

Press Release

Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Salone del Mobile: Design Ambassadors around the world. ABITO, curated by Palomba Serafini Associati, arrives in Hong Kong.

18th November 2026

Salone del Mobile.Milano

The Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Salone del Mobile.Milano: Design (and Fashion) Ambassadors around the world. The ABITO exhibition, curated by Palomba Serafini Associati, arrives in Hong Kong.

Following its debut at the 2026 Salone del Mobile.Milano the ABITO exhibition – organised and promoted by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and curated by Palomba Serafini Associati – is being held at DesignInspire, an event organised by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council and supported by HKSAR Government's Cultural and Creative Industries Development Agency as the lead sponsor, from 18th to 21st November. Forming part of the Salone del Mobile.Milano World Tour, the event will bring a dialogue between design, fashion and cultures to the forefront of the international stage, exploring how objects and garments reflect the transformations of society and its lifestyles.

From 18th to 21st November, **Hong Kong will host the next stop on the Salone del Mobile.Milano international tour**. Designated by the **Deputy Prime Minister and Honourable Minister Antonio Tajani** as an **Ambassador for Italian Design Worldwide**, the **Salone del Mobile.Milano** is renewing its commitment to **the international promotion of a culture that combines creativity, manufacturing tradition and innovation**. This initiative is enriched by **collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Italian diplomatic network**, which combines cultural promotion with the development of new opportunities for businesses, fostering relationships with strategic markets and international creative communities.

The highlight of this leg of the tour is **ABITO/HK**, the Hong Kong edition of the exhibition that made its debut at the Salone del Mobile.Milano in April 2026. Juxtaposing historic garments from the Quinto Tinarelli Collection with Italian furniture and design objects still in production, the exhibition traces **the evolution of fashion and interior design from the late nineteenth century to the present day**. The exhibition in **Hong Kong** will also feature **signature works by local creative pioneers and emerging designers carefully selected by Palomba Serafini Associati, thanks to a collaboration with the HKTDC**. The comparison between the two cultures makes up the central theme of a narrative that spans eras, customs and visions of everyday life, linking tradition and innovation, artisanal skills and new ways of living and inhabiting spaces. The exhibition thus serves as a **meeting point for Italian and Hong Kong creativity**, opening up new avenues for cultural exchange.

Maria Porro, President of the Salone del Mobile.Milano, had this to say: "*The international growth of Italian design demands a continuous presence in the markets and the ability to understand their evolution. Hong Kong is a strategic partner for the Salone: a place where design culture and business activity come together, opening up opportunities for collaboration with Asia. Organised and promoted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in collaboration with the Salone, ABITO/HK brings the cultural heritage that gives value and recognition to our design output to this dialogue. The exhibition thus becomes part of a broader endeavour geared to building trust, understanding the needs of designers and introducing Italian businesses to new opportunities. The*

curatorship of Palomba Serafini Associati is a valuable contribution to this process, sensitively shaping a dialogue between fashion and design capable of bringing Italian culture closer to that of Hong Kong."

"*Creativity, fashion and design are among Italy's most important competitive assets — expressions of our cultural identity, as well as powerful drivers of innovation, growth, and internationalisation. The arrival of the ABITO exhibition in Hong Kong, following its stops in Milan — where it opened at the Salone del Mobile this year in April, reaffirms its status as a flagship growth diplomacy initiative. It is a project that showcases Italian talent, quality and know-how to the world, highlighting the ties between culture and business and turning the appeal of Made in Italy into new opportunities for collaboration and exports*" said the **Italian Consul General to Hong Kong and Macao, Francesco Cannito**.

"ABITO explores the evolution of Italian creativity through two parallel transformations: the shift from artisan to industrial production, and from haute couture to prêt-à-porter. This journey illustrates how skilled craftsmanship – initially associated with exclusive production intended for a select elite – has evolved thanks to industrialisation, making design and fashion accessible to an ever-wider audience, without compromising on design quality, aesthetic innovation or the identity of Made in Italy. It is no coincidence that the ABITO exhibition was first presented at the Salone del Mobile.Milano, a venue that symbolises the evolution of design and the dialogue between creativity, industry and culture. In this journey, it is also essential to acknowledge the vision and sensitivity of Maria Porro's presidency, which has successfully enhanced and strengthened the cultural side of the Salone, recognising the importance of projects capable of going beyond commercial presentation to generate content, reflections and fresh opportunities for dialogue," the curators, **Ludovica Serafini and Roberto Palomba**, added.

