



# INTERIOR DESIGN

BY JOHN F. PILE

acoustical value), supporting structure, which may be visible or hidden, and, often, lighting and HVAC elements are all integrated into a factory-made product system. It may include visually striking elements such as coffers or other forms. Such integrated systems most often find use in office and other contract or commercial interiors (fig. 190).

**METAL CEILINGS.** Some systems use spaced metal strips with the intervals open to the acoustical material above. Metals such as stainless steel, aluminum, copper, or bronze also find occasional use as surface materials for ceilings. Pressed-metal ceilings (erroneously called *tin* ceilings), once popular Victorian elements, have now been rediscovered.

**GLASS.** The usual material for skylights, glass is normally set in a framing of wood or metal (fig. 185). As skylighting expands to become a total ceiling, it is possible to speak of a glass ceiling—a feature of some famous architectural structures. Glass, mirror, or a plastic substitute as a ceiling material can create spectacular and startling visual effects.

## MISCELLANEOUS ELEMENTS

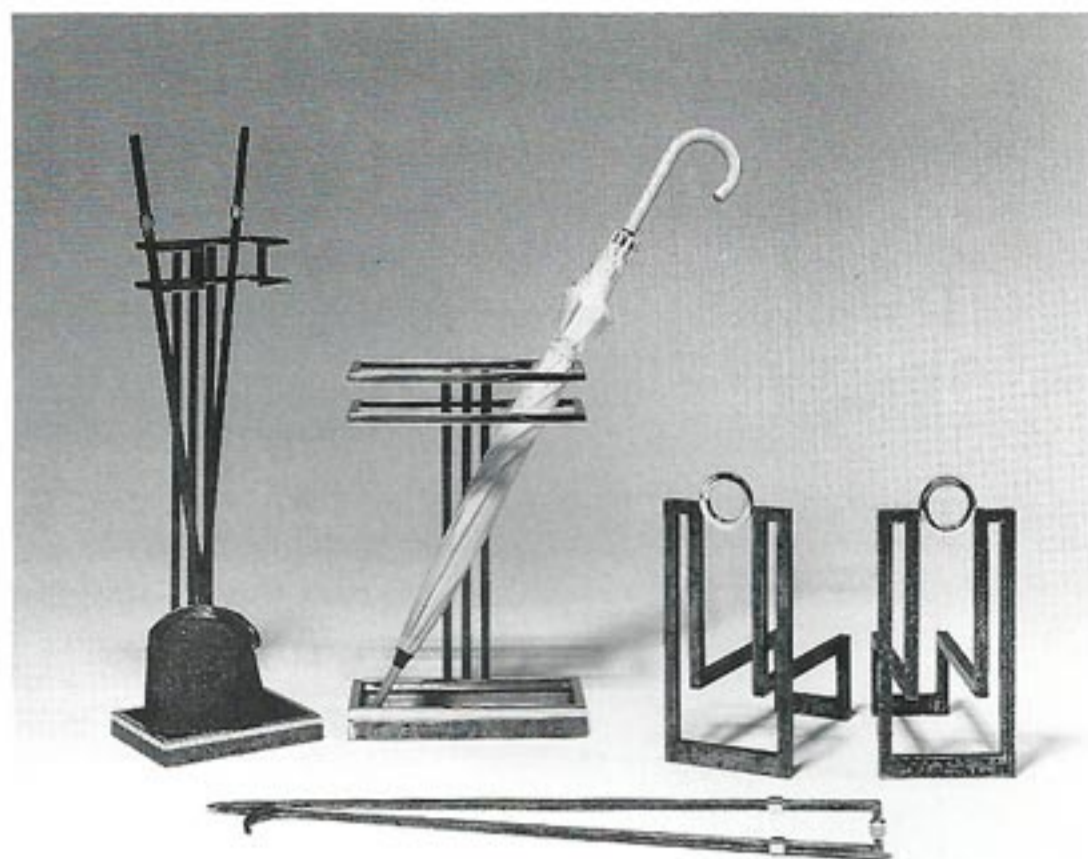
Of the surprising number of components in an interior, many may seem minor or incidental, but each calls for design attention in terms of material selection and specification. The following is a very condensed list of such elements with some notes on the material selection issues that they involve.

