

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### *The Art of Cleto Munari*

18 JANUARY - 8 FEBRUARY 2013

Mizuma Gallery is pleased to present The Art of Cleto Munari from 18 January to 8 February 2013. For the first time in Singapore, this show by artist-designer Cleto Munari in collaboration with leaders of the Transavangarde movement: Mimmo Paladino, Sandro Chia; and world-known architects Alessandro Mendini and Marcello Morandini, highlights the development of "disegno italiano". This exhibition features unique handmade art furniture and objects, exploring liberal theories between modernism and postmodernism.

As a reaction against the conceptual and minimal art of the 1970s, Munari and the artists of the Transavangarde movement show how the figure is needed to produce a passageway between the serenity of social communication and the turbulence of the artistic act, thus returning to the portrayal of recognisable objects in a rough and violently emotional way using vivid colour harmonies and radical shapes.

Throughout his productive adventure, Cleto Munari has been protecting the idea of the figure as a disruptive event by constructing his very own language that ranges from architecture to jewellery, from décor to decorative objects. He has demonstrated how the contemporary artist who possesses multiple aptitudes can observe the world without feeling the need to manipulate it; but how the figure introduces beauty as a defence against the inertia of the daily routine.

**Cleto Munari (\*1930, Gorizia)** He founded Cleto Munari Design Associates in 1972 with its primary objective the research of image, form and style. In 1985 he opened a studio in Vicenza where, with world famous architects, he created jewellery and objects for his new avantgarde collections, making history in jewellery worldwide. His creations are in many museum collections around the world, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art and MoMA, New York.

**Alessandro Mendini (\*1931, Milan)** Designer and architect, co-founder of the Domus Academy, he was awarded the Compasso d'oro for design twice in 1979 and 1981. Since 1989 he has designed two underground stations in Naples, the Groningen Museum and the Mendini Gallery. As the creator of the famous "Proust" chair, he pushes the boundaries of what products could be.

**Mimmo Paladino (\*1948, Paduli)** First a conceptual photographer, he shifted his attention to figurative painting in the late 70s, and became a central figure of the Transavangarde movement. He was part of the Aperto '80 exhibition curated by Achille Bonito Oliva for the 1980 Venice Biennale. His numerous solo exhibitions have been held in public museums and private galleries worldwide.

**Sandro Chia (\*1946, Florence)** Initially focusing on conceptual art during the 1970s under Yves Klein's influence, painting gained increasing importance for the artist, reflecting tradition and history in a subjective-expressive way. He was part of Documenta 7 and of the 1988 Venice Biennale. A well known and respected artist, his works are in collections worldwide.

**Marcello Morandini (\*1940, Mantua)** Starting as a graphic designer with Umberto Eco, he participated in the 1965 San Paulo Biennale. He studies the visual representation of movement, producing black and white graphic and plastic works. Awarded the title "Honorary Royal Designer for Industry" by the Royal Society of Arts, London, his works are recognised and collected internationally.

**David Palterer (\*1940, Haifa)** Naturalized Israeli Italian, the architect and designer lives and works in Florence since 1972. His work ranges from urban planning to interior design. He has taught at various prestigious institutions, such as the Politecnico di Milano, and his works are in museum collections worldwide, including the Israel Museum, Jerusalem, the Fonds national d'art contemporain, Paris, the Chicago Athenaeum Museum of Architecture and Design, Chicago and the Kunstmuseum, Düsseldorf.

## Opening Reception

18 January 2013, 6PM

Exhibition will open on Friday, 18 January 2013, 6PM.

## Gallery Profile

Mizuma Gallery was first established in Tokyo by Sueo Mizuma in 1994 with the mission of promoting Asian and Japanese artists both on the local and international contemporary art scenes. Its Singapore opening will be the 3rd expansion for Mizuma Gallery with current spaces in Tokyo, Japan and Beijing, China. Mizuma Gallery is a key gallery for the development of Japanese contemporary art and has exhibited at important art fairs such as ARCO (Madrid), Armory Show (New York), Frieze (London), FIAC (Paris), Basel Miami (Miami) and Hong Kong Art Fair (Hong Kong).

