



## Take Your Seat / Prendi posizione

### Solitude and conviviality of the Chair / Solitudine e convivialità della sedia

*Featuring thirty winners of the Compasso d'Oro Award and more than a hundred honourable mentions, the exhibition curated by Nina Bassoli proves an indisputable truth: the chair is unquestionably a political, social and cultural testament to its time.*

In conjunction with **ADI's Compasso d'Oro Award**, from 5 to 10 September the "supersalone" exhibition taking place at Milan's Rho trade fair venue is hosting **Take Your Seat / Prendi posizione. Conviviality of the Chair / Solitude and conviviality of the chair**, a project/installation that will engage visitors and provide much food for thought at the special event staged by the Salone del Mobile.Milano curated by architect Stefano Boeri. Taking centre stage at the show is the chair. Make that over **130 chairs**. Because no other object has ever better summed up the **importance of design**, whether it reflects a passing fad or a cornerstone of civilization. This awareness is the starting point for a unique narrative journey from 1954 to the present day, depicting the role that chair design has played in its many and varied iterations through the tremendous changes that society has undergone, and how it has reacted to cultural paradigm shifts with ingenuity and utterly inspired approaches and forms.

*"The design industry must take a stand every single day over the issues large and small that life throws at us, and perhaps even try to get ahead of the curve. **Take Your Seat - Prendi posizione** is an invitation to all those who hold responsibility in the world of design, from designers to manufacturers, distributors to academics, and marketers to critics, in an effort to ensure that the future of design is more than merely a random decision," says Luciano Galimberti, President of ADI, the Italian Industrial Design Association.*

Featuring high-impact displays designed by **Alessandro Colombo** and **Perla Gianni Falvo**, the exciting event will provide visitors with plentiful information to help them comprehend each era's political and social dimension and cultural paradigms, simply by observing its chairs, i.e. the materials and technology employed, and the aesthetic underlying them. **Audiovisual content** will welcome the visitor in a **theatrical and immersive setting** to be explored like a landscape with curiosity rather than following a rigidly pre-established path; the various styles on show represent different eras, starting from the boom years of the Fifties, through the turmoil of the late Sixties, the oil crisis of the Seventies, up to the environmental issues and concerns dominating the present day.

Located in the four pavilions of the "supersalone", the exhibition is divided into four thematic sections focussing on the different uses to which chairs are put (**Take your seat / Prendi posizione; Work Learn Produce / Lavorare Imparare Produrre; Cook Set Share / Cucinare Apparecchiare Condividere; Going Out: Going Public / Uscire fuori: Entrare nello spazio pubblico**), plus an "extra" section within the **ADI Design Museum (The Fifth Quarter / Il quinto quarto)**, representing the ideal conclusion - or beginning - of the itinerary. Each section may be viewed as a standalone exhibition or as part of a broader event that, through continuous cross-references, encompasses a collection that is a world first in terms of its superb quality and historical-scientific relevance.

What effects are generated by the act of sitting? What thoughts, mechanisms and relationships come into play while we sit? How do we relate to others and the space around us? As an object, how does the chair encourage interaction and sharing when grouped together with other chairs to form a system? Set against the backdrop of different behaviors, rather than classified by type or compositional elements, the chairs on display take on a new life revealing a powerful grip on reality and current events, regardless of their era.

#### **Take your seat / Prendi posizione**

The first section addresses the meaning of sitting and the symbolic function of the chair. This thematic "island" emphasizes its ceremonial and representative purpose. Even today, "to chair" means to preside over, to occupy an acknowledged rank in society. A video montage of film clips from the post-war years to the present day narrates the highly personal, yet politically and socially charged act of sitting. Video installation: DAVIDE RAPP (Orama)

#### **Work Learn Produce / Lavorare Imparare Produrre**

The second "archipelago" is centered on the workplace. Starting with the most iconic and traditional office chairs, the collection offers insights into how the work environment has evolved from various office workstation configurations to more informal settings, up to the recent rise in working from home and telecommuting. Video installation: FOSBURY ARCHITECTURE; (AB)NORMAL **Cook Set Share / Cucinare Apparecchiare Condividere**

The third section examines the social side of meals as a time for sharing and interacting. Seats placed around a dining table represent the heart of the home and relationships with family and friends. Lunch takes on a significant social role, becoming a time for sharing and emancipation. The place where food is consumed, versus where it is prepared (the kitchen), offers an all-encompassing overview of the evolution of the domestic space, the relationships between its inhabitants, and the degree of privacy or sharing this activity engenders beyond the family unit. Video installation: ANNA PUIGJANER (MAIO Architects).



**Going Out: Going Public / Uscire fuori: Entrare nello spazio pubblico.**

The fourth section looks at how the chair's role changes when it leaves the private space, at home or at work, and enters the public sphere. Seating for small groups (as in cafes' and restaurants) or accommodating huge audiences (shows and events) can transform a public space, albeit temporarily, making it more habitable and prompting new relationships. Through a series of examples and arrangements this in-depth study offers food for thought on potential uses - and misuses - of the chair as an object of urban appropriation, and makes extremely timely considerations that would have been completely unimaginable up until a few months ago, opening up exciting new scenarios for design. Video installation: MATILDE CASSANI

**The Fifth Quarter / Il quinto quarto**

An "extra" section - the fifth - includes a small number of chairs that have lived through this long and vibrant history without actually being part of it: these chairs have never won a Compasso d'Oro award, or even earned an honourable mention, but they nevertheless represent a crucial part of our story, precisely because they were left out. The "antagonists" are metaphorical, anti-modern, symbolic, and radical chairs that belong in the ADI Design Museum solely to demonstrate that the history of the institution has always been entwined with the parallel histories of culture and society, and that each one continuously fuels the others. Nina Bassoli

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