



Curriculum
Guide &
Activity
Ettore
Sottsass

ICA
MIAMI



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INTRODUCTION

In this course, educators will discuss how artists work; Ettore Sottsass's Memphis Design draws inspiration from such movements as Art Deco and Pop Art to create a body of work representing ideas of the '90s.

By viewing the artist's work, students will learn that Ettore Sottsass was an Italian architect and designer who helped found the Memphis Group, a Postmodern design collective that produced unconventional furniture.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will explore how Ettore Sottsass's unique furniture design connects and reflects important historical moments in history.



Photo courtesy of the artist and The Norman and Rosita Winston Foundation Inc. Funds, The Millstream Fund, and Jerry I. Speyer Fund

FOR TEACHERS - FLORIDA STATE STANDARDS

English Language Arts:

Access Point #: LAFS.8.W.3.AP.8a

Gather information (e.g., highlight, quote, or paraphrase from source) relevant to the topic from print and/or digital sources.

Visual Arts:

Access Point #: VA.912.O.1.In.c

Explore the use of space, scale, and environmental features to create three-dimensional form or the illusion of depth and form.

VA.912.O.1.4

Compare and analyze traditional and digital media to learn how technology has altered opportunities for innovative responses and results.

VA.3.S.1.3

Incorporate ideas from art exemplars for specified time periods and cultures.

Social Studies:

Access Point #: SS.5.G.2.In.a

Recognize push and pull factors that have influenced boundary changes within the United States, such as job opportunities, climate, and natural hazards.

KEY DISCUSSION

During the initial discussion, pose questions that draw upon students' critical thinking skills by asking them to identify the relationship between two or more individuals in a historical, scientific, or technical text. Additionally, students will understand the arts reflect and document cultural trends and historical events and help explain how new directions in the arts have emerged.



Ettore Sottsass, Totem no. 18, 1966. Glazed earthenware, painted oak
Lindermann Collection, Miami Beach. © 2019 Artists Rights Society
(ARS), New York; ADAGP, Paris.

VOCABULARY TERMS

Memphis Design: Memphis is a design movement that began in 1981. They took their name from a Bob Dylan song titled Stuck Inside of Mobile with the Memphis Blues Again, which was played on repeat during their first meeting. Bright colors, graphic patterns, and bold geometric shapes characterize the aesthetic of the Memphis Group, the Italian Postmodern design collective founded by Ettore Sottsass in 1980.

Art Deco: The art deco style reflected modern technology and was characterized by smooth lines, geometric shapes, streamlined forms, and bright, sometimes loud colours.

Pop Art: Pop artists borrowed imagery from popular culture—from sources including television, comic books, and print advertising—often to challenge conventional values propagated by the mass media, from notions of femininity and domesticity to consumerism and patriotism.

Futurism: an Italian art movement of the early twentieth century that aimed to capture in art the dynamism and energy of the modern world

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Ettore Sottsass was born in 1917, Innsbruck, Austria. His family moved to Italy for him to attend Politecnico di Torino in Turin where he graduated with a degree in architecture in 1939.

He is remembered as an Industrial Designer and Architect, but had a varied practice that included drawings, ceramics, photography, jewelry, and writing. He is known for making machines “fun” with the famous red Valentine Typewriter (1968, Olivetti), and his ideas can be traced even to Apple’s design philosophy today. Sottsass took heavy inspiration from the Beat generation extending its playfulness into design. Most known for co-founding Memphis, a postmodern design collective that rebelled against functionalism with bright colors, funky patterns, and new forms that inadvertently defined the look of the 1980s. The movement aimed to be a counter to another large design movement called Bauhaus. Sottsass became a large influence on the basis of design and thinning the gap between fine art and design.



Courtesy of the artist

ABOUT THE WORK

Ettore Sottsass and The Social Factory, surveys the work of Italian architect and designer Ettore Sottsass, focusing on his monumental furniture, conceptual photography, and speculative drawings

The first in ICA Miami's design series dedicated to showcasing the important overlap of art, design, and ideas, "Ettore Sottsass and the Social Factory" connects Sottsass's production to momentous postwar economic and social changes, proposing that his objects both contributed to and deeply reflect the historical moment in which they are embedded.



Ettore Sottsass, Mobili grigi, 1970. Fiberglass, manufactured by Poltronova. Courtesy Centro Studi Poltronova. Photo: A. Fioravanti, E. Sottsass. © 2019 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York; ADAGP, Paris.

ACTIVITY - BUILD YOUR OWN UNIQUE FURNITURE INSPIRED BY THE MEMPHIS DESIGN MOVEMENT

Appropriate for 3-5 grades and Middle School

Activity Prompt: For this activity, students will create a monumental piece of furniture that expresses a moment in pop culture or art movement.

Materials:

- Colored Construction Paper
- Colored Assorted Tape
- Makers
- Magazine for patterns/ design
- Cardstock
- Cardboard
- Elmers Glue or Glue Gun

Alternate Activity for Middle/ High School:

- Popsicle Sticks (Different Sizes/ Color)
- Glue Gun
- Hot Glue Sticks
- Blueprint (Sketch of your furniture)

ACTIVITY - BUILD YOUR OWN UNIQUE FURNITURE INSPIRED BY THE MEMPHIS DESIGN MOVEMENT

Activity Instructions

- \\ Start by choosing some patterns that catch your eye.
- // Next glue them onto cardboard rolls.
- \\ Make some cuts on the inside edges of the tubes, this will be where to place the popsicle sticks.
- // Once the chair seat and back are secured together get to work on the legs.
- \\ Make the legs out of some cardboard using this shape that you drew and cut out of a piece of paper.
- // Trace the shape and cut out the cardboard twice, one for each side of the chair.
- \\ Cut some cool patterns out of a magazine and glue them onto the legs.
- // Finally, glue the legs to the chair and you're done!