



Mazzer of Fact

In Short

1955

Born in Italy

1978

Graduated from Milan Polytechnic in Architecture

1980

Opened his studio at Conegliano Veneto Italy

Has collaborated with the likes of Artemide, Bonacina, Cappellini, Magis, Martex, Ycami and Zanotta.

Also produced architectural project for residential complexes, apartment buildings, trade centres and offices.

Some of you will recall that, in our Clerkenwell Design Week review, we gave the Above and Beyond Award to Parcour for, well, going above and beyond!

Completely remodelling the showroom

Interior every night, the Parcour team worked tirelessly to offer visitors an incredible variety of work settings, events, hospitality and exciting new product designs.

Whilst chatting with the team we discovered that even more exciting new developments were already in the pipeline. Being understandably cagey, our hosts offered us little snippets of information, without fully revealing what was in store.

Now, however, we have the full picture – and what's more we have exclusive access to the designer responsible for Parcour's latest, innovative furniture collection – Mario Mazzer, whose collaboration with leading manufacturer Martex is now available in the UK through Parcour.

Mario was born in 1955 and went on to get a degree in architecture at the Milan Polytechnic in 1978, followed by the diploma in Industrial Design at the Polytechnic School of Design in 1979. He gained amazing experience in the 1970's, working with some of the masters of Italian design.

In 1980 Mario opened his own studio at Conegliano Veneto, Italy, where he started to develop his own personal design language. Today he works in a variety of sectors, from architecture to industrial design and regularly contributes to the cultural debate on design in conventions and conferences.

His works have also been shown in major museums and design exhibitions.

Mario has and continues to work for leading design companies, including Almadesign, Artemide, Bonacina, Bonaldo, Busnelli, Cappellini, Clever, Fiam, Flou, I Tre, Lucente, Magis, Manital, Martex, MinottiCucine, Mistral, Poliform, Rossi di Albizzate, Gruppo Sintesi, Solzi Luce, Tronconi, Varaschin, Ycami and Zanotta.

He also continues to develop impressive architectural projects for residential complexes, apartment buildings, trade centres and industrial sites, as well as restructuring of historical buildings, planning of workspaces, offices and showrooms.

We begin by asking Mario to tell us a little more about his roots. 'I started my career by graduating in Architecture and Industrial Design in Milan, however I developed my humanistic and art culture in Venice,' he reveals.

'I began this job working in Milan with two masters of Italian architecture and design – Achille Castiglioni and Marco Zanuso. 'My first job as a designer was special as I designed and worked on creating an engine assembly island in the Alfa Romeo factory for workers with reduced work capacity. It was a unique experience. Later, my work turned more to product design. 'As for designing products with a lasting effect on my career, I would say the Clino table, provides me with a certain notoriety. The wall reclining table, where the function overlaps perfectly to the shape, was designed for Magis in 1984.' →



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Today, technology allows us to live and work in any place, with the only requirement to be connected and mobile.
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← So is Venice now home? ‘Today, technology allows us to live and work in any place, with the only requirement to be connected and mobile. I’ve chosen to live in a town near Venice. It’s a beautiful hilly area, which has now earned some acclaim as the Prosecco-producing region. An ideal place that offers work/life balance, quality of life for tranquillity and contemplation, whilst remaining globalisation – and with access to an international airport.

‘I see working in both areas (product and architecture) as a natural synergy. My own practice is divided into two departments: the first deals with design, the second with architecture. The diversity between architecture to the design of small products is a very complex one. The transition from one scale to another requires a lot of attention and, at the same time, requires flexibility.

‘It’s exactly this transversibility of the two that inspires many of my works. It is this incisive need to bring order and architectural elements – I take the inspiration to develop design projects.

‘My architectural matrix motivates numerous furnishing requirements, and it is perhaps for this reason that I design furniture and accessories for contract and the workplace.’



Bonaldo clothes hanger



Kyo table for Martex



Climo table for Magis

We ask Mario to describe his working process. ‘This profession requires a lot of passion,’ he considers. ‘I search for that initial ‘small light’ that will grow into a workable idea, and that by dint of imagining, something eventually switches on. I love to work on products that are utilitarian and functional to our everyday life.

‘I need to try and try again to achieve a professional result characterised by an honest, curious and well thought out design. I relentlessly question and challenge my own concepts and beliefs, to foster new ideas for our industry.’

So, does Mario usually take concepts to manufacturers/clients or do manufacturers/clients give him a brief for what they need for their portfolio? ‘In today’s modern evolving marketplace there is no rule. With some companies, for which I do the art direction, the briefing arises during the meetings on corporate direction and development.

‘Other times, the idea for a new product arises thanks to a certain propensity that allows me to capture messages and brand requirements that are in the air, and in this case I am the one who proposes the most suitable concepts to the manufacturer.

Is the design process the same for everything Mario does – for example, does he employ the same process for architecture as he does for lighting and office furniture design?

‘My education has to be found in an architectural Gestaltung, generally I have this approach also in furniture design,’ he explains. ‘I love the change of scale: passing from a big scale, as an architectural project requires, through to a ‘real’ scale of design objects. This ability allows me to give value to details in architecture.

