

Kartell Museum

The Kartell Museum, founded by Claudio Luti in 1999 to celebrate Kartell's fiftieth anniversary, is the custodian and narrator of one of the most fertile and fascinating chapters in the history of Italian design. It illustrates a unique reality that has witnessed the amazing marriage of plastic and design, animated by the constant commitment to the "technological challenge" that characterises all the items on display.

The layout by Ferruccio Laviani displays over a thousand items that have been part of our everyday lives from 1949 (year of Kartell's foundation) to the present. It covers an area of 2500 m² in the Kartell building designed by Anna Castelli Ferrieri and Ignazio Gardella in 1967, and displays car accessories, household goods, lamps, labware, furniture and furnishing accessories, that are part of the over sixty years of Kartell's history.

Winner of the Guggenheim Impresa & Cultura Award for the best corporate museum, the Kartell Museum preserves about 4,000 products, 15,000 photographs, 5,000 drawings that can be consulted by scholars and researchers. The Kartell Museum aims to promote the culture of design to the public with guided tours, research, international exhibitions and publications, such as the recent monograph *Kartell. The Culture of Plastics*, published by Taschen, which presents the more than sixty years of Kartell through the voices of the protagonist and the designers, but also the images and photographs from the museum archives.



"This extraordinary museum is an ode to design, an ode to plastic and an ode to the history of Italian design."
Paola Antonelli

"Kartell's museum's strengths are the company's strengths. The museum shows the choices it has taken, and the investments it has made. The exhibits, and the display itself, reflect a continuing and serious commitment to research and experiment. At a time when so many archives are being lost or discarded, Kartell is a model for others to follow"
Dejan Sudjic

Kartell

The chemical engineer Giulio Castelli founds Kartell in 1949 with the aim to "produce objects with innovative features seen as the application of new technologies, with an eye to economy of materials and efficiency in the process". He begins his activities producing automobile accessories, homeware, lighting fixtures, laboratory ware and, with the opening of Habitat Division in 1963, furniture and furnishing accessories. Right from the start Kartell takes the wholly innovative approach of designing items based on technological research and design, essential in tackling "the design of plastics" which, unlike natural materials, have no visible identity before they are processed.

In 1988, as he approached the age of 70, Giulio Castelli handed over the leadership of the company to Claudio Luti, who purchases Kartell. Luti revises the catalogue while remaining faithful to the Kartell DNA and concentrates his strategies on the product promoting quality-based project research which emphasises tactile qualities and sound perception of the surfaces, and enlisting the aid of designers such as Philippe Starck, Vico Magistretti and Antonio Citterio. The company's business is divided into two main lines: Labware or laboratory items, and Habitat, dedicated to furnishings, home décor and lighting.

In 1997, Kartell plans a new distribution network, and opens at via Turati, in Milan, the first Kartell Flagship Store. With the most recent openings, Kartell has strengthened its corporate image as well as in Europe, China, Middle East and South America, with about 120 Kartell Flagship Stores and 150 Shop in Shops.

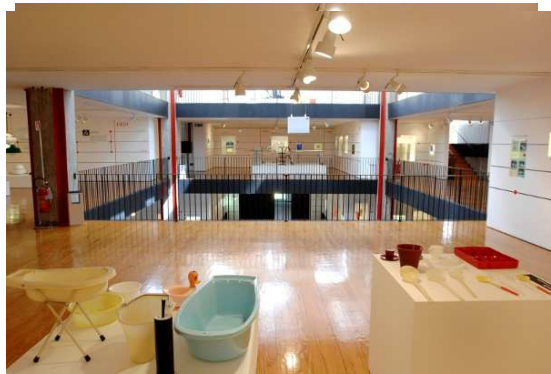


Household goods

The most illustrative pieces of Kartell Design of the 1950s are the household goods by Gino Colombini, who headed the company's technical department. **Colombini finds the "right form" for the new materials, creating objects that combine utility and beauty and contributing to the transformation of the domestic landscape.**

In 1953 Kartell commences the production of polyethylene buckets and baby baths with the aim of "*introducing plastic to the home*". The company soon progresses to products of great cultural significance, such as the shockproof polystyrene *long-handled dustpan*, now displayed in many museums worldwide, which replaces the traditional metal version with wooden handle, or the *KS1481 lemon squeezer*, the shape of which will be taken as a model by home appliance manufacturers for the electric citrus juicers.

