

## **TRA MARTELLO E INCUDINE** Design and Handicraft of wrought iron

**Sampietro 1927 shows the works that young designers planned and that have been worked out and produced into a workshop GIULIO IACCHETTI coordinates.**



**“TRA MARTELLO E INCUDINE”** resulted from the will of the company Sampietro 1927 to tell, by means of a limited selection of numbered pieces that the participants to the workshop designed and afterward the company manufactured, the endless story of metalworking as well as of the required skill to create works made of metal, both small objects or big structures, needing a high level of competence, accuracy and professionalism.

Through this operation the company, whose typically hand-crafted historical origins join top level high tech production techniques and procedures, looked for new design incentives that could become a kind of 3D, effective and unmistakable catalogue able to tell what quality, tradition value and innovative inputs mean in 2011.

It was chosen a workshop because this way of working allows to have a constant relationship among the involved parties - the responsible people of the company, the coordinator and each designer - in order to improve the design solutions enriched with others' experiences and skills. The workshop, which took place under the aegis of the Design Museum Triennial of Milan, results from the collaboration and the media-partnership with the architecture and design magazine IQD. The designers - Federico Angi, Carlo Contin, Dunja Weber and Studio 4P1B - Giulio Iacchetti selected to join the project, represent that new generation of Italian design who is clever and sensitive to the relations between design and handicraft.

**SAMPIETRO 1927** is a company that was established more than 80 years ago and is specialized in iron working in all its phases. Over the decades it has developed remarkable skills as manufacturer of items made of copper, brass and stainless steel, too. The alternation of several generations within the company, currently led by Giampiero Sampietro and by his son Mario Isacco, who represents the third generation, has always given new nourishment to it providing, over the years, updated construction solutions and a higher and higher final quality.

## **TRA MARTELLO E INCUDINE told by Giulio Iacchetti**

"Work at the center". This sentence, which is the title of a beautiful catalogue Antonio d'Avossa and Francesca Picchi wrote and dedicated to Enzo Mauri's work, is still ringing in my mind and in my heart ever since I met and knew, thanks to Roberta Busnelli, of the company Sampietro 1927: a historical and famous artisan company of wrought iron at Lipomo, a place very near Como. I was thinking in an obsessive way about the centrality of work while I was visiting the Sampietro workshop and observing the measured and skilled movements of the workers who busied themselves at the forge taking out white-hot bars that were shaped by using wonderful tools, mainly self-built or modified by their intensive use.

Those craftsmen's work made me think about the quality of a production cycle carried out separately from the planning stage. In those hands, between the sparks of the forge and the sound of the anvil beaten by the hammer, I seized the truth of Enzo Mari's words when he said that *"the quality of an industrial product is inseparable from the quality of the work those who will make it express"*. Into that workshop (but we could extend this idea to any place of real manual production) I clearly understood that the artisan work is the only antidote against the alienating parceling out of the industrial production that, by dividing the tasks to reduce costs, deprives the operators of the joy to follow the production of a handmade article, from its design to its finishing.

With this specific awareness I invited some good designers (Carlo Contin, Dunja Weber, Federico Angi and Studio4P1B) to deal with this way to mean the work, trying to insert their ability of design synthesis into the channel of the traditional working of wrought iron.

First of all it was a work of listening and dialogue: the visits to the workshop alternated to collective meetings at the study in order to revise the works, to analyze the prototypes and the handmade articles that started to take a form at the workshop. The relationship with the workers, which was initially a mere exchange of information, turned to be a dialogue with several parties imbued with a mutual curiosity on one's disciplines and skills in order to achieve a true exchange of knowledge. The final result consists of a series of well-drawn and well manufactured items that will be showed in details in the following pages.

However it would be limited to restrict this joint work to a catalogue of items made of wrought iron with a contemporary design. As a matter of fact this workshop aims at setting itself up as a prototype and an experimental paradigm of a renewed meeting between handicraft and design world. For the artisanal sector it proves that it is possible to outline, with the contribution of external designers, a design pathway overcoming the repetition of standard or folk shapes. For designers this is the opportunity to consolidate the relation between thought and action as well as the privilege to follow the creation of one's item, and to realize that the central position of the work is another way to assert the central position of man, and the pleasure to make with one's hands for other men items that reflect the beauty of the world.

Giulio Iacchetti - 13th/11/2011

## **IRON AND FIRE**

### **Design by Giulio Iacchetti**

Three thin iron strips, suitably twined following an helicoidal drawing, contribute to create a three branch candlestick.

The skillful and traditional working of wrought iron becomes clear and model observing how the metal is transformed and shaped by the effect of the hammer, by adapting itself to the formal design.

The hardness of the material clashes with the light movement of the iron strips that move in the space fulfilling several functions they are for: base, arm and support of the candles.

