

**Caro Joe
Colombo,
ci hai
insegnato
il futuro.**



Comune di
Milano

Galleria
d'Arte Moderna
Milano



Press release

**Dear Joe Colombo,
you taught us about the future.**

Curated by Ignazia Favata

An exhibition that reviews the background and ideas of an architect and visionary designer, who could envisage and foresee the future of design, technology, and contemporary society

**24th May – 4th September 2022
GAM Galleria d'Arte Moderna**

Via Palestro 16, Milan

*So, designers will no longer just draw with a pencil,
they will create in partnership with technicians,
scientists, professors and doctors and, in the fairly
near future, even electronic brains.*

(Joe Colombo)

Press release

In 1954, he set up TV Newsstands at the Milan Triennale from which

Zenit broadcast images and people could watch informative programmes; a jazz enthusiast, working with the artists Enrico Baj and Sergio Dangelo, he furnished the famous old Santa Tecla Jazz Club with a collage of posters and battered mannequins hanging from the ceiling: this marked the beginning of Joe Colombo's extraordinary career (1930 - 1971) – who was always on the lookout for new technologies and materials on the borderline between art and industry – and unsurprisingly was known as the prophet of design.

The exhibition entitled CARO JOE COLOMBO, CI HAI INSEGNATO IL FUTURO (DEAR JOE COLOMBO, YOU TAUGHT US ABOUT THE FUTURE), curated by Ignazia Favata and organised by Suazes in conjunction with the Galleria d'Arte Moderna in Milan and Joe Colombo archive, is dedicated to him and his irrepressible imagination constantly projected into the future. The exhibition, running from 24th May-4th September 2022, brings his own story and constant interest in new forms of progress to the rooms of GAM Galleria d'Arte Moderna in Milan.

The exhibition layout begins with his early experiments from the 1950s when he joined the Nuclear Art Movement and made his first design for a Nuclear City that included a residential city and an underground city complete with cars, utilities, warehouses and an underground railway.

The death of his father and the need for him to be involved in the family business led to a radical change in direction as he abandoned the art world and ventured into industry. This turned out to be a crucial experience for Colombo, who learned about construction and production techniques and became familiar with new plastic materials. After a few years, he gave up the business and opened his first firm in Milan.

The 1960s began with him being awarded the IN-ARCH prize for the methacrylate false ceiling in the Continental Hotel at Platamona in Sardinia (1964). He then designed his first Acrilica lamp for O-Luce with his brother Gianni and won a gold medal at the 13th Milan Triennale (1964).

His talent for abstraction that emerged during his early years and the more concrete approach he developed working in business led him to create design objects in new shapes using new materials, proposing innovative ideas for how life would be lived in the future.

His love of mechanics, his sense of freedom from the constraints of special architectural contexts that he envisaged on a much smaller and more transformable scale, together with his studies into ergonomics and psychology, resulted in him designing such radically innovative projects as the Programmable System for Living, multifunctional mono-blocks like his MiniKitchen for Boffi and Box 1 for La Linea, even going so far as to propose Future Habitats like Visiona 1 for Bayer, the Total Furnishing Unit for MOMA and even his own house in Via Argelati in Milan.

The exhibition also has a catalogue entitled
Joe Colombo. Designer. Catalogo Ragionato 1962 – 2020
published by Silvana Editoriale.

Partners: B-Line, Bonacina 1889, Oluce, Trep +
Technical partners: Fantoni, Linea Light Group - Stilnov

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Biography

Joe Colombo, described in 2000 as ‘the prophet of design’ by Stefano Casciani and Anna Del Gatto during a RAI television programme, was born in Milan in 1930, where his important but brief career as a designer ended at just 41 years of age.

During his time as a student at Brera Art Academy and Milan Polytechnic, he devoted himself to Nuclear Art and mixed with the artists Enrico Baj and Sergio Dangelo. From 1951 he took part in various exhibitions of the Nuclear Movement. In 1954, he was part of the Mac Espace Executive Committee together with Bruno Munari and Gillo Dorfles. In the same year, he took part in the 10th Milan Triennale with two projects, one for Albisola Ceramics and the other involving the installation of TELEVISION NEWSSTANDS of Zenit equipment. He loved the mountains, jazz music and cars.

He was a professional skier and loved to go to Santa Tecla Jazz Club, which he had furnished together with Baj and Dangelo featuring a ‘collage’ of posters of nuclear painting and battered mannequins sticking out of the walls and ceiling. He resumed his career, after taking a short break to work at his father’s business after he passed away in 1959, and opened his first firm. In 1962 he began work as a designer creating the ACRILICA lamp, the only project in partnership with his brother Gianni.

His artistic background and experience working as an industrial manager helped him develop close ties between the worlds of design and industrial production. His interest in new forms of expression, without the constraints imposed by traditional approaches, and his constant experimentation (in the field) of new technologies and materials, can clearly be sensed in the originality of so many of his projects in the field of design and architecture. In 1963 he was awarded the IN-ARCH prize for furnishing a hotel in Sardinia and the following year he won a gold medal for ACRYLIC and two silver medals for his COMBI-CENTER and MINI-KITCHEN at the XIII Triennale.

