



PRESS RELEASE

## **Forme: Umberto Riva, architetto designer**

Curated by Gabriele Neri

*Exhibition set up*

Designed by Umberto Riva with Emilio Scarano

*Video*

“Umberto Riva” by Francesca Molteni and Claudia Adragna  
Muse Factory of Projects production

### **Opening**

Saturday April 6th 2019

3.00 pm – 8.00 pm

### **On view**

April 7 – May 5, 2019

Open daily: 10.30 am – 7.30 pm

Wednesdays and Thursdays, 10.30 am – 9.00 pm

Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays

Entry ticket 5 € Reduced ticket 3 € (6-26 years)

Admission free from Monday to Friday

Special Openings Design Week 2019

9 – 14 April, 10.30 am – 9.00 pm



The Fondazione Sozzani presents in Milan the exhibition "Forme: Umberto Riva, architetto designer " curated by Gabriele Neri, in conjunction with Miart and Salone del Mobile 2019.

One of the Italian masters of architecture and design, Umberto Riva, born in 1928, was recently awarded with the Gold Medal at the Triennale di Milano for sixty years of projects ranging from architecture to industrial design, from editorial graphics to interiors, from urban planning to painting, from restoration to museum set-up.

The exhibition, curated by Gabriele Neri, focuses on the activity of Umberto Riva in the field of design, developed as a complementary research to the architectural and pictorial one starting from the Sixties. The selected pieces are part of a continuous process of materic and formal experimentation, driven by an anxiety that leads to geometric, chromatic and spatial anomalies. Says Riva: "Mine is not the work of an intellectual, but that one of the craftsman who approximates the form".

With rare out-of-production prototypes, unique pieces, paintings, drawings and unpublished sketches from the architect's private archive, the exhibition shows three distinct but intertwined design areas.

A first section presents Umberto Riva as "master of light", with a selection of "illuminated glass" - so he calls its lamps - which form different installations.

The second focuses on furnishing, a point of contact between architecture and design, through historical pieces and unpublished works, such as the new E19 armchair presented in the exhibition, edition of the Galleria Giustini / Stagetti in Rome.

A third section reflects the complexity of his graphic research: paintings, pictures and architectural drawings shows the recurrence of certain geometries, and attest to the circularity of Riva's work, which often repeats: «I always feel like facing the same project».

The exhibition is completed by the set up designed by Umberto Riva with Emilio Scarano, and by the new film "Umberto Riva" curated by Francesca Molteni and Claudia Adragna produced by Muse Factory of Projects. This first film on Umberto Riva was born with the intention of covering the silent world of his daily life, filled by the project of his personal exhibition, thus tracing some threads of a long journey into the space of architecture and design of the '900. It aims to see the Riva's method at work, a continuous process of experimentation, of materials and forms, always questioned and rediscovered starting from an intuition that is confronted with reality, the context, the limits.

The exceptional design of Umberto Riva emerges over the years through exhibitions, publications and even in the world of cinema. The "E63" lamp, designed by him in 1963, inspired by a sculpture by Brâncuși, appears in the futuristic setting of Blade Runner 2049 - sequel to the famous film by Ridley Scott - creating an unexpected space-time short circuit.

Looking at the filigree of the work of Umberto Riva, one can see the dynamism of expressionism - preferred to the stillness of the classical world and visible in never-upright angles and recurrent



triangulations; the chromatic affinity with Léger, Nicolas de Stael and Poliakoff, but also Pierre Bonnard, and the lesson of Corbusier, Carlo Scarpa, Frank Lloyd Wright, among many.

Gabriele Neri writes: "In the work of Umberto Riva, the form has a priority meaning, which goes to beyond use; for this reason, he considers his creations in the field of design not as simple furnishing objects, but as figures in continuous dialogue with each other. The pursuit of the shape starts from the sheet of paper or from the canvas, to then tackle the three-dimensionality of the real world and the potential of ancient and modern materials: from plastic to Murano glass, from metal to marble, from wood to cement. The form is a point of arrival, not of departure; it is the temporary stage of a painful and incessant exploration".

**Umberto Riva** (Milan, 1928) graduated in architecture in Venice in 1959 after studying with Franco Albini and Carlo Scarpa. Since then he has worked in Milan dealing with projects of all scales: from urban spaces to single buildings, from landscape to domestic interiors, from exhibition display to design. His work, published in major architectural magazines and exhibited in venues both in Italy and abroad, has received important awards including the Gold Medal for Italian Architecture (2003) and the Gold Medal for Lifetime Achievement (2018) of the Milan Triennale. In the design field he has worked with many companies including Fontana Arte, Bonacina, Francesconi, VeArt di Scorzè, Barovier & Toso, Artemide, Poltronova, FontanaArte, Driade, Tacchini, Galleria Giustini / Stagetti. Academician of San Luca since 1998, Umberto Riva has taught at the universities of Milan, Venice, Palermo and Nancy.

**Gabriele Neri** Architect and PhD, since 2011 he teaches "History of design and architecture" at the Polytechnic of Milan and conducts research at the Academy of Architecture in Mendrisio (CH). He has curated exhibitions in Italy and abroad and is member of the Board of Directors of the Fondazione Museo del Design of La Triennale di Milano. Among his publications: *Capolavori in miniatura. Pier Luigi Nervi e la modellazione strutturale* (MAP-Silvana Editoriale, 2014); *Caricature architettoniche. Satira e critica del progetto moderno* (Quodlibet, 2015) and *Umberto Riva. Interni e allestimenti* (LetteraVentidue Edizioni, 2017).

### **MUSE Factory of Projects**

Founded in 2009 by Francesca Molteni, MUSE develops concept and production of editorial and multimedia projects, videos, video installations and websites. The most recent documentaries include "Amare Gio Ponti", "Superdesign", "La Magnifica Fabbrica. 240 years of the Teatro alla Scala "and" The Power of the Archive. Renzo Piano Building Workshop".

### **Fondazione Sozzani**

The Fondazione Sozzani was established in 2016 by Carla Sozzani and is dedicated to the promotion of culture through photography, fashion, the fine arts, and applied arts.



The Foundation has assumed the patronage of Galleria Carla Sozzani and continues all relevant public functions that the Galleria has supported for the past 29 years. [www.fondazionesozzani.org](http://www.fondazionesozzani.org)