



MUSEI ITALIANI

“DESIGN UTOPIA” 1880-1980

100 years of design History / the Biagetti - Koenig Collection

Curated by **Su Dan** and **Alessandro Guerriero**

China's first complete exhibition about the history of international Design

Supported by Embassy of Italy

Tsinghua University Art Museum, Beijing

Open to the public: from 1 June until 25 August 2021;

Opening ceremony: 3 June 2021.

One hundred years of History represented by 158 iconic pieces, creations of the major masters of Italian and International Design, will be on show for the first time in China on the occasion of the 110th anniversary of Tsinghua University, the one of the most important universities of the People's Republic of China.

The EXHIBITION, curated by **Alessandro Guerriero** and **Su Dan**, showcases the Biagetti collection, a unique historical and didactic instrument, which was created in Ravenna in 1988 by Raffaello Biagetti, Giovanni Klaus Koenig, Giuseppe Chigiotti and Filippo Alison. The exhibition, which is part of Italy's cultural heritage, tells the story of the birth and evolution of one of the most important cultural and social phenomena of the last century: Design.

DESIGN UTOPIA “Utopian projects are born when the gap between present and future widens immeasurably. It's one thing is to live in a state of salvation, but quite another to live in hope, progress or Utopia. This last concept is where the deep, extensive, far-reaching problems lie. It is the place of a solitary, singular, controlled project, and it keeps on reinventing the superficial, the indifferent and the ambiguous working on the assumption that humankind today is conglomerate of singularities which both agree but at the same time contrast with each other.

Design Utopia is the place in which the world's image will be repeatedly re-designed, where great conceptual opposites, such as artificial-natural, art-design, will change their roles and values, but where craftsmanship, technology, new materials and methods will continuously reinvigorate our poetic calling.” *Alessandro Guerriero*



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The PROJECT is promoted by **Musei Italiani**, founded by Federico Bonadeo. Musei Italiani, thanks to the collaboration with **Tsinghua University Art Museum** and to the support of the **Embassy of Italy**, presents a unique didactic experience, in occasion of the 50th Anniversary of Sino-Italian Relations.

The COLLECTION is a unique didactic instrument which sets out the history of furniture design from 1880 to 1980. The itinerary inside the museum starts from the onset of the Industrial Revolution and continues through a series of chronological islands representing the most important design movements right up to the *Poltrona di Proust* by Alessandro Mendini, created together with Alessandro Guerriero, the co-curator of the show and the founder of Alchimia.

The names of the designers exhibited are numerous and exceptional: Art Nouveau is represented by the works of Charles Rennie Mackintosh, Antoni Gaudì and Gebrüder Thonet. Then comes the Viennese School of the 1900s with Josef Hoffmann followed by the Bauhaus, Gerrit Thomas Rietveld up to Frank Lloyd Wright. The 1950s are represented by Scandinavian, Italian and American designers such as Alvar Aalto, Charles and Ray Eames, Carlo Mollino, Carlo Scarpa, Luigi Caccia Dominioni and Gio Ponti. The Italy of the 1960s sees the dawn of the industrialisation of design and the so-called “Italian Style” of the Castiglioni brothers, Gae Aulenti, Alessandro Mendini and Ettore Sottsass, passing through the most controversial and irreverent forms of expression, typical of Radical Design, to arrive at the shocking works of Memphis and Alchimia.

The HISTORY begins in Ravenna in 1988, when “Museo dell’Arredo Contemporaneo” was created by Raffaello Biagetti, Giovanni Klaus Koenig, Filippo Alison and Giuseppe Chigiotti, with the aim of representing the most crucial moments of the evolution of Italian and International industrial product design, highlighting nuances and contrasts through the different experiences that have generated contemporary design.

The project was extremely innovative for its time, with the strong intention of taking the visitor on an imaginary voyage through the evolution of creativity applied to objects. The efforts of this core team were strengthened by the help and vision of great names such as Dino Gavina, Ettore Sottsass, Ignazio Gardella and many other authors, who contributed to the creation of a “theatrical museum” where every stage is a scene, a chapter in a book, able to generate a consistent and unbiased vision, chronological and accurate in its references to the most important protagonists of the sector.



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In Detail

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Musei Italiani is an organization founded with the clear objective of generating business activity through the management and promotion of Italy's huge historic and contemporary cultural heritage, both in Italy and throughout the world. Musei Italiani operates in the fields of applied arts, design and fashion and, thanks to its solid network of foundations and partners, it raises funds to manage prestigious areas of cultural heritage with the aim of increasing its value and visibility.

