MAKING THE MODERN FOUNTAIN PEN

AURORA'S *HASTIL* AND ITS GLOBAL INFLUENCE

NICHOLAS ADAMS

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Introduction

Handwriting is intimate. We apologize for our illegible script, creating trouble for others. Or take silent pride in the ripple of words that perfectly expresses our thoughts. At one time neat handwriting was thought to be an indicator of good character, the dominance of rational faculties over animal instinct. Perhaps we still live with a residue of that idea. We carefully pick the tools we use: the pencil with soft or hard lead; the ballpoint pen with a choice of colored inks; we may choose a fountain pen. "Nice pen," someone says when we drag it from our bag or pull it from our pocket. It feels like a very personal compliment. And we pick paper and tool to match the task: grocery list, business letter, love note. Writing with our "wrong" hand seems like an unbidden stammer, or worse: it's just not *us*. An exhibition about a pen is invariably more than just a story of design.

Hastil, the fountain pen at the center of this exhibition, is a special object. Designed in 1968–69 for the Aurora company in Turin by Marco Zanuso (1916–2001), an Italian architect and industrial designer, and Richard Sapper (1932–2015), a German industrial designer, it is the first pen to fulfill the design principles of the modern movement; it is the only fountain pen in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art in New York. It is also a work of its time, brushed by contemporary debates in Italy around a group of artists known collectively as Arte Povera. Fifty-five years after its introduction in December 1970, its continuing popularity (it is still in production) and its influence on pen design throughout the world has much to say about design and technology, and about modernity and international taste.[1] Indeed, this exhibition is about more than just a single fountain pen.

Previous pages and above: Marco Zanuso and Richard Sapper, Hastil fountain pen for Aurora, 1970.

Fountain Pens and Ballpoints

The great historian of medieval technology, Lynn White, observed that new technology "merely opens a door, it does not compel one to enter."[2] White's principle has been criticized as overly simple, even inaccurate where he applied it—but the study of fountain pens affirms its utility. Although there are many reasons for using a fountain pen, its endurance as a portable writing instrument entails the rejection of the typewriter and the ballpoint pen, two modern technologies that overcome many of the deficiencies of the fountain pen. What keeps the fountain pen alive for written text is the gratification of laying ink on paper, of painting words, and the pleasure of owning a writing implement that represents one's taste. It is the special object that converts our ideas into personalized communication.

The typewriter replaced the factory-manufactured steel dip pen and the fountain pen at the end of the 19th century. Business preferred the legibility of a conventional typeface, the easy ability to make multiple copies, and the simplicity of filing identical sheets in different places. Speed was an advantage, too. An 1879 experiment concluded that a handwriter could produce between 25 and 50 words a minute, depending on skill and familiarity with the text.[3] Typing speed was expected to be around 60 words per minute ("and correct at that").[4] One typist could do the work of two or three handwriting copyists: second (or third) copies were made possible by carbon sheets set between white paper. Still, over the first four decades of the 20th century, the fountain pen held its own for personal use, leaks and accidents notwithstanding. When the Hungarian László Bíró invented the ballpoint pen in 1942, it marked the end of the fountain pen as a mass portable writing instrument. Ballpoint pens were cheap,

Lázló Biró,
first ballpoint pen,
the Birome, 1943.

functioned well on most paper, and they were adapted to the modern age, traveling safely on airplanes. Fountain pen manufacturers quickly developed their own ballpoint pens or acquired companies to make them. There was resistance—some banks, fearing forgery, for example, insisted customers sign checks with a fountain pen. And many school districts and some countries required elementary school students to use fountain pens as they learned to form their letters. But overall, the once-ubiquitous fountain pen faded from sight. It appeared, if at all, as a personal ornament, like a tie clip, a brooch, or a nice watch—a modest affectation. Today, the fountain pen comes out for an important contract, a book inscription, or an intimate condolence letter, and it remains a common graduation gift. International treaties and congressional bills are generally signed with fountain pens, but these are exceptional moments: the ballpoint pen and the roller ball, invented in 1946, have conquered all.

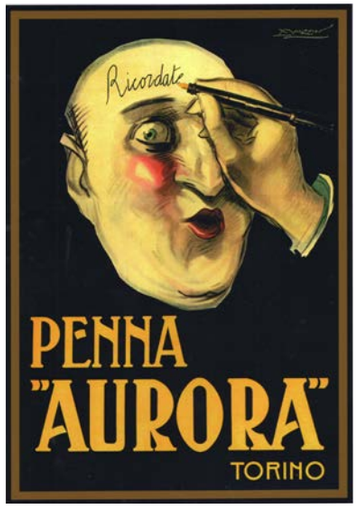
The ballpoint pen revolution fractioned the market for writing instruments. Plastic-barreled ballpoints, sold in packs of six, 12, or 24, could be stamped with advertising slogans and given away free of charge. To counteract the popularity of the ballpoint pen, fountain pen designers and manufacturers adapted new technologies. Injection molding increased material integrity, preventing leaks. The development of the plastic ink cartridge, widely in use by the mid-1950s, eliminated the need for bottled ink. (Glass cartridges had been used early in the century.) Enabling fountain pens to be carried on airplanes further proved their usefulness as a tool for modern times, though accidents were still possible and the remedies awkward. The Italian novelist Alberto Arbasino in *Fratelli d'Italia* (1963) reported that airline hostesses handed out "little envelopes of wax paper, because above a certain height the fountain pen became a real fountain, with ink spraying into

everyone's pockets."[5] Today, despite manufacturers' assurances (and encouraging YouTube videos), few are willing to risk a full fountain pen at 35,000 feet.

The exhibition will explain the meaning and significance of Aurora's Hastil in its own place and time and then show its design repercussions worldwide. Fountain pens are a luxury; alternatives are available; design matters. Historians in the future will wonder how and why this design fashion, of which Aurora's Hastil was the progenitor, held sway for so long. This exhibition is our chance to explore the topic for the first time.

Aurora and Design

Aurora's interest in advanced design goes back to a time when the fountain pen still ruled the market. Founded in 1919 in Turin by Isaia Levi as La Fabbrica Italiana Penne a Serbatoio ("the Italian Fountain Pen Factory"), Aurora's dedication to original design and technological innovation differentiated it from other Italian penmakers, according to Letizia Iacopini, author of the authoritative book on Italian pen-making.[6] Pens like the R.A. 2 were overlaid with gold and silver, for instance. Aurora also drew inspiration from much-admired American pens: their coral-colored Duplex pen of 1927 borrowed its form (color and name) from the Parker Duofold (introduced in 1921). Turin was the center of the Italian automobile industry (Fiat, Lancia, Alfa Romeo, Ferrari), and Aurora capitalized on locals' engineering skills to assemble a brilliant team of technical experts. They developed original filling systems, capless fountain pens such as the Asterope (with its retractable nib), and experimental steel alloy nibs that responded like highly prized gold nibs. Aurora also developed "granular" ink to be sprinkled into the barrel: just add



Achille Luciano Mauzan, poster, 1922–24

Carlo Biscaretti di Ruffia, poster, 1926

water! They even hired witty graphic artists, such as Mauzan and Biscaretti della Ruffia to advertise their pens.

