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# NANDA VIGO

EXHIBITION 7. 7. 2022

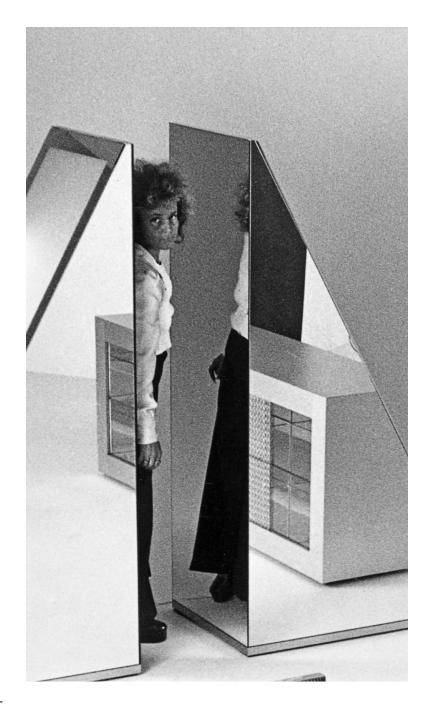
**- 8.1.2023** 

# THE INNER SPACE



"Identificazione: incerta Architetto: riduttivo Artista: riduttivo Designer: riduttivo Pioneer: maybe

Anyway: Nanda Vigo"



# WHO IS NANDA VIGO?

A native from Milan and trained at the EPFL, École polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne, Nanda Vigo (1936 - 2020) stood out in the 1960s for her transversal approach to the arts, architecture and design. A major figure in the Italian avant-garde art scene, she has always favoured the experimentation and the exploration.

From 1959, she has attended the studio of Lucio Fontana, before getting closer to the artists Piero Manzoni and Enrico Castellani, who founded the Azimuth gallery in Milan. It was during this period that she discovered the artists and places of the ZERO movement in Germany, the Netherlands and France. Between 1964 and 1966, she participated in numerous ZERO exhibitions in Europe; in 1965, she organized the legendary *Zero avantgarde* exhibition in Lucio Fontana's studio in Milan.

Between 1965 and 1968, she signed the interior of *Lo Scarabeo sotto la foglia*, a house developed from initial plans by Gio Ponti and built by Giobatta Meneguzzo in Malo in northern Italy. In 1971, she received the *New York Award for Industrial Design*, for the *Golden Gate* lamp produced by Arredoluce and carried out one of her most emblematic projects for the *Casa Museo Remo Brindisi* in Lido di Spina. In 1976, she won the Saint-Gobain first prize for glass design, and in 1982 she took part in the 40<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale.

Nanda Vigo's creations are permanently presented at the Triennale Design Museum in Milan, in the collection of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, at the Museo del Novecento in Milan and at the Castello di Rivoli. In 2014, she exhibited at the Guggenheim Museum in New York as part of the retrospective dedicated to ZERO. In 2015, within the Zero. Die Internationale Kunstbewegung der 50er und 60er Jahre exhibition program, she exhibited at the Martin-Gropius-Bau in Berlin and at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam.

Nanda Vigo, *Trigger* of the space, Galleria Vinciana, 1974 © Aldo Ballo -Archivio Nanda Vigo, Milan

# INTRODUCTION

This solo exhibition showcases, for the first time in France, the work of Nanda Vigo (1936 - 2020), an unclassifiable pioneer and key figure of the Italian avant-garde. Through immersive, sensory installations, *Nanda Vigo, the inner space* takes in architecture, art and design as so many fields of total creation, offering an insight into the importance of the artist's oeuvre and her research. More than a chronological charting of her career, this exhibition is a sensory experience.

A number of historical environments and interiors, most of them now demolished, have been reconstructed for the exhibition, to offer visitors a real sense of the unique dimension of her work. Playing with effects of transparency and reflection, glass, aluminium, mirrors and neon – her preferred working materials – alter our perception of space and arouse our senses.

As early as 1959, Nanda Vigo began breaking with the established codes to provoke emotions and propose a new relationship with art. Each surface she designs becomes an environment in which to live, act and react. Extremely hard-working, she was continually changing her style while always remaining true to herself, her standards always high, removed from passing trends and fashions of the moment.

In the man's world of the avant-garde, Vigo's strong personality and experimental approach won her the respect of big names like Otto Piene, Gio Ponti and Lucio Fontana, with whom she collaborated on a number of occasions. Yet despite what was a remarkable career, like many other women artists and designers her work has yet to gain the recognition it deserves.

Showing Nanda Vigo at madd-bordeaux is an opportunity to grasp just how current her work remains today. Free from the constraints of representation, Vigo pushed the boundaries of space in her life and her work. Her achievements, both experimental and immersive, bear witness to her autonomy of action and thought.

Organised in partnership with Archivio Nanda Vigo – founded in Milan by the artist herself in 2013 – this exhibition is as much a tribute to her work as it is to the figure of Vigo as a woman artist.

In order to enhance the experience of the immersive visit, the cartels of the works appear only in the visit booklet.





Extract, Studio visit of Nanda Vigo Alberto Mattia Martini 2016, Milan Video 19 min. 38 sec Courtesy of Alberto Mattia Martini

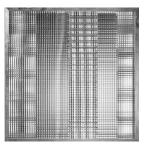
Chandelier Explorer Edition Arredoluce, 1971 Steel structure and cable, mirror glass Courtesy of Céline Marcato

# CRONOTOPO

In 1959, Nanda Vigo began her artistic work with a series of pieces entitled *Cronotopo*, linked to her research around the concepts of time and space. At once painting, object and sculpture, the chronotype is like a fragment of space in which a number of glass panels are overlaid inside a metal frame. The way the light interacts with these reflective materials – moulded glass, steel, mirrors – blurs established spatial and temporal boundaries, and transforms our perception of space.

