

KartellLand

CELEBRATING 70 YEARS OF ITALIAN DESIGN HISTORY

THE KARTELL WORLD PORTRAYED IN AN EXHIBITION AT THE IADC
INTERNATIONAL ART DESIGN CENTER IN SHENZHEN
23RD NOVEMBER 2019 – 30TH MAY 2020

From 23rd November 2019 until 30th May 2020, the iADC – International Art Design Center in Shenzhen, China, hosts “Kartell Land – Celebrating 70 years of Italian Design History”, an exhibition that recounts the evolution of Kartell, the values underpinning its industrial output and its design through highly immersive installations. The exhibition enjoys the patronage of the Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

Kartell looks keenly to China, addressing an audience which passionately embraces a brand that is a symbol of excellence made in Italy, a champion of industrial design and development for the past seventy years. China responds with like interest, hosting this monographic show which presents the past and future of the company with an exhibition itinerary, curated by Ferruccio Laviani, spread across two floors of the museum, covering an area of some 1500 m².

With the aid of objects combined with audiovisual and graphic supports, the exhibition looks at specific themes, offering a comprehensive reading of the brand's entire output through the development of creativity, design, aesthetic taste and materials. A veritable universe that draws visitors into a sort of story hovering between the real world and a dreamlike state, precisely because it is such a unique and colourful world, which is why the decision was taken to call it “Kartell Land”.

The exhibition actually begins from the area immediately outside the Museum, where an installation comprised of giant, disconnected 3-D lettering welcomes visitors and provides an introduction to the exhibition. The exhibition itself is divided into 9 thematic areas and features a selection of products from the permanent collection of the Kartell Museum, plus products that over the past 30 years have become veritable brand icons, the culmination of industrial manufacturing with continuous evolution and technological innovation at its core.

The first section is “**THROUGH THE YEARS**”, an overview of Kartell's most important graphic creations, including catalogues, advertising images, posters, drawings and art shots that tell the story of the company's evolution in communication. Historical images combine with more recent ones, illustrating the changes in the culture of living but also the most significant milestones achieved by the company over the years, from production to technology. An “art gallery” where panels of various sizes are positioned on trestles like

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paintings that reproduce the different types of creativity.

The exhibition continues with **“THE INVENTION OF ITALIAN DESIGN”**, which illustrates the most historic part of Kartell through a selection of products from the permanent collection of the Kartell Museum, a space measuring 2,500 m² located in the historic headquarters of Kartell in Noviglio, near Milan, where over 1000 objects are on display. A series of gilded arches create the backdrop for the products that have made the history of Italian design. The story is completed by several archive images which unfold in an alternating sequence of images and videos.

On the staircase leading to the next floor, visitors have the chance to familiarise themselves with all the designers who have collaborated with Kartell in the past 20 years. **“DESIGN SPEAKS”** reproduces life-size silhouettes of the designers, with stories, anecdotes, personal accounts and technological challenges narrated through audio contributions from the designers themselves. An emotional and engaging journey aimed at connecting the visitor with the creative minds of Kartell which come to life one by one, activating a virtual exchange.

Red is the institutional colour of Kartell, and **“THE POWER OF RED”** celebrates it in this section. Some of Kartell’s most representative products, made in red, are revealed through the lighting effects of a large LED screen, which intermittently turns on and off, catching the eye and revealing the objects on the ground and suspended in mid-air for the enjoyment of visitors.

The transparent polycarbonate chair is synonymous with Kartell for people all over the world. In **“THE INVENTION OF TRANSPARENCY”**, its features are displayed in an “Immersive Room” where visitors are catapulted into a surreal installation of blue sky and clouds with all-over projections in which Kartell’s transparent products seem to fly. A totally immersive room that evokes the concept of lightness and purity of the lines expressed by the transparencies of the floating products which tell the story of one of Kartell’s greatest innovations.

Moving on, an explosion of colour is projected in **“THE INVENTION OF COLOUR”**. The products in the Kartell catalogue are on display, as they were on the steps of an Italian piazza, accompanied by large luminous signs. Colour, one of the distinguishing features that has made the company so easily recognisable, is expressed in a multitude of brightly coloured products with different uses and functions. Transparencies and solid colours, matt and glossy objects are mixed and displayed on two separate podiums: “The Chairs Arena” and “Transparent Colours”.

Looking towards the future has always been part of the Kartell DNA and today’s sensitivity towards environmental issues becomes the starting point for great new projects. In **“THE INVENTION OF FUTURE. BIO RECYCLED PLASTIC AND WOOD”** research and innovation today lead Kartell to produce objects and furnishings in bioplastic that are contextualised here in an aseptic and technological setting, which



reminds us of the most advanced research laboratories. In contrast, an explosion of nature with luxuriant vegetation in abundance provides the backdrop for the brand new collection of wooden chairs designed by Philippe Starck, with the motto 'In the Mood for Smart Wood', and A.I., the first chair created by artificial intelligence, with the contribution of Philippe Starck, made from 100% recycled material.

In a changing world, capsule collections and co-branding have spread to the world of fashion. This section repropose some of Philippe Starck's chairs, upholstered in fabrics by the most prestigious fashion houses: Burberry, Dolce & Gabbana, Jean-Paul Gaultier, Missoni, Moschino, Pucci, Valentino and Zegna. A stroll among the display windows of the big names in Italian fashion, where **KARTELL** becomes à **LA MODE**.

The final section of the exhibition treats visitors to "**KARTELL ICONS**", a selection of pieces that have made the Milanese brand internationally famous and are still among the bestsellers of the Kartell catalogue, including Componibili, Mobil, Maui, La Marie, Louis Ghost, Bourgie, Masters, Piuma, Venice, Smatrik and A.I. Artistic shots taken by great photographers like Helmut Newton and David LaChapelle and photographs with a strong evocative impact, feature Kartell's icons and provide a backdrop for the real objects on display.

Claudio Luti, president of Kartell, underlines "*We are honoured to have been invited by the iADC to tell our manufacturing story. This exhibition installation, which toys with the unconventional emotion of product display, allows us to present Kartell in an innovative way, illustrating our creative journey and our processes of continuous innovation. Today Shenzhen is recognised as one of China's major hubs for high-tech industries and an important centre for the development of creativity in design applied to various sectors. We decided to open a Flagship store here last year, so we are proud to have the opportunity, through this exhibition, to show the Chinese public the emotional side of Kartell too*".

For further information:

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