

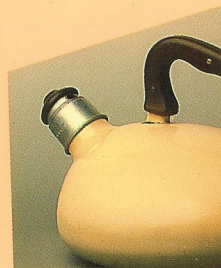
# HOLLAND



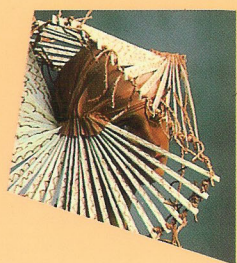
INSTITUTIONAL DESIGN



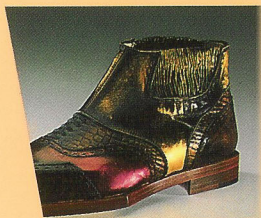
DESIGNING FOR THE PROFESSIONAL SECTOR



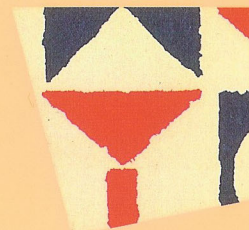
DESIGN FOR THE INTERIOR



JEWELRY



MIXED NEWS



GRAPHIC DESIGN

# IN VORM



## 1973-1986: FORM AND

### MEANING

#### HONEST OAK AND BITS AND BOBS

The abundant range of industrial products aroused reaction in the late sixties. Mass standard existence called for alternatives. People wanted more individuality. The hippies popularized oriental ways of life: low-priced cane chairs, rugs, Indian cotton curtains and in particular exotic trinkets appeared on the market. 'It was a period when people voluntarily introduced monstrosities into their homes. My God, what a mess', Simon Mari Pruys said.<sup>1</sup> Jumble sales were ransacked, pseudo-antique stores mushroomed. Kitchen equipment, old prints and antiquated photos harked back to the 'quality that used to be taken for granted.' People started displaying their trinkets in typecases. Reacting to a variety of environmental scandals, they wanted to get back to nature. They filled their rooms with fast-growing plants; bamboo, honest oak and cane replaced the plastics. Open interiors were 'in'. The wall between the kitchen, formerly a separate room, was pulled down, so that it opened out into the living room. Doorless kitchen units were filled with stoppered glass jars. The dining counter came into fashion. The quest for openness prompted a search for ways and means of quickly adapting interiors to people's changed needs. The home had to be flexible. Lundia cupboards, originally intended as warehouse storage units, lent themselves to a variety of combinations. (ill.245) Cosy brown pervaded the entire house. Ceilings were fitted with plastic fake oak beams. Lye-steeped solid oak furniture became highly popular. Furniture companies like Oisterwijk, Sanders and Van der Meer quickly climbed on the bandwagon. The market was inundated with furniture with a handmade look but which had never been near a cabinet-maker.

#### THE CALM BEFORE THE STORM

Although quantitatively speaking the seventies did not yield much in the way of new design, the foundation was laid for the design revival of the early eighties. Manufacturers had scant interest for the designer's contribution. The only exception was Artifort. To the annoyance of Dutch designers, foreigners were recruited. Gijs Bakker revolted. Trained as a jeweller, he started designing furniture in the seventies for industrial production. Bakker claimed that talented young designers were being denied a chance to put their ideas into practice. In his capacity of teacher at Arnhem Art Academy, he and his students endeavoured to improve the designer-industry relationship. He forged links with existing companies and set up joint projects.<sup>2</sup> He embarked on what was known as the chair project with Gispen in 1972. The theoretical approach which Bakker instilled in his students was essential. 'The chair in relation to people is an object fraught with emo-

tion. It is the crucible of all aspects of design.'<sup>3</sup> Bakker's philosophy bore fruit. Under his guidance Paul Schudel, Hans Ansems, Herman Hermesen, Ton Haas and Hans Ebbing trained at Arnhem: the young designer generation of the eighties. This so-called Arnhem School continued the investigation of form that was deeply rooted in the visual arts. The designer, not the product, was the main thing.