The exhibition: ABITO/HK

Clothing the body and inhabiting space: **ABITO/HK** weaves these two dimensions together to narrate the **transformations of society from the late nineteenth century to the present day**. At its heart lies **the evolution of women's roles**, which, through **changing clothing**, is symptomatic of a more profound **transformation**: the **conquest of movement**, of **public space**, and of a new **position in the world**. Equally, **domestic objects and environments are also transformed**, adapting to new gestures, new freedoms and new ways of life.

The exhibition is organised by historical period, creating an **ongoing dialogue between clothing and design objects**. The **garments**, drawn from the **Quinto Tinarelli Collection**, span over a century of history and bear the tangible marks of time; alongside them, **Made in Italy furniture and objects still in production** demonstrate the **ability of design to endure and transcend the ages without losing its meaning**. Linking these layers, a **series of photographs** by the architect Roberto Palomba **creates a visual backdrop that serves to enhance the narrative** and make the transition between the different seasons of collective life tangible.

This juxtaposition reveals a fertile interplay between two dimensions of time: **on one hand, the permanence of design**, conceived to endure and span the ages; **on the other, the ephemeral nature of fashion**, an expression of its own present, and yet also a testament to the cultural, social and aesthetic changes that have shaped society. It is precisely **in this distinction** that **the meaning of the exhibition lies**, every **garment** becoming **a living trace of a specific time** and every **object** gauging

design's ability to **stand the test of time**, offering visitors not just a series of forms, but **a very real experience of Italy's cultural transformation**.

In the **Hong Kong** installation, the **centre** of the large oval exhibition space showcasing garments and design objects — arranged in chronological order — features **a space dedicated to local design**: an interesting way of bringing distant worlds and cultures into dialogue and connection, worlds united by craftsmanship, creative sensibilities and a shared pursuit of beauty, research and innovation. A coming together that shows how the language of creativity can bridge geographical and cultural divides, giving rise to new opportunities for exchange and mutual inspiration.

Dialogue beyond the confines of the exhibition space. Salone del Mobile.Milano featured in the InnoTalks programme

Through the Consulate General of Italy in Hong Kong, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation promotes and supports Italian participation in DesignInspire, underscoring the role of the diplomatic and consular network in showcasing the country's excellence and fostering new opportunities for networking, collaboration and commercial development for Italian businesses. Within this context, the Salone del Mobile.Milano helps to broaden the international dialogue on design, fashion and lifestyle, with a **programme of events dedicated to creativity as a driving force behind cultural relations and economic opportunities**. The Salone del Mobile.Milano will feature in **two** of the **InnoTalks** programme **events**.

On Thursday 19th November, the talk **Beyond the Object: Designing Cultural Connections – Exhibitions, cross-cultural dialogue and cross-sector collaboration** will feature the **Italian Consul General to Hong Kong and Macao Paolo Cannito** alongside **Annalisa Rosso, Editorial and Cultural Director, Advisor to the Salone del Mobile.Milano**. Also taking part will be **Roberto Palomba** from **Milan**, founder of the **Palomba Serafini Associati** studio **alongside Ludovica Serafini**, **William Lim**, architect, artist, collector and **Managing Director of CL3** and **Freeman Lau**, **Founder of KL&K Creative Strategics, Chairman of the Hong Kong Federation of Design and Creative Industries and Vice Chairman of the Design Alliance Asia.** Taking the **ABITO/HK** exhibition as its starting point, the discussion will explore the role of **exhibitions as platforms for cultural exchange**, capable of bringing together different disciplines, creative communities and diverse worldviews. The exhibition's curatorial approach will provide a starting point for reflecting on how design, when placed within different cultural contexts, can foster dialogue around shared experiences and knowledge, whilst also highlighting the unique characteristics of each culture.

On Friday 20th November, **the event Beyond Design: Doing business in Italy. Where creativity meets opportunity**, organised by the Consulate General in collaboration with ITA – Italian Trade Agency, the Salone del Mobile.Milano and other key players in the Italian business ecosystem, will feature the **Italian Consul General to Hong Kong and Macao Francesco Paolo Cannito, Paola Bellusci Director ITA Agency in Hong Kong, Francesco Vitale, President of Italian Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong and Macao** in conversation with **Annalisa Rosso, Editorial and Cultural Director, Advisor to the Salone del Mobile and William Figliola, collector and founder of Novalis Art Design gallery and the Italian Arts Foundation in Hong Kong**. The discussion will focus on **the role of Italian design as a driver of economic development and internationalisation, alongside the opportunities for collaboration and business that Hong Kong can offer to Italian companies.**

