

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

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- A. Statements on topics related to the subject of the dissertation
- 1. Bruno Munari's figure is an exemplary case study to better understand Italian modernist developments in graphic design.
- 2. Italian modernism grew out of the interplay of advertising, Futurism, and rationalist architecture: the outcome however turned out to be a modernism of its own kind.
- 3. Under the fascist regime, the new constructivist aesthetic was assimilated only in its formal aspects, leaving all social components out of the picture.
- 4. Lacking a unifying theory, Italian graphic artists like Munari went along gropingly, by trial and error, sometimes pulling together contrasting idioms.
- 5. Notwithstanding his accommodation to Fascism, a progressive social utopia sustained Munari's artistic activities in the postwar period.
- 6. Munari's creative workshops for children assume an explicit ideological (utopian) connotation that makes him one of the most radical Italian designers of the 20th century.
 - B. Statements on topics related to the area of study
- Despite its mainstream status, the constructivist paradigm is but one version of modernism in 20th century graphic design: France and England, for instance, were notable exceptions. Fascist Italy too had its own special way to Modernity.
- Munari's career was shaped by both Futurism and Constructivism: the futurist aesthetic guided 8. his formal research, while the modernist attitude brought a progressive ideological dimension to it.
- 9. Modern Italian graphic design is defined by the intimate connection with the fine-arts milieu, and can best be described as a spontaneous achievement by a group of self-taught artists.
- 10. In the 1960s art criticism imposed its own methodologies and language on Italian design historiography: as a consequence, most of the existing literature is anecdotal, romanticising, and abstruse.
- 11. It has been argued that Munari is the only designer of his generation that did not succeed in 'making money.'
 - C. Statements on more general topics
- 12. Italy is a country that never saw any revolution happen (Branzi 2008): this fact is reflected in the continuing oscillation between modernity and tradition.
- 13. Italians' general indifference to politics is a legacy of Croce's Idealism, and evidence of backwardness.