplanes between dawn and dusk. [It will have] a machine-gun launch. [It will have] repeat editions. —F. T. Marinetti, art director[118]

111. Done in tempera (24×32 cm): these were sketches for act I, scene 1; act III, scene 2; and another two for unidentified scenes (reproduced in Lista 1989: 253 and 1990: 119). They originally belonged to Vinicio Paladini.

112. The Edizioni Metropoli offices were located at 4 of the Galleria del Corso, in the center of the city, where Ricas and Munari opened their first studio in 1931 (cf. Bassi 1994: 8). They may have taken over the Edizioni Metropolis spaces following the failure of the *Italia Veloce* project. See Munari's letter to Thayaht, 20.9.1930, written and signed by hand on Edizioni Metropoli letterhead: 'My dear friend, thanks for the photos which, once Marinetti sees and selects them, will be published. Share the material I sent you as widely as possible. I'm awaiting the badge for uomini veloci (fast men). Best wishes from Hoscar Fusetti. Sincere regards, Munari' (Mart, Archivio del 900, fondo Thayaht: Tha 1.2.19.11).

113. The inevitable homage to the regime is emphasized on both the letterhead (cf. Fusetti's letter to Thayaht, 20.10.1930: 'Almanacco dell'Italia veloce (...) the most Fascist book / dedicated to "Benito Mussolini, fast leader of fast Italy",' Mart, Archivio del 900, fondo Thayaht: Tha 1.2.19.12) as well as in print advertisements (cf. *Il Giovedì* no.22, 9 October 1930).

114. Oscar Fusetti (1900–1947) joined the Florentine Futurist group in the early 1920s and directed the magazine Firenze Futurista; he also participated in the Futurist Congress held in Milan in 1924, but soon broke off his ties to Marinetti because of political differences. He returned to the movement in '29 through Fillìa, and launched the *Almanacco* publishing project. In the 1930s he was commissioner of Milan's Fiera (trade fair), worked as a journalist and documentary director, and taught at the experimental cinematography school in Rome (the Scuola sperimentale di cinematografia). He became a Partisan after '43, but his political career was cut short by his sudden death (Cammarota 2001: 491–2).

115. *Almanacco dell'Italia veloce: prime adesioni, primi collaboratori*. Milano: Edizioni Metropoli [1930]. In-16°; pp. 16, perforated index with increasingly large page size. It is quite likely that the idea for the format was influenced by Vladimir Majakovsky's *Dlia Golossa* (For the Voice), edited by El Lissitzky and published in Berlin in 1923 (Lutze & Vogt), the same year in which Diulgheroff attended the Bauhaus in Weimar (Salaris 1986: 151–2).

116. *Almanacco Italia veloce*. Milan: Edizioni Metropoli, 1930. Printed by Archetipografia, Milan. Foldout with 3 panels, 23×30 cm (closed); duotone printing (black and red). The specimen in the collection of the Biblioteca Braidense has a dedication to Mussolini written by Marinetti. In addition to the detailed list of subscribers, the document has typographic compositions created by Diulgheroff and clearly based on constructivist models. There is also a flier, with similar typographic layouts, in the collection of Mart, Archivio del 900, fondo Thayaht: Tha 1.2.19.4-4.

117. The fourth Exposition of modern decorative and industrial arts was the last one to be held in the historic Villa Reale in Monza, from 11 May to 2 November 1930; with the shift of management to the state, the later expositions became triennial and were held in the Palazzo dell'Arte in Milan.

118. This quote was taken from the manifesto text published in both the foldout and in the promotional specimen.

The specimen, also laid out by Diulgheroff, was a collection of promotional compositions by Balla, Diulgheroff, Dottori, Munari, Pozzo, and Prampolini, interspersed with parolibero typographic compositions and photographs with commentary penned by famous supporters.[119]

The intention of the editors was that the publication's strength would lie not only in its content, but also in the shape of the printed object itself, presented as a repertoire of the technical possibilities and creativity of Futurist graphic design. A true typographic tour de force, the specimen features: an aluminized paper cover and the Edizioni Metropoli logo printed in relief with gold ink; eight types of paper with varying colors, finishes, and weights; and printing in metallic inks, serigraph, and on cellophane.[120] The financial investment for a publication of this sort—considering the volume's format (a quarto of 1,000 pages), planned print run (300,000 copies, printed in rotogravure), international distribution, the collaborators' compensation and subscription fee (rather high for the time), and the complexity of the various promotional efforts—evidently corresponded to the Futurists' ambitions, as they were always looking for the regime's support. However, despite the numerous and prestigious subscriptions received from the highest state offices and the culture sphere, the *Almanacco* project remained unrealized. The reasons for its failure are unknown, but the most obvious hypothesis is that funding was insufficient for an editorial achievement of such scale and technically complex requirements; and political factors certainly added to the difficulties (despite his interest in Futurism, Fusetti was tagged as an anti-Fascist and put under special surveillance).[121]

Munari's contribution to the specimen consisted of two advertising plates. The curators' selection criteria are not known, but the inclusion of two pages in his case, compared to the other participating artists (Diulgheroff was the other exception, as he created the overall constructivist graphics), can be read as a recognition of his role in the organization, or his growing professional achievement as graphic designer for advertisements. They are fictitious creations: the first plate is an aeropictorial depiction of a plane in flight through space—it feels like a sketch for an aviation-industry magazine cover, and even the title *Ali d'Italia* (Wings of Italy) recalls the *Ala d'Italia* Munari collaborated on the year before; the other is a sort of collage of dynamic symbols cherished by the Futurists (a ship, plane, car, gears, with the addition of a book) diagonally intersected by the title *Pubblicità a scoppio* (Internal-combustion advert),[122] in which certain elements (an economy of means, the absence of a background) foreshadow a more autonomous manner, freed from painting and open to graphic ideas from outside of the

119. *Programma Almanacco dell'Italia veloce*. Milan: Edizioni Metropoli, 1930. In-quarto, pp. 36.

120. Among the *Almanacco*'s announced publishing innovations were some pages in the form of discs with recordings of Il Duce and poetry performances. An idea Depero returned to in 1931 for his book-object project (never realized) *New York—film vissuto* containing parolibere plates, photomontages, and two discs (Lista 1984: 102).

121. Cammarota 2001: 491–2. Cf. Crispolti 1980: 408–9; Lista 1984: 102; Fanelli, Godoli 1988: 145, 147; Salaris 1995: 32; Ceriani 1998: 158–9; Cammarota 2006: 203. The envelope in Mart, Archivio del 900, fondo Thayaht relating to the *Almanacco* is titled 'Aborto dell'Italia veloce' (The Abortion of Fast Italy), which is indicative of the delusion felt by the organizers, regardless of their significant dedication to it.

122. The sketch's title refers to the expression used to promote the publication: '(...) we will create the Futurist internal-combusion advert, full of unexpected, improvised contrasts, so as to create the atmosphere most favorable to the products' presentation' (letter sent to subscribers, 21.3.1930, on Edizioni Metropoli letterhead; in Mart, Archivio del 900, fondo Thayaht: Tha 1.2.19.01).

movement. The latter echoes a similar illustration that appeared a few months later as the cover of a sports and travel magazine from Trentino titled *Vie Latine* (March 1931), for its special issue on the Fiera di Milano;[123] the previous January Munari had published a color plate in the magazine that anticipated his later explorations in collage.[124]

Therefore, in the 1930s the attempt to create a new advertising trend shaped by aeropictorial innovations (a trend Munari, Dottori, Diulgheroff, and Prampolini were associated with)—for which the *Almanacco dell'Italia veloce* was basically the most advanced experiment—met with moderate success and remained limited primarily to the Futurist realm; much as they had tried to do the previous decade with mechanical art, which remained far from becoming a dominant force.[125] While this held true in general for the poster, in Munari's case the transposition of the style into his illustrations was successful, as proven by his published work in 1929–31 and his cover for *Lidel* in November 1930. The latter were the first concrete examples of his application of an aeropictorial visual language to the field of graphic design, although they do not yet take full advantage of the expressive possibilities of the Prampolinian cosmic current that would come to the fore a little later. Indeed, the work where such 'cosmic' evocations were most evident was in his more distinctly painterly publishing projects, beginning in the end of '31 with the *Cantastorie* collection for Campari (1932) and the 'litolatta' or tin-litho *L'Anguria lirica* (1934), wherein a vaguely surreal atmosphere predominates.[126]

Lito-latte, Tin-litho books

In the spring of '33 in a letter to Tullio d'Albisola, between word play and poking fun at business correspondence, Munari mentioned he was very busy with work for the trade fair, but had nevertheless accepted the job of creating illustrations 'for eleven kisses,' whimsically adding that he had refused Campari's offer of '1,000 lire per drawing.' The conclusion is instructive, and helps one understand the kind of nonsense humor Munari so loved:

> We will pay no attention whatsoever to your graciously attractive letter, because we have a rather poor opinion of the crap you create (tin books) and if you would kindly accept a one-way ticket (at an 80% discount) for the Gates of Hell, we'll gladly arrange it for you. With our sincerest contempt, / Bruno Munari [and Ricas] / P.S. Dirty old man, do tell us the final submission date for these drawings. Go on.[127]

123. Monthly founded in 1921 and published in Trento by the Studio Editoriale Dolomiti. Its name was in continual flux up until 1926, when *Gazzetta del turismo* was substituted by the more Roman name *Vie latine*. How Munari came into contact with its editorial offices is unknown, but one could suppose it was through Depero (also from the Trentino region) or through the plant where the magazine was printed, the Officine Perego in Milan. Cf. Di Corato 2008: 214.

124. *Vie latine: Gazzetta del turismo* XI; 3 (March 1931) and 1 (January 1931), respectively. 23.5×30 cm. The cover image not only borrowed compositional elements from his two plates for the *Almanacco dell'Italia veloce*, but also took chromatic elements (hinged upon brown and green-blue tones) from his contemporary poster for *Sultanina*. The plate, titled 'Una visione futurista della Scala mentre la radio diffonde nel mondo l'eco degli spettacoli' (A Futurist view of the Scala as the radio spreads the sound of its performances throughout the world) shows an axonometric view of the Scala inserted into a planisphere emitting rays representing radio transmission (14.8×19.8 cm; duotone).

125. Fanelli, Godoli 1988: 145.

126. Tanchis writes of 'a propensity towards Surrealism (…) checked by a metaphysical estrangement, or by a cool constructivist approach' (id.: 1987: 13). Cf. Menna 1966: '(…) quite close to Prampolini's immanent declinations of aeropictorial poetics (…) Munari did not aim to create a collective stupor (…) as much as he instead aimed to create fabulous little worlds for what I would call a more everyday, domestic use' (orig. in *La botte e il violino* no.3, 1966, reprinted in *Bruno Munari* 1979: 73).

127. Letter Munari to d'Albisola, 6 April 1933, in Presotto 1981: 149.

Thus began the collaboration between the Ligurian ceramicist and Munari to create
| 21 | *L'anguria lirica,* a book-object made up of 21 litho-printed tin plates hinged into a tubular spine, published in 1934 by Edizioni futuriste di Poesia.[128] It is a long poem that describes the 'five typical stages of passion's trajectory (...) appearance of the woman and advent of passion; the insistent and persistent image of the woman; the fever of possession; alternations of hope and disappointment; and the joy of a dream come true,' for which d'Albisola had been proclamed Record Poet at the Second Circuito di Poesia (Poetry circuit) in Turin the previous year.[129]

It was a complex editorial project, an ambitious poetic work, and was Albisola's second tin-litho edition. It included contributions by Diulgheroff (the author's portrait), Vittorio Orazi (afterword), and the omnipresent Marinetti. It was produced and copublished by the industrialist Vincenzo Nosenzo (owner of a food-packaging factory in Savona), another supporter of the unique publishing initiative that had aroused the Futurists' enthusiasm two years before.[130] The tin books were, in fact, the culmination of the progressive dissolution of writing's linearity launched by Marinetti in 1912–13. Following the Futurists' various publishing experiences, his idea now came to the fore to challenge the book's traditional form and materials.[131] Materially, d'Albisola and Nosenzo's publishing project was connected to Depero's experiments with the book-object *Depero futurista/Dinamo Azari* (1927), and, more directly, to the experiments with metallic materials in advertising carried out by the Futurists of Turin and Liguria.[132]

128. Tullio d'Albisola. *L'Anguria lirica (lungo poema passionale)* [The Lyrical Watermelon (a Long, Passionate Poem)]. Rome: Edizioni futuriste di Poesia/Savona: Lito-latta, [August 1934]. Printed by Lito-latta, Savona. Edition of 101, of which 51 were NFS. 17×19.5 cm; pp. 42 (21 litho-printed tin sheets); tubular hinged binding; in a litho-printed metallic slipcase; 700 gr. Cover and 11 color lithographs by Bruno Munari, 1 black illustration (portrait of Tullio d'Albisola) and the Lito-latta logo by Diulgheroff. Preface by Marinetti, and an appendix by Vittorio Orazi. The book was first exhibited in Rovigo in July 1936 at the Seconda Mostra d'Arte Sindacale Polesana (Maffei 2002: 17; Cammarota 2006: 115; Lista 1984: 121; De Grassi 1986: 83–8; Iannaccone 2004: 4–6; Verdone 1988: 354; Mainieri 2009: 3).

129. Vittorio Orazi, from the 'Clarification' at the end of the book; cit. in Verdone 1988: 379. Poet, writer, critic, and playwright, Vittorio Orazi was the pseudonym of Alessandro Prampolini (1891–1976), brother of the more widely known painter Enrico. The 'Circuiti di poesia' (poetry circuits) were competitions held to elect Italy's Record Poet (the first year's final competition was held at the Galleria Pesaro on 31 October 1931) organized annually in various cities throughout Italy by local Futurist groups. As described by Marinetti: 'a cyclonic racket of aeropictorial, Futurist, critical, glasses-wearing, relaxing students and shouting paroliberi climbing atop others' shoulders' (from his preface to the *Anguria lirica*).

130. The first volume of this sort had been Marinetti's *Parole in libertà futuriste olfattive tattili-termiche* (Olfactive, Thermo-Tactile Futurist Words-in-Freedom), a collection of texts published in November 1932. It is easy to imagine the sensation this book created upon its arrival, as it was a book made entirely of metal, consisting of 15 litho-printed tin sheets hinged into a tubular spine and inserted into a metal slipcase, weighing a total of 850 gr. (Lista 1984: 103; Fanelli, Godoli 1988: 40; Mainieri 2009: 3).

131. The development of a typographic theory that, however fragmentary, could be pushed forward by the Futurists 'as a corollary to the theoretical elaboration of the words-in-freedom' began with the *Manifesto tecnico della letteratura futurista* (Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature, 11 May 1912), followed by the *Supplemento al manifesto tecnico della letteratura futurista* (Supplement to the Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature, 11 August 1912), in which, drawing on Mallarmé, the idea of the poetic text as musical score was formulated, and ultimately led to the 'Typographic Revolution' Marinetti lucidly announced in *L'immaginazione senza fili e le parole in libertà* (The Wireless Imagination and Words-in-Freedom, 11 May 1913). See Fanelli, Godoli 1988: 11–2, 17; Cammarota 2006: 23–5; cf. also Ravaioli 1998: 12ff.

132. The use of metallic effects in the graphic arts (for its obvious mechanical connotations) gained solid footing as metallic papers and cardboards became available on the market (cf. the cover of the aforementioned specimen of the *Almanacco dell'Italia Veloce*), while earlier experiments had used metallic inks (Depero's 'bolted book' cover). Regarding the use of metalic materials in advertising, the most oft-cited precedents are: the '*cartelli lanciatori*' (enamel-coated metal notice boards printed on both sides) made in Turin by Diulgheroff for the Arturo Tucci advertising agency, as well as by Farfa (1928–29); and the aluminum cover of the menu at the Taverna Santopalato, also by Diulgheroff (1930). Additionally, in Liguria the Futurist group of Savona (Farfa and Giovanni Acquaviva) made a triumphal arch of tin on

The path paved by the new book-object was anything but linear. Already the choice of hiring Munari—who evidently was not sufficiently well known, despite the undeniable success of the *Cantastorie* book—gave rise to some controversy in Turin.[133] In the summer of 1934, in addition to the delay due to production difficulties, the volume's debut was further delayed by a distribution ban imposed by police because of two female nudes they considered scandalous; it was only thanks to Marinetti's political connections that the ban was lifted a month later.[134] The tin-litho edition of *L'Anguria lirica* was preceded by a first edition of the poem on paper, which was substantially identical in content, but illustrated by Nino Strada and published in July 1934 in Milan by Mario Chiattone's Officine d'Arti Grafiche.[135] The pamphlet's composition closely recalls the layout of the first collection, Marinetti's *Parole in libertà futuriste tattili termiche olfattive*, edited and illustrated by d'Albisola; it was spiral bound, and the text was freely distributed across the page, using a combination of different faces. Compared to the first collection, in which an approach inspired by the constructivist work of Diulgheroff prevailed,[136] with composition influences ranging from abstraction to Futurist *paroliberismo*, Munari made the most of his experience as an advertising designer, perfecting d'Albisola previous graphic look.[137] *L'Anguria lirica* was a typographically more sober work, beginning with its very format, which Munari made slightly smaller and brought into vertical proportions, facilitating the volume's easy handling. The page has narrow margins, with a justified block of text alligned with the exterior border; the verses—set entirely in a boldface *Semplicità*[138]—take up (with a few variations) two narrow columns, linked by syntactic alignments or according to their meanings, with a red thread framing prominent sections and headers. Additionally, Munari's layout (echoing the schematic used in the *Cantastorie*) is based on the double-page spread, with the facing illustration inserted into a smaller rectangle printed atop a metallic background, positioned to aid compositional balance with regard to the text as well.

the occasion of Mussolini's visit; in 1931 Farfa (who likely put d'Albisola in touch with the Nosenzo plant) published the parolibero poem 'Litolatta,' which was lithographically printed on a tin plate; and, following the success of d'Albisola's books, other objects were made in tin: passes, business cards, and calendars (Cammarota 2006: 22–5; Lista 1984: 103; Lista 2009a: 7–8; Crispolti 1980: 394–5; Salaris 1995: 31–2).

133. Just as Munari was accepting d'Albisola's offer, Fillìa wrote to ask: 'Why did not you invite Oriani, Pozzo, and Mino Rosso, who are much more important, as painters and sculptors, than Munari?' (letter Fillìa to d'Albisola, 2.4.1933, in Presotto 1981: 69, cit. in Iannaccone 2004: 4).

134. In asking d'Albisola for news, Fillìa wrote: '(…) In the bulletin that came out today we talk about your ceramics and your tin book (Marinetti says it's a myth, that it doesn't exist) (…)' (letter Fillìa to d'Albisola, 11.8.1934, in Presotto 1981, cit. in Iannaccone 2004: 7n).

135. Tullio d'Albisola. *L'Anguria lirica*. Milan: Officine d'Arti Grafiche Chiattone, [July 1934]. In-8°. Edition of 500 numbered copies. With 12 illustrations by Nino Strada. Pamphlet spiral bound with wire. À propos of the object's date, see the letter from Nino Strada to d'Albisola, 7 July 1934, in which the former tells the latter he has finished his illustrations for l'*Anguria*, which will be printed that same week (in Presotto 1981: 130); also cf. Mainieri 2009: 3. Nino Strada (1904–1968), Milanese ceramicist. After studying art at the Accademia di Brera, he began his career as a draughtsman, painter, and model-maker in Albissola Marina, where he became a part of the Ligurian group of Futurist ceramicists, with whom he showed work at all of Milan's biennial and triennial art exhibitions. In the 1930s and then after WWI he collaborated with various Italian ceramics manufacturers, primarily in Liguria and Umbria.

136. In the early 1930s Diuglheroff designed the Casa Mazzotti in Albissola Marina, the new headquarters of Ceramiche Mazzotti, in pure rationalist style (1934).

137. In the first tin-litho, with a layout by d'Albisola, the text had been composed in a column whose size/width varied from one page to the next, in a sans-serif face (*Super*, Schriftguss, 1930: see Jaspert, Berry, Johnson 1970: 343–4); while the illustrations followed the poem on the recto side of the sheet, rather than mirroring it across the gutter in a two-page spread.

138. This was a face from the Nebiolo foundry, designed under the management of Alessandro Butti (1930–31); it is clearly inspired by *Futura* (the

The 'abstractions' inspired by the poem are of the same tenor as those made for Campari two years earlier, based on a minimal design combined with an accentuated perspectival layout, rendered here in a limited color range which privileges the contrast between the black type and the warm red and orange tones. The cover features a perfect integration of image and typography, wherein the linear profile of a knife overlaid atop a red disc succinctly depicts the watermelon the poem is named for. Some time before, in a letter to Tullio d'Albisola, Diulgheroff had written: 'I see the future reader of your book calmly seated on a chromed steel chair, completely concentrated, turning the pages of colored tin atop a smooth plane of shatterproof crystal that is axonometrically projected and mirrored in the rectangle of inlaid linoleum floor spread across the room's 50 rational cubic meters, in a light-filled ambience full of lyricism'[139]—an evocative image that, in addition to including all the major symbols of modernity as borrowed from architecture, can easily be read as a comment on the many illustrations Munari made during this period.

Despite the uncontested success of the two tin editions, thanks also to d'Albisola's considerable promotional efforts, no other 'mechanical books' were ever produced (though another had already been announced in September 1935)[140]—except for the tin-litho with verses by Farfa made much later, again by Munari, with some of his drawings from the 1930s.[141]

Comic illustration

A graphic work done in a very different context, Munari's participation in the goliardic publication of the local University Fascist Group, titled *Cip! Cip!*[142] (Chirp! Chirp!), is interesting from a biographical point of view, and helps one understand the type of scene he frequented in Milan. It was a 'unique issue'—the traditional satirical newspaper published occasionally by students to raise money or show their irreverence toward authority—'to benefit the birds of the GUF (Gruppi Universitari Fascisti),' the student pilots of the aeronautics section. The aviation-related theme perhaps explains the presence of Munari as well as other Futurists like Franco Grignani and Carlo Manzoni. The humorous illustrations and short texts reflect the student-run context in which the publication was created: Munari did a series of drawings, hovering between his caricatures and his early mechanical puppets, which were evidently appreciated for their ironic take on the Futurist mechanical mythology; and he also designed one of the two savvy covers.

resemblance is most evident in the uppercase letters), but the lowercase letters take noteworthy liberties and have a real originality.

139. Letter Diulgheroff to d'Albisola, 2 January 1933, in Presotto 1981: 18–9.

140. For the launch of *Parole in libertà futuriste olfattive tattili termiche* a few pages printed separately were used as posters and hung up at various expositions; additionally, in Savona d'Albisola set up a store dedicated exclusively to selling the book. A third edition was announced by d'Albisola in an article published in *Stile futurista* (no.11–12, September 1935: 40) (De Grassi 1986: 83, 86–7).

141. On the occasion of the major Futurist retrospective at Palazzo Grassi, Venice, in 1986. The volume was titled *Farfa, il miliardario della fantasia* (Savona: Marco Sabatelli editore, 1986) and contained three verses by Farfa and six drawings by Munari; Marinetti's preface was taken from the original edition (1933) of the artist's verses, as was the 'distribution warehouse' (Riolfo Marengo 1987: 51–2).

142. *Cip! Cip! Gorgheggio unico dei goliardi milanesi* [Chirp! Chirp! The Unique Warble of the Milanese Goliards]. Milan: informally published, February 1931. Printed by S.A. Stampa Periodica Milanese, Milan. 25×35,2 cm; pp. 54. Below the frontispiece a note reads: 'a favore degli uccelli [piloti della Sezione Aeonautica del Guf] del Gruppo Universitario Fascista milanese' ('to benefit the birds [student pilots of the aeronautics section of the GUF] of the Milanese University Fascist Group'). Double cover in color designed by Munari and G. Duka; additional contributions by Carlo Manzoni and Franco Grignani (Bassi 2001b: 277–8; Di Corato 2008: 215–6).

The publication's original facing-page layout—logically attributed to Munari, as are the typographic illustrations of the double frontispiece—allows the work to be read in both directions, with a Dadaist parolibera image set in the middle of the pamphlet acting as a hinge between the two sections. The text titled 'Tragedia futurista' (Futurist Tragedy, signed with a laconic Mah?/Huh?), is probably also his.

