

Alfredo

Verbal Doodling.

Häberli

*For Stefanie,
Aline, and Luc,
and
for my parents*

- The Lines of My Hand Page 17
- Glimpsing a New World Page 21
- Can We Count on Chance? Page 28
- Dreams are Dependable Page 30
- Enzo Mari, the Design Conscience Page 47
- Bruno Munari, or: Making Air Visible Page 54
- Italo Lupi and the Periodical
as Built Architecture Page 59
- Then I Ran out of Breath Page 62
- El hombre que me hizo observar el mundo:*
Enzo Mari Page 68
- Rolf Fehlbaum or
How to Take Pleasure Seriously Page 72
- The Friendship with RF,
as We Called Him Page 78
- Martin Heller or:
What are You Working On? Page 93
- Riccardo Sarfatti, a Beacon of Light Page 96
- Renato Stauffacher or
Little, Tiny Sparks of Joy Page 107
- Riccardo Blumer and the
Deceptive Lightness of Inquiry Page 118

- Enrico Astori,
at First a Fleeting Encounter Page 121
- Giulio Cappellini,
the Truffle Hound Page 136
- Patrizia Moroso or *buongiorno tesoro* Page 140
- The Invisible Ones —
il famoso ufficio tecnico Page 146
- Konstantin Grcic and Jasper Morrison —
Sketching Our Own Landscape Page 149
- Back to My Friend and Fellow Designer
Konstantin Grcic Page 158
- Anders Byriel or Hygge in Milan Page 167
- Philippe Starck,
l'homme qui ne dort pas la nuit Page 173
- Ross Lovegrove — Supernatural Page 180
- The Journalists —
Word Acrobats and Linguistic Architects Page 187
- Atelier, Studio, Office
as Wunderkammer Page 192
- Bar Basso and Negroni Sbagliato —
The Designers' Cocktail Page 202
- IKEA PS — *La rivoluzione a Milano*
siamo noi svedesi Page 205

Amore mio,

Milan and Italy remain my great loves Page 209

Il consulente Page 211

Giulio Ridolfo —

Serene Radicalism, Radical Serenity Page 218

Ramón Úbeda,

Fearless Acrobat and Chameleon Page 224

Eugenio Perazza,

with Courage and Passion Page 229

Continuity with Clients or

Endless Lines Page 232

Mille Miglia, *la corsa più bella de mondo* Page 234

Hotel Speronari —

l'albergo con vista stelle Page 240

Fiera Campionaria or

Exhibiting as Memorializing Page 244

Ettore Sottsass or:

the Inner Life of Restaurants Page 247

Libreria Internazionale, Ulrico Hoepli —

Libri illeggibili Page 252

Eleonora Zanotta —

Dream and Reality Page 255

The Way Things Go Page 264

Ramón Úbeda, Fearless Acrobat and Chameleon

Verbal Doodling

It was through my travels and constant pursuit and absorption of every conceivable source of visual stimulation, inspiration, and excitement that I discovered in Barcelona and Madrid two cities that reminded me powerfully of my native Argentina—and Spanish design as well! There was Javier Mariscal with his *Cobi* mascot for the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona, his *Duplex* barstool and *Trampolin* chair, to say nothing of the graphic designs he did for his new home of *Bar–Cel–Ona* (1979), his interior designs for the *Gambas* restaurant, and his comic-like style of industrial design that I discovered through the magazines *Madriz*, *Ardi*, and *De Diseño*. I spent a few days with Javier at the Hôtel Particulier Montmartre in Paris, where we were both on the jury for a Nespresso competition. There I discovered what a great sense of humor he has, how quick-witted he is, and how eager to challenge monopolies and all things bourgeois. He was exceptionally stimulating, and as a young designer he impressed me no end. As critical as Enzo Mari, he was also playful and mischievous, always fighting tirelessly for the same goals.

De Diseño and *Ardi* became important sources in my search for that other Milan, for Barcelona, and with it the world of Pete Sans, Óscar Tusquets, Alfredo Arribas, Pep Bonet, Sybilla, Lluís Clotet, and Mireia Riera, to name but a few. Then one day I met a quiet, shy, unassuming man by the name of Ramón Úbeda. He wrote for those magazines and had a hand in their creation, though whether as a graphic designer, a journalist, a designer, or an architect I cannot say. Perhaps it doesn't even matter.

