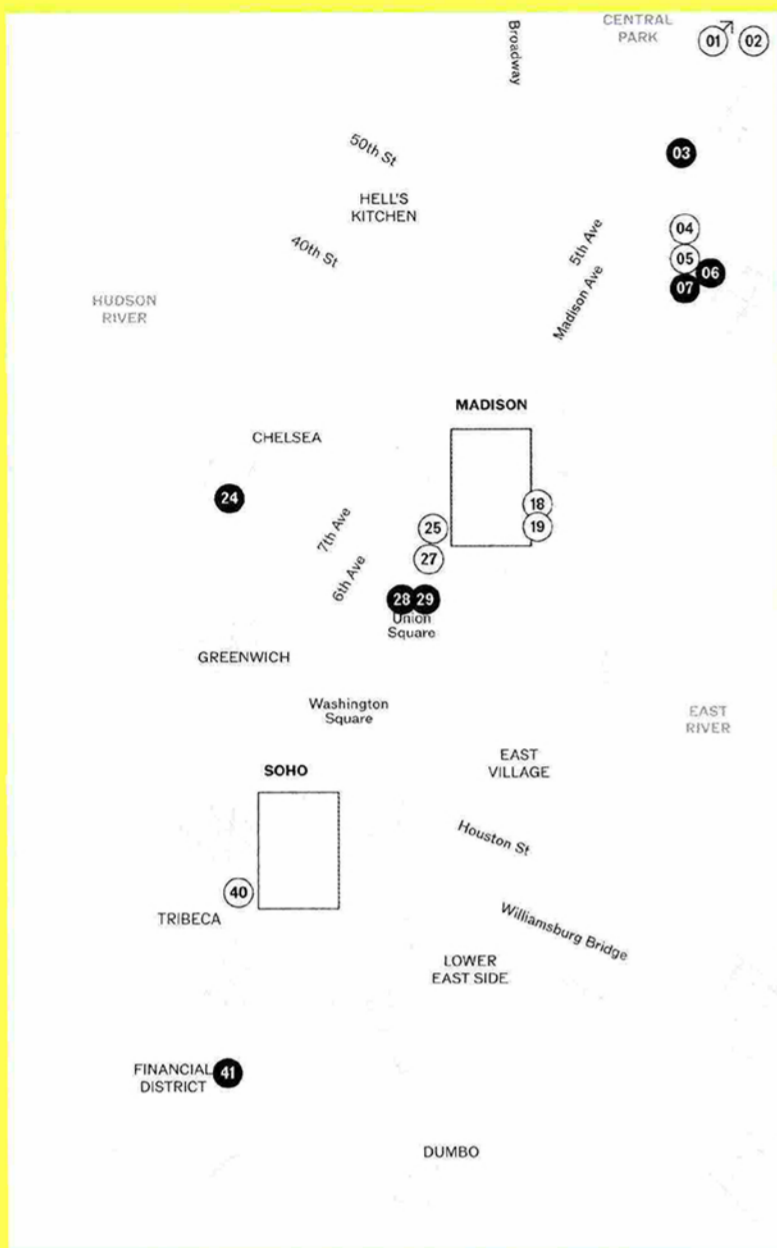


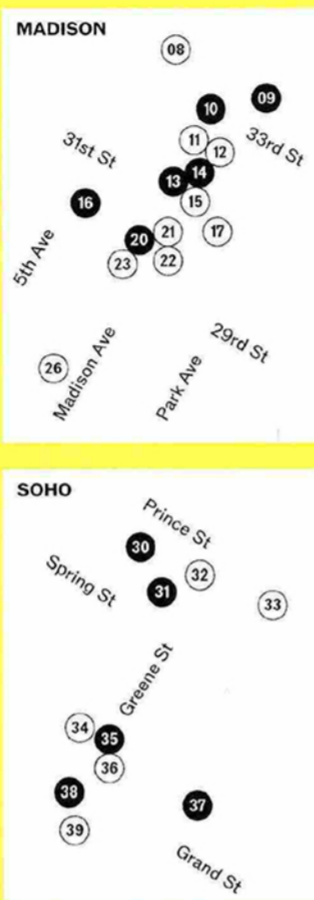
Big Italy

curated by Patrizia Catalano
in collaboration with Marina Jonna



New York. From Soho to Madison via NoMad, the store windows of Made in Italy and the Italian Design system are making a fine display. The trends? As six entrepreneurs tell us, product design matters, but it matters even more to create atmospheres and new imagery