Bakker's ideas did not really catch on though, because they did not take the production process sufficiently into account. He was even accused of undermining the profession. Bakker the idealist persevered, however: 'with the insight and creativity of the designer, a manufacturer can rise above the competitive struggle for pennies. He can develop a series of products with an original and recognizable identity, giving the firm more confidence.'<sup>4</sup> In partnership with Castelijns, Bakker himself produced a few designs which clearly reflect his ideas. (ill.246) Sales were not encouraging, however; the models were not a commercial success. Towards the end of the seventies an exhibition of Dutch design was organized at Bakker's initiative. The English word 'design' was heard for the first time. A lucid conception underlies the products which were selected for the exhibition. It was a homage to the designer.

#### BAKKER ON THE DESIGNER

In Bakker's opinion a lot of meretricious effort goes into industrial design, a clever piece of technology being wrapped up to look charming and aesthetic. He makes a distinction between two categories of designers: the rationalists and the fundamentalists. The rationalists focus on the production process, the fundamentalists broach the historically evolved appearance of a product. 'Those are the ones I mean when I talk about design. They dare ask what the purpose and use of a utensil is.'<sup>5</sup> The designer functions as the manufacturer's conscience.

#### PREMSELA AND INDUSTRY

The primacy of form has been perpetually proclaimed by another designer, the man who inspired Bakker: Benno Premsele. All his life Premsele has fought for good industrial design. He started his career in the fifties at the Bijenkorf, and later opened an architectural office together with Jan Vonk. He continues to do a substantial amount of committee work.

He is particularly interested in the businessman-designer relationship, and most negative about what is being done with regard to Dutch design: 'Just look at Philips. Of course it's good for Holland to have such an industry, but its effect in this country is virtually nil.'<sup>6</sup> Government policy is to blame. When Premsele collaborates with industry, he deals with every facet of product development. He holds that designing and technical developments ought to go hand in hand.

What comes out of Premsele's office represents the pinnacle of textile design. He has also won in-

ternational acclaim. Like Gijs Bakker, he designs for several manufacturers: carpets for Van Besouw, wall-coverings for Vescom and furnishing fabrics for Gerns + Gahler. He has made countless stands for Pastoe, Auping and Van Besouw. The versatility of interior designer Premsele was highlighted in 'benno premsele among others', an exhibition at Amsterdam's Stedelijk Museum in 1981. 'With this exhibition I wish to make it clear that a designer is part of a process. He is not someone who sits in a room, has an idea, sends a piece of paper to the factory and goes along a year later to see what they've done with it. It's quite the other way round; so many people are involved in the process that the result no longer shows exactly who did what.'<sup>7</sup>

#### BRUNO NINABER AND FORM

A third important figure for the development of design in the Netherlands in the seventies is Bruno Ninaber van Eijben. Even his earliest designs radiate great simplicity. 'Less is not possible, more is not necessary' is a frequently quoted remark of his. He produced and distributed his designs himself, being one of the first Dutch designers to do so in the late seventies. Like Gijs Bakker he established his reputation with jewellery, later evolving into an industrial designer. Ninaber has commanded respect from the very start. In 1979 he was the first winner of the Kho Liang Ie award, the Netherlands' only design prize. A passage from the jury's assessment reads: 'Ninaber is an exceptionally skilled designer with a keen insight into aspects of production technique. His technically varied designs all demonstrate quality and great inventivity, as well as interest in detail.'

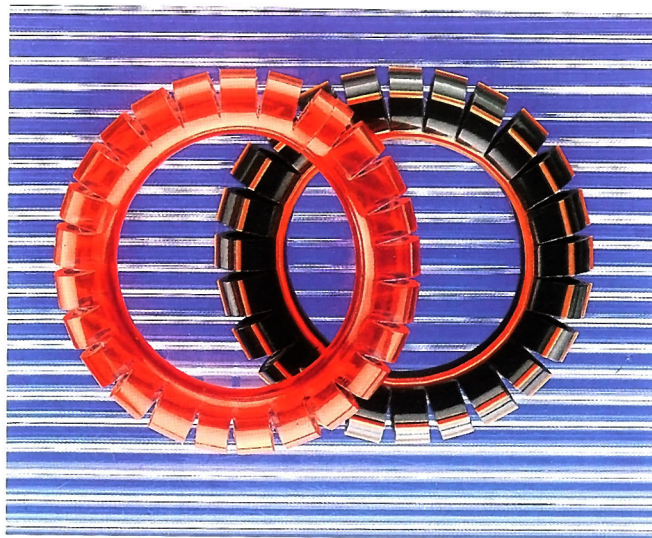
#### CLOCKS, LAMPS AND VASES

Products for the home which are striking for their good form are the result of teamwork between industry and the designer, or the sole work of the designer. Only a few manufacturers like Artimet and Eikelenboom are involved. In the case of furniture, big companies like Pastoe and Artifort are in search of a new personal identity. Innovation is the magic word. This innovation, heavily subsidized by the government, is primarily invested in technology, not in design.

