

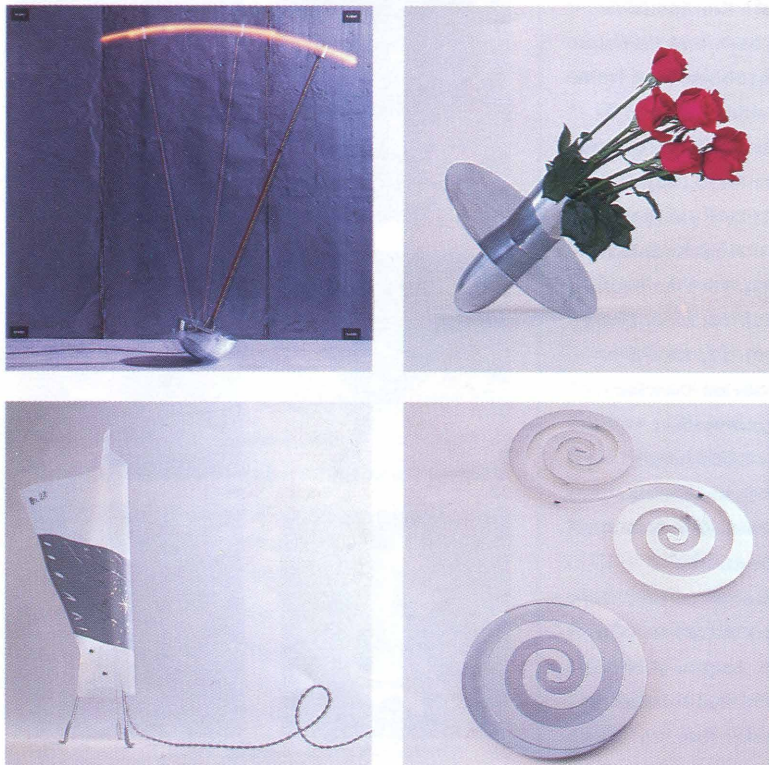
INTERIORS

OCTOBRE 1989

30 UNDER 30

18 AOUT

Fabrice Berrux, Bruno Moretti and Pascal Oriol make visual poetry and social commentary in Paris.



August 18 (18 Aout) is the arithmetic average of the birth dates of this firm's partners: Fabrice Berrux, Bruno Moretti and Pascal Oriol. While these self-proclaimed "makers of objects" consider the title "designer" pretentious and refuse to appear serious—Moretti's resumé describes him as "born in Nevers. Maker of sling-shots. Destroyer of sand castles"—their work has had very serious and rapid success.

The trio teamed up in July 1987, after graduating from the Ecole des Beaux Arts of Dijon, with one month to design a series of products for the show *Moving International*. The resulting pieces were selling within the year from 100 outlets.

They have been described as "bricoleurs" by the French, or skilled in the art of making something out of whatever is at hand. In effect, their furniture, lamps and other products are often inspired by and made from sundry materials and odd scraps that they keep in their studio and add to constantly—a

Above: Objects by 18 Aout invite play, such as the rocking lamp Poussah, top left, of chromed steel and enameled paper. Poignant references abound, such as to the old dream of "plowshares out of swords" in the O.B.U. vase, top right, and to Psalm 27 in the PS 27 lamp, bottom left, of silkscreened fiberglass. The spirals of the trivet Chaud/Froid, bottom right, are of matte and shiny chromed steel.

twist on the materials library of the traditional architect and a pointed reference to the global need for recycling.

Their designs and references show an irreverent sense of humor, concurrently jibe and homage to the concept of social responsibility. Their O.B.U. vase, of polished aluminum, is a reference in name and form to the word for "bomb-shell" in French, and to the placing of flowers in guns—an act that became symbolic of the peace movements of the 1960s. With the vase, they have turned a lethal weapon into a thing of grace and beauty. The O.B.U. vase is the first in a series that 18 Aout is developing, aptly called the Maginot Line.

Their award-winning trivet Chaud/Froid (Hot/Cold), that has been honored with a permanent place in the Musée National des Arts Decoratifs in Paris, is made of two intertwined spirals that can come apart and function separately. In an unabashed tour de force of mixed metaphors, the trivet refers to the land art piece Spiral Jetty by American artist Robert Smithson, the spirals of electric stove burners and a famous poster for Orangina by the great French graphic artist, Villemot.

Their Poussah lamp is a cross between a toy and a kinetic sculpture. A small bulb perched on a long stem embedded into a heavy half-globe of metal, the lamp creates a flashing arc of light when rocked. The firm's free-form silk-screened fiberglass lamp is called PS 27 after the Psalm that is inscribed on the wall of their favorite lunch spot: The eternal is my light and my salvation. ●