## About Gillman Barracks

Gillman Barracks (GB) is Asia's up-and-coming destination for contemporary art. It will be distinguished as a vibrant centre in Asia for the creation, exhibition and discussion of contemporary art. Named after British general Sir Webb Gillman, GB is set amid lush greenery and was once a stronghold to the First Battalion of the Middlesex Regiment. The conserved colonial barracks will house galleries and creative businesses, as well as the Centre for Contemporary Art (CCA) Singapore. The international galleries will feature diverse and ever-changing contemporary art exhibitions, while CCA Singapore will bolster the region's visual arts landscape through its international artist residency, research and exhibition programmes. By fostering cultural exchange and creation, showcasing the best and most innovative art of our times, as well as generating discourse and research, CCA Singapore will establish Singapore as an important centre for contemporary art in Asia. Gillman Barracks was officially launched on 14 September 2012, and open to public from 15 September 2012. The Centre for Contemporary Art (CCA) Singapore will open in 2013. More information on Gillman Barracks can be found at [www.gillmanbarracks.com](http://www.gillmanbarracks.com).

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## **An Introduction to the Art of Cleto Munari**

*Milenko Prvacki, Artist, Senior Fellow, Office of the President, LASALLE College of the Arts*

By introducing Cleto Munari's collection of exquisite design in Singapore, we have to address two major issues: how one relates to the relevance of such a sophisticated form of design in relation to contemporary living and positioning toward utilitarian art, and secondly—but equally important—raise the necessity to present to the Singaporean public the great importance of the Italian Transavanguardia, with its influential style, a pure and genuine original art movement that reshaped the map of contemporary painting, sculpture and printing within an international frame and indirectly—it resonated internationally—even in contemporary art practice in Southeast Asia.

We all know that Design, above all, represents a synthesis of applied arts, science and philosophy, with its main goal to adapt and subordinate the environment to humankind's aspirations, so that it becomes more functional and more beautiful. Design changed and evolved through history in relation to technology's achievements, aesthetics and social needs.

We need to bring as a referral point: Bauhaus. The most important source of modernism and functionalism, it set the principles and criteria that continue even today to influence designers. The Bauhaus movement is detectable by combining handmade objects and fine art, in order to make it available to the general population. It represented, a century ago, a source of modernism and functionalism, and set the principles that still today affect contemporary design and the way we are looking at its impact on everyday life.

A key influence was generated by the style of former designers who contributed to spreading the ideas of the Bauhaus and paved the way for modern design. Walter Gropius envisioned the unity of art and technology, and the influence of the Bauhaus spawned countless significant movements in the artistic community, embraced enthusiastically by some of the world's most prominent artists of that era: Oskar Schlemmer, László Moholy-Nagy, Lyonel Feininger, Paul Klee, Wassily Kandinsky and Josef Albers.

In line with this logic, consequent to its fundamental meaning, the Italian and international designer Cleto Munari also combines handmade objects with fine art and collaborate with great artists, designers and theoreticians, akin to the spirit of the Bauhaus. And this is the only similarity with the well-known modernist movement. Munari follows the same approach but rethinks and reinvents design theory and praxis by collaborating with another eclectic group of artists, architects; and theoreticians: Sandro Chia, Mimmo Paladino, Dario Fo, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Carlo Scarpa and Mark Strand. It is not easy to conduct an orchestra with so many good, exceptional and already formed, independent soloists.