On an international scale, the significance of Dutch design is negligible. Some designers realize this. 'At the beginning of the seventies a counter-current developed: a generation that had been confronted all too emphatically with the salvation doctrine of the industrial age.'<sup>8</sup> The eighties are different. A wide range of designers, forced into independence by the poor economic climate, have created a wave of new shapes. The market is inundated with clocks, lamps, furniture and vases, many of them handmade or assembled in studios. All the same, they look industrial. The colours are gaudy, with plenty of red, yellow or blue accents. Grey, white and black are popular too. New materials, notably synthetics, are used in sheets. Without the irritation of manufacturers to cramp



364



367

364  
Box with bracelet and salad basket 1975, perspex and aluminium  
Marion Herbst

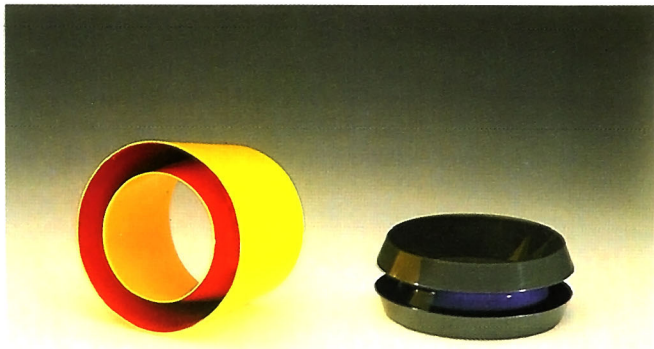
365  
Bracelets 1986, extruded aluminium, treated with epoxide and lacquered  
Herman Hermesen

366  
Bracelets 1985, synthetic, gold leaf and lacquer  
BEL-design/E.van Beusekom and B. Laken

367  
Garden hosepipe bracelets 1978, pvc  
Maria Hees

368  
Bracelets with sliding bands, straight or slanted fastening 1975, stainless steel and acryl  
Bruno Ninaber van Eyben

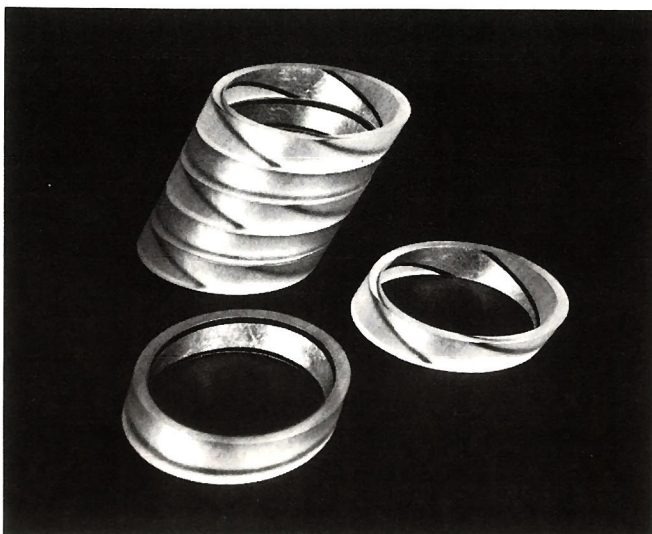
212



365



368



366





44  
Plaster model for relief head of  
Wilhelmina 1947  
L.O. Wenckebach

45  
Reverse of cent 1947, diameter  
12.5 cm  
L.O. Wenckebach

46  
Plaster model for relief head of  
Juliana 1947  
L.O. Wenckebach

47  
Some of the coinage of the  
Netherlands; design 1947-1950  
circulated 1948-1981, nickel and  
bronze (old guilder and rixdollar  
in silver)  
L.O. Wenckebach  
prod. 's Rijksmunt

