

A close-up photograph of human skin, showing a cluster of freckles and a single mole. The skin is light-toned and the background is a soft, warm orange color.

**THOUGHT
FOR
HUMANS.**

Press Release

Salone del Mobile.Milano in
New Delhi for new Made in Italy
design opportunities

8th February 2025

 Salone del Mobile.Milano

Salone del Mobile in India: new opportunities for Made in italy



Salone del Mobile.Milano

The Salone del Mobile.Milano flies to India to open up new opportunities for Made in Italy design

The Salone touched down in New Delhi, the capital of a hugely important strategic market for Italian furnishing sector companies, boosted by a favourable economic situation, an increase in purchasing power and growing demand for high-end and design products.

In the run-up to the **63rd edition (8th-13th April, Rho Fiera Milano)**, and within the framework of the prestigious **India Art Fair**, the Salone del Mobile.Milano, a global point of reference for design and furniture, returned to India to **renew synergies and strengthen ties with what is a fast-growing market of great interest to Italian companies**. India continues to take an increasing part in the Salone, with **over 4,890 of the country's professionals at the 2024 edition**. Demand for high-end furniture products is booming, driven by increased investment in the real estate and contract sector. The New Delhi event thus represents **an important step towards an ever closer collaboration between Italian companies and the Indian market**, with the Salone del Mobile as the leading benchmark design hub.

The Salone was welcomed to the **Italian Cultural Institute of New Delhi by Antonio Bartoli, Italy's Ambassador to India and Nepal, Antonietta Baccanari, Director of the ITA-Italian Trade Agency Office in New Delhi and Coordinator for India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, and Andrea Anastasio, Director of the Italian Cultural Institute of New Delhi**. The meeting brought together media, companies and sectoral professionals to discuss the prospects and opportunities offered by the Indian market, which is emerging as one of the most dynamic economies in the world, with a forecast growth rate of **6.5% in 2025** and mounting demand for high-end design and furnishing products

Maria Porro, President of the Salone del Mobile.Milano, had this to say: *"The presence of the Salone del Mobile in India offers unique opportunities to consolidate trade and cultural relations between the two countries. The performance of Italian exports in the wood-furnishing sector confirms the interest and growth potential in this market, making it a crucial destination for the internationalisation strategies of Italian companies within the sector. This is why the Salone is here: to guide and support them in a mature market that is increasingly passionate about quality, uniqueness and industrial manufacturing. Equally, this initiative underscores the great opportunities for cultural dialogue between Italy and India. It was to this idea of dialogue that we wanted to dedicate the round table When Design Meets Art and Craft, a discussion between experts who explored the ways in which design can build bridges, redefine perceptions and create new synergies between two countries with strong creative identities."*

Antonio Bartoli, Italy's Ambassador to India and Nepal, also emphasised the central role of the Salone as a platform for dialogue between the two countries: *"Almost 2,000 exhibitors from all over the world. Over 350,000 visitors. Around 2 million interactions between people. These incredible figures make the Salone del Mobile.Milano a global reference brand. The ability to combine style, elegance, tradition and innovation is a common trait of both Indian and Italian design. The presence of the Salone del Mobile at the India Art Fair will surely foster further synergies and collaborations between our design industries."*

Antonietta Baccanari, Director of the ITA-Italian Trade Agency Office in New Delhi and Coordinator for India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka added: *"Design enthusiasts in India have long recognised the excellence and innovation of Italian craftsmanship. Italy remains firmly positioned as the third largest supplier of furniture to India. The presence of representatives from the Salone del Mobile in New Delhi is testament to the enduring ties between Italy and India, celebrating a shared passion for creativity, beauty*

and quality. We are keen to help support new collaborations and strengthen Italy's commitment to shaping the future of design in India."

Andrea Vaiani, Exhibition Director of the Salone del Mobile.Milano, concluded: "India is an increasingly key market for the Salone and for the Italian furniture sector as a whole. In 2023, the Italian Furniture Macrosystem saw a brilliant performance that placed it in 27th place among the main destinations, with growth of +19.1% since 2022 and a total value of 112 million euros. Furthermore, India has steadily positioned itself among the top ten countries in terms of number of visitors to the Salone del Mobile in recent editions. This is why we are here: to strengthen dialogue, create new connections and accompany Italian companies in an increasingly dynamic and receptive context."

