

PRESS RELEASE

ITALIAN DESIGN

Achille Castiglioni and Joe Colombo

THE TWO ICONS WHO HAVE INNOVATED THE MADE IN ITALY DESIGN

Curated by **Fondazione Sozzani**

in collaboration with **Fondazione Achille Castiglioni and Joe Colombo Studio**

opening reception

Thursday March 24th, 2021

from 7pm to 9pm

on view

from March 25th to May Xth, 2021

every day, 11 am – 8 pm

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THE TWO ICONS WHO INNOVATED THE MADE IN ITALY DESIGN

The exhibition highlights the works of the two great designers, two of the best known legends in the history of industrial design. On view some of their most influential creations, including Achille Castiglioni's Arco Lamp. The Arco lamp was, for the first time, a suspension lamp designed not hanging from the ceiling but to be moved around. Joe Colombo's "Elda chair" is a perfect example how Joe Colombo's designs were looking to the future. The structure and the shell of the armchair are in fiberglass, the base mounted on a rotating device and the upholstery seems to evoke a lunar space landing.

Under the discerning eye of their respective Estates, many of the designs by both Achille Castiglioni and Joe Colombo are still being produced by their original firms.

"Design demands observation."

A pivotal figure in the designs of the 20th century, **Achille Castiglioni** exerted a profound influence on contemporary living in multiple ways.

Both an architect and designer, Castiglioni's infusion of wit into domestic objects like lamps and stools helped to establish Italy as the acknowledged leader in sophisticated modern design. "When design is recognized, universally, as the cultural force that it is in Italy, Achille Castiglioni will be considered amazing, like Duchamp in his influence", – said Paola Antonelli, senior curator of Architecture and Design at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.¹

Conceiving complete design processes and functionality, he became a maestro of materials. Most of the works he designed are the outcome of real ingenuity, humanist culture, intelligent experimentation, technical expertise, aesthetic sensibility and, above all, they always accomplished their practical purpose.

During his 60-years-long career - he died in 2002 - he worked with the most relevant Italian furniture companies including Alessi, Cassina, Danese, DePadova, Driade, Flexform, Flos, Kartell, Olivetti, Zanotta as well as Brionvega, Lancia, Phonola and Pirelli. He also collaborated with many other architects and designers including Bruno Munari, Enzo Mari, Marcello Nizzoli, Max Hubera and Pierluigi Cerri.

"My designs experiences try to create an evolutionary link between current reality and future".

Joe Colombo, who died suddenly in 1971 at the age of 41, achieved in a few short years a legendary reputation as one of Italy's great designers.

He fused the individual objects of interiors into complex, multifunctional "machines for living" that were built to adapt to the needs and desires of inhabitants.

With these designs that were far ahead of their time, Joe Colombo created the foundational elements of the futuristic designs of the Sixties.

Colombo's vision of a rational world in which design should be based on scientific research was also illustrated by his many contributions in the field of industrial design, including automobiles, watches, ski bindings, glasses, air conditioning units as well as an in-flight service tray for the Italian airline Alitalia.

As he spoke in an interview in 1969, he sat on a molded plastic chair. "I did not design this chair," he said, "I calculated it."² Silvana Annichiarico, former Director of Triennale Design Museum in Milan, so wrote: "Whether it's chairs, lamps or futuristic visions of the city, Joe Colombo has an uncommon skill to anticipate the times. ...And above all, there is his absolute talent in giving shape to ideas, or in translating thoughts into images. Design was to Joe Colombo the imagination of what's possible".³

¹ The New York Times, by William L Hamilton, Dec. 5, 2002

² The New York Times, Aug. 1, 1971

³ La Repubblica, by Silvana Annichiarico, Feb. 17, 2021

Achille Castiglioni

(1918 -2002, Milan)

Achille Castiglioni was a pioneer of Italian design and one of its most influential protagonists. He graduated in architecture from the Politecnico University of Milan in 1944 and joined his brothers Livio (1911-1979) and Pier Giacomo (1913-1968) at renowned Studio Castiglioni, which they established together in 1938.

His earliest training found him exploring forms, techniques, and new materials. A Design Professor, he taught at the School of Architecture of the Politecnico University of Turin from 1969 to 1980, and at the Politecnico University of Milan from 1980 to 1993.

In 1956 he acted as a founding member of ADI, Associazione Disegno Industriale (the Italian Industrial Design Association). Since 1986 he was Honorary Royal Designer for Industry. In 1987 he received the honorary degree in design from the Royal College of Art of London, and in 2001 from the Politecnico University of Milan.

During his career he was awarded eight Compasso d'Oro prize (1955-1979) - the first and most recognized design prize - and several the Triennale Medals: Bronze (1947), two Silver Medals (1957, 1963), two Gold Medals (1957, 1960), and two Triennale Grand Prix (1951, 1954).

Achille Castiglioni's works belongs to the most relevant public museum collections including the MoMA in New York, the Victoria & Albert Museum of London, the Kunstgewerbemuseum Zürich, the MAKK Museum für Angewandte Kunst in Köln, Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris; London Design Museum and more.

Joe Colombo

(1930 – 1971, Milan)

Joe Colombo (nickname for Cesare Colombo) was one of the most successful Italian designers of his time. Colombo studied art at Milan's Brera Academy and studied Architecture until 1954 at the Politecnico di Milano University.

He joined the Nuclear Painting movement in the early 1950s founded by Enrico Baj and Sergio Dangelo. Early on, he developed an interest in architecture, designed the Utopia of a subterranean nuclear city, frequented Milan's jazz clubs and became interested in design. In 1959, Colombo had to take over the family company, which produced electric appliances, and started to experiment with new construction and production technologies. Colombo's career as a designer began around 1962.

He also achieved innovative forms with furniture in plywood, leather and rattan as well as lighting pieces that rank among the many well-known individual objects he designed. In 1964 Colombo received the *IN-Arch prize*. In 1967 and 1968, he was awarded ADI Associazione Disegno Industriale prize and in 1970 he received the Compasso D'Oro award. Colombo's seating furniture like the "Tube Chair" and the "Multi Chair", offering a wide range of possible uses, as well as the numerous examples of container furniture meant to shape the living space of the future as multifunctional units.

Some of his most important works are on display in the main Public Collections as the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, the Albert and Victoria Museum in London, and more.