

Salone del Mobile. Milano

The Manifesto



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Ministero dello Sviluppo Economico

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FIERA MILANO

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Emotion

The Salone del Mobile, which has its roots in Milan, endeavours to condense and underscore its strong points and its connections with the city, in a bid to carry forward the process of internationalisation that both have embraced, and to flag up design concepts to the design community for imminent use.

This has sparked the very first **Salone del Mobile.Milano Manifesto**, an affectionate tribute to the city, a declaration of intent geared to channelling the forces in Milan to work together to preserve the leadership role of both the city and the trade fair, and attract ideas, projects and new resources.

Why the Salone del Mobile is not just a trade fair.

The Salone del Mobile is a system of **connections, creativity and innovation**. Within the space of a week, more than threehundredthousand people converge on Milan: entrepreneurs, journalists, collectors, intellectuals, critics, designers, architects, creatives, purveyors of knowledge and nurturers of beauty. They meet up again each year during Salone week in a place where they know they will be greeted with a great raft of opportunities.

The Salone is an **emotion** first and foremost, transmitting positivity, enthusiasm, initiative and cheerfulness. Companies that work and design are proud to invest in an event on which the eyes of the world will be trained; architects and designers channel their creativity in order to express it at the Salone. Emotion lies in putting together a project that will, in turn, transmit emotion and empathy; the event's organisers work closely with the companies for a year, in order to provide them with the best possible platform.

This is why the Salone is so much more than just a trade fair. It is a **global experience** that attracts professionals who are directly involved with the sector as well as people from outside the design business. Everybody wants to attend the Salone, to come into contact with creative people, innovative people, people who produce and people who buy. Companies, creatives, trend-seekers, all want to be in Milan, protagonists of the Salone del Mobile.

This sets in train a virtuous design – product – quality – innovation – city – value chain – that reflects the uniqueness of the Milan Salone. This virtuous process is made up of a number of essential parts, each of which is an important piece of the jigsaw that sets out the intentions of the new Manifesto.

Enterprise

More than 2,000 companies take part in the Salone del Mobile (30% of them from abroad), showcasing furnishing products that range from classic to design. Behind the images of theatrical-looking stands and displays perfect right down to the last detail, lies the work of the factories, the local production network (companies from Brianza) and the more distant network represented by the Veneto, the Marches, Tuscany and Apulia, well as top quality goods from Germany, France, Belgium, Spain, America and more besides.

It is this industrial network, this manufacturing system, made up of small, very small artisan enterprises alongside the big manufacturers, that creates a solid basis for a successful fair, featuring foreign exhibitors amongst the top producers, enabling it to present the very best of a sector and its creative and productive fabric to the rest of the world.

The success of the Salone del Mobile.Milano is due entirely to the production system that underpins it, allowing it to showcase innovative products and processes every twelve months. The affirmation of the Salone exhibitors and therefore of the Salone itself rests on this capacity for ongoing innovation. Innovation with regard to lines, to shapes, to market approach and sales, innovation in communication, even questioning some of the brand's anchor points without denying its history. This is a duty that the Salone companies are bound to fulfil to an even greater extent than in the past, because competition has got sharper, time scales shorter and the market super-demanding. Only with continual innovation and high quality can the global challenge be won.

The Salone also has a duty to innovate itself, without compromising its very nature. It has to know how to challenge methods and criteria in a bid to raise standards and remain ahead of the game, with regard to both exhibition model and client service. The phrase *we've always done it like this* has ceased to exist, replaced by a commitment to strive to do *even better and achieve more than we already are*.

Quality

Quality these days means sustainable quality, which involves keeping a close eye on all the parts of the production process – from design to industrial development, financial planning and the marketing and communication process, right up to after-sales service. Sustainable quality does not consist of the green outcome in itself, i.e. the cardboard chair or bamboo glass. Sustainable design is a new way of doing business that takes the end life of products into account, products that, by their very nature, are eternal because they are iconic objects still need to be potentially recycled. It is the sort of design that increasingly encompasses the principles of the circular economy and greater environmental awareness, that considers an object well beyond its function alone, fostering and encouraging practices of sharing and reuse.