A few years later Munari was again involved in another such initiative for the same group of Milanese goliards (including Carlo Manzoni, Bassano Erba, and Angelo Uglietti) titled *Latteria di Tripoli* (Tripoli Dairy) and released in early 1934. The pamphlet—published in a double edition of deluxe and common versions 'for the benefit of needy students'—beginning with its very title, is a parody of the homonymous lottery Lotteria di Tripoli (Tripoli Lottery) launched a year earlier by the Italian government.[143] The color cover, signed Munari/r+m, depicts a Disneyesque cow[144] with a student underneath wearing a tricked-out goliardic cocked cap and milking banknotes from its udder; furthermore, the composition jokingly riffs on a famous poster by Fabrizio Seneca.[145] The inside includes humorous short texts, cartoons, and photomontages by Munari, who was one of the magazine's editors (all depicted in a color illustration by Balilla Magistri), and alongside Ricas designed the layout. Compared to the caricaturesque tone of the cover illustration, Munari's develops a surreal tone in the vignettes—similar to the ones he published in the *Almanacco letterario Bompiani 1933*— thereby proving that his hand had taken on a degree of adaptability to different contexts which, combined with his keen sense of humor, led him to develop an illustrational style suited to the humorous newspapers that were one of the decade's most important editorial phenomena.[146]

Comics, humour and literary newspapers

Munari's first illustrations for *Lidel* and the *Corriere dei Piccoli*, as well as his ads for Campari, marked his debut in comics—datable between 1927 and '29—and his ad shorts for the IPC can be traced back to the same period. Indeed, humour illustrations constituted an important part of Munari's illustration work during the 1930s, as they meshed well with his personal sense of irony and responded to the public's growing taste for the new comic strip and humourous newspaper genres. Despite the appearance of American comics in the *Corrierino*, aimed at an adult readership, In Italy comics were still considered a minor genre, aimed primarily at a younger or semi-literate readership.[147] Furthermore, conditioned by educational aims, the new medium was inevitably affected by the general climate under Fascist rule, yielding to become a vehicle of nationalist propaganda for both the regime and the Catholic

143. Paired with the Tripoli Gran Prix auto competition, the Lotteria di Tripoli (1933–41) was the first annual lottery run by the Italian government.

144. See, for example, the short film *Steamboat Willy* (1928).

145. Fabrizio Seneca, 'Lotteria di Tripoli' (1934), 34×48 cm. Salce Collection, Museo L. Bailo, Treviso.

146. *Latteria di Tripoli. Numero unico dei goliardi milanesi a favore degli studenti bisognosi*. Milan: unofficially published, [February/March] 1934. Printed by S.A. Stampa Periodica Milanese, Milan. 22.5×30 cm; paperback; pp. 64. With numerous caricatures; includes an advertisement for the r+m studio. An illustration by Balilla Magistri shows the editors Bassano Erba, Berto Andreoli, Carlo Manzoni, Angelo Uglietti, Pino Donizetti, and Bruno Munari—some of whom also authored work for the previous special issue, *Cip!…Cip!…* (Cammarota 2006: 226–7).

147. This prejudice did not, however, prevent the *Corriere dei Piccoli* from reaching a weekly circulation of 80 thousand from its first issue (1908) on, and reaching a vast readership that extended into the postwar period after WWII (Bona 1998).

Church.[148] It was primarily during the 1930s, in the wake of the economic crisis, that American adventure comics became a hit in Italy (thanks to all King Features Syndicate's main characters, from Tarzan to Mandrake, as well as Disney's, led by Topolino (Mickey Mouse), as evidenced by the appearance of countless new publications.[149] Their increasing success (which the regime tolerated until 1938) inspired original Italian productions, whose artists came primarily from the fields of illustration and, above all, satirical papers.

The juxtaposition of the two genres is not surprising, insofar as humour was, at the time, an emerging phenomenon of the cultural industry, capable of horizontally penetrating various broad, rather heterogeneous readerships.[150] Although in the previous decade the establishment of the regime severely limited freedom of the press, in the early 1930s comic papers—albeit with a different tone—made a comeback. Following on the tails of *Marc'Aurelio*'s (1931) phenomenal success,[151] a series of papers targeting an adult, bourgeois readership appeared; these periodicals marked the arrival of 'a new, intelligent formula for satire, made up of allusions, suggestions, and indirect swipes more than openly expressed things. It was the only kind of satire that could be done'.[152] It was a surreal humour, based on *nonsense* and word play, following in the footsteps of the absurdist humour Ettore Petrolini innovated in the theatre and Achille Campanile worked with in prose. Deploying a kind of humour that, ultimately, responded to the 'widespread presence, throughout Italy, of a repressed desire for criticism of Fascist-era rhetorics', those magazines became a custom of their own, and their characters and expressions were adopted for everyday use.[153] This explains why comics—which were so popular with a young readership, whose moods they interpreted, to a certain degree—also circulated and were appreciated in intellectual circles, and in Milan's literary and publishing world in particular: there's no other explanation for the collaborations publishers like Bompiani and Mondadori established not only with Munari, but also many other satirical artists, cartoonists, and authors.

148. Both *Il Balilla* (published by the Fascist daily *Il Popolo d'Italia*) and *Il Giornalino* (published by the Catholic Edizioni San Paolo) debuted in 1923–24.

149. The main publications: *Jumbo* (1932–38), to which the Cossio brothers also contributed; *L'Audace* (1934–41); *L'Avventuroso* (1934–43); *L'intrepido* (1935–43); *Topolino* (launched in 1932 by Nerbini, taken over by Mondadori in '35 under a Disney licence); *Il Vittorioso* (1937). Such widespread circulation ultimately led to the adoption of speech balloons instead of the rhyming captions originally used by the *Corriere dei piccoli* in the teens (Pallottino 1998: 318–20).

150. Just as it is not surprising that the main forces on the market were the two largest periodical publishers, Rizzoli and Mondadori.

151. *Marc'Aurelio* (1931–1943) was a comic paper founded in Rome in 1931 by Oberdan Cotone and Vito de Bellis. It gathered all the best satire writers from other papers of the early decades of the twentieth century (*Il Becco giallo*, *Il Travaso delle idee*), which had been muzzled by the laws and prohibitions imposed by the regime. Directed by the young Giovanni Mosca and Vittorio Metz, it featured some of the most famous contributors: Gabriele Galantara, Attalo (pseudonym of Gioacchino Colizzi), Mameli Barbara, Cesare Zavattini, as well as Metz and Mosca. It was a biweekly, published Thursday and Saturday. Characterised by a goliardic, slightly rude spirit (which was in turn characteristic of the Roman scene), it was an immediate success and between 1935 and 1940 reached weekly runs of over 350 thousand copies. See Gianeri (Gec) 1967: 148; Gianeri (Gec), Rauch 1976: 33–4; Mangini, Pallottino 1994: 163; Pallottino 1998: 324; Carpi 2002: 60.

152. Gianeri (Gec), Rauch 1976: 33; cf. Murialdi 1986: 103–4, 154.

153. Chiavarini 1998: 139. See also the observations of Oreste Del Buono and Italo Calvino: 'It does not seem insignificant that comics and humour papers were so popular at the time (...)' (Del Buono 1971: xvii); and '(...) certainly Bertoldo gave youth a 'somewhere else' where they could take refuge from the totalitarian language (...)' (Calvino, 'L'irresistibile satira di un poeta stralunato' in *La Repubblica*, 6 March 1984: 19, cit. in Mangini, Pallottino 1994: 164).

154. Cesare Pavese, article published in *L'Unità*, 3 August 1947, cit. in Braida 2003: 46. Cf. Pedullà 1997: 358, 360–1.

The publishing industry's dynamism affected both the periodical and book sectors: it was the decade of translations, as Cesare Pavese later said, and publishers both large and small aimed to popularize international literature—a goal facilitated by reduced royalties for foreign authors.[154] While Rizzoli focussed on mass-market illustrated magazines, especially women's magazines, the other key new publisher, Mondadori, made an upward leap from children's books and textbooks to literature, thanks to their aggressive author-recruitment campaign (which allowed them to offer more than the competition), their maniacal attention to books' graphic look, and their remarkable promotional efforts. Part of that strategy included the 1925 launch of the *Almanacco letterario*, an annual gift book of curiosities and unpublished texts.[155] In 1930 the *Almanacco letterario* was acquired and further developed by Valentino Bompiani—Mondadori's former secretary general, who in 1929 left to found his own publishing house, focussing on contemporary fiction, especially foreign titles[156]—who made it a key publication within his larger advertising strategy, aimed at a broad public rather than a more specialised readership.[157] Munari had already met Bompiani at the Libreria Unitas bookshop,[158] but his first contact with the editorial offices on Via Durini must have taken place in 1931, perhaps through Marinetti, who alongside Masnata was a contributor to the 1932 edition, in which Munari debuted with a series of caricatures similar to those of his early career.[159]

The compilation-oriented structure of the publication, centered on a review of the year's literature in Italy and abroad, initially conformed to the literary customs of the time, and therefore appeared in a medium-sized format with vignettes and drawings but without any photographs. Thanks to the new editorial formula launched in '33 (the first edition edited not only by Bompiani, but also Cesare Zavattini), the *Almanacco* soon became a more unusual publication, and its editors—attentive as they were to young talents, and open to innovation—allowed themselves (at least up until 1937) to indulge in unusual approaches to both the layout and images.

> I met him in 1930 (…) Bompiani was the new publisher, and his Almanacco featured work by new draughtsmen, painters, caricaturists, illustrators, graphic designers (…) who, alongside literary news, ironic texts, and gossip (…) published their drawings; the young architects showed architectural sketches and drawings; basically, this Almanacco introduced readers to a developing cultural spectrum that went beyond just Italian culture.[160]

155. Founded by Mondadori in 1925 and directed by Umberto Fracchia (literary director of the publisher's book division, and later founder of the magazine *L'Italia Letteraria*), the annual publication was edited by Valentino Bompiani and Enrico Piceni until 1928. The magazine went with him, as a gift from Mondadori, when Bompiani briefly went to work at the publisher Unitas, and from 1930 on it was run by Bompiani as part of his own publishing venture (Valli 1990: 18; Bompiani 1976: 6; Piazzoni 2007: 55–64).

156. Decleva in Rumi, Vercelloni, Cova 1994: 34–5, 40; cf. Accame 1989: 30–49.

157. Piazzoni 2007: 55. The publication was initially (from 1930 to '33) accompanied by an *Almanacco Aeronautico*, edited by Orio Vergani and Giuseppe Mormino (ibid). 'Bompiani was not a periodical publisher, and he knew it. (…) The *Almanacco Letterario* was not a periodical, but rather an annual book edition. It was only available in bookshops. It aimed to be a 'summary' of the year in culture. It created a chance for Italian writers, even from other publishers, to meet. It began with Zavattini in the 1930s (…)' (Silvana Ottieri, 'Valentino Bompiani: impaginare la vita' at http://rcslibri.corriere.it/bompiani/pantaeditoria/3.htm, last accessed 5 November 2010)

158. Opened by Bompiani during his brief period directing the small publisher (1928-29), it was frequented by Milanese writers, intellectuals, and artists (Piazzoni 2007: 43).

159. *Almanacco letterario 1932*. Milan: Bompiani, December 1931. Printed by Unione Tipografica, Milan. 15.5x20.5 cm, paperback, pp. 368 (11). Cover by Bruno Angoletta. It included 5 line drawings by Munari to accompany the 'Dialogo illustrato' text by Falconi and Biancoli (ivi: 189).

160. Munari in Accame 1989: 66.

In 1932 Munari designed the cover of a novel that became a bestseller for the
|24| small publisher, *Un'avventura a Budapest* by the Hungarian author Ferenc Körmendi, which was soon followed by another title, also designed by Munari.[161] For both covers the artist adopted an intentionally paired-down, against-the-trend approach, with the title rendered in informal, immediate writing, without relying on the support of any imagery whatsoever.[162] Published in the Letteraria Stranieri (Foreign Literature) series, the two books marked the beginning of a long collaboration with Bompiani designing covers; his work with them intensified in the 1940s, and continued even stronger in the postwar period. The success of Körmendi's books helps explain Munari's conspicuous role in the *Almanacco letterario 1933*, which explicitly credited him in the colophon.[163] In addition to a series
|67| of photomontages ('Atmosfera 1933') that attest to the editors' unusual attention to photographic imagery, Munari contributed
|25| illustrations for two texts by Marinetti ('Il teatro totale delle masse' and 'Il Futurismo al 1933') and numerous drawings to accompany literary reviews, divertissements, and miscellaneous columns.[164] On the whole, these were comic- and caricature-type illustrations, which sometimes veered toward the grotesque; the quality of his contributions is not always the highest, and the best examples are those in which his comic verve unites with a sure-handed mark making, in forms reminiscent of his aeropictorial works.[165]

Munari's collaboration with the *Almanacco letterario*—with the exception of his longer yet more intermittent collaboration with the monthly *L'Ala d'Italia*—constituted his most long-term professional experience of the 1930s. His name appears in each edition up to 1939 amongst those of Bompiani and Zavattini's closest collaborators; and in his role as graphic designer he was able to work not only with illustration and photography, but layout as well. Observing each successive edition of the annual, a clear transition from Munari's comics-inspired style to the use of various other techniques can be seen, from photomontage to collage to photograms, all the while maintaining his distinctive ironic tone. Even though small, light-weight line drawings (a few featuring collage) were still a part of the *Almanacco letterario 1935*,[166] by the 1934 edition photographic

161. Ferenc Körmendi, *Un'avventura a Budapest* (orig. title: *A Budapesti kaland*). Milan: Bompiani, 1932. In-8°, pp.414. Published in Italian the same year that it won the international competition run by the Associated English and American Publishers, this novel was issued in 13 editions over just a few years. Ferenc Körmendi, *Via Bodenbach*. Milan: Bompiani, 1933 (orig. title: *Pa. 7, 15 Via Bodenbach*). In-8°, pp.275. Both novels were published in the Letteraria series, which was the most long-lived. The two covers are reproduced in *Almanacco letterario 1935* (for an example of Munari's handwriting, see his graphic work in *Almanacco letterario 1936*: 99). Cf. Longoni in Braida 2003: 78.

162. A completely different approach applies to the cover design of the next novel, *La generazione felice* (Bompiani, 1935) which introduces a constructivist approach in his work.

163. Valentino Bompiani, Cesare Zavattini (ed.), *Almanacco letterario 1933*. Milan: Bompiani, December 1932. 15.5x20.5 cm, paperback, pp.(48) 384. Colour cover by Bruno Angoletta; Carlo Manzoni and Erberto Carboni were among the illustrators.

164. 'Progetto di locomotiva per la nuova stazione di Milan' (17), 'L'annata letteraria in Italia' (44–55), 'marzo nudista (...), maggio bellico' (141), 'Le grandi manovre navali della letteratura italiana' (143–7), 'giugno novellistico' (187), 'Viaggio a sorpresa' (193–4), 'Le donne letterate' (239), 'settembre avanti lettera' (301), 'Il teatro totale delle masse' (Marinetti) (302–7), 'Il Futurismo al 1933' (Marinetti) (312–5), 'Panzini and Pegaso' (316), 'ottobre statistico' (319), 'liriche di Luciano Folgore' (355), 'Indiscrezioni statistiche,' 'Milano proteste,' 'Dove va il romanzo?'.

165. For example, a few representations of the months (May, September), an illustration opening the text on Futurist theatre, and drawings interspersed throughout the annual literary review. Manzoni's work in the same volume shows similarities to Munari's graphic style, which was also evident in the photomontages and could be explained as a reciprocal influence or an exchange between the two young artists (as happened between Ricas and Munari in painting).

166. Valentino Bompiani, Cesare Zavattini (ed.), *Almanacco letterario Bompiani 1935*. Milan: Bompiani,

|68| works—photomontage and photograms in particular—took the upper hand.[167] The relative weight of traditional illustration (ink drawings, albeit still in the style of comics), declined, making way for formal experiments in collage and montage, which led Munari—much like Manzoni and Carboni—to try his hand first at incongruous collage (following the example set by Max Ernst and Jacques Maret), and later at bona fide photomontage, often with graphic or pictorial elements.

This trajectory can also be seen in his contributions to *L'Ala d'Italia*, an aviation monthly published in Milan, whose editorial team, led by Federigo Valli, was surprisingly open to the innovations of the Milanese avant garde—while, conversely, aviation's 'mechanical' connotations made it an important meeting point between Futurism and Fascism.[168] In 1932 the magazine changed its format and layout; Munari's hand is evident on the covers as well as the layout of several articles that, in both their photographic cropping and text formatting, introduce a constructivist-type approach. Throughout his long collaboration with the magazine, which continued up until '39, Munari (sometimes alongside Ricas) produced noteworthy humorous and propagandistic photomontages, the first of which appeared in the February 1933 issue; and (as a unique case) the same issue featured line drawings analogous to the comics he had illustrated for Bompiani.[169]

The change in style appears fully com-
|71| pleted in the *Almanacco letterario 1936*, in which Munari published a series of collage images that supplanted comic drawings.[170]

Toward mid-decade, basically, Munari had definitively embraced collage, and showed a predilection for the manipulation of fin de siècle magazines and catalogues to disorienting and ironic ends: collage became his most relevant technique during this period, and he used it primarily to create illustrations for the most varied editorial contexts (but then abandoned it completely after WWII). In the following edition, titled *Almanacco antiletterario 1937*—which, as stated in the preface, was provocatively conceived of as a controversial and tongue-in-cheek book—photography in all its manifestations (photomontages, photocollage, photo sequences) did not act exclusively as a visual support for the text, but rather assumed its own role as an autonomous, parallel narration.[171]

1934. Printed by Tip. Pizzi & Pizio, Milan. 21×28 cm, paperback, pp.128 (civ). Colour cover by Erberto Carboni. Munari is incorrectly listed as 'C[arlo] Munari' amongst the contributors, together with Giorgio Tabet and Mario Vellani Marchi. His drawings (small coats of arms) accompany a collection of authors' declarations (12–3), while the divertissement 'Multa rinascentur…' recycles drawings already published in the 1933 edition (20). A curiosity: on p.38 an engraving by Eric Gill is reproduced, and was almost certainly taken from an article published in *Arts et Métiers Graphiques* (no.25, September 1931: 357–64).

167. V. Bompiani, C. Zavattini (ed.), *Almanacco letterario Bompiani 1934*. Milan: Bompiani, 1933. 21×28 cm, paperback, pp.112 (lxviii). 'This catalogue was compiled by Valentino Bompiani and Cesare Zavattini with the collaboration of the painter Munari and the photographer Egone'. Cover by Erberto Carboni. Munari did various photomontages, photograms, and photographs for this edition, in addition to designing its layout.

168. The official publication of the Regio Aeronautico Club Italiano, founded in 1919 as *Gazzetta dell'aviazione*, but published regularly only beginning in 1922. Directed by Attilio Longoni, and later Federigo Valli. In 1935 *L'Ala d'Italia* was named 'the national periodical of Fascist aviation' and the publisher moved to Rome, into the newly built Ministero dell'aeronautica; the editorial offices remained in Milan. Regarding the connection between Fascism and Futurism, see Schnapp 2008: 146.

169. For the article by Pietro Maria Bardi, 'Attenzione, attenzione!', in *L'Ala d'Italia* XII; 2 (February 1933): 33–6. One of the three drawings is signed Munari+D (Mario Duse, of the Milanese Futurist group; Di Corato 2008: 224).

170. V. Bompiani et al. (ed.), *Almanacco letterario Bompiani 1936*. Milan: Bompiani, 1935. 21×28.5 cm, paperback, pp., (lvii) 112 (2). Munari, in addition to doing the layout, created a series of collage illustrations ('Film documentario dell'anno 1935,' pp.19–28; 'Peccati letterari,' pp.42–43), two photomontages and a little graphic scherzo (p.99). Note also the photocollages by Carboni and the group of architects known as BBPR.

171. Emilio Radius, Dino Buzzati, Bruno Munari,

Setting aside political satire, which was effectively impossible, *Marc'Aurelio* marked the transition to a more imaginative humour as an end in itself: throughout the 1920s, the earlier satirical papers had experienced changes in direction and adaptations of their editorial line that ended up conforming to the climate imposed by the regime.[172] In addition to vignettes and short pieces making fun of Fascist Italy's enemy du jour, these papers took aim at the same bourgeois public of which their readerships consisted: 'pre-fab motifs: women in crisis, sterile couples, bon vivants and fat bourgeois'.[173] Rizzoli's *Bertoldo* and Mondadori's *Settebello* were the chief papers to fully perfect the formula begun by *Marc'Aurelio*, accentuating its surreal aspects: on a graphic level, that type of humour translated into a space without perspective or gravity, accentuated by a linear mark in which objects and characters are immersed.[174] Faced with the commercial success of *Marc'Aurelio*, in 1936 Rizzoli (which had tried to acquire the Rome-based publication to no avail) created its own humour weekly, *Bertoldo*, planned alongside Zavattini—who, however, due to a last-minute clash with the publisher, went to Rizzoli's competitor, Mondadori.[175] Rizzoli then entrusted Giovanni Mosca and Vittorio Metz with its management, and hired an editorial team of very young humorists adept at the new style, including Giovannino Guareschi, Carlo Manzoni, Walter Molino, Giaci Mondaini, and Saul Steinberg (who was an architecture student in Milan at the time).[176] Although he certainly knew and frequented several of the Rizzoli paper's authors and artists, Munari was not included in the circle of its contributors—who nevertheless almost all crossed paths again as the editorial team of *Settebello*, the competing humour weekly Mondadori launched in 1938, to which Munari was a regular contributor up until 1939.[177]

Il Settebello was associated with the editorial team of *Marc'Aurelio*, which Mondadori acquired and entrusted to Zavattini and Campanile to turn it into an illustrated magazine. For its relaunch, Zavattini focused on contributions from well known artists and writers (Trilussa, Campanile, Guasta, Steinberg, and Zavattini himself, all of whom formed the new editorial

Valentino Bompiani (ed.), *Almanacco antiletterario Bompiani 1937*. Milan: Bompiani, 1936. 21×28.5 cm, paperback, pp. 236. Munari designed the layout, the cover, and a series of photomontages and collages. There are also two small line illustrations for the piece by Marinetti, but they are minimal (112–3).

172. Aside from *Marc'Aurelio*, the most widespread comic papers were *Il Travaso delle idee*, *420*, *Guerin Meschino*, and *Pasquino* (Gianeri (Gec), Rauch 1976: 32–4).

173. Gianeri (Gec) cit. in Aloi, Moretti 2006.

174. Mangini, Pallottino 1994: 41–2.

175. *Bertoldo* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1936–43). Biweekly (Tuesdays and Fridays), but when Rizzoli ended up acquiring *Marc'Aurelio* in 1940, *Bertoldo* turned into a weekly. The masthead was designed by Mario Bazzi, the layout (which remained virtually unchanged over the years) was by Guareschi, who was also managing editor until its closure. Aside from a few colour editions, the graphics were entirely black and white, in order to distinguish itself from illustrated women's magazines, which were identified more by the colour of the ink than by their content (Manzoni 1964: 20). See Manzoni 1964: 22–32; Gianeri (Gec) 1967: 151–152; Gianeri (Gec), Rauch 1976: 33–4; Mangini, Pallottino 1994: 37–47, 183; Carpi 2002: 62–4.

176. Zavattini: 'Rizzoli gave me some papers to manage (…) I brought out some young cartoonists and humour writers, Guareschi, Manzoni, Brancacci, because we'd decided to publish that kind of weekly', from an interview in *Parliamo tanto di me* (Milan: Bompiani, 1977): x, cit. in Mangini, Pallottino 1994: 39.

177. Founded in Rome in 1933 by Egeo Carcavallo and Bepi Fabiano, modelled on the French *Ric et Rac* (a comic-strip weekly published by Fayard, 1929), later compiled by the editors of *Marc'Aurelio*, in 1938 *Il Settebello* (1938–1943) was acquired by Mondadori, who moved its editorial offices to Milan and hired Zavattini and Campanile as directors. It has been called 'the most peripatetic paper in all Italian journalism, it passed through so many hands' (Gianeri (Gec) 1967: 151). In 1939 the paper changed its title to *Ecco*, and later switched back to *Il settebello: nipote settimanale del Bertoldo* and the newspaper format; in 1941 it was acquired by Rizzoli, with Giovanni Mosca as director. See Gianeri (Gec), Rauch 1976: 34; Cf. Mangini, Pallottino 1994: 38–39; Pallottino 1998: 324–5; Carpi 2002: 59–90.

board), on improving the editorial formula (with more vignettes and fewer texts), and on a new graphic look.[178] The contributors included those who worked with Rizzoli's *Bertoldo*, like Steinberg, Bazzi, Manzi, Molino, Mondaini, and new names, including Boccasile, Gec, Tabet. Munari, according to Zavattini's 'name policy', ran his own space in the paper: indeed, in his rather unique contributions he presented, following the example of the American cartoonist Rube Goldberg, a series of implausible contraptions that were as complicated as they were useless.[179] Whether it was a deliberate choice or not, Munari avoided the more hackneyed types of humour with his
|28| machines—for example, types of satire exploiting women and the more advanced cultural currents—and instead embodied the paper's nonconformist spirit, which was more popular with his younger generation. This ironic and detached attitude can also be seen in his use of surrealist collage in other editorial contexts (that were not specifically humour-based), where the technique allowed him to carve out his own original space.[180] In light of such developments, it is worthwhile to reflect on two interesting examples from the early 1930s: Tullio d'Albisola's letterhead, which Munari designed around 1932 or '33, featuring a drawing that foreshadowed such
|25| inventions; and an illustration that appeared in the *Almanacco letterario 1933* depicting an imaginary mechanism similar to the 'comic machines' that made him a success in the pages of *Settebello*.[181] Later on, in one of Zavattini's ventures, those images were collected into a book published by Einaudi, titled *Le macchine di Munari* (Munari's Machines, 1942).[182]

During the first phase of its relaunch, with editorial offices still centered in Rome, *Settebello* kept its large-scale format, albeit with variations to the original typographic layout; the editorial offices moved to Milan between October and November 1938, whereupon the weekly adopted a smaller format and different graphic look, with a colour cover and higher page count.[183] Although there is no concrete proof, Munari may have been directly involved with

178. Large format (40×56 cm) and 6 pages (later 8); news announced in issue no. 232, 16 April 1938 (Carpi 2002: 71).

179. Already well known in Italy: cf. Munari 1966 (*Arte come mestiere*): 15. Rube Goldberg (1883–1970), American cartoonist and draughtsman. He rose to fame with 'Foolish Questions', vignettes published in the *New York Evening Mail* in the teens, characterised by a surreal sense of humour. Beginning in 1914 he created a series of satirical vignettes featuring improbable gadgets that performed chain reactions to complete banal tasks. His success led to such inventions being named after him. Winner of the 1948 Pulitzer Prize.