In conversation with **Andrea Anastasio, Director of the Italian Cultural Institute of New Delhi, Maria Porro** emphasised the importance of the Salone del Mobile as an ecosystem of creativity and innovation, and described the contents of the next edition: "The countdown to the 63rd edition of the Salone del Mobile.Milano has begun, and once again we are preparing to celebrate design excellence in a sold-out event, with more than 2,000 exhibitors and 148 brands, including first-timers and returnees, poised to set out their vision of the future. In addition to being a platform for business and innovation, the Salone is a unique cultural hub, thanks to site-specific installations curated by major players on the international scene. Pierre-Yves Rochon will lead us to the discovery of Villa Héritage, Paolo Sorrentino will engage us with *La dolce attesa* and Robert Wilson will open the edition with *Mother*, in dialogue with Michelangelo's masterpiece. Furthermore, the first edition of The Euroluce International Lighting Forum, in the Arena designed by Sou Fujimoto, will be a multidisciplinary meeting point. Investing in culture for us means building bridges between past and future, tradition and innovation, fuelling a global dialogue on design and its infinite possibilities."

Andrea Anastasio, Director of the Italian Cultural Institute of New Delhi, highlighted the cultural value of the event: "The Salone del Mobile is not just design, but an experience that connects people, ideas and traditions. It is a global stage on which materials, innovation and creativity come together in an open dialogue between different cultures. This is why the presence of the Salone in India is so significant."

The round table **When Design Meets Art and Craft** provided a unique opportunity to explore the dialogue between craftsmanship and the new perspectives of global design. Moderated by **Samta Nadeem, Maria Porro** took part in the discussion, alongside leading figures on the Indian and international scene, including **Malika Verma**, an expert on craftsmanship and cultural identity, **Iram Sultan**, an interior designer who blends traditional materials and techniques with contemporary language, and **Federico Fraternali**, an Italian designer who works between Italy and India exploring the coming together of two different production ethics. The debate focused on the ability of design to act as a bridge between cultures, professions and disciplines, exploring how **Made in Italy** and **Made in India** can dialogue and cross-pollinate each other. A special focus was devoted to the concept of luxury and the changing perception of Italian and Indian design on the international scene. The round table also provided an opportunity to reflect on the new design geographies and emerging interdependencies, with a specific focus on the evolution of the applied arts and manufacturing excellence.

During the trip to India, on 7th February, **Maria Porro, President of the Salone del Mobile.Milano**, presented the 'Award for Excellence in the Restoration of a Historic Building' to **Mathew and Ghosh Architects** for the restoration of the RBANM's High School in Ulsoor, Bangalore during the **AD100 India 2025** awards ceremony, an award that celebrates the 100 best architects, designers and interior decorators in this country. The project, designed by architects **Soumitro Ghosh and Nisha Mathew**, is an example of how design can dialogue with the past to build the future.

Biographies



Salone del Mobile.Milano

Biographies

Maria Porro

President Salone del Mobile.Milano

Maria Porro, born in Como in 1983, has been President of Assarredo since being unanimously elected in September 2020, and is the first woman to take on this role. She joined the Board of Directors of Assarredo in 2017 and the General Council of FederlegnoArredo in 2019. She is Director of Marketing and Communication at Porro S.p.A., an old-established Italian design brand, set up by her greatgrandfather Giulio in 1925. She joined the company permanently in 2014, with responsibility for bolstering the company's international trade network and strengthening its communication strategies, before taking on her current role, with sustainable development very much to the forefront. She graduated cum laude in Set Design from the Brera Academy of Fine Arts, and worked in theatre, art and large events as a designer, coordinator and curator. She has always maintained strong ties to the family firm and the design world, collaborating with her father Lorenzo Porro and with the Lissoni Associati studio in particular, in the field of stylistic research and new product development, and personally overseeing the company's presentations at the Salone del Mobile. Starting from July 2021 she has become President of Salone del Mobile.Milano