**BUILT-IN ELEMENTS.** As these usually function as furniture pieces, they are discussed in Chapter 6. Wood, both solid and plywood, is the most commonly used material. Where toughness and durability are of primary importance, plastic laminate is frequently employed as a surface material.

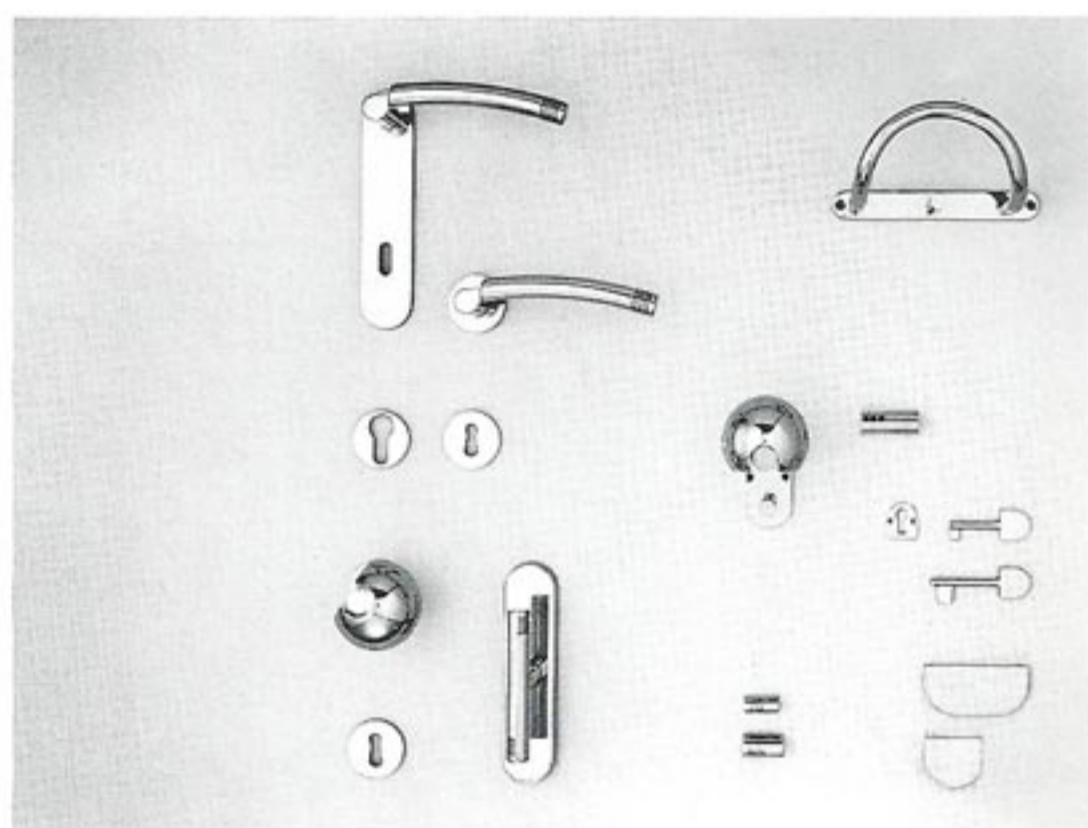
**FIREPLACES AND HEATING STOVES.** Although more or less obsolescent in a functional sense, fireplaces are still widely valued and used for aesthetic and nostalgic reasons. The materials and designs of fireplaces and hearths, mantels, and accessories (fig. 191) remain a significant aspect of both traditional and modern interior design. Since the public has become concerned with energy conservation, heating stoves have been rediscovered as economical heating devices and as objects with strong aesthetic appeal. A wide variety of both traditional and modern designs is available.

