

SIDE GALLERY

OSVALDO BORSANI



Bed with Wall Unit

Manufactured by Arredamenti Borsani
Italy, 1950s
Wood, brass and lacquered aluminum

Measurements

143 × 221 × 102h cm
56,3 × 87 × 40,2h in

Provenance

Private Collection, Italy

Literature

Giuliana Gramigna, Repertorio del Design Italiano 1950–2000 per l'Arredamento Domestico, Allemandi, Turin, 2003.
Giampiero Bosoni, Osvaldo Borsani, Skira, Milan, 2018.
Domus Magazine, various issues, 1940s–1950s.

Biography

Osvaldo Borsani (1911–1985) was one of the leading figures of twentieth-century Italian design and architecture, renowned for combining technical innovation with refined craftsmanship. Born in Varedo, Italy, into a family of cabinet-makers, he was introduced to furniture making from an early age through his father, Gaetano Borsani, founder of the Atelier Varedo. There, the young Borsani trained alongside skilled artisans and worked closely with architect Gino Maggioni, whose familiarity with the Viennese Jugendstil movement fostered Borsani's early appreciation for the relationship between architecture, decorative arts, and fine craftsmanship.

Borsani studied at the Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera in Milan, graduating in 1931, before continuing his education in architecture at the Politecnico di Milano, where he received his degree in 1936. Even before completing his architectural studies, he demonstrated exceptional talent with the Casa Minima project, designed for the V Triennale di Milano in 1933 in collaboration with architects Cairoli and Varisco. The project, characterised by its rationalist principles and rigorous geometric language, was awarded the Silver Medal and received praise from influential critic Edoardo Persico in Casabella, establishing Borsani as one of the most promising designers of his generation.

Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, Borsani developed an elegant design language that reconciled modernist ideals with Italy's long tradition of artisanal excellence. In 1953, together with his twin brother Fulgenzio Borsani, he founded Tecno, the company that would become synonymous with innovative furniture for domestic and professional interiors. Under his artistic direction, Tecno pioneered the integration of advanced engineering, industrial production techniques, and sophisticated aesthetics, producing iconic pieces that remain landmarks of post-war Italian design.

Among his most celebrated works are the adjustable P40 lounge chair (1955), widely regarded as a masterpiece of modern furniture design, as well as numerous seating systems, desks, storage units, and architectural commissions that reflected his interest in flexibility, ergonomics, and mechanical ingenuity. His work successfully bridged architecture, interior design, and industrial production, embodying the ideals of the Italian design renaissance of the post-war period.