



Italian Design

Modernism in Turin and Milan

14–20 October 2024 (MK 412)

7 days • £3,570

Lecturer: Dr Philippa Joseph

The history and development of Italy's design industry from Art Nouveau to the present day.

Iconic 20th-century buildings and important private collections, several accessible only by arrangement.

Based in two beautiful historic cities which were central to the development of modern design.

In the 1950s and 60s, Italian design epitomised head-turning, sophisticated chic the world over. However, its origins can be traced back to the turn of the 20th century and even earlier, when Art Nouveau began sweeping through Europe's most fashionable cities. Turin, the first capital of the fledgling Italian state following unification in 1861, was at the vanguard of the flamboyant new style. The city has countless *Stile Liberty* (as it was dubbed in Italy) cafés, houses, pavilions and restaurants, which continue to lend it an elegance and modernity quite unlike that of any other Italian city.

Futurism followed from 1909, with its emphasis on energy and speed. Turin, the heart of Italy's burgeoning automobile industry, was again at the forefront of this dynamic new movement. Architecturally, Futurism is best symbolised by Fiat's Lingotto factory (1926), with a test track on its roof. Italy was soon in the thrall of International Modernism in architecture, and developed its own version, Rationalism, exemplified by Giuseppe Terragni's Casa del Fascio in Como (1936).

Italy's postwar reconstruction was encapsulated by architect Ernesto Rogers, who famously stated that he and his colleagues should be prepared to design everything 'from the spoon to the city'. In the decades that followed, Italy produced innumerable beautiful and often innovative buildings, cars, furniture and industrial designs, including the Vespa scooter (1946), the Fiat 500 (1957), and Olivetti's Lettera 22 (1949), the favourite portable typewriter of the world's writers. Olivetti combined design excellence with corporate beneficence, and its headquarters at Ivrea, north of Turin, had bright, modern factories surrounded by open green space, workers' housing and enhanced employee benefits that won world renown.



Lingotto, helix access ramp

Milan and its environs are still home to many important furniture firms, and since the 1930s has held the famous international design fair, the Triennale di Milano. It is now also home to the recently opened Museo del Design Italiano, whose extensive collection provides illuminating insight into ground-breaking Italian innovation and products.

Itinerary

Day 1: Turin. Fly at c. 7.30am (British Airways) from London Gatwick to Turin. On the way to the hotel, visit the excellent Museo dell'Automobile. The day continues with a *Liberty Style* walking tour. First of three nights in Turin.

Day 2: Turin. Much survives from the Italy Expo 61, and we visit the amazing gravity-defying trade fair pavilions designed by the brilliant civil engineer Pier Luigi Nervi, and the stunning Palavela designed by Franco Levi and Annibale and Giorgio Rigotti. In the afternoon, visit the famous testing track on the roof of Lingotto, the former Fiat factory, an architectural homage to Futurism opened in 1926. Before returning at the hotel, stop at the Teatro Regio (originally inaugurated in

1738), designed by the influential if enigmatic architect, designer and sportsman, Carlo Mollino (1905–73).

Day 3: Ivrea, Turin. Olivetti was Italy's most important postwar company, and in 2018 their offices and factories at Ivrea became a UNESCO listed site (Patrimonio dell'Umanità). We see several iconic buildings, and have lunch in the factory. On return to Turin, there is an optional visit to the Mole Antonelliana, begun in 1863 as Turin's main synagogue, but now home to the National Museum of Cinema. At 167.5 metres, it was Europe's first skyscraper and remains the world's tallest brick building.

Day 4: Milan, Binasco. In the morning, first-class rail to Milan. Visit the Grattaciolo Pirelli, the city's iconic skyscraper (completed in 1960), designed by a team including Gio Ponti, Alberto Rosselli and Pier Luigi Nervi. The MUMAC Coffee Museum in Binasco has an extensive collection of the finest Italian espresso machines. Founded in 1949, Kartell is a furniture company famous for some of the most memorable plastic furniture from the Pop Art era. First of three nights in Milan.

Day 5: Milan, Arese. In the morning, special visits to the Fondazione Franco Albini,

Italian Design, Modernism in Turin & Milan
continued

dedicated to the creator (with Franca Helg) of numerous classic furniture designs. In Arese, the Museo Storico Alfa Romeo holds some of the marque's most important cars, including the original Giulietta Sprint and Spider from the 1960s, and front-engined Grand Prix cars from the 1940s and 1950s.

Day 6: Brianza, Como, Milan. Furniture is central to the history of Italian design, and in the area of Brianza – just north of Monza – there are scores of really important companies, including Cassina, famous for its *Superleggera* chair (1957) by Gio Ponti, and Bonacina 1889, manufacturer of cane and rattan furniture, including several designs by Franca Helg and Franco Albini. Giuseppe Terragni's Casa del Fascio in Como was built between 1932 and 1936 and is probably the most famous Rationalist building in Italy. In Milan the Palazzo dell'Arte, home to the Triennale, was designed by Giovanni Muzio in the 1930s. It houses the Museo del Design Italiano, a collection from the 1930s to the 1990s.

Day 7: Milan. The Museo del Novecento houses important 20th-century art, including works by Metaphysical and Futurist artists and sculptors (De Chirico, Salvini, Boccioni, Marinetti and Russolo). Villa Necchi Campiglio is a beautiful Modernist/Art Deco house designed by Piero Portaluppi for the heirs to the Necchi sewing machine company. It also has a small but exquisite art collection which includes paintings by Boccioni, de Chirico, Modigliani, and Sironi. Fly from Milan Linate to London Heathrow, arriving at c. 8.35pm.

Lecturer

Dr Philippa Joseph. An art, architectural, and design historian whose research covers artistic and cultural exchange across Europe, especially between Andalucía and Sicily, and the wider Mediterranean basin. Philippa also has an academic interest in, and teaches on, 20th-century Italian architecture and design. She is a Senior Fellow at the Institute of Historical Research, a tutor at the Oxford University Department for Continuing Education and a regular contributor to *History Today*.

Practicalities

Price, per person. Two sharing: £3,570 or £3,290 without flights. **Single occupancy:** £4,210 or £3,930 without flights.

Included: flights (Euro Traveller) with British Airways (Airbus 320); hotel accommodation as described below, with breakfasts; 1 lunch and 4 dinners with wine, water, coffee; travel by private coach; all admissions; all tips; all taxes; the services of the lecturer and tour manager.

Accommodation. Grand Hotel Sitea, Turin (grandhotelsitea.it/en/): 5-star hotel, comfortable, elegantly furnished and very central. **Accommodation: Rosa Grand Hotel, Milan** (starhotels.com/en/our-hotels/rosa-grand-milan): a smart 4-star hotel excellently located directly behind the Duomo. *Single rooms are doubles for sole use.*

How strenuous? There is inevitably quite a lot of walking as well as standing around in museums and other sites, and it would not be suitable for anyone who manages everyday walking and stair-climbing with difficulty. Average distance by coach per day: 44 miles.

Group size: between 10 and 22 participants.