

# VANNI *goes arty* 2008



**The relationship between design and contemporary art. Is there a possible synergy between the two and how the focus on a particular territory reconciles with the goal of both of addressing a global public and economy?**

**Alice Rawsthorn (critica di design International Herald Tribune)**

If you look at the history of design and the history of art there have always been links between the two, and they have been most fruitful when it has been a genuine intellectual collaboration between artists and designers. See for example the links between the British pop artist Richard Hamilton and the German designer and chief designer at Braun during the 1960s, where they each explored each other's work. These links are very natural and very spontaneous and they come out of a very genuine cultural and intellectual compatibility. And so they are very enriching for both the designer and the artist.

Where I think the links between contemporary art and design become more problematic is when objects of design are created solely for the purpose of selling for very large sums of money on the open market. Obvious examples are the limited editions of furniture been auctioned at Sotheby's and Christie's as so called "design art". Commercially they have a great deal in common with popular contemporary art and they are very much designed to be sold to the same art collectors. There are of course some honourable exceptions of genuine interesting and culturally complex and provocative projects, but in the main frankly they simply have been produced to make money to be sold as "art objects".

I think that if you are going to draw parallels between design and art it has to be not necessarily in the typology of the object but in the kind of qualities that those objects or those images or those spaces are placed. If something is culturally challenging, culturally complex, rich with meaning, it is thought-provoking, or provocative, if it forces us to re-assess our opinions about some aspects of daily life or to think about it in a different way then you can say that the work of design has artistic qualities.

What is problematic is that too often people confuse aesthetics with art: only because something looks aesthetically pleasing certainly it doesn't make it art.

