

“Giovanni T.” and the New Typography in Italy. Discussion and Renegotiation of Tschichold's Ideas in Italian Graphic Arts Magazines

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Prelude: Paul Renner at the 5th Milan Triennale

On 10 May 1933, the 5th Triennale opened in Milan in the newly completed Palazzo dell'Arte, designed by the architect Giovanni Muzio. At a time of maximum alignment between architectural Rationalism and the fascist regime, the exhibition hosted the work of many prominent European figures in contemporary architecture. Attention from various observers in the press was notably drawn to the “white German section”, devoted entirely to the graphic arts and arranged with “white linoleum on the floor, thin glass cases supported by chrome metal slats” and “only two succulent plants for decoration”.¹ (figs. 90–91)

The exhibit was organised by the Deutscher Werkbund and curated by Paul Renner, who at that time still held the position of director of the Meisterschule für Deutschlands Buchdrucker (Master School for Germany's Book Printers) in Munich. Renner's Futura typeface was prominently displayed in large polished nickel-plated metal inscriptions, on the white walls of the two rooms arranged by the Munich architect Walther Schmidt. At the core of the exhibition, alongside a selection of German publishing production (mostly photographic and “useful” books), were numerous examples of printed matter of all kinds, such as postage stamps, labels, packaging, industrial catalogues and other commercial and advertising graphics. Remarkably, *Die Form* magazine observed that in this specific field, German graphic art “developed a completely new style in the combination of typography, photography, and drawing”.² While this new approach was exemplified in the show through the works by lead-

1 Ojetti 1933: 3. “Vien fatto di chiedersi se la bianca sezione germanica, quest'anno dedicata tutta alle arti grafiche, dal libro ai manifesti, dai francobolli ai modelli di caratteri, sarebbe stata così perfetta nell'ordinamento – linoleo bianco sul pavimento, sottili vetrine rette da liste di metallo cromato, pareti bianche, scritte nere, due piante grasse per solo ornamento”.

2 *Die Form* 1933: 189. “Man kann wohl ohne Überheblichkeit sagen, daß hier die deutsche Graphik in der Verbindung von Typographie, Photographie und Zeichnung einen völlig neuen Stil entwickelt hat [...]”.

ing figures of the New Typography movement, such as Willi Baumeister or Max Burchartz, the Werkbund section also paid homage to the history of letterforms, from Roman capitals to the present. In the introductory hall leading to the first room, four automatic projectors displayed sixty illustrated examples compared with German architectures and works of art from the same era.



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fig. 90 Exhibition view of the hall of the German Werkbund section at the 5th Triennale in Milan, curated by Paul Renner, from *Die Form*, 8, June 1933.

fig. 91 Exhibition view of the second room of the Werkbund section at the 5th Triennale in Milan, curated by Paul Renner, from *Die Form*, 8, June 1933.

Following this, visitors encountered various calligraphic and typographic samples that represented the “writing of the present” in Germany,³ including a text set in Futura, taken from a well-known speech delivered by Mussolini in 1926: “We must not exploit the heritage of the past. We should create a new art”.⁴ This Mussolini discourse composed in Futura vividly embodied the transfer of Central European Modernist graphic culture into fascist Italy, steeped in contradictions and ambiguities as it was.

The German section, curated by the Deutscher Werkbund, at the 5th Triennale opened mere months after Jan Tschichold's arrest and only a few days after the final closure of the Bauhaus in Berlin. Shortly before the opening of the exhibition in Milan, Renner himself had been briefly detained by the Gestapo, and he was subsequently obliged to resign from his position at the Munich school. As predicted by Edoardo Persico – the writer and art critic who at the time was co-editor and responsible for the new layout of the *Casabella* magazine – Germany would no longer be represented in Milan with Modernist works in the coming years.⁵ However, it was precisely during this period, when the Modern Movement faced setbacks across continental Europe, that discussions on New Typography took root in Italy.