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EVERY CITY EVOKES ITSELF THROUGH ITS SYMBOLS, its most representative architectures. In New York, an iconic contemporary city, they've always been the skyscrapers and with them Brooklyn Bridge, the Statue of Liberty, Central Park. The city that fascinated Le Corbu, who wrote an essay about it, *When the Cathedrals Were White*, has dictated the rules of style and glamour has more than any other place in the world.

The light, the energy of the city, its disenchanted charm have attracted millions of people, who travel to New York to realize a dream, a project, to feed a myth that is always on the move. The focal point of the city is Manhattan, which tells its story through its skyline, the buildings designed by great architects, and also its ground level comprising the fascinating commercial spaces that make the world's cities vital, but here are so much more representative and iconic.

Made in Italy – an expression coined in New York for the exhibition "The New Domestic Landscape" curated by Emilio Ambasz at the MoMA in 1972 – has made a special contribution to the city, and in particular to Manhattan. Since the 1980s, the most important fashion brands have flocked here (Armani, Max Mara, Gucci...), together with the gourmet world, with the legendary Arrigo Cipriani and later Oscar Farinetti and his Eaty, and then design, first and foremost Cassina and B&B Italia.

The first district colonized by Italian monobrand design stores was SoHo. In the 1970s it was a run-down and dilapidated neighborhood, but its turn-of-the-century buildings had some very attractive spaces, with wooden floors, cast-iron columns, high ceilings and lots of light. The first to reclaim it were the artists, who settled in what was a former abandoned industrial area, converting the spaces into large studios. In the following decade, the 'mythical Eighties', the lofts were joined by elegant art galleries and from there the escalation for design and then fashion began. "SoHo was the ideal showcase where we wanted to arrive with our first single-brand flagship store," says Roberto Gavazzi, CEO of Boffi, the kitchen, bathroom furniture and furnishing systems company that is now 90 years old. "It was the trendy neighborhood in Manhattan, when Piero Lissoni and I decided to go scouting. Some leading Italian design companies, such as Flos and Artemide, had already opened in SoHo. In Greene Street we found what we were looking for: a former workshop, a place full of charm where the processing and production machinery was all present. Lissoni decided to leave some of the machines as a memory of the past, making sure that our collection harmonized with the space. Boffi Soho has proved very rewarding, because it opened up the American market for us. In fact, the store reflects the tastes of the New York public: in the rather dark colors, spacious volumes and a certain atmosphere typical of Manhattan stores. We have a very mixed public, clients with an extremely informal look. Music or movie stars, interested in making substantial purchases, often turn up, especially at weekends. Manhattan is full of people who don't care much about their appearance, but they favor a Boffi monobloc kitchen that they most likely won't even use (they all eat out a lot). But it will go on display, as if it were a work by Donald Judd. May marks our last event in SoHo. From next autumn we'll be in Madison, a neighborhood with different spaces, much larger. In our new premises we'll be presenting a world home showcasing Boffi's furnishing systems with De Padova's furniture and padded seating, creating a more complete store where we'll be able to present customers with an all-round offering."

Those who won't be moving from their SoHo addresses are Artemide and Scavolini (the latter has just renovated its space in perfect New York style). Carlotta de Bevilacqua, president and CEO of Artemide, points out: "Our company's presence in New York dates back to 1981 with the opening of the first showroom and the creation of Artemide

Inc. Ernesto Gismondi set off from Italy to grow the company worldwide, relying on internationally renowned architects to design new products, but always with know-how and manufacturing rooted in our territory. He called on great designers such as Massimo and Lella Vignelli to create our American showrooms, conveying the Italian culture of design to the best possible effect. Over the years the American market has changed, but has always recognized the value of true Made in Italy, which today translates not only into the beauty of timeless iconic objects but also research and innovation in the most recent lighting systems. Our Soho showroom, where we've been since 1996, is a very lively place. It is much more than a showroom, also being a center of expertise to support the end clients and professionals in the sector with lighting design services."