The event will also provide **an opportunity to present the 65th edition of the Salone del Mobile.Milano, scheduled to take place from 13th to 18th April 2027 at Fiera Milano, Rho** and to highlight the role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI) and the diplomatic and consular network in supporting Italian companies as they enter new markets and in fostering commercial relations and international partnerships. The events making up the exhibition programme will be at the heart of the presentation – **the Salone Internazionale del Mobile, the International Furnishing Accessories Exhibition, Workplace3.0 and S.Project**, along with **SaloneSatellite**. The return of **Euroluce**, the biennial lighting event, will feature the second edition of **the Euroluce International Lighting Forum**, an opportunity for dialogue amongst the international community of lighting designers, architects and researchers. **Salone Contract**, featuring the **Masterplan by Rem Koolhaas and David Gianotten / OMA**, which connects businesses with architects, developers and clients involved in major projects in the hospitality, residential, workplace, marine and public spaces sectors, will be making its debut. Finally, the curator of **Salone Raritas**, Annalisa Rosso, will present the second edition of the platform dedicated to unique pieces, limited editions and creative high craftsmanship, with exhibition design by Formafantasma, announcing the **participation of William Figliola**, who joins the first two previously announced protagonists, **India Mahdavi** and **Mathieu Lehanneur**.

ABITO/HK

DesignInspire (18th-21st November 2026)
Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre
1 Expo Drive, Wan Chai, Hong Kong
18th November 2026 | 2.00 pm – 7.00 pm
Open to trade visitors only

19th–20th November 2026 | 9.30 am – 7.30 pm
21st November 2026 | 9.30 am – 7.00 pm
Open to trade and general visitors

An exhibition produced and promoted by
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In collaboration with
The Salone del Mobile.Milano.

Lead Sponsor
Cultural and Creative Industries Development Agency (CCIDA), HKSARG

Event Organisation and Exhibition Stand Construction
Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC)

In partnership with
The Consulate General of Italy in Hong Kong and Macau

Curation, set-up and display
Palomba Serafini Associati

Photographs
Roberto Palomba

Garments
Quinto-Tinarelli Collection

General and project coordination
R.L.11

Shoot production
Menotrenta

Model agencies
Fashionmodel Major

Make-up and hair
Danny Visnadi

InnoTalks

Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre
1 Expo Drive, Wan Chai, Hong Kong

19th November 2026 | 5.00 pm – 6.30 pm
Beyond the Object: Designing Cultural Connections – Exhibitions, cross-cultural dialogue and cross-sector collaboration
A talk featuring Francesco Paolo Cannito, Italian Consul General to Hong Kong and Macao; Annalisa Rosso, Editorial and Cultural Director, Advisor to the Salone del Mobile.Milano; Roberto Palomba, founder of the Palomba Serafini Associati studio alongside Ludovica Serafini; William Lim, Managing Director CL3, Freeman Lau, Founder of KL&K Creative Strategics, Chairman of the Hong Kong Federation of Design and Creative Industries and Vice Chairman of the Design Alliance Asia.

20th November 2026 | 4.30 – 6.00 pm
Beyond Design: Doing business in Italy. Where creativity meets opportunity
A talk featuring Francesco Paolo Cannito, Italian Consul General to Hong Kong and Macao; Paola Bellusci Director ITA Agency in Hong Kong; Francesco Vitale, President of Italian Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong and Macao; Annalisa Rosso, Editorial and Cultural Director, Advisor to the Salone del Mobile.Milano; William Figliola, Founder of the Italia Art Foundation and Co-Founder of Novalis Art Design.

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. During her time as president, Supersalone (2021), a special format exhibition dedicated to the post-pandemic recovery took shape; followed by the 2023 edition of Euroluce – The City of Lights, large-scale installations by David Lynch, Paolo Sorrentino and Es Devlin, and the 2024 launch of the Salone Observatory, devoted to scientific research with the publication of an annual report on the design ecosystem. In 2026, the Salone further expanded to include the first edition of Salone Raritas and the Salone Contract 2027 spin-off, featuring a curatorial masterplan by Rem Koolhaas and David Gianotten / OMA. Its activities reflect a coherent and integrated vision of design as a cultural language, capable of bringing ethics, aesthetics and business together. Starting from June 2026 she has become Vice President of the La Triennale di Milano Foundation.

