



Press release

## MERCANTEINFIERA SPRING: THE GOLDEN TWENTIES AND THE KING OF FAKES, KENNETH JAY LANE

(Parma, January 23) 1919: The Treaty of Versailles officially ended the Great War. In victorious Paris, a sense of rebirth transformed the French capital into a most dynamic laboratory of culture and creativity. The widespread euphoria felt in the United States because of its industrial expansion infected Europe to the beat of the Charleston, Foxtrot and Jazz.

Many famous figures made the Twenties shine: Louis Armstrong, F.S. Fitzgerald ("The Great Gatsby" was published in 1925), Joséphine Baker, Picasso, André Gide, Marcel Proust, Vionnet, Patou Lanvin and Chanel.

An era of apparently incessant optimism and freedom, during which domestic technologies such as the telephone, radio and gramophone were introduced. Cinema turned into feature film and women became bold. Having joined the labour market in massive numbers, they abandoned Victorian customs, shortened their skirts and adopted freer modes of behaviour: heavy makeup and short "garçonne" hairstyle.

"***The Golden Twenties. Life and fashion in the Années Folles decade***", the first collateral show scheduled at Mercanteinfiera, the Fiere di Parma event dedicated to antiques, design, modern vintage and vintage collectibles, running **from February 19 to March 8**, draws inspiration from this frenetic, electrifying era, overflowing with vitality and changes.

The show is curated by Paolo Aquilini, director of the Como Silk Museum, and Clara Cappelletti, in collaboration with Fondazione Setificio, Associazione Ex Allievi del Setificio and with the contribution of Ostinelli Seta, Clerici Tessuto, Bianca Cappello (jewellery historian) and Samuele Magri (art historian).

In the year in which Parma is Capital of Culture, the exhibition centre wants to reconnect with the city, with this show, through the cultural contamination of the Roaring Twenties.

Years of excitement, excess and provocation, which would lead to the first signs of female emancipation, including in fashion. Waistlines dropped, and skirts got shorter and shorter every year. In 1923 they hit the ankle, in 1924 the shin, in 1925 they fell just below the knee while in 1927 they crept above it, for the first time in the history of fashion. The **flapper** era had begun: women who touched up their makeup in public, smoked with a cigarette holder, and waived their feather fans when pausing between Charleston dances.

Through a timeline that tells the story of the 1919-1929 decade, more than sixty dresses, objects, accessories, precious fabrics and Como silks dating to the Golden Twenties period will be on display at Mercanteinfiera.

An immersive and sensory journey, featuring sounds and perfumes, shiny sequins and soft feathers. A magical time machine, imaginary Joan Crawford and Norma Shearers, will take visitors back until that last fragment of vitality before Wall Street's Black Friday in 1929.

The clothes on display come from the private collection of the Como Silk Museum, Clerici Tessuto, and Ostinelli Seta.

Elegant, sophisticated, the friend of aristocratic women such as the Duchess of Windsor and Princess Margaret, of famous divas such as Audrey Hepburn and Liz Taylor, he never stopped wanting to be a symbol of the American democratic spirit, because if it's true that "a diamond is forever, a rhinestone is for everyone."

This is the portrait of Kenneth Jay Lane (1932 - 2017), the famous American costume jewellery designer and protagonist of the second collateral show: ***Brilliant Illusions: a homage to Kenneth Jay Lane. The King of***

**Fakes**” curated by Maria Teresa Cannizzaro, collector, scholar of American costume jewellery and President of the Passato e Futuro cultural association - Italian Vintage Fashion & Costume Jewellery Club section - and by Fiorella Operto, costume historian, Vice-President and also a keen collector.

**The items on display come from the personal collection of** Maria Teresa Cannizzaro and date to the late 1960s.

The exhibition also celebrates the Italian know-how that contributed so much to what Lane himself called “the beautification of America”. “Italy, a country that I love and visit often and from whose exceptional museums I draw great inspiration,” the costume jewellery designer used to say.

He appreciated not only Italian culture and art, but also the sophisticated craftsmanship of the artisans who, from the late 19th century onwards, emigrated to Providence (where Kenneth graduated from the prestigious Rhode Island School of Design) and worked in the numerous costume jewellery factories that supplied Hollywood productions.

Today his creations, less expensive than jewels made with precious stones, yet elegant and tasteful, have achieved a popularity that grows day by day. So much so that his first costume jewels, such as those designed for Jacqueline Kennedy from 1962 onward, were auctioned at prestigious sites at prices close to those of real jewels, as an increasingly wide audience in different continents has started to collect them.

Eclectic and cultured, he used to say that essentially, he was a merchant who had the ability to make women from all walks of life feel like Cinderella going to the Prince’s Ball.

**Chris Sheppard**, President of Kenneth Jay Lane Inc, will present this eclectic figure who played such a significant role in the history of costume on **Saturday, February 29, at 11:30am (Pav. 4 - Sala Toscanini)**, in a meeting with the Mercantefiera public.

Over 100 American pieces of American costume jewellery together with antiques, design and vintage collectibles, the undisputed hallmarks of Mercanteinfiera.

The history of art from the 16th to the 19th century will be displayed by 1000 exhibitors over 45,000 sqm of exhibition area: antique Spanish ivory and turtle coin collection cabinets. imposing 18th-century mirrors or traditional Trapani pieces, such as a 16th-century Deposition in pink alabaster or the colourful porphyry vases. Those chasing rare pieces will come across curious unique pieces such as, for example, 39 Capodimonte statues from 1850 depicting Napoleon’s army, a late 19th-century silver anklet that was a part of Indian women’s dowry, or a Villanova bronze necklace dating as far back as the 9th century AD.

The exhibition is further enriched by iconic pieces by design masters such as Albini, Iosa Ghini and Fornasetti, jewels by David Webb, or strictly vintage fashion by Valentino, Chanel and Judith Leiber, who captivated women all over the world with her fanciful watermelon-shaped clutches.

Over 5000 buyers from all over the world have booked a place at the 26th edition of Mercanteinfiera Spring. Canada is a new entry.

**Mercanteinfiera has the patronage of IAM - Italian American Museum of New York.**

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