

# Marina Iremonger

## British Consulate General Milan – Italy

- **Trade Adviser, Head of Fashion & Design Unit**
- **Sectors covered:  
Design & Interiors,  
including Furniture and  
Furnishings, Interior  
Textiles and Ceramics;  
Designer Fashion and  
Textiles**



# Key Market Characteristics

- Italy is one of the most difficult markets to export design products or design services because of the following reasons:

Strong local industries, ie furniture, textiles, designer clothing and footwear, jewellery, ceramics, wood, glass and other materials

Strong local designers and strong local culture for design and elegance

Geographical position which favours imports of products and trends from all over the world.

# Design & Interiors

- In the Lombardy region there is a strong furniture industry cluster made up of thousands of companies which are all active in the various stages of furniture production, from design to prototyping to engineering to sub-contracting to final assembling and end-product. Among the companies based in the region surrounding Milan there are some of world's top names in lighting such as Artemide or Flos and furniture such as Cappellini, Cassina, Kartell, B&B, De Padova etc. Associated with this industry a large service industry has been created mainly in Milan with focus on communication, pr, events, advertising etc.
- The first edition of the Milan's International Furniture Exhibition took place in 1961 and it has since gained popularity as the world's no. 1 design exhibition and event. In April 2009 the Milan's Salone del Mobile attracted 313,385 visitors from all over the world, including trade visitors, public and press. During the exhibition the entire city hosts a calendar of off-site shows and events, organised with the collaboration of Interni design magazine.

# British Design Embassy

- In April 2009 UKT&I and the British Consulate General Milan organised the very first British Design Embassy outside its original London location. During the week of the Salone del Mobile the prestigious Galleria d'Arte Moderna at Villa Reale hosted the British Design Embassy which was curated by Sir Paul Smith with the contribution of Moroso and the media partnership of icon magazine.



# British Design Embassy Milan

April 2009



# Love & Money

- On the occasion of the Milan's Salone del Mobile and of the British Design Embassy UKT&I organised the international launch of the Love & Money multimedia exhibition at Villa Reale



# Design & interiors

- Market opportunities:
- Printed textiles; textile furnishings; wallpaper; small furniture; kitchen accessories; tableware; bathroom accessories; hi-tech accessories; lighting solutions; low-emission lighting; environment-friendly interiors solution; design giftware; interiors solutions for the contract market (hotels, restaurants, spas).

# Key exhibitions in design and interiors

- Salone del Mobile (including the biennial trade show Euroluce) and Milan Design Week, Milan, every year in mid-April
- Macef (furnishings, accessories, tableware, silverware, giftware), Milan, September and January
- Abitare il tempo (interior decoration, furniture and textile furnishings), Verona, September
- Made (Projects, Architecture and Building), Milan, February

# Designer fashion and textiles

- Characteristics of the market: strong local manufacturing tradition, excellent design and quality of fabrics and materials. Italian fashion labels are among the world's leading brands, thanks to good quality and design. Most international luxury brands have their collections manufactured by Italian companies.
- At the same time the Italian distribution and retail system has always been very open to British fashion designers. Opportunities exist for British designer to sell in Italy through a local agent or showroom, to work under licence with a local manufacturer or to partner with a local company on special limited edition collections. British fashion designers have always been considered as trend setters by the Italian press and trade.
- British style and trends are very much appreciated in all sectors. Besides men's wear and knitwear, which has always been in demand, also ladies' designer footwear and clothing, casual and urban wear, evening and occasion wear are demanded by agents and retailers.
- Printed textiles are appreciated by both manufacturers of apparel and manufacturers of soft furniture and furnishings. The combination of traditional crafts and contemporary style has proved to be particularly successful in both fashion and interiors textiles.

# Designer fashion: key exhibitions and events

- Milan and Florence are the two fashion cities in Italy. Milan hosts two fashion weeks a year, in September and at the end of February/March, during which a number of trade shows and a thick calendar of catwalk shows take place. The key fashion exhibitions are White (high-end designer collections of clothing and accessories) and Mi Milano Pret a` porter (contemporary clothing collections, evening and occasion wear, beach wear).
- Florence hosts the world's leading mens' wear exhibition, Pitti Immagine Uomo, in June and January, followed by a calendar of catwalk shows which take place in Milan during Men's Fashion week.
- Milano Unica held in Milan in September and March is one of the leading international trade shows for apparel fabrics.