Creating design these days means thinking about the future, its sustainability, not just in terms of the use of the materials but also of the productive processes, upholding certified and universally acknowledged quality standards first of all, but also thinking about design that will endure over time.

The next Triennale International Exhibition will focus on sustainability and the intrinsic quality of design, but right now the Salone is exploring the relationship between nature and living, with an exhibition/installation in the heart of the city that will trigger reflection on tomorrow's living and on how to relate the design of an interior space to the nature of the external space.

Design

The designers and architects, the main actors, along with the companies and the success of the home furnishing system, owe their fame partly to the Salone and partly also to the industrial city of Milan. It has welcomed them and believed in their creative abilities, nurtured so many great Italian architects and designers, not just from the city itself, who have gone on to leave their mark, their prestigious signature all over the globe.

Great masters whose projects were launched at the Salone del Mobile, who have netted Compasso d'Oro awards for designs for everyday objects, are now putting their stamp on multi-award-winning architecture in Dubai, New York, Beijing, London, Sydney, Tokyo, Chicago and many other international cities.

Designers and architects come to Milan from all over the world, and the Salone is a more or less obligatory staging post, for getting to know themselves and others, for doing research and for garnering well-deserved recognition for their work or for laying the ground for future projects.

Today's invitation from the Salone to Milan is addressed to its masters, to the architects and the designers who have contributed to the success of the event, to the growth of the brands and the evolution of the city. It is now time for the Salone and Milan to look to the future and engage together again in a team game in which everyone has their own part to play, the accent must not merely be on physical architecture for the city, not just on new furnishings to showcase at the Salone, but also on new models of creating design and architecture, a new way of thinking and planning. Design that goes beyond the things themselves, that looks at the people, the needs of a changing world searching for new signals, as well as at beauty and emotion in the little everyday things. Let us continue to help Milan grow with fine new futuristic architecture as well as with conversions of old buildings, let us think in terms of a joint effort to create the model of a city that is increasingly beautiful and welcoming, not just during the Salone del Mobile.

Networking

Networking means cultural inclusion, first and foremost. Visitors from more than 160 countries make their way to the Salone. It also means spatial inclusion (the Salone spreading through the city, in the centre and in the suburbs), the inclusion of experiences and new forms of welcome.

Share is undoubtedly one of the most used and abused words at this moment in time, but for the Salone sharing begins with its dialogue with the city. Milan does not exist without the Salone and there can be no Salone del Mobile without Milan. Design week provides the great multinationals from a variety of sectors – from informatics and technology to the food industry – with an exhibition space, all these businesses come to Milan at this particular time precisely because of the spirit of sharing that characterises it. During this particular week a communication, industry and creativity networking system enables unique connections to be made in one space and at one time.

The multinationals come to Milan to showcase their products during the Salone del Mobile because it is here and only here that they meet their target audience, the interlocutors that they would otherwise fail to intercept.

Sharing ideas, needs, experiences, sharing real contacts, networking in order to grow together, means building a virtuous process in which the respective skills, characteristics and abilities serve to empower each other, to increase the positive outcomes for the event and for the city. Then, after the Salone, synergies can be forged that create the very reasons why these leading global economic system brands establish themselves in Milan, bringing projects and resources. This is the common goal: optimising the centripetal force of the Salone, to shore up and retain the investments that would otherwise be allocated elsewhere.

Sharing the city's many spaces to help the Salone steadily become the City's Salone, and sharing converging thoughts in a bid to elevate the overarching quality.

Young people

The Salone del Mobile has been nurturing promising young designers for more than twenty years at SaloneSatellite. The event is a springboard for talented young people from across the globe, along with their own creations, prototypes of objects that could prove to be their passport into the world of design. Many of them have been successful, finding the right companies to manufacture their creative designs; equally, these young creatives' ideas often provide the lifeblood companies need for reworking the design of their own products. It is at the Salone del Mobile that demand and supply meet, with a view to commercial, creative and cultural interchange.