48  
Some of the coinage of the  
Netherlands designed 1981 circ.  
from 1982, nickel and bronze  
Bruno Ninaber van Eyben  
prod. 's Rijksmunt



The portrait, like that of Wilhelmina, is true-to-life and realistic. As tradition dictates she faces in the opposite direction to that of her predecessor. The guilder and the rijksdaalder, also designed by Wenckebach were first issued in 1954 and in 1959 respectively. Few problems were encountered with the production of Wenckebach's models. He did have to redo the design for the ten cent coin. Several minor changes were brought about in harmonious cooperation between the technical experts at the Mint and Wenckebach.

The Wenckebach series of coins remained in production unchanged, apart from a few minor adaptations in the size of the rijksdaalder and the type of metal used for the rijksdaalder and the guilder, until Queen Beatrix came to the throne in 1980.

#### NINABER VAN EYBEN

In 1980 a committee was again set up to advise the State Secretary for Finance on a new series of coins. The committee decided to commission nine designers.<sup>9</sup> They were asked to submit designs for a series of coins of the same denomination, size and weight as the old series with the exception of the cent which was due to disappear in 1983. Tradition dictated that the portrait should look left but the possibility of the Queen being portrayed other than in profile was not excluded. The committee chose the design of the only industrial designer participating, Bruno Ninaber van Eyben.<sup>10</sup> His design was described in the committee's report as original, innovative, clear, well-thought out and functional.

In the design for the reverse Ninaber wanted to express the fact that a coin is not in the first instance a unit but part of a historically determined system. This is why he has tried to step outside the narrow surface of the coin with lines which can conceivably be extrapolated outside the circle. On each coin the denomination is given in figures. The decimal system on which the Dutch arithmetic system is based is indicated by lines. The coins with denominations up to ten cents only have vertical lines. The denominations up to a guilder have horizontal lines and the denominations up to ten guilders have diagonal lines. The five guilder coin, which will shortly come into circulation, fits into the system.

The non-decimal denominations are indicated by a fraction bar above the denomination. If the bar is whole, the coin has a decimal denomination. If the bar is divided into two by one of the vertical lines, the denomination is half of the decimal and a quarter if it is divided into four. Thus the link between the different reverses is greater than it was with the Wenckebach series.

A traditional circumscription was impossible if the face was to match the reverse. Ninaber chose a half profile with alongside it three vertical lines and the text. This was an original idea which solved two traditional design problems. First of all it relieved Ninaber from having to cope with the hair problem. And second it was now possible to give the portrait direction. Ninaber exploited this

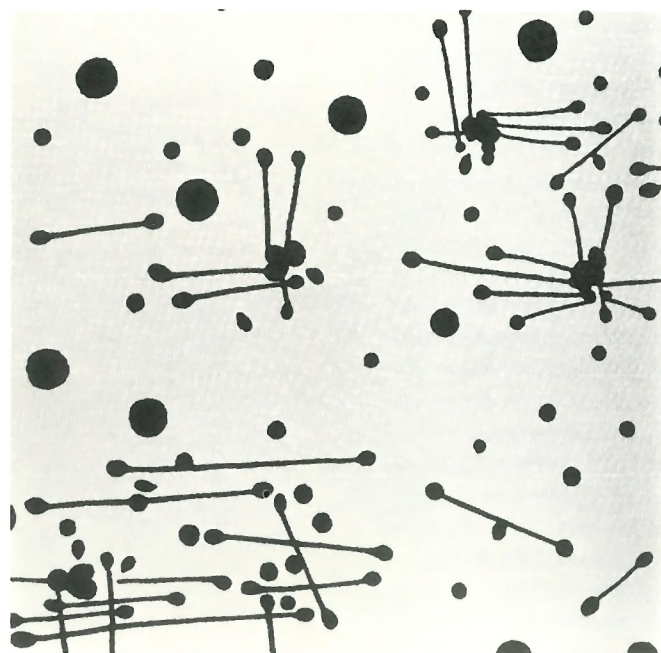
A certain wilfulness was part of the make-up of some designers; they were only all too happy to keep the design at home in order to be able to cherish it from initial idea to end product.