Biography

Based on how people are related to objects and the habitat, he proposed new ways of living such as his design for an experimental apartment for the DOMUS RICERCA group, which he was part of at Eurodomus 1 in 1966, and the SISTEMA PROGRAMMABILE PER ABITARE for the 14th Triennale in 1968.

These ideas were then developed into VISIONA 1 Futuristic Habitats designed on behalf of Bayer for the Interzum exhibition held in Cologne in 1969 and his TOTAL FURNISHING UNIT for an exhibition entitled “Italy: The New Domestic Landscape” held at MoMa in New York in 1972.

He won the following important awards include: a Compasso d'Oro (Golden Compass) for his SPIDER lamp and another for the CANDYZIONATORE manufactured by Candy; International Design Awards for COUPE' and SPRING, both manufactured by O-Luce; the Tecnhotel award for his UNIVERSALE chair for Kartell and the SMAU award for the BOBY trolley designed for B-Line.

Many of his works have been exhibited and are part of collections belonging of some of the world's most important museums.

Joe Colombo Archive

La catalogazione e l'archiviazione dei lavori di Joe Colombo avviene nel 1968 con l'ingresso nello studio dell'Arch. Ignazia Favata che organizzerà anche lo sviluppo dei lavori e la loro presentazione alla committenza. Viene subito creato uno schedario con i riferimenti dei lavori: numero di codice, data, titolo, nome del committente, tipologia del prodotto, numero di disegni, presenza di schizzi, pubblicazioni, mostre, premi, foto personali e foto di prodotti, di realizzazioni, ecc. Da allora lo schedario è stato digitalizzato, e sono stati aggiunti: libri con pubblicazioni e libri monografici, mostre collettive e monografiche, riedizioni e nuove produzioni su schizzi originali.

Tra i libri monografici ricordiamo: "Joe Colombo Designer 1930-1971" di Ignazia Favata del 1988; "Joe Colombo: lighting design-interior design" di Marco Romanelli del 2002; "Joe Colombo- I maestri del design" collana diretta da Andrea Branzi del 2011; "Joe Colombo- Protagonisti del Design" collana diretta da Vando Pagliardini del 2013; "Joe Colombo. Soluzioni globali e futuribili dell'habitat-Lezioni di architettura e design" collana diretta da Alessandra Coppa del 2016; "Joe Colombo. Designer. 1962-2020" di Ignazia Favata edito da Silvana Editoriale del 2021. Tra le principali mostre monografiche ricordiamo: "L'opera di Joe Colombo" alla 15^a Triennale di Milano nel 1973, "Joe Colombo" al Musée d'Art Moderne a Lille métropole del 1984; "I Colombo" alla Galleria d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea dell'Accademia Carrara di Bergamo del 1995; "Joe Colombo" al 35° Salone del Mobile del 1996 per il COSMIT; mostra itinerante "Joe Colombo. Inventing the future" organizzato dal Vitra Design Museum al Triennale di Milano, a Weil am Rhein, alla Manchester Art Gallery, al Musée des Arts Décoratifs-Louvre, di Parigi, al Landesmuseum Joanneum di Graz, al Grassimuseum di Leipzig, 2005-2009.

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Informazioni

**Dear Joe Colombo,
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GAM Galleria d'Arte Moderna
May – 4th September 2022

Where

Via Palestro 16, Milan

Tariffe

full ticket € 10,00

discounted ticket € 8,00

Opening hours

Tuesday to Sunday

from 10 a.m. to 5.30 p.m.

Last admission one hour

before closing time

Closed on Mondays.

Partner:

B-Line, Bonacina 1889, Oluce, Trep +

Partner tecnici:

Fantoni, Linea Light Group - Stilnovo

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The first catalogue raisonné on Joe Colombo, visionary and brilliant designer of the 20th century. 180 works among historical pieces and those still in production.

People will be able to study at home and carry on their own activities there; distances will no longer have much importance, no longer will there be any justification for the megalopolis.
Joe Colombo



Joe Colombo Design. Catalogue Raisonné 1962-2020

Joe Colombo (Milan, 1930-1971) was **one of the greatest designers of the last century**, visionary and ingenious, capable of giving shape to ideas that retain a striking relevance to this day.

Trained first at the Brera Academy and then at the Polytechnic of Milan, Joe Colombo has expressed, in just twenty years of work, an absolutely innovative world view, which placing man and his life at the center of reflection, **imagined a dynamic and transformable habitat** both on a domestic and urban scale. A design in the round, aimed at satisfying every need – also thanks to technology and new materials – and to **shape the space and its objects according to the different activities of the moment**, be they working or social interactions. From here, the modular and dynamic furnishing accessories with futuristic lines, among which some pieces that have become iconic of Italian design stand out such as the Tube Chair, the Spider lamp (Compasso d'Oro 1967) or the Bobby trolley (now at the MoMA in New York), the “monoblocks”, such as the Mini-Kitchen or the Total Table with integrated dishes, up to the global housing unit, a visionary “machine”, which encompasses all the needs of living.

This volume constitutes **the first catalog raisonné of his work**, of which about 180 projects are documented, divided between works still in production and historical works; introduced by the essays by Ignazia Favata – his historical collaborator – and Domitilla Dardi, it is completed by a critical anthology.

edited by Ignazia Favata
and Domitilla Dardi

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