

Sempering - Process and Pattern in Architecture and Design

Among many of the exhibitions at the 2016 Milan Triennial, *Sempering - Process and Pattern in Architecture and Design* stands out due to its seemingly straightforward and analytical approach to design. The exhibition's poster shows eight illustrations that are reminiscent of illustrative how tos from all kinds of handcrafting manuals.

Curated by Luisa Collina and Cino Zucchi and taking place at MUDEC, *Sempering* centres on the technique of basically everything ever made. It presents eight ways of making things. stacking, weaving, folding, connecting, moulding, blowing, engraving and tiling.

This concept of *Sempering* (categorising techniques) refers to *The Four Elements of Architecture* that Gottfried Semper wrote in 1851. He deduced four elements and four *ways of making* from the way humans built their first shelters. With this anthropological approach Semper draws straight lines between form and function. Man's act of being creative seems to originate from his will to survive. it is a solely functional act.

The year of Semper's publication also saw the opening of the *Great Exhibition* at the Crystal Palace in London. Countries from all over the world participated. Across 92000 square meters, the exhibition showcased the triumphs of financial wealth, innovation and industrialisation. The presented objects were proofs of power, proofs of survival.



Great Exhibition



Sempering

When observing the setting of *Sempering* and the *Great Exhibition* in 1851, quite a remarkable comparison can be made. Technique is a decisive factor for the way objects are clustered. The repetitiveness of the installation (object after object) allows the objects to be seen as examples of innovation and production, acts of men, rather than an individual object with a maker, concept and story.

With this exhibition the Museum of Cultures presents simple lines that connect survival, innovation and form. However, we also see that — over time — the amount of lines increases and their form becomes more complex.



Great Exhibition



Sempering



Great Exhibition



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As the world becomes more complex, globalised and dematerialised, the techniques we have developed in order to survive also become increasingly complex. There were four ways of making in 1851 and eight ways of making in 2016. What would the analyses in 2181 look like?

