On the occasion of the Italian Design Day, the Istituto Italiano di Cultura, in collaboration with the Consulate General of Italy, R & Company, MUSE, and Design Exchange presents Super Design, an exhibition of Italian Radical Design curated by Maria Cristina Didero and Evan Snyderman. The exhibition will open on March 1 at the Istituto Italiano di Cultura.

On February 28, at Design Exchange there will be the Toronto premiere screening of SuperDesign: Italian Radical Design 1965-1975, a film by Maria Cristina Didero and Francesca Molteni, - the latter also director – which further investigates the untold stories behind the outstanding works of the Radicals, directly from the memories of the players of the time. Following the screening, Franco Raggi will discuss the influences of the Italian Radical Design movement on modern design, with a focus on the Design of the 70s and 80s.

SUPERDESIGN: ITALIAN RADICAL DESIGN 1965-1975
A film by Maria Cristina Didero and Francesca Molteni – Directed by Francesca Molteni (67’ minutes)


SuperDesign is a film about 19 players of the Italian Radical Movement. Through their words and their stories, Didero and Molteni retrace the history and the heritage of the movement. They take us back to that time when everything seemed possible.


The mid-1960s represented a revolutionary time when the need for change has spread everywhere in the Western world and has pervaded all the aspects of life. Some beautiful archival historical images recreate the atmosphere of the period. It was a time of ‘positive turbulence’ also on an artistic level. And even today we can definitely catch a glimpse of this radical viruses in our interviewees! The movement took its steps in Italy - in the 1960s crossed by a wave of political violence, bombings and terrorism, but at the same time an excitingly creative place: because of the energy of its industrialists and the ability and the creativity of its designers, Italy started becoming a global focus for design. Looking at the works of these architects, designers and curators, walking with them through their cities alleys, listening to their revolutionary ideals, we find that the dreams, the utopias, the ideologies and the passion, which have permeated their experience and their art are still alive nowadays. Listening to our protagonists’ stories, our question is: What is left today, what is the Radical Movement’s heritage, in a historical period in which the speed of cultural change have resulted not only in a generalized conformity, but also in a loss of values and in the rise of populist parties and nationalist movements?

About the director

After graduating in Theoretical Philosophy from the University of Milan, Francesca Molteni took a postgraduate course in Film Production at New York University. She curated the concept design and directed television formats and documentaries for the RAI network and collaborated with publisher Edizioni Olivares. From 2002 to 2009, she produced historical documentaries, television formats and institutional videos with 3D Produzioni Video.

In 2009 she set up the MUSE Factory of Projects.

She has taught at IULM University, Milan, at the University of Palermo and, at Naba, the New Academy of Fine Arts in Milan. Since 2012 she has contributed to the Sunday edition of IlSole24Ore as the author of “Oggetti d’impresa [Objects of Business]”. In 2014 she received the PIDA DesignPrize for the “Dove vivono gli architetti” exhibition, curated with Davide Pizzigoni for the Milan Salone del Mobile 2014.

Wednesday, February 28 - 6pm - 7pm
Design Exchange | 234 Bay St., Toronto| Free admission | Presented by Design Exchange in collaboration with Istituto Italiano di Cultura; Consulate General of Italy, Muse; R & Company, NYC.
THINKING OBJECTS: A RADICAL APPROACH TO CONTEMPORARY

A talk by Franco Raggi

On the occasion of the Italian Design Day, Franco Raggi will discuss with Francesca Molteni about the influences of the Italian Radical Design movement on modern design, with a focus on the Design of the 70s and 80s.

The Italian Radical Design movement began in the 1960s in response to the tumultuous political and social climate: Young designers rejected aesthetic norms and, in the process, created unique art and architecture. On the surface, the movement’s playful and symbolic imagery simply referenced pop culture but these works subversively took aim at the establishment. The Radicals introduced striking and bold colours; instead of the integrity of material properties, they embraced ornamentation and decoration.

As Franco Raggi wrote (in his “Radical Story” - Casaballa, 1973), the radical movement tried to “overcome the disciplinary discourse of design, namely the reconstruction of the contradictions at the formal level, destroying... the normal image of the product.” The function of the Radicals’ works was to subvert the way you thought about the object. These pieces were meant to “stand out” for their bizarrity and to be looked at and enjoyed. The Radical designs, with their irony and distorted scale deeply influenced the imaginary of every-day-use-objects, but also magazines, books, exhibitions, schools and much more! Seductive, captivating and utterly surreal, the Radical Italian movement despite its brevity still continues to be a major source of inspiration.

Wednesday, February 28 - 7:30pm - 8:30pm

Design Exchange | 234 Bay St., Toronto | Free admission | Presented by Design Exchange in collaboration with Istituto Italiano di Cultura; Consulate General of Italy, Muse; R & Company, NYC.

