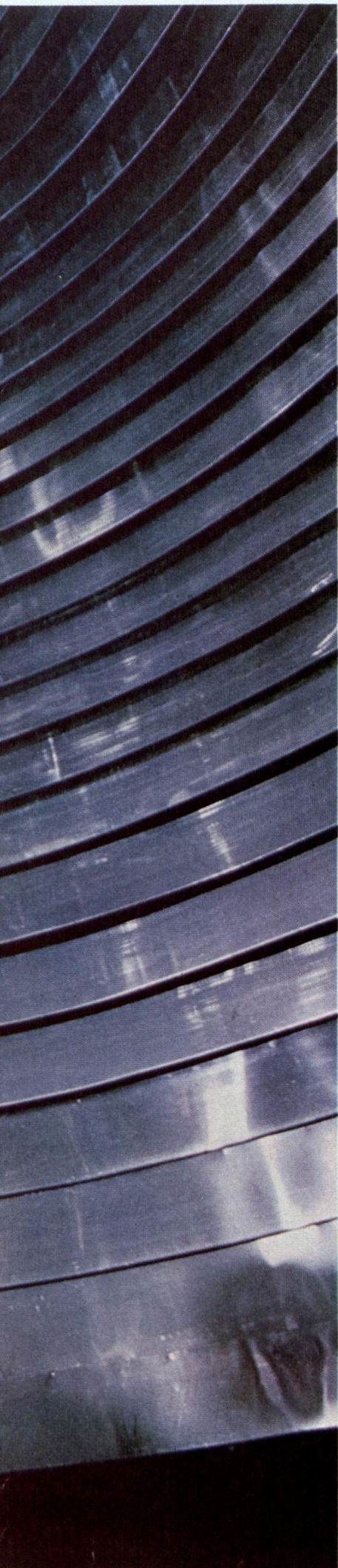


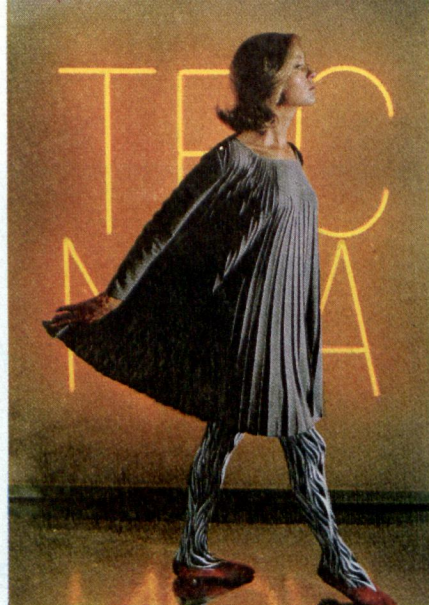


*The author predicts that female technological workers of the 21st century will wear jump suits and boots. Aluminum rotunda in background is*





*supposed to represent equilibrium.*



*Pleats and tights are for moon shopping.*



*For cocktails: a silk toga with net hose.*

# DESIGNS ON YOUR FUTURE

*The woman of tomorrow will wear pleats and tights, and live in a house spun from glass fiber, with patent-leather walls and no furniture at all.*

By EVELYN JABLOW

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN LAUNOIS

Stepping out of the hot, bright sunlight of Milan's Sempione Park into the exposition hall of the Triennale—the world's most prestigious show of furniture, decorative art, industrial design and architecture—was like walking into a mammoth fun house. In the long, dark entrance hall, pictures and lights flashed off and on, and a babble of sounds from television commercials filled the air.

In a huge silver room bathed in yellow light a voice enticed the viewer to play a game with a machine. The machine asked, "What is your age, sex, profession, hobby?" The final question had a sardonic twist: "You live in a world dominated by advertising. How do you like it?" After receiving the answers, the machine spewed out a character analysis which consigned the individual to one of three categories—the world of utopia, the world of technology or the world of illusion created by advertising.

It was obvious from the exhibits that followed that Italian artists and architects were taking a sardonic view of

Leisure Society in the 20th century—the theme of this year's 13th Triennale. In America, *New York Times* columnist Russell Baker moaned, "With its genius for self-adjustment, society has turned leisure into labor," and the Triennale went to extremes to prove his point.