Indeed, with these creations, Vigo wishes to stimulate our senses and our minds with the aim of triggering almost overwhelming physical, emotional and psychological sensations. The work breaks wi convention and transports the viewer in a deep inner reflection, full of energy.

The wall mounted and free-standing *Cronotopos* dating from 1963 and 1965 are some of the artist's earliest works and were fundamental to her subsequent career.







# ZERO

"It is not a style, and it is not a group. It is not a movement. And I don't want it to become one. ZERO is an attitude." That is how Otto Piene, founder member of ZERO, defined this phenomenon, which he launched in 1957 with Heinz Mack in Düsseldorf.

Nanda Vigo made contact with these artists in the early 1960s, through Lucio Fontana and Piero Manzoni. She had been seeing Manzoni since 1959 and the two became a couple. Right from the outset, multiple ties united Vigo and the artists of the movement. They shared a common mindset and their ideas converged in the same direction. Through their creations, the ZERO artists embodied a renewal: they redefined modernity, to overcome the traumas of the Second World War. Their visual-arts research gave priority to light and its dynamic, two themes dear to Vigo, which she materialised in many ways through her practice. She showed her work alongside theirs in Europe, and contributed to the group's recognition in Italy, where she organised the touring exhibition ZERO avantgarde 1965, in Milan, Venice, Turin, Rome and Brescia.

Thanks to the support of the ZERO foundation in Düsseldorf, a selection of original archive material is on show here: the three issues of the ZERO review, disseminating their innovative ideas, published for the *Evening Exhibitions* between 1958 and 1961; the first invitation cards; photographs of the group; and 23 posters of the movement's most iconic exhibitions. These documents taken together attest to the diversity of practices – visual arts, performance, exhibition and publishing – of these artists, who also curated their own shows.

They make the link between Nanda Vigo's work and the artistic transformations of her time, and show the incredible ideological vitality of the network, active from 1957 to 1966, when its founding members, Heinz Mack, Otto Piene and Günther Uecker, announced its dissolution, at the ZERO in Bonn exhibition.













#### Showcase:

Invitation card 7<sup>th</sup> Evening Exhibition, 1958 Courtesy of ZERO foundation

Invitation card  $7^{\text{th}}/8^{\text{th}}$  Evening Exhibition, 1958 Courtesy of ZERO foundation

Invitation card 8<sup>th</sup> Evening Exhibition, 1958 Courtesy of ZERO foundation Heinz Mack, Otto Piene, Günther Uecker, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 1962 Photo by Raoul van den Boom Courtesy of ZERO foundation

ZERO-Manifest Günther Uecker, Heinz Mack and Otto Piene, 1963 Courtesy of ZERO foundation Poster of the exhibition Vigo, Mack, Piene, Uecker Galerie Wulfengasse 14, Klagenfurt, 1964 Courtesy of ZERO foundation











Newspaper article of

the exhibition ZERO avantgarde,

Courtesy of ZERO foundation







ZERO avantgarde 1965 Galleria del Cavallino, 1965 Courtesy of ZERO foundation

Brochure of the exhibition

Enrico Castellani, Zita Vismara, Heinz Mack and Nanda Vigo, probably at the Galleria Cadario, Milan, date unknown (1963 - 1965) Photo by Martha Rocher Courtesy of ZERO foundation ZERO House, Nanda Vigo in front of a piece by Lucio Fontana, Milan, 1959/1962 Courtesy of ZERO foundation

Telegram from Nanda Vigo to Heinz Mack, date unknown Courtesy of ZERO foundation









#### Exhibition posters ZERO foundation, Düsseldorf

#### Left wall:

Mack Schmela gallery, Düsseldorf, 1958

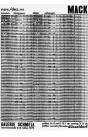
Mack Piene Lichtreliefs, Ölbilder, Lichtmodelle Graphisches Kabinett, Heidelberg, 1959

Dynamo Boukes gallery, Wiesbaden, 1959

Vision in Motion Hessenhuis, Anvers, 1959









Mack, Piene Studio F, 1960

Mack Diogenes gallery, Berlin, 1960

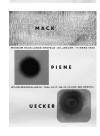
Mack Schmela gallery, Düsseldorf, 1960

ZERO. Edition Exposition Demonstration Schmela gallery, Düsseldorf, 1961









Mack + Klein + Piene + Uecker + Lo Savio Gallerie La Salita, Rome 1961

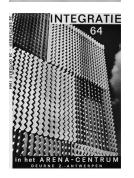
Piene, Mack St. Stephan gallery, Vienne, 1961

forum'62 Centrum voor kunstambachten, Gand, 1962

Mack, Piene, Uecker Museum Haus Lange, Krefeld, 1963







Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam,

Diogenes gallery, Berlin, 1963

Arena-Centrum, Antwerp, 1964

ZERO Edition Exposition

Demonstration

Integratie 64

Right wall:

1962

















ZERO: An Exhibition of European Experimental Art The Washington Gallery of Modern Art, Washington, 1964

Mikro Zero/Nul Amstel 47 gallery, Amsterdam, 1964

ZERO New Vision Center Gallery, London, 1964

Mack, Piene, Uecker Kestner-Gesellschaft, Hanover, 1965 Art et Mouvement Tel-Aviv Museum, Tel-Aviv, 1965

Zero avantgarde 1966 Galleria associazione zen, Brescia, 1966

Piene. Zweites Fest für das Licht Schmela gallery, Düsseldorf, 1966

ZERO in Bonn Städtische Kunstsammlungen, Bonn, 1966

# RADICAL

Radical, in reference to the strong and unique personality of Nanda Vigo; radical like her choices of materials and her artistic vocabulary, revealed here through a selection of objects, furniture and elements of scenery.