In the 1920s and 1930s, Aurora positioned itself as "la penna italiana" to echo the Fascist government's appeal to buy "Made in Italy." In 1926, Giuseppe Belluzzo, the minister for the national economy, attacked those who purchased imported goods as "disertori dell'economia nazionale." Every imported fountain pen, Aurora noted in advertising that recalled Fascist policy, "represents an authentic gold coin leaving Italy and a day of unemployment for a worker." Aurora advertising featured imperial eagles and the fasces associated with the Fascist party.[7] Later, to celebrate the government's colonial ambitions and its war in Abyssinia, Aurora developed Etiopia (1936), a pen that exploited "the wave of enthusiasm fueled by government propaganda" for Italy's colonial wars. The use of Fascist iconography represented "a zero-cost promotional incentive…."[8] Levi and was declared exempt from Italy's racial laws (1938)—though later, as a precaution, he converted to Roman Catholicism and took refuge in the Vatican.[9]

Following the war, now led by the Verona family, Aurora refreshed their line of pens. The most popular fountain pen in stationery stores in America and Europe when the new ballpoint had arrived was the American-made Parker 51. It

reached the public in 1942 and was so popular that Parker had to "ration" delivery. The novelty of this pen was its design, dynamic in form: the barrel colors and silver or gold cap might have come from the palette of American Art Deco designers like Norman Bel Geddes or Raymond Loewy. The hooded nib offered a technological advance, too: it kept the point of the pen from drying out, and Parker introduced a new ink along with the pen so that you could "write dry with wet ink," as advertising in 1942 proclaimed. (Blotting paper, generally required for fountain pens, was not necessary.)


Geoff Hollington, Parker 51, 1941.

Aurora was one of the many Italian pen manufacturers to echo the design of the Parker 51. In 1946, they produced the Aurora 88. Its designer was Marcello Nizzoli (1887–1969), who, before World War II, had worked with the architect Edoardo Persico on the design of two retail shops for Parker in Milan (1935) and afterward designed typewriters for Olivetti (notably the super-thin Lettera 22 in 1950). Aurora 88 came in an elliptical aluminum case with an instruction sheet and a yellow polishing cloth. The "88" may be a reference to the sweeping curves craftsmen at Aurora made when they tested their nibs. Or an infinity sign on its side. To some, the name might even have recalled the 88th, the American infantry division that had fought its way north through Lombardy in 1945. The 88 became a status symbol during the


Marcello Nizzoli, Aurora 88 and metal pen case, 1946.

Marcello Nizzoli, Aurora 88, 1946.

Italian postwar economic miracle. By November 1952, helped by the short supply of Parker 51s, Aurora had sold one million 88s. They manufactured their own ink called Biflux, which had many of the qualities of the Parker quick-drying inks. Aurora's engineers also developed an original piston filling system for the pen, in which the internal seal on the piston was made of alternating rubber and felt pads. Parker—already popular in Italy—was a natural reference point for Italian fountain pen designers. Postwar, Parker stayed in the news; they sponsored exhibitions of contemporary Italian art in the United States and underwrote a prize for the return of the head of a statue from the Ponte Santa Trinita in Florence, lost after wartime bombing. Parker's role in Italy confirms the argument of the historian Victoria de Grazia about the penetration and influence of American products on the Italian market.[10]

The Aurora 88, with its possible reference to the pens of Italy's new American allies, represented the first effort to remake the company's reputation in liberated Italy. The 88 was superseded by the Duo-Cart (1954), which combined elements of another American pen, the Eversharp Fifth Avenue (1943–47), with the 88. "Duo-Cart" described the ability of the barrel to hold two plastic cartridges, and it also exemplified political change within Aurora. Nizzoli, who had designed the 88, had been closely linked with fascism—as an exhibition designer and as a collaborator in the decoration of Giuseppe Terragni's masterpiece, the Casa del Fascio in Como (1932–36). Aurora's choice of Albe Steiner (1913–1974 as the designer for the Duo-Cart also sent a significant political message, for Steiner was the grandson of one of Italy's anti-fascist heroes, Giacomo Matteotti, a left-wing politician murdered by Mussolini's henchmen in 1924. Steiner had joined the Communist Party in 1939 and participated in

partisan struggles against Nazis. (Steiner's brother, Mino, also active in the partisan movement, was deported from Milan to the concentration camp at Mauthausen, where he was killed.) In the years following, new pens and new designers would write a new history.

Milan as the Home of High Design

Though manufactured in Turin, Hastil was designed in Milan at the end of a period of startling postwar Italian economic growth—the so-called "miracolo economico." Prior to the war Milan had been the site of the most important international trade fair in Italy, the Fiera Campionaria. Italian and international manufacturers and buyers came to the city to purchase up-to-date stock for department stores (furniture, domestic accessories, etc.) from across Europe, Asia, and the Americas. Aurora regularly sent its representatives to the fairs there. In 1962, there were 4.3 million visitors and 14,000 vendors open for business.

Milan also established dominance in several sectors of fashion. It became home to major clothing brands such as Versace, Armani, Valentin, Prada, Dolce & Gabbana, Moschino, and Moncler. Milan and Milanese firms excelled in contemporary furniture and interior design: not just couches, chairs, and tables but lamps, place settings, plates, and glasses. Designers like Vico Magistretti, Gio Ponti, Achille Castiglioni, Carlo Mollino, Gae Aulenti, Mario Bellini, Afra and Tobia Scarpa, and Franco Albini were working for firms like Cassina (founded 1946), Kartell (founded 1949), Arflex (founded 1950), and Artemide (founded 1960). Milan became the center of "industrial design," a new professional category in Italy. The Associazione per il Disegno Industriale (ADI) was founded in Milan in 1956; comparable American

Richard Sapper, Artemide, Tizio desk lamp, 1972.

associations go back to the 1920s. The first Italian exhibition dedicated to industrial design was held at the Triennale in Milan in 1954, and along with the annual Fiera Campionaria, Milan became an important sales point for Italian designers as well as a place for them to learn international trends and tastes. As Ernesto Nathan Rogers, an important architect and editor of the architectural design magazine *Casabella*, wrote in May 1960, urging architects and designers to take up the tasks of the day: "From the spoon to the city, in all sectors in which art has the task of uniting beauty and utility in an inseparable synthesis, modern design must assume its responsibilities."[11] Spoons, cities, and pens. For Aurora (as for many firms tied to the Italian consumer market), Milan was the launching point for national and international success.

