



Press Release

Salone Contract Tour debuts in
Shanghai: China accounts for 72% of the
Asia-Pacific contract market potential

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Salone del Mobile.Milano

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Westbund Central, the US\$8 billion mixed-use development on the Xuhui waterfront, acts as a case study for the first stopover, dedicated to the evolution of international demand. Hongkong Land, Benoy, MDO and CCD dialogue with the Salone del Mobile.Milano, discussing how major urban developments, decision-making processes and client expectations are changing in the run-up to Salone Contract 2027.

The Salone del Mobile.Milano has chosen Shanghai for the launch of the first edition of the **Salone Contract Tour**, an international stakeholder engagement initiative that accompanies the debut of **Salone Contract 2027**. The first stop takes **mixed-use development** as a lens through which to examine new demand in the contract sector, starting at **Westbund Central**, Hongkong Land's **US\$8 billion** development project for a new urban hub on the Xuhui waterfront, comprising **over 1.1 million square metres of developable area**, featuring a mix of public realm, offices, retail, residential units, hospitality and culture.

The choice of Shanghai reflects the importance of the Chinese market and the scale of the transformation currently under way. China accounts for around **72% of the potential Contract market in the Asia-Pacific region**,¹ for an estimated value of between **20 and 25 billion euros**. Meanwhile, large-scale mixed-use developments, the regeneration of existing buildings, the hospitality sector and new models of living are changing the way briefs, standards, specifications and supplies are defined.

Maria Porro, President of the Salone del Mobile.Milano, had this to say: *"Mixed-use highlights a broader shift: design is increasingly becoming a key factor in building property value from the outset. Hotels must attract guests and forge an identity, workplaces must offer people a reason to spend time there, retail must encourage longer stays and foster a desire to return, and residential properties are incorporating services and amenities that are increasingly akin to those found in the hospitality sector. In this context, furniture, lighting, surfaces, materials, acoustics, technology and bespoke solutions are no longer merely the final elements of the fit-out: they contribute to an asset's ability to maintain its appeal, relevance and performance over time. This is particularly evident in China, where a more selective market is shifting the focus from quantitative growth to the quality of assets, and their ability to reposition themselves and respond to new uses and behaviours. For the Contract sector, this means one very concrete thing: design is becoming part of the strategy through which a property competes. The Tour has been put together to observe this evolution directly within the markets, and will involve developers, architects, interior designers, professionals and other stakeholders who generate and shape demand. The aim is to gather requirements, priorities and decision-making criteria to feed into Salone Contract 2027."*

In Shanghai, the discussion brings together **Hongkong Land, Benoy, MDO – More Design Office** and **CCD – Cheng Chung Design** for the talk **The Integrated Destination – Designing across asset classes**, organized in collaboration with the **Media Partner Designwire**. Westbund Central thus becomes a concrete case study through which a broader question can be explored, which is what happens when we no longer design a single hotel, shopping centre, workplace or residential property, but an entire destination in which different asset classes have to function as parts of the same system.

¹ Salone del Mobile–PwC Italy, *The Contract Market 2026*, China/APAC tables, reproduced in Contract Market Focus: China

China: a 20–25 billion contract market undergoing a compositional shift

The size of the market is significant, but it is its changing nature that makes China particularly important. **Residential properties account for 48% of estimated contract market potential**, encompassing traditional residential, rental housing, student accommodation, co-living and senior living. These are followed by **offices at 24%, retail at 18% and hospitality at 10%**. Mixed-use developments involve a combination of these segments and drive demand for solutions capable of spanning multiple asset classes.²

Opportunities do not derive solely from new-build projects. Between **2026 and 2030, China plans to commence the regeneration of approximately 115,000 urban residential complexes**,³ creating demand for housing, shared spaces, services, amenities and the overall quality of the living experience. The hospitality sector pipeline also remains sizeable: by the end of June 2026, **109 hotel projects were ongoing in Shanghai**, while there were **3,588 projects at various stages of development**, across China as a whole, of which **2,547 were already under construction**.⁴ This scale generates thousands of decisions regarding guest rooms, lobbies, F&B, lighting, materials, furniture and communal areas.

The growth of **branded residences** feeds into to this trend, with hospitality, living and design increasingly converging. In Asia-Pacific, the number of branded residence projects has seen **55% growth over the last five years**, signalling demand for companies to be able to reconcile international brand standards with the creation of specific identities for each individual project.

For Italian companies, this trend builds on an already significant commercial presence. **Furniture sector exports to China hit €364 million in 2025 and €144 million in the first half of 2026**.⁵ However, contract sector exports are driven by different principles to simple product exports: in large-scale projects, decisions start being taken years before handover and involve developers, architects, interior designers, operators, consultants, procurement companies and contractors.