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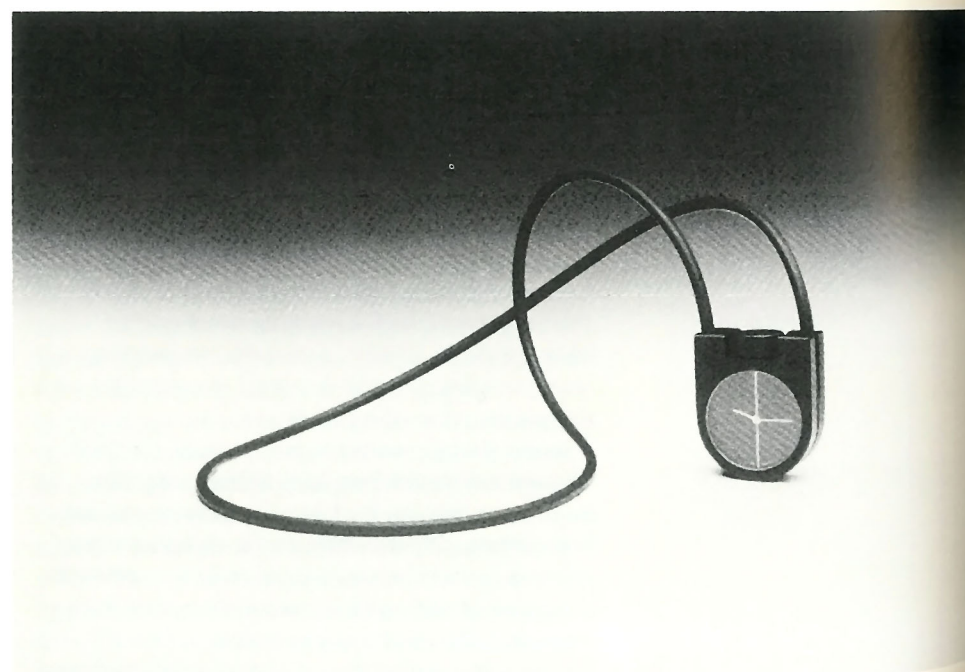


369  
Vase 1987  
Johan van Loon

370  
Vases Aquarius 1986  
Johan van Loon  
prod. Rosenthal

371  
Material Kyoto the fifties  
Lewin Alcopley  
prod. De Ploeg

372  
Necklace watch 1976  
Bruno Ninaber van Eyben



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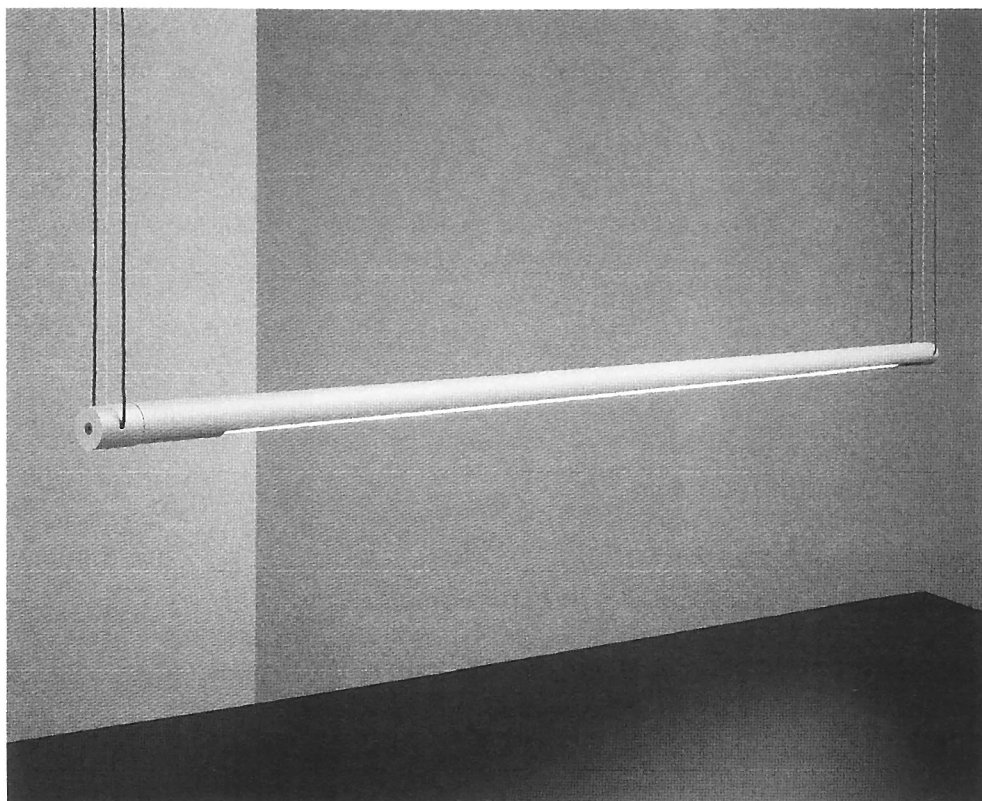


