



Roberto Snaiidero: the Salone del Mobile is synonymous with culture

President Snaiidero, once again after 55 successful seasons, we are about to see the “miracle” that occurs every year in April, the Salone del Mobile. Milano - a miracle that is actually the result of the work of many people. This year (2016), moreover, we have not just one but two events because the fair was preceded by the opening of a major exhibition within the XXI Triennale di Milano.

In fact, the great job being done by the Salone del Mobile team will be on display in a few days. We have just inaugurated the XXI Triennale, where the Salone is in the spotlight with “Rooms: Novel Living Concepts” within the general theme of “Design After Design”. In my opinion this participation exemplifies the union that exists between the biennial Salone del Mobile, featuring Kitchens and Baths this year, and what may be a reflection on the future of living spaces.

This confirms, if proof were needed, the ability of the Salone and everything surrounding it to create culture. These 55 years have also been a time of great cultural production.

Exactly. The Salone is a great event that draws the world to Milan because, in addition to presenting the products that companies are able to design and produce, it is synonymous with culture. Every year in Milan we introduce new proposals for the city that is the world capital of design.

But this is not a culture as we find in other sectors that use it merely as a vehicle, but rather a precise expression of the know-how of your companies. This aspect seems to me to describe what the rest of the world is not capable of producing. How would you explain this peculiarity?

I completely agree. Many hold a Design Week, but participating in the Salone del Mobile is a totally different thing. In our week Milano really lives, beginning at eight in the morning and finishing at midnight, with a whole succession of events. This is the greatest strength that the Salone del Mobile has created over these 55 years.

The Salone represents culture and know-how, but the figures are also extraordinary. Although we cannot deny that the times are still difficult, the sector and its supply chain show impressive data. Do you want to tell us about it?

The fair this year extends over approximately 270,000 square meters of exhibition space, with more than 2,400 exhibitors of which over 30% come from abroad. We expect an attendance of over 320,000 people. In six days the whole city of Milan will be involved, and the hotels are already completely sold out. This year we have the two biennial Kitchen and Bath events, and we also wanted to focus on classic styles by asking the filmmaker Matteo Garrone to produce a short film presenting Italian Classic. It is an event that goes far beyond the simple presentation of kitchens or sofas.

The world of design as a leader in Milan, but also a major player in the national economy...

If we consider the 2015 closing figures we have a turnover of over 42 billion euros, with exports of over 12 billion. For the first time in recent years the domestic

market is also beginning to show positive signs; we have a positive balance of payments of 7 billion euros. So we can say that the sector contributes to the country's growth.

The Show is a moment of great visibility for everyone and an extraordinary podium for politicians and administrators

This year we planned visits by several ministers; what happened a few days ago will cause some defections, but the Salone will continue.

After this week is over, don't you feel a bit lonely for the rest of the year?

No. We are doing a job that goes beyond the week and covers the whole year. We're looking at various initiatives to keep the Salone always in the foreground. In addition to the usual presence of Saloni WorldWide in Moscow, we have already announced the launch of the Milan Salone del Mobile in Shanghai next November 19th to 21st.

A very important event that testifies to the fair's vocation of looking beyond national borders. Do you want to give us a little preview of the Shanghai initiative?

We have already announced this event in Milan, Shanghai and next month in Beijing. It will be held at the SEC, Shanghai Exhibition Center, with over 40 Italian companies taking part. However we see it as more than just a trade fair - it will be the expression in China of the Italian Lifestyle, with the participation of related sectors and production chains that represent Italian quality, design and history as well as a culture from very far away.

So we bring a vision of home living to China, where habits seem far removed from our own.

There is a growth process in this area too. If we think back to the apartments in Chinese cities 15 years ago, the average was only 30 square meters. Today we see residential construction with very different surface areas, where the Chinese want to have Italian design that is not copied but original.

So you believe that you are not arriving too late for the great Chinese boom, but rather in advance of maturing Chinese tastes.

Certainly: in this sector we are the number one exporter to the Chinese market, we have overtaken all other competitors. Wanting to present the fair in Shanghai follows this growth strategy for Italian companies in that market.