The effect on the individual of constant bombardment by the mass media was vividly dramatized in a completely mirrored room 50 feet high. Visitors to the room, enveloped a thousand times over by their reflections, saw themselves reduced to dust-speck size as the result of a blitz of film clips flashed continuously from hidden projectors. The photographs represented all phases of 20th-century work, and play: famous people, sports events, historic scenes—ranging from the serious to the ludicrous, with none lasting longer than the blink of an eye. In the background sounded the endless rumble of rock-'n'-roll music, advertising clichés and slogans.

Another vignette captured the essence of the weekend mania for play: an ex-

pressway jammed with small cars laden with camping gear, boats, picnic baskets, suitcases, portable radio and television sets—the leisure society on the move, desperately trying to reach some overcrowded spot to play organized games.

Italian designers hammered home the point that the 20th century is becoming the Pop-Art Era—a worship of the familiar, a passion for objects rather than provocative new ideas.

The city of Milan has sponsored this noncommercial exhibit since 1923, but this year's show was a sharp departure from the past. The manufacturers, designers, artists and architects who came from around the world to spot furniture trends, set up manufacturing and import operations, or just to steal ideas, were more startled by the show's philosophy than by its exhibits. For this year's Triennale was less a showcase of new designs than a satiric commentary on the contemporary corruption of leisure.

About \$20 billion is spent annually in the United States alone on recreation and



*The 20th century is becoming the Pop-Art Era—a worship of familiar objects rather than provocative new ideas.*



*Structural shape of iron bridge is repeated in this pleated theater dress.*

*Dressed for lounging on the moon, model stands on pegboard stools.*



#### Future Designs

leisure. Worldwide, the figure is astronomical. Yet, say the Milan critics, our goal is not leisure but mass consumption, and frenzy, rather than serenity, seems to be the result.

The emptiness of modern life was pointed up by a great, high hall that offered endless steps leading nowhere. The walls and steps were covered with aluminum foil and reflected in mirrors. Enrico Baj, one of Italy's leading contemporary artists, spoofed the ubiquitous soft-drink machines and jukeboxes by constructing them out of Erector sets to form pop-art sculpture. Another room, dominated by murals and photographs of Marilyn Monroe, represented an attempt to portray the creation and destruction of a personality through the myth-making machinery of the movie industry. Artist Lucio Fontana's satiric concept of the average man's idea of utopia was wall-to-wall purple carpeting and indirect lighting.

The Italian section of the show ended in a rotunda where the walls and ceiling were made of large strips of aluminum which gave the hypnotic illusion of spinning in slow motion. The background music was soft and serene. The scene was intended to represent equilibrium—an inner peace and harmony Italians believe is being destroyed by the senseless pace of modern life.

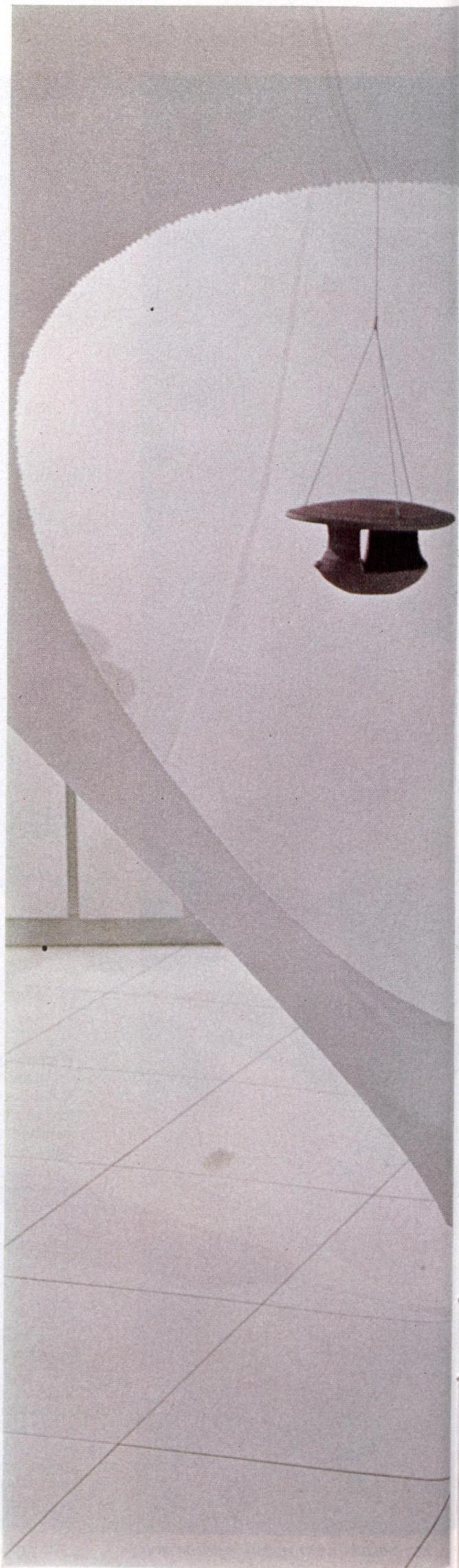
However the 14 other countries participating in the Triennale ignored the sociological implications of the 20th century and presented a few unusual designs for the more immediate future.