The *Iceberg* lamp, the *Due Più* chair, the *Blocco* pouffe or the *Hard & Soft* table are innovative creations, particularly representative of the artist's personality. They conjure up references to the Bauhaus art movement and its industrial and functional vocabulary, yet at the same time reflect a mysterious and provocative pop identity. The lines are straight and emphasised by the light reflecting on the chrome, or else entirely absent when lost in long fur. These formal structures are simple, so as not to divert attention from the essence of the work.

The duality of materials is present throughout her career, from early works like the *Due Più* chair to her final furniture collection, *Hard & Soft*, produced in 2019. The *Hard* – echoing the hardness of the metal – and the *Soft* – in reference to the softness of the fur – are attributed, in the case of the *Due Più* chair, to the structure and contact with the body, whereas the roles are reversed for the *Hard & Soft* table, in which the fur is laid on a structural element. The square of the *Iceberg* lamp and the deliberately asymmetrical triangle of the corner mirror are geometric shapes chosen for their symbolic meanings. The combination disconcerts the eye and our perception of space, in a radical atmosphere.









Blocco pouf, 1970 Edition Driade Synthetic fur, wood frame, polyurethane upholstery Courtesy of Nilufar Gallery

Due più chair, 1971 Edition More Coffee Chromed steel, Mongolian fur Courtesy of Archivio Nanda Vigo, Milan

Iceberg lamp, 1970 Edition Arredoluce Steel, glass, neon Courtesy of Gorilla Collection Hard & Soft table, 2019 Mongolian fur, mirror, crystal glass Courtesy of Luca Preti collection

# LO SCARABEO SOTTO LA FOGLIA

Lo Scarabeo sotto la foglia (the beetle under the leaf) is one of the last interiors still in place, and one of the most significant to understanding the work of Nanda Vigo, combining as it does art, architecture and design.

Lo Scarabeo sotto la foglia was designed by Italian architect Gio Ponti (1891 - 1979) to be his holiday home, but he never actually had it built. In May 1964, Ponti published the detailed plans in *Domus* magazine, of which he was founder and editor-in-chief, so that any readers wishing to use the design could do so. In response to their publication, Giobatta Meneguzzo, a surveyor and art collector, contacted the architect to ask his permission to build the house in his home village of Malo, in northern Italy. In 1966, Meneguzzo met Nanda Vigo at an art event in Verona, and the two became friends. He invited her to design the interior of the house, which was to be his main residence. With Ponti's approval, she enlarged the space to cater for the family's needs, creating a basement. The house was inaugurated in 1969, with a happening by members of the famous New York experimental theatre group The Living Theatre.

It soon established itself as a unique, resolutely modern venue, both architecturally and for the art scene it hosted. The organisation of the spaces, the dialogue with the outside and the light, the shape of the roof, the use of white floor tiles and the incorporation of in-situ works by Lucio Fontana, Enrico Castellani and Agostino Bonalumi were all seen as a real revolution. The building consists of a large central area comprising the entrance hall, living room and parental bedroom. Opening onto this area are the kitchen, bathroom, children's bedroom and basement. Above the seat which is a natural continuation of the floor, the hanging metal works by Julio Le Parc delimit the space.

A tour of this private house is now available for the first time, by means of an immersive tool created in partnership with the EPFL Pavilions. It can be accessed by scanning the QR codes in the pictures displayed in this unit.



















Point the phone at the QR codes to activate panorama of Lo Scarabeo sotto la foglia

7 immersive panoramas created by EPFL Pavilions, 2022 Concept: Sarah Kenderdine Images: Olivier Gisiger Domus n°414, May 1964, (facsimile) Courtesy of Domus, Milan

Domus n°482, January 1970, (facsimile) Courtesy of Domus, Milan

# AMBIENTE CRONOTOPICO

The artist pursued her chronotopic research, seen first in the courtyard. The wall-mounted and free-standing works previously viewed from a distance are now experienced from within, penetrating inside her *Ambiente Cronotopico*, conceived for the first time in 1968 for the *Eurodomus* exhibition in Turin.

Throughout the 1960s, Nanda Vigo developed her concept of space-time, interpreting it in different ways. To that end, she drew up a lexicon of forms in line with her chronotopic theory and created spectacular environments with names like Ambienti Cronotopici Vivibili (liveable chronotopic environments), Labirinti (labyrinths) and Ambiente Cronotopico (chronotopic environment). Designed for events taking place in different locations, these environments physically engage visitors at the heart of the artist's work.

They symbolise an important stage in her practice. Nanda Vigo conceived them as a place of research, in which the arousal of the senses takes precedence over form. The way the materials interact with the light creates multiple reflections, animated directly by the visitors' presence, resulting in a sense of disorientation. Time becomes relative and space infinite.



Ambiente Cronotopico, 1968 Copy produced under the direction of the Archivio Nanda Vigo, 2021 Impressed glass, metal, neon Courtesy of Archivio Nanda Vigo in collaboration with Glas Italia

# **GOLDEN GATE**

Like Golden Gate, most of the objects created by Nanda Vigo involve manufacturing processes, despite being close to a craft practice, produced in small series. This floor lamp is the product of a special collaboration with Angelo Lelii, founder of the Italian firm Arredoluce. Their research led to the creation of a specific machine, designed by Lelii, for bending and cutting stainless-steel pipes to incorporate curved neon tubes. Innovative in its form and the technology used, Golden Gate (1968) became an icon of Italian design.

It was on a trip to San Francisco that Lelii suggested renaming the lamp, originally called *Futurama*. Its new name, *Golden Gate*, refers to the famous red bridge linking the peninsula to the town of Sausalito.

Fascinated by Vigo's work, the entrepreneur devoted entire trips to her projects, in search of the latest technological advances. The lamp's red LED may be cheap and commonplace today, but at the time they were produced and supplied only by NASA, for the control panels of the great calculators used for the Apollo mission. Lelii went in person to Cape Canaveral to procure some. Only a small number of copies of the floor lamp were produced at the time, given how difficult it was to make, the disproportionate cost of production and the rarity of the LED tubes.