Zanuso and Sapper were at the center of these developments—Zanuso had trained as an architect but had an early affinity for exhibition and industrial design, and he embodied the virtues outlined by Rogers. Zanuso was also an admirer of Le Corbusier (1887–1965), one of the founders of the modern movement, and like the Swiss architect he was also an industrial designer.[12] He worked for the office equipment firm run by Adriano Olivetti, designing factories in Italy and abroad (Buenos Aires, 1960 and São Paulo, Brazil, 1961) as well as offices and housing in Italy. As an industrial designer he shaped furniture and sewing machines, telephones and chairs. Zanuso had collaborated with the painter Pietro Consagra (1920–2005) in the design of the park dedicated to Pinocchio in Collodi (1952–1971)—he was well acquainted with contemporary art.

Sapper had trained in Germany and settled in Milan where he worked for the architect Gio Ponti on the most prominent postwar skyscraper in Milan, the Pirelli Tower (1958). He also worked for Rinascente, the Milan department store, which took a leading role in modern design; his lamp for Artemide, the crane-like Tizio, was one of the first lamps to use a halogen bulb. Sapper was one of the major designers for Alessi, and for the furniture maker, Knoll. There are Sapper-designed computers (for IBM) and watches (Lorenz and Heuer). He won the Compasso d'Oro, the major Italian design award, multiple times. Zanuso and Sapper were responsible for some of the most prominent post-war designs.

Broadly speaking, Zanuso offered artistic leadership; Sapper provided the technical and practical expertise—but as in every true collaboration, the lines of responsibility overlapped. The pair also engaged theoretical issues around design: Their Model 201 television, for example, appears as a black acrylic cube when turned

Richard Sapper, Alessi, espresso coffee pot, 9090, 1978.

Zanuso and Sapper, Brionvega, Radio Cubo ts502, 1962.

Zanuso and Sapper, Siemens–SIP, Grillo telephone, 1966.

Zanuso and Sapper, Brionvega Black ST201, 1969.

off; when turned on, the entire face is lit. As Zanuso noted in commentary for an exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City: Instead of a dialogue between spectator and object, a surreal tension would be created. When switched off, the object is an abstract thing that holds you at a distance; when on, it vanishes and is replaced only by an image.

Zanuso and Sapper were alert to theoretical developments in the visual arts generally. In recognition of this bright period of Milanese (and Italian) design, the Museum of Modern Art organized an exhibition entitled *Italy: The New Domestic Landscape* (1972). Twenty-one years later (1993), the museum held an exhibition focused solely on the work of Zanuso and Sapper.

Arte Povera and Modernism: Unexpected Bedfellows

The design of Hastil brought together two seemingly divergent artistic and architectural movements: the Modernism of 1920s Germany and France and the Italian artistic trend of the 1960s and 1970s. We associate machine symbolism and simplified geometries with Modernism—the works of Walter Gropius, Le Corbusier, and Mies van der Rohe. Modernism is defined by the programs of the Bauhaus (1919), Le Corbusier's *Vers une architecture* (1927), and in the highly abstract designs of Mies van der Rohe. Zanuso was an admirer of Le Corbusier, especially. Arte Povera, by contrast, was a trend—really a group of artists linked together by the critic Germano Celant in the late 1960s and

1970s that aimed to reduce art to the bare minimum, bringing it back to its archetypes, to its essentials. For some, this involved using debris and trash as the basis for their work (Michelangelo Pistoletto), or earth, or hardware and plumbing materials (Alighiero Boetti). It is a trend of contradictions, a group with little in common besides the label invented by the critic: anti-commercial and ironic, violent and political, too, and then at other times, none of the above.[13] That Hastil, a piece of commercial industrial design, should be connected to Arte Povera might seem, at first, improbable. Even so, elements of Arte Povera artists seep their way into the design process, offering contemporary adjacency that may well have stimulated formal possibilities. The designer Achille Castiglioni, for example, could design the most elegant of modern floor lamps, the Arco (1962) and in the same year design a floor lamp, the Toio, using automobile headlights: Modernism and Art Povera were adjacent. Though no visual evidence survives, it is said that the model of the pen Zanuso and Sapper first sent to Aurora was no more than a single rolled sheet of aluminum-faced paper of the sort once found covering cigarettes in their box.[14] To this they attached a conventional fountain pen clip.[15] What seemed like an accident ("what we had on hand") was surely deliberate, an allusion to the trash and debris favored by some of the Arte Povera artists: By rejecting the complex designs and expensive materials that Aurora (and other manufacturers) had used for their pens, they expressed their radical intention to make a modern metal pen, thin, undecorated, and most importantly, straight-sided.[16] This was the basis of a more detailed model made from a thin (8mm) PVC tube sheathed in silver paper made by the designer Paolo Orlandini in the Zanuso studio.[17] Embedded in those choices, from the cigarette paper to the PVC rod model, a piece of hardware, there was also a com-

Parker 45,
Flighter, 1962.

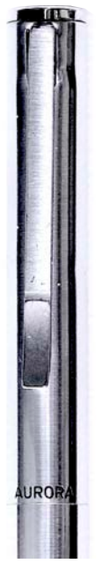
mercial idea, an evaluation of what Aurora needed to do to make a new and fresh pen.

Zanuso and Sapper must also have looked to Parker for inspiration as Aurora had done before the war with the Duplex pen and after the war with the 88. In 1949, Parker had introduced a new type of 51 with an all-steel body in a material they called Lustraloy, and named these metal pens Flighters. Like the original 51, they were aerodynamic in shape, with the brushed satin-metal body and cap alluding to an airplane fuselage.[18] They also introduced ballpoint pens in the same all-metal Flighter style. At 9 mm in diameter, the ballpoints were slimmer than any fountain pen on the market: "patrician and slim," according to a Parker advertisement from 1964. So from Modernism, Arte Povera and the Flighter, how do we get to Hastil?

Since no documents and no drawings have been released by Aurora, we can only consider the finished object.[19] Metal, substantially straight-sided and slim—similar pens had existed before, but they were just ink carriers "without style"; Hastil, as its name in Italian implies, "has style." The unornamented tube of Hastil linked Arte Povera and Modernism: the former interpreted the tube as reduced to an essence (or a prototype); the latter interpreted it as a geometric ideal. Though based on different theoretical propositions, they lead to identical formal conclusions.

† The tube was the foundation. The cap closely matches the diameter of the barrel to maintain the homogeneity of the form. (In most pens the cap has a greater diameter than the barrel.) The barrel is made from an original alloy called *ecosteel diamantato*, chromed and polished to a blurry finish.[20] It is a tube that will stand out against any natural background.

† Functions need to be expressed as concisely as possible. (The Modernist adage is that "form follows function.") The clip is distinct from the cap and not confused with it. Many pens terminate the clip in a ring that loops around the finial so that it can be locked in place. The Hastil clip is separate: it is just a clip on the cap. It is made from a gray-colored polished selenium that naturally has a slightly foggier surface than the barrel. Close examination shows the clip to consist of an angled tip (polished vertically) with a horizontal groove distinguishing it from the long arm of the clip (polished horizontally). The angled point facilitates the entry of paper under the clip; the arm holds the papers in place. The clip is set just below the end of the cap and extrudes from the barrel when in use; otherwise, it remains tight to the cap. Even at this level of intimate detail, the unified geometry is maintained.



