



Press Release

MERCANTEINFIERA TELLS THE STORY OF OLIVETTI'S GENIUS AND OF THE ITALIAN MIGRANTS IN AMERICA

*Fiere di Parma,
from 12 to 20 March, 2022*

(Parma, 16 December 2021) - **Mercanteinfiera**, the Fiere di Parma exhibition of antiques, historic design and vintage collectibles, **opens from 12 to 20 March** looking back to the 20th century.

Two collateral shows will inaugurate the 26th edition: “**The ships were setting sail. Home sweet home America**” and “**Olivetti #HistoryofInnovation**”. Different stories that share the element of aspiration: the dream of the over 14 million Italians who at the beginning of the last century set sail for the New World, and the dream of one man, Adriano Olivetti, who aimed at an economic-industrial model based on solidarity, responsibility, justice and humanity.

*“Two distinct objectives guided me in the choice of the shows - says **Ilaria Dazzi**, Exhibition Director of Mercanteinfiera. On the one hand, the desire to contribute to the collective memory, because the stories of yesterday’s migrations are fundamentally the same as those we see today, with the same fears, the same hopes and the same feelings. On the other, to point the spotlight on a genius in, among other areas, design, a man deserving of greater recognition, who was able to innovate Italian industry. Without abdicating its business calling, Mercanteinfiera has long aimed to be a place where creativity, imagination and reflection can be nurtured. We welcome art enthusiasts and we work hard to ensure that they cross the exit gates as more aware citizens.*

The scheduled collateral shows (Pav. 4)

“**The ships were setting sail. Home sweet home America**” is organized by Massimo Cutò, journalist and collector, and tells the story of the journey of the Italian migrants who in the early 20th century embarked for the United States with the great shipping companies - Navigazione Generale Italiana, Lloyd Italiano, and Fabre Line, just to name a few.

The exhibition ranges from the posters of the elegant liners with their smoking chimneys that were sent monthly to town hall offices advertising new routes, to the ads of Italian products that were already the symbols of a pioneering “Made in Italy” sector; from the evocative family photos framed by the two flags, sealing their integration into the New World, to the shoe shine stool, the humble destiny of many wops (a derogatory term used for Italians, derived from “without papers”). There are also cockades, the dreaded health cards issued in Ellis Island, which

decreed the end or the beginning of the migrants' dream, and melancholy music about the fatherland, now so distant.

“Olivetti #StoriadiInnovazione” is the title of the show organized in collaboration with the Olivetti Historical Archive Association in Ivrea.

The itinerary consists of three stages - typing machines, calculators, laptops printers and cash registers - that focus on Adriano Olivetti's concept of design: not just an external finishing touch to apply to the product in order to sell more, but rather a metaphor for responsibility towards the environment, people, the destiny of the product and of society.

Thus, on display there will be the M40 model and the Lettera 22, the portable typewriter that was used by great journalists and writers from Indro Montanelli to Oriana Fallaci, from Enzo Biagi to Ernest Hemingway. Also the Olivetti Valentine, made in 1968 to a design by Ettore Sottsass and Perry A. King, the calculators Divisumma 24 and 18, Summa 19 and Programma 101, the desktop programmable calculator considered by some IT historians to be the very first true personal computer.

However, the indisputable trademarks of Mercanteinfiera are, as always, its **antiques, signature design and vintage collectibles**: the whole history of art from the 17th to the 20th century, from the Baroque period to Classicism, from Romanticism to Realism and Art Deco, comprising a rich collection of rare pieces, will be on show in 40,000 sqm of exhibition area. Here it is not unusual to find side by side an antique 19th-century Cartel clock made by the Parisian clockmaker Antoine Thiout, a sophisticated stereoscopic viewer of the early 20th century for looking at postcards in three dimensions, and a painting by the provocative Austrian performance artist Herman Nitsch or by Luciano Lutring, painter and criminal. The latter, known in the 1960s as the “machine gun soloist” because he used to hide his weapons in a violin case, had a double career as outlaw and artist.

There are also brand names of watches (Rolex, Patek Philippe, Audemars Piguet, IWC etc.), of vintage fashion and of historic design: Gio Ponti, Colombo, Fornasetti, Arne Jacobsen, Gio Verneti and Gaetano Pesce. Four pavilions of iconic objects from the past, an expression of great creative and production adventures that have entered our homes and transformed them. As they continue to do today, thanks partly to Mercanteinfiera.