

BOOKSTORE

P102. Gio Ponti e Milano

by Lisa Licitra Ponti, Paolo Rosselli and Salvatore Licitra, with an introduction by Stefano Boeri, photos by Paolo Rosselli, Quodlibet 2018, 266 pages, €22.00.

This new guide to the works of architecture built by Gio Ponti in Milan from 1920 to 1970 contains 35 different projects. Narrated by the architect's daughter Lisa Licitra in pithy texts accompanied by personal memoirs, with an introduction by Stefano Boeri and striking photographs by Paolo Rosselli, the selected works are also illustrated by archival documents and drawings. A lifetime of design on different scales (urban design, architecture, interiors, objects), accompanied by critical research and curiosity, as seen in the magazines where Ponti was the editor - *Stile* and *Domus* - and in articles written for *Corriere della Sera*. Ponti shifted rapidly and skillfully through multiple forms of expression, signs, figures, facades, colors, making every work become "a world in its own right."

Ritrovare Gianfranco Frattini

by Marco Romanelli, Triennale Design Museum 2018, 112 pages, €14.00.
The catalogue of the exhibition organized at Villa Reale in Monza last sum-

mer, this book by Marco Romanelli examines one of the protagonists of the history of Italian design in the postwar era, who together with Magistretti and Sottsass, the Castiglioni brothers and Zanuso, Parisi and Rosselli, just to name a few, set the tone of the Italian approach to architectural design in the wider sense of the term. Gianfranco Frattini was part of a formidable group of "personalities capable of seamlessly shifting from architecture to interiors, furnishings to products." Frattini addressed many different typologies in pursuit of a "world of beauty and rigor [...] in which man should be able to live well in its spaces." Introduced by a conversation with the designer's daughter Emanuela, this portrait of Frattini reveals how in his work interior design and furnishings blended, "combining in a virtuous and elegant partnership," a synergy based on complex, in-depth research that can be seen as a method that is still quite useful today.

Atlante dei Luoghi Insoliti e Curiosi

by Travis Elborough and Alan Horsfield, Rizzoli Editore 2017, 224 pages, €25.00.

Atlante delle Architetture Fantastiche

by Philip Wilkinson, Rizzoli Editore 2018, 256 pages, €24.90.

The atlas is usually a big book containing geographical maps of the world. The name comes from the mythological giant who held the world on his shoulders, shown on the cover of the famous anthology of maps by Gerardus Mercator in 1595. The term 'atlas' has gradually come to mean any collection of plates, usually in large format, on a specific theme. The atlas, in substance, becomes a literary genre, a necessarily illustrated book that approaches various subjects from a historical standpoint. This is the case for these two volumes. The first is on unusual and curious places existing on our planet, with maps made for the occasion. The second sets out to document a fine selection of works of 'phantom architecture' (often works that remained on the drawing board) chosen for their particular experimental or utopian spirit. These enjoyable works address various themes (abandoned places and floating universes, underground landscapes and dream creations, ideal worlds and enlightened visions) in a stimulating voyage through imagined and constructed history, discovering places and works of architecture from antiquity to the present.

Margherita Sarfatti

by various authors, Electa Editore 2018, 312 pages, €40.00.

Catalogue of the exhibitions recently held at Museo del Novecento in Milan and MART in Trento and Rovereto on Margherita Sarfatti (1880-1961), a protagonist of Italian art and architecture during the Fascist period. The book, like the exhibitions, documents her role as a tireless advocate of the "Novecento" movement, which especially in Milan produced exceptional works of art and architecture. A lover of the Duce until she fled from Italy in the wake of the racial laws of 1938, Margherita Grassini was born in Venice into an important Jewish family, and married Cesare Sarfatti in 1898, moving to Milan in 1902, where she was a strategic figure of reference, with her salon, for the Italian cultural system. She was one of the initiators of the "Novecento" movement, which set out to develop a "modern classicism" in the arts, getting beyond realism in painting and sculpture, and historicist eclecticism in architecture. Through the recovery and reinterpretation of forms and the definition of harmonious compositions with a classical matrix in spite of their contemporary character: the Novecento artists and ar-



chitects wrote an important chapter of Italian art history. With the definition of the "beauty of utility" Margherita Sarfatti approached the reformulation of a concept of 'style' that could be extended to various disciplines: painting and sculpture, architecture and the design of objects. While the catalogue and the exhibitions exhaustively document the theme of painting, 'reinvented' by Boccioni, Sironi, Casorati and Soffici, Campigli and Severini, just to name a few, and without overlooking the sculptural magic of Wildt, inexplicably nothing is said about architecture, except for some hints in the contributions of Antonello Negri and Mariateresa Chirico. Nevertheless, architecture was fundamental in Sarfatti's artistic career: her project for the tomb of her son Roberto, killed in battle on the highlands of Asiago, commissioned in the 1930s to Giuseppe Terragni, and the fertile episodes of Milanese Novecento architecture, seem like missing chapters in this 'portrait' (exhibitions and catalogue) of a protagonist of Italian culture between the two World Wars. *Matteo Vercelloni*