Hastil, cap and clip
detail, 1970.

† The nib (what writes) is distinct from the barrel (what holds ink). Conventionally, nibs form a visual continuation of the line of the curve of the barrel: the nib spreads wide before narrowing to a point. In the Hastil, the folded shoulders of the nib wrap the feed and keep the nib visually distinct from the barrel. The nib, sometimes described as spear-like, could be compared to be a stylized Parker arrow.[21]

Hastil, clip detail,
1970.

Hastil, nib, feed and grip, 1970.

† Any interruption to the formal integrity of the barrel can only be justified by function: The plastic grip maintains the diameter of the barrel and marks where the pen would be held.

† At the end of the barrel, two rectangular windows have been cut out and plastic flanges inserted: These are the "freni," or "brakes." They have two jobs. Firstly, they keep the cap away from the surface of the barrel to prevent scuffing. (Scuffing had proven to be something of a problem on the Aurora 88.) Secondly, they hold the cap in place when the pen is posted. In keeping the cap away from the barrel, the brakes also prevent galling (or cold welding), caused when adjacent metals stick to one another.

We attribute the pen to Zanuso and Sapper. But can we drill into that attribution? Identifying a single "hand" or a pair of "hands" responsible for a work of industrial design, as we might do for a painting, is not realistic. Even buildings, conventionally ascribed

to a single architect, are the product of multiple conversations between the designers, engineers, craft workers, and suppliers. Industrial design has similar characteristics: material specialists, technical experts, and even marketing managers can influence the design. In the case of a pen like Hastil, for example, many (if not all) of the technical details were probably worked out by the engineers at Aurora. The designers set the principles and ensured that the details fulfilled the principles. Paolo Orlandini, who we met as the artificer of the PVC model and later directed his own design firm after leaving Zanuso, was probably critical. Aurora patented the filling system, as well as the brakes, the clip, the nib, and the fractional taper to the barrel that facilitates the meeting of barrel and cap. And a number of these details required extra (costly) work for the manufacturer: The brakes, in particular, require cutting out two holes in the barrel, the insertion of a tiny spring, and the placement of the brakes themselves. The hole could only be made after the chrome plating to ensure well-defined sharp edges without processing burrs or accumulations of chrome on the edges.[22] These details, costly as they are, are critical to sustaining the design principle. If there were elements on the pen that seemed inimical to the principles of concision, we might even doubt the existence of a controlling design principle. Instead, the consistency of the details confirms the principle. Quite reasonably, Aurora has highlighted the work of their engineers. The group had (they said) rethought every piece of the pen "in modo nuovo e originale" ("in a new

Hastil, barrel finial and "brakes," 1970.

Le Corbusier, Poissy, Villa Savoye, pilotis, 1928–1931.

and original manner"), as they noted in an advertisement of December 1970. But the originality of the shape of the nib, the clip, and the brakes only matter because they are part of a programmatic vision for the pen: "God," in the words attributed to the Modernist architect Mies van der Rohe, "is in the details."

Under the direction of Zanuso and Sapper, Aurora made a pen that respected the principles they had laid down. The unornamented barrel and cap recall Adolf Loos's noted article "Ornament and Crime" (1909), in which ornamentation is equated with degeneracy. The pen was a metal tube without color or textural variation. Le Corbusier's unornamented, baseless column, the "piloti," was one of the five essentials for modern architecture (he said) at the Villa Savoye in Poissy (1925–27). But the pen also recalls Alighiero Boetti's straight-side arte povera "Mazzo di tubi" ("Bunch of tubes") of 1966 or the "Colonne" ("Columns") of 1968. Furthermore, Hastil's lustrous chromed surface would neither patina nor age, remaining forever new, a realization of yet another of the dreams of the first Modernists: Modernism, they imagined,

would never age. Here was a piece of Modernist/Arte Povera hardware brought to a surprising aesthetic level of permanence.

Hastil is not, however, a naturally comfortable pen for everyone—further proof of its roots in Modernist design. The narrow barrel size (it varies from 8.45 to 9.2 mm) is problematic for people with large hands; a long thumbnail will bite into the finger wrapping around the grip from the other side. The ink capacity of the pen is also small, half that of the Parker 51, and, when set down without the cap, the pen rolls away easily. Modernism, however, is not only about the expression of function in form, but about machine logic, about asking users to conform to a mechanical ideal. "Une maison," wrote Le Corbusier in his treatise *Vers une architecture* (1927), "est une machine à habiter" ("a house is a machine for living in"). Here the exchanges between Aurora and the designers must have been intense. To Aurora's engineers (and to anyone with an eye for the market) these limitations must have seemed counterproductive: Why make an object uncomfortable or impractical for potential consumers? Zanuso and Sapper must have explained that the pen they were designing had to find its place in the context of Italian fashion: It needed to meet standards that experts in modern design would appreciate if it was to resonate in the market. Traditional black resin pens were perfectly comfortable—photographs from the 1950s show Le Corbusier using a (relatively conventional) Sheaffer Valiant fountain pen—but Zanuso and Sapper wanted to make a pen that respected architectural and design values.[23]

Alighiero Boetti, Mazzo di tubi, 1966

Achille and Pier Giacomo Castiglioni, Flos S.P.A., Arco lamp, 1962.

There was a local level of significance in Hastil, too. The choice of a polished straight metal tube recalled the metallurgical prowess of Milan and Turin and the reputation of Milanese furniture companies that employed metal tubes in chairs and tables and in extravangantly minimalistic lamps (Castiglioni, Arco, 1962) Simplified cutlery sets by Castiglione and Olga Finzi Baldi, the latter with a lustrous finish, suggest the reach of the fashion. Even motorcycles, immensely popular in postwar Italy and made in the Milan area, like the FB (FB Mondial) or the Moto Devil from nearby Bergamo, had exposed tubular exhaust pipes and engines. As an early symbol of youthful freedom, the appeal of the motorcycle was summed up in the aching lyrics of a popular song by Lucio Battisti, "Il tempo di morire" (1970), with its promise to give his beloved the prized motorcycle if she will swear her love: "Motocicletta, 10 HP/ Tutta cromata, è tua se dici: 'Sì.'" ("Motorcycle, 10 HP/ All chrome, it's yours if you say: 'Yes.'") To have an (old-fashioned) fountain pen that played in that realm of popular culture points to the hope of manufacturers to connect to the broadest market.

In 1970, when it came to advertising and selling the pen, Aurora dropped any reference to Arte Povera, as it wasn't relevant to selling and would have confused consumers. Instead, the advertisement compared Hastil to Milan's Pirelli Tower (Gio Ponti, 1956) as a symbol of modernity. The advertisement is in the tradition of the Modernist architectural treatises (like Le

"Hastil: The Need for a New Fountain Pen," advertisement, 1970.