During the mid-1970s, with the strengthening of the furniture division, Kartell gradually withdrew from the household goods sector: the *Kartell in Tavola* table set, designed by Anna Castelli Ferrieri, Centrokappa and Franco Raggi, is the latest production of Household goods Division that stops for thirty years. In 2009 the company once more ventures into the world of tableware accessories with the trays and vases of Mario Bellini and Patricia Urquiola and continues its reflections on transparent, coloured and precious materials.



Lighting

The Lighting Division was founded in 1958 and Kartell developed brilliant new practical and environmental solutions for home lighting. The *4006 lamp* by Achille and Piergiacomo Castiglioni is the company's first suspension lamp. Boasting exemplary formal simplicity and characterised by lightness and infrangibility, it paves the way for a production that lasted over two decades.

Up until 1981, the year that the division is closed, **the company has called upon the masters of design from Marco Zanuso to Joe Colombo and Giotto Stoppino.** Joe Colombo designs items with universal appeal like the *KD27 table lamp* in 1967 and tries out variations on the theme of graduated light as in the *KD24 table lamp* of 1968. The *Tic-Tac lamp* designed by Giotto Stoppino in 1970 is made of polypropylene (a plastic used for insulation) where the lamp could be turned on by pressing the top of the lamp with the hand thus making the characteristic "tic-tac" sound. In 2002 the new suspension lamps, *Easy and FL/Y* by Ferruccio Laviani, marks the re-opening of the division with new reflections and plays of light across transparent surfaces.

The first suspension lamps and then the table lamps, *Take* and *Bourgie* by the same designer, reinforce the language of transparent plastic and demonstrate the ability of the company to meet the varied aesthetic criteria relying on its wealth of technological know-how acquired in its sixty years of production. The formal and technical research led in 2012 to the *Taj* lamp by Ferruccio Laviani who for the first time used LED technology inside an essential but decided form.



Labware

Kartell opens a labware division in 1958, when it has acquired a thorough knowledge of plastics, as testified by the many awards won for the high quality of its products.

Due to their strength and shatterproof characteristics, plastics are much better suited for labware than traditional materials like glass, ceramics and wood.

The earliest production consists of plastic versions of common labware hitherto made of glass, such as beakers, cylinders and funnels. Kartell's contribution to the sector was twofold, involving both the use of new plastic materials and the design of products with significant changes, both aesthetic and functional. For example, as early as 1959, Gino Colombini reinvents one of the commonest items, the test-tube rack.

Towards the end of the 1970s, Kartell successfully enters the fields of disposable products, whose shape and characteristics are closely associated with highly specialised use and require very sophisticated design procedures.

Today Kartell's Labware Division still uses the most sophisticated technologies to design and manufacture products to the highest qualitative standards.



Furniture

After winning five Compasso d'Oro Awards and Medals of the Triennale di Milano, Kartell starts manufacturing plastic furniture in 1963. Kartell strengthens its identity during the 1960s in the wake of the international success of Italian and particularly Milanese design, exploring the versatility of materials and enlisting the aid of external designers, such as Marco Zanuso, Joe Colombo and Giotto Stoppino.

In 1964 the famous K1340 children's chair (later 4999) designed by Marco Zanuso and Richard Sapper becomes the world's first plastic chair. This combinable, easily cleaned and disassembled piece with a soft, semi-enveloping form is extremely successful. This chair is followed in 1967 by Joe Colombo's stackable 4867 "Universale" chair that is the first chair in the world to be made entirely from injection-moulded ABS.

At the end of the decade, Kartell manufactures surprising furnishing objects, such as the modular furniture *Componibili*, invented by Anna Castelli Ferrieri, surprising objects because of the module that satisfies the different styles of living that are becoming widespread.

The 1970s are characterised by new attention to the workplace and the areas of collective services. One example is the series of a *chair, side table and armchair* designed by Gae Aulenti for the Fiat offices in 1974 where rigid polyurethane is used for the first time. In 1979 the *Sistema Scuola* designed by Centrokappa was born, elements for functional school furniture (seating, benches, tables and accessories) for study and play that could be put together and taken apart using big red screws and a play screwdriver. In the same year, Anna Castelli Ferrieri designs the *Sgabelli* series which uses the technology of embedding metal inserts in the polyurethane frame making it possible to produce these high stools made of plastic which has never before been done.