Westbund Central: US\$8 billion for a new urban hub

The Westbund Central project will make this complexity concrete. The project represents the **largest single investment in the history of Hongkong Land**, for a value of approximately **US\$8 billion**. It spans **23.1 hectares** and provides for over **1.1 million square metres of developable area**, within a complex **totalling approximately 1.7 million square metres**, with ongoing phased completion scheduled up to **2028**.

The scale is not merely quantitative. Westbund Central will cater for **Grade A offices, luxury retail, waterfront residences, two Mandarin Oriental hotels, convention facilities, cultural venues, sports facilities, wellness centres and public spaces**. The **masterplan, designed by KPF**, coordinates the various components of the development, whilst a network of international firms is responsible for individual fields: **Benoy** for the commercial and luxury retail elements, **HKS** for the Mandarin Oriental Hotel and Convention Centre, **Heatherwick Studio** for The Orbit, and **Hassell** for the landscape.⁶

² Salone del Mobile–PwC Italy, *The Contract Market 2026*; China/APAC market size tables (compiled by PwC Italy). References: Swire Properties and Hang Lung Properties, half-year results 2026.

³ State Council of the PRC, Urban Renewal Plan 2026–2030, May 2026; Xinhua, 16th July 2026

⁴ Lodging Econometrics, China Construction Pipeline Trend Report Q2 2026, public summary of 5th August 2026; data as at the end of June 2026.

⁵ Federlegno Research Centre, Furnishing Macrosector Exports to China, 2025 and January–June 2026.

⁶ Hongkong Land, press release of 4 May 2026; KPF, West Bund Financial Hub factsheet.

Maria Porro commented: *"For Salone Contract, the key focus lies precisely in the governance of a project of this scale. When multiple asset classes and multiple practices are working on the same development, who ensures overall coherence? How are architecture, interiors, landscape and the public realm coordinated? Where is the quality standard set? At what stage do materials, furniture, lighting, acoustics and bespoke solutions come into play? And what capabilities must manufacturers demonstrate to be considered reliable partners in such a complex supply chain? Westbund Central therefore provides an opportunity to examine the Contract sector prior to supply, at the very moment when real estate strategy, positioning, brief, design governance and selection criteria begin to translate into design decisions."*

From the developer to the interior designer: who drives demand

For the Shanghai panel, introduced by **Jessica Ma**, Founder of Designwire and moderated by the event's Media Partner Designwire, the Salone del Mobile.Milano has chosen to bring together four organisations representing different stages of the contract sector supply chain, from the client to architectural design, interior design and hospitality. **Alvin Lo**, General Manager, Design and Planning at Westbund Central, Hongkong Land, delivers the developer's perspective and the design governance of one of the largest mixed-use developments currently under way in Shanghai and states: *"I am overwhelmed that Salone del Milano, the world's largest platform for furniture and spatial design, hosted a Roadshow at The Seed of Westbund Central. This architecture is built on a belief in inspiring innovation and sustainability – and on this occasion, this space is filled with remarkable minds and an energy that truly encapsulates our spirit of 'Enjoy Life'".* **Qin Pang**, Director, Head of the Shanghai Studio and Head of Design at Benoy, brings the expertise of an international practice specialising in large-scale retail, commercial and mixed-use projects, with a focus on the evolution of destinations and the integration of architecture, retail, F&B and public space and states: *"The core evolution of contemporary commercial spaces is a systemic transformation from transactional to urban public life spaces. Spatial value has, to a certain extent, come to take precedence over merchandise value. Our design strategy integrates public spaces, leisure experiences, hospitality-style services and retail, creating destinations rooted in the urban fabric and able to stay vital over time."*

The interior design aspect is covered by **Justin Bridgland**, co-founder of MDO – More Design Office, an independent practice founded in Shanghai and active in the residential, hospitality, commercial and F&B sectors, with a particular focus on materials, detail and bespoke solutions who underlines: *"A true partner knows how to say no. They should be able to question an idea and help us develop it, bringing expertise that we do not have. Their contribution often involves less visible aspects, such as joints, tolerances, assembly, or long-term performance. It is precisely these details that make the difference between an object that looks beautiful when first made and one that people will continue to appreciate for many years."*

Joe Cheng, founder of CCD8 – Cheng Chung Design, rounds off the panel with a perspective on international luxury hospitality: CCD is one of Asia's leading firms specialising in interior design for high-end hotels and resorts, and works with some of the world's largest hotel groups. *"Design and brand are bound by a relationship of co-creation. Design does not end with the opening of a hotel: it becomes part of brand management over the long term. Having our offices around the world allows us to understand local cultures, while the diversity of our international team enables us to respond to the needs of each individual context."*

With **Maria Porro, President of the Salone del Mobile.Milano**, the discussion further explores the various levels through which Contract demand is shaped: **the people who develop and coordinate the project, those who build the destination, those who define the interior experience, and those who translate the standards of major hospitality brands into recognisable spaces that resonate with their context**. The focus is on the skills now required of design firms to secure major international projects and collaborate in a more structured way with clients and designers.