Corbusier's *Vers une architecture*) in which a modern activity or object is compared to a traditional one. Here, Hastil = the Pirelli Tower = modernity is compared to an old-fashioned harness race at San Siro (Milan). Aurora also sold Hastil to industry. A black Hastil stamped "PIRELLI" is one of the survivors from a batch of pens ordered for executives at the tire company. A Hastil cap imprinted with the name IVECO, the commercial truck company of Fiat, the Turin car maker, suggests that other companies did the same. Hastil was a popular and recognizable "accessory" out in the market. There was something chic about it: an affordable work of art; industrial, yes, but artistic. The owner of Ercolessi, the major pen store in Milan, at the time, reported that people came in to ask for "the pen designed by Marco Zanuso."[24]

"Hastil," the name, also spoke of modern times and foreign places. In Italian an initial "h" is silent, so the name is difficult for most people. "La-Ástil" is the usual pronunciation. The name is a

compound of two Italian words: "ha" and "stil" (meaning "it has style"), but perhaps for an English-speaker "Hastil" could point to the English word "hastily." Hastil was a new pen for business efficiency and the consumer culture of fashionable Milan: machine speed, compelling and alienating at the same time. As Germano Celant noted in his comments on Arte Povera, "Appunti per una guerriglia (1967)" (Notes for a Guerilla): "First comes man, then the system, so it was in ancient times. Today it is society that produces, and man consumes."[25] Consumer art in replica, industrial design—fountain pens, lamps, coffee pots—was compelling because it was fashionable and potentially affordable, linking one to modernity; alienating because it was impersonal and sometimes well beyond people's means. Hastil also dates from the time of Michelangelo Pistoletto's (b. 1933) mirror "paintings" that prioritize reflection over substance, as the art historian Romy Golan has argued.[26] Hastil was such an object. It could have easily slipped into one of the films by Michelangelo Antonioni from the early 1960s (*La Notte,* 1961; *L'eclisse,* 1962) where "rooms become not so much spaces but object-filled cubicles."[27] Hastil could be that object sitting on a marble side table beneath the curve of a shiny and fashionable Arco lamp.

There is one further allusion offered by Hastil. Zanuso was deeply engaged in the transformative possibilities of industrial design. With his students he undertook exercises to reexamine prototypical objects: the students changed materials, dimensions, or altered preconditions to see what would result.[28] In an interview in 1971, Zanuso describes the process of designing Hastil and refers to his pedagogical practices.[29] "In decades of passive figurative repetition, the pen had become a torpedo, a missile, an explicit male symbol. I wanted to rediscover its feminine nature. Of course, it is not a basic necessity, but to achieve this

result, it took two years of research." The interpretation is reductive, to be sure, but looked at through Zanuso's lens, perhaps the barrel is a silver gown, the brakes black shoes, the nib the head of a woman with blond (or silver) hair, someone like Monica Vitti, the noted actress who interpreted Antonioni's female characters. Whatever else, Hastil does not look like the conventional "man in a suit," the somber businessman's black plastic or resin pen. And Zanuso's intentions are diametrically opposed to the Sheaffer Pen Company's "Pen for Men," the "PFM" (1959), with its troublingly anthropomorphic snorkel filling system. "Women's" pens, there were, too. In a period of gender stereotyping, the "Lady Sheaffer" seemed like a pen for a few notes at a luncheon club rather than a pen for business.[30] Hastil's modern elegance seems largely beyond conventional period gender stereotyping.

"She's Writing with the Exciting New Lady Sheaffer," advertisement, USA, 1959.

Hastil was sold in a brushed aluminum presentation case, a hinged cylinder (210 mm x 55 mm in diameter) with a hole on the upside. It is a piece of miniature architecture itself, recalling the exhaust towers on Le Corbusier's Unité d'Habitation in Marseille (1952) or the cylindrical staircase Louis Kahn designed for the Yale Center for British Art at Yale University, New Haven (from 1965). The black plastic interior holds Hastil like a tool in its box. Riccardo Murrau identifies the designer as the Milanese architectural firm of Cini & Nils with Guala Stampa (for the plastic interior). Cini Boeri (1924–2020) had worked for both Gio Ponti and Zanuso—she opened her own studio in 1963. That there would have been easy communication between Zanuso, Sapper, and Boeri can be assumed; why (or if) Zanuso and Sapper stepped back

Cini Boeri, Hastil case, 1970.

from the task cannot be known. Anything is possible: friction with Aurora, Zanuso and Sapper's own work schedule, a desire to help a former employee. Boeri was deeply interested in the work of the Arte Povera artists such as Alighiero Boetti, who employed PVC tubes intended for plumbing. (The Zanuso office had already used PVC to make their development model of Hastil.) She adapted those materials to design lamps, like her Lamp 602, which reveals her rejection of the unique and precious nature of art echoed in the Hastil presentation tube.[31]

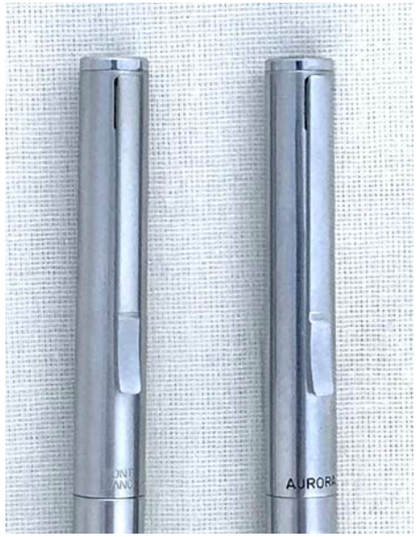
Hastil in Its Historic Context

As historians we look for explanations. Why did so few Modernists design fountain pens? They designed all sorts of domestic equipment, but no fountain pens. For a while, in 1944, the Hungarian designer László Moholy-Nagy (1895–1946), a member of Walter Gropius's Bauhaus, visited the Parker Company in Janesville, WI, two days a month to advise on design issues. He even left patented designs for a "finger-like" pen, but they never found their way into production.[32] In Hastil, we have a pen that fulfills the characteristics of Modernism but with no actual Modernist fountain pen from the 1920s. Here again the issues and solutions found in the art of their own time may have stimulated the designers to think about the essence of the fountain pen and turned

Cini Boeri, Arteluce, Lampada 602, 1968.

them back to Modernism. The connections with Arte Povera sunk below the reflective surface of Hastil—Boetti's "Mazzo di tubi" may have mattered to Zanuso and Sapper, but to most consumers Hastil was just understood as a form of "neo rationalism" contemporary to the architectural work of Richard Meier, who in the 1960s returned to the early work of Le Corbusier for inspiration, as did Italian architects such as Aldo Rossi, Mario Botta, and Franco Purini. This postwar return to the architecture of early Modernism is commonly described as the International Style—international because the language of 1920s Modernism became filtered through the experiences of architects working worldwide. And just as national traditions emerge in "International Style" building, so, too, in pens, where decoration of a simple straight metal pen sometimes reflects national decorative traditions. Hastil is also a piece of replicable contemporary consumer art of a familiar sort—linked to Arte Povera (as prototype) and Modernism (as abstract geometry). Hastil then finds its place somewhere between the museum and the corner stationery shop.