Fabiana Scavolini, CEO of the kitchen company of the same name founded in 1961, told us about the recent renovation of the Manhattan store: "The opening of Scavolini Soho Gallery, our first flagship store in New York and the largest kitchen showroom in Manhattan, dates back to 2010. It is a fundamental step on our path to internationalization, in a strategic market such as the United States. The Soho space has a strategic value for us and has to constantly reflect the brand's identity. This is the reason why we've recently carried out a thorough renovation of the showroom, which looks like a loft of 900 square meters, laid out on two levels, featuring our most recent proposals in a total home look. On foreign markets we present the concept "The Italian Sense of Beauty", which sums up our values, Made in Italy and the beauty of our collections with a customized approach for products designed for every project need. The American market is certainly sensitive to the charm of Italian cuisine, and Scavolini is perceived as a brand ambassador of Italian style and excellence in the world."

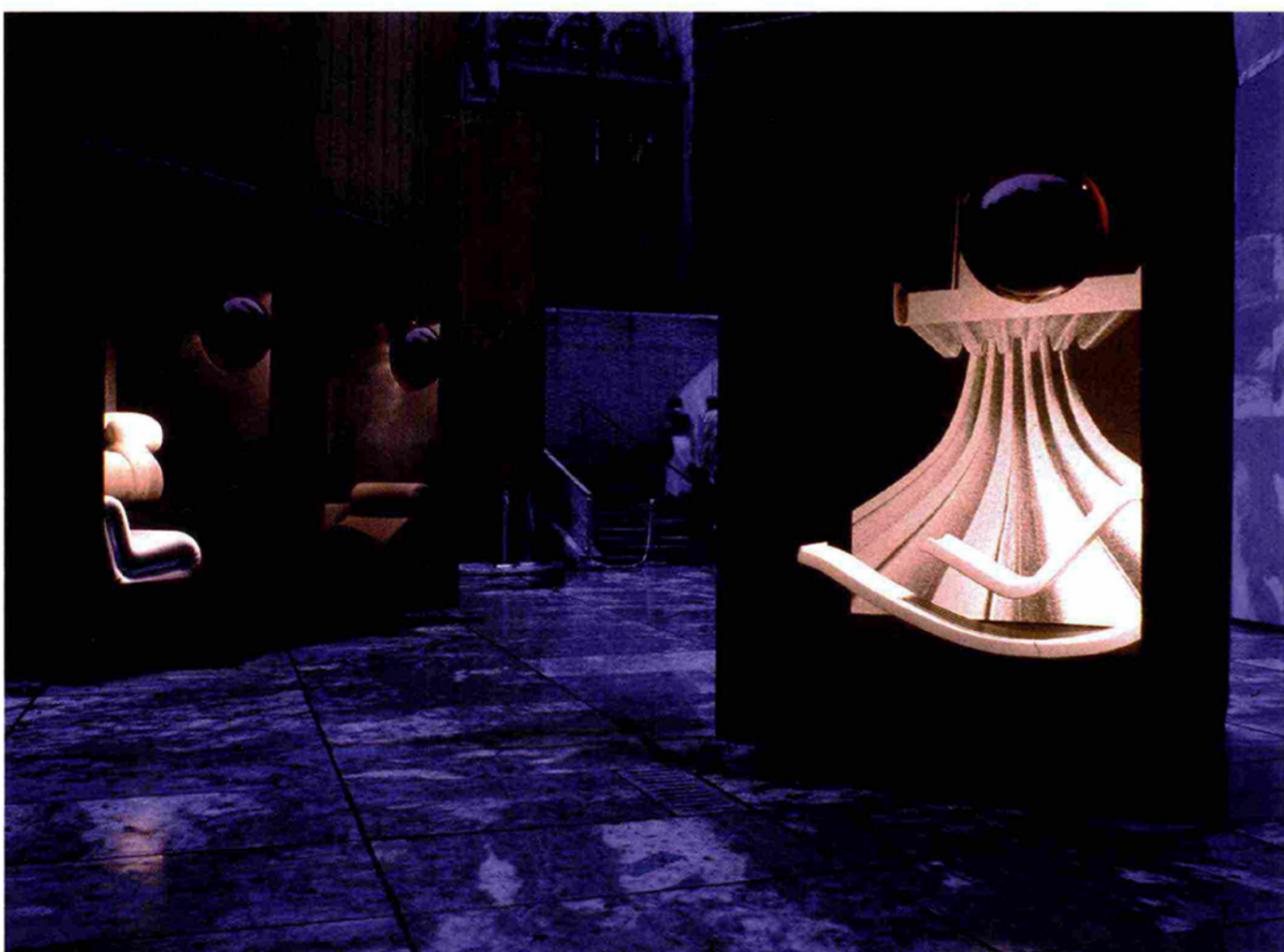
If SoHo was the top district until the start of the 2000s, in the first decade of the new millennium Italian companies began exploring new areas, in particular NoMad (North of Madison Square Park) and Madison. One of the pioneers is certainly Minotti, with its close ties to its local partner DDC. Alessandro Minotti, the company's general manager, tells us all about it. "We arrived in New York in the late '80s and then, in 2002, unlike many Italian brands, we immediately chose to place ourselves in NoMad with DDC, the multi-brand store founded by the Hakakian family. In fact, they were the ones who settled in this area and the first to preside over it. They're a family historically driven by a great passion for Italian design. Ours is an important collaboration that has also extended to the Miami and Boston stores. The project for our flagship store in New York, inaugurated in 2010, was designed by Rodolfo Dordoni, who has been our art director since 1998 and our sole designer for many years. The space in Madison won us over us by its double-height windows and its spaciousness, with 800 square meters. The sophisticated interior design project sets off the brand's wide range of products, best-sellers and most recent furnishings, including the outdoor collection, which is increasingly playing a leading role in America."