Andrea Vaiani

Exhibitions Director Salone del Mobile.Milano

Andrea Vaiani boasts a strong background in commercial management and operational supervision of major events, particularly in design-related industries. He has managed Miart – Milan's International Modern and Contemporary Art Fair – and MIFED – International film, tv film and documentary market – and played a key role in planning and executing major international exhibitions in Italy and abroad, including Salone del Mobile.Milano. His expertise spans contractual negotiations, exhibition layout design, and operational planning, ensuring the seamless execution of large-scale events. From 1991 to 2000, Vaiani served as Key Account Manager for Salone Internazionale del Mobile. He then held the position of Exhibition Manager at Rassegne S.p.A., Fondazione Fiera Milano, until 2004, and was Commercial Director of Cosmit S.p.A. for 11 years (2005-2015). In September 2015, he was appointed Exhibitions Director of Salone del Mobile.Milano, overseeing seven specialized exhibitions that encompass the entire home-furnishing sector: EuroCucina (International Kitchen Furniture Exhibition) with FTK – Technology For the Kitchen, the International Bathroom Exhibition, Euroluce, Workplace3.0, S.Project, the International Furnishing Accessories Exhibition, and SaloneSatellite. Additionally, he has managed international editions of Salone del Mobile in the United States, Russia, and China, expanding the event's global reach and influence.

Antonio Bartoli

Ambassador of Italy to India and Nepal

As of 29 July 2024, Antonio Bartoli is Ambassador-designate of Italy to India and Nepal. Since the early 2020, he has headed the Office for Relations with Parliament at the Cabinet of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. As Ambassador in Tbilisi (2014-2019), he promoted political dialogue (very first visit of the President of the Italian Republic to Georgia), business and trade (in particular in the infrastructure, energy and hospitality segments), scientific and cultural cooperation (several exhibitions from Roman mosaics to contemporary art, including focuses on Michelangelo, Bernini and De Chirico; tenfold increase in the number of students learning Italian language; innovation award; artists' residencies; joint research projects). As spokesperson and head of press, culture and public affairs at the Embassy of Italy in Washington DC, in 2013 he coordinated the Year of Italian Culture in the US (300 events in 60 cities). In 2012, he worked at the US State Department for a year, handling the economic dossiers of the Middle East and North Africa. At the Italian Embassy in Beijing,

fulfilling the duties of Cultural Counsellor (2004-2006), he organised the Year of Italy in China and led the Italian Cultural Institute. As Political Counsellor (2006-2008), he dealt with China's foreign and home affairs in the critical pre-Olympic Game time. As Consul General (minister plenipotentiary) in Toulouse (2000-2004), he promoted an intense calendar of economic and cultural initiatives in a geographical area equal to a quarter of France in dimension. In his previously held positions at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, from 1997 to 2000, he was posted at the General Directorate for Personnel, becoming then Deputy Chief Secretary to three Under Secretaries (with responsibility for the UN, the Middle East and Asia); from 2008 to 2011, he served at the Cabinet of the Minister. Before entering the diplomatic career, he worked as professional journalist from 1991 to 1997. Being a member of the Order of Journalists and the Parliamentary Press Association, he covered politics and economics. After graduating in economics from LUISS University in Rome, he joined the former Alitalia to study a McKinsey project to redesign the company's organisational structure getting then promoted to the role of marketing director assistant. He was a scholar at the Corriere della Sera School of Journalism, he studied at the LSE Summer School and he was awarded a master's degree in international relations at Sciences Po after presenting a thesis on 'asymmetric warfare'. He is co-author of the book 'Carriere Internazionali' (*International Careers*) for Il Sole 24 Ore. He is married to Ester with whom he has five daughters.

Andrea Anastasio

Director Italian Embassy Culture Centre, New Delhi

Andrea Anastasio studies art history and oriental studies in Rome and at I.S.M.E.O.. Later he obtains his M.A. in philosophy in Venice. Throughout the '80s and '90s he travels extensively in India, studying Indian art history and philosophy. He works at the cataloguing of Islamic architecture in India for UNESCO and at the publication of the teaching of J. Krishnamurti at the K.F.I. Foundation in Madras. In the same years with the architectural firm Rahul Mehrotra & Associates-Bombay. He works at identifying and cataloguing craft and building techniques in the rural areas of India. He designs for Italian companies such as Artemide, Memphis-Milan, Danese and Foscari, connoting his projects of hybridizations of the industrial production processes with craft procedures and by the use of hand made materials that are then industrially finished. Since 2002 his work focuses on manipulating objects and materials of domestic usage and consumer-goods. By the making of objects, pictures, drawings, books and videos, his research focuses on temporality, fragility of human condition, on the definition of reality. He approaches domestic space as the privileged stage where the contradictions of human existence can be evoked and re-enacted. He was Artist in Residence at Isabella Stewart Gallery in Boston in He has won the Best Light Design of the year at Salone-Milano in 2016 and the USA Design Press Best Light of the year in 2017. In 2020 he has won the Italian Council Award. In 2005 he was Artist in Residence at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum - Boston - USA. Since 2018 he is the art director of Bottega Gatti. Since Novembre 2023 he is chiara fama director of the Italian Culture Centre in New Delhi.