Over two metres tall, this imposing floor lamp is today considered a design archetype, which earned Vigo the New York Award for International Design in 1974 and the Milan industrial design award in 1976.











Post card from Angelo Lelii to Nanda Vigo, 1970 Courtesy of Archivio Nanda Vigo, Milan Sketch (facsimile) of the *Golden Ga*te of Angelo Lelii to Nanda Vigo, 1970 Courtesy of Archivio Nanda Vigo, Milan Floor lamp *Golden Gate*, 1970 Edition Arredoluce Steel, neon, LED Courtesy of Galleria Luisa Delle Piane

# **ARREDOLUCE**

The collaboration between Nanda Vigo and Arredoluce lasted only four years, but was very productive. Angelo Lelii, managing director and founder of the company, agreed to produce Vigo's designs, which were technically bold and difficult to position on the market, like *Golden Gate*. Arredoluce was a manufacturer of mass-produced objects that retained a craft dimension in their research, materials, systems of production, lines and functions. These light fittings show the changing tastes of Italian society in the 1970s.

For a company like Arredoluce, which continually shifted between tradition and innovation, the classic and the modern, Vigo's arrival represented a turning-point, a third stage in its history, following on from the fundamental experiments carried out with Ettore Sottsass and Gio Ponti in the preceding decades. Fourteen models were designed by Vigo and produced by Lelii, in addition to a large number of pieces that did not get beyond the prototype stage. Production numbers remained low: a few dozen units for nearly all models, with the exception of *Linea* and *Manhattan*, which were produced in larger quantities for export mainly to the United States.

The Manhattan floor lamp (1971) is exemplary in terms of technical research. It comprises two plates of brushed metal placed vertically and held together by magnets that conceal the neon tubes inside. This design gives the surface a smooth appearance, with no visible screws or joints.

To show what a rich collaboration it was, a selection of stainless-steel light fittings produced by Arredoluce between 1968 and 1971 are presented here: table lamp *Iceberg* (1969), wall and table lamps *Geometral* (1970), floor lamp *Linea* (1968), table lamp *Utopia* (1971), floor lamp *Manhattan* (1971) and floor lamp protype of *model* 14033 (1968).















Table lamp *Iceberg model* 14088, 1969 Edition Arredoluce Steel, glass, halogen Courtesy of Archivio Arredoluce / Fragile Milano

Table lamp Geometral model 14072, 1970 Edition Arredoluce Chromed steel Courtesy of Justine Despretz

Wall lights Geometral model 14073, 1970 Edition Arredoluce Chromed steel Courtesy of Justine Despretz Floor lamp Linea model 14031, 1970 Edition Arredoluce Chromed steel, fluorescent tube Courtesy of Archivio Nanda Vigo, Milan

Lampe de table Utopia model 14106, 1971 Edition Arredoluce Steel, neon Courtesy of Didier et Clémence Krzentowski / Galerie Kreo Floor lamp Manhattan model 14105, 1971 - 1972 Edition Arredoluce Brushed steel, neon Courtesy of Luca Preti collection

Prototype of floor lamp model 14033, 1968 Edition Arredoluce Steel Courtesy of Archivio Arredoluce / Fragile Milano

# AMBIENTE SPAZIALE: "UTOPIE", NELLA XIII TRIENNALE DI MILANO, LUCIO FONTANA AND NANDA VIGO, 1964–2022

Reconstruction authorized by the Archivio Nanda Vigo and the Fondazione Lucio Fontana.

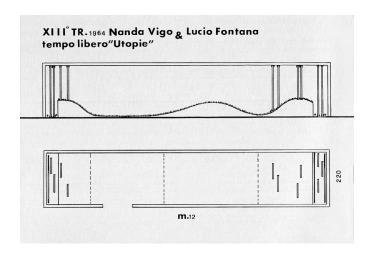
In 1959, after reading *Manifiesto Blanco*, Nanda Vigo contacted Lucio Fontana and met him in his studio. At that time, Fontana was one of the most influential artists of the Milanese avant-garde. He was developing an ideology around concepts of time and space, which he materialised through his *Concetti Spaziali* (spatial concepts) and *Ambienti Spaziali* (spatial environments). Driven by common research themes – time, space and light – as set out in their respective manifestos, the two soon became collaborators and friends. Alongside architectural projects like *ZERO House* (1959 - 62), in 1962 the duo produced their first installation for the exhibition *Lucio Fontana*: *Opere 1949 - 61*, at the International Center of Aesthetic Research, in Turin.

From 12 June to 27 September 1964, the 13<sup>th</sup> Milan Triennale took place at the Palazzo dell'Arte and Parco Sempione. It was the first Triennale on a specific theme, that of free time, a topical subject for Italy as it experienced major phenomena of social change linked to the process of industrialisation. The exhibition *Tempo Libro* was curated by writer Umberto Eco and architect Vittorio Gregotti, who invited Fontana to exhibit. Fontana suggested to Vigo that they team up to design two corridors on the theme of utopia, defined as: "the hopes and hypotheses that humanity has formulated in respect of future societies in which man's dignity and all possibilities for spiritual and physical expansion are recognised."

The duo came up with a work that was to be the high point of their collaboration: Ambiente spaziale: "Utopie", nella XIII Triennale di Milano. This large-scale installation comprised two environments, independent of the laws of gravity and proportion, which Fontana had anticipated in his manifestos on spatialism and which Vigo would develop in her chronotopic spaces.

