**DESIGN WEEK 2017**

**This year Matrix International is going to attend "White in the City",** a project which creates an itinerary that relates the white color as a symbol of well-being, sustainability and quiet in the heart of Brera.

Particularly Matrix displays the **three-legged armchair ARABESK, designed by FOLKE JANSSON in 1955, at the Radetzky Hall of Cusani Palace where "White Icons" will be exhibited.**

**That’s a tribute to Jansson from the company and the son of the well-known Swedish designer, sculptor, painter and ceramist, a few months after his death, by rediscovering new materials.**

It was the mid-fifties, from some time I was looking for an upholstered chair or armchair. But I could not find anything that would convince me, only squared objects and combinations of linear elements. That was the Swedish style. Apparently, the only possibility of having the chair I wanted was to try to shape it. Having practiced as a sculptor for a year, I had developed a good control of three-dimensional shapes. Fully confident, I started making sketches, which unfortunately ended trashed sheet after sheet. It was not easy to get a three-dimensional shape. Then I focused on the continuity of a line. I worked until it became a curved surface with which to draw the entire chair. I was fully committed, sketches were my battlefield, but it soon became clear that it would be difficult to explain to a producer my intentions with those materials, and then I built a clay model. Now all that remained was to find someone who would and could produce it. There was a furniture manufacturer in the city, furniture realised in style, but it represented my only resource. So I took my little clay model and went to meet the director of Wincrantz. After careful consideration, his comment was, "ok, we do it!” He asked me a drawing, but to trace a piece of furniture that had not a straight line and without angles on which to build the projections seemed almost impossible. The only solution was to build a full-scale model, a carpenter could build the frame. I shaped the chair using paper-mache and poultry metal mesh. It became a heavy prototype, but it was good enough to show the form over to an experience craftsman. After the construction of the frame, we moved to the upholstery; finally alive, Arabesk was firmly resting on its three legs!

It was presented later at Salone del Mobile 1955 in Göthenburg and it was immediately a huge success.

Following its launch, the interest in Arabesk was more in Europe than in Sweden, but its distribution was anyway quickly stopped.

The cooperation between Matrix International and Folke Jansson started in the late nineties, when a Swedish trader introduced the designer to the company.

Arabesk had been out of production for the last decades, and Folke suggested it to become part of Matrix Collection.

A prototype of the chair was made available: a handmade wooden frame, carved by hand and filled up with foam rubber panels, covered with fabric.

Matrix decided to take over the project and to bring to a higher technical level.

After having made a resin model of the chair, a mold was manufactured and finally a steel reinforced, water based, expanded foam Arabesk was produced industrially for the first time ever.

The Arabesk chair as we know it today, an expression of both formal integrity and of standardized manufacturing process, is part of Matrix collection since year 2000.

Matrix holds the exclusive rights to produce and distribute the chair worldwide, with exception of Scandinavian countries.

Vitra, which owns a prototype of the chair as part of its design museum collection, is currently re-editing the guide-book of the collection and acknowledging Matrix International for having brought it to light from oblivion.

**Folke Jansson**

Sculptor, painter, ceramist, Folke Jansson addressed art and design with a unprecedented approach for a Scandinavian. He tackled sculpture as a trained engraver in the ‘40 and later ceramics in a small factory at Koping. His early watercolors and scenography are of the same period. He stepped into the world of furniture almost by chance: he wanted to make the prototype of an armchair for himself, which turned to be too complex to be achieved with his own abilities in woodworking. The Wincranz Company, starting from a metal and paper model make by Folke, created the first Arabesk and presented it at the Gotheborg Furniture Fair in 1955. Since the product had a notable success, Folke started designing furniture (chairs, armchairs, chaise-longue) for the same firm.

Folke Jansson is a designer who is difficult to define, being the creator of daily objects which are far from the organic forms of Aalto, and yet not aiming to the minimalism of Jacobsen or Kjaerholm.

His experimentation has led him to play both with the free forms embedded into materials, and with the geometric patterns superimposed to them.

**Another masterpiece by Matrix is displayed – always on the occasion of White in the City – at San Carpoforo Church: the INTRECCIO table designed in 2016 by Paolo Portoghesi.**

**INTRECCIO TABLE** with cast iron base, birch legs and Calacatta marble or glass top (Ø cm 120-140), re-proposes the crisscrossed arches theme that Portoghesi used both designing the candlesticks for Officina Alessi in 1988 and the prayer hall of the Great Mosque in Rome, built from 1975 to 1995. In the table designed for Matrix International eight limbs are assembled asymmetrically and intertwined in the middle, thus creating a dynamic composition.

The middle-emptied cast iron base enhances the organic forms of the table, which overall sense of grounding is strengthened by its bed-mould edge.