180. Cf. Mangini, Pallottino 1994: 167–8. Munari himself considered his comic output with a slightly condescending eye, as if it belonged to his juvenilia: '(...) those comic [machines] that I drew *during my student years*, with the sole aim of making my friends laugh' (Munari 1966: 15, italics mine)

181. D'Albisola's letterhead can be seen in the Mazzotti-Thayaht correspondence dated 3 March 1934 (Mart, Archivio del 900, fondo Thayaht: Tha 1.2.07.63); the illustration titled 'Settembre avanti lettera' is in *Almanacco letterario 1933*, cit.: 301.

182. See Munari's correspondence with Zavattini [late 1941/early '42], which clearly leads one to believe that Zavattini was at the root of it: '(...) I'll gladly accept *your proposal* but I think it would be advisable to revisit those machines and do them better, and in colour. I could also manage the graphic design and binding. I'd like to make it 'my book' (...)'; 'Dear Cesarissimo, the book I'm doing with Einaudi is in good shape and I often think of *your altruism* and your now long-standing friendship. I hope it is a success. Einaudi will also publish the *sillabario* (you remember the primer?) (...)' (Archivio Zavattini, Biblioteca Panizzi, Reggio Emilia: Zavattini/Munari correspondence, M844/4 and M844/1 respectively; italics mine).

183. The new format was 19.5×28 cm, pp.24/32. On 16 May 1939 the weekly changed its name, *Ecco Settebello* (later just *Ecco*) and returned to the newspaper format. The change can most likely be attributed to the goal of shutting the publication down; the regime did not approve of it, but because it was on good terms with Mondadori it offered them a way out: the weekly could continue publication for a year or so (but in 1940 both Campanile and Zavattini left) reducing the page count to 16 and modifying its content to a more literary focus. During the war, other Mondadori mastheads had to cease publication: *Il Milione* (which replaced *Le Grandi Firme*) and *Novellissima*, while the illustrated weeklies *Tempo* and *Grazia* carried on (Carpi 2002: 78–9).

the magazine's redesign; actually it is quite probable, since within the next few months (if not as early as November) he became an artistic consultant for another of Mondadori's illustrated magazines, *Grazia*—which paved the way for him to become art director of *Tempo* only a few months later.

As an illustrator, during this same period Munari occasionally contributed to another periodical associated with Zavattini: *Le Grandi firme*, a literary magazine founded and directed by the writer Pitigrilli.[184] In 1937 Zavattini had Mondadori acquire the Turin-based biweekly, became managing director, and turned it into an illustrated weekly, characterised by Boccasile's voluptuous colour covers.[185] While keeping the editorial formula of the short-fiction magazine, the new management secured (thanks to the publisher's strong catalogue) better authors, and the colour-illustration format, weekly schedule, reduced price, and inclusion of photography all helped the magazine gain greater visibility, setting itself apart from other literary and specialist periodicals.[186] Because it was a sui generis literary magazine, Munari's contributions were limited to a few line illustrations, such as the ones that accompanied an article by Angelo Frattini, 'La Lamentevole istoria di Giovannino rovinato dalla passione per il cinema,' in March 1938.[187]

Despite its success, the magazine was forced to shut down in October 1938, replaced by the new *Il Milione*, which continued along the same lines, with the same editorial team and graphic look. Yet even that became a brief experiment: by 1939 Mondadori was already working on the new illustrated magazine *Tempo*, which joined the women's weekly *Grazia* (launched in November of the previous year): thus the last issue of *Il Milione* closed with the editors saying their farewells to the readership by effectively saying 'see you soon in the pages of the new periodical.'

Realist style

Through this exposure to the complex realities of a major editorial group like Mondadori, Munari caught a glimpse of new possibilities for working within the nascent cultural industry. Such experiences were quite distant from both the niche environment surrounding Futurism as well as the editorial offices of minor magazines and publications not affiliated with an industrial group nor conceived of as illustrated magazines, which were the real publishing innovation of the 1930s. These possibilities were fundamentally different with respect to the paths taken up until then, insofar as they allowed for a broader and more capillary influence on the social landscape and mass communications. Therefore it was, once again, in Milanese magazine publishing, where he had already experienced his

184. Literary magazine founded and directed by Dino Segre (a.k.a. Pitigrilli) in Turin in 1924, *Le Grandi firme* was a bimonthly of novellas and serial novels, which adopted the French custom of including a facsimile of the original signatures (firme) below each text. Focussing primarily on comic novels and erotica, it became the fashional magazine of Italy's 'decent middle class' (Pallottino 1998: 256, 325; Carpi 2002: 91–120. Cf. http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Le_Grandi_Firme, last accessed July 2010). Segre (1893–1975) was a writer, journalist, and spy for Ovra, the Fascist secret police.

185. As with *Bertoldo*, Zavattini originally planned to begin the endeavour with Rizzoli, but Mondadori ultimately made it happen. The provocative 'signorine grandi firme' were the Italian equivalent of American pin-ups, and entered the male psyche of the times with equal ease.

186. '(...) Today the public is not content to just read. They want photography. The stadium and the cinema have taught them to see. Between the columns of typographic composition and fantasy, they want to see some photographs, or some window into life and into reality' (Zavattini, from the editorial in issue no.308, 22 April 1937; cit. in Carpi 2002: 91).

187. In *Le Grandi firme*, XV; 357 (31 March 1938).

first significant graphic evolution—from comics and humour illustrations to collage and photomontage—that at the dawn of the 1940s Munari discovered a new professional realm as art director for Mondadori's periodicals. But he did not take this step without first exploring other possibilities in the broader field of illustration.

At the time, the field of graphic design was still developing, and reflected a practice that included disciplines now considered autonomous, even if complementary: illustration, photography, advertising, typography, exhibition design, interior decoration—Munari's experience went fluidly from illustration to advertising and vice versa (not to mention his strictly artistic endeavors). Along this open, non-linear route he did not hesitate to try out well beaten paths, if he felt they were the appropriate choice within his given context. Thus, parallel to his work in comic drawings, Futurist illustration, and avant-garde photomontage, Munari also explored traditional visual languages that were curiously close to the expressive values of the Novecento movement. He used a realistic approach for the covers of the periodicals most in keeping with the regime and the more generalist press. Many of his tempera illustrations from the early 1940s (at the height of the war) while documenting occasionally embarrassing political themes, often resort to an iconography that is anything but original, expressed in a crude mannerism. Incongruous as it may seem with his Futurist militancy and artistic inclinations, such a choice is explicable when one considers the communicative ends of the various publishing products he worked on.[188]

This type of repertoire belonged primarily to illustrated periodicals directly tied to the regime, like *La Rivista illustrata del Popolo d'Italia*, and secondarily to illustrated current-events monthlies like *La Lettura* and *Natura*, which nevertheless reflected the increasingly repressive climate. The control the Ministry of Popular Culture wielded over any and everything that was published was exercised through both preventive censure and seizure as well as the self-censure of publishers themselves. Not surprisingly, beginning in 1935 with the war in Ethiopia and the international sanctions, there was a return to order in all sectors of culture that was clearly reflected in the press's esthetic choices and content.[189] The *Almanacco letterario Bompiani* is a case in point: as early as the monographic edition of 1938, dedicated to the passing of Luigi Pirandello, and even more in the following editions, the periodical's typographic look was decidedly more sober and traditional, and both comic illustrations and photomontage were newly absent.[190]

Beginning in the late 1920s, the availability of a broader range of columns and the appearance of illustrated supplements favoured newspapers' spread to ever greater swaths of the population.[191]

188. One must remember the meticulousness with which Munari constructed his own personal mythology during the postwar period, emphasising certain aspects of his work and excluding others that could seem contradictory, less original, or even embarrassing when compared to the *persona* of the rational, creative designer. Cf. Schnapp 2008: 144.

189. Braida 2003: 48.

190. *Almanacco letterario Bompiani 1938*. Milan: Bompiani, 1937. 27,8×20,8 cm, paperback, pp. (lxiv) 160. Printed by Società Grafica G[iuseppe] Modiano, Milan. Munari was amongst the many compilers, alongside Bompiani and Zavattini; in addition to the duotone photomontage on the cover, Munari also did the layout. *Almanacco letterario Bompiani 1939*. Milan: Bompiani, 1938. 27,8×20,8 cm paperback, pp. (xcviii) 192. Printed by Società Grafica G[iuseppe] Modiano, Milan. The typographic design basically followed that of the previous edition, while the cover featured a design based on a wooden texture (on which a sheet of letterhead is depicted) and the photographic illustrations (aside from the ones of architecture) were simple realist montages.

191. Cannistraro 1975: 202–3.

Of the Milanese newspapers, the Fascist daily *Il Popolo d'Italia*[192] had created its own monthly supplement in 1923, founded and directed by Arnaldo Mussolini and Manlio Morgagni.[193] As a widespread current-events periodical that was richly illustrated and played a strong role as a showcase for the regime's achievements, *La Rivista Illustrata del Popolo d'Italia* enjoyed constant contributions by Mario Sironi—who strongly influenced its graphic aspect through his large repertoire of covers, illustratons, and headings—as well as those of important artists like Nizzoli, Garretto, Prampolini, Depero, and Sepo.[194] Between late 1931 and early '32 Munari also joined the magazine's team of contributors, initially doing aeropictorial illustrations and his first compositions based on photomontage. His collaboration with the magazine lasted until 1940, with alternations between more sophisticated illustrations and propagandistic covers modelled on pictorial realism.

His first cover appeared on the March
|29| 1934 issue, and depicted the foot of a colossal statue overlaid with the outline of Italy atop a blue background. Despite the form-emphasizing graphic treatment, it is ultimately just a retouched photograph inserted into a drawing: the image basically seems like an attempt at integrating, through concealment, the principle of photomontage with very traditional illus-
|30| tration.[195] Even the following cover, in November, was created by the same technique, and depicts a plough in the foreground while offering a glimpse of a tank in the background.[196] On the whole, the covers Munari did for the Rivista up until 1940 all featured political themes and iconography that were near and dear to the regime's rhetoric: toeing the magazine's line, the images translate themes like 'Roman-ness', autarchy, swamp drainage and land reclamation, the war in East Africa, the Empire; at times they are literal transpositions of propagandistic slogans (like the ubiquitous inscriptions covering the façades of public buildings). Beginning with the September 1935 issue, which painted a nationalist picture of the Ethiopian war, the montage technique was abandoned in favour of a less precise, more immediate type of drawing, which was part of a tendency that grew stronger over the years and culminated in an elementary, two-dimensional, almost childlike style.[197] Other covers, generally

192. *Il Popolo d'Italia*, historic Milanese Fascist paper founded by Benito Mussolini in 1914 (directed by his brother Arnaldo and, following his death in '32, by their brother Vito), remained a relatively widespread party paper (largest print run, 200,000 copies in 1938), despite the predominance of the *Corriere della Sera* (Cambria 1994: 135).

193. Manlio Morgagni (1879–1943) journalist and political figure closely tied to the regime: contributor, and later administrative director of *Il Popolo d'Italia*, along with Arnaldo Mussolini he founded *La Rivista illustrata del Popolo d'Italia* (1923), and later *Natura* (1928). He is primarily known for having been the general director of the Agenzia Stefani, the historic press agency that became the official mouthpiece of the regime in the 1920s. Morgagni was unwaveringly faithful to Mussolini, and committed suicide in July 1943 upon hearing news of his arrest.

194. *La Rivista Illustrata del Popolo d'Italia* (Milan, 1923–1943). General-interest monthly directed by Arnaldo Mussolini until 1931, thereafter by Manlio Morgagni. The subject matter it covered ranged from politics to sports, fashion, art, theatre, and literature (Pallottino 1988: 314, 256; Lattarulo 1995: 94; Margozzi, Rum 2007: 76–7). Mussolini's daily paper also published a weekly supplement, *L'Illustrazione fascista*, which had difficulty competing with established periodicals like *L'Illustrazione Italiana* and *Domenica del Corriere*; in 1931 the weekly became the official publication of the Opera nazionale dopolavoro, based in Rome, and one can easily imagine that the editorial offices in Milan would have decided to invest their new resources in a current-events monthly of its own, alongside the sumptuous editions of the *Almanacco fascista* (Cambria 1994: 141; cf. Margozzi, Rum 2007: 76–7).

195. *La Rivista Illustrata del Popolo d'Italia* XII; 3 (March 1934). 33.5×24.5 cm, pp.92.

196. *La Rivista Illustrata del Popolo d'Italia* XII; 11 (November 1934). 33.5×24.5 cm, pp.120. This issue is dedicated to drainage of the Pontine Marshes, and the image echoes Mussolini's motto 'È l'aratro che traccia il solco, ma è the spada che lo difende' (It is the plough that makes the furrow, but the sword defends it).

without any particular distinction in either the drawing quality or the choice of subject matter, followed at the rate of about one per year: in April 1936 (an image dedicated to autarchy, with an Italian flag waving from a chimney in front of the Coliseum);[198] April 1937 (on the occasion celebrating the 'birth of Rome' the cover depicts the tower of an industrial plant);[199]
|31| December 1937 (Roman legioneers' insignia, symbolising the Imperial subject matter);[200] September 1938 (wheat shocks against a blue sky crossed by three bombers);[201] March 1939 (Italy's intervention in the Spanish civil war, represented by a Fascist tank rolling forward);[202] May 1939 (a view of the Gulf of Naples, dominated by an Italian navy submarine);[203] and December 1940 (with the war underway, the image evokes a nighttime air raid).[204] From this brief overview it is easy to see how Munari adopted a deliberately paired-down, loose, almost sketch-like approach for the Rivista; and that choice is also visible in the magazine's masthead, which was often imprecisely outlined. Despite his falling back onto facile, mannered formulas, Munari's work for two other magazines, *Natura* and *La Lettura*, showed a greater degree of liberty, and, indeed, those publications were less politically driven; even in his realistic covers Munari sometimes managed to include his personal research on perceptive phenomena (tâches, textures, figure/ground).

|32| A cover created in 1936 for *L'Ala d'Italia* can also be traced back to this group, and its type of imagery was quite unusual compared to the photographic work Munari normally used for magazine. This cover shows a foreshortened view of the statue of Emperor Augusts overlaid by the schematic structure of an airplane wing, while a flock-like formation of large airplanes diagonally cuts across the background sky. It is quite probable that the stylistic choice, paired with ancient Rome-inspired iconography, was to some degree dictated by the publication's international context, as it was a collection of numerous technical and institutional texts and was published in five languages. Again here the illustration seems to be a compromise between drawing and photomontage; nevertheless, the asymmetrical, diagonal composition and the subtle play between planes give the image some dynamism and depth.[205] The illustration published in the January 1938 issue of *L'Ala d'Italia* is in the same vein, and celebrates Italy's victory in the Rome-Dakar-Rio de Janeiro aeronautical competition.[206]

197. *La Rivista Illustrata del Popolo d'Italia* XIII; 9 (September 1935). 33.5×24.5 cm, pp.92. The iconographic choice of a colonial helmet hanging from a rifle, with a bunch of texts in honour of the Fatherland and Il Duce, appears fairly predictable… The same can be said of the other covers described here.

198. *La Rivista Illustrata del Popolo d'Italia* XIV; 4 (April 1936). 33.5×24.5 cm, pp.188.

199. *La Rivista Illustrata del Popolo d'Italia* XV; 4 (April 1937). 33.5×24.5 cm, pp.116.

200. *La Rivista Illustrata del Popolo d'Italia* XV; 12 (December 1937). 33.5×24.5 cm, pp.80.

201. *La Rivista Illustrata del Popolo d'Italia* XVI; 9 (September 1938). 33.5×24.5 cm, pp.80.

202. *La Rivista Illustrata del Popolo d'Italia* XVII; 3 (March 1939). 33.5×24.5 cm, pp.80.

203. *La Rivista Illustrata del Popolo d'Italia* XVII; 5 (May 1939). 33.5×27 cm, pp.80.

204. *La Rivista Illustrata del Popolo d'Italia* XIX; 12 (December 1940). 33.5×27 cm, pp.80.

205. *L'Ala d'Italia* XV; 10–11 (October/November 1936). 21×28 cm. The statue is visibly retouched by a brush (to the point of appearing out of focus), while the airplane silhouettes are photo clippings glued onto the crudely painted sky. The image's propagandist content is unquestionable, and associates aviation with the celebration of the ancient Roman Emperor Augustus during the 'Anno Augustano' (Augustan Year) proclaimed by Mussolini to celebrate the conquest of Ethiopia and the proclamation of the empire. It was during this final phase that ancient Roman archaeology became yet another tool for reinforcing the idea of Fascist power: in 1937 the *Mostra Augustea della Romanità* (Augustan Exhibition of Romanness) opened in Rome (cf. Silk 1996: 63; Schnapp 2008: 162n).

206. 'Sorci Verdi' in *L'Ala d'Italia* XVIII; 1 (January 1938): photo ill. The title was taken from the name of the 205th Squad of the Regia Aeronautica. The

The monthly *Popolo d'Italia* was printed by Alfieri & Lacroix, the most advanced typo-lithographic press in Italy; at the time, Antonio Boggeri worked in the office of Luigi Poli, who managed the illustrated supplement's production. For a short while (while still working for Poli), Boggeri was also art director of *Natura*, a publishing enterprise launched by Alfieri & Lacroix together with Morgagni (director of the *Rivista*) in 1928. *Natura* was among Italy's first popular science magazines and had a graphic look that was relatively sumptuous for that period.[207] Boggeri or Poli himself may have been the go-between connecting the editorial offices and Munari, who began to work with the monthly in the spring |34| of '32, with an impactful aeropictorial cover depicting a stylised agrarian landscape centred on the line of a furrow dug by a mechanical plough.[208] This example is also interesting because of how the masthead is designed, showing a gradual assimilation of the most advanced typographic work.[209] While the contributions Munari published between 1933 and '36 consisted primarily of compositions based on photomontage, toward the end of the decade he did a series of four illustrated covers that are particularly interesting on both a technical and compositional level. The first, titled 'Scher- |35| zo con agate', opened the February 1938 issue and differs from his previous covers in its hyperrealism (which depicts two agates and a beetle on a wooden surface). Both the foreground figures and background are rendered down to the smallest detail, to the point of looking more like a photomontage than a trompe l'œil; the same meticulousness seeps into the masthead, which the artist had fun with, varying its design and taking different typefaces as his model for each issue.[210] The following two covers, while less precise, show equally fascinating images—one hinged on the comparison of a prehistoric bird fossil and |36| a hummingbird, the other on a couple of electrical insulators and a lightning bolt piercing the night sky.[211] But more than all |37| the others the cover of issue 3–4 in spring 1942—the last one of this sort Munari did—marked a further, definite evolution of his work in illustration.[212] The abstract composition (which effectively winks, even in the title, at the cosmic vein of aeropainting of the 1930s) was created by pressing an object soaked in colour, which instead of

monochrome illustration is printed in green; the emblem and a photograph of the Savoia Marchetti SM79 fuselage are featured atop a schematic drawing of the transatlantic flight path (http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sorci_Verdi, last accessed 23 November 2010).

207. Directed by Luigi Poli and published by Alfieri & Lacroix between 1928 and 1943, *Natura* was an illustrated monthly magazine (as stated in the subtitle) 'of 100 pages of high-quality paper with 200 prints and a colour cover by famous artists (...) it covers everything that could be of interest to a modern soul, from economics to science, art, nature, travel, and sports. The variety of subject matter and splendour of the printed illustrations make it the true magazine of the well-to-do family' (from an advert published in the bulletin *Il Milione*, October 1932). See Fossati, Sambonet 1974: 17; Monguzzi 1981: 2; Pansera 1984 in Iliprandi: 191; Lattarulo 1995: 96.

208. *Natura* V; 4 (April 1932), 26×34 cm. The drawing recalls the propaganda poster of the Stenberg brothers, 'To the Fallow Ground', constructed through the photographic repetition of a tractor in successively smaller sizes, which Munari could have seen in 1927 at the III Mostra Internazionale delle Arti Decorative di Monza, where the Soviet Union had five sections, including one dedicated to Books and Photography that exhibited constructivist film posters.

209. His awareness of Renner's *Futura Black* well before its 'discovery' during the Werkbund exhibition at the V Triennale in 1933 is evident. A specimen of the type was reproduced in *Arts et Métiers Graphiques*, no.18 (15 July 1930); and a few covers of the German monthly *die neue linie* (April 1931, February 1932) modeled their mastheads on its forms (cf. Rössler 2009: 141–2).

210. *Natura* XI; 2 (February 1938). 26×34 cm, pp.64.

211. *Natura* XI; 3 (March 1938). 26×34 cm, pp.64; the illustration is titled 'Attraverso i millenni'. *Natura* XI; 11 (November 1938). 26×34 cm, pp.64; the illustration is titled 'Alte tensioni'.

212. *Natura* XV; 3–4 (March/April 1942). 26×34 cm, pp.92; the illustration is titled 'Fantasia cosmica' and explicitly recalls similar compositions by Prampolini, Fillìa, and other Futurists who belonged to the cosmic aeropictorial current of the mid-thirties.

leaving a flat or chiaroscuro field of color actually made a chance texture. The receding ground creates a space in which this organic form is suspended, intersected by a thread rendered in a contrasting chromatic gradient. Both his abandonment of figurative representation for abstract form (which nevertheless still steered clear of pure geometry) and his investigation into the communicative value of organic forms prove Munari's new interests in the visual field, and make this image the tangible sign of a significant change in his approach to illustration—which ultimately found its ideal field of application (and further development) in his cover designs for Bompiani, Einaudi, and Club degli Editori in the postwar period.

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La Lettura, cultural supplement to the Corriere della sera, was a 'typical railway magazine'[213] that combined the characteristics of high-culture magazines with middle-class ones: the visually sober monthly offered articles, novellas, poems, books reviews, and current-events notes. Over the course of the 1930s, under the management of Mario Ferrigni and later Aldo Borelli, the magazine held its position in the marketplace and took on a more journalistic, consumer-product profile—while still maintaining a noteworthy cultural level. Next to entertainment columns, the so-called *elzeviro* (elsevier) was established (symptomatic of the gradual emptying-out of content), as an article of witty, light journalism entrusted to the pens of famous writers. Another of the magazine's strong points lay in its illustrations: the articles were accompanied by photographs, novellas and serial novels by drawings, and the colour cover was done by famous illustrators of the day (Sacchetti, Dudovich, Brunelleschi, Tofano).[214]

Munari worked with the editorial offices on via Solferino as an illustrator, and then as a graphic consultant as well, relatively late, between 1936 and '40, in the same period of the magazine's relaunch with a larger format and new illustrators to enliven and give a more youthful edge to its earlier look.[215] As with his work for *Natura*, Munari's contributions were generally photomontages and collage influenced by Surrealism, but he also published articles on various popular topics (which marked the beginning of his writing career)[216] and did a significant number of covers. Painted in tempera, these covers were characterised by a traditional pictorial style; nevertheless, in the best examples, in which there is a noticeable graphic and atmospheric refinement, one can detect a clear emulation of Bayer's graphic work, while the last covers from 1939–40 attest to Munari's use of solutions derived from his research into perception.[217]

213. Giuseppe Prezzolini (from *La coltura italiana*, Florence, 1927) cit. in Camerlo 1992: 10.

214. *La Lettura* (Milan, 1901–1945) was founded in 1901 by Luigi Albertini, who was also its director from 1900 to 1925, and created a series of periodicals aimed at emerging social classes to accompany the paper: *La Domenica del Corriere* (1898), *Il Corriere dei Piccoli* (1908), *Romanzo mensile* (1903). Albertini was succeeded by Giuseppe Giacosa (successful theatrical author and librettist), Renato Simoni (1906), Mario Ferrigni (1923) and, in 1934, by Aldo Borelli (who was also the newspaper's director) in tandem with Emilio Radius (Camerlo 1992: 10–1, 40–53; Contorbia 2007: 1772; Santoro 1998a: 76).