But if Minotti had the insight to position itself pioneeringly in Madison years ago, today there are many brands that have moved from SoHo or have expanded their showrooms in NoMad and Madison. Here, on 7 March, Design Holding opened its new flagship store that brings together the group's brands – B&B Italia, Flos, Louis Poulson, Maxalto, Arclinea and Azucena. We talked about it with Francesco Farina, CEO of B&B Italia USA. "It was a very important step for the brand and for the group. We successfully inaugurated very important premises, a floor space of 2300 square meters in which the various brands of the group dialogue with each other to tell the American public about our Italian identity. To those who think that Made in Italy and its design are linked to the past and only appeal to a mature clientele, I

30 Scavolini

429 West Broadway (btw. Spring & Prince Sts.)

Scavolini Soho Gallery is the name of the flagship store opened in 2010 by the Marche-based company. Located in the heart of the Soho district, it has a floorspace of 900 square meters laid out on two levels, with the ground floor being particularly characteristic, looking like the typical loft of a New York gallery, with wooden boards and enameled cast iron pilots. A reference point for the American market (it is Manhattan's largest made-in-Italy kitchen store), Scavolini Soho Gallery has recently been renovated to make the brand's collection even more attractive, in the name of the total home look. The company is also present in the U.S. market with a subsidiary, Scavolini USA, and a network of stores located in major cities across the country, including Las Vegas, Chicago, Houston, Miami and Los Angeles. New openings are also planned.



Two snaps taken by Cristiano Toraldo di Francia at the exhibition "Italy: The New Domestic Landscape", devised and organized by Emilio Ambasz with the support of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Trade, presented at the MoMA, New York, from 23 May to 11 September 1972. The exhibition, which ratified the success of Italian design in the USA, gave rise to the slogan "Made in Italy".

can say that the exact opposite is happening. Today we have a public with an average age of under 45. The secret? Be very attentive to the changes taking place in the market. Once in the U.S., it was architects who took their clients to visit showrooms. Now we're talking about inquiring travelers who have an interest in choosing for themselves what they want. And when I say keeping up with the times, I also mean dealing with sustainability seriously, and not as a simple greenwashing operation."

New York forever then, because, as Carlo Molteni, president and CEO of the Molteni Group, says, "New York is a window on the Americas. Ours is an important message, presented with the details of impeccable design on the two floors of the flagship store. Our presence on Madison Avenue, with input from creative director Vincent Van Duysen, is both an invitation and an inspiration. A project that translates Italian style by reinterpreting the classic New York mansion. A style that can be perceived in the care lavished on the materials, details and craftsmanship of the portals, the travertine flooring and the impressive walnut wood staircase."