Annalisa Rosso

Editorial and Cultural Director, Advisor Salone del Mobile.Milano

Annalisa Rosso is currently Editorial and Cultural Director, Advisor at Salone del Mobile.Milano, curator of Salone Raritas, and Director of the Euroluce International Lighting Forum. She works at the intersection of design culture, markets, and communication, building dialogue between companies, institutions, and creative communities across Europe, the Americas, the Middle East, and Asia. Trained in anthropology, she approaches design as a relational practice. Together with Francesco Mainardi she co-founded Mr.Lawrence, a strategic design consultancy that fosters meaningful connections and defines new market perspectives. Key collaborations include international institutions such as Design Doha Biennial, the Architecture and Design Commission at Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Culture, DesignSingapore Council, and IRTHI UAE Contemporary Crafts Council, as well as companies including B&B Italia, Driade, EMU, ETEL, FontanaArte, Four Seasons, Marsèll, Nemo Group, Santoni, and SIGMA. Among the projects she conceived and developed for Salone del Mobile are the public programme Red in Progress at KAFD in Riyadh (2025), the kinetic monumental Library of Light by Es Devlin at Pinacoteca di Brera in collaboration with Feltrinelli (2025), the exhibition A Thinking Room by David Lynch at Fiera Milano (2024), and the performative installation The Orbit's Orbit by Matilde Cassani in Shanghai (2024), in collaboration with West Bund Art & Design Fair. She has curated several exhibitions and site-specific projects dedicated to contemporary design (among them: Objects of Common Interest for Design Miami/), and public programs in Milan, Riyadh, New York, New Delhi, Hong Kong, and Shanghai, featuring speakers such as Shigeru Ban, Francis Kéré, Hans Ulrich Obrist, Lesley Lokko, and John Pawson.

Palomba Serafini Associati

Ludovica Serafini and **Roberto Palomba** founded Palomba Serafini Associati in Milan in 1994, a practice now internationally recognised as one of the most authoritative voices in contemporary architecture and design. Their design research is distinguished by a profound attention to the human dimension of living, understood as a space of relationships, well-being and everyday experience. At the heart of every project there is always the person, with their gestures, desires and memories. Architecture and design thus become tools to create places capable of welcoming, protecting and moving people. Their approach stems from the encounter between a contemporary vision of society and an intimate knowledge of the historical and cultural roots of design, which they reinterpret with sensitivity and rigor. The result is projects able to tell stories, evoke emotions and build identity, where past and future merge into an elegant, measured and deeply empathetic language. Over more than thirty years of activity, projects by Ludovica Serafini and Roberto Palomba have received more than 100 international awards and recognitions, including the Compasso d'Oro, Elle Decoration International Design Award, Red Dot, Design Plus, Good Design Award, German Design Award and Ahead Award. They design architecture, interiors and exhibitions worldwide and collaborate – often as art directors – with some of the most important international brands, including Artemide, Fendi Home, , Giorgetti, Kartell, Maserati, Poltrona Frau, Talenti. Their work is a constant balance between rigor and intuition, structure and delicacy, function and poetry. A way of designing that does not impose, but listens, interprets and accompanies: because for Ludovica Serafini and Roberto Palomba, designing means first and foremost taking care of people.

Freeman Lau

Founder of KL&K Creative Strategics, Chairman of the Hong Kong Federation of Design and Creative Industries and Vice Chairman of the Design Alliance Asia

Born in Hong Kong in 1958, Freeman Lau Siu Hong is a renowned designer with over 40 years of professional experience. Freeman's contributions to the design sector and Hong Kong society have been widely recognised with over 300 international art and design awards. Notable awards include the Bronze Bauhinia Star from the Hong Kong Government in 2006 and the DFA World's Outstanding Chinese Designer (WOCD) in 2021. Among his representative product designs are the Watsons distilled water bottle, which won the International 'Bottlewaterworld' Design Award in 2004, and the "Chairplay" series, which includes the Pony Chair, created in collaboration with Giormani, which won the Hong Kong Designers Association Global Design Award 2016. Freeman is Founder of KL&K Creative Strategics, Chairman of the Hong Kong Federation of Design and Creative Industries and Vice Chairman of the Design Alliance Asia. He initiated the HK-SZ Design Biennale in 2014 and co-organised Business of Design Week (BODW) with the Hong Kong Design Centre to promote design exchange between cities. In 2024, he curated the "Design Pulse Asia" exhibition at the Hong Kong Design Centre's DX design hub. In 2026, he has been involved in the Hong Kong Heritage Museum's WoW! Hong Kong Design Series II — East-West Design Reflections: Haven Collection's Ming Furniture and a Century of Chair Play, and the Guangdong Museum of Art's By the People 2: Creative Chinese Characters.