**Giulio Iacchetti** was born in 1966 and since 1992 he has been involved in industrial design, planning for several brands such as Alessi, Danese, Foscarini, Ferrero, Globo, Grom, Lavazza, Nava, Panasonic, Pandora Design, Sambonet and Skitsch.

His activity as a designer alternates his activity as teacher at many universities and design schools, in Italy as well as abroad. Over the years he has been awarded with important international awards. In 2001 he won, together with Matteo Ragni, the Compasso d'Oro award for the biodegradable multipurpose cutlery Moscardino that, at the same time, becomes part of the permanent design exhibition at MOMA in New York.

By means of the conception and coordination of the joint project Eureka Coop, carried out for Coop Italia, he carried the design into the organized large-scale retail trade and marked the new generation of the Italian design. In 2009 this project won him the Prize of the Prizes for innovation the President of the Italian Republic gave him. In addition to his activity as designer, there is the artistic direction for important brands such as iB taps and fittings Globo pieces of pottery and Coccio design edition. For Corraini Edizioni he edited the book *Italianità*, a collection of statements concerning the objects, the symbols, the smells, the tastes and the sounds that contributed to shape the Italian people's conscience. In May 2009 the Milan Triennial hosted his personal exhibition whose title was "Giulio Iacchetti. Disobedient objects".

## **TOOLS**

### **Design by Federico Angi**

The small tables Tools, which have been designed to enhance the malleability and resistance of the material and consist in a top of a 3 mm thick sheet and a frame of American black walnut, are manufactured applying the forging techniques once the craftsmen used to create working tools characteristic of the rural life.

The special joints with sinuous forms, which wraps the legs, clearly derives from the rural world and remind you immediately the hollow for the long wooden handles we usually find with shovels. The thick iron plate of the top is cut, beaten and worked completely manually by the blacksmith. Bending, torsions and stretching result from a skillful artisanal work that cannot be achieved using other materials or working methods. The legs also follow the same logic and, like the handle of the same tools, are obtained by turning parts of American black walnut.

Sizes: 600 x 600 x h 350 mm , 450 x 450 x h 550 mm

**Federico Angi** was born in Bollate, in the province of Milan. After an artistic education as graphic designer, he obtained a degree in Industrial Design at the Polytechnics of Milan. In 2008 he started to work by collaborating with Giulio Iacchetti and Lorenzo Damiani. He satisfies his hunger for design learning to catalogue, study and meditate on the projects of the great masters, but his passion-obsession for design is appeased when it starts to develop prototypes and models of his own projects in his small laboratory, housed in his home's garage. Models that may be of auto-production: sophisticated for the craftsmanship on the matter and pragmatic for the industrial inspiration and the contents. He doesn't particularly like flying, but he soon learns, and this is also why he lives and works in Milan.

## **MANIGLIONI** Design by Carlo Contin

This small collection consists of three pieces, aiming at showing the potentials of wrought iron working and finishing. Each handle is meant like a short list of workings that vary every time, with forms that enhance the manual character and tell the artisanal process renewing the inventory of traditional forms.

DORACURVA - It is a handle obtained by bending a shaped iron sheet, rolled up itself in order to create a long central crack, thus showing an internal as well as external part. Internally it is finished with a "golden leaf" lining that creates a sheet of light that is in contrast with the external part made of iron and finished in a different way, leaving it smooth, beating it with a special hammer or "burning it" with fire till the metal is fused.

PICAPENNA - It is manufactured by rolling and molding a very thick iron sheet, it is finished by hammering with a texture that is obtained using a tool named "penna" (peen [n.d.t.]). The inspiration comes from nature, considering the exterior of the handle as a big petal of a flower characterized by an uneven surface.

ARCOFERRO - It is a handle made of iron sheet, shaped and bent. Its surface is still of natural iron finished with wax in order to enhance the signs of the "strokes" of hammer necessary to give a shape. It is the interpretation of the traditional arch shaped big handle where the applied technique allows to make each handle be different.

## **FENDIFORGIA** Design by Carlo Contin

This chair, meant for outdoor, is inspired by nature. The final form is generated by two continuous lines that intersects, forming the seat and the rear legs and the front legs with the back, respectively, without interruption, meeting at one point.

The back of the chair is then manufactured by cutting lengthwise the iron round bar and then enlarging it by rolling and shaping in order to ensure the correct comfort.

The seat is manufactured by intertwining irregularly a strip made of raw rubber till an irregular drawing is created like a cobweb.

The aim has been to reach a degree of form lightness as high as possible by reducing sections to a minimum, tapering them at the ends, cutting them and bending them avoiding as much as possible welding, looking for an "organic" as well as essential drawing.