Hastil and International Modernism



Hastil pen rebranded as "Montblanc," 1972.

How is the straight, slim metal fountain pen comparable to the internationalization of modern architecture after World War II: a tiny pen and a mega-building? Suddenly, postwar, it seemed, the world wanted buildings of steel and glass even though the materials were not always well adapted to all the places they were wanted. In the 1970s, the initial request for an airport terminal to accommodate visitors for the Hajj, in Saudi Arabia, was for a design in steel and glass. There was an international hunger to build in that manner, though it was impossible from an environmental point of view. Hastil sparked a comparable revolution in the

Montblanc Noblesse (Germany) and Omas Rinascimento (Italy), 1972.

design of the fountain pen. It wasn't just the Parker Flighter, well distributed internationally, that stimulated change. Countless manufacturers across the world developed Hastil-related pens in the period between 1970–1990: straight, slim metal rods, squared off top and bottom. Montblanc, the German brand, was the first manufacturer to spot a trend and had Aurora manufacture a "Hastil" that was then branded "Montblanc." Called the V.I.P. (1973), Montblanc later developed the Noblesse (1974), its own distinctive narrow pen, and the Slimline series. OMAS, in Bologna, Italy, introduced the Rinascimento (1972). Lamy and their designer Gerd A. Müller presented a series of Modernist designs related to Hastil: straight-edged, simplified, with a squared-off spring-action clip—the CP1 or LAMY 50 (1977)—followed by LAMY 50 (1983) and "the unic" or Lamy 90 (1984).

These are all comparatively well-documented pens for major manufacturers. But the depth of the "slim, straight metal pen" movement can only be appreciated if we gather in all the similar metal pens. (Italian critics refer to these pens disparagingly as "grissini"—"bread sticks.") We cannot construct a complete genealogy, as too many dates are unknown, and some family members are yet to be identified. But if our primogenitor can be identified, we can sketch in a family tree looking for common "genetic" characteristics.

Examining some of the key parts of Hastil, we can see how other manufacturers resolved comparable issues.

Posting a cap on a straight metal pen was not simple. Hastil's brakes are a brilliant (though technically complicated and expensive) system. Other pen manufacturers incise a line as the catch point for the cap, a more economical solution as the Lamy

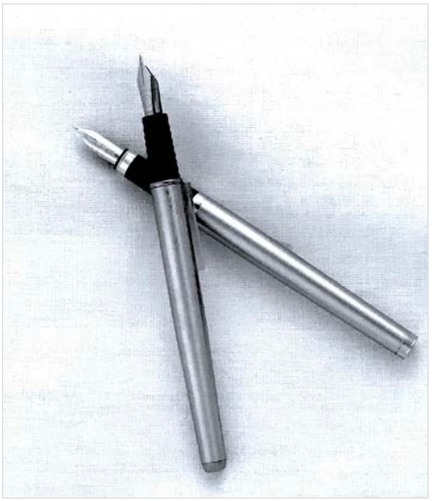
Gerd A. Müller, Lamy CP1 (German), 1974.

Pelikan Signum (Germany), 1978, Pilot Birdie (Japan), 1983, Sheaffer (USA) Fashion, 1992.

CP1, 1977. Designers play with this feature. Shaeffer has one line at the end of the barrel (functional) and another on the cap (decorative); Pilot has only a decorative line above the clip, as does the Pelikan Signum (1978). An internal plastic sleeve in the cap may prevent scuffing and cold welding.

Aurora's Auretta Lusso (1970), a school pen, offered an economical solution to the problems of posting. By reducing the diameter of the end of the barrel (an old idea), Aurora provided an economical place for posting the cap. The Pilot Birdie, the Mini-Birdie (1983 and 1990), and the Faber-Castell Neo Slim (2018) use the same system—as, ironically, does the Parker 25 (1975) in what appears to be reverse influence, as Parker takes over a method of posting used by Aurora. One of Hastil's distinctive features—never properly duplicated—is its nib with rounded shoulders folded tightly around the feed. Montblanc's designers developed a claw- or beak-like nib. Dunhill's Elysée (made by Montblanc, 1980) folds the base of the nib outward to create a further reflective surface like the Hastil. Most makers follow the Montblanc solution to one degree or another, each manufacturer shaping the nib slightly differently. Those that use a scaled-down conventional nib (Inoxcrom from Spain and Ballograf from Sweden, for example) seem to have stepped back from the opportunities of the narrow pen. Aurora developed many variations for Hastil: gold, lacquered bodies in the colors of Ferrari, linear decorations along the cap and barrel. Design variations were also introduced by other manufacturers: hexagonal or octagonal barrels, cross-hatched patterns, and novel materials (brass, silver, gold) were offered to

Aurora, Auretta Lusso, 1970.



Clockwise from top left:

Inoxcrom (Spain) top, Ballograf 2000 (Sweden), 1980s.

Waterman (France), Gentleman and Torsade, 1990s.

Heiko (DDR), 806, 1977.

refresh the market and reach those yet to be convinced. Makers like Waterman introduced more than one type of straight metal pen (Torsade, Executive, Gentleman, Super Master, Facette from 1976). The fashion for slim, straight metal pens also passed to eastern Europe prior to 1989. HEIKO in the German Democratic Republic produced the chrome-surfaced 806 (1977–1978) designed by Jürgen Raudis. Markant and Garant, also from the DDR (ca. 1990), produced slim metal pens, as did PEVDI in Hungary (1980s). And the Yaroslavl (1980) pens, though not exactly slim, show that the Hastil-Flighter style, at least, was favored by Soviet manufacturers. In some variations the barrel is patterned or colored; occasionally, manufacturers experimented with facetted barrels.

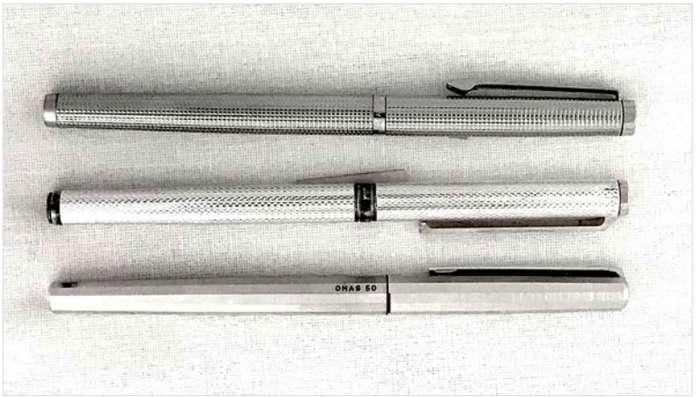
Any list of the penmakers who take up the challenge of the thin, straight-edged metal pen will be incomplete—even so, it

Yaroslavi 488 (Soviet Union), 1977.

