

Italian Threads: MITA Textile Design 1926-1976

Estorick Collection of Modern Italian Art, London

30 September 2020 – 17 January 2021

Italian Threads, which was due to open at London's Estorick Collection in spring, has been rescheduled and will now run from 30 September 2020 until 17 January 2021. **Italian Threads** showcases 50 years of bold MITA commissions produced for world art fairs, private homes, clubs and ocean liners, encompassing the avant-garde movements of the day from Futurism to Abstract Expressionism.

Founded in Genoa in 1926, MITA (*Manifattura Italiana Tappeti Artistici*) was a celebrated Italian textile firm that earned its reputation by collaborating with some of Italy's most talented artists and designers. Among these were Gio Ponti, Fortunato Depero, Arturo Martini, Emanuele Luzzati, Arnaldo Pomodoro, Giò Pomodoro and Ettore Sottsass Jr. Organized in collaboration with the Wolfsoniana – Palazzo Ducale Fondazione per la Cultura, Genoa,

Reflecting the expert craftsmanship and full diversity of MITA's production, the exhibition features original works, designs and photographs illustrating the firm's remarkable output. It includes rugs, carpets, tapestries, limited-edition art panels, printed fabrics, scarves and major commissions that carried the banner of modernism from the 1920s to the 1970s. The show traces an evolution of taste; MITA's textiles travelled around the world, were shown in influential art exhibitions and defined the interior design of major Italian ocean liners (which Gio Ponti considered "floating art galleries"), as well as bringing the avant-garde into everyday life.

Founded by Mario Alberto Ponis, MITA was formed "with the aim of using new mechanical inventions in the manufacture of classic hand-knotted carpets", merging new technologies with craft traditions for a characteristically Italian approach to industry. MITA began collaborating with creative thinkers at the forefront of modernism who produced rug patterns and designs that captured the aesthetic spirit of Futurism, Rationalism and the Novecento movement. Many of these partnerships lasted for years and were represented in submissions to world's fairs and the Triennales of Decorative and Modern Industrial Art in Milan.

After the Second World War, MITA greatly expanded its offerings beyond carpets and rugs to include tapestries, fabrics and other products. Collaborating with the most inventive and experimental artists of the period – many of them associated with the magazine *Domus* – Ponis extended MITA's visual vocabulary to include geometric abstraction and graphic illustration, vividly realized in limited-edition art panels printed on hemp or linen and signed by the artists. MITA also began tackling ambitious projects for private homes, bars, clubs and restaurants, and its influence was cemented with the firm's participation in *Italy at Work: Her Renaissance in Design Today*, a trendsetting exhibition that toured the U.S. in the early 1950s.

MITA's 50-year reign culminated in large post-war commissions for Italian ocean liners and shipping companies, with vibrant tapestries, curtains and furnishings that adorned lavish spaces on the vessels: most notably the first-class reading room of the ill-fated *Andrea Doria*.

Notes to Editors

About the Estorick Collection

The Estorick Collection of Modern Italian Art is internationally renowned for its core of Futurist works. It comprises some 120 paintings, drawings, watercolours, prints and sculptures by many of the most prominent Italian artists of the modernist era, by artists including Boccioni, Severini, Balla, Modigliani, de Chirico and Morandi. There are six galleries, two or three of which are used for temporary exhibitions. Since opening in 1998, the Estorick has established a reputation and gained critical acclaim as a key venue for bringing Italian art to the British public.

Important Information about Booking and Safety

- Admission to the museum is for pre-booked ticket holders only, in timed slots
- Tickets can be purchased online at www.estorickcollection.com or by phone at 020 7704 9522
- Visitor numbers are currently restricted. If there is capacity, visitors who have not booked may be able to book in at the museum entrance on the day
- Members of the press can book free tickets in the same way or contact alison@alisonwrightpr.com
- Entry is contactless and carefully staffed
- Visitors are required to wear face a covering and are encouraged to practise good hygiene. Hand sanitiser is available throughout the museum

Listings Information

Estorick Collection of Modern Italian Art, 39a Canonbury Square, London N1 2AN

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www.estorickcollection.com | Twitter @Estorick | Facebook / Instagram estorickcollection

Opening Hours

Wednesdays-Saturdays 11.00-18.00 | Sundays 12.00-17.00 | Closed Mondays & Tuesdays

Admission £7.50 | Concs £5.50 | Includes entry to exhibition and permanent collection

Tube/Rail: Highbury & Islington (Victoria Line / London Overground / Great Northern); Essex Road (Great Northern)

For further press information, please contact Alison Wright

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