This reconstruction of the first environment, which is presented for the first time in France, was made possible by the agreement of the Fondazione Lucio Fontana and the Archivio Nanda Vigo. Twelve metres long with walls and a ceiling covered in red wallpaper with an aluminium finish, this corridor incorporates technical patterned-glass panels at either end, backlit by red neon tubes. The undulated wooden floor was laid with a thick red rug. The thick rug and the quadrionda glass are recurring elements in Nanda Vigo's interiors, while the tactile and chromatic components recall the solutions used by Lucio Fontana in *Esaltazione di una forma* (1960), as does the feeling of imbalance produced by the undulated floor. *Ambiente spaziale: "Utopie"* was designed as an imaginary place that invites the viewer to feel free and to dream.

For visitors with limited mobility and those who don't want to walk through the work, ask a guard; a hidden door provides direct access to the rest of the exhibition.



Lucio Fontana y Nanda Vigo Ambiente spaziale: «Utopie» nella XIII triennale di Milano, 1964 - 2022
Reconstruction authorised by Fondazione Lucio Fontana and Archivio Nanda Vigo Corridor with red metallic cladding, corrugated floor with red carpet, 14 panels of printed industrial glass; red neon tubes © Fondazione Lucio Fontana, Milano / by SIAE / Adagp, Paris, 2022
© Archivio Nanda Vigo, Milan

"I have always loved art so whole-heartedly t hat it seems impossible for me to distinguish the everyday object from its artistic influence"

Nanda Vigo, C'è design e design, e quello artistico? L'arte e il design. Rapoporto tra arte e design, Milan, 1<sup>st</sup> October 1993

# TRIGGER OF THE SPACE

This second part of the exhibition presents the materialization of Nanda Vigo's mystical research. From 1972, the artist embarked on an esoteric journey that drew on her many experiences among non-European cultures, in places like Egypt, Iran, India, Nepal and Mexico. The richness of these experiences led her to develop and incorporate a spiritual dimension in her creations. She discovered symbolic shapes and signs, which she used to compose an alphabet that enriched her personal language: the triangle, square, rectangle and circle, for her works in two dimensions; the pyramid, cube, sphere and cylinder, for her three-dimensional pieces.

In her text Exoteric Gate (attraverso il sogno cosmico) (1976), Nanda Vigo presents a trilogy on three planes, between the real, the unreal and the transcendent. Three states underpinning her research that are triggered by reflective surfaces, although it is impossible "to determine the exact moment where the unreal becomes real, and takes on the transcendent appearance of illusion."

Through the series of works titled *Trigger of the Space*, which she began in the 1970s, Nanda Vigo modulated and modified our concept of spacetime. These pyramidal light sculptures with spectacular reflections are made using mirrors and neon lights. They are like trampolines to new worlds, bridges to the vast, unknown universe. They are not contemplative objects, to be viewed head-on like a painting or statue. They must be experienced internally, like spaces, incorporating our own sensory experiences. The *Trigger of the Space* series creates an interaction with viewers, who become at the same time producers of the work – their reflections interact with the space, which is reflected on the surfaces of the mirror object.







Trigger of the space, 1974 Mirror, neon Courtesy of private collection, Trigger of the space, 1974 Mirror, neon Courtesy of Archivio Nanda Vigo, Milan Trigger of the space, 1974 Mirror, neon Courtesy of Archivio Nanda Vigo, Milan

# MIRROR

Echoing the works of the *Trigger of the Space series*, in which mirrors are used for highly symbolic purposes, the furniture pieces shown in this space reveal the way in which the artist-designer transposes her artistic research to design. The *Four Corners* table produced by Driade, the *Cosmos PL4*, *Cosmos PR4* and *Andromeda 686Q* mirrors produced by Glas Italia and the *Wonderbox* produced by Luca Preti all communicate through their reflections. Indeed, in Nanda Vigo's extended research into light, the mirror represents a strong central element capable of making the furniture disappear, by way of the environment it reflects.

The Wonderbox was part of a private project initiated by Luca Preti, a collector of historical Italian design pieces and a friend of Vigo. In 2015, he suggested to the artist that she reinterpret the TOP hi-fi cabinet, designed in 1970 for Fai International. For that reinterpretation, Vigo chose to incorporate a Cronotopo piece inside the cabinet, which she renamed Wonderbox. As she herself put it, "the solution was created with mirror materials, frosted glass, LED elements and blue neon lights. The cabinet is displayed with the doors closed, and they may only be opened if necessary."











Mirror Andromeda, 686Q, 1974 Edition Glas Italia Crystal mirror Courtesy of Glas Italia

Coffee table four corners, 1970 Edition Driade Crystal mirrorl Courtesy of Alexandre Guillemain Mirror Cosmos, PR4, 1981 Edition Glas Italia Crystal mirror, black paint Courtesy of Glas Italia

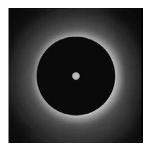
Wonderbox, 1971 -2015 MD structure, plastic laminate, smoked glass, mirror, glass, neon, LED Courtesy of Luca Preti collection

Miroir Cosmos, PL4, 1981 Edition Glas Italia Crystal mirror, black paint Courtesy of Glas Italia

# **GENESIS**

In black crystal with red and blue neon lights, *Genesis Light* (2006) contains many references to the cosmos and its symbolism, and in particular black holes. The term "genesis", which refers to the creative process, is also the hallmark of Nanda Vigo's own private language, founded on esoterism and her quest for knowledge.

The beams of light, which spreads beyond the surface of the object, is one of the signs of her expressive code. The harmony between light and space induced by the reflective surfaces is a constant in her work and characterizes her artistic development since the *Cronotopo* of the 1960s.



CELL 8

# LIGHT TREE

The Light Trees are covered with fragmented screens made up of shapes that belong to the primary language defined by Nanda Vigo with her cosmological alphabet: squares, rectangles and circles of fluted or frosted glass, which act as a filter to soften the light from the vertical neon tubes and highlight the symbolic growth of the tree.

Studio visit of Nanda Vigo Alberto Mattia Martini, 2016, Milan Video 19 min. 38 sec.