Antonietta Baccanari

Trade Commissioner at ITA - Italian Trade Agency, New Delhi Office and Coordinator for India Bangladesh and Sri Lanka

Antonietta Baccanari is the Trade Commissioner and Director of the Italian Trade Commission in New Delhi, and the Coordinator of the Italian Trade Agency offices in India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. She has been associated with Italian Trade Agency since 1998, holding various positions thanks to her vast experience in foreign trade. Prior to her current position in India, she also headed ITA Houston and ITA Sydney offices in 2018-21 and 2014-18 respectively. Attaining her post-graduation with specialization in Law & Economics of the European Communities and having graduated in Political Science, she understands international trade from political as well as economic perspectives. A true linguistic aficionado, she is fluent in French, Spanish, and English, in addition to her native Italian.

Federico Fraternali

Co-Founder and Head of Design, Tarocollective & Tarostudio

Federico Fraternali is an experienced product and interior designer with a Master's degree in Design from Politecnico di Milano. He has previously contributed to a Milan-based studio specialising in furniture and interior design. In the residential sector, he has designed prestigious homes in Paris, Venice, London, and Milan. His extensive knowledge of the Indian design landscape is underscored by seven years of experience in interior, product, and architectural design, working for a vast portfolio of clients including Reliance, Impresario, Arvind, Masaba, House of Things, Manyavar, The Sleep Company, Melorra and many more. Formerly serving as the Head of Design at Restore Design PVT LTD, Federico is a recipient of the Designer Dozen and A'Design awards. Currently, he is the co-founder of Tarostudio and its spinoff furniture brand, Tarocollective. His work is characterised by a pursuit of balance, viewing design as an ongoing approach and process rather than a final product.

Iram Sultan

Principal Designer and Founder, Iram Sultan Design Studio

Iram Sultan is principal designer at Iram Sultan Design Studio, which she founded in 1998 to dream up bespoke spaces. Her consistent design philosophy is always collaborative, contextual, empathetic, and completely client-driven, based on the unwavering desire to create "invisible design" that touches people, beyond what they can simply see. Art, materiality, custom details, exploration and learning of anything new, craft, design history, emotions of belonging, comfort, joy, and warmth are all key components in her design sensibility. Each one has contributed to spaces that are elegant, timeless, and thoughtful, underpinned by a keen understanding of design history and a passionate love of art. Sultan considers herself fortunate to have worked with some of the most wonderful clients in the world, to create homes that speak of their lives.

Malika Verma

Founder Border&Fall

Malika Verma is a brand strategist and vocal advocate centred on future narratives within craft and design. As the founder of Border&Fall, her agency translates the nuances of handmade into thoughtful initiatives and impactful brand strategies across design, craft, and culture. Border&Fall's non-profit initiatives include the critically acclaimed digital documentation "The Sari Series: An Anthology of Drape". Focused on shifting perceptions of Made in India, Verma's work in craft advocacy further extends to documentation, reportage, public manifestos, and advisory roles.

Samta Nadeem

Curatorial Director STIR

Samta Nadeem is a design curator and writer based in London. With a keen perspective on creative cultures and their contemporary complexities, Samta is passionate about engaging with issues of social and environmental justice through design and discourse. She leads curatorial programming and content curation at STIR – an award-winning global media house and curatorial agency operating in the domains of art, architecture, design and creative technologies. Samta is an entrepreneur, mentor, public speaker and occasionally freelances with cultural institutions such as the Design Museum London.



Salone del Mobile.Milano International Press Office

For more information or interview requests, please get in touch with the Press Office.
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