215. Although Munari's name does not explicitly appear in the colophon, his art direction is recognisable, at least during the 1937–39 period, in certain cuts and montages of photographs and illustrations at the beginning of articles and the headings of columns. Cf. Camerlo 1992: 48.

216. These first texts were dedicated to model airplanes ('I modelli volanti' in xxxvi; 11, 1 November 1936: 942–3), photograms ('Che cosa sono i fotogrammi e come si fanno' in xxxvii; 4, April 1937: 352–5), printing techniques ('Tipografia' in xxxvii; 5, May 1937: 438–43), suspended sculptures ('Che cosa sono le macchine inutili e perché' in xxxvii; 7, July 1937: 660–5), and the evolution of the chair ('Sedili' in xxxviii; 9, September 1938: 846–51). During the war years Munari refined his writing in the pages of *Tempo* and *Domus*.

217. Cf. Tanchis 1986: 45.

From a visual point of view, there are two noteworthy covers from 1937 wherein Munari offers a glimpse of the varied interests and graphic inventiveness he was capable of creating. The illustration that |40| opens the April issue was entirely created in mosaic, using small, coloured cardboard tesserae; the technique was naturally tied to the subject (the face of a Roman emperor), reinforcing certain connotations, but can also be situated alongside the experiments with texture Munari was carrying out at the time, as demonstrated by several other covers.[218] The cover of the July issue (which depicts an aerial view of a bather on the beach) took a completely different approach, between photomontage |40| and polymaterial compositions, and was made using a three-dimensional assemblage of various elements (photographs |42| cut into unusual contours, cardstock, fabric, sandpaper) created with a fairly 'tactile' technique.[219] The following covers, however, returned to the somewhat crude visual language evident in his work from the same period for *La Rivista Illustrata del Popolo d'Italia*, even if, compared to the latter, war-related and nationalistic subjects did not appear until conflict broke out. The cover of the October 1937 issue, for example, shows a pupil at the chalkboard seen from behind the teacher's back, which takes up half of the image; riffing on the scholastic subject matter, the masthead is also outlined in pen, as if a child had doodled on it. The November issue, with the faces of two newlyweds in profile, cleverly winks at the regime's rhetoric by depicting the groom wearing a helmet.[220] The cover |42| of the November 1939 issue was similarly made, aside from the war-related subject matter.[221] It is interesting to note that, in general, despite the broad fields of uniform colour that flatten the design, the composition is balanced by a degree of depth between the foreground and background, in a solution that perhaps took into consideration the magazine's eventual visibility within the newsstands.

The two illustrations opening the June and October 1938 issues are more aesthetically appealing, and are openly modelled on the subject of evasion, albeit still built around the relationship between planes that, like theatrical curtains, rhythmically divide the space. The first shows a foreshortened view of a ship's bridge with a large wind sock, with a few passengers looking at a distant island;[222] the second, showing a window opened onto the sea, plays upon the idea of a picture within a picture (with the palpable influence of Magritte).[223] Quite differently, the January 1939 issue features an unusual image, whose main element (more than the actual subject matter, a snow-covered tree) consists of so-called *tâches*, created with light brushstrokes, which Munari experimented with to depict natural phenomena like snow, waves, or reflections on water.[224] This and the following cover exhibit a more

218. *La Lettura* XXXVII; 4 (April 1937). 19×28 cm, pp.104. Examples of experimentation with pictorial means of creating natural textures can be seen in some details of the October (the fabric of the two jackets) and November 1937 (the bride's veil) issue covers, as well as the October 1938 (ocean waves) and January 1939 (snowflakes) issue covers.

219. *La Lettura* XXXVII; 7 (July 1937). 19×28 cm, pp.96. Well before the recent infatuation with stop-motion in the fields of advertising and animation, the creation of images made from three-dimensional paper objects had already been done in the 1930s (cf. Piet Zwart's puppets in his famous *PTT Boek*); in the sixties the technique experienced a revival, and was used primarily for illustrations.

220. *La Lettura* XXXVII; 10 (October 1937) and 11 (November 1937). 19×28 cm, pp.96.

221. *La Lettura* XXIX; 11 (November 1939). 19×28 cm, pp.76.

222. *La Lettura* XXXVIII; 6 (June 1938). 19×28 cm, pp.96.

223. *La Lettura* XXXVIII; 10 (October 1938). 19×28 cm, pp.96.

224. *La Lettura* XXIX; 1 (January 1939). 19×28 cm, pp.104.

decisive inclination toward visual experimentation and research, above and beyond the client's brief: similarly, in February 1940, the theme behind the compositional framing of a fighter-plane cockpit is actually the optics of camouflage.[225] During the war, a few Futurist artists were hired by the military to work on camouflage: between '41 and '43 Tullio Crali worked on camouflage for the Italian Supreme Command near Rome, and then in the camouflage centre in Macerata.[226] Called to arms in '41, Munari was sent to an anti-aircraft battery not far from Milan.[227] It is possible he had a chance to work on camouflage patterns; but even if he did not, it seems clear from a number of illustrations he did during this period that he was quite interested in it. Certainly his study of perception-based figure/ground relationships was the logical source of his additional research into *negative/positive* visual relationships carried out in the 1950s. This new line of pictorial research—like the one into organic forms and textures—was reflected in his graphic work as early as the 1940s, as can
|43| be seen in a few covers for novels published by Bompiani.[228]

From the cosmic style to photomontage

In the early 1930s, as Munari's painting and sculpture tended toward a more open abstraction—as an observer noted as early as 1931, 'Munari, the youngest of all, is gaining ground in abstract interpretations that reveal the temperament of an original, self-assured artist through their visual balance and pictorial harmony'[229]—his parallel work as an illustrator, while it did not exclude any specific styles, nevertheless went in a direction of more frequent use of collage, which he increasingly identified with as a flexible expressive technique well suited to his creative flair. Initially, in the black-and-white as well as colour illustrations published in various periodicals between 1931 and '33, the spatial illusion created by perspectival foreshortening was accentuated by the layering of abstract forms and polymaterial textures.[230] This period saw the beginning of Munari's collaboration with *La Rivista Illustrata del Popolo d'Italia*, where he soon published two aeropictorial compositions with an athletic theme:
|45| despite the typical presence of geometric elements, the first was dominated by a caricaturesque tone, while the second included a photographic cut-out that was one of his very first photomontages.[231] Yet the image's layout remained pictorial, much like
|44| the illustrations done for *Natura* toward the end of '32, in which cosmic overtones

225. *La Lettura* XXIX; 1 (January 1939). 19×28 cm, pp.84.

226. Cf. www.tulliocrali.it, last accessed November 2010.

227. Cf. letter to Zavattini, undated but evidently from the end of 1941, in which he speaks of a 'month-long licence' (Archivio Zavattini, Biblioteca Panizzi, Reggio Emilia: Zavattini/Munari correspondence M844/4). For a more recent quote, Munari himself said: 'At the beginning I did not go to war. I was rejected because of a problem with my chest (...) and in the last year I was summoned to an anti-aircraft battery just outside Milan (...) It was a sad experience, under a mafioso, profiteering commandant. (...) I was having stomach problems at the time and kept going to the infirmary, to no avail, but then a doctor sent me home for something I did not even have: that, too, was part of the Surrealism...' (in Branzi 1984: 42; cf. also Manera 1986: 153).

228. See for example, the cover of Donald John Hall's novel *Spinosa ospitalità*. Milan: Bompiani, 1943[4] (1938) [orig. title: *Perilous sanctuary*]. Letteraria series. 12×21 cm, paperback, pp.301. The image on the dust jacket has a green background and a piece of bark with the title in the middle. The actual cardstock cover has the series' standard typographic layout, with the publisher's logo.

229. Vittorio Orazi. 'La mostra di aeropittura' in *La Rivista Illustrata del Popolo d'Italia* VIII; 11 (November 1931): 49–51. This was a review of the Futurist show at the Galleria Pesaro in autumn 1931; the article opens with a reproduction of Munari's 'Sosta aerea'.

230. Cf. Ravaioli 1998: 22; Fanelli, Godoli 1988: 83.

231. 'Il tifoso' in *La Rivista Illustrata del Popolo d'Italia* VIII; 12 (December 1931): 72[1]; and 'L'inutile acrobazia' ivi IX; 2 (February 1932): 70[1]. Cf. Di Corato 2008: 218

rendered with a map-like precision were predominant,[232] and the commemorative illustration published in *La Rivista Illustrata del Popolo d'Italia* in August 1933, whose subject matter, although reminiscent of a previous cover, took on an unusually metaphorical aspect.[233]

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Elsewhere Munari made graphic modifications to photographic elements so as to insert them into aeropictorial compositions without creating an excessive break from the overall atmosphere. He soon adopted this technique for the covers that most closely approached propaganda, and it can also be seen in the illustrations published over the course of '33 in *L'Ala d'Italia*[234] and again in May '34 in *La Rivista Illustrata del Popolo d'Italia*,[235] in which graphic and photographic interventions combine, proving that it was one of Munari's tried and true procedures. In later examples—like the illustrations published in *La Rivista Illustrata del Popolo d'Italia* in November 1935[236]—the compositions were still a combination of drawing and photography, but the latter was dominant, and is evidence of his transition to photomontage.

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Influences

Up to that point, as we have seen, Munari utilised many different visual languages, going progressively from mechanical puppets to comics, aeropictorial illustration, and realism. Beginning in 1932–33 his expressive repertoire became more clearly defined, and this change indicates new points of reference. Indeed, on the one hand Munari absorbed the specific stylistic elements of aeropainting through the work of Prampolini, Fillìa, and Diulgheroff, all of whom worked in the cosmic vein;[237] on the other, he kept abreast of metaphysical

232. 'Meteora e pianeta spento' and 'Viaggio nello spazio' in *Natura* v; 11–12 (Christmas double issue, 1932). See also Raffaele Carrieri's article 'Munari: illusionista degli spazi' in the same issue (ivi: 67–70). Munari's interest in cartographic marks emerges in many of hiw works, both pictorial and graphic: see, for example, *Cartina cosmica*, 1930 (reproduced in the catalogue *Officina del volo*, 2009: 150–1) and the wall map he made for the V Triennale in 1933 (reproduced in *Natura* VI; 6 June 1933: 42–3).

233. 'Volo di Verona del 2 agosto 1919' in *La Rivista Illustrata del Popolo d'Italia* XI; 8 (August 1933): 66. The composition recalls the crash in which a few pilots lost their lives (including Tullio Morgagni, the sports journalist who founded the first Giro d'Italia, as well as the magazine director's brother), and features an image that, beyond the symbolic value of the plough, also formally echoes the subject matter on the cover of the April 1932 issue of *Natura* (Di Corato 2008: 222).

234. 'I cento soldati di Balbo' in *L'Ala d'Italia* XII; 7–8 (July/August 1933): 48.

235. 'Giuochi atletici' in *La Rivista Illustrata del Popolo d'Italia* XII; 5 (May 1934): 13. The composition depicts jumping athletes: aside from the aeropictorial backdrop, it is similar to the contemporary photomontages published in the *Almanacco fascista del Popolo d'Italia 1934* XIII (reproduced in Lista 1985: 79).

236. *La Rivista Illustrata del Popolo d'Italia* XIII; 11 (November 1935): 58–9, 67, 127. This was a celebratory issue dedicated to the Fascist accomplishments of the previous year, including numerous illustrations and photomontages by Ricas/Studio Boggeri, Carboni/Studio Boggeri, Nizzoli, Depero, and Munari, who contributed three manually altered photomontages: the first was for a short article by Guglielmo Marconi (an antenna and two electrical poles are depicted against a starry sky dominated by an eclipse); the second was for Gino Rocca's article 'Scenario della nuova Italia' (on top of chimney silhouettes obtained through multiple printing, several image boxes show a group of citizens and, overlapping them, two theatrical masks, symbolising comedy and tragedy); the third was dedicated to the Italian advance into East Africa (illustrated by two photographic collages portraying two roman swords).

237. Munari's relationship to the two leaders of the Turinese Futurists, Fillìa (Luigi Colombo, 1904–1936) and Nicolaj Diulgheroff (1901–1982), although unintense, seem to have involved a mutual respect: in an article in *L'Ufficio Moderno* (VII; 11, November 1932), next to the work of Ricas and Munari, three trade show installations by Diulgheroff are reproduced; Munari had worked with him on the *Almanacco dell'Italia veloce* and more recently on d'Albisola's tin lithos. Beyond their occasional encounters (like at the Futurist-inspired soirée organised by *L'Ufficio Moderno* in February 1931), Munari also had a direct relationship with Fillìa, and in particular with *La Città Nuova*, the architectural and applied arts bimonthly he directed: although it does not seem to have published any images or texts by Munari (aside from a brief declaration on aeropainting in issue no.1, 6 February 1932), in a 1934 letter to d'Albisola Munari mentions having written to Fillìa to praise the magazine's layout (by Ugo Pozzo), but adds, 'Oh! My poor pages (...)', which suggests that he had written an article or perhaps overseen the layout of a particular section (undated letter, 1934, in Presotto 1981: 147).

and surrealist developments through the European examples he saw reproduced in foreign publications. Despite the closed intellectual climate imposed by the regime, consumer culture—cinema, comics, sports, and popular music (from America and elsewhere)—enjoyed a degree of flexibility and was sometimes able to slip through the censors' sieve, such that a few foreign publications on the applied arts and architecture were circulating in some of Milan's bookshops.[238] In addition to the bookshops affiliated with the Galleria del Milione and Lino Pesaro gallery, a few others are worth mention: first and foremost the Libreria Salto,[239] a constant point of reference for the spread of modernist culture in Milan; the Futurist bookshop run by Umberto Notari; and the publishers Sperling & Kupfer and Editoriale Domus, who acted as commission-based merchants for the publications reviewed in their magazines.[240] And it is likely that the Futurist Headquarters in Milan also had a library or archive. Certainly, as Giuseppe Salto recalled, such 'openness to the world, in a country as provincial and backward as Italy, could only last a few years', more or less into the mid-1930s, when the Italian involvement in Spain and annexation of Ethiopia sparked a return to autarchic order and restrictions, ending up in stark wartime isolationism.[241] As for art galleries, the Milione, Tre Arti, and a few other exhibition spaces offered 'free entry and consultation of books, newspapers, and art and literature magazines. [Access to] the modern debate in its entirety', as a period advertisement proclaimed.[242] The international magazines regularly distributed in Italy in the early 1930s included: *Cahiers d'Art*, *Cercle et Carré*, *Abstraction-Création*, and *Art Concret* for art; *L'architecture d'aujourd'hui* and special editions of the Éditions Cahiers d'Art for architecture; *Arts et métiers graphiques*, *La Publicité*, *Gebrauchsgraphik* (distributed by the publisher Görlich), *Commercial Art*, *Farbe und Form* (published by the Reimann Schule in Berlin), and the series of Bauhausbücher and technical periodicals like *Deutsche Drucker*, *Archiv für Buchgewerbe und Gebrauchsgraphik* for commercial graphics.[243]

A few significant encounters between the Milan's cultural scene and the Central-European exponents of Surrealism and Constructivism are also worth mention: as early as 1927, at the III Mostra Internazionale delle Arti Decorative (Third International Decorative Arts Exhibition) in Monza, the Soviet Union had presented five sections, including one dedicated to books and photography, which included contemporary film posters (Prusakov, the Stenberg Brothers) that had never been seen in Italy;[244] and in '33 the exhibition installation

238. Cf. Forgacs, Gundle 2007: 272–3.

239. Opened in 1933 by Alfonso Salto, the Libreria Salto was a bookshop specialised in Italian and foreign publications on architecture and the applied arts. Located in the rear courtyard of via Santo Spirito 14, in the postwar period it was run by Alfonso's sons Giuseppe and Giancarlo, who also made it available as an exhibition space. In particular, it was the centre of many events surrounding the Movimento Arte Concreta (MAC Concrete art movement) (Salto 1996: 6; also Piera Salto, interview with author, 15 July 2009).

240. Di Corato 2008: 217 and 217n.

241. Nevertheless, although it catered to a small clientele, the Libreria Salto continued importing books from around the world, even during the war, through neutral Switzerland (Salto 1996: 7).

242. From an advert in the bulletin *Il Milione*, published by the eponymous Milanese gallery and edited by Giuseppe Ghiringhelli (bulletin of 7 November 1933, cit. in Pontiggia 1988: 16).

243. The magazines mentioned here were regularly distributed in Italy: see the announcement in *Campo grafico* (no.5, 1935: 65) and various reviews in the bulletin *Il Milione*. Crispolti (1992c: 81) mentions *Minotaure* as a source, but the magazine run by Albert Skira appeared only in 1933, well after the first evidence of Surrealism showed up in Munari's work (cf. Di Corato 2008: 213).

244. At the time, the striking contrast between Russian posters and the narrative style predominant in Italian posters provoked unmistakably perplexed reactions (Mori 2007: 64).

curated by Paul Renner for the Mostra delle arti grafiche (Graphic Arts Show) of the Deutsche Werkbund at the V Triennale caused a stir; on a more local level, in January 1932 the Galleria del Milione mounted an exhibition of French painting, including work by Max Ernst, which had significant consequences for Munari's work;[245] in '33 Villani of L'Ufficio Moderno organised an exhibition titled Cartello internazionale e cartello nazionale rifiutato (International Poster and National Reject Posters), which included the work of Bayer, Moholy-Nagy, Carlu, Cassandre, and the Russian constructivists; and through the mid-thirties there were solo shows by Kandinsky, Vordemberge-Gildewart, Albers, and Baumeister.[246] Although Munari did not travel much, his indirect personal relationships with artists and intellectuals must not be underestimated—at a time when modern means of communication (like the telephone) were just beginning to take hold in Italy, these contacts were a fundamental vehicle for exchange. One example from close artistic circles was the 'travelling salesman of Marinetti & Co.', as Prampolini was known, who lived in Paris for extended periods and was in contact with nearly all the European art movements; he also knew the fairly nonconformist artists Vinicio Paladini and Ivo Pannaggi, the only Italians to gain in-depth experience with the Soviets; finally, his friend Luigi Veronesi knew Moholy-Nagy personally and exhibited with Albers at the Galleria del Milione in 1934.[247]

As Munari himself recalled:

> I was continually keeping on top of things, looking for books and publications (...) but I did not have any direct ties. (...) I was trying to assimilate those developments through the newspapers, in whatever field they happened to be in, because I've never considered art to be divided into separate fields.[248]

Munari's exposure to such a range of stimuli pushed his visual language in two distinct directions: on the one hand, he developed a taste for the semantic bait and switch between graphically heterogeneous elements, clearly inspired by Ernst's collages; on the other, he deployed recurring metaphysical elements influenced by the work of Herbert Bayer, which ended up enriching and transforming his sense of aeropictorial space.[249] A key example of this is his cover for the January 1933 issue of *Natura*, a suggestive composition wherein the surrealist transformation of the Futurist

245. During the show copies of Ernst's romans-collage were probably available for purchase through the bookshop. In these works—*La femme 100 têtes* (1929) and *La jeune fille qui rêvait d'entrer au Carmel* (1930)—Ernst carried the technique of the 'disorienting collage' to its fullest heights.

246. The exhibitions at the Galleria del Milione generally lasted a fortnight or so. Aside from the aforementioned 'Tre pittori di Parigi: Jean Lurçat, Max Ernst, Louis Marcoussis' (9 January 1932), other show included 'Wassily Kandinsky' (24 April 1934); 'Frederick Vordemberge-Gildewart' (15 October 1934); 'Josef Albers/Luigi Veronesi' (23 December 1934); 'Willi Baumeister' (25 May 1935); 'Arp, Domela, Kandinsky, Magnelli, Seligmann, Sophie Täuber Arp, Vézelay' (5 March 1938); in the field of graphics, the Esposizione del cartello internazionale e del cartello italiano rifiutato, organized by Dino Villani of *L'Ufficio Moderno* (June 1933), and a solo show by Xanti Schawinsky (September 1934). Cf. Pontiggia 1988: 104.

247. Crispolti (1969: 13) mentions—à propos of the Lombard abstractionists affiliated with Milanese Futurist and rationalist circles—trips to Paris taken by Veronesi, Licini, Reggiani, and Veronesi's personal contacts with Moholy-Nagy, Vantongerloo, Max Bill, and Delaunay. The ironic statement about Prampolini was by Ivo Pannaggi, quoted in Verdone in Crispolti 1995: 50. Paladini was a vital link to Russian visual culture during the 1920s, while Pannaggi played a key role as a foreign correspondent in Berlin for many architecture newspapers and magazines.

248. Munari in Branzi 1984: 42.

249. Many critics cite Bayer with regard to the metaphysical overtones in Munari's work: see Crispolti (1992: 92) regarding the pictorial work, Tanchis (1987: 28, 45) regarding the graphic work. Nevertheless, such references remain fairly generic, and do not indicate how Bayer's graphic and pictorial work would have spread in Italy: at least Di Corato (2008: 217) provides some information on reproductions and reviews of it in the press.

legacy appears complete.[250] This photomontage, which depicts a sort of metaphysical dialogue between a Greco-Roman bust and an ultra-modern, metal tubular chair,[251] is noteworthy in many respects. It shows not only a perfect integration of photography within pictorial space, but also a radical leap forward compared to the esoteric evocations of cosmic aeropainting.[252] A number of illustrations published in '32–33 in *Natura*, *L'Ala d'Italia*, and *La Rivista Illustrata del Popolo d'Italia* document this transitional style.[253]

Bayer and Moholy-Nagy

The playful approach Munari took to such illustrations is similar to Bayer's visual advertising vocabulary, and well ahead of its first appearance in Italy in the pages of *Natura*,[254] Munari must have been aware of his refined style, as the presence of the classical imagery proves.[255] It is difficult to think of any other explanation for certain formal similarities between Munari's graphic work of this period and the rarely exhibited compositions hovering between the abstract and the surreal that Bayer painted between 1925 and '28.[256] The most characteristic images include amorphous bodies, animated geometries, clouds, and stage sets, all recurring elements in Munari's aeropictorial work. In the advertising work of Bayer's Berlin period, he proceeded in similarly proto-surrealist vein, taking them into his own graphic repertoire, which clearly echoes surrealist work as much as functionalist typography. And yet, even though he made use of that visual vocabulary, Bayer aimed not so much at decontextualisation and disorientation as ends in themselves, but rather more for an evocative atmosphere, made up of concrete objects set within an irreal space, the end target being mass communications.[257] The allusion to the classical world falls into this approach; above all—especially in Fascist Italy, which was increasingly interested in returning to the image of ancient Roman monumentality—such a stance took on a strong nationalist resonance, if not explicit consensus. It is therefore difficult to sort out the references that are at work in the cover Ricas and Munari designed for *L'Ufficio Moderno* inMay 1935, and although it is technically a photomontage, it can be grouped with the aforementioned illustrations featuring altered photographic images. The cover depicts the face of a Roman

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250. *Natura* VI; 1 (January 1933). 26×34 cm, pp.84.

251. Just introduced in Italy by Columbus, under licence from Wohnbedarf, Zurich (1932).

252. Prampolini's pictorial works focus on the transfiguration of apparent reality: 'I see aeropainting as a means for crossing over the frontiers of visual realities (...) and experiencing the occult powers of cosmic idealism' (from 'L'Aeropittura. Valori spirituali della plastica futurista' in *Futurismo* I; 4–5, 1932, cit. in Fanelli, Godoli 1988: 82).

253. See the compositions at the beginning of Raffaele Carrieri's article in *Natura* V; 11–12 (November/December 1932): 67; 'Amori subacquei' in *Natura* VI; 7 (July 1933): 58; 'I 42 minuti di Colacicchi' in *L'Ala d'Italia* XII; 2 (February 1933): 12–3; 'Vertigini' in *La Rivista Illustrata del Popolo d'Italia* XI; 2 (February 1933): 74.