Introduction to the interview by Alberto Mattia Martini.

It is well known that being a woman in a society like ours is not easy. especially if one chooses to become an artist in the 1950s. Yet Nanda Vigo was not fazed, and set about studying architecture, then visual art and design, with determination. The idea of light, which would later become a decisive source of inspiration for her entire oeuvre, came to her when she first saw the Casa del Fascio, in Como, designed by rationalist architect Giuseppe Terragni. After graduating in Lausanne, she settled in Milan, where art entered her life decisively and, I would say, completely: she collaborated with Giò Ponti, made friends with Lucio Fontana and became Piero Manzoni's partner. Vigo also made contact with the ZERO group, or rather the ZERO Movement, as the artist herself was at pains to stress; a movement in which she was to become a key protagonist, as curator of the ZERO avantagrde 1965 exhibition in Lucio Fontana's atelier. Many and important were the trips she made around the world, her projects, works, exhibitions and prizes. She was a woman with a capital "W" but, above all, an artist with a capital "A".

This video interview is part of Alberto Mattia Martini's project, StudioVisit Arte=Vita, which aims to present the key figures of the Italian contemporary art scene. These videos offer a glimpse of the artists' life and their atelier, which we might consider to be the "place where everything originates", the private space in which the artist often finds their creative inspiration and produces their works.

Alberto Mattia Martini is an art critic and exhibition curator, who has curated many major exhibitions in both public spaces and private galleries. He currently teaches the history and theory of methods of representation at the Brera Academy of Fine Art, in Milan. He was principal of the Rovereto Academy of Fine Art and artistic director of the Brescia Free Academy of Fine Art, where he also taught the history of contemporary and modern art. He writes for many publications, including: Flash Art, D'Ars, Artein, Espoarte and Artribune.com. He is also on the register of technical experts to the Court of Parma. He collaborated for a number of years with the world-renowned critic and founder of the nouveau réalisme art movement, Pierre Restany.





Studio visit of Nanda Vigo Alberto Mattia Martini, 2016, Milan Video 19 min. 38 sec Courtesy of Alberto Mattia Martini

Light Tree, 1985 Painted iron, printed glass, halogen bulbs, neon Courtesy of Stefano Galuzzi "Space here is itself an artwork on the architectural scale, constructed of artworks. Compared with this, other art collectors' homes can appear diluted, vague; made from objects and intervals. Here there are no intervals."

Nanda Vigo, "Casa e quadri", Domus n°528, November 1973

# CASA BLU

Nanda Vigo designed six monochrome interiors: Zero House (1959-62), Lo Scarabeo sotto la foglia (1965-68), Casa Museo Remo Brindisi (1967-71), Casa Blu (1967-72), Casa Gialla (1970) and Casa Nera (1970). This series of interiors openly combines art, architecture and design, and references a pop art sensibility. Presented in the iconic design magazine Domus, Vigo's interiors soon became a benchmark in Italian interior design of the time. Artworks were included as part of the designs, rather than as added decoration. Art and architecture work in symbiosis to create a living environment, personified and avant-garde.

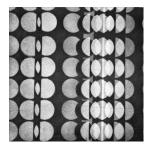
Like Lo Scarabeo sotto la foglia, Casa Blu plays with perception. In these spaces, light becomes physical when cast onto steel, aluminium, patterned glass, Plexiglas or ceramic. Vigo invented the home as a refuge, fed by the obsessions of those who inhabit it. Casa Blu is the first of a series of houses designed by the architect for wealthy clients in Milan, and named after the colours that are their source of inspiration. The artworks displayed on the walls and the shiny surfaces of the apartment lend coherence to the interior and give the impression that the apartment is part home, part art gallery.

In the reproduction of part of that interior in Klein blue, a number of Nanda Vigo's iconic design pieces are displayed: the *Blok* table (1972) made by Acerbis, and the *Cronotopo* sideboard (1971) and *Wright Wright* chairs (1972) made by Driade. In addition is a painting done by Vigo in 1968, *Figurazione Cronotopica*, which evokes the pattern created by the rays of light passing through the glass of these *Cronotopos*.









Buffet Cronotopo, 1974 Edition Driade Aluminum, glass shelves and doors, mirror interior Courtesy of Gorilla Collection

Chairs Wright Wright, 1972 Edition Driade Chrome plated metal, fabric Courtesy of Galleria Luisa Delle Piane Table Block, 1972 Edition Acerbis Crystal glass, mirror Courtesy of Galleria Luisa Delle Piane

Figurazione Cronotopica / Crazy pictures, 1968 Acrylic paint on canvas Courtesy of Gorilla Collection

# STORET

Nanda Vigo designed the Storet storage unit in 1992 for Italian furniture manufacturer Acerbis. The design stands out from the rest of her production for its functionalism, rounded lines and raw-wood aesthetic, which she had explored very little up until then.

This project consolidated her collaboration with Acerbis, begun in the 1960s with the *Blok* table series. It takes the form of an unusual pillar chest with ten drawers in playful, generous shapes. Originally made of cherry wood, its simple, vertical structure contrasts with the dynamic, transgressive language of the coloured elements. The glossy lacquer finish of the drawers reflects the light and contrasts with its matte, rectangular body.

In 2019, artistic directors Francesco Meda and David Lopez Quincoces, who were working on the reproduction and updating of furniture by great designers, were taken with the designs of this piece, which were held in their archives. They decided to reproduce it and, for the first time, to make its more compact version, already considered by Nanda Vigo herself in 1992 as a more affordable alternative.

