

# I.D.

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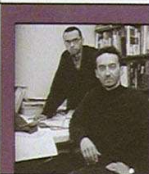
THE I.D. FORTY  
SOCIALY CONSCIOUS DESIGN

guerrillas.  
in our midst



## Choose to Reuse

CARRARA, ITALY



### Paolo Ulian

(pictured here with his brother, Giuseppe)

#### project

designing usable objects from discarded materials

#### soapbox issue

a higher quality of life for everyone

#### can't live without

my work

#### shoe size

41 (European)

PAOLO ULIAN'S DESIGN CAREER was inspired by Michelangelo. In 1992, when Ulian first began considering discarded materials as potential resources for usable, artistic products, he noticed how wasteful marble quarries were. Living in Carrara, Italy, a place renowned for its marble, the designer was inspired by the very same stone of Michelangelo's sculptures.

"I found that only about 30 percent of the marble was actually being used," Ulian says. "And since thousands of tons are processed every day in Italy, there's an immense waste. Eventually it's ground into powder or grit." Ulian used the marble refuse to design such products as a marble bowl with a curvature that takes advantage of dynamite core holes, "resulting in production that needed only a limited amount of labor," the designer says.

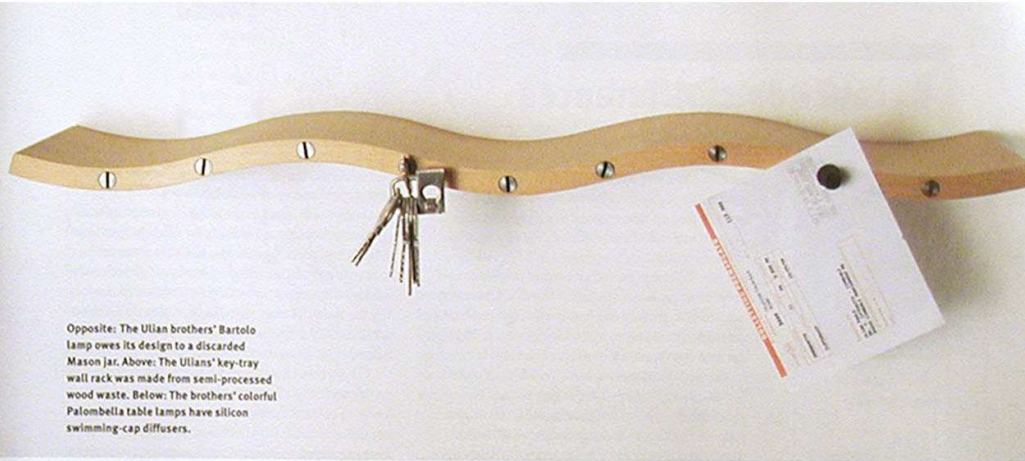
Ulian had dabbled with painting before studying industrial design at Florence's ISIA. His chance encounter with Enzo Mari resulted in an assistantship with the renowned designer from 1990–92. "I began to realize that, as a designer, I must accept responsibility, both economically and socially, for the environment and its conservation," Ulian says of his stint with Mari. "And, in those years, I became conscious of the ethical mission I had to pursue."

Ulian discovered that "the world is already saturated with goods of every kind" and that he could, if he chose to, "do absolutely nothing to counter the frenzy of resource-consuming industrial production." He chose instead to commit his career to the design of objects that turned the world's waste into useful products.

In 1996, for example, Ulian tackled the problem of reprocessing wood refuse. He began rescuing wooden scraps from Cecotti International, a nearby factory, and transformed them into usable objects. Today, the resulting key-tray wall rack, stool, waste bin and paperweight—all designed with his brother, Giuseppe, in 1998—are sold in stores worldwide. The brothers' lamps, made of recycled materials, are even more amusing: the Anemone, made of ballpoint pens; the Bartolo, with its Mason jar base; and the Palombella, packaged flat with a silicon swimming-cap diffuser.

Ulian's work has been included in numerous exhibitions, and he was named Designer of the Year at the 2000 Furniture Fair in Milan. He was once asked if he would ever create a planet-damaging product, even for a fee of \$1 million and a guarantee of anonymity. "One million dollars is a lot of money," he replied. "But, no."

MEL BYARS



Opposite: The Ulian brothers' Bartolo lamp owes its design to a discarded Mason jar. Above: The Ulians' key-tray wall rack was made from semi-processed wood waste. Below: The brothers' colorful Palombella table lamps have silicon swimming-cap diffusers.