But hence, here is the very sensitive place where Munari distinguishes himself from the usual trends, annual styles and seasonal fashions. Munari goes out of the traditional mold makers and banal populist recipes but deliberately and consciously creates a sophisticated play on the edge of the blade, between design and art on one side, and elitism and appeal in another. He knows exactly the measure of how to balance the relation between functionality, craft and art. Because, ultimately, Munari's objects aspire to, and remain in the field of fine arts. It is the pictorial intensity, the subtlety of the lines (coming from original drawings) that leave their statement on his furniture and home accessory collection.

With a great contribution and "help of his friends"; Munari now presents a comprehensive and consistent body of work here in Singapore. And just a reminder to the Singaporean public, his friends are not ordinary collaborators but very well known Italian artists of the Transavanguardia, today's international names, personalities and works that traced the direction for world's art practice some 35 years ago. They were all "rebellious" young artists, under the guidance and generous protection of an exquisite intellectual, art-critic and historian: Achille Bonito Oliva.

*“The transience is in the creation of the work, which is never hampered by academic perfectionism, but is always in transit between the creative drive and the stability of the result. Moreover, the image always catches fleeting sensations, such as the witticisms in the work of Chia, the sense of matter in that of Cucchi, the suspension of time in Clemente, the music of color in De Maria, and multipurpose motifs in Paladino. Time as a relentless flow becomes the defining moment of works that contain the embryo of their own supersedence”.*

- Achille Bonito Oliva

These artists and Munari’s individualism is not compromised in any of the exhibited design works/arts objects/collaborations. It is a leavening process with sensitive and pragmatic results, successful hybrids, “beautiful” and applicable, very much in tune exactly with what the Singaporean public is ready now to follow.

Mimmo Paladino for Cleto Munari



*Bar Cabinet "Battle of San Romano"*

## Mimmo Paladino for Cleto Munari



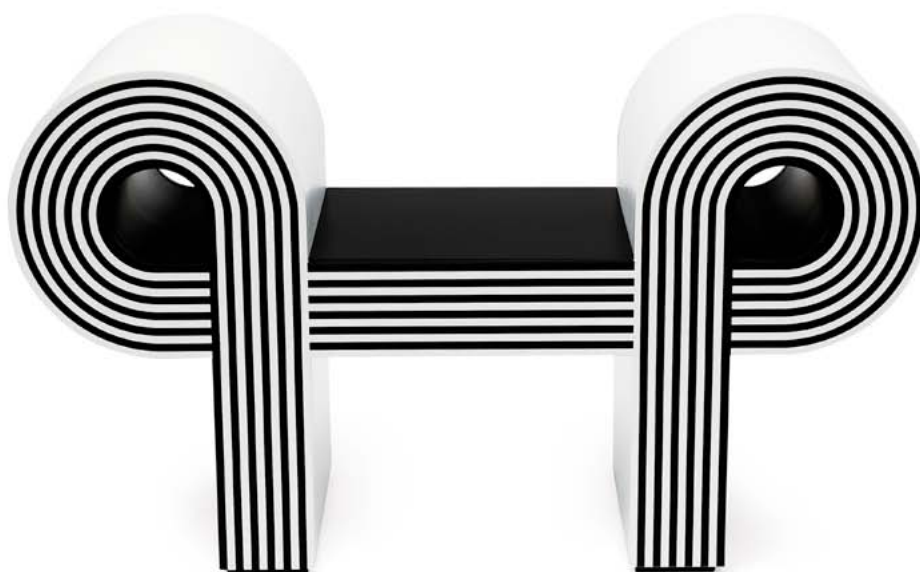
*Table "Battle of San Romano"*

## Cleto Munari



*Table "Palafitte"*

## Marcello Morandini for Cleto Munari



*Bench "Posseduta"*



## Alessandro Mendini for Cleto Munari



*Bookcase "San Francisco"*

## Sandro Chia for Cleto Munari



*Cabinet "Fantasmino"*

## Cleto Munari



*Ring in silver 925,  
composed coral,  
gold plated 24 carat*

## Cleto Munari



*Bracelet in silver 925,  
gold plated 24 carat*