The pieces presented in this space are the product of the final developments made by Nanda Vigo and Acerbis. The Storet collection, now comprising a four-drawer bedside cabinet and a ten-drawer pillar chest, presents new finishes and dimensions in line with today's needs. The use of ash and oak reveals Acerbis's expertise and makes for a sustainable production cycle. Its range of soft and original colours, from light green to peony pink, reinforce its character and make it a good match for a wide variety of interiors









Night table Storet, 1992 Edition Acerbis, 2020 Walnut, burgundy lacquer paint Courtesy of Acerbis/MDF Italia srl

Night table Storet, 1992 Editions Acerbis, 2020 Walnut, burgundy lacquer paint Courtesy of Acerbis/MDF Italia srl Chest of drawers Storet, 1992 Edition Acerbis, 1994 - 2001 Walnut, mustard lacquer paint Courtesy of Acerbis/MDF Italia srl

Night table Storet, 1992 Edition Acerbis, 2020 Walnut, mustard lacquer paint Courtesy of Acerbis/MDF Italia srl

#### Under frame:

Letters and sketches (facsimiles) exchanged between Nanda Vigo and Acerbis, 1992 - 1994 Courtesy of Acerbis/MDF Italia srl

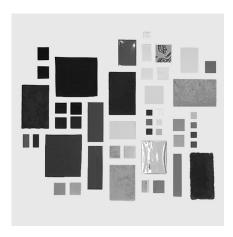
# MATERIALS LIBRARY

Research, innovation and experimentation represent a major part of Nanda Vigo's work, which we have chosen to include here in the form of a "materials library".

Through a selection of raw materials extracted directly from her works or inspired by the lexicon of materials she established over time, this space offers an insight into the artist's preferred mediums, such as glass, mirrors, metal, velvet, fur and rugs.

In order to fully experience the artist's universe, visitors have the opportunity to try out the distinctly modernist and avant-garde *Due Più* chair – a tubular structure made of stainless steel with two cylinders of fur, designed by Vigo in 1971.

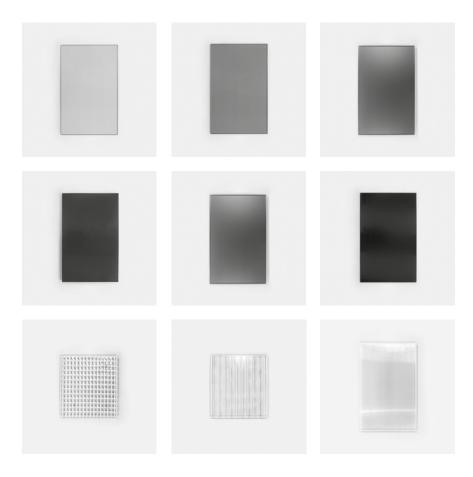
Our warmest thanks to Acerbis, Archivio Nanda Vigo, Barrisol, Dedar and Saint-Gobain Vitrage Bâtiment for their donations of materials and their support in setting up this space.

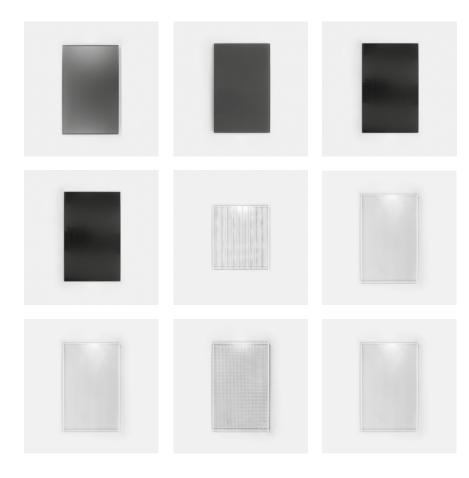




Armchair *Due Più*, 1971 Edition More Coffee, 1971 Metal, synthetic fur Courtesy of Archivio Nanda Vigo, Milan

Material samples from the exhibition's scenography and from various donations





Saint-Gobain vitrage bâtiment Parsol Bronze Glass

Saint-Gobain vitrage bâtiment Planilaque Noir profond Painted glass

Archivio Nanda Vigo, Milan Quadrionda Impressed glass Saint-Gobain vitrage bâtiment Miralite Gris contraste safe Mirror

Saint-Gobain vitrage bâtiment Miralite Revolution Bronze Mirror

Archivio Nanda Vigo, Milan Impressed glass Saint-Gobain vitrage bâtiment Parsol Gris Glass

Saint-Gobain vitrage bâtiment Miralite Revolution Gris Mirror

Saint-Gobain vitrage bâtiment Estriado Impressed glass Saint-Gobain vitrage bâtiment Planilaque Argent métallisé Painted glass

Saint-Gobain vitrage bâtiment Miralite Pure Clair Mirror

Saint-Gobain vitrage bâtiment Master-Point Impressed glass Saint-Gobain vitrage bâtiment Planilaque Bleu aqua Painted glass

Archivio Nanda Vigo, Milan Impressed glass

Saint-Gobain vitrage bâtiment Master-Shine Impressed glass Saint-Gobain vitrage bâtiment Planilaque Bleu nuit Painted glass

Saint-Gobain vitrage bâtiment Satinovo clair Satin glass

Saint-Gobain vitrage bâtiment Pixarena Impressed glass

# SALLE DE CONFERENCES

Arazzo is a woollen tapestry created by Vigo and produced by Flou in 1992. Conceived as a headboard, the design of this tapestry evokes a non-academic representation of a Roman temple, in bright colours. The art of tapestry has existed since antiquity, playing a decorative role to enhance the splendour of temples and palaces. With this roughly outlined temple design, Vigo blurs the viewer's frames of reference, transporting them into her own imaginary world.