About Franco Raggi

Franco Raggi (born 1945) is an architect. He teaches Interior Design at ISIA in Florence. Between 1970 and 1975 he wrote for the architecture and interior design journals Casabella and Modo, before becoming their editor between 1981 and 1983. He has contributed to the Venice Biennale and the Milan Triennale by organizing architecture and design exhibitions. Between 1970 and 1980, Raggi took part in the Radical Design movement: In 1973, he orchestrated the first critical exhibition of Italian Radical Design on behalf of the IDZ, Internationales Design Zentrum, in Berlin. In 1980 he began designing for a number of leading Italian companies including Fontana Arte, Cappellini, Kartell, and Poltronova. He designed, among other things, the Milan corporate headquarters of Gianfranco Ferré. He collaborated in the design of the building and the interior of the Humanitas hospital. He is currently image coordinator for Barovier&Toso of Murano, a blown-glass maker. His graphic and design work is displayed in museums and private collectios. Together with some of his architect and designer friends, he contributes to FLARE magazine

SUPERDESIGN ITALIAN RADICAL DESIGN: 1965-1975

Curated by Maria Cristina Didero and Evan Snyderman

OPENING ON March 1, 2018 - 6:30pm - 8:30pm
March 1, 2018 – May 2, 2018
Istituto Italiano di Cultura | 496 Huron St., Toronto |

On the occasion of the Italian Design Day: The Istituto Italiano di Cultura in collaboration with Consulate General of Italy, R & Company, MUSE, and Design Exchange presents Super Design, an exhibition of Italian Radical Design curated by Maria Cristina Didero and Evan Snyderman.

The show has been over a decade in the making and has come together through extensive research, passionate collecting and interviews with the protagonists of the movement. Originating as a response to the tumultuous political climate of the era, the Italian Radical design fever included both performative works by architects who presented their ideas with symbolic imagery and pop culture references, as well as actual works of seating and lighting, most of them produced using the latest in synthetic materials, among which polyurethane. These individuals and groups went on to significantly influence the arc of design history and changed how the world thinks about the act and outcome of design processes. Strongly opinionated in his approach to creativity, at the time the radicals hit the streets with demonstrations, generated manifestos and conceived works with symbolic imagery that referenced both current politics and pop culture. Didero writes in her introduction essay, “Creativity—in all its manifestations— was deeply influenced by this demand for regeneration. Those active in
fields such as art and architecture sought to overcome the boundaries of their disciplines and often joined forces to question the status quo with the aim of subverting the social, political, and visual culture of their time.”

Alongside these iconic masterpieces such as Pratone from Ceretti-Derossi-Rosso, Fiore Artificiale by Gino Marotta, or Capitello from Studio65, the Super Design also presents some rare ephemera rediscovered over the years; included are photographs of cinematic interior spaces designed by the radicals in the 60s-70s, such as nightclubs, private homes and restaurants.

Italian Radical Design remains an important moment in the history of international design and is increasingly relevant in our current cultural and political landscape. The progressive works created by these visionary groups continue to act as an inspiration for the contemporary artists pioneering the industry today; originated from strong values these objects are still able to move our souls today as they speak about what we are and the way we live. Super Design, started over a decade ago as a passionate process of rediscovery, is now an opportunity to expose how these visionary leaders truly shifted our perception of creativity at large. On view is a collection of the key works that represent this visionary movement; according to the curator title, we are dealing with a design that wanted to change the world.

Istituto Italiano di Cultura | 496 Huron St., Toronto |
Gallery hours: Mon - Fri: 10:00am - 1:00pm; 2:30pm - 5:00pm | Free admission | Presented by Istituto Italiano di Cultura in collaboration with Design Exchange; Muse Factory of Projects; R & Company, NYC.

About the curator
Maria Cristina Didero is an independent design curator and freelance journalist, based in Milan and working internationally. She contributes regularly to different magazine such as Domus and Vogue Italia, and she runs her own column titled “L’Ascensore” in IconDesign. Didero has collaborated with a number of institutions both in Italy and abroad, curating exhibitions worldwide and editing related catalogues. Among the most recent ones, AL(L): Projects with Aluminum by Michael Young at Grand Hornu (BE) for Stichting Kunstboek, (2016) and in the same year The Space in Between, Nendo’s first museum-like and anthological exhibition at Holon Design Museum, Tel Aviv (IL). In 2015 she published with Franco Audrito of Studio65, The Merchant Of Clouds (Skira) for the related show at the GAM, in Turin (IT).

In 2013 she wrote the introductory text to 1968, a book by Maurizio Cattelan and Pierpaolo Ferrari based on Dakis Joannou’s radical design collection. Maria Cristina Didero has published and contributed to several books, among them in 2013, The System of Objects at DESTE Foundation (GR), a project co-curated with Andreas Angelidakis, in 2011 Keep Your Seat, GAM in Turin with Danilo Eccher (Electa), in 2010 Michele De Lucchi (Corraini) with illustrations by New York based illustrator Steven Guarnaccia, The Italian Book of Innovation (2017, Rizzoli), Utopie Radicali, Palazzo Strozzi (2017, Quodlibet).

(photo courtesy of Joe Kramm / R & Company).