

EXHIBITION



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Andrea Illy, chairman, Altgamma Foundation

IN THE LAP OF LUXURY

Shanghai gets a large helping of Italian glamor through the Salone del Mobile Milano, along with a virtual tour of the country’s rich cultural spots. **Sun Yuanqing** reports.

Italian culture in a mere 15 minutes. That is what was on offer at the Salone del Mobile Milano’s Shanghai edition from Nov 19 to 21, through *Panorama*, a 360-degree video presentation, covering almost all aspects of “made in Italy”, including fashion, design, food and beverages, hospitality and automobiles.

With the help of drones and immersive media technology, the video takes the audience on a virtual journey, where they fly over the Coliseum in Rome, see fashion shows by top designers and visit Mediterranean wineries.

It features 250 of the country’s greatest artworks by artists such as Raphael, Leonardo Da Vinci, Giotto di Bondone and Sandro Botticelli. It also showcases Italian craftsmanship and jewelry, with music by renowned Italian musicians playing in the background.

The video features more than 200 locations, including museums, theaters, city squares, buildings and natural landscapes.

The video, which made its debut at the Milan Expo last year and was screened at New York City’s Grand Central Terminal in June this year,

has been seen by 260,000 people so far.

The mission of the video is to showcase the Italian luxury industry, which represents about 5 percent of the country’s gross domestic product, says Andrea Illy, chairman of the Altgamma Foundation, the Italian luxury industry association. He is also the president of Illycaffè, a renowned Italian coffee brand.

The video is also part of the organization’s efforts to propel the growth of the luxury industry in Italy, he says.

“This (the video) is the best way to show Italy’s natural beauty, culture and manufacturing prowess. We want to improve the engagement, the image and the reputation of Italian luxury.”

“It is to promote the luxury industry rather than specific brands. If you showcase fashion items, it (the impact) is only for a while and then it is gone. New consumers want to understand the cultural side of Italian heritage. So, it becomes important to show them the culture and the roots of Italian luxury. This is what *Panorama* hopes to do.”

Illy, who first visited China more than 25 years ago, has returned to



Top and above left: Visitors attend the screening of *Panorama*, an Italian video show, at the Grand Central Station in Manhattan in June. Above right: Andrea Illy, chairman of the Altgamma Foundation, says the video is tailored to improve the “engagement, image and reputation” of Italian luxury. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



the country more than 25 times since, and has witnessed how the country has changed.

He says Chinese customers, in particular, are now more educated and sophisticated. And Italian brands have been quick to react to this changing trend.

He recalls when he first visited Shanghai he could not even find proper socks, but this, he says, is no longer the case.

He adds that though China’s luxu-

ry industry is experiencing a slowdown due to a campaign against extravagance and an economic slowdown, it is in fact entering a new era.

Explaining his point, he says: “No economy can survive for long only on exports and public expenditure. So, the main driver, at the end of the day, has to be internal consumption. And that is what is happening in China now.”

“So, what I am saying is the very

opposite to what is generally believed — that is China is entering a very positive phase in its economic cycle, which is of internal consumption. Now, disposable income is growing and consumers are getting more drawn to quality products and services. So, this is the moment when luxury businesses will find solid growth.”

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NEW INNINGS

Ignored London landmark undergoes huge makeover

By RUTH HOLMES in London
Agence France Presse

From Walkmans and iPhones to classic cars and robotic arms, London’s newly opened Design Museum will offer a journey through the world of contemporary design.

The museum in London’s plush Kensington district is the culmination of a \$103-million project to transform a once derelict building.

“Our ambition is to create somewhere which would be a world center for design and a place to start conversations about the world of design,” museum director Deyan Sudjic said last week at a media preview.

The museum contains almost 1,000 objects in its permanent exhibition — among them a London underground train, a Ford Model T car, Gucci tennis shoes and Christian Louboutin’s Pigalle high-heels — covering everything from fashion to engineering.

The museum’s new site is nearly three times the size of its previous home, which was a former banana warehouse in southeast London.

British designer Terence Conran,



Left: A woman looks at exhibits at the Design Museum during its opening in Kensington, London, on Nov 17.



Right: A general view of the same museum. REUTERS

who founded the museum, hailed it as a “magnificent new cathedral of design” and said the move was “the most important moment of my career.”

“It allows all our dreams and ambitions for the museum to come true, to create a world class space, truly international, with the size and scope for the serious promotion and

celebration of design and architecture in this country,” he said ahead of the public opening on Nov 24.

“I don’t think there’s anywhere in the world that comes up to this museum at the moment.”

‘New life and purpose’

The 1960s modernist building — formerly London’s Commonwealth

Institute — was refurbished by architect John Pawson in a five-year project, retaining its striking roof.

Luqman Arnold, chairman of the museum’s trustees, says the transformation of a “derelict and unloved building had “given a neglected London icon a new life and purpose”.

“It will provide an international showcase for the many design skills at which Britain excels and a creative center promoting innovation, nurturing the next generation of design talent,” he said.

The museum’s first temporary exhibition, entitled *Fear and Love — reactions to a complex world* — comprises 11 installations by international designers including Kenya Hara of Japan, American-Israeli Neri Oxman and British Turkish-Cypriot Hussein Chalayan.

The *Pan European Living Room*, an installation by the OMA architecture practice, is furnished with a piece of design from each of the 28 EU member states, proposing that our notion of domestic interiors has been shaped by European trade and cooperation.

Chief curator Justin McGuirk describes the exhibition as “a laboratory of ideas, and a place for absorbing how the world is changing”.

“Design is a very broad and versatile discipline today and it’s dealing with a lot of complex issues — that’s what this show is about.”

Briefly

Hermes opens Chongqing store



Hermes unveiled its 23th store in China, in Chongqing, earlier this month. Designed by Denis Montel, it combines the country’s southern culture with the brand’s aesthetics. The store offers womenswear, menswear, accessories and perfumes.

Bulgari displays iconic jewelry



Italian jewelry brand Bulgari held an exhibition of its heritage pieces in Beijing in collaboration with Vogue China recently. Themed “gem, dream and style”, it showcased some of the brand’s most iconic pieces.

30 years of Saga Furs

Finnish fur auction house Saga Furs recently celebrated its 30th anniversary in China with a show during China Fashion Week. The show featured its classic designs from the past 30 years and collaborations with both local and international designers. Eight Chinese brands, including Brandon Sun and Crystoline, participated in the show.

Moiselle shows new collection

Womenswear brand Moiselle showed its 2016 autumn/winter collection recently in Beijing. Inspired by the Neverland Ranch of Michael Jackson, the collection combines Oriental hues with Western tailoring. At the show, the brand also debuted its new homewear line Rosamund Moiselle, created in collaboration with actress Rosamund Kwan.

China World Mall holds charity event



China World Mall marked the upcoming holiday season with a philanthropic event on Tuesday. The event featured charity sales that contributed to Orbis International, a charity dedicated to the protection of vision. Meanwhile, a new promotional campaign for the mall was unveiled.

Shenbai unveils wedding gowns



Chinese fashion brand Shenbai showcased its new collection earlier this month at China Fashion Week. Known for its couture wedding gowns, the brand combines Western tailoring with traditional Chinese craftsmanship. Its 2017 spring/summer collection is inspired by 17th-century Paris.