French architects designed a House of Culture with a floor that looked like a giant pegboard. The chairs, tables and shelves were built on stems to fit the holes in the floor. Depending on the activity scheduled for the room, the components could be rearranged to form either a recreation area, an auditorium or a classroom.

The Belgians constructed a theater with a stairway made from structural pipe which could be reassembled like a giant tinker toy, in any size and place. The theater seats were molded laminated wood without backs. All seats were near the stage to allow for a new concept of audience-participation drama.

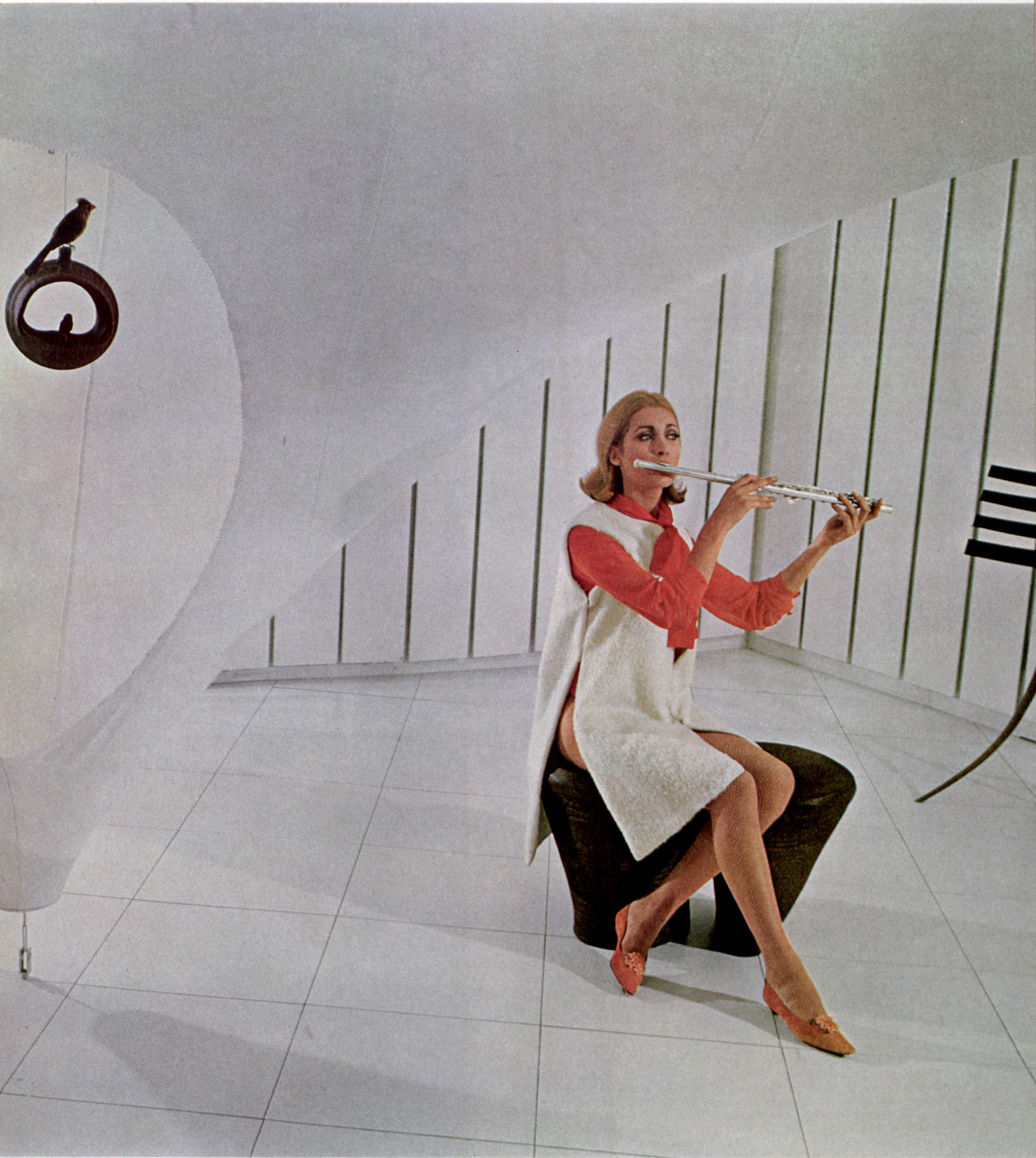
The Swiss showed a room with a floor made of a series of levels, or platforms, completely carpeted to create "floor furniture," eliminating the need for upholstered chairs and sofas. Such a system would simplify moving problems, since tenants would only need to transfer personal belongings and art objects from one home to another.