254. Article by Luigi Poli, 'Herbert Bayer, un maestro dell'arte grafica' in *Natura* VI; 11–12: 53–60.

255. Greco-Roman statues had already appeared in the advertising work of Alexei Brodovitch (see Aux Trois Quartiers, reproduced in *Arts et Métiers Graphiques* no.14, November 1929 and no.18, July 1930) and reappear in Bayer's work for the Studio Dorland throughout the 1930s (see the exhibition catalogue *Das Wunder des Lebens* and the advert for Adrianol, 1935), just as they did in the work of his friend and colleague Xanti Schawinsky (the poster for Princeps Cervo, 1934). The atmosphere of this work owes more to the metaphysics of de Chirico than to Surrealism.

256. In 1929 Bayer exhibited drawings and paintings at the Galerie Povolozky in Paris and the Künstlerbund März in Linz, Austria; in '36 he exhibited at the Salzburg Kunstverein. His paintings had never been exhibited in Germany, although a number of his works were in German museum collections—such that they were eventually included in the 'degenerate art' exhibitions of 1937–38 (Cohen 1984: 41, 56n, 404–5).

257. Cohen 1984: 25–8, 43, 404n. Bayer was among the artists selected for the Dada and Surrealism retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1936, and upon his arrival in America he became associate more with Surrealism than with Modernism (ibid: 43).

statue in an extreme close-up that consumes the entire page; on half of it, conveniently out of focus and divided along the nose, a Futurist synthesis of Roman iconography appears. The graphic rendering of the image leans toward abstraction, but the linear elements seem to be deployed more as stylistic touches than in any functional sense.[258]

Compared to Bayer, however, in the photomontage-based illustrations Munari seems to make the most of the paradoxical implications created by the juxtaposition of incongruous elements precisely in order to create a surreal or comic atmosphere. So one cannot help but wonder why he so rarely turned to this type of composition in his advertising work, and instead limited its use to magazine illustrations. Obviously the answer can only be partial and would require further proof, but by observing what was being produced in Italy at the time—if, that is, even the work Schawinsky was doing in Milan appears conditioned by prevailing pictorial tastes—one could conclude that the most significant damper was the provincialism of patrons and clients as well as the public in general.[259] The fact is that photomontage, which Munari began to explore as early as 1930 following in the footsteps of Pannaggi and Paladini,[260] gradually allowed him to distance himself from Bayer's influence and find his own more controlled, minimal style halfway between the allusiveness of surrealist illustration and the dynamic contrasts of constructivist work.

Apart from occasional reproductions included in collections and articles,[261] the most accessible source in early-thirties Milan regarding Bayer's work was *die neue linie*, a luxury women's magazine also distributed in Italy.[262] This German monthly

258. *L'Ufficio Moderno* x; 5 (May 1935). 21.5×28.5 cm. Cover signed 'Ricas+Munari'. This image is similar to a photographic work Munari later made for the weekly Film, also reproduced in the *Almanacco Letterario Bompiani 1938* with the title 'Antica e recente iconografia romana. La razza è sempre la razza' (ivi: 8).

259. This held to such an extent that his most famous posters, even though based on a dynamic composition with the use of montage, are nevertheless done with pictorial, not photographic means: see the posters Princeps Cervo (1934), Esposizione Aeronautica Italiana (1934), Aranciata S.Pellegrino (1935). His work for Olivetti was an exception, as were the works done within the context of regime propaganda (his 1934 'poster for the plebiscite', published in *La Rivista Illustrata del Popolo d'Italia*), which was to some degree more responsive.

260. Vinicio Paladini (1902–1971), painter, architect, set designer, graphic designer, and art critic. Born in Moscow to a Russian mother but raised in Italy, he kept close ties to Russian culture. He was self-taught, and joined the Futurist movement in 1922; along with Pannaggi he wrote the *Manifesto dell'Arte meccanica* and presented the *Ballo meccanico futurista* at the Casa d'Arte Bragaglia. He earned a degree in architecture (1931), and in the years between the wars he worked as both an art critic and set designer for both theatre and film, as well as doing work in graphic design and exhibition design (Padiglione dell'Opera Nazionale Maternità e Infanzia, at the Exposition Internationale in Brussels, May 1935). Russian constructivism was a major infuence on his aesthetic and ideological stance, an in 1923 he publicly broke from Marinetti (only to return to the Futurists a few years later). In 1927 he co-launched a short-lived surrealist movement, the Movimento Immaginista (Imagist movement). He could not stand Italy's prevailing air of conformity, and constantly travelled throughout Europe (France, Germany, Belgium, Russia), and finally settled in New York in 1938, where he stayed until 1953, working as an interior architect and graphic designer. Rampant McCarthyism forced him to return to Italy, and his architecture and set-design career were cut short by his sudden death in late 1971 (Baldacci 2006: 6–11; Lista 1985: 129; Lista 2001a: 220; Fanelli, Godoli 1988: 84, 194–5).

261. Photographs by Bayer appear in Werner Gräff's *Es Kommt der neue Fotograf* (Berlin: H. Reckendorf, 1929, published on the occasion of the *Film und Foto* exhibition in Stuttgart) and in a special issue of *Arts et Métiers Graphiques* dedicated to photography (no.16, mars 1930, ed. Waldemar George); his advertising compositions are reproduced in *Publicité,* edited by Cassandre for the L'Art international d'aujourd'hui series (Paris: Editions d'Art Charles Moreau, 1929). Two articles on Bayer were also published in *Gebrauchsgraphik*: 'Umbo–Herbert Bayer' by Kurt Hirschfeld (no.7, 1930: 44–51) and 'Herbert Bayer' by H.K. Frenzel (no.5, 1931: 3–19) (Droste 1982: 198).

262. Published from 1929 to 1943 by the Verlag Otto Bayer in Leipzig, which specialised in women's magazines, *die neue linie* was a relaunch of the earlier magazine *Frauen-Mode*, with a new editorial approach and important redesign by Moholy-Nagy. Under the direction of Bruno E. Werner and Arndt Bayer, the magazine was an immediate commercial success, with an average print run of 35 thousand copies. Of these, approx. 10 thousand

stood out on newsstands and major Italian hotels thanks to its unusual large format and elegant graphics, which reflected the interests of its bourgeois target audience: fashion, domestic lifestyle, travel, and current events, all presented from a modern angle. Its publishing strategy included a rather sophisticated graphic presentation, which can be traced back to the formal innovations of the constructivist new typography: indeed, its typographic design and art direction were entrusted to László Moholy-Nagy and Herbert Bayer, with the collaboration of many former Bauhaus students (including Irmgard Sörensen-Popitz, Kurt Kranz, and Georg Teltscher). Aside from a series of photographic covers, Moholy-Nagy also designed the format and layout, which remained essentially the same up until the war years, while Bayer designed the masthead, set in his famous universal alphabet, and numerous covers.[263] Moholy-Nagy determined the peculiar visual style of *die neue linie*'s covers through images based on a combination
|51| of photomontage and various illustration techniques, from line drawing to airbrush retouching, all characterised by an almost surreal atmosphere. It was precisely that approach that became Bayer's distinguishing style, and he ably made use of montage and the graphic manipulation of photography to create evocative images.[264] Although he translated such typo/photographic principles into his own less radical version, adapted to the realities of the commercial press, Moholy-Nagy's approach was also reflected in the use of photography, which played an essential role and was often entrusted to significant photographers like Umbo, Erich Salomon, Cecil Beaton, and Germaine Krull.[265]

This discreet yet constant presence within the Italian press could explain the broader interest in Moholy-Nagy and Bayer's work—which spread beyond the closed circles of Milan's avant-garde even before the well known Werkbund exhibition at the 1933 Triennale.[266] Indeed, within the covers of *die neue linie* it is possible to identify the themes and graphic cues later found in Munari's work, after he had assimilated them in various ways.[267] On the other hand, even though it was not the sole stimulus for the revivification of the graphic arts in Italy, *die neue linie* nevertheless is a concrete example of the channels through which that generation of advertising designers absorbed certain aspects of Central-European modernism—and in particular the stylistic elements less directly linked to rationalist architecture, which in Italy was the main vehicle for the spread of the new typography.

were distributed abroad, in over forty countries. A special issue dedicated to Italy appeared in January 1938, and another in August 1940 (Rössler 2009: 13, 19, 25, 39, 73). As proof of the magazine's circulation in Italy, a spread from *die neue linie* was reproduced in Guido Modiano's article 'Fotografia 1931', published in *Campo grafico* 11; 12 (December 1934): 276–7. Additional proof can be seen in the magazine's fairly broad availability in the antique publications market (confirmed by researcher Pasqualino Schifano, in correspondence with the author, 21 May 2010).

263. Presented in the pages of the magazine *Offset, Buch und Werbekunst* no.7 (1926): 398–400.

264. Rössler 2009: 41–5. Moholy-Nagy did a dozen covers in all, from the first issue (September 1929) to the May 1933 issue; Bayer did 26, beginning in 1930, espcially in the magazine's early years; in any case, up until '38 *die neue linie* remained one of the biggest clients of the Dorland-Studio, which he was director of.

265. The colophon of the first issue (September 1929) credits 'Prof. Moholy-Nagy, Berlin' with the magazine's cover and typographic layout; both Moholy-Nagy and Bayer are listed as members of the editorial committee in the December 1931 issue (Rössler 2009: 29–33, 35, 39–45, 47–53, 59).

266. Photographs by Moholy-Nagy appear in *La Rivista Illustrata del Popolo d'Italia* in June and August 1933; the same year, *Natura* hired Bayer for the cover and devoted an article to him in the December issue.

267. For example, the use of crumpled-up kraft paper to resemble rocklike forms (VI; 11, July 1935; by H. Bayer) recalls similar work by Munari for covers made in the postwar period; the cover image of the August 1935 issue (VI; 12; by E. Kreimer) recalls Munari's mosaic cover for *La*

> [With Kandinsky, Braque, Picabia, and Magritte I did not have] any personal relationship, just the awareness and study of their [work and] experiences, which I then tried out so as to understand them better. Ditto for Man Ray, Duchamp, and a few others (...) I made all these acquaintances through the Galleria del Milione, or through friends who had been to Paris, especially Prampolini (...) I've always dealt with graphics and visual research (...) During that period I was following and experimenting with the [work and] experiences of Arp, Bill, Schwitters, Cassandre (for the alphabets), Herbert Bayer, and others from the Bauhaus.[268]

Photography

Any consideration of the network of influences acting on a given artistic milieu, despite the risk of some schematic generalisation, is nevertheless useful for contextualising more precisely the activity of those working in the cultural field, especially in a context as closed-off as Italy was during the Fascist period. Concerning the inclusion of photography in Munari's work, his initiation into photomontage took place, even before the examples set by Moholy-Nagy and Bayer, through Paladini and Pannaggi—artists who were in contact with Europe's most significant avant-gardes, and whose graphic work Munari was certainly familiar with, despite their marginal status in the Futurist movement and their lack of direct ties to the Milanese group (as both lived in Rome). Likely of equal importance was his discovery of the imagist movement, which Paladini founded in 1926, and wherein Munari saw the same metaphysical atmospheres (Paladini actually knew both De Chirico and his brother Alberto Savinio quite well, and they often met up in Rome and Paris).[269] It is important to emphasise that, beginning with photomontage, Munari almost simultaneously began to try his hand with layout according to constructivist principles, and there, too, one can reasonably conclude that Paladini had a significant influence.

Like many of his contemporaries, Munari knew Moholy-Nagy's fundamental theoretical text, *Malerei, Fotografie, Film,* published in 1925.[270] The photographs reproduced in the book offered an up-to-date repertoire of the most recent international research, which made it—alongside the special issue of *Arts et Métiers Graphiques* (1930) and the two collections published on the occasion of the *Film und Foto* exhibition in Stuttgart (1929)—one of the first international resources to reach Milan in those years.[271] Although he did not know German, it was not hard for Munari to stay abreast of Moholy-Nagy's main theories, which were more or less explicitly adopted by almost everyone who favoured a revivification of Italian photographic culture, which was still strongly tied to pictorialism.[272] The significance of that text, which

Lettura (April 1937). More than a direct lift, these were primarily cues taken for visual experimentation with texture.

268. Munari in Quintavalle 1979: 15–6.

269. Founded by Paladini along with Roman literati and artists (Dino Terra, Umberto Barbaro, Antonio Fornari), the Movimento immaginista championed an aesthetic somewhere between that of the Dadaists and metaphysicists, but was short-lived (Baldacci 2006: 9–10).

270. The eighth book in the Bauhausbücher series, published by the Albert Langen Verlag in Munich in 1925 (and in a second edition in 1927). The volume consists of a theoretical introduction (c.42 pp.) and a collection of a hundred or so black-and-white photos (including work by Steiglitz, Renger-Patzsch, Man Ray, Lucia Moholy, Hannah Höch, and Moholy-Nagy himself), as well as a typographic storyboard for a film about the city (Moholy-Nagy). The reproduced images include, in particular, many photograms (Moholy-Nagy, Man Ray) and photomontages (Hannah Höch, Paul Citroen, Moholy-Nagy), as well as animated film sequences.

271. *Arts et Métiers Graphiques* no.16 (March 1930), cit.; Werner Gräff, *Es Kommt der neue Fotograf*, cit.; Franz Roh, *Foto-auge* (Stuttgart: Akademischer Verlag Dr. Fritz Wedekind & Co., 1929). In Munari's close circle, the architect Enrico Peressutti, who had taken part in the Stuttgart exhibition in '29, acted as a milanese spokesperson for the new photographic currents, and architects like Gian Luigi Banfi and Giuseppe Pagano were excellent photographers (Paoli 1999: 115).

introduced Italy to the principles of pure photography, was echoed in the controversies that erupted in trade magazines, fueling theoretical debate. In Italy, the argument had two opposing sides: according to one, the ideal photography would be subordinate to pictorial aesthetics; according to the other, it would explore the photographic medium's inherent possibilities. It is significant that Moholy-Nagy's book was taken up as a fundamental reference by those in Italy who—like Boggeri, Persico, and Ponti, that is, people outside of the professional photographic circles—sought to capture the essence of this 'new vision.' Indeed, over the course of the 1930s the influence of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Sobriety) movement found fertile terrain in Milan's artistic and literary avant-garde circles and cross-bred with the photographic practices of advertisers, graphic designers, and architects. In addition to Persico's reviews in *Casabella*, even a typographic magazine like *Campo grafico* dedicated ample space to the subject of photography, adhering to the precepts of the Bauhaus, which echoed throughout Boggeri, Modiano, and Veronesi's texts calling for an optically pure visual language:

> Another current (…) counters the photographic version of pictorial means, and trusts the inherent qualities of the medium itself to produce a different way of seeing the world and all its objects, unveiling the hidden photogenic character in never-before-seen images.[273]

Not that independent photographic research was not taking place within the Futurist movement, but after early experimentation with cronophotography—later abandoned because of the opposition mounted by the painterly current led by Boccioni[274]—it was not until 1930 that Tato's *Manifesto della fotografia futurista* (Futurist Manifesto of Photography, 1930) appeared, whereupon Marinetti belatedly condoned the field that many young Futurists working in graphics had already begun to investigate on their own. While contributions from the field of architecture leaned more toward formalist or documentary photography, and advertising explored the technical possibilities of framing and lighting to arrive at an abstract representation, graphic artists like Paladini, Pannaggi, Veronesi, Grignani, and Munari took a more 'technicist' stance, which turned to both optical/chemical procedures (like double exposures, solarisation, negative prints, and superimposition/overlapping) as well as experiments without any camera at all—like photograms and photomontage, in which the latent potential for interpreting reality in a non-objective, conceptual, or even metaphysical way enjoyed free reign.[275]

272. Almost all the main theoretical texts on modern photography from the early 1930s look to the ideas expressed by Moholy-Nagy: Antonio Boggeri ('Commento' in *Luci e ombre. Annuario della fotografia artistica italiana*, 1929), Giò Ponti ('Discorso sull'arte fotografica' in *Fotografia*, 1, 1932), Guido Pellegrini ('La nuova fotografia' in *Il Progresso Fotografico* no.3, 30 March 1933 and no.4, 30 April 1933; Pellegrini directed the magazine *Fotografia*). That same year, Moholy-Nagy published an article in Italian in *Note fotografiche* ('Su l'avvenire della fotografia' in IX; 2, August 1932) (Paoli 1999: 101–2, 105; Alinovi 1982: 409–10).

273. Antonio Boggeri, 'Commento' in *Luci e ombre. Annuario della fotografia artistica italiana*, 1929 (quoted in Monguzzi 1981: 8).

274. See the 'Avviso' published in *Lacerba*, 1 October 1913, by the group of Futurist painters including Boccioni, Carrà, Russolo, Balla, Severini, and Soffici, who excluded the idea of any link between the Futurist's pictorial research and the Bragaglias' 'photodynamism'. After 1914 Anton Giulio Bragaglia left photography to focus on cinematography and theatre (Lista 1985: 8–9).

275. Zannier 1978: 70–1; Alinovi 1982: 409–11; Paoli 1999: 106–12; Pelizzari 2010: 93–4. The broad horizons of *Fotografia*, the annual published by Domus in 1943, reflect the joint contributions of architecture and graphics: the review includes architects (Mollino, Pagano, Peressutti), graphic artists (Munari, Veronesi, Steiner, Grignani, Nizzoli), film directors (Comencini, Lattuada), photojournalists (Patellani) (Pelizzari 2010: 97–8; Paoli 1999: 109–11).

In the early 1930s photomontage enjoyed a fair degree of popularity in Italy as a form of modern illustration in periodicals, publishing in general, and advertising, as well as in the large-scale 'fotoplastici' (photomosaics) in trade-fair installations and exhibitions. 'Photomontage is the only type of modern illustration', Luigi Veronesi asserted.[276] Beginning with the very first rudimentary Futurist attempts,[277] the technique of photomontage appeared in Italy toward the mid-twenties, in the work
|54| of Paladini and Pannaggi, who, thanks to
|55| their close ties to Russian culture, helped introduce Italy to the work of the Soviet avant-garde. For both artists, that mediation took place through both their important work in art criticism,[278] as well as their own graphic work, modelled on photomontage. Between 1926 and '31 Paladini created many covers with photomontages, in which Dadaist humour melds with constructivist principles;[279] his photomontages regularly appeared in the magazines *Occidente* and *Quadrivio*, where they became characterised by large fields of colour, coloured papers, and photographic fragments, with results similar to Bayer's advertising work.[280] Compared to Paladini's style, which was more attuned to visual effect than formal balance, Pannaggi's photomontages have more controlled, scenographic or set-like composition, and are also set apart by their subject matter, taken from mechanical art (Pannaggi and Paladini penned the *Futurist Manifesto of Mechanical Art*, published in 1922).[281]

Various Milanese artists tried their hands at photomontage, including Nizzoli, Veronesi, Carboni, Munari, and Ricas, who preferred cropping and the syntactic juxtaposition of photographic fragments—often completed by the insertion of drawn portions—to the Futurists' technique of overlapping negatives. While superimposition lent itself to a poetic and psychological investigation of the subject,[282] collage, which worked with thematic short-cuts based on the semantic recombination of

276. Luigi Veronesi, Pallavera [pseudonym of writer and director Mario Soldati], 'Del fotomontaggio' in *Campo grafico* II; 12 (December 1934): 278; this was a special issue focussing on photography, including articles by Boggeri, Modiano, and Veronesi on advertising photography and photomontage (cf. Dradi 1973: 29–31).

277. In 1915 Carrà and Dottori made their first mixed collages, inserting photographic fragments into their graphic compositions, but this practice remained sporadic (Lista 1985: 11). As Paladini wrote in 1929: 'In Italy, as far as I know, Ivo Pannaggi and Vinicio Paladini were the only ones who felt the value of this new art. The former expressed it through procedures influenced by the constructivist aesthetic, and the latter did so through what one could call Proustian procedures' ('Fotomontage' in *La Fiera Letteraria* V; 45, 10 November 1929; cit. in Verdone 1995: 40, 448).

278. In addition to the articles published in various literary and art magazines, Paladini's book *L'Arte nella Russia dei Soviet* (Rome: Ed. La Bilancia, 1925) is particularly relevant. From the late 1920s Pannaggi was based in Germany and worked as a foreign correspondent for important magazines and newspapers.

279. Not just from avant-garde publishers (Edizioni d'Italia, Edizioni Alpes), but also from mass-market publishers (Bompiani, Corbaccio); see the covers of Dino Terra, *Ioni*. Milan: Edizioni Alpes, 1929; Diotima, *L'orologio innamorato*. Rome: Edizioni d'Italia, 1930; Elio Talarico, *Tatuaggio*. Rome: Edizioni d'Italia, 1931; Dino Terra, *Anima e corpo*. Milan: Bompiani, 1934; Armando Ghelardini, *Malessere*. Milan: Corbaccio, 1934 (reproduced in Lista 1984 and as ads in *Almanacco Letterario Bompiani 1934*).

280. See, for example, the photocollage series titled *Giochi olimpici*, 1934 (reproduced in Lista 2001b: 238–40). The shift in tone was a consequence of the 'imagist' period, as Pannaggi recalled: '(...) I went to Germany (...), Paladini slowly faded, or just distanced himself from Futurism to focus more on his post-metaphysical loves (...)' (cit. in Verdone 1995: 43).

281. In Pannaggi the influence of Russian models in particular recalls Rodchenko's photomontages for Vladimir Mayakovsky's books (*Pro eto*, 1923), while in his postal collages echoes con be seen of the abstract work of Schwitters, with whom he was in touch (Crispolti: 1995: 337–8; Lista 1985: 129; Fanelli, Godoli 1988: 84, 195). See the covers for: Vasari, *Raun*. Milan: Edizioni il libro futurista, 1933; SA Luciani, *L'antiteatro. Il cinematografo come arte*. Rome: La Voce, 1928; IDieci, *Lo zar non è morto*. Rome: Edizioni dei Dieci, 1929 (reproduced in Lista 1984).

282. From the Bragaglia brothers to Depero, Tato, Unterveger, Wulz, and others: see Lista 2001b: 225–7, 234–51.

elements taken from reality, allowed artists to build an image in a broader variety of registers, from the grotesque to the satirical, from the realistic to the surreal, from the narrative to the abstract—which was the compositional formula developed by both the Berlin Dadaists and the Russian constructivists.[283] Nevertheless, compared to the chaotic and subversive compositions of the former, the latter (Moholy-Nagy and Rodchenko in particular) opted for an approach based before all else on the composition's coherence, capable of expressing an *Uberrealität*. Moholy-Nagy emphasised the constructive and conceptual aspect of this type of photomontage, which

> are pieced together from various photographs and are an experimental method of simultaneous representation; compressed interpenetration of visual and verbal wit; weird combinations of the most realistic, imitative means which pass into imaginary spheres. They can however also be forthright, tell a story; more veristic 'than life itself.[284]

Basically, when compared to Dadaist anarchy, this type of photomontage was seen as a form of calculated disorder, and possessed a precise meaning and centre that allowed for its immediate comprehension; and it is precisely in that form, thanks to its associative powers, that photomontage gained its greatest popularity in the fields of advertising and poster design as well as political propaganda.

Munari's first attempts at photomontage date back to 1932; they were published as illustrations in the usual periodicals, and immediately showed his attentive awareness of the key Italian and foreign referents. Well aware of the new visual language's range of expressive possibilities, Munari initially followed the 'piled-up' approach commonly used by the Dadaists, with minimal reworking; but the meaning of the resulting images was not always immediately or clearly comprehensible. At the same time, and to an increasing degree, Munari was exploring formulas of allusive and narrative juxtaposition, which related to his interest in the spatial possibilities of the composition, and were also quite similar to Moholy-Nagy's work:

> Linear elements, structural pattern, close-up, and isolated figures are here the elements for a space articulation. Pasted on a white surface these elements seem to be embedded in infinite space, with [a] clear articulation of nearness and distance. The best description of their effect would be to say that each element is pasted on vertical glass planes, which are set up in an endless series each behind the other.[285]

In reality, a clear-cut demarcation between the various types of photomontage is quite rare: in any given composition the various options are often simultaneously present, regardless of one or another formula's predominance. The cover of the August 1932 issue of *L'Ufficio Moderno* exemplifies the first tendency: the photomontage is limited to a simple juxtaposition of two photographs symbolic of modernity (the American metropolis and the crowd), but with a

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283. The principle of montage signals a break not only from the fine arts tradition, but above all a shift in the syntactic and semantic levels of the image, as it ruptures the spatial continuity of Renaissance perspective and the coherence of the image (cf. Ades 1986: 48, 107–9; Spies 1991: 11).

284. Moholy-Nagy, *Malerei, Fotografie, Film*, cit. (English translation, *Painting, Photography, Film*. London: Lund Humphries/MIT Press, 1969: 36). Moholy-Nagy repeatedly revisited his definition and practice of photomontage and photogram: see, in particular, 'Fotoplastiche Reklame' in *Offset Buch und Werbekunst* no.7 (Leipzig, 1926: 386–394) and 'Fotografie ist Lichtgestaltung' in *Bauhaus* no.1 (Dessau, Januar 1928: 2-9), both quoted in French translation in the catalogue *László Moholy-Nagy: Compositions lumineuses 1922–1943*. Paris, Centre Georges Pompidou, 1995: 189–91 and 193–7, respectively.

