



ENZO MARI: Designer Biography

Enzo Mari, the internationally renowned industrial designer, has been creating furniture for more than 50 years and is widely recognized as one of Italy's most thoughtful and designers. His work can be characterized as functional, sustainable, and rational and he is continuously searching for a new way to reinvent the wheel—specifically through significant collaborations that he truly feels stand for something significant.

Where Japan Meets Italy

Enzo Mari's most recent artistic and environmental venture was initiated in 2003 when he joined forces with one of Japan's oldest and most esteemed furniture ateliers, Hida Sangyo, Co., Ltd. Together, they began to create the HIDA Concept furniture collection, a 34 piece series of furniture and décor accessories of which 15 pieces are available in the US, that transformed the beauty of the knotted Sugi wood into chic, streamlined luxury styles.

Hida Sangyo originally piqued Mari's interest when he learned about the company's effective use of the Sugi tree for furniture production, as well as the innovative technology processes they employed to drive down production costs. Mari concurred with Hida Sangyo's values and missions, and he too was an advocate for sustainable furniture manufacturing, as well as the importance of supporting forestry workers.

The resulting HIDA collaboration collection exudes simplicity and beauty that closely resembles traditional Japanese architecture. The product also combines the Italian power of design with Japanese technology. Additionally, it uses environmentally-friendly and sustainable manufacturing practices.

The HIDA collection has been well received amongst design influencers and has demonstrated success internationally. It has already received accolades for its accomplishments in the global market and specifically received the 2007 'Editors Award for Craftsmanship' at the International Contemporary Furniture Fair in New York. The next step for Mari and Hida will be to launch the collection into the U.S. market for fall 2008.

Before the HIDA Collaboration

Enzo Mari was born in Novara, Italy in 1932. As a young man, Mari studied classics and literature at the Academia di Brera in Milan. Mari started working in the industrial field in the 1950s and opened a studio in Milan to continue his studies in the psychology of vision, systems of perception and design methodologies. At that time, he found himself forced to earn a living. Traveling via bike one day, because he could not afford a taxi, he delivered his metal “Putrella” material to the Italian manufacturing company, DANESE. This initial meeting would be the beginning of a long-standing relationship between the manufacturer and Mari and from there they begin collaborating, eventually mass-manufacturing various products. The items created by Mari in fact, the ‘*Putrella*’ and his *wooden block series*, remain some of DANESE’s most visible products to this day. Doing his own experimental work in other areas of the visual arts, Mari went on to found the Nuova Tendenza group of artists in Milan in 1963. In the 1970’s Mari began utilizing his production skills and experience to create a sustainable furniture line, while still continuing his work as a product designer. Today 29 of Mari’s pieces are permanent fixture in MoMA’s collection.

Enzo Mari’s philosophy and perceptions of the world are apparent in all elements of his work, and most recently specifically in the collection he designed with Hida Sangyo. All his pieces are not just aesthetically satisfying, but each design must be utilitarian, functional, and do justice to the materials used. Mari’s philosophy can be best described as “rational design” and he defines his work as being “elaborative or constructed in a way that corresponds entirely to the purpose or function of the project.”

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