“Intreccio table expresses a wish to generate a form by building upon the constructive and formal potentialities of the three materials used. The porosity of cast iron at the base, the light and vaporous surface of birch, the glossiness of marble and glass, and the arboreal inspiration that rules the composition, aiming to relate the earth and sky, as in a tree” (Paolo Portoghesi).

**The relationship between Paolo Portoghesi and Matrix International** has started thanks to a charismatic figure of the design of the '900: Eero Saarinen. Gangemi Editore strongly promoted the contribution of Portoghesi for the foreword of the book "Eero Saarinen- The Organic Unit in Furniture Design", written by Massimo Imparato, the Art Director of the company, to document the researches made upon a few unknown products designed by the Finnish master, that Matrix has produced and included in its collections.

The introduction to the Book, presented in January 2015 in Rome, offers an interesting interpretation on Saarinen's contribution to the evolution of the 20th Century architectural vocabulary and touches a crucial issue of the contemporary design debate, emphasizing the importance of speaking "… of industrial design not as "a matter of tasting but as a rigorous and relevant matter of study."

Such an analysis – “that follows in parallel the creative process in terms of expressive will and in terms of technical feasibility with industrial methods" – created the premises of a cooperation between Polo Portoghesi and Matrix International which is unveiling on the occasion of Fuori Salone 2016.

Architect, teacher and writer, Paolo Portoghesi is the combative advocate of a "rooted architecture", which interprets tradition not just as a transfering of acquired habits, but as a stimulus to innovation in the continuity of certain premises that express the identity of human places and cultures.

His best known project is the Mosque of Rome. Among his recent works: the churches of Santa Maria della Pace in Terni, Santi Cornelio e Cipriano in Calcata and San Francesco in Castellaneta, the Quartiere Latino of Treviso, the District Rinascimento I in Rome, the Great Mosque of Strasbourg, the Urban Park of Abano, the Cemetery of Cesena, the laboratories of the " “Città della Speranza” in Padua.

In the field of design he has designed furniture and objects for Alessi, Arzberg, Atelier Sedap, Cemusa, Frigerio, Meccani, Mirabili, Cleto Munari, Poltronova, Ritzenhoff Cristal, Swid Powell and others.

He is professor emeritus at the University of Sapienza and he has received three honorary degrees. He was president of the Academy of S. Luca, it is the Accademico dei Lincei and a member of several international Academies.

His most important books are: Baroque Rome (1966, new expanded edition in 2011); F. Borromini (1967); After modern architecture (1980); Architecture and Nature (1995); The Hand of Palladio (2007).

**Matrix International**

MATRIX production has been developed onto the essential criterion of excellence: in the choice of materials - metal, wood, leather and fabrics - and in the expert craftsmanship, to ensure the highest quality and durability. And above all, onto the excellence and uniqueness of the project, to be aligned with the rapid

evolution of taste, style and contemporary living habits. Whether it's a comfortable seat for the living room or the dining area, a table around which to celebrate the increasingly appreciated rituals of conviviality, or a complement

which makes everyday practices easier and more pleasant - the collection ranges from the bookcase to the umbrella stand, from the bench to the ashtray – for Matrix the starting point is always thorough design research.

The first, **CODICI** (www.matrixinternational.it), which marked the beginning of the company’s activity, collects pieces of outstanding figures of the Design of the XXth century: Eero Saarinen, Marcel Breuer, Mies Van Der Rohe, just to name a few. Not re-editing, but manufacturing of unedited projects which Matrix unearthed in its archives research, with the collaboration of the heirs of architects who have written the

fundamental codes of Modern Design. With its trait of essentiality and geometrical rigor, the collection offers a rich panorama of "classic" furniture, defined by a sign that can either create timeless spaces with an essential look, or harmonize interiors characterized by heterogeneous details.

The second, **THE ULTIMATE COLLECTION**

(www.matrixinternational.it), gathers a number of contemporary

projects with strong personality, and focuses on the aesthetics and

flexibility of interiors imposed by new lifestyles. The whole collection, which is characterized by astonishing forms and colors aligned with new trends, is directed by expert design professionals, but it also looks forward to the designers of the future, capable to combine new research methods with the immediacy of new ideas. It's the case of the collection of seats Sogno (2014) designed by a team of the DIDA, Department of

Architecture of the University of Florence and the cabinet system MOVE (2015) designed by the art director of company, Massimo Imparato.

**Addresses:**

**- CUSANI PALACE, Via Brera 13 MILANO**

**- SAN CARPOFORO Ex-Church,**

**Via Marco Formentini 14**

**MILANO**

**Open to the public:**

**2017| April 4th – April 9th**

**Hours: 10 am – 10 pm**

**Press preview: April 3rd h. 9 am**

[www.matrixinternational.it](http://www.matrixinternational.it)

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