their style, designers use severe, simple and often geometrical forms. The Bauhaus and De Stijl idioms are a source of inspiration, reviving the ancient polemics of industry versus craftsmanship. 'Especially the interior architects and jewellers take the rap as "amateurs". Not only do they foster the general public's misapprehension that a design for industry is nothing but an aesthetic form, they also make it tougher for themselves to obtain a place in industry.'<sup>9</sup> Designers started to assemble collections, English names suggesting an international clientele. Art Wave makes perspex-fronted clocks in a variety of colours, Cortina Plastics produces lamps which cater to an alleged need for imaginative and trendy products. The Dutch Interior Design Collection nurses products on their way from the studio to the shop: 'a gap in the market, because designers don't know where to go.' Under the name of Martech, designer Mart van Schijndel has launched a programme of lamps, furniture and a vase called Delta. 'I started to produce on my own because I was displeased with the quality of the appearance, user-value and cost of existing products.' The Delta vase is a huge success. It is one of the few products to be exported. Former pupils of Gijs Bakker have also emerged in the eighties. Hans Ansems developed the Stringa lamp entirely off his own bat. Other graduates have formed a joint venture: the Ebbing Haas Schudel Design Association. The trio produce a variety of lamps and clocks themselves. Under the trademark Designum they collaborate with three graphic designers, Jan van de Broek, Loek Kemming and Noudi Spönhoff, motivated by a desire for freedom. Painstakingly and with great perseverance, Designum have since built up a small collection of interior accessories with products by designers such as Schudel and Herman Hermesen, who embroider on the ideas of their teacher Gijs Bakker. Schudel: 'My designs emerge from a period of careful consideration and analysis. Measurements and proportions are only fixed after lengthy deliberation; thorough investigation usually precedes my choice of material too.' Hermesen, who trained as a jewellery and product designer, aims at lucid construction, reducing the form of his designs to the bare essentials. Myranda Brugge's KS vase for Designum is also highly expressive.