Great prospects, then ...

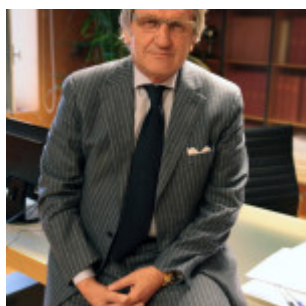
Not only that, but more. We have undertaken several other missions, for example in Iran. Even before the embargo was lifted we were there; we'll be back in July and I will be there for a B2B in which we want to strengthen existing relationships. It's a new market, but since last year there has been an increase of 34% and I think this year we will go beyond that.

Returning to Milan: the world does not stand still, and we have seen London, Cologne, Paris. What response do you expect from Milan?

I expect Milan to confirm what the industry is doing and what it's investing in. I have no doubt that the presentation of new products will generate a lot of expectation and attention. Not even I know exactly what will be on offer, but every year I'm amazed at what Italian companies can do.

Per approfondire

Focus on Roberto Snaidero



Born in Majano (Udine) in 1948, Roberto Snaidero graduated in Economics at the University of Trieste. In 1973 he became president of Lamborghini SpA, a ski and sportswear

manufacturer. From 1984 to 1991, as chairman and CEO of Abaco SpA Tolmezzo, a manufacturer of modular kitchens, he oversaw a targeted development plan which quickly placed the company at the high end of the market and brought wide visibility in the United States. From 1991, for three years he was a member of the trade committee of the Friuli regional Confindustria, while from 2002 to 2008 he was a member of the board and the governing council of the national Confindustria organisation. From 1996 to 2002 he was president of the Triveneto coordination committee of Federlegno, while from 2002 to 2008 he served as president of FederlegnoArredo at National level. In 2008 he became an advisor of Cosmit SpA (the organizing committee of Salone del Mobile). He was a member of the council of the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Crafts of Udine and is on the executive committee of Confindustria Udine. He was board director of Promosedia, an organisation for promotion on international markets of products from the Friuli area known as the "Chair Triangle".

In 1997 he founded Snaidero Engineering & Trading SpA, of which he is chairman and managing director. The company provides turnkey solutions for communities, furnishings for nursing homes and complete turnkey projects in the wood production chain, providing staff training supplemented by adequate managerial support. He is past president of Catas, a research center and test laboratory in the wood and furniture sector which has received critical acclaim internationally, and was a member of the board of the Italian Trade Promotion Agency. In 2006 in partnership with his sons he founded Erresse Invest Ltd., a financial investment company. From 2009 to 2011 he was on the governing council of CEI-BOIS Brussels (European Federation of Woodworking Industries). He is a member of the governing council of the Leonardo Committee.

In 2011 he was re-elected president of national FederlegnoArredo and became a board member of Confindustria, also at national level. Since October 2012 he has been on the technical committee for the internationalisation of Confindustria. In October 2014 he was elected president of FederlegnoArredo Eventi SpA and also president of Salone del Mobile Milano. In December 2015 he was appointed president of the company that organizes MADE

Expo Milano (an international trade fair for the Italian architecture and construction sector).

About Author



Alessandro Colombo

Nato a Milano (1963), dove si laurea in architettura al Politecnico nel 1987. Nel 1989 inizia il sodalizio con Pierluigi Cerri presso la Gregotti Associati International. Nel 1991 vince il Major of Osaka City Prize con il progetto: "Terra: istruzioni per l'uso". Con Bruno Morassutti partecipa a concorsi internazionali di architettura ove ottiene riconoscimenti. Nel 1998 è socio fondatore dello Studio Cerri & Associati, di Terra e di Studio Cerri Associati Engineering. Nel 2004 vince il concorso internazionale per il restauro e la trasformazione della Villa Reale di Monza e il Compasso d'oro per il sistema di tavoli da ufficio Naòs System, Unifor. È docente a contratto presso il Politecnico di Milano e presso il Master in Exhibition Design IDEA, di cui è membro del board. Su incarico del Politecnico di Milano cura il progetto per il Coffee Cluster presso l'Expo 2015

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