Tapestry Arazzo, 1992 Edition Flou, 1992 Wool Courtesy of Luca Preti collection

#### On the wall facing the tapestry:

#### Panel 1

Nanda Vigo and Lucio Fontana, Milan, 1966 © Lothar Wolleh, courtesy of Archivio Nanda Vigo, Milan

Nanda Vigo and Remo Brindisi, Moscou, 1970 © Claudio Papola, courtesy of Archivio Nanda Vigo, Milan

Nanda Vigo and Piero Manzoni, Milan, 1962 © Uliano Lucas, courtesy of Archivio Nanda Vigo, Milan

Nanda Vigo and the artists of Brera at the Jenny bar, Milan, 1964 © Uliano Lucas, courtesy of Archivio Nanda Vigo, Milan

Nanda Vigo and Lucio Fontana, Galleria Vinciana, Milano, 1964 © Fabrizio Garghetti, courtesy of Archivio Nanda Vigo, Milan

Nanda Vigo with Heinz Mack and Max Bill, Kassel, 1964 © Erhard Wehrmann, courtesy of Archivio Nanda Vigo, Milan

Nanda Vigo with Günther Uecker, Enrico Castellani, Gillo Dorfles, Pio and Beatrice Monti, Willoughby Sharp, Galleria Dell'Ariete, Milan, 1966 © Lothar Wolleh, courtesy of Archivio Nanda Vigo, Milan

Nanda Vigo and Gio Ponti, birthday of Gio Ponti, in his studio, Milan, 1971 © Casali/ Domus, courtesy of Archivio Nanda Vigo. Milan

Gio Ponti, birthday cake made by Nanda Vigo, Milan, 1971 © Casali/Domus, courtesy of Archivio Nanda Vigo, Milan

Nanda Vigo and Enrico Castellani, opening of Lo Scarabeo sotto la foglia, Malo, 1968, courtesy of Archivio Nanda Vigo, Milan

Nanda Vigo et Yoko Ono, XLIV Biennale of Venezia, 1990 © Fabrizio Garghetti, courtesy of Archivio Nanda Vigo, Milan

Nanda Vigo and Ludovico Acerbis, Milan, 2007 © Acerbis/MDF Italia srl

#### Panel 2

Nanda Vigo, ZERO House, 1959, Milan © Casali/Domus

Nanda Vigo, ZERO House, 1959, Milan © Casali/Domus

Nanda Vigo, *Casa Gialla*, 1970, Milan, courtesy of Archivio Nanda Vigo, Milan

Nanda Vigo, *Casa Gialla*, 1970, Milan, courtesy of Archivio Nanda Vigo, Milan

Nanda Vigo, *Casa Nera*, 1970, Milan © Marco Caselli, courtesy of Archivio Nanda Vigo, Milan

Nanda Vigo, Casa Blu, 1971, Milan © Carla De Benedetti, courtesy of Archivio Nanda Vigo, Milan

Nanda Vigo, *Casa Blu*, 1971, Milan © Marco Caselli, courtesy of Archivio Nanda Vigo, Milan

Nanda Vigo, Casa Museo Remo Brindisi, 1971, Lido di Spina © Marco Caselli Nirmal

Nanda Vigo, Casa Museo Remo Brindisi, 1971, Lido di Spina © Marco Caselli Nirmal

Nanda Vigo, Casa Museo Remo Brindisi, 1971, Lido di Spina © Marco Caselli Nirmal

Nanda Vigo, Casa che non esiste, 1972, Centro Driade, Piacenza, courtesy of Archivio Nanda Vigo, Milan

#### Panel 3

Nanda Vigo, floor lamp model 4041, 1960, edition Kartell

Nanda Vigo, floor lamp Golden Gate, 1970, edition Arredoluce © Ugo Mulas, courtesy of Archivio Nanda Vigo, Milan

Nanda Vigo, floor lamp Manhattan model 14105, 1971, edition Arredoluce, courtesy of Archivio Arredoluce/Fragile Milano

Nanda Vigo, collection *TOP*, 1970, edition Fai International © Laura Salvati, courtesy of Archivio Nanda Vigo, Milan

Nanda Vigo, chair *Due Più*, 1971, edition More Coffee © Lorenzo Sampaolesi, courtesy of Archivio Nanda Vigo, Milan

Nanda Vigo, pouf *Blocco*, 1971, edition Driade © Aldo Ballo -Domus

Nanda Vigo, chair *Wright Wright*, 1972, edition Driade,
courtesy of Archivio
Nanda Vigo. Milan

Nanda Vigo, table *Blok*, 1972, edition Acerbis © Acerbis/MDF Italia srl

Nanda Vigo, stereo *TOP*, 1970, edition Fai International © Aldo Ballo, courtesy of Archivio Nanda Vigo

Nanda Vigo, bar *Blok*, 1971, edition Acerbis © Acerbis/MDF Italia srl

Nanda Vigo, sofa *Nevada*, 1974, edition Driade © Laura Salvati - Driade

Nanda Vigo, bedside Storet, 1992, edition Acerbis, 2020 © Alberto Strada, courtesy of Acerbis/MDF Italia srlItalia srl

#### **Exhibition curators**

Victoire Brun, head of design collection and exhibition projects at the madd-bordeaux

Justine Despretz, Italian design specialist and founder of the Aster Design company

#### Scenography

Bérengère Bussioz

#### Highlight

Serge Damon

#### Poster and visual communication

Anette Lenz

#### Graphic design

Izaskun Gaspar Ibeas

#### The City of Bordeaux and the museum would like to thank the institutions and archives that have generously contributed to the exhibition

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Fondazione Lucio Fontana

ZERO Foundation

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# Many thanks to all the lenders of the exhibition

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Galleria Luisa Delle Piane
Glas Italia
Gorilla Collection
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The Mayor Gallery
ZERO foundation

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# The museum also wishes to thank for their faithful support

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Diva Bordeaux, société de négoce

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Les Crus Bourgeois du Médoc

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# Madhi Fikri

Sophie Gabal Marie-Francisca Sevilla Avec la collaboration de Julia Balerdi, Eliot Blachon, Louis Coillet-Matillon, Léa Cabannes, Maxime Daviau, Aramis Dopffer, Léa Jacquier-Hervouet, Manon Jamain, Camille Joulia, Manon

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