



PRESS RELEASE

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EXHIBITION ON ITALY'S ARCHITECT ALESSANDRO MENDINI OPENS AT CONTEMPORARY SPACE ATHENS

An Exhibition Commemorating the 2014 European Prize for Architecture Given to Italy's Famed Architect Opens at Contemporary Space Athens April 24 and Continues through June 9.

As an architect, philosopher, architectural theorist, visionary, and design practitioner, the influence of Alessandro Mendini in contemporary architecture spans close to half a century.

In 2014, Mendini was named the 2014 Laureate for the prestigious European Prize for Architecture.

An exhibition commemorating Mendini and his life-long work opens at Contemporary Space Athens (74 Mitropoleos Str.) on Friday, April 24 and continues on view through June 9.

The European Prize for Architecture is given every year as a collaborative effort between The European Centre for Architecture Art Design and Urban Studies and The Chicago Athenaeum: Museum of Architecture and Design.

The European Prize is awarded to those rare architects who have demonstrated the highest standard of public design and have significant contributed to humanity and to the built environment through the highest art of architecture

The work exhibited ranges from iconic objects, furnishings, interiors, paintings and installations to architecture and urban planning, and also includes significant theoretical work, both with the famous Studio Alchimia and with his brother Francesco, an architect, with whom he founded Atelier Mendini in 1989.

"Alessandro Mendini," states Christian Narkiewicz-Laine, Museum President of the Chicago Athenaeum, "is



one of the rare, most iconic architects and architectural minds in the history of art and architecture and clearly within the profound ranks of Leonardo Da Vinci, Palladio, Alberti, and Ledoux. His philosophic thinking is more than original. He has pushed concept beyond the perimeters of the inventive, relentlessly searching, in a most non-compromising way, for the most essential design idea. And the results center on the most visionary and far-reaching of our times. In an era where architectural ideas are copied and duplicated worldwide faster than 'viral,' Mendini and his works remain singular, prophetic, and original with the unique finger print of nothing less than a genius architect."

"Not since Frank Lloyd Wright," continues Narkiewicz-Laine, "has the world seen a more theory-driven and profound-thinking architect than Mendini."

On view are many of his architecture projects in Italy including: Alessi Offices and Factory (Two Extensions of the Factory at Crusinallo), Omegna, (Italy) 1993; Swimming and Sports Centre, Trieste (Italy), 2004; Naples Metro System – Santa Rosa/Materdei/Università stations, Naples (Italy), 2000-2009; Town Hall, Naples (Italy), 1999; Byblos Art Hotel-Villa Amistà, Verona (Italy), 2005; Trend Group's offices in Vicenza (Villa Alle Scalette) 2005; Bovisa Tech District in Milan, Italy; Reorganisation and Street Furnishings for the Seaside Promenade in Catanzaro, Catanzaro (Italy); Complex in Via della Bicchieraia (including the Municipal Theatre, Teatro Comunale Aretino), Arezzo (Italy), 1997; La Casa della Felicità" for Alberto Alessi ("The House of Happiness") Crusinallo (Italy), 1980-1988; Clock Tower, Gibellina (Italy), 1987; and Ambra Dolce Design Gallery, Milan, (Italy), 1993.

Outside of Italy, Mendini designed Torre Paradiso, Hiroshima (Japan), 1988; Groninger Museum, Groningen (The Netherlands), 1988-1994; Dinosaur at Hukui - Dinosaur Museum, Katsuyama (Japan), 2000; Posco, Seoul (Korea), 2013; Triennale di Milano – Branch in Incheon (Korea), 2009; Busstop Hannover – Steintor Stop, Hannover (Germany), 1992; Madsack Publishing Company Headquarters, Hannover (Germany); Galleria Mendini, Lörrach (Germany), 2004; and numerous other buildings in Europe, the USA and Asia.

Among his numerous architectural designs, the Groninger Museum and the Paradise Tower in Hiroshima are the most outstanding. With both buildings, the typical Mendini teamwork is clearly visible: the projects are realised not alone, but rather in co-operation with the most varied guest-architects.

For decades, Alessandro Mendini has played the most pivotal role in the development of contemporary Italian design, mostly as publisher of the magazines Casabella (1970-1976), Modo (1979-1985), Domus (1980-1985 and 2010-2011), and Ollo (1988). For many years following his architectural studies, Mendini was the principal theoretician of the Italian avant-garde design and its most important trend-setter.



In 1976, he was among the first members of the legendary Studio Alchimia, founded by Alessandro Guerriero. Studio Alchimia was a gallery for experimental work, not constrained creatively by industrial production and mocked the scientific rational behind Modernism. Mendini became the movement's leading exponent and L'enfant terrible, together with Ettore Sottsass, Andrea Branzi, Paola Navone, and Michele De Lucchi. During this period, he designed furniture that revolutionized the image of Italian design and questioned the position of the until then undisputed "Bella Design" from Italy. As a result, the bourgeois categories of Good Design and kitsch were challenged and reversed.

Mendini has also worked as a design consultant for many of the world's leading manufacturers and design brands, including Alessi, Royal Philips B.V., Cartier, Hermès, Venini, Swarovski, Swatch, and Bisazza.

His collaboration with Alessi's Dream Factory is the most celebrated where the architect-designer has produced many of Alessi's most iconic design products: 100% Make Up, 1992; Anna Box; 1996; Anna G. Corkscrew, 1994; Din-Don Champagne Flute, 2004; Anna Gong Folding Cake Stand, 2011; Moka Alessi, 2011; Parrot Corkscrew, 2014; and Pinocchio Corkscrew, 2013.

"He is the Father of Radical Design and Neo-Modern; first with the direction of the magazine Casabella, then by creating Modo magazine (where I first met him), and finally with Domus. Alessandro Mendini has caused a real earthquake for cultural change. He repositioned Italian design in the role of the international avant-garde for the mutations of taste. Through exhibitions, writings, drawings, the direction of magazines, and epic projects, he was able to concentrate around his innovative ideas as the most revolutionary mind of both architecture and design."

"A personality like Mendini is rare in Italy, in Europe, and perhaps, in the world," continues Donà. "His persona is very current, very contemporary, and as extraordinary as is his humanity and the way he relates to others through his work. The European Prize of Architecture awarded to Mendini is with great wisdom, insight, and vision."

A catalogue on Alessandro Mendini on the occasion of the European Prize for Architecture is authored by Claudia Donà and published by Metropolitan Arts Press and is available through The European Centre.

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