In the United States exhibit, architect-designer Charles Forberg set out to destroy the idea that rooms must be either



*The United States exhibit at Triennale used nylon*





*stretch fabric, anchored at ceiling and floor, to shape unusual curved areas in a standard room. Entire area was white to create a serene and airy atmosphere.*



*'Leisure without study is death;  
it is a tomb for the living man.'*

#### Future Designs

square or rectangular. He used huge swooping canopies of nylon stretch fabric to create cave and tunnellike areas, giving a rounded, sculptural feeling to a rectangular space. The walls were of white patent leather; the floor of white plastic laminate. The general effect was light, airy and serene. To change the shape of the areas within the room, the homeowner need merely redrape the canopies in other directions.

A group of exhibits dealt with leisure living out-of-doors. British design students created a cube on wheels which opened like a giant jack-in-the-box into four rooms. The caravan cube could be easily carted across country on a small trailer. Owners would be able to set up their mobile apartment within an hour.

The Italian outdoor exhibit offered a blow-it-up-yourself plastic recreation hall big enough to house a tennis court and two or three Ping-Pong tables. The newest thing for swimming pools was a loud-speaker system which transmits music underwater. The familiar wood-slat or wrought-iron park bench will be replaced by modernistic concrete units combining chairs, tables and lighting.

The Milan exhibit emphasized the point that the architecture of the future will be based on the work of designers and engineers now occupied in technological advancement. Materials used for rocket-motor cases, expandable space stations and lunar vehicles will be adapted to build houses for the first pioneer colonies in space. At Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co., for example, engineers are constructing a model of a moon house spun out of glass threads, wound round and round like a cocoon.

The furniture and decorative objects which go into the house of the future will not be as important as the shape of the house itself. Some will be built underground, similar to the concrete caves architect Paolo Soleri is now constructing in Arizona. Soleri and his wife and children live in one of the subterranean earth houses, and another is used for his working office. Eventually homes also will be built under water.