These young people come from all over Italy and all over the world because Milan is a learning platform for creating knowledge that is then exported.

When they return to their countries of origin or are scattered about the world, they take with them the cultural bases, the methods and the styles they have learned in Milan.

Milan is a way of being, hard working, concrete, sincere and dynamic.

Culture

The Salone del Mobile provides an extraordinary opportunity to spread the culture of design, amongst other things. History melds with the contemporary, the cultural and artistic heritage inspires the creativity of the future. It is a chance for different forms of expression and different languages to meet and cross-pollinate, triggering extremely high-level events and happenings. It also provides an opportunity to experience and valorise the city of Milan's immense cultural heritage to the full – the La Scala theatre, the network of City Museums, Palazzo Reale, the Pinacoteca di Brera, the company museums and Milan's Historic House museums, and, especially, the Triennale. Together they make up a treasure trove to be discovered and rediscovered, through their cross-pollination with creative expressions of design.

The time has come to make the Triennale into a dedicated space for design and architecture, a museum space that tells the story of so many other stories, of people, objects, businesses, happenings. A Museum that does not exist, but one that Milan thoroughly deserves.

Communication

Milan is the city of publishing; the leading national newspapers have traditionally been located in Milan or decentralised offices, and design and fashion publishing takes place in Milan; furthermore, the Salone attracts more than 5,000 journalists from all over the world. Agencies, creatives and graphic designers create the integrated communication system and make up the great community that is mobilised for a week and amplifies the history of the Salone. A community that has expanded over the last few years, thanks to the digital world, to which the Salone looks with great interest and an eye for new projects. The aim is to harness these new tools to create opportunities for development and ways in which to improve its own dissemination of information, breaking down barriers and frontiers.

Milan at the centre

Milan is the city with which other cities compare themselves most frequently and on which they model themselves. It is an international city. Milan is now made up of several different dimensions and its openness to the world and dynamism is projected in so many different ways.

Milan is the moral capital of a beautiful and culture-rich country – Italy – and has allowed its cosmopolitan character to emerge over the last few years, going beyond the industriousness that its inhabitants have always acknowledged.

Milan has become the “great Milan”. Despite its small geographic footprint, like other great metropolises around the world, it has managed to centralise a number of excellent enterprises that now form the beating heart of the city itself.

It is the 4.0 version of “Milano da bere” [Milan, good enough to drink], the “place to be” as the City Council claim goes, but it really is the place in which things take shape and are communicated.

The city’s new toponymy has changed the perspectives and flows of people, there is no longer one single nerve centre, rather more spaces, history and the new.

The Salone del Mobile’s exhibition space is of particular importance in the relationship between the event and the city. The fairgrounds, designed by Massimiliano Fuksas, aroused a great deal of scepticism ten years ago, with critics deriding the decision to move the exhibition pavilions out to Rho. The Salone del Mobile has proved them wrong. Connected to the heart of the city by an efficient and practical underground system, with the High Speed train that gets to Turin in 50 minutes, Bologna in 60 minutes and Florence in 100 minutes, the Salone is the centre of the city of design.

For one week the geography of the city is redesigned and re-equilibrated, using areas normally vacant or seldom frequented as showcases and laboratories for experimentation and creativity all at once: this is the “Widespread Salone”, the evolution of the Fuorisalone concept.

Milan’s trump card during design week is without doubt the Salone del Mobile itself, drawing in the general public and business. With the spontaneity and generosity of an inclusive city like Milan, this concentration of opinion leaders became the Fuorisalone, all the things that take place outside the boundaries of the fairgrounds.

Going beyond the concept of the Fuorisalone, the Salone transforms the city into a fluid space, open to a great many experiences and a great many opportunities for meeting and sharing. The centrality of the Salone in terms of the geography of Milan should serve as a virtuous example and a possible model for the rehabilitation of the former Expo site, to enable that space to also become a central and attractive part of the city.