

HOME / MOVIES / REVIEWS / [DESIGN IS ONE: THE VIGNELLIS](#)

## DESIGN IS ONE: THE VIGNELLIS

Duo delights

BY [SUSAN G. COLE](#) OCTOBER 10, 2013 12:00 AM



Massimo and Lella Vignelli have a design for living.

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**DESIGN IS ONE: THE VIGNELLIS** (Kathy Brew, Roberto Guerra). 80 minutes. Opens Friday (October 11). **For venues and times, see listings.** Rating: **NNN**

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Design team Lella and Massimo Vignelli are a perfect documentary subject. They're stunning to look at and create beautiful things, and the dynamic between them is charming. Too bad we don't get more about their personal story in Design Is One.

Instead, directors Kathy Brew and Roberto Guerra present testimony from designers, architects, curators and the Vignellis themselves about what makes them so unique. It starts with the range of

their work, everything from graphics (Massimo says they basically brought Helvetica to America in logos for American Airlines and Bloomingdale's) to furniture, books, jewellery and architecture.

Their motto is "If you can't find it, design it." They believe obsolescence is unethical and insist that the function of design is to improve the environment - all inspiring ideas.

But none of it matters without the relationship between the two. The Vignellis have been partners - in marriage and business - for over 50 years. We learn that Massimo is the visionary and Lella the realist, and that the trust level between them is off the charts.

But how did they meet? When did they recognize their affinity? If there's ever been a difficult moment between them, you'd never know it. Certainly, the gobsmacked Americans interviewed by the filmmakers aren't going near that information.

Maybe a trek back to Italy to talk to some people who knew the team in their early days could have filled in the blanks.