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TSINGHUA UNIVERSITY ART MUSEUM

Tsinghua University Art Museum was founded in 2016 with the aim of spread the historical achievements of human civilization. The building, designed by internationally recognized architect Mario Botta, covers a total area of 30,000 square meters, of which 9000 square meters is designated as exhibition space. Tsinghua University Art Museum owns more than 13,000 pieces of collections, covering six major categories, namely, painting and calligraphy, embroidery, porcelain, furniture, bronze ware and comprehensive artwork. The Museum aims to present diversified collections, to gather the latest original works, to promote exchanges with museums both at home and abroad and to share resources, so as to together sustain the development of human civilization.

Tsinghua University Art Museum has integrated the wisdom of the creators of Chinese civilization and history, presenting the profound humanistic connotations of Tsinghua accumulated over the past century to compile this new and brilliant chapter of building the museum into one of the world's first-class modern comprehensive art museums.

<https://www.artmuseum.tsinghua.edu.cn/en/>

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The Curators:

Alessandro Guerriero is an Italian designer.

In 1976 he founded Atelier Alchimia, a group of designers that started and led the Italian post-avanguardia. In the '80s, with Atelier Alchimia, Alessandro Mendini, Coop Himmelb(l)au, Philippe



MUSEI ITALIANI

Starck, Michele De Lucchi and others, he designed the Museum of Contemporary Art in Groningen. In 1982 he won the Compasso d'Oro. In 1988 he published OLLO - Rivista senza Messaggio. His works are showcased at the Museum of Modern Art in Kyoto, at Twentieth Century Design Collection and at the Metropolitan Museum in New York, at the Museum fur Angewandte Kunst in Vienna, at Groninger Museum in the Netherlands, at the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art in Denmark, at the Kunstmuseum in Düsseldorf and at the Museum of Modern Art in Boston.

He has lectured in several Italian and International universities. In the 1987 he founded Domus Academy, in 1995 he founded Futurarium and in 1996 the new atelier Radiosity; in the same year, he followed the project of the Benetton Museum (Mogliano Veneto) along with Oliviero Toscani. He has been lecturing at Nuova Accademia di Belle Arti in Milan, of which he has been president since 2013.

Su Dan is a Chinese designer, curator, writer and academic.

He holds posts concurrently as Vice Director of Tsinghua University Art Museum, Professor of Academy of Arts & Design, Tsinghua University, Vice Dean of Tsinghua University Institute for Cultural Economy, Director of Key Lab of Traditional Crafts and Materials Research, Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Su Dan also works as the Chairman of the Interior Design Council is on China's Architectural Committee, is a member of the Beijing Municipal Committee of the Political Consultative Conference, is visiting professor at the Nuova Accademia di Belle Arti di Milano and Domus Academy, is distinguished visiting professor of Shanghai Academy of Fine Arts, Shanghai University and is Doctoral Supervisor of the Faculty of Humanities and Arts of Macau University of Science and Technology.

Designers exhibited:

Antoni Gaudì, Gebrüder Thonet, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, Adolf Loos, Joseph Hoffman, Walter Gropius, Otto Rittweger, Jean Prouvé, El Lissitzky, Marcel Breuer, Mies Van Der Rohe, Renzo Frau, Frank Lloyd Wright, Gerrit Rietveld, Vladimir Tatlin, Peter Keler, Alexander Rodcénko, Gunnar Asplund, Mart Stam, Charles Martin, Eileen Gray, René Herbst, Le Corbusier, Hans Coray, Gio Ponti, Giuseppe Terragni, Ignazio Gardella, Herry Bertoia, Carlo Pagani, Claudio Salocchi, Pietro Chiesa, Alvar Aalto, Charles Eames, Gabriele Mucchi, Isamu Noguchi, Arne Jacobsen, Osvaldo Borsani, Ico Parisi, Eero Saarinen, Poul Henningsen, Gino Sarfatti, Achille e Piergiacomo Castiglioni, Carlo Scarpa, George Nelson, Gae Aulenti, Franco Albini, Herbert Ohl, Marco Zanuso,



MUSEI ITALIANI

Richard Sapper, Luigi Caccia Dominioni, Raffaello Biagetti, Lella e Massimo Vignelli, Mario Ceroli, Gaetano Pesce, Bernard Govin, Afra e Tobia Scarpa, Man Ray, Ettore Sottsass, Joe Colombo, Mario Bellini, Rodney Kinsman, Dino Gavina, Enzo Mari, Toshiyuki Kita, Giancarlo Piretti, Anna Castelli Ferrieri, Ernesto Gismondi, Vico Magistretti, Kazuhide Takahama, Stefan Wewerka, Cini Boeri, Bruno Munari, Shiro Kuramata, Alessandro Mendini.

Scientific Committee

Raffaello Biagetti - Founder of the Museo dell'Arredo Contemporaneo, Ravenna;
Giovanni Klaus Koenig – Architectural historian;
Filippo Alison – Design historian and curator of Cassina's *I Maestri* collection;
Giuseppe Chigiotti – Architect and designer.

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