**TRIM.** This is a general term for moldings, cornices, reveals, baseboards, nosings, wainscots, railings, and similar elements used for functional and/or aesthetic reasons. Wood, metals, and plastics are all common materials for elements of trim, which usually are ordered from catalogs but can be custom-designed to fill a particular need.

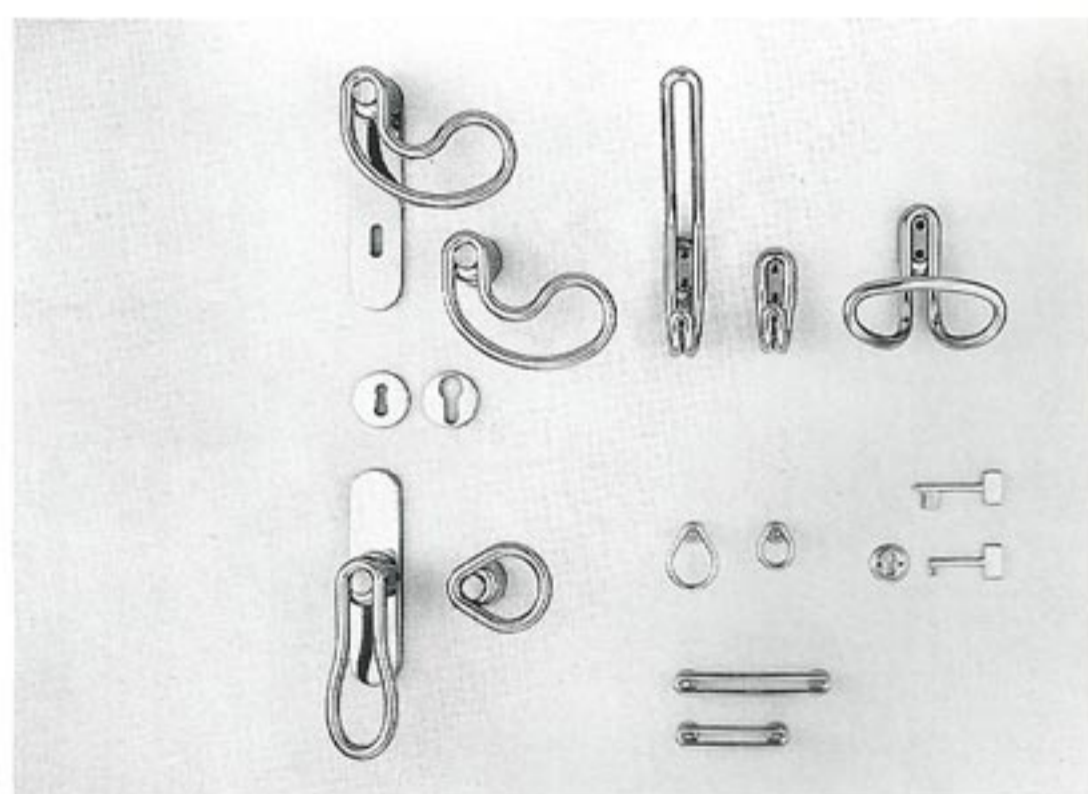
191. An umbrella stand, fireplace tools and tool holder, and andirons of strongly geometric features, in lacquered and distressed iron with mirror-polished brass accents, make handsome accessories for any modern interior. Designed by Matthew Smyth Accessories and produced by LCS (Luten Clarey Stern Inc). (Photograph: © 1986 Dan Cornish/ESTO)



191



192



193

192, 193. Serie Otto G hardware by Italian designer Vittorio Gregotti (fig. 192) and Serie Otto A hardware by Italian designer Gae Aulenti (fig. 193) include door hardware and coat hooks in cast brass, chromium, or nerox plate, which present excellent design alterna-

tives to the bland, largely banal hardware in common use. Because they are in daily use, these objects—usually considered minor design details—have significant influence. (Photograph courtesy Fusital)