The exhibition curated by Renner received extensive coverage in Italian graphic arts magazines, in opposition to the disappointing Italian *Mostra dell'Arte Grafica* (Graphic Art Exhibition) at the Triennale. Yet, for Italian typographers and graphic artists, the Deutscher Werkbund section at the 5th Triennale was neither the first nor the only occasion of contact with the New Typography. Texts and examples from Germany and other European countries circulated through different mediating channels, among which trade magazines played a crucial role. Although much later than in other European countries, in Italy the New Typography was widely discussed in graphic arts periodicals and became the focus of a cultural debate no less heated than the one that arose around Rationalist architecture. This contribution concisely reconstructs this discussion, drawing on a more extensive investigation conducted over several years.

Tschichold in Italian Graphic Arts Magazines

Existing literature on the history of Italian graphic design commonly emphasises a series of pivotal events occurring in Milan in 1933. In addition to the Deutscher Werkbund section curated by Renner at the 5th Triennale, these accounts often

mention Edoardo Persico's influential new design for *Casabella*, the opening of Antonio Boggeri's studio – thus starting a fruitful collaboration with numerous designers who would later emerge as key figures in Italy's post-war design scene – and lastly the birth of *Campo Grafico. Rivista di estetica e di tecnica grafica* (1933–1939) designed and printed by a militant group of Milanese workers of the printing industry, who carried on a harsh battle against the neo-traditionalism of Raffaello Bertieri and the periodical that he edited, *Il Risorgimento Grafico* (1902–1941).⁶

3 *Ibid.*: “Schriftschaffen der Gegenwart”.

4 *Ibid.*: 187. “Non dobbiamo sfruttare il patrimonio del passato — noi dobbiamo creare un'arte nuova”. The quote was given in Italian in the text, followed by the German translation. Both the review in *Die Form* and an article in *Gebrauchsgraphik* 1933 gave much emphasis to the presence in the exhibition of this passage from Mussolini's speech and wished that this warning would be heeded in Germany. The original speech was given by Mussolini at the Academy of Fine Arts in Perugia and was first published in *Critica Fascista* in 1926 (Soffici 1926). It was used very often in slightly reworked versions such as the one displayed at the *II Esposizione di Architettura Razionale* organised by Pietro Maria Bardi in Rome in 1931.

5 Persico 1934 (1968): 68–69.

6 Grizzanti 2022; Vinti 2019.

However, in the fateful year 1933, another important event occurred that history of Italian graphic design fails to mention. In February that year, the Turin magazine *Graphicus* published an opening article titled “Della nuova tipografia” (About the New Typography) and signed “Giovanni T”.⁷ (fig. 92) As far as can be proven, this was the first publication of a text by Jan Tschichold in Italy. Upon textual comparison, the piece turns out to be a synthetic and incomplete translation of an article that had already appeared in 1930 in the magazine *Arts et métiers graphiques* and that was indeed the French version of Tschichold’s introduction to his second book *Eine Stunde Druckgestaltung*. At the time, in the midst of his efforts to disseminate the ideas of the New Typography, Tschichold decided to have it translated in the international trade press; it also appeared in the British periodical *Commercial Art*.⁸

Apparently, someone in the editorial staff of *Graphicus* took the initiative of Italianising the name of Jan Tschichold, turning it into “Giovanni T”.. More than being the direct effect of the fascist policies of linguistic Italianisation (which became official only later, in 1940), this alteration was probably motivated by the will to dissimulate the author’s provenance in the eyes of the magazine’s readers and some of its contributors. It is noteworthy that just a month after Tschichold’s text was published, an article in the magazine cautioned against the adoption of an “international style” and feared the risk of “becoming slaves to theories and practices conflicting with our Latin sentiment”.⁹ In the following years, *Graphicus* gradually aligned itself with the Modernist approach of *Campo Grafico*, yet never abandoning the quest for a national typographic style, that was often identified with a modern fascist style.

Limited information is available regarding the circulation of the book *Die neue Typographie* in Italy.¹⁰ However, language barriers and the prevailing traditionalism within the Italian graphic arts sector may have hindered the dissemination of the volume. An early introduction in Italy of the “new typographic style” coming from Germany can be found in a text by Guido Modiano published in 1929. Modiano was the owner of an important printing firm in Milan and during the following years became a key figure in the debate on typography. In 1931, he launched the *Tipografia* magazine for the Reggiani Type Foundry, which preceded *Campo Grafico* in aiming to align Italian typographic culture with European Modernism, albeit very short-lived, with only three published issues.¹¹