In the 1980s under the artistic management of Anna Castelli Ferrieri, Kartell furniture reconcile industrial logic and the high-tech approach with the allure of postmodernism, resulting in products such as the *4300 table*, the first large table entirely produced by injection moulding, and the infinitely *stackable 4870 chair*.

In 1988 under the guidance of Claudio Luti the *Dr. Glob* chair by Philippe Starck is the first product with significant thicknesses, sharp corners, touch, new colourings and matt surfaces, a forerunner of the trends that would dominate the years to come.

During the 1990s plastic is combined with other materials such as aluminium, iron and wood and acquires a very wide range of colours, as in the case of the *Mauna-Kea* chair by Vico Magistretti, which is offered in 160 colour variations. Kartell further extends its collection with the contribution of several international designers, resulting in products such as Ron Arad's *Bookworm* bookcase (1994) and the *Battista* trolley by Antonio Citterio and Oliver Loew (1991).

Since the turn of the millennium, the emphasis has been on transparency. The trend commences in 1999 with Philippe Starck's transparent polycarbonate *La Marie* chair, which revolutionises the plastic surfaces hitherto used. Kartell is the first company to produce painted transparent surfaces and to employ rotation-moulding technology, allowing the production of the first all-plastic sofa in the design sector, Philippe Starck's *Bubble Club*.

In the following years such well-known international designers as Patricia Urquiola, Patric Jouin or Marcel Wanders play with surfaces creating wavy, faceted and irregular surfaces. In 2008 the *Mr. Impossible* chair by Philippe Starck makes using the revolutionary laser welding technology meant it is possible to join its two shells with an invisible seam, the sign of the constant technological challenge taken up by Kartell. Proof of the growing tendency for technical innovation is the *Ghost Buster* commode of 2011, the largest single mould product in the furnishing world.

The company has also experimented using the material in other sectors as well, in 2009 with the collection of coloured footwear and in 2013 with the complete bathroom project designed by Ludovica+Roberto Palomba.



Communication

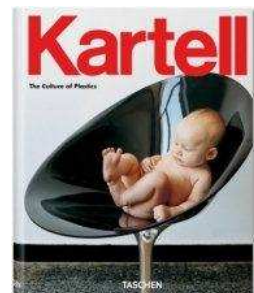
Kartell has always participated in the cultural debate on the themes of industrial design: *Qualità*, the sector's first house organ, is founded in 1956 and focuses on design and plastics. Its graphic layout is entrusted to Michele Provinciali.

During the 1970s the company starts publishing *Kartellnews* and *Modo* magazine edited by Alessandro Mendini. **In 1972, invited by the MoMA in New York, Kartell participates in the exhibition entitled *Italy: The New Domestic Landscape*, presenting three avant-garde living proposals designed by Gae Aulenti, Ettore Sottsass and Marco Zanuso.** They are accompanied by several pieces from its production that are subsequently added to the museum's permanent collection. In 1973 Valerio Castelli founds Centrokappa, a company of the group that not only coordinates Kartell's image but also promotes Italian design worldwide with cultural events on the theme of design staged in the exhibition hall that is now part of the Museum.

During the 1980s Kartell steps up its marketing and communication activities in the attempt to reach a public with a new cultural approach, and commences a detailed study of its history with the exhibition entitled *Kartell 1949-1983. Progetti per il presente*.

Following the foundation of the Kartell Museum in 1999, the company's collections are requested by the world's leading museums, commencing with the Pompidou Centre in Paris, which stages a monographic exhibition entitled *La Donation Kartell* in 2000. In 2007 the company decides to maintain the Museum's contemporary spirit by extending it with three new rooms, dedicated to the production from 2000 to the present day. With the same spirit, the Museum organizes in-depth exhibitions on design and creativity, such as: *The invisible* by Tokujin Yoshioka (2011), *7 electric chairs...as you like it* by Robert Wilson (2012).

In 2012 Kartell has edited the monograph *Kartell. The culture of plastics*, published by Taschen, presenting the "plastic revolution" in daily life from post-war days up to the present.



Selection of awards

Kartell has been honoured with many international awards which have recognised both product design and corporate strategies based on research and on design consistency.