“He is the ideal go-to man for companies in the design business, the perfect person to get creation to accord with production, designers with entrepreneurs. He is good at mediating between talented designers who have lost their way and clueless producers, and is of great service to them both,” to quote another virtuoso, Juli Capella. “He campaigned relentlessly for the internationalization of *diseño* long before it was acknowledged to be the best way out of the crisis, and he was instrumental in pushing Spanish manufacturers to be fearless about working with the very best foreign designers.”

Ramón is a chameleon and acrobat rolled into one. He is also a very good mentor and consultant for firms that have lost their bearings and want

to reset their compass. He helps where he can and does what he does best, which is to write books, design things, develop concepts, and bring people and producers together. It was Ramón who brought me to Camper, to BD Ediciones, and, most recently, to Andreu World, and it was again Ramón who made sure they got the best of me. He writes like Pablo Neruda, has a mind as sharp as Enzo Mari, is as open and receptive as Ettore Sottsass, and is as much a magician as Bruno Munari. He is also a great friend and connoisseur who, like me, has lived and breathed design for forty years. Our methods are similar and entail observing, investigating, traveling, creating, and consulting, always bound solely by the task in hand.

Thanks to Ramón, my horizons have now broadened to include Spain. He was a great help here, in part by introducing me to Don Lorenzo Fluxa, the owner and founder of Camper. Fluxa is another wonderful man, “una gran personalidad, un Don Señor,” and someone I hold in high esteem. Together we were able to design more than two dozen boutiques all over the world, from Paris to Shanghai, from London to Sydney, and even in my home town of Zurich, too. My parents lived in Barcelona for twenty years, so I often arranged a stopover there to

visit them. Meanwhile, I was working with BD Ediciones on projects such as the *Ginger* stool and *Happy Hour* series (2001), or the *Los Bancos Suizos* program (2005). Then we went to Mallorca, and how we laughed on those domestic flights out to the islands! Oh yes, we always took pleasure very seriously.

Another highlight was *Campertoðer*, a collaboration with a shoe manufacturer, which for me meant designing a small series of shoes for men and women, whose rubber overshoes earned them the name *Campermeable* (2008). The eighty cartoons that I created for my first Camper boutique on the Faubourg Saint Honoré in Paris in 2006 were a dream come true for me as a young designer, and a welcome chance to try something new. But I digress.

Whenever we met up, Ramón and I would typically exchange a few personal words before getting straight into the magazines, interior design, and the personalities that came up in *De Diseño*. Ramón was part of this new movement right from the start, and not only that: He is also a key figure in the New Spanish Design—the movement that stirred up such a furor in Milan. He really did know everything and everyone. How else could he have become

such a profound connoisseur of creativity and such an outstanding patron of design? This is a position he has retained to this day. Just recently he received an honorable mention at the National Innovation and Design Awards presented by the Spanish king in Valencia.

Our paths first crossed just before the turn of the millennium, and we have frequently been thrown together since then, including in the books that Ramón has published, like *Sex Design*, *Inout & Friends*, *Conversation about Work*, and others.

Concept Alfredo Häberli

Editing of the German texts Ursula Eichenberger

Translations Bronwen Saunders

Design DelerueRoppel

Printing and binding Offizin Scheufele

© 2024 Alfredo Häberli and

Verlag Scheidegger & Spiess AG, Zürich

Verlag Scheidegger & Spiess

Niederdorfstrasse 54

8001 Zürich, Switzerland

www.scheidegger-spiess.ch

Scheidegger & Spiess is being supported by
the Federal Office of Culture with a general subsidy
for the years 2021–2024.

All rights reserved; no part of this publication may be reproduced,
stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or
by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording,
or otherwise, without the prior written consent of the publisher.

This book is part of the two-volume publication

Alfredo Häberli—

Verbal Doodling. / 30 Years, Questions, Answers.

and is not available separately.

ISBN 978-3-03942-115-2

German Edition:

ISBN 978-3-03942-114-5