After Giovanni T.’s article was published in *Graphicus*, Tschichold’s real name appeared three times within the pages of *Campo Grafico*: initially as the author of a concise text

on charts diagrams in 1935, then in a review of his book *Typographische Gestaltung* in 1936, and finally in the signature of an article discussing the proportions of the New Typography in 1937.¹² (fig. 93) Concluding the latter was Tschichold’s expressed will “to contribute to the further advancement of the New Typography in Italy”.¹³ During this period, Tschichold had already relocated to Basel. Although

7 Giovanni T. [Jan Tschichold] 1933.

8 Tschichold 1930a, 1930b, 1930c.

9 Lagoni 1933: 9. “Rendersi schiavi di teorie e pratiche contrastanti col nostro sentire latino”.

10 It is known that Tschichold asked Fortunato Depero for a copy of his book *Depero Futurista* and promised one of his books in exchange (Camillini 2020). It is also likely that the printer Carlo Frassinelli either owned or had access to a copy for reference of *Die neue Typografie*, as he referred to the book in his 1941 *Trattato di architettura tipografica*.

11 Modiano 1929. On the figure of Guido Modiano see Vinti 2005 and Chiabrando 2006.

12 Tschichold 1935; G. P. 1936; Tschichold 1937.

13 Tschichold 1937: 8.

he had begun to critically examine and soften various aspects of the New Typography, particularly with regard to typefaces and their combinations, his unwavering dedication to disseminating Modernist ideas on typography persisted. What is worth noting, however, is that at this point *Campo Grafico*'s readership was already acquainted with many of these ideas, including the relevance of abstract painting, the rejection of "typographic neutrality" in favour of contrast, and the "need to avoid any closure" to privilege asymmetry.¹⁴

Asymmetry, in particular, had been the focus of an article published by the magazine in 1935 and authored by another key figure in the New Typography movement: the Stuttgart painter and graphic designer Willi Baumeister.¹⁵ In May of that year, he held a solo exhibition at the Galleria Il Milione in Milan, where he gave a short lecture in which, according to the gallery bulletin, he was able to communicate "even more with drawings [...] than with words".¹⁶ *Campo Grafico* then published, alongside the Italian transcript of his talk, Baumeister's quick illustrative sketches that provided effective arguments in support of the free and asymmetrical balance in typographic composition. Furthermore, the magazine's editors supplemented these images with works from the Italian graphic production of those years, showing the precise desire to trace back to European roots the achievements of modern typography in Italy. (fig. 94)

The Suppressed Futurism

Tschichold's 1930 text published in *Graphicus* – originally the introduction to the book *Eine Stunde Druckgestaltung* (A Lesson in Printing Design) – has been regarded as "perhaps his most compact and compelling statement of the principles of New Typography".¹⁷ Like *Die neue Typographie*, it included a concise historical overview of the New Typography movement, with a specific focus on the contributions of the avant-garde. In the French version published by *Arts et métiers graphiques* (which is the source of the Italian translation) this part begins as follows: "En Italie, Marinetti, dans *Les mots en liberté futuristes* (1919), en Allemagne, le dadaïsme, antérieurement déjà, donnèrent une première impulsion à ce nouveau développement de la typographie".¹⁸ A significant difference becomes evident when comparing

this specific passage with the equivalent in the Italian version: "Dadaism gave the first impetus to this new typographic development, and in 1922 the first typographic experiments of some abstract painters took place in Germany".¹⁹ Remarkably, there is no mention of Futurism. Its substantial contribution to the rupture of the typographic tradition is deliberately omitted. Such an omission is particularly striking considering that Tschichold himself regarded Marinetti's "typographic revolution" as a crucial step in the "change-over from ornamental to functional typography", as he claimed in his 1928 book.²⁰

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Baumeister 1935.

¹⁶ *Bollettino del Milione* 1935. "Anche più coi disegni [...] che forse con le parole".

¹⁷ Kinross 1995: xxxv.

¹⁸ Tschichold 1930b. This point in the English version (Tschichold 1930c: 10) reads: "Dadaism, through Marinetti in Italy with his 'Les mots en liberté futuriste [sic] (1919)' and even earlier in Germany, gave the first impulse to the new development of typography".