From Shanghai to Salone Contract 2027

The insights gleaned during the Tour will feed into **Salone Contract**, which will make its debut at **the 65th edition of the Salone del Mobile.Milano, at Fiera Milano, Rho from 13th to 18th April 2027**. The masterplan by **Rem Koolhaas and David Gianotten / OMA** will shape a platform designed to foster dialogue between projects, industrial capabilities and client requirements through **The Dome, Podium, Project Spaces and B2B areas**.

The Salone Contract Forum will explore the evolution of demand, investment and collaboration models that are redefining key property assets, whilst the partnership with **PwC** will provide research, data and analytical tools on markets, asset classes and commissioning processes. The Tour will support this work through direct dialogue with stakeholders across different markets, building an international perspective on the themes that will come together in Milan in 2027. Shanghai kicked off the tour with a focus on mixed-use developments. Subsequent stopovers will broaden the scope to include **workplaces, hospitality, residential and marine sectors**, whilst conserving the same underlying questions: **who is driving new demand in the contract sector, how are projects changing, and what skills are developers and designers seeking within the design industry?**

The Salone Contract Tour forms part of the Salone del Mobile.Milano World Tour, organised with the support of the **ITA – Italian Trade Agency**, the **diplomatic and consular network**, and the **Italian Cultural Institutes of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation**.

Fabio De Cillis, Director of the ITA Agency in Shanghai, had this to say: *"The Salone Contract Roadshow in Shanghai represents an important strategic initiative that connects the expertise of the Italian design sector with the most ambitious urban development projects. The initiative builds on the long-standing strategic partnership that the ITA Agency and the Salone del Mobile.Milano have enjoyed for many years, both globally and locally here in Shanghai. We are shifting the focus from individual products to an integrated model of design, coordination and project management, tailored to multifunctional destinations and complex property developments. As ITA Shanghai, we remain firmly committed to fostering direct dialogue between international decision-makers in the property sector and leaders of Italian industry, transforming major market shifts into opportunities for concrete and lasting growth for Made in Italy."*

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.

Rem Koolhaas

Founding Partner of OMA

Rem Koolhaas (Rotterdam, 1944) founded OMA in 1975 together with Elia and Zoe Zenghelis and Madelon Vriesendorp. He graduated from the Architectural Association in London and in 1978 published *Delirious New York: A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan*. In 1995, his book *S,M,L,XL* summarized the work of OMA in "a novel about architecture". He co-heads the work of both OMA and AMO, the research branch of OMA, operating in areas beyond the realm of architecture. His built work includes the Austrian House (2023), Taipei Performing Arts Center (2022), Axel Springer Campus in Berlin (2020), the Qatar National Library and the Qatar Foundation Headquarters (2018), Fondation Galleries Lafayette in Paris (2018), Fondazione Prada in Milan (2015/2018), Garage Museum of Contemporary Art in Moscow (2015), the headquarters for China Central Television (CCTV) in Beijing (2012), Casa da Musica in Porto (2005), Seattle Central Library (2004), and the Netherlands Embassy in Berlin (2003). Koolhaas directed the 2014 Venice Architecture Biennale, is a professor at Harvard University, and curated *Countryside: The Future* (2020), an exhibition about the non-urban areas around the globe that opened in February 2020 at the Guggenheim Museum in New York.

