

# I Saloni: Beacon of Furniture Industry

The 2009 edition is recognition of the quality of the goods on offer and of the layout of the exhibition space. There were 313,385 visitors, including operators, public and press

by Luca Bianco



From April 14th to 19th 2010, fiera Milano will host the 49th Salone Internazionale del Mobile (International Furniture Fair), which will be accompanied as always by the International Furnishing Accessories Exhibition and SaloneSatellite, in addition to the biennial events SaloneUfficio, Eurocucina and International Bathroom Exposition. The 2009 edition, which ended on April 27th, has shown once again as I Saloni, this is the collective name of the events, proved yet again to be a beacon of style for furnishing, technical illumination and young designers, as well as an acknowledged setter of trends.

A huge number of specialist operators flocked to the Saloni, making for a total of 278,000 presences, +14% on the 2007 edition, when EuroLuce was last held. The widely-hailed internationality of the Saloni is confirmed again this year by an even greater influx of visitors from abroad: 153,456 from 151 different countries, 43 of them in Europe, 27 in North and South America, 47 in Asia, 27 in Africa and 7 in Oceania, the majority from Russia, Germany and France.

The 124,544 Italian operators who also attended the Saloni are testa-

ment to the fact that the sector is holding fast after the last few difficult years and despite the current financial crisis. Another 30,000 people converged on Sunday, the only day the Fair was thrown open to those not operating in the sector. There was also an impressive press presence, with 5385 journalists from all five continents, as compared with 4520 in 2007. All in all, visitors, members of the public and the press accounted for a massive total of 313,385 presences.

There was also a surprisingly large number of exhibitors, all of whom saw their efforts and sacrifices well rewarded



in what has not made for an easy 2009: 2723 exhibitors (911 of whom were from other countries) ranged over an area of 202,350 m<sup>2</sup>; the exhibition space was completely sold out, with 491 companies on the waiting list, their applications turned down due to lack of available space. The exhibitors were split as follows - Salone Internazionale del Mobile and International Furnishing Accessories Exhibition 1496 (including 317 from 30 other countries); EuroLuce 525 (including 174 from 25 other countries), Salone Satellite 167 stands showcasing the work of 702 designers (including 420 from 36 other countries) and 22 international design schools/universities.

This success can also be ascribed to the packed programme of collateral events, running in tandem with the biennial EuroLuce, which included the tenth Designing Designers, the International Convention of University Courses in Design, entitled Where Does Light Move To? with 252 participants, 60 from abroad. For 205 operators, there was a hands-on chance to experiment with light as part of Practical Interior Lighting Workshop, in collaboration with the PLDA and APIL lighting designers' associations.

The two collateral events proved to be of great interest: these were the large Magnificence and Project exhibition, which ran until 21st June 2009 at Palazzo Reale in Milan, featuring important and extremely valuable pieces of classical furniture alongside twentieth-century design pieces. The installation devoted to light and its scenographic qualities, entitled I=N=V=O=C=A=T=I=O=N (I call your image to mind), signed by the British artist Cerith Wyn Evans remained on exhibit in the Triennale Garden, having been given on free loan to the prestigious Milanese institution by Cosmit. ■