

Spotlight on Italian Design: Pio Manzù in DUMBO

Natasha Lardera (October 25, 2012)



Spring design&art is a Brooklyn exhibition space and related store promoting design and art through curated shows and highlighted product, that has now directed its attention to Italian design. A creative bridge that brings new and well-established designers to America has been inaugurated with the work of a real icon.

A taste of classic 60's Italian design, a chance to discover, admire, mingle and shop. This is just a slice of what [spring design & art](#) [2] (126a Front Street, Brooklyn NY 11201) has to offer.

Spring design&art is an exhibition space and related store, located in Dumbo, promoting design and art through curated shows and highlighted product. Structured on four principal shows a year, curators [Anna Cosentino](#) [3] and [Steve Butcher](#) [4], work with a pool of talented guest artists, designers and curators to create cohesive, informative and, above all, interesting exhibits. It is an ambitious and exciting project that promotes thinking, explores new exchanges and provides a link to, and association with, innovative projects.



Spring has been promoting Independent designers and contemporary artists since the very beginning by trying to present their work in a new, contemporary way," Anna Cosentino said to i-italy, "Our mission is to expose these designers in a context that reflects the world we live in, thus bringing together design and art by giving them equal exhibition space. We want the gallery experience to be less intimidating. Furthermore, it is important that the design we feature has intrinsic value and meaning while we emphasize all those merits that are often ignored, such as manufacturing, imagination and ingenuity.

In the past nine years there have been many international collaborations – with [Brooklyn Design](#) [5], the [Design Academy Eindhoven](#) [6] in the Netherlands, [Central St. Martins College of Art and Design and the Royal College of Art](#) [7] in England. Strangely enough, there has never been a collaboration with Italy a country that is home to many creative people."

You have now started collaborating with designer and creative director [Giacomo Cavalleri](#) [8], with whom you have worked on a show on [Pio Manzù](#) [9], how did this happen?

"I have known Giacomo Cavalleri for several years now and we have often talked about possible projects and collaborations when he lived in New York. When he moved back to Italy, Giacomo started an amazing new project that he named Made in Bergamo, a collective of international designers that has received great praise and global recognition. That's when the "serious talks" started and we agreed on creating a new bridge that brings new designers to New York, to Brooklyn to be exact. Our calendar includes new and well-established designers who are looking to be introduced in America to present their work. When we say design we mean a larger concept that includes graphics, products, fashion and the environment. We have several different roles: we are facilitators, translators, interpreters and producers."

Why did you decide to start with the work of Manzù?

"Pio Manzù is an icon of Italian design. He represents all that we admire in a young designer. He incorporates acumen, the drive to innovate and discover, to go beyond conventional rules thus delivering real innovation. Don't forget that in the sixties he revolutionized the automobile industry with the introduction of Fiat 127 (Fiat's first super-mini-sized hatchback) and that he has collaborated with major houses such as [Castiglioni](#) [10], [Flos](#) [11], [Kartell](#) [12] and [Alessi](#) [13]. We couldn't say no to the amazing opportunity to present a small profile of a great talent and introduce him to our public, design lovers who welcome our ideas."

At the show you have also introduced [Manzoni Design](#) [14], tell us about it.

"Giacomo Manzoni (Pio Manzù's son) and Giacomo Cavalleri came to New York to introduce Manzoni Design at spring. Manzoni Design brings to back life some of Pio Manzù's old projects, which were found in old archives, and has reworked old prototypes such as the valigetta portadocumenti. The briefcase was designed for Fiat in 1965– the black, white or red object has a simple functional design made of two symmetrical plastic parts and one mold – as a promotional tool given to retailers yet it still is extremely functional and still incredibly modern.

Among other items available at the gallery we find the Parentesi lamp (1969) which was inspired by a sketch drawn by Pio Manzù and designed with Achille Castiglioni. It is a clear example of form that follows function, subtraction of ornamentation, and the composition of a product that draws beauty from its form.

Based on a prototype chair designed in 1967 for the Rinascente department store, the Manzù lounge chair clearly takes its inspiration from the automobile design that Pio Manzù is recognized for. It is a swiveling armchair with seat and back shell in compact polyurethane molded together with expanded polyurethane."

What projects do you have for the future?

"We are currently working on the 2013 calendar. We are reviewing all the different requests we have received yet we can say that we will deliver a variegated program. We don't need just good



proposals we also need to find organizations that are interested in collaborating as sponsors. Spring's philosophy is to have an ongoing dialogue and creative exchange. We facilitate that also by organizing lunches and dinners at the gallery. With that in mind, we have decided to introduce coffee afternoons using the coolest espresso machine by ROCKET from Milan and MOGI coffee."

Now that we have started, the Italian connection continues...

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