David Gianotten

Managing Partner – Architect of OMA

David Gianotten is the Managing Partner – Architect of OMA, where he oversees the firm's organizational and financial management, business strategy, and global growth, alongside leading his architectural portfolio. David currently leads projects worldwide, including the Museo Egizio 2024 in Turin; the Selman Stermasi Stadium in Tirana, Albania; Amsterdam's Bajes Kwartier, transforming a 1960s prison complex into a vibrant neighborhood of 1,350 apartments; the new Koepel District in

Breda, converting a Panopticon and Judicial Compound into a mixed-use area; the Innovation Partnership Schools in Amsterdam; and the Metropolitan Village, a high-rise residential building in Taipei. Projects that David has delivered include the Gallery of the Kings at Museo Egizio (2024), Apollolaan 171, a high-end office building in Amsterdam (2023), the Taipei Performing Arts Center (2022), Bali's Potato Head Studios (2020), the WA Museum Boola Bardip in Perth (2020), and White Cube LIRCAEI in Lusanga (2018). David's leadership extends to curatorial projects, such as designing an opening exhibition for Powerhouse Parramatta in Australia and co-curating *N*thing is Possible* at the Singapore Design Centre (2022). David joined OMA in 2008, launched its Hong Kong office in 2009, and became Partner in 2010, leading the Asia-Pacific portfolio for seven years. Since 2015, he has been based in the Netherlands, managing OMA globally.

Alvin Lo

General Manager (Design&Planning) of Shanghai Westbund Central, Hongkong Land

Alvin Lo is a Registered Architect and Authorized Person accredited by HKIA and ARB. With more than 25 years of experience in real estate development and an extensive portfolio of award-winning projects, he is recognised for managing highly complex design, as well as spearheading innovative trends in mixed-use development. His notable works include K11 Musea in Hong Kong and Dubai Square in UAE. He currently serves as General Manager (Design & Planning) for Shanghai Westbund Central. As Hongkong Land's largest single-asset investment, the project totals over RMB 60 billion in investment. The mixed-use scheme features 650,000 sqm of office space, 1,500 residential and serviced apartment units, 240,000 sqm of luxury retail, two Mandarin Oriental hotels and a convention centre. Set to become Shanghai's new downtown, its first phase has already attracted internationally listed enterprises including Adidas and lululemon to establish their headquarters on site.

Qin Pang

Director of Benoy, Head of Shanghai Office and Design Director

Over nearly 30 years of architectural practice, he has explored the relationship between architecture, society and nature, seeking integrated design solutions for projects of varying scales and levels of complexity. Recognised for his expertise in sustainable architectural design, Qin was seconded by the UK Government to UK Trade & Investment (UKTI) as a Sustainable Urban Development Specialist. In this role, he assisted the local government of Chongqing in developing comprehensive design strategies for sustainable urban development. Since returning to China in 2008, Qin has played a leading role in the design of a series of landmark projects, earning widespread recognition within the industry. He was selected for the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) China Architect 100 Programme for 2020–2022 and was recognised as one of Shanghai's Outstanding Young and Mid-Career Architects in 2023 by the Architectural Society of Shanghai China. Beyond his professional practice, Qin is actively involved in architectural education and academic exchange. He has served as a lecturer, visiting professor and guest critic at several leading universities, including Donghua University, Tongji University, Southeast University and Xi'an University of Architecture and Technology. He has also served as a Council Member of the 14th Council of the Architectural Society of Shanghai China, and as Co-Chair of the Mixed-Use Development Council for ULI Mainland China.

Justin Bridgland

Co-Founder & Lead Designer of MDO and Studio J. Bridgland

In 2014, Justin Bridgland and Jaycee Chui co-founded MDO, and in 2025, they went on to establish Studio J. Bridgland. He is an RIBA chartered architect, interior designer and musician with over 20 years of experience in the UK and China. His design philosophy is rooted in restraint, a natural sensibility and a layered approach, with a focus on creating timeless spaces. Rather than pursuing a signature style, he seeks to bring architecture, interiors, art and everyday life together, creating spaces that foster meaningful connections with people and retain their relevance over time. His work has received

international recognition, with projects recognised by awards including AHEAD Asia, the Hospitality Design Awards, the Architizer A+Awards, the World Architecture Festival Awards, the Dezeen Awards, the WA Awards and the Design Anthology Awards.

Joe Cheng

Founder of Cheng Chung Design

Mr. Joe Cheng is the founder of Cheng Chung Design. He served as CTBUH's first jury chair for the category of interior design, and the jury member of Frame Award for the category of hospitality design. He has also been honored numerous titles such as UN cultural ambassador, Chinese Design Person of the Year, member of Hall of Fame, Professor of Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts and so on. He is well-known in the field of international hotel interior design. CCD had won more than a hundred of top-notch international design awards including the "Gold Key Awards", which is the highest honor in interior design industry. CCD is the first Chinese design company to win a full range of hotel design awards. CCD was ranked as #1 in TOP 10 Hospitality in US Interior Design Magazine in 2022. In addition, it has been named to the "Top 500 Asian Brands" in 2019 and 2020, and to the "China's 500 Most Valuable Ranking" in 2020. It is the first and only design brand on both lists.



Salone del Mobile.Milano Global Press Office

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