285. Moholy-Nagy, commenting on the photomontage 'Leda and the swan' (1925) in 'Space, Time and the Photographer' (in Kostelanetz, 1970: 65).

more visible intervention in the masthead, positioned at the centre of the two images in order to create a visual connotation.[286] The result still seems rough and somewhat tentative, in both the photographic manipulation and the lettering. And yet just a few months later, the same idea of photographically describing the magazine's field of interest (labour organization and
|57| advertising) translated into a cover that exudes an entirely different compositional strength and balance, thanks to a different approach that is more informed about Moholy-Nagy and Baumeister's work. The image is centred on a perspectival play between a rationalist building and the façade's mosaic advertisement as observed by a group of passersby in the foreground: it is a minimalist composition that, through a surrealist-inspired approach, constructs a space that is at once plausible and abstract, |58| wherein the perspective and contrast in scale create an impression of great depth, reinforced by the red background.[287] The composition's synthetic nature and the simultaneity of everything taking place in the image appear fully in keeping with Moholy-Nagy's postulations, according to which photomontage's resulting image, aimed at expressing an idea, must be concentrated and economic in its means, so as to quickly activate the viewer's visual sensations and mental associations. Munari seems to have closely followed Moholy-Nagy's instructions, which mention simple overlapping and the importance of the verbal element—the title—in providing the key with which to read the image. Even the context and applications of photomontage |60| recall Moholy-Nagy's assertions almost literally:

> One can, among other things, use it to summarise an entire film or theatrical work, theatrical scripts or screenplays can be condensed into a single image of this sort. One can also use it to illustrate an idea or a feeling. [It can be used] for propagandist ends, for advertising, for posters. [It can be used] to satirise the current times, etc.[288]

Indeed, it is impossible to miss the relation to the comic and surreal realms Munari so readily explored in his photomontages, especially in his long series of illustrations completed around 1936 for the more general-audience magazines with which he collaborated, dominated by an allusive or metaphorical exploration of the assigned subjects. A good example is his composition 'Per il quinto di secondo', published in *La Rivista Illustrata del Popolo d'Italia* in 1932: this collage deals with athletics and depicts a runner set to sprint, in front of a background featuring a large stop-watch and a photographic frame showing a crowd of spectators. The image, which includes a few painterly interventions, shows his having surpassed the constructivist model taken from Paladini, evident in its minimalism and rigorous spatial construction.[289] This example is accompanied by many other, similar illustrations: the illustration 'Vertigini', published in the same magazine in February '32; the cosmic self-portrait and series of photomontages

286. *L'Ufficio Moderno* VII; 8 (August 1932). 21.5×28.5 cm. The cover is printed in duotone (black and red).

287. *L'Ufficio Moderno* VII; 11 (November 1932). 21.5×28.5 cm. This composition is unsigned, but in an advert for Studio R+M published in the following issue they specified that 'The cover of the previous issue was created by the scissors of the painter Munari'. The masthead, in simple sanserif capitals, appears within small white rectangles that echo Persico's work in negative for the titles and headlines of *Casabella* (see 'Città 1932' in *La Casa Bella* no.59, November 1932: 24–7), also taken up by Munari in the *Almanacco Letterario Bompiani 1933*.

288. Cf. Moholy-Nagy, 'Fotografie ist Lichtgestaltung' in *Bauhaus* no.1 (Dessau, January 1928: 2–9), cit.

289. *La Rivista Illustrata del Popolo d'Italia* X; 6 (June 1932). Photo ill., 24.5×33.5 cm. Cf. Di Corato 2008: 218–9.

that accompanied the article by Raffaele Carrieri in *Natura* at the end of the same |61| year; the illustration 'Amori subacquei' in *Natura*, July '33; 'I bimbi d'Italia sui monti and al mare' in the August '34 issue of *La Rivista Illustrata del Popolo d'Italia*, with a polymaterial inclusion; the composi- |59| tions published in the *Almanacco fascista del Popolo d'Italia 1934*; and the splendid two-page spread titled 'Logica elementare |62| del rinnovamento' published in *Campo grafico* in February 1935.[290] All these compositions show how, beyond the strictly surrealist register, this type of montage (in Munari's hands) was also ideally suited to experimentation with the straightforward expressivity of the image, through dynamic compositions and surprising associations.

That approach also matches Veronesi's vision—he viewed the composition in photomontage primarily as a question of surfaces, forms, and colours, which only later are translated into photographic elements fit to obtain a 'lyrical whole'; a pictorial composition, therefore, that refers to a specific 'narrative content'.[291] And the attention to content is one of Munari's constant preoccupations, obviously tied to the publishing realm as well, where illustrations remain subordinate to the written text. Certainly, even in his case the captions affected the meaning of the images, specifying how they were to be read; but it was rare that his compositions ever lacked their own coherence and clear connection to their given theme. Whether the montage makes technical use of the juxtaposition or overlapping of fragments, or is articulated in a more complex and dynamic manner, the resulting image clearly suggests a meaning, outlined in a metaphorical, surreal, or, more often, comical fashion. And indeed, upon closer consideration, beyond the variety of forms it assumed, Munari's work in photomontage throughout the 1930s shows a constant quest for the independence of the visual register from the verbal register, which gradually led him to free his images from their subordinate role as mere illustrated comments. In the latter half of the decade, in fact, his investigation into photography splits—focussing on the one hand on surrealist collage inspired by Ernst, and on the other on the narrative implications of image sequences.[292]

L'Ala d'Italia

The use of photography was not limited solely to the interior illustrations of *L'Ala d'Italia*; beginning in 1934 Munari also used it on the cover. Up until then the covers of *L'Ala d'Italia* focussed exclusively on illustration, with an advertising layout that was occasionally entrusted to various artists who then freely interpreted an aeronautical theme: for example, during '33 as a cover for Shell Munari and Ricas proposed both an illustration (a schematic representation of the urban fabric, crossed by an automobile and the shadow of an airplane) and a photomontage (an association between various means of land, sea, and aerial transportation, unified within the oil company's trademark).[293] Although

290. In *La Rivista Illustrata del Popolo d'Italia* x; 2 (February 1932): 74; *Natura* v; 11–12 (Christmas issue, 1932): 67–70; ivi, vii; 7 (July 1933): 58; *La Rivista Illustrata del Popolo d'Italia* xii; 8 (August 1934): 10; Arrigo De Angeli (ed.), *Almanacco fascista del Popolo d'Italia 1934* (reproductions in Lista 1985: 79); *Campo grafico* iii; 2 (February 1935): 36–7, respectively.

291. Veronesi, Pallavera in *Campo grafico* ii; 12 (December 1934): 278.

292. The photomontage types outlined by Zannier (1988: 291ff), Ades (1986: 48, 107–9, 116–88, 135–6), and Pelizzari (2010: 89–90) are useful for such analysis.

293. These are two original sketches now in the collection of Maria Fede Caproni di Taliedo, Rome. One of the two drawings is mounted on an earlier cover, facilitating an exact date. 19×22 and 16.5×18.5 cm, respectively. There is also a third sketch from the same series, now in a private

|63| the January 1934 issue respected the cover's traditional advertising format, it also heralded, in no uncertain terms, the use of photography on the cover with a richly concise conceptual image. Munari and Ricas proposed an innovative solution based on minimalist photomontage, wherein the diagonal of the aircraft's reflectors converge in the night sky above the hybrid form of a bird/Stanavo-brand aircraft (the underwriters) printed over it in red.[294] In the following months the two designers continued to propose photographic solutions, even though they no longer remained anchored to one sole formula. The |64| February issue saw the disappearance of the frame that held the masthead and delimited the image on all four sides; the cover (unsigned, but certainly by Munari, who is the first illustrator credited) adopted a full-bleed image, once again a photomontage, but of a different type, centred on the juxtaposition of two photographs that are integrated with one another thanks to their dynamic cropping and chromatic separation of blue and sepia tones (the blue colour also maintained its visual association with the previous issue and those to come). The image shows a bunch of clouds 'pierced' by an aerial view of a city (probably Milan, where the Caproni company headquarters recalled on the cover were located, on the outskirts of the city).[295] This device was also used on the cover of the March issue, with a different photographic cropping yet similar effect (this time a group of biplanes stands out against the sky) that allows for the inclusion of an elegant, clear typographic summary.[296]

Over the span of a few months, then, the graphic layout Munari and Ricas developed for the cover seems to have been accepted |66| by the editorial team, but with the April issue, dedicated to the *Esposizione Aeronautica* (Aeronautics Show) in Milan, Munari once again changed the rules and used a more radical photomontage, featuring the profile of an aircraft in which typographic elements and photographs of the Palazzo dell'Arte (Giovanni Muzio's brand-new building for the Triennale) and the nearby Torre della Radio (by Ponti) are collaged. The image's iconic feel is the result of the synthetic collage's isolation within the blue background, the overall configuration (with intersecting diagonals), and the carefully chosen photographs highlighting the architectural structures and constructed forms of the aircraft.[297]

The following issues instead signalled the editorial team's return to illustration, and only toward the end of the year did Munari's name again appear on the cover, with a black-and-white photomontage (this time more realistic) with which he |65| packages an inevitably striking Christmas image: in the foreground is a pilot flying a plane, and on the horizon, beyond the clouds, a small comet appears, as if to evoke a modern crèche.[298] The cover of the following issue was again by Munari and Ricas, and again used photomontage, albeit with a return to more aeropictorial stylistic elements. The duotone image has a background gradient that goes from brown to blue, against which stylised profiles of airplanes are set, and through their shapes we catch a glimpse of the clouds.[299] This was

collection (I am indebted to Maria Fede Caproni for this information).

294. *L'Ala d'Italia* XIII; 1 (January 1934). 21×28 cm. Cf. Schnapp 2008: 147–8.

295. *L'Ala d'Italia* XIII; 2 (February 1934). 21×28 cm.

296. *L'Ala d'Italia* XIII; 3 (March 1934). 21×28 cm. The table of contents, which was a one-time experiment and never again appeared on the cover of *L'Ala d'italia*, was set in *Semplicità,* and the layout made able use of the type's various bodies and weights.

297. *L'Ala d'Italia* XIII; 4 (April 1934). 21×28 cm. Cf. Pelizzari 2010: 89–90.

298. *L'Ala d'Italia* XIII; 12 (December 1934). 21×28 cm.

the last cover Munari made for *L'Ala d'italia*: soon thereafter the Futurist Filippo Masoero was appointed photographic director of the magazine.[300]

Almanacco Letterario Bompiani

Compiling a list of the photography by Munari that appeared in the *Almanacco Letterario Bompiani* between 1932 and '37 reveals a body of work with varied degrees of quality, and highlights his simultaneous creation of the different types of photomontage outlined above. The magazine was a special kind of training ground for the artist, given the type of publication it was, the intellectual context in which it was created, and the tastes of the readership of the time. The publication offered a singular mixture of serious and facetious work—something quite rare by the standards of today's literary reviews—with the precise goal of being popular and accessible. As Valentino Bompiani recalled, 'Literature did not make the news. The publication's excessive pleasantness and agreeability were a deliberate attempt at giving the writers a semblance of "citizenship" and presence, to somehow make them seem familiar'.[301] Basically, the *Almanacco Letterario* was a new genre, hovering somewhere 'between journalism and criticism, between information and advertising': in addition to literary reviews and current-events columns, it also gave ample space to cultural topics; and the caricatures, comic vignettes, and photomontages were 'intermezzos' of sorts in which irony and humour were given free reign. The formula was a success, judging from the print runs (quite respectable for the time, between 10 and 15 thousand copies).[302] Its informal style was accentuated beginning with the 1934 edition, with a new octavo format that left ample room for images and photographs.[303] It was precisely this visual aspect that, according to Munari, characterised the *Almanacco*'s look during that period:

> I made an effort to be sure that the image was never just a repetition of the text. I tried to set up a relationship between different images. [I did so] a bit through Dadaist techniques, through contrasts. Also with the techniques Max Ernst used in his collages. One time, for example, I edited the calendar of the year's events [1935]. There was, I remember, a black box with 'New York was left in the dark' written underneath. It was exhausting. For an entire year I had to choose all the most important events in the newspapers, cut them out, and archive the clippings. (…) [In the illustrations] I sought a visual parallel to the textual tone, and I brought these images together and also tried to give them a pleasing, communicative aspect. It is almost the same principle by which one should do a book cover (…). It seems to me that [this type of visual communication] was well received. The public does not distinguish between one type of visual communication and another. Everyone's used to it, it is all over the streets (…).[304]

In the 1933 edition, Munari published a series of photomontages indicative of his eye for a wide variety of formal solutions

299. *L'Ala d'Italia* XIV; 1 (January 1935). 21×28 cm.

300. Filippo Masoero (1894–1969), a member of the Roman Futurists, was a pilot, photographer, set designer, and director. In 1926 he was appointed director of photography and cinematography at the Aeronautical Ministry under Balbo's reign, where he made documentary films and experimented with aerial photography with effects similar to those of aeropainting; he went on to become director of the Istituto LUCE (L'Unione per la Cinematografia Educativa, the Union for Educational Cinematography, the State's film institute, whose acronym also means 'light'). He volunteered in the Ethiopian War, and made magnificent photographic covers for *L'Ala d'Italia* in 1937, which are sometimes incorrectly attributed to Munari (Lista 2001b: 268).

301. Bompiani 1976: 7.

302. Ibid. Cf. Piazzoni 2007: 55–64.

303. Valli 1990: 14, 40, 51. From 1936 on, such free spaces gradually diminished, to the point where the wartime volumes have a much more rigid structure and more serious content (Valli 1990: 22, 39). The 1937 edition, *Almanacco antiletterario*, on the other hand, met with a fair amount of controversy in the specialised press (cf. Valli 1990: 56n).

304. Munari 1976: 10.

and content.[305] Of the dozen compositions
|67| grouped under the title 'Atmosfera 1933' not all carry his actual signature, but their stylistic cohesion and type of humour hint at his hand. Some of them have paired-down compositions based on the juxtaposition of a few photos or photographic fragments (*Anno X°, Che cosa meravigliosa è l'uomo, Sport*), others have pictorial or collage insertions (*Ginevra, Dopo la guerra vien la pace, Arte moderna*), and still others are straightforward photographs with a humorous caption (*Nudismo razionale*). The images' uniqueness lies in their prevalent comic tone, at times vaguely surreal or Dadaist. Regarding their content, on the other hand, the repertoire includes: more or less openly political themes, spanning from a metaphorical celebration of the
|68| regime's accomplishments (*Anno X°, Radio*) to facile satire against the enemies of Fascist Italy (*Che cosa meravigliosa è l'uomo, Hanno eletto Roosevelt, Ginevra*), to explicit war propaganda (*Dopo la guerra vien la pace*); and lighter subjects, which included surprising effects (*Sport, Arte moderna, Sex appeal, Tendenze dell'architettura*) or witty jokes (*Nudismo razionale, Stars*). While the caricatural or disorienting effects were generally created through changes in scale and perspective, in certain instances they come instead from the overlapping of unrelated forms to create interpretative tension: from this viewpoint, the most graphically interesting photomontages are *Sex appeal* and *Tendenze dell'architettura,* which introduced the use of the bivalent object—an outlined shape filled with photographs whose content is read and creates connotations relating back to the object represented in the silhouette (here, the female figure and rationalist architecture).[306] This was an original variant that Munari also deployed in metaphorical and celebratory ways (for example, for *L'Ala d'italia*) but in other cases he used it for highly surprising formal experiments, like a photocollage (from the same period, but reproduced only in *Libro illeggibile 1966*) in which the human forms are 'expanded' through the outline, which is thereby transformed and takes on new shapes.[307]

The contributions to the following volume, whose layout Munari edited—taking full advantage of the new format—include not only photomontages, but also photograms, collages, and the first photographic sequences. The few photomontages stay within the humourous vein, and take aim at the traditionalist tendencies of Italian art. And although they are not signed, many of the visuals interspersed throughout the texts can be attributed to Munari, as they are based on an ironic play between photographs and captions, and include a Dadaesque collage titled *Una vetrina del museo letterario dell'anno 2000*.[308]

305. *Almanacco Letterario 1933*. Milan: Bompiani, 1932. 15.5×20.5 cm. 12 b/w photomontages titled 'Atmosfera 1933': *Anno X°*, *Ginevra* (Munari), *Dopo la guerra vien la pace* (Munari), *Radio* (Manzoni), *Che cosa meravigliosa è l'uomo* (Munari), *Tendenze dell'architettura* (Munari), *Hanno eletto Roosevelt* (photography), *Nudismo razionale* (photography), *Stars* (photography), *Arte moderna* (Munari), *Sex appeal* (Munari), *Sport*.

306. One peculiar characteristic of photomontage is that the photographic elements have a double aspect, as they are first perceived as objects, and then as symbols (John Berger, *The political use of Photomontage*, cit. in Ades 1986: 48).

307. This photomontage is reproduced in a portfolio consisting of loose sheets with photographs of the artist's work, enclosed in *Libro illeggibile*, published by the Galleria dell'obelisco, Rome, 1966 (cf. Maffei 2002: 119).

308. *Almanacco Letterario Bompiani 1934*. Milan: Bompiani, 1933; cit. Munari contributed three photomontages: *Sogno di Carrà* and *Sogno di Sironi* to accompany the article 'Annata artistica' (88); and the illustration *V Triennale* (91). Also attributable to Munari are a photomontage illustrating the article 'Festa del libro' (19) and the Dadaist collage *Una vetrina del museo letterario dell'anno 2000* (83), as well as various comic illustrations with photographs. The photographic sequence *Vita privata dello scrittore* (33) is also interesting, and likely portrays Munari himself in the act of making the gesture for 'silence' (photographed by Egone), which foreshadows his interest in gesture as a

In addition to the aforementioned legacies of Paladini and Pannaggi—one tied to Russian culture, the other to German culture—and the impact of Moholy-Nagy's book, Milanese artists stayed abreast of European artistic advances in the 1920s through numerous avant-garde magazines tied to Dadaism and constructivism that were distributed in Italian artistic circles (from the Hungarian *Ma* to the Polish *Blok*), as well as through commercial publications from the advertising sector (like *Das Plakat*).[309] At the beginning of the 1930s echoes of the Berlin photomontage exhibition mounted in 1931 by Domela probably reached Milan, as did word of other shows organised by members of the ring Neue Werbegestalter (New Advertising Designers),[310] who used photomontage not only in their sculptural and visual experiments, but even more often in their advertising work—even if it is hard to say exactly how much of the commercial work by Domela, Zwart, Schuitema, Baumeister, and Burchartz actually trickled all the way to Italy. What is certain is that in Italy—with the exception of theoretical texts, for which language was a virtually insurmountable barrier—reproductions remained the main vehicle through which people stayed informed.

So, from his first experiments with costructivism (an approach he continued to use in situations tied to propaganda), Munari passed with ease into working with conceptual photocollage, which was more flexible and adaptable to the allusive type of illustration the press often requested, and took more or less frequent dips into the bordering realms of the photogram and of collage. After taking a slight break from the *Almanacco Letterario Bompiani 1935*—in which his role was limited to the layout and a few drawings—in the 1936 edition Munari returned to photomontage with renewed imaginative vigour.[311] The unique aspect of these new compositions, done in a clearly surrealist style, was the evident degree of maturity he had reached in combining heterogeneous elements and accentuating their dreamlike atmosphere, thanks also to his pictorial definition of space (in contrast to his earlier collage on a plain white ground). The collection also includes

form of language, further developed in the book *Supplemento al dizionario italiano*, published in 1958 in a non-commercial edition by Carpano (later reissued by Muggiani in 1963) [*Speak Italian: The Fine Art of the Gesture*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2005]

309. The magazine *Ma* (1919–25) founded and directed by Lajos Kassak with Moholy-Nagy, was the mouthpiece of the main currents in modern European art, with many reproductions; Szczuka's photomontages appeared in *Blok* (1924–26), published by the eponymous group of artists (Strzeminsky, Szczuka, Berlewi); *Das Plakat*, which was internationally distributed, published many Dada photomontages (regarding avant-garde periodicals of the interwar years, see Bury 2008; cf. Ades 1986: 37, 116–8, 156). Lista insisted on the influence of Mieczysław Berman (1903–1975), a Polish artist who used photomontage as a means of personal expression (id. 1985: 11–2; id. 2001b: 220). However, that hypothesis is not very credible, insofar as—riffing on Heartfield's work—Berman did realist photomontages focussing on social issues. Despite some formal similarities in his first constructivist photomontages (published in the literary magazine 1930), it is unclear how Munari could have known his work, at least before the postwar period: the first exhibition of Berman's photomontages actually took place in Warsaw in 1936, with the Czapka frygijska (Phrygian Cap) group, while from 1930 on his attention shifted to realistic photomontage focussed on social satire. Furthermore, the formal resemblances can also be explained in light of the two artists' shared points of reference: Lissitsky, Rodchenko, Klutsis, and Moholy-Nagy. On Berman see *Mieczysław Berman* 1973.

310. Two exhibitions at the Gewerbemuseum in Basel, *Ausstellung Neue Typographie* (1928) and *Neue Werbegraphik* (1930) were among the most important in terms of public attendance, illustrated catalogue publication, and (last but not least) their geographic proximity to Milan. Cf. Hollis 2006: 41–2; Lavin 1992: 39–41.

311. V. Bompiani et al. (ed.), *Almanacco letterario Bompiani 1936*. Milan: Bompiani, 1935. 21×28.5 cm, paperback, pp. (lvii) 112 (2). Munari oversaw the layout and contributed some photomontages and collages. The two photomontages are titled Il pubblico che fotografa (48): in the first image, a photo of a Greco-Roman statue and a lion wearing eyeglasses are set against a background of a branch-like structure (a negative print of tree branches); in the second, a representation of the vascular system is placed in front of a female figure playing golf.

a series of photomontages by Erberto Carboni (others were included in the 1937 edition), whose visual language appears at first to have many points in common with Munari's work, and can be traced back to the same models. Yet, comparing their compositions, a fundamental difference between the two artists becomes evident: compared to the minimalism of Munari's compositions, Carboni's not only have a more technically polished look, but they also have a more orderly structure, as well as a greater degree of control over the compositional, photographic, and typographic elements—and often include classical elements similar to those in the work of Bayer and Agha.[312] Munari, for his part, never seems to give up his natural inclination for ironic playfulness and disorientation, created by the subtle incoherence of juxtaposition, and it is precisely this aspect that sets him apart from other artists working with photomontage.

> The taste for graphic techniques has always been a kind of picklock for me, a tool for trying my hand at other, more articulated and composite expressive forms and instruments (…) As for my work in publishing (…) my first commissions came from Bompiani for their first issues of the famous *Almanacco letterario*. I continued to work for that publication for a long time, producing results that were unanimously considered absolutely brilliant.[313]

To get a sense of Munari's developed command of this medium (outside of the publishing realm), all it takes is a short look through an extraordinary, one-off docu- |70| ment titled *Le forze ignote dell'anima*, which was recently rediscovered.[314] This is a small, square-format book composed solely of colour photomontages; the compositions consist of photographic and typographic clippings taken from period prints, without any manual interventions, and are set up in a long sequence, with photomontages covering one and sometimes two pages. In its present condition it is impossible to determine whether this was a dummy for a publication that was never realised, a storyboard for an animated film, or perhaps a personal divertissement made for a friend. Certainly—judging by the variety and dynamism of the compositions, subtly balanced along the thin line between formal experimentation and surreal humour—these photomontages are absolutely among Munari's best work. They mine the artist's most highly original vein, and can be considered among the most successful examples of the art of photomontage in Italy.

The same is true of the following *Almanacco antiletterario Bompiani 1937*, |72| in which everything, including the cover, is characterised by the good-humoured polemical tone of a call for a return to seriousness, a natural consequence of the surrounding political climate.[315] Munari, who was again one of the editors, contributed a notable

312. Scudiero 1997: xxii. The same is true of the photomontages produced by the architecture group BBPR (one appears in the 1935 *Almanacco*, while others were exhibited at the Galleria del Milione in January '37 in the Mostra insolita di Arte Grafica e Fotografica; see Pontiggia 1988: 22–3). Other artists working in photomontage in a comic or surreal vein similar to Munari's were Carlo Manzoni and Ezio D'Errico (a contributor to *L'Ala d'italia* and editor of the typography magazine *Graphicus*).

313. Munari in Borelli 1993: 110.

314. *Le forze ignote dell'anima*. Unique copy, with original collages. 19×18 cm, pp.48, stapled-bound. Now in the archives of the Istituto Internazionale di Studi sul Futurismo (ISISUF), Milan. A few spreads are reproduced in Maffei 2008: 52–3.