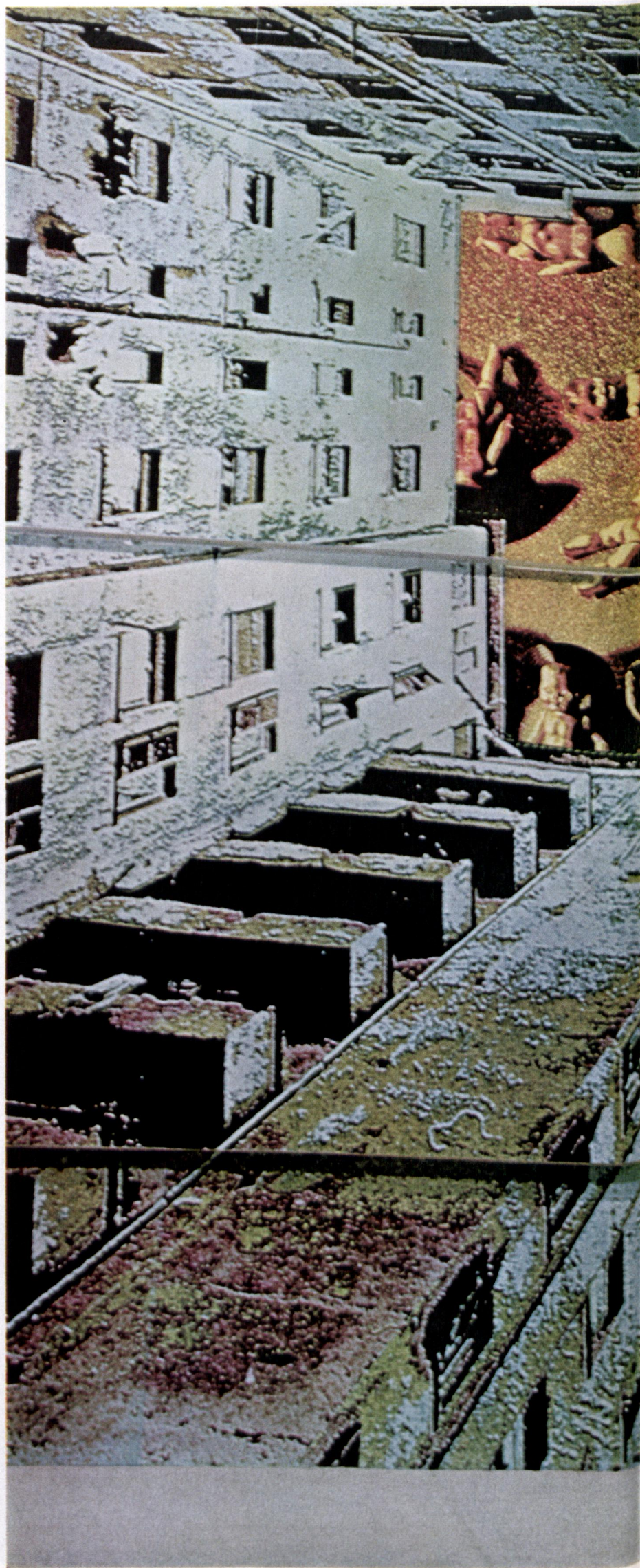
These houses will be stamped out as one unit, with openings for windows and doors. The igloo shape, the cone, the round house, the mushroom and the two-story cylinder probably will be used on the moon. Furniture will be unadorned and shaped to the human frame; chairs and tables will often be joined to each other like Siamese twins. For variety, the homeowner on the moon can zip over to his prepackaged-furniture store to pick up some pneumatic chairs and a table, which he can inflate himself, similar to the procedure used with life rafts. Each house will have its own electric

inflator to keep up the pressure of the furniture. Lighting will be woven into the walls, eliminating conventional fixtures and giving the entire wall the appearance of a softly glowing panel. The intensity of the light, and even the color, will be controlled at a master panel.

Into this environment will rocket the 21st-century woman. Everything in her life—home, clothes, furnishings—will probably be created by the same designer. Such designers of the future will be able to shape a dress as well as a space house. Having spent 12 years in the field of interior design myself, I found it interesting to develop my concept of a wardrobe for the woman of the future. As I conceived it, the entire wardrobe will be contained in a cylinder no larger than a man's golf bag, compartmentalized to hold three or four pieces of clothing that can be worn in multiple combinations. Clothes construction will be simple, devised for ease of movement. The pleated outfits shown on these pages will come in one size only—a free form to fit all figures—prepackaged in a tube. The variety of pleating (such as mushroom, sunburst, accordion) will determine the shape of the dress. Fabrics will be lightweight, extremely colorful and often of stretch material. From shoulder to hem the tops will be 36 inches long to fit in the travelpack without folding. A warmly insulated jump suit replaces the standard overcoat. Since the short skirt length exposes legs nearly to the thigh, women will wear gaily patterned or ornamented tights. Boots will be worn outdoors; soft, slipperlike shoes indoors. Purely ornamental accessories, such as earrings and bracelets, will not be worn. The 21st-century woman will put on her basic tights each morning and merely change pleated tops during the day as she moves from activity to activity.

Her astronaut-husband's outfit will be equally simple. The 21st-century man will abandon tie, shirt and trousers. Instead he will be outfitted in the masculine version of the one-piece stretch moonsuit for traveling, and will strip down to long tights and a short toga, reminiscent of the free-swinging styles of the Roman charioteer. While traveling through space, he will wear a skintight pressurized suit made out of stretch material. Gloves, helmet and shoes will all be attached to the suit to protect the body.

Though the whimsical and technological aspects of the 21st century can be easily projected, it is not easy to predict whether society will make the appropriate sociological and philosophical advances. Civilization evolves slowly. Two thousand years ago Seneca wrote, "Leisure without study is death; it is a tomb for the living man." If things keep on, say Italian critics, the tomb will be filled with badly designed knickknacks. THE END



*Italian critics charged international architects with creating brutal*





*buildings and destroying nature. As the concrete jungle becomes more terrifying, people will wear brighter clothes in a revolt against such oppressiveness.*