‘Currently, my practice is working on the design and construction of small objects. We are designing a collection of remote controls, ‘luxury’ wine accessories, →

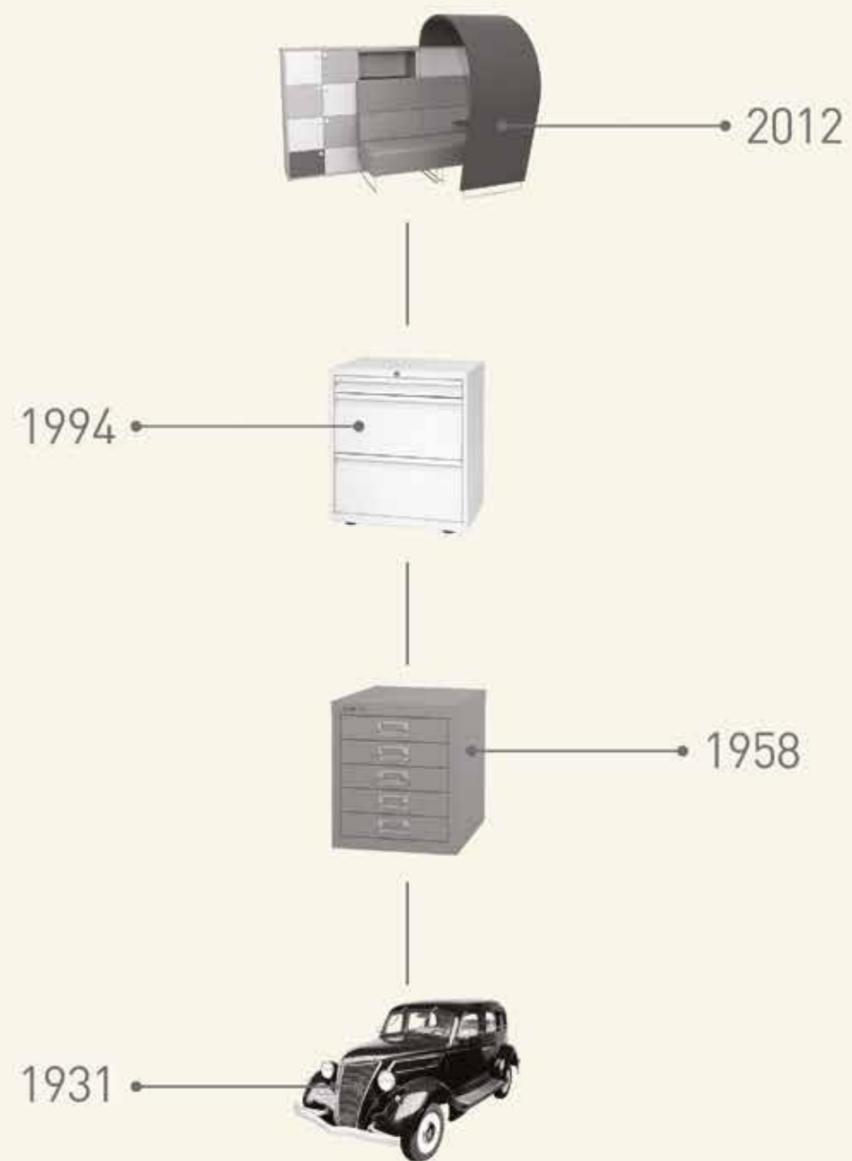


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←corkscrews and professional decanters. Here the approach is different – minimalist, which focuses on ergonomic and functionality as well as essential aesthetics.

'Our practice collaborates in various areas of industrial design, from furniture design to the design of mechanisms for awnings and sun umbrellas. The range of brands and products is exciting and diverse. In regards to furniture design, we are currently working with Martex, Alma Design, Minotti, Bonaldo, Mizar, Jesse and Flexform.'

It would of course be amiss of us not to talk about the development of the exciting new Martex products. 'My collaboration with Martex is extremely strong, as it began with the design of their first system collection, Han,' Mario tells us. 'The executive system became an international success.'

'Since moving into the workplace industry, Martex has become renowned for

Profile

Left image
Kyo table for Martex.

Main image
HOS headquarters, Brescia.



its unconventional use of colour and by its residential approach to furnishing the modern office. This is the distinguishing element that has allowed Martex to grow as a design-led furniture company – a way that today many competitors are following, confirming de facto the uniqueness of the brand.

'Our ongoing collaboration is a work in progress. We are currently working on extending the Kyo system. A very successful collection that, of course, has been imitated, nevertheless it still has many superior features that have to be developed. Furthermore, we are working on a new system that embodies

agile working by utilizing existing concepts from the Kyo collection. Without wishing to make Mario blush, we can't help but note that he has been frequently recognised for his work – in fact, winning awards has become something of a habit. 'The most gratifying aspect of my job is to give aesthetic pleasure to those who live and use my products,' Mario reflects. 'I don't design to win an award, but of course when it happens I am very satisfied.'

'I have won several important international awards: seven Red Dot awards, seven Good Design and different IF awards. Last year, with the Flute remote control I designed for

Mastermotion, we won all the most important international awards.

'But the most important award for me is the Young Design I won in 1991 with the Rita chair, produced by Zanotta, because it was the first.' Finally, we ask Mario who the greatest influences on his career have been. 'I married young, when I was still a student – at that time one of my greatest influences on my work was painting. A profound and lasting influence has always been my wife, Rita. She has always encouraged me to work and follow my passions. This profession is my life but also my obsession.' Behind every great man... ●