

# Kartell

## GIULIO CASTELLI. THE ENTREPRENEURIAL CULTURE OF THE ITALIAN DESIGN SYSTEM



The 25th of May sees the inauguration of an exhibition entitled "Giulio Castelli. La cultura imprenditoriale del sistema design", a tribute to the man and entrepreneur who founded Kartell back in 1949 and first introduced plastic materials to the world of furniture. Castelli revolutionised the sector and helped establish Italian design culture by recognising the professionalism of designers. The exhibition is planned to coincide with the opening of the new ADI Design Museum, which also celebrates Castelli as one of the nine founders of ADI, the Industrial Design Association, back in 1956.

It presents a chronological journey, in words and images, through the life and works of Giulio Castelli and brings

together both public and private photographs, stories, and historical information about the various stages in his career.

A photo portrait by Chris Moyse opens the exhibition, accompanied by a biography of Castelli, and leads into content arranged in 15 theme-based chapters summarising his life and mission in the world of design. Castelli's entrepreneurial vision was closely intertwined with public institutions like the Salone del Mobile, design schools (recently established at the time), museums and other business figures. His life was doubly linked to that of his wife, the designer Anna Castelli Ferrieri, and was dedicated to what we would today define as design culture.

From 1949 to 1988, when Kartell was acquired by Claudio Luti, his son-in-law, Giulio Castelli never failed in his determination to create and promote what he termed "the culture of plastic", creating objects that revolutionised daily life and entered into medical laboratories, domestic kitchens, offices and homes on a par with glass, wood and metal. Many of the themes Castelli championed, such as quality, technical innovation, durability and practicality, are valid for Kartell even today. Proud of its DNA, Kartell is still committed to product evolution and is eagerly introducing new, sustainable and recyclable materials.

*"My grandfather was a visionary and had a pioneering spirit," **Lorenza Luti, Kartell's Marketing and Retail Manager, explains.** "That is what inspired him to create something that was completely new in its day. Back in the early 1950s he wanted to produce objects with characteristics that had never been seen, produced using new technologies chosen for their economic use of materials and efficient processes. This was the foundation on which Kartell was built. From the word 'go' our company has always adopted a completely original approach to the development of every article, based on advanced technology and a commitment to design. Following in his footsteps, we still pursue his intuitive vision with passion and pride, and still create ground-breaking and technologically innovative products that generate amazement and excitement, just as he did seventy years ago."*

Giulio Castelli was born in 1920 and studied under the Nobel Prize winner Giulio Natta, obtaining a degree in chemistry from Milan Polytechnic in 1943. He set up Kartell in 1949 and began collaborating with some of the period's top architects, including Gino Colombini, Achille and Pier Giacomo Castiglioni, Joe Colombo, Marco Zanuso, Gae Aulenti, Richard Sapper, Giotto Stoppino and Ignazio Gardella. As a result, Kartell rapidly established itself as a key name in Italian design and a precursor of today's internationally acclaimed business system.

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