Hastil with the Sailor Chalana (Japan), two millimeters thinner, 1970s.

is plentiful: Diplomat, Geha, Lamy, Messmer, Porsche, Reform, Rotring, Otto Hutt (Germany), Borghini, Columbus, OMAS (Italy), Parker, Sheaffer, Waterman, (USA, France, England), Ensso (United States), Elysée, Stypen, (France), Inoxcrom (Spain), Faber-Castell (Switzerland), Ballograf (Sweden), Sailor, Pilot, Platinum (Japan), Europen (made in Belgium for an Iranian market), and Pensan (Turkey). Smaller pens, even thinner than Hastil, were introduced by Japanese companies Sailor (Chalana) at 6.35 mm and Pilot (the Birdie) at less than 8 mm. They were intended as "pocket pens," or "purse pens," or to be set into a loop on a diary. In this troop are also pens manufactured by major brands to be sold under other labels: Montblanc made the Gemline (and possibly the Lady Mascara and the Classique) for Alfred Dunhill (England), and they may also have made a fountain pen for Papermate (USA)—better known for its ball-

An array of metal pens (left to right): Rotring (German), Waterman (France), Lamy (Germany), Pilot (Japan)



Three decorative pens (from below): Omas 50 (Italy), Pensan (Turkey), Colibri (USA)

point pens—and for the American fashion firm, Colibri, as well as the Reynolds pen (USA). Aurora may have made a pen for a Korean brand, St. Maxim, as well as a pen for Pierre Cardin that is stamped (on the clip) "Swiss made." In short, Hastil is at the head of an all-metal army of pens, though the word "army" is woefully misplaced. An army is founded on hierarchy, and while it is possible to establish a progenitor (Hastil), no complete chronological chart can be constructed. This army has a long and varied troupe of camp followers. Rarely is the name of a designer known or can we affix a date with certainty. A firm may make a pen, may give it a name, but over the years it can be modified: a newly designed clip, a variation to the grip, even a new filling system. Often these take place without an announcement; only after the fact do collectors work out what has happened. Even the identification of brand and a date can be misleading. Some pens are assembled from a collage of pieces, purchased from different suppliers. As an example of a minor variant in the Hastil for which we have no "author" is the "Aurora" incised on the nib of some of the pens. Was this inscription the decision of Zanuso and Sapper? Or Aurora? When was it introduced? (Not when the pen was first produced.) When was this identification removed? (It's not on recent examples.)

Conclusion

Recording persistence as well as novelty is an honorable enterprise for historians. Is this linked sequence of metal pens still open, or can nothing new be wrung from the "grissino"? Contemporary makers like Lucio Rossi seem to have found new ways to make the straight metal pen speak in fresh accents. Rossi is an architect, like Zanuso, and his pen the Rod is what it says: just a rod. Yes, but … it is 11 mm in diameter (larger than Hastil) with a push-pull opening system: pulled apart for use and pushed together to be closed. Angled cuts mark transition points and represent the function of the pen. Rossi sees form not just as a solid but as implied dynamic movement. It is a traditional idea in a new manner: function (opening and closing, writing) implied by the form rather than expressing it.

These issues bring us back to art history. In his book *The Life of Forms in Art* (1934), the French medievalist Henri Focillon developed a method of analysis that would allow one to discuss the formal affinities shared by undated fragments of sculpture; his method has some relevance to fountain pens. The fountain pens discussed here have "a certain calling or, if you will, a certain formal mission. They have a consistency, a color, a texture…." Each pen calls on, limits, or develops a certain class of artistic form. Focillon's student George Kubler in *The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things* (1962) characterized the connection between similar objects as forming "a linked sequence." Hastil is the prime object from which the others spring. Whether a new pen will be developed in a way that forces a reassessment of all previous examples is not clear. Rossi's Rod suggests the sequence is still open.

Lucio A. Rossi,
The Rod (Italy), 2021.

Why does this matter? The identification of the things on an equivalent "formal mission" allows us to make design comparisons. These are not evaluations of "good" or "bad," but a consideration of design consistency between pens: barrel to clip; branding to design; nib to barrel shape; connection of cap and barrel. Zanuso and Sapper's work with Hastil stands at a pinnacle of achievement. To a degree each designer is conscious of the sequence, keen to do something different and new, but restricted by the obligation to satisfy a client who wants the reference to be evident to the distracted shopper. As in the situation faced by Focillon and Kubler, most of our source material derives from an examination of (generally undated) objects about which primary documents are not available: the manufacturers' budgets, deadlines, materials, even their evaluation of rival products. (Private firms rarely divulge their archival records, and that has been the case with Aurora.) Our lack of knowledge forces us to think about the objects in front of us, about the relations between the pens, and about the problems of making and meaning. Looking hard at objects, distinguishing their finer differences, can be practiced on the finest paintings and sculptures—but even the things closer to hand benefit from our scrutiny, reveal invention and novelty, and help us better understand our world.

NOTES

1 On the continuing popularity of Hastil, see "Hastil," *Abitare* (April 1998), 170.

2 Lynn White, *Medieval Technology and Social Change* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), 28.

3 George M. Beard, "Conclusions from a Study of One hundred and Twenty-five Cases of Writer's Cramp and Allied Affections," *The Medical Record* 15. 11 (15 March 1879), 247.

4 *Women's World*, ed. "A Diplomée of a London Hospital" (Lever Brothers, Port Sunlight, 1899), "Secretarial Work," 145.

5 The hostesses brought "delle bustine di carta oleata, perché sopra una certa altezza la penna stilografica diventava una vera fountain pen, con spruzzo d'inchiostro dentro tutti taschini …" Alberto Arbasino, *Fratelli d'Italia* (Milan: Adelphi, 1993), 297.

6 Letizia Iacopini, *La storia della stylografica in Italia 1900–1950/The history of the Italian fountain pen, 1900–1950*, 2 vols (Milan: OPS, 2001), 1: 27–132.

7 Each pen sold abroad: "rappresenta un'autentica moneta d'oro che esce d'Italia ed una giornata di disoccupazione di un operaio." Quoted in Iacopini, *La storia della stylografica in Italia*, 1:54–55. Luca De Ponti, *La Storia dell'Aurora dal 1919 ai giorni nostri / The Story of Aurora from 1919 to the Present* (Milan: Editando, 1995), 22.

8 Iacopini, *La storia della stilografica*, 87.

9 See Adriano Moraglio and Cesare Verona, *Questione di Stilo: il romanzo delle penne Aurora* (Florence: Giunti, 2021).

10 Victoria de Grazia, *Irresistible Empire: America's Advance through Twentieth Century Europe* (Belknap Press, 2005).

11 "Dal cucchiaio alla città, in tutti i settori nei quali l'arte ha il compito di congiungere la bellezza e l'utilità in una sintesi inscindibile, il design moderno deve assumere e responsabilità che gli sono proprie." Ernesto N. Rogers, "Memoria e invenzione del design," in *Editoriali di architettura* (Turin: Einaudi, 1943, 143).