**Carlo Contin** was born in 1967 at Limbiate, few kilometers from Milano. From 1991 to 1997 he worked as entrepreneur in the furnishing field. In February 1998 he opened his own agency dealing with interior design and architecture. His plans have been carried out, among the others, by Coop, Cappellini, Fambuena, Guzzini, Legnoart, Meritalia, MoMA New York, Ravarini Castoldi, Slamp and Sphaus. Among his several collective exhibitions we mention in 2007 The New Italian Design at the Milan Triennial; in 2005 Design at Coop, Made for China and Ovologo; in 2004 Sensidivini, Multipli di Cibo and New Agri Culture; in 2002 Tipi Italiani, Saint- Etienne Biennial and Sistemi di Misura dei Designer; from 2001 to 2003 Vilt: Kunst, Mode an Design; in 2001 Designers Saturday. From 1999 to 2003 he took part to the Satellite Showroom.

## **MEGAWAVE** Design by Dunja Weber

Outdoor seat made of intertwined wrought iron bars.

To carry out this plan it has been necessary to make the most of the malleability of the red-hot iron in order to put the textile technique into an oversize scale, intertwining horizontal and vertical iron sections.

Using the strength of the hammer and a great manual skill, the 2 cm sections have been transformed into 7 cm large strips to create a comfortable seat. As if by magic, unlike textile fibres that stay soft, the iron sections, once they are cooled, become stiff again and create an extremely solid frame.

The seat Megaweave is created with only six rings intertwined in this way, a lot of sweat and artisanal ability.

Sizes: cm Ø75 h 40

**Dunja Weber** was born in 1973. She has the Luxembourg nationality, in 1998 she took her degree at the Glasgow School of Art, when she moved to Milan. She gained a lot of experience at the company Cassina and at Marco Ferreri's and Stefano Giovannoni's design studios.

She was James Irvine's right-hand person for eight years and afterwards in 2007 she set up on her own and her agency dealt with furniture, industrial and exhibition design. In 2008 she established Gate-08, a group of International designers based in Milan aiming at reinforcing the dialogue between design and craft. She teaches at the European Design Institute and at the Politecnico in Milan. Bearing constantly in mind both the production process and the final user, she tries with her work to plan consistent, simple and essential products that are characterized by an easy use, clear lines and a fair employ of materials. Her European background allows her to combine the Northern essentiality with Italian stylishness and production tradition.

## **MORESCO** **4P1B Design Studio**

It is a modular structure consisting of one element made of wrought iron with a characteristic "V" geometry; the elements are arranged to hook on each other by means of metal rings.

MORESCO results from the research of the characteristics and potentials of wrought iron aiming at combining the tenacity and the resistance, which are usually attributed to this material, with lightness and softness characteristic of nets.

Being inspired by Moorish decorations and by geometrical grids that usually make them up, a triangular based module has been drawn. These elements are able to combine themselves creating surfaces thanks to a simple hooking system.

Thanks to the freedom of direction for the modules, it is possible to create endless configurations; it is possible to install the nets on several looms to build partition walls, banisters or railing and to bend them, adapting them for example to the parapets of stairs.

Looking at MORESCO you have the feeling to be in front of a traditional bars made of wrought iron; but when you touch the mesh it is made with you are surprised by the unexpected flexibility of the material.

## **PLENILUNIO** **4P1B Design Studio**

It is a street lamp for city use, characterized by a stalk consisting of four little squares made of iron that open on the upper part taking the traditional pinecone shaped working; the space created in this way contains a source of light.

The street lamp PLENILUNIO reinterprets an object that traditionally belongs to the production of wrought iron, in this case deprived of the mass of decorations in order to give greater strength to the working themselves.

The project focuses on one working that enhances its nature and emphasizes its esthetic qualities. Therefore the street lamp PLENILUNIO consists of a stalk that opens in the typical pinecone shape expanded till it turns into the structure of the object itself. For the nature itself of this working, the street lamp becomes dynamic and light while the empty volume that is created contains the source of light protecting it. It almost seems that the luminous sphere fluctuates, kept or maybe caught by the branches of a tree.

**4P1B Design Studio** was established in Milan in 2008 resulting from the meeting among five young designers: Antonietta Fortunato, Antonio De Marco, Diego Franzini, Marco De Santi and Simone Fanciullacci. The five of them, who studied at the Design faculty of the Polytechnics in Milan, after having gained experiences and collaboration in several agencies, decided to join and to establish a new design experience. The value of this agency is the comparison and the contamination among different cultures, knowledge and competences, able to talk together in order to find together the best solution for complex problems, too. Since its establishment, the agency has been dealing with full spectrum design providing a service that ranges from identifying the concept to engineering, passing by the graphic communication, the planning of fair mounting and installations.