¹⁹ Giovanni T. [Jan Tschichold] 1933: 8. "Il Dadaismo diede un primo impulso a questo nuovo sviluppo tipografico, e nel 1922 si ebbero in Germania i primi esperimenti tipografici da parte di alcuni pittori astratti".

²⁰ Tschichold 1995: 53. The paragraph *typographic revolution* from the manifesto *L'immaginazione senza fili e le parole in libertà* (1913) was also reported in the text, drawn from its republication in *Le mots en liberté futuristes* (1919).

According to him, by dismantling the conventional rules of typesetting, Marinetti and Futurists had liberated the expressive potential of the typefaces and opened the way to a true re-foundation of typography, in which the elements of the printed page finally became a “functional expression of content”.²¹ Why then, right in Italy, in the first known translation of a text by Tschichold, was Futurism totally dismissed? There are at least two plausible reasons behind the suppression, which seems even more surprising, considering that it came from a journal – *Graphicus* – dedicated to the promotion of a modern, yet national typography.

Firstly, despite the persistent image of inter-war Italian graphic design being dominated by Futurist aesthetics,²² in reality, Second Futurism represented just one of the modern currents trying to gain hegemony in fascist Italy. While it is true that many Futurist poster artists continued to be active during the 1930s, Italian typographers and graphic designers were eager to embrace new contemporary trends. Much more than in Futurist art, models were now identified in Rationalist architecture and geometrical abstract painting. The editorial staff of *Campo Grafico* had close ties to the artistic, intellectual and Rationalist architect circles in Milan. One particular connection was with the Galleria Il Milione, a gathering place for the small group of abstract painters who opposed the more conservative approaches of the Novecento movement. During the 1930s, this space hosted not only Baumeister's solo exhibition but also Friedrich Vordemberge-Gildewart's, whose work was proposed in *Campo Grafico* as an example of “teaching abstract painting” for typography.²³ It was not until much later, in 1939 and 1941, that Futurism was retrospectively celebrated in two special issues of *Campo Grafico* and *Graphicus* that paid homage to Marinetti's “typographic revolution” also in order to counter growing accusations of internationalism.²⁴ (fig. 95)

Secondly, in the previous years, Futurism had fallen short of the objective to which *Campo Grafico* and other Italian new typographers aspired: the reception and acceptance of Modernism into the printing trade. The experiments in Futurist publishing with *parole in libertà* (words in freedom / mots en liberté) directly challenged the long-established form of the book, frightening the deeply traditionalist Italian graphic arts community. Trade magazines received Futurist experimentations on book typography as mere provocations and, until the late 1920s, they remained impermeable to any kind of influence coming from artistic avant-gardes. Contrary to the radical approach of Futurists, in the 1930s *Campo Grafico*, *Graphicus* and typographers such as Guido Modiano renounced to question traditional aesthetics in the book publishing realm. Instead, they embraced the belief that “the characteristic products of our time”²⁵ were not books, but rather magazines, brochures, and industrial catalogues – printed materials in which photographic images played an increasingly dominant role.

Photography and the “Two Pages in One” Scheme

Traditional typographic culture maintained a fundamental distrust towards photography, even though in a magazine such as *Il Risorgimento Grafico* there was no lack of significant

21 *Ibid.*: 56.

22 The chapter on Italy in Hollis 1994 is exemplary of this tendency.

23 Modiano 1934. In 1934, Galleria il Milione also organised an important Kandinsky exhibition.

24 *Campo Grafico* 1939; *Graphicus* 1942.

25 Modiano 1933.

GRAPHICUS

DELLE ARTI DELLA STAMPA
RIVISTA MENSILE DELL'AMMINISTRAZIONE, VIA MODENA 40, TORINO 122

N. 284
FEBBRAIO 1933-XI
ABBONAMENTI
ITALIA L. 12, ESTERO L. 30

DELLA NUOVA TIPOGRAFIA

Con questo nome è conosciuto quel movimento di rinnovazione tipografica iniziato prima dagli avanguardisti tedeschi e seguito da Olanda, Russia, Cecoslovacchia, Svizzera e Ungheria. Benché gli inizi si debbano a propositi individuali, è certo che il successo è dovuto principalmente alle necessità pratiche del momento.