315. Emilio Radius, Dino Buzzati, Bruno Munari, Valentino Bompiani (ed.), *Almanacco antiletterario Bompiani 1937*. Milan: Bompiani, 1936. 21×28.5 cm, paperback, pp.236. Munari's photomontages include: *Antidiluviani* (117), *Basta con la letteratura ortopedica* (119), *Basta con la letteratura da pianeti della fortuna* (121), *Basta con la letteratura da vin santo* (123), *Basta con la letteratura pullman* (125), *Che manchi davvero qualcosa al mio sistema?* (126), *Poeti* (127), *Nuove trame poetiche* (128), *Un ignobile genere letterario* (129), *Situazione della letteratura galante* (130, for the text 'Radio mattutina'), *La nostra radio quotidiana* (131), *Fuori l'autore* (132, for the article 'L'uomo

number of photomontages, photographic sequences, and collages, as well as the cover illustration. His photomontages in particular, which take aim at purportedly lightweight literary genres, are distinguished by their refined comic style (also evident in other work from the same period), and were made with an almost surrealistic collage technique. The main series has a background made up of newspaper clippings and other printed matter, on top of which he has created juxtapositions of photographs and illustrations whose meaning is completed by an ironic title, inserted into the composition within a black ribbon. The second series, alternated with the first, is instead based on the juxtaposition of titles and curious images. Even if in some cases these illustrations were made to accompany articles, generally speaking the full-page photomontages were no longer subordinates of the written texts; rather, the image-based contributions had by now assumed a parallel function within the publication, and were on par with the text-based contributions, to such an extent that even the figurative arts reviews (overseen by Carboni) had a purely visual execution.

Surrealist collage

Another significant innovation of Munari's contributions to the '36 *Almanacco* is a col-
|71| lage titled 'Film documentario dell'anno 1935' which is a succession of small images created with clippings from old line illustrations.[316] The importance of this long strip, which ironically comments on the salient events of the year, lies precisely in the technically innovative use of collage—which is doubtless due to the influence of Ernst, to whom Munari seems to have paid explicit homage, much as he did with the small collage included in the 1937 edition.[317] Indeed, collage was the medium in which Munari did a great number of illustrations (at least up until 1939), primarily for *L'Ala d'Italia* and *La Lettura*. Aside from Ernst's earliest photographic collages, which had been shown at the Galleria del Milione in January of '32, Munari's photocollages also drew inspiration from his romans-collage, *La femme 100 têtes* (1929) and *La petite fille qui rêvait d'entrer au Carmel* (1930), which could be viewed and bought at the gallery, and introduced the idea of using old print clichés as an expressive material.[318] Next to Ernst, Munari also likely took inspiration from the Feuillets inutiles of the French artist Jacques Maret, which was a unique poetry magazine intermittently published beginning in 1928 and

che viveva dei diritti d'autore', with drawings by Ricas) and, toward the back of the volume (after another series of photomontages by Carboni), *Carriera letteraria a 40 anni* (178) and *Cinema americano* (179). Cf. Valli 1990: 53; Piazzoni 2007: 62–3.

316. *Almanacco Letterario Bompiani 1936*, cit. The main collage, 'Film documentario dell'anno 1935' (19–28) consists of the series: *Nascita dell'anno 1935, Punti nevralgici d'Europa, In Germania, Il Giappone ha un appetito da Gargantua, La corsa agli armamenti, La delinquenza è in aumento, Intelligence service, La crisi fa un viaggio, Le pitture italiane a Parigi, Venizelos arriva a Napoli con i suoi non-Ministri, Inchiesta sulla fabbricazione di armi a Washington, Wotan aspetta la sua ora…, Lindbergh inventa il cuore artificiale, I pesci in fondo al mare si abituano all'uso del caffè, A Hollywood: nozze e divorzio, Inchiesta su San Giuseppe, Meteorologia delle stelle del cinema, La moda è questione di busti, Merci giapponesi in Mediterraneo*. Other comic collages were made for the article 'Peccati letterari' (42–3) and the volume also included a graphic scherzo titled *Finito di correggere le bozze dell'Almanacco, ho scritto una lettera d'amore* (99).

317. *Almanacco antiletterario Bompiani 1937*, cit.: 63 for Enrico Sacchetti's article 'Niente da dire'.

318. '3 Pittori di Parigi: Jean Lurçat, Max Ernst, Louis Marcoussis', Galleria del Milione, 9–21 January 1932 (cf. Pontiggia 1988: 104). The collages, two of which appeared in *Fotoauge*, were exhibited for the first time at the Galerie Sans Pareil in Paris in 1921. The magazine *La révolution surréaliste* (1924–29) was also a likely source of inspiration for Milanese artists, not so much for photomontage (which, outside of Ernst, was not much used by the surrealists), as much as for experimental photography (photograms, solarisations, double prints, and double exposures); in any case, Ernst's collages were reproduced in the final issue (Ades 1986: 116–8). On Ernst's collages, see Spies 1991, and Aragon 1930.

was repeatedly presented in *Arts et Métiers Graphiques*: Maret's collage illustrations, made from found papers of all sorts, were modelled on the Dadaist taste for visual play as an end in itself, nonsense, and surprise, in both the images and the selection of poetic texts they accompanied.[319] The work of Ernst and Maret showed Munari how—unlike with photography, but rather by combining fragments from an unusual or past visual realm (independent of their literal meaning)—one could create the semantic paradox or ambiguity that, transposed into the everyday context of printed periodicals, readily lend themselves to comic play and humour. Thus, in the very same publishing world in which he had created allusive and propagandist photomontages, from the mid-thirties on the hybrid visual language of photocollage allowed him—in an increasingly suffocating political and cultural climate, as exemplified by the rapid shift in tone of the *Almanacco* after '36—to eke out a nonconformist space in which he could express his natural ironic and detached attitude.[320]

Regarding the boldly surrealist bent of the juxtapositions, some of the photomon- |73| tages Munari published in *L'Ala d'Italia* between 1933 and '34 could be read as previews of his upcoming work as an illustrator, which appeared for the first time in 1935.[321] A refined, clearly surrealist-inspired |76| composition published in *L'Ufficio Moderno* is from the same period, albeit from a different field.[322] Already in these early, particularly successful attempts one can see his formal preferences for mechanical structures (machines, motors, looms) and organic structures, which frequently returned in his work, in the most varied configurations. Aside from the mechanical theme, which clearly came from Futurism, no other personal subjects appear in this work, nor is there any sign of eroticism (which was an essential aspect of even Ernst's work) or engagement in social rather than political issues: instead, there is a degree of convergence with the graphic language of some cartoonists associated with *Bertoldo* and *Settebello*—Mosca, Manzoni, Guareschi—united by their use of period typographic collage material for their vignettes. Such mannered and emphatic forms, associated with *fin de siècle* bourgeois traditions—and therefore good alternatives to the bombastic rhetoric of the regime—took on a highly ironic charge in the vignettes. Similarly, in Munari's photocollages the strange combinations of forms and styles, often accompanied by piercing captions, could be compared to witty jokes, as they offer a humourous openness not through comic illustration but rather through the technique of photomontage—much as Moholy-Nagy had predicted.[323] Yet in this case an examination

319. See Max Jacob, 'Feuillets inutiles' in *Arts et Métiers Graphiques* no.38 (November 1933): 34–7 and Jean-Marc Campagne, 'Papiers collés de Jacques Maret', ivi no.45 (février 1935): 61.

320. After the call for a return to order in the 1937 edition, and the monographic issue dedicated to Pirandello (1938), the breezy tones that had characterised the *Almanacco* in the early 1930s began to dim, and the space given to photography and comic illustration was reduced to make way for the adoption of a more serious tone in keeping with the regime's totalitarian, war-mongering evolution (Piazzoni 2007: 62–3).

321. *L'Ala d'Italia* XII; 10 (October 1933): 43–5 (P.M. Bardi, 'Volare: pensieri e casi'); ivi XIII; 12 (December 1934): 51–6 (Adone Nosari, 'Mezzo pratico per non divenire aviatore'); ivi XIV; 3 (March 1935): 18–9 (Farinata degli Uberti, 'Eliche e parole'), 31–3 (Emanuele Recchia, 'Cos'è il "numero di ottano"'), 55–57 (Menka [Igino Mencarelli], 'Passeggeri–Propaganda'); ivi XIV; 4 (April 1935): 33–36 (Federigo Valli, 'Volerà o non volerà?'). Some compositions from 1935 were made and signed together with Ricas.

322. *L'Ufficio Moderno* X; 5 (May 1935): 238, for the column 'Consensi e dissensi'. Tanchis emphasises the frequent 'mechanical' representation of the human body in photomontages and collages, where it appeared in the form of anatomical diagrams, one of whose sources he identifies as a medical atlas with plates on transparent acetate (Tanchis 1987: 14).

of the circumstances leads one to see that it was Munari's work that had an influence on his colleagues at *Bertoldo*, and not vice versa (as they shared friendships as well as professional relationships).[324]

Even without occupying an exclusive spot within his larger versatile œuvre, Munari's work on collage illustrations hovering between the surreal and the humourous intensified in 1936, in particular in *L'Ala d'Italia*, where they were included alongside more straightforward visuals as well. In general, they illustrated literary texts (autobiographical memoirs, articles about customs and lifestyle), and more rarely popular science or technical texts. Even where the single images do not have any particular value or appear to be too
|75| stylistically different[325] a degree of cohesiveness is guaranteed by the conceptual uniformity of the whole, which acts as a bemused and complementary commentary to the readings. The best examples are nevertheless those in which the image is not only surprising but also has its own precise iconic strength, like the collage titled
|74| *Poeta incompreso* (Misunderstood Poet), published along with many other images in the October/November 1936 issue. The image depicts a radial engine suspended in a cloud-covered sky; on the lower right is a human bust (represented by an anatomical diagram), over which is placed a box with poetic verses aluding to the moon as 'aereo (…) astro d'argento [che] naviga il firmamento' (aerial/airplane … silver star that navigates the firmament): the play on words, with 'aereo' as both adjective (aerial) and noun (airplane), and the title's allusion provide the key with which to read the composition, which basically associates the role of the pilot to that of the poet.[326]

The surrealist style of Munari's collages with prints and photographic clippings grows even stronger toward the end of the decade; they continued to accompany articles with a relatively lightweight tone, for which he produced brilliantly concise and humourous images, like the series for 'La retorica del primo amore', evidently an homage to Ernst and Maret, the double article 'Realismo ed egocentrismo' and
|77| 'Tipi e temperamenti', and 'L'aeroplano innamorato', which proved the variety of his repertoire, in addition to being his last documented collaboration with *L'Ala d'Italia*.[327] By 1938, in response to the changing cultural and political climate, the magazine was returning to the use of more sober

323. Moholy-Nagy: 'Les humoristes de l'avenir ne travailleront vraisemblablement plus à partir de dessins mais à partir de photoplastiques' (from 'Fotografie ist Lichtgestaltung' in *Bauhaus* no.1 (Dessau, Januar 1928: 2–9), cit.

324. Guareschi used various collage techniques, ranging from drawing on photographs to photocollage, paper sculptures and stage sets, collage with clippings from old publications (almanacs, catalogues, papiers trouvés) which he then reused in his vignettes and as visual headers and footers for columns; Mosca also worked in a similar fashion, inserting period illustrations and photographs into his vignettes, often as a [visual] equivalent of the bourgeois world evoked in his intentionally affected prose; Manzoni also assimilated Steinberg's graphic manner, and in certain respects up until the mid-1930s he was highly influenced by Munari. Cf. Mangini, Pallottino 1994: 68–9, 82, 89, 99, 105.

325. Like in 'Aggiunte al vocabolario delle idee fulminanti…' in *L'Ala d'Italia* xv; 5 (May 1936): 59–63; 'La convivenza nello spazio' ivi xv; 7 (July 1936): 51–5; and 'L'uomo-ora e la strategia della produzione' ivi xv; 8 (August 1936): 13–16.

326. *L'Ala d'Italia* xv; 10–11 (October/November 1936). This issue contained numerous photo illustrations with colour photomontages (48^1, 120^1, 248^1, 312^1), full-page and smaller b/w photomontages (56, 78, 136, 152, 189, 191, 212, 213, 254); and a colour photomontage by Ricas (32^1). The compositions provide an inventory of sorts of the styles of Munari's photomontages: surrealist photocollages (*Poeta incompreso, C'è chi vola e c'è chi sta a terra*); photographic mosaics (*Forme della natura oppure natura delle forme*); photographic clippings inserted into illustrations (*Volo notturno, Il paracadute*) or into fine-art reproductions (*Invito al turismo*); and straightforward photomontages (*Precisione costruttiva, Sanzioni*).

327. In *L'Ala d'Italia* xviii; 1 (January 1938): 63–6; ivi xviii; s/n (1 December 1938): 25–6; ivi xx; 1 (1–15 January 1939): 57–60; ivi xx; 10 (1–15 May 1939): 41–47, respectively. Cf. Silk 1989: [9]: '[These] illustrations address a variety of issues and most are humorous, many with verbal-visual puns, some slyer and cleverer than others'.

graphics—first changing the masthead, then the cover, abandoning photography in favour of more traditional illustrations, and finally the interior illustrations, where photocollage replaced photomontage. Yet the end of Munari's collaboration with that magazine also coincided with his transition to art director of Mondadori's periodical division, which took place in early 1939. Thereafter, the original graphic approach of his humourous collages was taken up by other illustrators (including Canevacci, D'Errico, Ricci, and Guerra).

The association between surrealist illustration and light-hearted content also fit the bourgeois tenor of *La Lettura*, the magazine affiliated with the *Corriere della Sera*, which Munari began a long collaboration with in 1936. Once it had abandoned all references to constructivism, and was no longer chained to the directives of official rhetoric, his imagination freely expressed itself in
|78| photocollages that bordered between the ironic and the surreal, which became his characteristic style during this later period. In addition to designing the covers and the popular science articles he wrote, his graphic contributions can also be seen in almost every issue through late 1939, and his surprising images not only accompany articles, but also distinguished some of the
|79| column headings, like the fantastic 'Giochi, enigmi, bizzarrie'.[328]

Photomosaics

While in Europe photomontage had become a form of visual expression the public was accustomed to,[329] in 1930s Italy the montage technique still inspired some perplexity and reserve. Especially in the variants more closely tied to constructivism, it was viewed with increasing annoyance in intellectual circles, such that after its early success in the press, photomontage lived on in blander, more comic, and therefore less perturbing forms.[330] One exception to this general state was the field of exhibition design, which ever since the *Mostra della Rivoluzione Fascista* (Exhibition of the Fascist Revolution) in '32 had assimilated—under a different ideological guise, of course—the work of the Russian constructivists.[331] Therefore, in the field related

328. See, for example, *La Lettura* XXXVI; 11 (November 1936): 901–7 (G. Titta Rosa, 'Panorama della poesia italiana d'oggi'); ivi XXXVII; 6 (June 1937): 552–7 (Luigi Barzini jr., 'L'attesa dell'amore-passione nella società americana'); ivi XXXIX; 3 (March 1939): 283–7 (Ettore Allodoli, 'Parole moribonde e frasi fatte'); ivi XXXIX; 4 (April 1939): 317–20 (Dott. Andrea Doni, 'Splendore e decadenza dello svenimento').

329. In relation to the widespread presence and banality of the 'photomosaics' of the 1937 Exposition Universelle in Paris, Lavin records the opinions of Gisele Freund ('La photographie à l'Exposition' in *Arts et métiers graphiques*, no.62, March 1938: 37–41) and Amadée Ozenfant (in *Cahier d'art*, 1937: 242) (Lavin 1992: 35).

330. Although this refers mainly to the intellectuals linked to the regime, who supported its strong nationalism, it must not be forgotten that the Italian culture of the period was dominated by the idealism of Benedetto Croce: see Munari's statement: 'In those years Croce had significant influence, so the idea of thinking culture could also be made through visual images could have been irritating to some' (Munari 1976: 10).

331. Organized in celebration of the ten-year anniversary of the Fascist march on Rome, the *Mostra della Rivoluzione Fascista* is a prime example of the regime's propagandist efforts. Set up in the Palazzo delle Esposizioni on via Nazionale in Rome, it opened the 28 October 1932 and remained open continuously for two years, with extraordinary public attendance (over 4 million visitors). Conceived of and directed by Dino Alfieri, who was affiliated with the Istituto di cultura fascista (Fascist Cultural Institute) in Milan, the exhibition reviewed the timeline of the 'revolution' beginning with the party's seizure of power in 1922 and illustrated the social and economic organization of the Fascist state. The monumental installations in various galleries combined to create a path made expressly to have a strong emotional impact on visitors through a modern use of architecture, photography, graphic design, and wall decoration never before seen in Italy. Its execution—carried out primarily by Sironi and the rationalist architects Terragni, Nizzoli, Libera, and De Renzi, with contributions from artists of various currents (including the Futurists Prampolini and Dottori)—was strongly influenced by Futurist and constructivist work, El Lissitsky's in particular, whose Soviet pavilion Sironi had seen at the 1928 *Pressa* Exhibition in Cologne (Schnapp 2003: 17–60;

to the major exhibitions promoted by the regime, photography and photomontage in particular held onto their relevance thanks to their role in propaganda. As early
|80| as 1933 Munari had created a large photomosaic for the Aeronautical Press pavilion at the V Triennale, probably thanks to his relationship with *L'Ala d'italia*.[332] For the VI Triennale in 1936, Munari collaborated with the architect Piero Bottoni on the installation of the Sezione Internazionale di Urbanistica (International Urban Plan-
|81| ning section), creating a large photomosaic diorama dedicated to the themes of urban planning, housing, production and distribution, transportation, and other aspects of collective living.[333] The photomosaic consisted of six panels, each of which featured a collage of photographs whose borders faded into one another to form a complex image in which the information-based and emotion-based aspects balance one another. Later on these compositions, with the addition of captions printed on translucent paper, were included in Botto-
|82| ni's book *Urbanistica*, published in 1938.[334] Munari was certainly aware not only of Paul Citroen's experiments in collage at the Bauhaus,[335] but also the famous *Tavola degli orrori* (Table of horrors) which Bardi exhibited at the Second MIAR (Movimento Italiano per l'Architettura Razionale, Italian Movement for Rational Architecture) exhibition in 1931 and showed again sometime later at the Galleria del Milione.[336] Setting such precedents aside, and despite the fact that photomosaic remains a unique case in Munari's larger body of work, his experience with it nevertheless proves his willingness and ability to try out the expressive possibilities of every artistic medium.

Photograms and other experiments

Toward the end of the 1920s, Veronesi and Grignani were the main Italian artists to experiment with the technical manipulation of photographic negatives and prints, as well as the expressive possibilities of the photogram—the luminous image obtained

Kirk 2005: 88–92; Fraquelli 1995: 131; Coen 1995: 179n; Malvano 1988: 159–161; and http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/ Mostra_della_Rivoluzione_Fascista, last accessed December 2010).

332. The attribution to Munari is based on a short note in *L'Ala d'Italia* XII, 7–8: 108 (July/August 1933) (Di Corato 2008: 225). A portion of Munari's photomontages is almost certainly the one now in the Massimo & Sonia Cirulli Archive, New York/Bologna; reproduced in Pellegrini 2009: 21 (incorrectly credited to a brochure).

333. The photomosaic was mounted to the walls of the hemicycle, below a long title in relief ('L'urbanistica studia e risolve i problemi relativi' in uppercase sanserif letters), while a low wall separating a raised platform overlooking the main floor featured photographic enlargements of an eye with a mirror reflecting the diorama inserted into the pupil; this 'quip' was accompanied by photographs highlighting the main problems identified by urban planning studies. In the same section, Munari also made a large abstract mosaic composition (*Guida della VI Triennale*. s/l: s/n, 1936[2]: 48–51; see Zannier 1978: 62).

334. Piero Bottoni. *Urbanistica*. Milan: Ulrico Hoepli Editore, 1938. This volume was part of the series Quaderni della Triennale, directed by Giuseppe Pagano; the layout was overseen by the architect Antonio Marchi (Zannier 1978: 62).

335. Paul Citroen (1896–1983), Dutch painter, photographer, and teacher. Born and raised in Berlin, he was in touch with Herbert Walden's artistic milieu, and made the first collages in the 'City' series in 1919; he attended the Weimar Bauhaus from 1922 to '25, where he made other photomontages, including the well known *Metropolis* (1923), exhibited at the Bauhaus Ausstellung that same year and included in Moholy-Nagy's *Malerei, Fotografie, Film*. Cf. Ades 1986: 99–100.

336. Pietro Maria Bardi (1900–1999), journalist, critic, gallerist. After the war he founded the Museum of Modern Art in Saõ Paulo. He ran the exhibition space in via Brera, which at the end of 1930 went to the Ghiringhelli brothers and was renamed Galleria del Milione. He moved to Rome, and opened his own gallery in the via Veneto in March 1931, where he mounted the Second MIAR exhibition, in an attempt to validate rationalist architecture as a response to the regime's renewal program (Crispolti 1986: 44). In that show, Bardi exhibited his famous *Tavola degli orrori*, a large photomontage that ridiculed the architectural eclecticism of the late nineteenth century and the classicism of architects like Marcello Piacentini. The controversy that inevitably ensued was presented, in an exhibition curated by the architects Luigi Figini and Gino Pollini, at the Galleria del Milione in June 1931 (Belli in *Anni Creativi al Milione* 1980: 17–9; Pontiggia 1988: 51; Benton 1995: 39).

without a camera, through the direct contact of objects with light-sensitive paper. Although somewhat less systematic, experiments similar to those carried out by Moholy-Nagy, Man Ray, and, of course, his friend Veronesi led Munari to try it as well. We do not know exactly when he began, but his early photograms were published almost simultaneously in early '34 in the *Almanacco Letterario Bompiani*, *Natura*, and *L'Ufficio Moderno*, and others continued to be published up until '37.[337] From the published material it does not seem Munari had extensive experience with the medium, as it appeared intermittently as illustration (and more rarely as an image used in advertising graphics), but judging from the few reproduced examples it seems he had a reasonable degree of technical competence (albeit not on a particularly high level, especially when compared to the work of Veronesi) which suggests he had a fair amount of darkroom experience.

|84| |85|

The two photograms published in the |83| 1934 *Almanacco* are a figurative synthesis of two reviewed novels that, stylistically dissimilar as they are, lend themselves to interpretation in photograms (Campanile's for its absurd humour, Masino's for the magical realism of its childhood recollections).[338] The images are the fruit of experimentation aimed at creating poetic, dreamily atmospheric landscapes, which in this case is a direct transposition of the narrative.[339] The photograms appear to be made through placing cut-out masks and small objects (twigs, pieces of fabric, wristwatch parts) directly (or on a pane of glass) on the paper, and minimal graphic interventions then completed the picture. Working through 'analogous transposition', in this case Munari's approach is almost the opposite of Moholy-Nagy's abstract experiments, and is closer to the magical atmospheres of Man Ray, focussed on the enigmatic character of the light-related manipulation of objects. Yet, as Filiberto Menna preceptively noted, 'contrary to the techniques of the Dadaists and surrealists, Munari is not looking to capture the incongruous or the nonsensical, nor mysterious fantasy—rather, he wants to create, once again, fabulous, bright, limpid worlds pervaded by a vein of cheerful irony'.[340] The critic is referring in particular to the photograms published in an article in the January 1934 issue of *Natura*, many of which effectively express that magical feel.[341] However—and it is not surprising, given his fundamental openness—Munari did not limit his work to this one approach

337. Munari's first photogram experiments date back to 1932: see the profile reproduced in the exhibition catalogue from the Galleria dell'Obelisco, Rome, 1966, in which both Man Ray and Moholy-Nagy are explicitly named; see also Munari's interview edited by Quintavalle in *Bruno Munari* 1979: 27. Lista (1985: 128) situates the photograms in a phase that predates the photomontages, but such a reconstruction is disproven by the chronological dates of the reproductions. Munari combined photography and old turn-of-the-century illustrations in his photomontages only in the latter half of the 1930s.

338. The forms created by light inevitably evoke cosmic space; Moholy-Nagy had already faced the same issue, and was careful to avoid any verisimilitude in his compositions (cf. Molderings 2009: 23 and Heyne 2009: 29).

339. *Radiografia del libro: 'Amiamoci in fretta' di Campanile* (59) and *Radiografia del libro: 'Periferia' di Paola Masino* (61) in *Almanacco Letterario Bompiani 1934*, cit. The first image shows a small boat suspended by balloons near a black moon above an urban landscape; the second shows a wall diagonally dividing the scene, with trees in both the foreground and background, and the moon and a few clouds standing out against the sky.

340. Filiberto Menna, 'Munari o la coincidenza degli opposti' in *La botte e il violino* no.3 (Rome, 1966), reprod. in *Bruno Munari* 1979: 70–5. Menna's essay is one of the few critical contributions of use to design historians. Cf. also Zannier 1978: 70–1; Paoli 1999: 118; Molderings 2009: 15–25.