William Lim

Architect, artist, collector and Managing Director of CL3

Graduated from the Department of Architecture, Cornell University, with a minor in Photography. William Lim has long been interested in art and architecture. His prestigious architecture company - CL3 has won numerous awards, such as the 'DFA Design for Asia Awards' and 'Grand Award for Culture' presented by the Hong Kong Design Centre (HKDC). He specializes in the production of large-scale art installations, and has recently begun to create oil paintings. During his artistic career, he has participated in many international exhibitions including the Hong Kong Victoria Park "Lantern Wonderland", the Venice Architecture Biennale held in Italy, the Hong Kong & Shenzhen Bi-City

Biennale of Urbanism/Architecture, and the "Architecture and Heritage: Unearthing Future" exhibition held at the National Museum of Modern Art, Seoul, Korea in 2019. He also had his solo exhibition, "Flower Good Moon Round" at H Queen's in 2023, “Ode to the Wandering Son” at Art Basel HK 2023, Time after Time at Ora-Ora, Tai Kwun, in 2026. He is committed to promoting culture and education. He is a member of the Cornell University Board of Trustees, the Gallery Advisory Committee of Asia Society Hong Kong Centre, a Arts and Culture Council Member of Asia Society Hong Kong Centre and a museum expert adviser to the Hong Kong Leisure and Cultural Services Department. In 2018, the Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) awarded him an Honorary Doctor of Arts and Sciences. In 2019, William donated 90 artworks of "Living Collection" to M+, a museum of visual culture in the West Kowloon Cultural District of Hong Kong, in which 70% of the pieces are from Hong Kong local artists.

William Figliola

Collector and founder of Novalis Art Design gallery and the Italian Arts Foundation in Hong Kong

William Figliola, a famous Italian art collector, has been fond of art since childhood and has inherited the family's collection history. He graduated from the University of Turin in 1989. During his college days, he studied under Michelangelo Pistoletto (a well-known artist in the international art field today, one of the main representatives of Arte Povera), Dino Gavina (The founder of the top Italian lighting brand Flos Man, also the originator of Italian industrial design), which strongly inspired his level of artistic appreciation. In 1989, William opened his first art gallery in his hometown of Turin, Italy. In 1990, he became the partner and owner of the design of the famous Italian design brand Memphis Milano, which includes design by the Memphis Group, Meta-Memphis, and Post Design. The Memphis Group was an Italian design movement founded by Ettore Sottsass in 1981 alongside Michele de Lucchi, Aldo Cibic, Matteo Thun, Marco Zanini, Martine Bedin, Nathalie Du Pasquier, and George Sowden. Active between 1981 and 1988, the Memphis Group defined ‘80s aesthetic and greatly revolutionized the design world. With Post Design, the brand frequently collaborates with renowned artists and designers to produce limited edition designs. In 1992, he opened the Post Design gallery in Milan. In 1992, he founded the Italian Arts Foundation, with the aim of promoting Italian Art in the world. Partnered with Professor Luigi Bellini, in 2006 they founded the Private Luigi Bellini Museum of Florence, which now has more than 10,000 works, of masterpieces by great Italian masters such as Raphael, Fra Angelico, Michelangelo and many others. Italian Arts Foundation collaborates with many private collections and art institutions to promote unique and prestigious pieces of art. In 2002, William became a partner of his third gallery in Paris, France. In 2007, inspired by mentor Dino Gavina, he opened his fourth art gallery in Turin under the name "NOVALIS". In 2012, William opened the Novalis Contemporary Art Design gallery in Hong Kong. The gallery is dedicated to expanding the creative connections between contemporary art and design. Novalis is the celebration of ideas that turn into objects we are madly in love with, to know the culture of design as a unique moment of the time and place we live in. For the past two years, William has also been a partner at LeeVida Gallery, alongside its founder, Jack Lee. LeeVida Gallery is a dynamic space dedicated to contemporary art and design, committed to championing both established and emerging artistic voices, fostering intercultural dialogue, and building a bridge between international collectors and innovative, multidisciplinary contemporary visual practices.

Salone del Mobile.Milano
Global Press Office

For more information or interview requests, please get in touch with the Press Office.
Images and preview images with captions and credits are available in the Press and Media Area.

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