Per spiegarsi il sorgere e progredire di tale movimento, è opportuno ricordare lo sviluppo tipografico prima della guerra. Alla miscela di stili degli anni 1839 e seguenti successe il movimento originato da Morris (1892) delle arti applicate. Nel dominio tipografico la sua imitazione era soprattutto storica (imitazione degli incunabili). Più tardi, verso il 1900, il *Jugendstyle* cercò di liberare il lavoro da ogni ossessione storica, ma il suo tentativo si concluse con imitazioni male studiate delle forme naturali e con una trasformazione dello stile Impero, ossia senza successo perché anch'esse forme storiche. Allora si ritornò verso di queste, ma con imitazioni più intelligenti, e le stampe tedesche dal 1911 al 1920 diedero vari saggi meritevoli. Il risultato maggiore di tale ritorno alle forme storiche fu — contrariamente a ciò che si sperava — lo « scoprimento » dei caratteri Didot, Bodoni, Walbaum, Garamond, ecc., preferiti già da tempo.

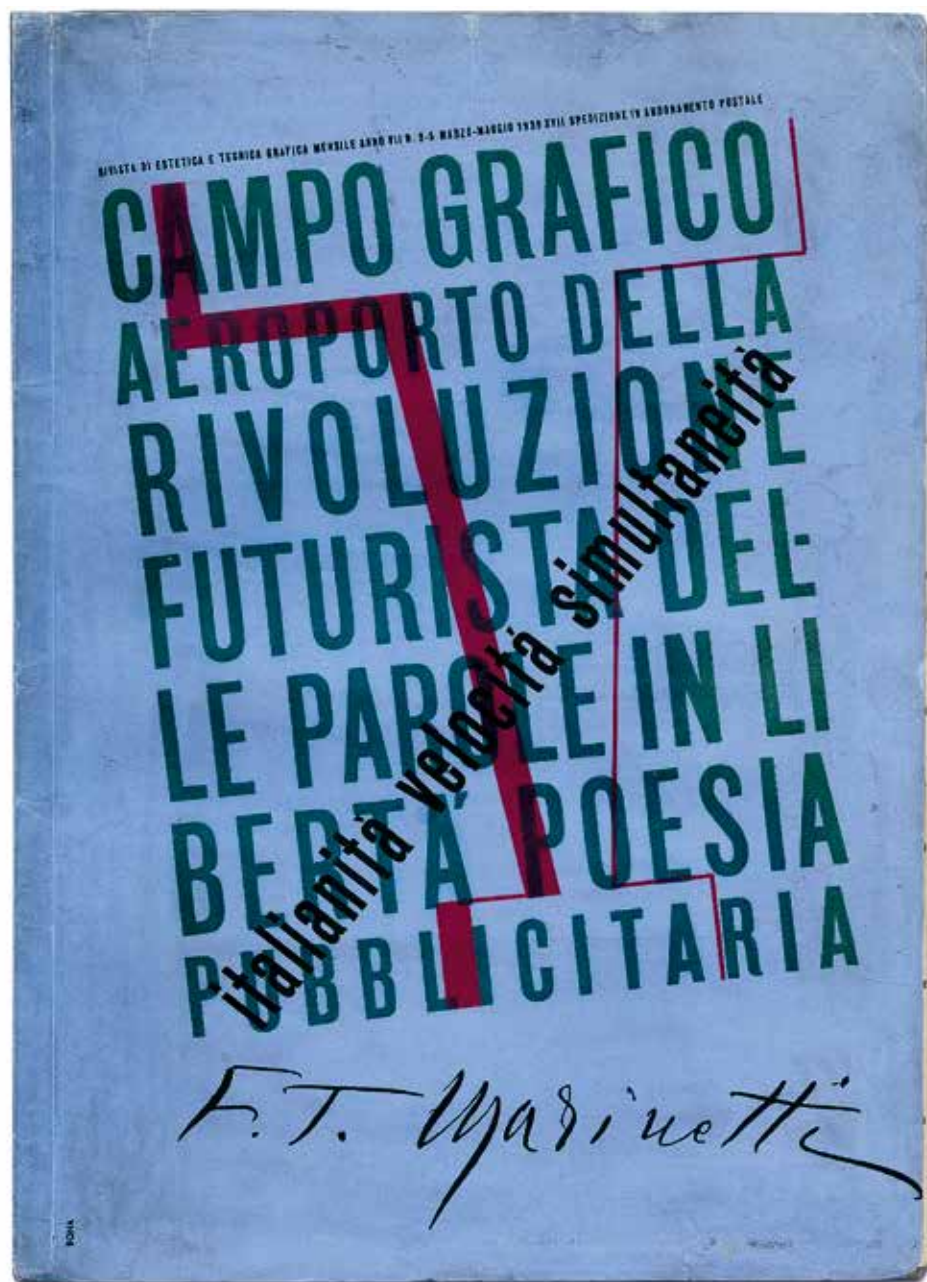
L'idea tipografica orientata nel senso storico non conosce che uno schema per la composizione:

l'asse centrale, il cui esempio più chiaro era la coperta dei libri. Tutti seguivano questo modello, tanto per giornali, annuari o lavori commerciali. Solo dopo la guerra si giunse a realizzare delle forme nuove, nelle quali si distinguevano due scopi diversi: la comprensione e la soddisfazione delle necessità pratiche e, inoltre, la creazione d'un ordine ottico, che deriva direttamente dall'estetica.

La Tipografia si distingue dall'architettura in quanto mentre l'aspetto esteriore d'una cosa nuova può, nell'architettura, esser dedotto interamente dalle necessità pratiche, nella Tipografia, al contrario, si può riconoscere nettamente un lato estetico nelle questioni di forma. E' questa circostanza che avvicina la tipografia alla creazione libera in superficie (disegno e pittura) più che all'architettura.

Nelle opere, siano tipografiche, pittoriche o grafiche, si tratta sempre della conformazione d'una superficie. Questo fatto spiega perché dovessero essere proprio i pittori moderni, gli astratti, i creatori della nuova Tipografia. La pittura astratta è un'espressione senza obiettivo di riferimento di colori e di forme pure senza interventi letterari. La Tipografia è l'ordine ottico (estetica) di determinati elementi (necessità pratiche, caratteri, incisioni, colori, ecc.) sopra una superficie. La differenza tra la pittura e la Tipografia con-





curiosity toward the subject. On the Modernist side, instead, the question of photography was considered crucial, insisting for its complete and definitive recognition as an essential element in the typographic composition. Photography, in the words of "Giovanni T", should be considered as "a kind of typeface" or "another form of language" complementary to writing.²⁶ Furthermore, *Campo Grafico* – which devoted an entire issue to the subject in December 1934²⁷ – often highlighted that photography, besides being the quintessential modern illustration medium, played a significant role in breaking traditional typographic rules. According to Attilio Rossi, the urge to heighten the potential of photographic images first led to force the traditional page layout, by invading the large symmetrical margins with pictures. **(fig. 96)** Subsequently, the static and symmetric scheme, based on the book page, was replaced with asymmetrical solutions²⁸: the resulting modular arrangement of the graphic elements was referred to as the "two pages in one" formula, which was first experimented by Guido Modiano and Edoardo Persico, respectively the printer and designer, as well as co-editor, of the *Casabella* magazine's new layout. In their early attempts, they disregarded the traditional symmetrical balance between the two adjacent pages, crossing the limit of the binding stitching, with headlines, photographic images and even the composition block of the main text. **(fig. 97)**

In 1933, *Casabella* came out with an almost square format to stress the horizontal dimension of the open issue and maximise the impact of photographs and architectural drawings. As Modiano explained in an accurate and comprehensive text on Persico's graphic work,²⁹ the new scheme amplified the constructive power of the white areas on the pages. According to Modiano, non-printed areas had always played a significant role in typographic design, but they were traditionally confined to framing text blocks with generous page margins. In *Casabella*'s pages, instead, margins were significantly reduced, so that it was sufficient to increase the leading role of the text to shift the white areas from the periphery to the interior of the composition. Additionally, by studying the position of voids on the whole area formed by the double spread, the white space could be transformed from a passive element into an active one, as Tschichold recommended since the publication of "Elementare Typographie" in 1925.