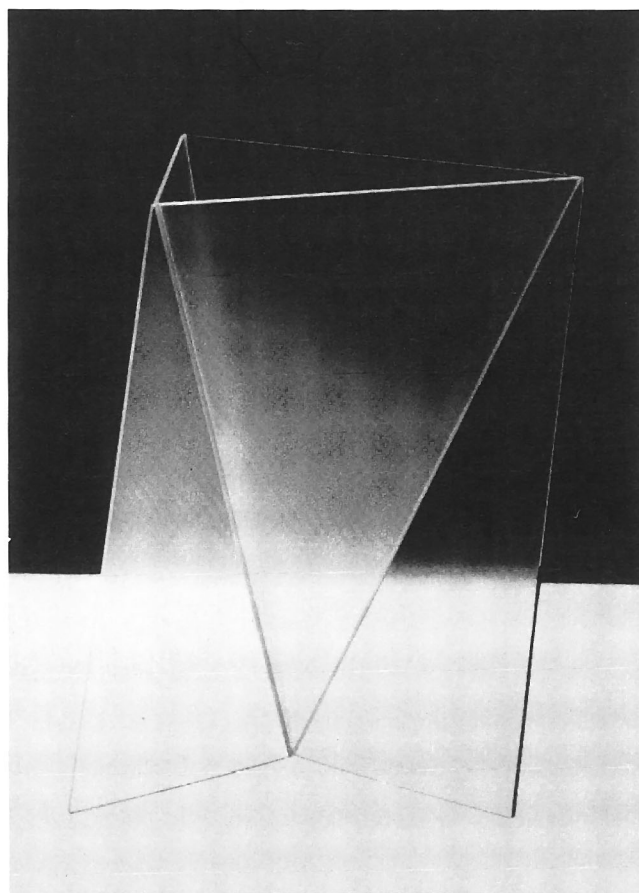
#### THUNDERBOLTS AND PINCUSHIONS

By the early eighties the ideas of Italian designer groups such as Alchimia and Memphis had reached the Netherlands. Student work at art schools was particularly influenced by expressive Italian design. 'Zany furniture is starting to appear here too.'<sup>10</sup>

No designer escaped from the Italian influence. Thunderbolt legs, bookcases with tilting shelves, lamps like pincushions, chairs with flags were extremes, intended as a criticism of eternal functionalism in designs. Efforts were made to give design its own identity, which in the postwar period had been determined by industrial produc-



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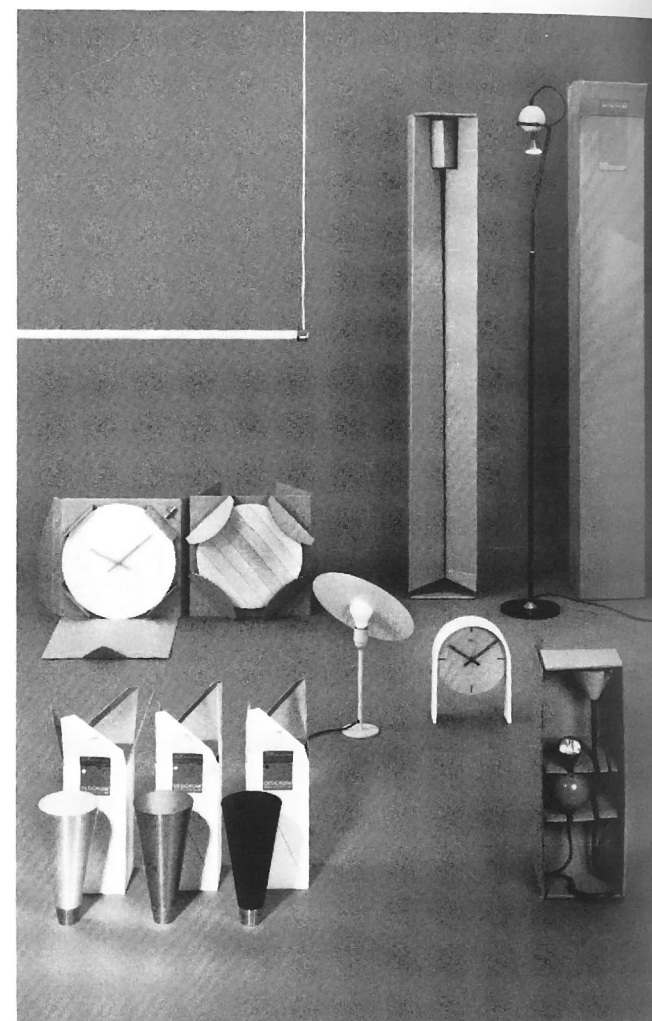


252

251  
Strip light 1977, aluminium and synthetic  
Bruno Ninaber van Eyben  
production by designer

252  
Vase Delta 1981, glass  
Mart van Schijndel  
prod. Martech  
to prevent plagiarism every vase  
was signed by the designer

253  
Designum products  
SK clock (disc clock) 1982, wood and synthetic  
Paul Schudel  
DK clock (drop clock) 1980, sand-blasted glass  
Paul Schudel  
KS vase (cone series) 1981, steel and aluminium  
Myranda van Bruggen  
lamp ACB (along came Bette) 1979, steel and aluminium  
Herman Hermesen  
spot ST (torch) 1982, steel and nylon cord  
Herman Hermesen  
armature LTL (lamella) 1981, aluminium and steel  
Herman Hermesen  
lamp Pico 1985, steel  
Herman Hermesen



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## **Holland in vorm, dutch design 1945-1987**

Gert Staal, Hester Wolters

1987, Stichting Holland in Vorm, Den Haag