12 See, for example, Letizia Tedeschi, "Marco Zanuso, progettare senza dogmi: il contributo degli artisti," Crespi, L., Tedeschi, L., Navone, A. V., ed. *Marco Zanuso: Architettura e design* (Rome, Officina: 2020), 125–148. References to Le Corbusier and Gropius are frequent in Zanuso's writings: see Grignolo, Roberta, ed. *Marco Zanuso: Scritti sulle techniche di produzione e di progetto* (Mendrisio: Mendrisio Academy Press/Silvana Editoriale, 2013).

13 On the politics of Arte Povera, see Nicholas Cullinan, "Vietnam to Fiat-Nam: The Politics of Arte Povera," *October* 124 (spring, 2008), 8–30.

14 It is interesting that Zanuso, in a jury for Italy's most prestigious design prize, the Compasso d'oro (1960), with Ludovico Belgoioso and Vito Magistretti (among others) praised the winner, a washing machine, CGE's *Castalia*, for its simple lines in "un campo troppo sovente dominato dai preconcetti estetici e da una falsa eleganza." The *Casatalia* "si distingue per la rinuncia a grafismi e giuochi formali superflui ed appariscenti aderendo invece, con modestia e senza enfasi, ad una necessità strumentale." Quoted by Ivan Paris, "L'industria degli elettrodomestici bianchi negli anni del miracolo," 111–112, in *Storia dell'impresa e storia del design* (Bologna: Cooperativa Libraria Universitaria Editrici Bologna, 2014), ed. Giorgio Bigatti and Domitilla Dardi. The description could be adapted for Hastil.

15 According to Riccardo Murrau, editor of the blog *Pennamania* and the son of a former Aurora manager, every detail of the pen is the work of the Aurora technicians (email exchange with the author, November–December 2024). Given the overall consistency of the design it seems improbable that, despite their brilliance, the Ufficio tecnico was responsible for ideating the theme of the pen. Designers retain control over the final appearance of an object. As an example: the brakes (*freni*) require an expensive series of production details: cutting a hole in the barrel for the brakes, the manufacture of the brake itself, setting a spring behind the brake and cutting the hole through the chrome surface and then ensuring the edges are clean. This kind of expensive interference in the making of a pen is something that would be unexpected from someone who has a reason to avoid incurring that expense. For a discussion of the interchange between designer and technician in furniture production, see Ettore Sottsass Jr., "Disegno e produzione del mobile," *Atti del Collegio regionale di lombardo architetti* (n. 11 (November 1957), 21. On the role of technical advisers, see Zanuso's former employee Cini Boeri's comments about the design and production of a suitcase (in Cecilia Avogadro, ed., *Cini Boeri architetto e designer* (Milano: Silvana, 2004), 96–97.

16 In fact the barrel has the slightest taper toward the end to facilitate capping. Aurora was insistent that this diminishing taper should not be perceived, as indeed it is not. For all intents and purposes, it is a straight shaft. They patented this feature in Germany in 1974 (Turin, Aurora archives).

17 "…in quegli anni ero un giovane architetto appena laureato e lavoravo nello studio (Z)anuso….proprio io sotto l'ala di (S)apper mi sono occupato della penna (H)astil ricordo che non facemmo un disegno ma

feci direttamente il modello presi un tondino di pvc mi sembra diametro 8 mm e lo rivestii con quel meraviglioso retino cromato rivestii anche le teste dello spezzone di tondino esimulai la clip con cartoncino rivestito dello stesso retino marcai con un tape adesivo nero la giunzione tra cappuccio e corpo penna….” Paolo Orlandini, electronic communication to author, 26 February 2025.

18 In their advertising, Parker even claimed the pen safe for airplane travel: “The finest pen on earth proves safest in the air.”

19 Repeated requests for access to visit Aurora’s archives have been ignored. Intermediaries have provided summary evaluations of the contents (or partial source material) to support the irrational contention that all that Zanuso and Sapper did was send in the model and that all work on the pen thereafter was undertaken by Aurora engineers.

20 The barrel and cap were first treated with a process called “Chromolight” by Aurora, then diamond etched (*diamantatura*), polished, and finally given a satin finish. Giovanni Abrate, “From the Aurora 88 to the Hastil,” originally appeared in *Pennant* (spring and summer 2006), reproduced in *Pentrace Articles of Merit*, see https://newpentrace.net/articleGA01.html (accessed 2 February 2025).

21 The nib was further elaborated in Aurora’s Kona (fountain pen), designed by the automobile designer Giorgetto Giugaro.

22 Electronic communication from Riccardo Murrau, 14 February 2025.

23 See the discussion on Fountain Pen Network, https://www.fountainpennetwork.com/forum/topic/232461-the-sheaffer-valiant-of-le-corbusier/ (accessed 15 February 2025).

24 *Panorama* (vol. 37), 9 December 1971, 136.

25 “Prima viene l’uomo poi il sistema, anticamente era così. Oggi è la società a produrre e l’uomo a consumare.” Germano Celant, “Arte povera: Appunti per una guerriglia,” *Flash Art* no. 5 (November–December 1967), 5.

26 Romy Golan, “Flashbacks and Eclipses in Italian Art in the 1960s,” *Gray Room* 49 (Fall 1012),102–127. Golan quotes the poet (and art critic) John Ashbery: “The figures and the décor that are the symptoms of today’s strange and new disease of alienation are the raw material, and perhaps the end product, of Pistoletto’s art….” (105).

27 William Arrowsmith, *Antonioni: The Poet of Images* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 73.

28 “In questo modo gli studenti erano costretti ad analizzare fino in fondo le caratteristiche peculiari dell’oggetto di partenza e, prima di mettere le

mani per poter creare queste sostituzioni, erano chiamati alla conoscenza approfondito del progetto iniziale e all’esame delle modifiche sostanziali, figurali, di contenuto e di prestazione che l’oggetto avrebbe subito nel momento della riprogettazione.” Marco Zanuso, “Insegnare il design,” lecture at the Istituto universitario di architettura di Venezia (23 April 1986) in Zanuso, *Insegnare il design* (Rome: Edizioni di comunità, 2022), 39.

29 “In decenni di passive ripetizione figurative, la penna era diventata un siluro, un missile, un esplicito simbolo maschile. …Ho voluto riscoprirne la natura femminile. Certo, non si tratta di un genere di prima necessità, ma, per arrivare a questo risultato, ci sono voluti 2 anni di ricerca.” *Tempo*, (33) 9 January 1971, 54.

30 See https://www.inkedhappiness.com/woman-is-the-unmentionable-of-the-fountain-pen-world/ (accessed 14 January 2025).

31 On Boeri, see Avogadro, *Cini Boeri*.

32 The designer-artist Alfonso Iannelli (1888–1965) designed a pen for the Wahl Eversharp Company in 1936. The pen was not named but its design recalls the Chrysler Building in New York. Iannelli worked for Frank Lloyd Wright as a designer/sculptor. See Jonathan A. Veley, *Eversharp: Cornerstone of an Industry* (Legendary Lead Company, 2024).

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