In proposing the "two pages in one" concept, the advocates of a New Typography in Italy pursued two complementary goals. Firstly, they aimed at adapting the Gutenberg tradition to the new "graphic rhythms" demanded by modern graphic production, in which Bruno Munari saw "a certain sense of movement akin to cinema".³⁰ The dynamic interplay of changing graphic elements was unified by a modular continuity, as if held together by an invisible line. Secondly, this new approach resolved "the meaning of Modern Art in

typographic terms",³¹ as Modiano put it. The two-pages spread, intended as the proper design area, became an open surface that paralleled both the canvas of the abstract painters – devoid of centre and closed frame – and the walls of Rationalist architecture, with their horizontal drive opposed to the tension of the force of gravity. **(fig. 98)**

26 Giovanni T. [Jan Tschichold] 1933: 8.
"Una specie di carattere", "un'altra forma di linguaggio". In this point, the English version reads: "Photography because it is merely another method of visual speech is also regarded as type". Tschichold 1930c: 15.

27 *Campo Grafico* 1934.

28 Rossi 1937.

29 Modiano 1935.

30 Munari 1937: 32.

31 Modiano 1938: 399. "Aver risolto il senso dell'arte moderna in termini tipografici".



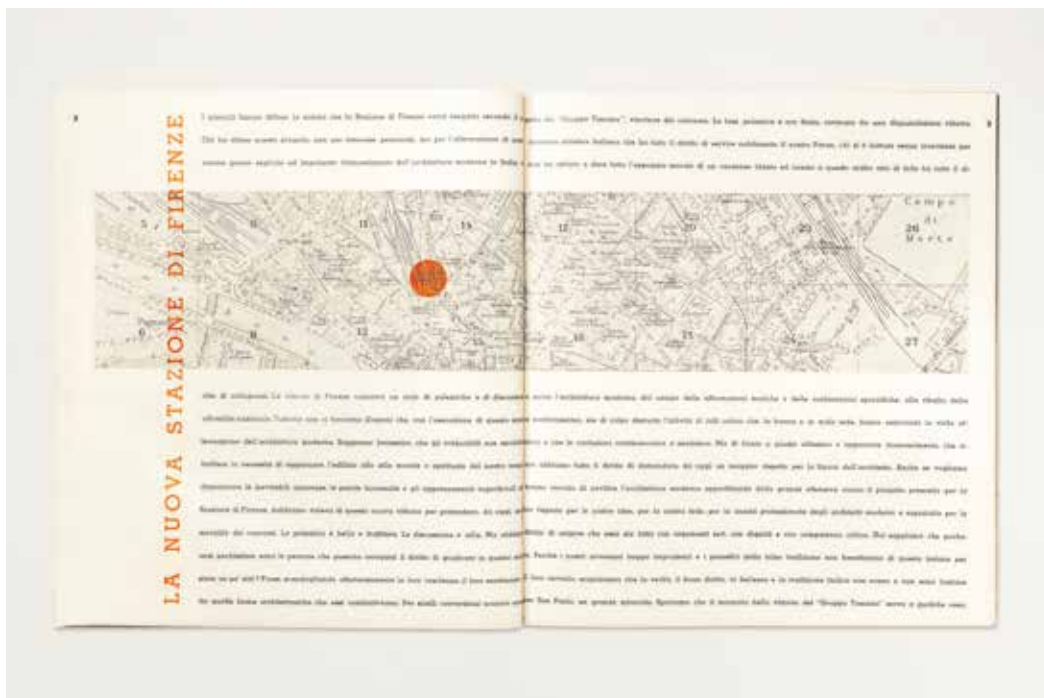


fig. 97 Double spread from *Casabella*, graphic design by Edoardo Persico, 1933.
Photo by Niccolò Quaresima



Double page from the promotional booklet *Il Linoleum. Sua fabbricazione* (Linoleum. Its Fabrication), graphic design by Guido Modiano, Bruno Munari and Riccardo Ricas, 1938. Promotional booklets and industrial catalogues were another privileged field for the application of the "two pages in one" scheme, whose possibilities were in this case expanded by the use of the album format and spiral binding.