341. Carlo Manzoni, 'Munari palombaro della fantasia' in *Natura* VII; 1 (January 1934): 42–3. Six photograms illustrate the text: *Suoni, Paesaggio sulla collina, Un pianeta tra gli alberi, Costellazioni, Natura, Umidità dell'aria*, some of which are also reproduced in *L'Ufficio Moderno* in 'Quattro nuove (naturalmente!) interpretazioni futuriste' (IX; 3, March 1934: 168–9).

to the photogram: there is another group of compositions that date back to the same period yet use no such imitative effects. They reflect his investigation of compositional, light-based experimentation with abstract forms—in other words, with the basic possibilities of the photographic process—and in that respect are faithful to Moholy–Nagy's experimental approach.[342] In any case, it is a limited number of photograms.[343]

In 1936, again in *Natura*, Munari published a photogram titled *Fra due mondi*, which hints at a new direction that was partially related to his previous work with surreal landscapes, but now use exclusively organic forms (plant bits, insects, mineral fragments).[344] Similar photograms were published a few months later to accompany an article Munari himself wrote for *La Lettura*.[345] These experiments not only signal his new interest in natural textures, but, specifically with regard to photographic media, looked back to the late nineteenth-century photographic impressions made without a camera, by placing plant forms directly on the light-sensitive support.[346]

Finally, another photographic procedure with formal parallels to the photogram that Munari tried out, however briefly, is also worth mention: negative printing, or the inversion of the image made from a slide. Aside from its occasional presence in his photomontages, just one composition of this type is known, and was published in 1943 to accompany one of his articles in *Fotografare*,[347] while a second, similar image appeared in 1944 in *Fotocronache*.[348]

Munari also used photographic means, albeit only occasionally, for magazine covers (aside from the specific context of *L'Ala d'Italia*), with results that not only attest to his constant visual investigations, but also elude any risk of repetitiveness. An early, highly original image for *Natura* dates all the way back to late '32, and shows a close-up of a knit fabric, which then transforms into an abstract motif and material texture, within which the title was created, much like an inversion, by cutting the letters out of another photograph.[349] His

342. Moholy-Nagy: 'Les photogrammes doivent être créés à partir de leurs moyens propres et premiers, leur composition ne faire apparaître et ne signifier rien d'autre qu'eux mêmes' (from 'Fotoplastiche Reklame' in *Offset Buch und Werbekunst* no.7, 1926: 386–94, cit).

343. *Suoni, Umidità dell'aria, Costellazioni reproduced* in the cited issues of *Natura* and *L'Ufficio Moderno*, as well as *Alcool* (where it was also reproduced).

344. *Natura* IX; 11–12 (November–December 1936): 64. The image depicts two stylised human figures of different sizes on a background made with the veins of a leaf and other linear plant parts. Regarding Man Ray, Munari seems to have preferred organic forms with imprecise outlines.

345. Bruno Munari, 'Che cosa sono i fotogrammi e come si fanno' in *La Lettura* XXXVII; 4 (April 1937): 352–5. In the article (which takes up ideas from similar writings by Moholy-Nagy, cf. *UHU*, 1928 and *Kinematograph*, 1929) Munari summarily yet clearly explains his technical procedure, emphasising its aesthetic value: 'The photogram is a new artistic medium that can be grouped with woodcut, drypoint, monotype, etc., but it is closer to the modern sensibility because it is full of unexpected effects. When you make photograms, you view the world in transparency'. In addition to his *Due insetti su un pezzo di mica* and *Insetto e fili d'erba*, the article also features photograms by Ricas, the wife of architect Luigi Figini, and Dilma (Munari's wife).

346. This refers to the 'photogenic drawings' of William Henry Fox Talbot (1835–1839). In the nineteenth century, photographic procedures without the use of the camera were used solely for documentary or entertainment purposes, not as artistic procedures (cf. Molderings 2009: 16–7). During this same period Veronesi was also interested in photographic experiments with organic materials.

347. Bruno Munari, 'Fotografie col pennello' in *Numero unico: Fotografare*, Milan: Agfa Foto, February 1943: 9–11. 16×23 cm. This was a unique issue sent only to subscribers to complete (along with another unique issue of Pose Istantanee) the final year of the magazine *Note Fotografiche*, which ended with the 10 April 1942 issue by ministerial decree. In addition to Munari's photographs, the article is illustrated with a reversed print by Albe Steiner.

348. Bruno Munari, *Fotocronache. Dall'isola dei tartufi al qui pro quo*. Milan: Editoriale Domus, 1944: 72. These are clearly two shots from the same series, given that the contain practically the same objects, many of which are in the same position relative to the others.

349. *Natura* V; 11–12 (November/December 1932). 26×34 cm (cf. Di Corato 2008: 220).

|41| photomontage for the cover of *La Lettura* in the summer of 1937 was no less stunning, and once again exhibits his interest in material perception and the synthetic capabilities of a sophisticated conceptual image.[350] Lastly, at the other extreme of the broad repertoire of manipulations photomontage underwent in Munari's hands, |91| the cover for the *Almanacco Letterario Bompiani 1938* is worth special mention. This was a monographic issue dedicated to the passing of Luigi Pirandello, and featured a photomontage created through overlapping on top of a portrait of the writer, in a visual translation of the Pirandellian myth of characters in search of an author.[351]

The amateur aspect of a parallel photographic practice (shared by many artists of that generation) allowed Munari to follow his surrealist inclinations even in photographic portraiture, with the most original |88| outcome being a series of humourous self-portraits in absurd costumes, apparently taken in a rural setting, perhaps on visits to his family in Badia Polesine.[352] Munari took constant pleasure in playing in front of the lens, even in the postwar period, and sometimes did so with photographer friends like Patellani and Ballo. At the same time Munari carried out abstract experiments begun with his work in the photogram, which were quite close to the work |92| of his friend Veronesi: one such work, *Studio per film astratto*—a colour photograph of moving objects (probably one of his useless machines)—was included in *Fotografia*, the annual published by Domus in 1943.[353]

From propaganda to documentary style

The propagandist photomontages Munari made for *L'Ala d'Italia* deserve separate consideration, and were largely inspired by constructivist models. The magazine, which primarily dealt with technical issues, awards, and aeronautical events, targeted a diverse readership consisting of military staff and aviation enthusiasts, and the unbreakable link between aviation and Fascism is reflected in the nationalistic tone of its content.[354] Because of its obvious modern connotations, flight was an important meeting point with Futurism—just think

350. *La Lettura* XXXVII; 7 (July 1937). 19×28 cm.

351. *Almanacco Letterario Bompiani 1938*. Milan: Bompiani, 1937. 21×28 cm, paperback, pp.(lxiv) 160. Munari is amongst the many compilers, along with Zavattini and Bompiani, Corrado Alvaro, Raffaele Di Muro, Stefano Landi, Guido Piovene, and Mario Robertazzi. In addition to the cover (a duotone print), he did the layout, which is sober and classical but also articulated, with a few asymmetrical openings.

352. Based on information provided by the artist, Tanchis confirms that Munari enjoyed dressing up in costume and taking such photographs when he returned to Badia Polesine on holiday, where he also photographed friends and relatives, around the mid-thirties. Although occasionally reproduced in works on his career (Aldo Tanchis, in conversation with author, December 2007 and January 2008; see also the catalogue *Bruno Munari. Opere 1930–1986* (edited by Meneguzzo); Lichtenstein, Häberli 1995; *Ricostruzione teorica di un artista 1996*) the photographs were never published, with the exception of a portrait of his brother Giordano, included in *Fotocronache*): the originals belong to the Munari family, but a few prints can be found in the archives of the Fondazione Ferrania 3M in Milan.

353. Ermanno Federico Scopinich, Alfredo Ornano, Albe Steiner (ed.), *Fotografia. Prima rassegna dell'attività fotografica in Italia*. Milan: Editoriale Domus, 1943. The book opens with an essay by Scopinich ('Considerazioni sulla fotografia italiana'), two essays by Ornano ('Tecnica di ripresa', 'Riproduzione nella fotografia a colori') and a text by Patellani ('Il giornalista nuova formula'). The graphics were edited by Albe Steiner. In the index Munari is portrayed in one of his typically humourous poses (Zannier 1978: 77, 80; Paoli 1999: 99–100; Pelizzari 2010: 98).

354. In 1922 *L'Ala d'Italia* (originally called *Gazzetta dell'Aviazione*) adopted its new name, inspired by a famous speech D'Annunzio gave at the Roman airfield at Centocelle, 'L'Ala d'Italia è liberata' (Schnapp 2008: 145). After the creation of the Aeronautical Ministry in 1923, the magazine allied itself with the regime: from 1929 to 1933, coinciding with Balbo's ministry, the cover featured the omnipresent fasces, and in '34 the subtitle changed to 'Periodico nazionale dell'aviazione fascista' (National periodical of Fascist aviation) and 'Nata in 1919 per volontà di Benito Mussolini' (Created in 1919 under the will of Benito Mussolini); in '35 its ties to the regime grew even stronger, with the publisher's move to the Ministero dell'aeronautica in Rome (see Silk 1996: 47–8, 73n; Schnapp 2008: 146).

of aeropainting. The beginning of Munari's (and Ricas's, occasional as it was) collaboration with the magazine dates back to 1932, and coincides with the redesign of its graphic look, which brought in a few modernist typographic innovations and gave more space to photography; the new editorial approach also called for political and artistic current events columns related to aviation. Although nothing was signed or credited as such in the colophon, in various issues from '32 there are changes to the
|93| layout of the main articles that reasonably indicate his participation. In such exercises Munari aimed to enliven the page through a more dynamic organisation of photos and texts, most often obtained through the use of diagonals and unusual cropping for the images (sometimes with painterly additions), in which one can clearly see an early attempt at approaching the layout through two-page spreads.[355] Such work was often uncertain, but was evidently inspired—aside from Soviet examples known only second-hand—by the celebratory volume *L'Italia fascista che avanza*, published the same year by the Istituto L.U.C.E. (on the occasion of the *Mostra della Rivoluzione fascista*) where the anonymous designer made ample use of photomontage and must have given a great deal of ideas to Munari.[356]

So, begining in the spring of '33 Muna-
|93| ri made his first mixed-media photomontages, combining photographic and drawn elements, in which he appears to waver between constructivist and aeropictorial influences, once again in search of a visual language that could be defined, modern, and accessibile at once.[357] In general, when his compositions accompany current-event articles—even though as a whole they maintain a degree of stylistic cohesion—they do not stray from the conventional approach of merely illustrative support material. In 1934 the magazine began the publication of a series of contributions by artists and intellectuals on the subject of 'mass-theatre'—a controversial 'total spectacle' promoted by Mussolini and staged in Florence in April 1934[358]—whose illustrations were in many cases done by Munari. He drew inspiration from relevant passages in the text, approaching the illustrations freely, often with the use of collage: for example, for Marco Ramperti's article 'L'aviatore come personaggio' (February 1934) a drawing, a mosaic of photographs, a photo completed by a comic illustration, and a collage of evocative, surreal images were strung together.[359] In other cases, some variants were tried out, such as overlapping schematic line drawings and aerial photographs, or collaging photographic images cut into the shapes of various objects.[360]

355. See for example the articles 'Gli 'Oceanici' a convegno' in *L'Ala d'Italia* XI; 5 (22 May 1932): 2–13; 'La settimana azzurra romana' ivi XI; 6 (23 June 1932): 10–21; 'L'Armata azzurra' ivi XI; 12 (22 December 1932): 54–5; 'Evoluzione della guerra' ivi XII; 3 (March 1933): 32–6; 'L'aviazione nelle Colonie Africane Francesi and il prossimo 'raid' del Generale Wuillemin' ivi XII; 10 (October 1933): 33–40.

356. *L'Italia fascista in cammino*. Rome: Istituto Nazionale L.U.C.E., 1932. Octavo, pp. (xvi) 239 (with 516 photographs). Cf. Zannier 1978: 62. Similar cues came from the contemporary work of Paladini, who, in addition to publishing photomontages, also worked on the layout of the magazines *Occidente* and *Quadrivio*.

357. Interesting examples appear with the articles 'Il turismo aereo' in *L'Ala d'Italia* XII; 4 (April 1933): 66–9; 'Sesto Calende e il 55 x' ivi XII; 7–8 (July–August 1933): 96; 'Ogni epoca ha le sue macchine' ivi XII; 12 (December 1933): 10; 'L'aviazione sovietica' and 'Parla Lindbergh: basta trimotori! Risponde Fokker: distinguiamo!' ivi XII; 10 (October 1933): 25–6 and 46–7 respectively.

358. Regarding this extraordinary theatrical experiment see Schnapp 1996. For a list of the various articles published through April '35 on the relationships between theatre and aviation, see Schnapp 2008: 162n.

359. *L'Ala d'Italia* XIII; 2 (February 1934): 37–40. Cf. Schnapp 2008: 148.

360. See 'Il teatro di massa e l'aviazione' in *L'Ala d'Italia* XIII; 12 (December 1934): 21–4, and 'Il Teatro di Massa e l'aviazione. Risposta a Ramperti' ivi XIV; 1 (January 1935): 41–4.

As demonstrated by recent criticism, these collages—far from being simple artistic fantasies—played a part in the general propagandist climate of the time. Nevertheless, beyond their questionable political alignment, such an interpretation risks losing sight of the fact that Munari's main interest lay in visual languages, and that because of their fantastical or parody-like style these illustrations certainly do not fall within the conservative canons promoted by the regime, and instead seem calculated solely to enliven banal or dry texts.[361]

The discussion changes when it comes to compositions that explicitly celebrate Fascism's accomplishments: Munari actually did create a fair number of celebrative photomontages and layouts to show off propagandist themes, at least up until '36. In these cases the photomontages, included in articles or as illustrations unrelated to any text, were done in a resolutely constructivist manner. As in the April 1933 issue, where his hand can be seen in a photomontage that opens a summary of the celebrations held on the tenth anniversary of the Fascist ministry, which projected images of Mussolini and Balbo atop the air force lined up on the field, all framed in a large x (to indicate the year of the Fascist era, as was standard).[362] Other eloquent examples can be found in the following issues, like the July/August issue, dedicated to Balbo's transatlantic flight, which included no fewer than four celebratory aeropictorial illustrations;[363] while later photomontages adopt different solutions taken directly from Soviet examples, like in 'L'anno che finisce' (December 1936), where the detail of hands raised in a Roman salute, through which we catch a glimpse of the crowd, is proof that Munari knew of the installations designed for the *Mostra della Rivoluzione fascista* (Giuseppe Terragni's 'sala O' in particular), and had indirect knowledge of Klutsis's famous posters.[364] It must be said, however, that this type of photomontage appears to be of a lower quality than his other work, with occasionally mediocre or uncertain works next to compositions that are more interesting for their dynamic balance or unusual combinations.[365]

In any case, by the mid-thirties there is also a clear change in the content of the propagandist material, and constructivist-inspired photomontage gradually gives way to work on the layout, as a result of increased attention to the possibilities of typo/photographic composition: in this sense his work for articles like 'Il comandamento del Fondatore' (June/July 1934), 'Nuove forze giovanili dell'aviazione italiana' (February 1936), 'L'aviatore Mussolini' (September 1936), and 'L'anno che finisce' (December 1936) are interesting

361. Gerald Silk was the first researcher to question the reductive, purely aesthetic reading of these compositions, and by juxtaposing the images and the articles' content he proved their primary function was to support the propaganda expressed in the texts (Silk 1989, 1996; cf. Schnapp 2008).

362. '28 marzo 1933' in *L'Ala d'Italia* XII; 4 (April 1933): 8–9. The photomontage is not signed, but is certainly attributable to Munari, who also published other photomontages in the same issue (66–9). The custom of listing the names of illustrators at the bottom of the table of contents hadn't yet been adopted by the editors.

363. *L'Ala d'Italia* XII; 7–8 (July/August 1933). Munari and Ricas made various non-text-related contributions: a photomontage on a two-page spread, 'Aviazione italiana = massa' (34–5), a composition titled 'Italo Balbo' (38) and another for the article 'Disciplina dell'Impresa e del Capo' (39), the aeropictorial photomontage 'I cento soldati di Balbo' (p.48) and 'Du-ce, Du-ce, Du-ce' (88). Cf. Silk 1996: 48–53.

364. Federigo Valli 'L'Anno che finisce' in *L'Ala d'Italia* XV; 12 (December 1936): 10–7. The layout is particularly interesting in that, next to the central photomontage (14–5), it contains two images set according to the dynamic composition of the photographs.

365. Among the less convincing examples are the illustrations 'Aviazione italiana = massa' in *L'Ala d'Italia* XII; 7–8 (July/August 1933): 34–5, cit.; 'L'Italia deve raggiungere il Primato aviatorio' ivi XIII; 4 (April 1934): 2; 'Guerra' and 'I primi aviatori erano padroni del mondo' ivi XIII; 6–7 (June/July 1934): 89, 112.

for their use of the two-page spread.[366] But other contemporary works show a further stylistic jump toward documentary-style layouts, based on photographic sequences that tend to become more independent than the texts, which are often reduced to minimal length. His first work of this sort dates back to '35, with a long geopolitical
|99| reportage on Eritrea, in which the photographs still accompany the article, albeit in a lively layout;[367] those were followed in
|100| '36 by various articles set up as short photojournalistic essays,[368] that sometimes assumed the look of bona fide cinemato-
|101| graphic sequences, like 'Atterraggio', which appeared in the current events column of the August issue.[369] The series of photo-
|102| graphic illustrations published in *La Rivista Illustrata del Popolo d'Italia* in April 1936, dedicated to autarchic policies in response to international sanctions, show a similar tendency.[370] In the section on the XVII Fiera di Milano Munari created 7 double illustrations illustrating some of the key sectors of national manufacturing: the images are macrophotographic enlargements of raw materials with touches of colour (that recall the colours of the flag…) on black-and-white photos, while the other side shows a different photo without any retouching.

This venture into documentary, perhaps arrived at from the editors' photographic material, can in any case be related to Munari's contemporary research on movement in sculpture (with his *useless* and *arhythmic machines*) as well as his reflections on the structure of printed matter, which riff on cinematographic principles.[371] Curiously, all this seems to have happened simultaneously to his adoption of surrealist collage as a peculiar style for entertaining illustrations: in other words, both options—the surrealist vein, tied to themes of escape, and the documentary vein, tied to propaganda—constituted a two-pronged solution to the risk of getting stuck in earlier formulas made increasingly rigid by the changing political climate.

|103| 'Udite! Udite!' (Hear, Hear!), published in the *Almanacco antiletterario Bompiani 1937*, is a bona fide hybrid of celebratory photomontage and photographic series. It is an articulated sequence of photomontages commented upon by quotes taken from Mussolini's speeches, and its technical distinction lies in a circular punch or cut-out through which you catch a glimpse of Mussolini's face, thereby creating a kind of double screen—a crossed projection aimed at replicating the effect of a cinematographic montage. Munari could have obtained a similar effect by reproducing a photo of Il Duce on each page, but the hole in the sheet creates a physical interaction that is more surprising for the reader. The 16-page signature opens and

366. In *L'Ala d'Italia* XIV; 6–7 (June/July 1934): 2–3; ivi XV; 2 (February 1936): 16–21; ivi XV; 9 (September 1936): 10–1; and ivi XV; 12 (December 1936): 10–7, respectively.

367. Arnaldo Cipolla, 'Eritrea italiana' in *L'Ala d'Italia* XIV, 4 (April 1935): 14–26.

368. See for instance 'Attualità aviatoria' in *L'Ala d'Italia* XV; 7 (July 1936): 33–48. The section consists of several short articles, including: 'Arma aerea/Civiltà romana/Segno ammonitore/Pace romana' (33–5), 'Gorrahei piana del sole' (36–7), 'Verso l'avvento delle fanterie aeree' (42–3), 'Con l'aviazione alla testa le truppe…' (44–5), 'Nostalgie somale' (46).

369. *L'Ala d'Italia* XV; 8 (August 1936): 33–40. Again here the column is subdivided into one- and two-page photoreportage: 'Atterraggio' (34–35), 'Turismo fotoaereo' (36), 'Vertigine della fotoacrobatica' (37), 'Da 12.000 metri' (38–9).

370. *La Rivista Illustrata del Popolo d'Italia* XIV; 4 (April 1936). B/w photo ill. printed on both sides, with duotone overprinting on the recto. The subjects depicted are: wool and artificial fibres for textile production (100–1, 124–5), wheat grains for the agricultural sector, lab instruments for the chemical industry, a microscopic enlargement of a reaction for the electrochemical sector, gears and mechanical parts for the iron and steel industry (156–7), wood shavings for the furniture sector (160–1).

371. This refers to two articles by Munari, 'Ritmi grafici' (published in *Campo grafico*, May/June 1937) and 'Tipografia' (published in *La Lettura*, May 1937), cit.

closes with a starry sky, against which the image of a microphone stand out just be- |104| low the title, while the second and penultimate pages feature a sequence of images of Mussolini in different poses as he harangues the crowd, which is visible through the opening onto the following pages. The sequence deals with current issues in Fas- |105| cist politics, from autarchic demands and claims against the League of Nations to the proclamation of a colonial empire, from relations with Germany to the military intervention in Spain, from satire of enemy nations (England, France, the United States) to a critique of the capitalist and Soviet systems, from a eulogy on Japanese expansionism to the exaltation of physical activity…[372] Without a doubt, it was a bravura piece, not so much for its unique photocompositions (of ultimately questionable value) as for its use of the cinematographic concept of the sequence, which was a success. It is decidedly more difficult to catch the irony that Munari more recently spoke of as the real intent of those photomontages, despite their apparent exultation of Mussolini: 'You could not avoid doing these homages (…) But you could create some veiled satire, which was allowed because it was not understood'.[373] But such intent to revolt cannot really be found in the Bompiani publication or anywhere else, much less at that precise historic juncture—and anyway, it has been repeatedly denied by many of his contemporaries, including Zavattini.[374]

As proof of Munari's growing interest in visual narratives, the '37 edition of the *Almanacco* contained another humourous photosequence, titled 'Crisi interiore ovvero una giornata spesa bene' (Inner Crisis: or, A Day Well Spent). It features photos by Gianni Calvi, but Munari was certainly the brain behind the piece, and perhaps also wrote the captions that ironically comment upon the images.[375] This can be grouped with the storyboard *L'amore è un lepidottero* (Love is a Lepidopteran), which Munari published in 1941 in another literary almanac, the *Tesoretto*.[376] Be that as it may, his interest in the communicative possibilities of the unmanipulated photographic image anticipated the photojournalistic work published soon thereafter in the Mondadori-owned *Tempo*, where Munari was art director from 1939 to '43.[377] The original humourous articles Munari published there were equally characterised by the investigation of narrative through photographic means, and were later collected into a volume titled *Fotocronache*, published by Editoriale Domus in 1944, after *Tempo* was shuttered.[378]

372. 'Udite! Udite!' in *Almanacco antiletterario Bompiani 1937*, cit.: 65–80. The titles of the individual illustrations are: Udite! Udite! (65), Duce (66), L'Italia è un'isola (67), Ginevra (68), A.O. (Africa Orientale) (69), Olimpiadi di Berlino (70), Spagna (71), Inghilterra (72), Giappone (73), URSS (74), America (75), Francia (76), Io non amo i sedentari (77), Annunci (78), Duce (79), Cielo stellato (80).

373. Munari 1976: 11.

374. '(…) none of us ever did political satire in those glorious days, it did not even cross our minds, nor did we have any desire to, under the eyes of the Minculpop [Ministero della cultura popolare, the Ministry of popular culture]. If anything we liked to create work on the verge of the absurd, stray a bit, talk about other things, but it was not possible to throw punches at Mussolini' (Zavattini in C. Carabba, 'La bussola satirica di Zavattini' in *Paese Sera*, Rome, 11/02/1977; cit. in Carpi 2002: 84).

375. *Almanacco antiletterario Bompiani 1937*, cit.: 118–24. The photos are by Gianni Calvi.

376. *Il Tesoretto. Almanacco dello 'Specchio'* 1942. Verona: Mondadori, 1942: 290–5. The sequence's subtitle is *Cortometraggio a colori* and consists of 29 photograms accompanied by a description of the action. Schnapp hypothesises that it was a storyboard for an animated short that was planned but never realised by Munari and the Cossio brothers: given the use of montage in the images, the project likely dates back to the mid-thirties, perhaps 1937, as the absence of Ricas might suggest (Schnapp 2008: 154; and correspondence with the author, December 2010).

377. Cf. Schnapp 2008: 149–50, 154.

378. Bruno Munari, *Fotocronache*. Milan: Editoriale Domus, 1944. Cf. review in *Domus* no.201 (1944).