In addition to the following selection of prestigious international awards, we highlight the **Gold Medals at the Milan Triennale**, a prize established in 1923, and those of **BIO**, the **Ljubljana Biennial in Design** which has been given since 1964, up to the most recent awards including those of **Elle Decor Magazine** or **Visionaries! Award** to Claudio Luti.

In 2000, Kartell Museum won the Guggenheim Impresa & Cultura Award for the best corporate museum. The Award is given in recognition of the Italian companies that create cultural activities and interpret the investment in culture as a tool for the building of a distinct cultural identity.

Compasso d'Oro Award



Among the most authoritative world awards, the Compasso d'Oro Award was established in 1954 by La Rinascente to highlight the quality of Italian design and since 1964 it has been curated by ADI, the Italian Industrial Design Association. Kartell has received the awards listed here and the selection of about seventy products received Honourable Mention.



1955
KS 1146 Bucket with cover
Gino Colombini



1960
KS 1171 Modular dish rack
Gino Colombini



1987
4870 Stackable chair
Anna Castelli Ferrieri



1957
KS 1065 Rectangular tub
Gino Colombini



1964
4999 Children's chair
Richard Sapper and Marco Zanuso



1994
Mobil drawer
Antonio Citterio and Oliver Loew



1959
KS 1481 Lemon squeezer
Gino Colombini



1979
to Kartell



2001
Bubble Club sofa
Philippe Starck

Good Design Award, Chicago



An International award established in 1950 and assigned by The Chicago Athenaeum and The European Centre for Architecture, Art, Design and Urban Studies to give recognition to the best product innovation and creativity.



2007
T-Table sidetable
Patricia Urquiola



2010
Ghost Buster commode
Philippe Starck with Eugeni Quitllet



2012
Audrey chair
Piero Lissoni



2007
Spoon Chair
Antonio Citterio with Toan Nguyen



2010
Masters chair
Philippe Starck with Eugeni Quitllet



2012
Miss Less chair
Philippe Starck



2008
Mr. Impossible chair
Philippe Starck with Eugeni Quitllet



2011
Magic Hole collection
Philippe Starck with Eugeni Quitllet



2012
Invisible table
Tokujin Yoshioka

Red Dot Award



From 1955, the German prize Red Dot Award follows the motto "in search of excellence" to value the design quality. Conferred by the Design Zentrum Nordrhein Westfalen, the award is today considered a prestigious recognition in the field of design. The category "Red Dot Best of the best" is reserved to the highest quality expressed.



2013
Invisible table
Tokujin Yoshioka

Red Dot: Best of the best
2013



2013
Masters chair
Philippe Starck with Eugeni Quitllet



2013
Audrey chair
Piero Lissoni

Kartell Museum Foundation

Head offices in Noviglio, Via delle Industrie, 3
Established on 23 December 1998
Recognised by the Region of Lombardy

Legal form:	Participatory Foundation
Founders:	Kartell spa
President:	Claudio Luti
General Secretary:	Lorenza Luti
Councillors:	Claudio Coppetti, Elisa Storage
Purposes:	<p>The Foundation proposes to disseminate knowledge of industrial design and its related aesthetic and production processes to the public. For this purpose the Foundation is intended to be a Company Museum, a permanent cultural institution open to the public and will see to the preservation, cataloguing and exhibition of those objects which are the assets and cultural and corporate features of Kartell Spa as seen in the logical framework of cultural and operational interrelationships with other bodies involved in the sector and national and international cultural institutions.</p> <p>The Foundation also wishes to investigate all aspects of the relationships between materials and the forms of objects in everyday use which bear meaningful witness to human civilization and the environment in which it developed in the context of the rediscovery and promotion of cultural values in the industrial product.</p>
Foundation Bodies:	<p>Among the bodies of the Foundation, provision has been made for the establishment of an Advisory Board as a consultative and guarantor body composed of Italian and foreign members specially qualified in matters of interest to the Foundation. This body will carry out consultative and collaborative activities in drawing up the programmes and activities of the Foundation.</p> <p>Provision has also been made for the establishment of a Participatory Meeting where advisory opinions and proposals will be presented on the activities, programmes and objectives of the Foundation which have already been outlined or which are still to be identified</p>
Curator Museo Kartell:	Elisa Storage



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