The Late Impact of New Typography in Italy A Different Relation with Tradition

Jan Tschichold's ideas had a significant impact in Italy, albeit with a considerable delay. His writings began to be known in Italian graphic arts circles precisely when the New Typography movement in Europe was losing momentum. Tschichold himself was on the verge of revising his positions, as evidenced in his articles published in Italian trade magazines, which showed a slightly more accommodating attitude towards tradition. This circumstance, coupled with the different political context, likely contributed to the emergence of an Italian version of the New Typography, definitely distant from the avant-garde's radicalism. Restraint and a lack of extremism can also be observed in the infrequent discussions regarding typefaces. Sans serif types, which Tschichold in 1928 proclaimed as the typefaces "in spiritual accordance with our time",³² also found their way in Italian print shops. Semplicità, produced by the Nebiolo Type Foundry in 1930, quickly gained widespread popularity and became one of the primary models for lettering on buildings and public spaces. However, in Italy, neither geometric sans serifs nor unicaser or "universal" types held a central place in the discourse surrounding the New Typography. The time was rather that of modern reinterpretations of Bodoni, such as the Bayer type, which elicited some discussion in Italy as well.³³ Nevertheless, the Italian debate focused more on other aspects and, particularly towards the end of the 1930s, a mutual rapprochement, if not a reconciliation, between Modernist and traditionalist positions became apparent.³⁴

Like Italian architectural Rationalism, the Modernist concepts of simplicity, logic and serenity were frequently associated to the idea of a modern classicism. One prominent figure who exemplified this perspective was Pietro Maria Bardi, a passionate advocate of Rationalist architecture and one of the influential intellectuals associated with the regime. Bardi argued against extreme typographic experiments, criticising the use of "clichés slipping off the page" and "vertical or crooked lines".³⁵ Despite his unwavering belief in the pursuit of modern taste, Bardi's idea of Rationalism in typography was rooted in a sort of "return to order". In his writings, he claimed an "Italian typography, clear, designed with constructive feeling, renewed without eccentricities and pondered with intelligence".³⁶ Bardi's aspiration for a Rationalist, Italian typography is not surprising. As I have highlighted elsewhere, New Typography in Italy developed in a cultural context in which the profession of faith for the modern could often coexist with a nationalist attitude and the latter did not exclude a profound aware-

ness and even flaunting of European influences.³⁷

Moreover, it is important to note that the examples and writings that arrived in Italy during the 1930s represented a movement that had already reached a level of maturity, being "equally distant from the older Bauhaus typography and Tschichold's initial elementary typography, as from the classicism of the bibliophile publisher".³⁸ This descrip-

32 Tschichold 1995: 73.

33 Modiano 1937; Mazzucchelli 1937.

34 Vinti 2005.

35 Bardi 1933: 553: "zincchi che scappano di pagina"; "righe verticali o di sghimbescio

36 *Ibid.*: 554: "Noi amiamo la tipografia all'italiana, chiara, architettata con sentimento costruttivo, rinnovata senza stramberie e considerata con intelligenza. Accettiamo qualsiasi rivoluzione purché fondata sulla logica. Pensiamo a un razionalismo tipografico: un ritorno alla elementarità, alla serenità, alla semplicità".

37 Vinti 2019.

38 Renner 2000 (1948): 88.

tion, adopted by Paul Renner in relation to the typography taught at the Meisterschule in Munich, can be reasonably extended to encompass many manifestations of the New Typography in the early 1930s, including Renner's selection of printed matter for the 5th Milan Triennale which, according to *Die Form*, achieved an "almost classical" spirit.³⁹ During the 1920s in Germany, printing trade magazines and schools were crucial in initiating a normalisation process of the early radical experiments of New Typography. As is well-known, Tschichold, who had trained as a typographer and calligrapher, succeeded precisely in mediating between the visionary proposals of avant-garde artists and the technical constraints of the printing practice.

In a similar way, during the 1930s in Italy, trade magazines and representatives of the graphic industry, such as typographers, owners and workers of printing firms, played an essential role in the affirmation of the Modernist current. The emergence of the early figures of consultant designers in the field occurred in a graphic scene still strongly dominated by the actors of the printing trade. As in other European countries, the issue at stake in Italy was not yet the birth of a new profession like that of the graphic designer (or at least it was not perceived as such), but the quest for a New Typography, i.e. an ambitious endeavour to regenerate the secular tradition of the art of printing by adapting it to the modern world.

39 *Die Form* 1933: 189. "daß hier heute schon geradezu klassisch wirkende Leistungen vorliegen".

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