

ITALY at wor

L'ITALIA AL LAVORO

Un *lifestyle* da esportazione

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Il titolo della collana sottolinea l'intenzione di considerare l'Arte come un sistema dinamico caratterizzato storicamente dalla molteplicità dei suoi attori. Se la creazione costituisce il cuore dell'arte, fulcro e motore del processo di produzione e di fruizione delle opere sono spesso figure che assumono e svolgono altre funzioni. Dai committenti ai collezionisti, dai conservatori dei musei ai destinatari di una più generica ma sempre più vasta educazione all'arte: lo sviluppo attuale della disciplina impedisce ormai di valutare semplicemente come secondario e accidentale il loro ruolo. Secondo questo approccio l'opera d'arte è "opera aperta": l'attenzione ad aspetti largamente interdisciplinari e alla sociologia dei fenomeni artistici intende infatti collegare il collezionismo e le sue pratiche, anche museologiche, a contesti e congiunture, a circuiti polivalenti e multiformi di cultura e di mercato. L'interesse, anche metodologico, è rivolto a tutte le possibili forme di diffusione e mediazione; la volontà è quella di considerare l'ampliamento di orizzonti che caratterizza oggi il dibattito sull'Arte e anche di perseguire l'idea che i documenti d'archivio o gli allestimenti museali possano proporre una Storia non meno significativa di quella degli oggetti evidenziando preferenze culturali ed estetiche.

The title of the series draws attention to its intent to regard Art as a dynamic system, characterized throughout history by a multiplicity of actors. While the heart of art may be creation, the linchpin and driving force to the production and consumption of works of art often rests with figures who take on and carry out other functions. Those who commission works of art and those who collect them, museum conservators and the recipients of a general but increasingly broad art education – the current development of the discipline makes it impossible to consider the roles played by such people as simply secondary or accidental. According to this approach, the work of art is an "open work": indeed, the attention to largely interdisciplinary aspects and to the sociology of artistic phenomena aims to link collecting and its practices, including its museological practices, with contexts and circumstances, with the multipurpose and multiform circuits of culture and market. The series' interest, including its methodological interest, is toward all possible forms of art diffusion and mediation; the purpose is to consider the broadening of horizons that currently characterizes the debate on Art and also to pursue the idea that archive documents and the way exhibitions are mounted in museums can convey a History as meaningful as the one set forth by artifacts, highlighting cultural and aesthetic preferences.

Tutti i contributi pubblicati nella collana sono sottoposti a double-blind peer review.

All contributions published in the series are subject to double-blind peer review.

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a cura di

Paola Cordera e Chiara Faggella

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From the House of Italian Handicrafts to the Exhibition *Italy at Work*. Continuities and Discontinuities Among HDI, CADMA and CNA (1945-1953)

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In the context of the most recent studies on Italian political, cultural and economic exchanges in the 20th century, relations with the United States emerge as an exemplary case to be examined to gain new insight into the origins and developments of globalisation.¹ In particular, in the period immediately following the Second World War, in conjunction with the Marshall Plan and the start of the Cold War, the United States had considerable and manifold interests in Italy.

To support the quick recovery of national craft production and facilitate its exportation to foreign markets, between 1944 and 1945 a small group of wealthy Americans of Italian origin founded HDI in New York.² The organisation was headed by Max Ascoli, former professor of Philosophy of Law at the University of Rome in the '20s who was forced to expatriate to the United States for his anti-fascist views. The HDI had a Board of Directors and an Advisory Committee; members of the former included, among others, Paolino Gerli – an importer of Italian textiles into America – the economist Bruno Foà, René d'Harnoncourt, future director of The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), and Anna Rosenberg. The Advisory Committee was made up of the businessman Nelson A. Rockefeller, the actress and intellectual Ruth Draper, and American diplomats from prestigious families with close political connections to the Roosevelt administration.³

Supporting the distinct characteristics of Italian handicraft production, such as the originality of the models, a strong link with the applied arts tradition, and high-quality execution by encouraging its gradual penetration into the American market meant, at this particular historical moment, renewing the

¹ Sbordone, Turrini 2020, pp. 7-10.

² Dellapiana 2022, pp. 105-108.

³ FR, ACLR, *Cadma*, b. 1, f. 1.

economic and social value of a sector that had always been at the top of national production. Ascoli immediately wanted to conduct a market survey, namely preliminary investigations on the absorption capacity of Italian craft products in the US market.

For the program to be successful, however, the support of art historians, economic experts and technicians operating in Italy was essential. The ideal hypothesis was a figure who had these skills, along with considerable political clout. Carlo Ludovico Ragghianti, whom Ascoli met in Rome in October 1945,⁴ was an excellent role model in this regard; he was in fact an art historian and critic who had special ties with the government: at that time he was undersecretary with responsibility for Fine Arts and Performing Arts.⁵ The two laid the foundations for the establishment of a committee to assist with the distribution of artisan materials, CADMA, the HDI's corresponding body and trustee in Italy.

My Dear Carlo – Ascoli wrote to Ragghianti – this is just a first line to open our transatlantic correspondence. Coming to Italy after so many years, I knew I would find old friends and that I would make new ones. I hold you at the top of the category of new friends so dear that I am tempted to backdate the friendship. I am very grateful to you for all the time and care you devote to our handicrafts.⁶

In November 1945, the agreement between the two organisations was signed.⁷ Although CADMA enjoyed economic aid from HDI, it was not a mere subsidiary body of the latter. It represented a fundamental and active instrument for the accomplishment of American projects. In fact, information provided by CADMA – through the artistic and technical support of people living in Italy who were familiar with its political, economic and social equilibriums – enabled managers at HDI to understand the real needs of Italian artisans and how best to direct their economic aid.

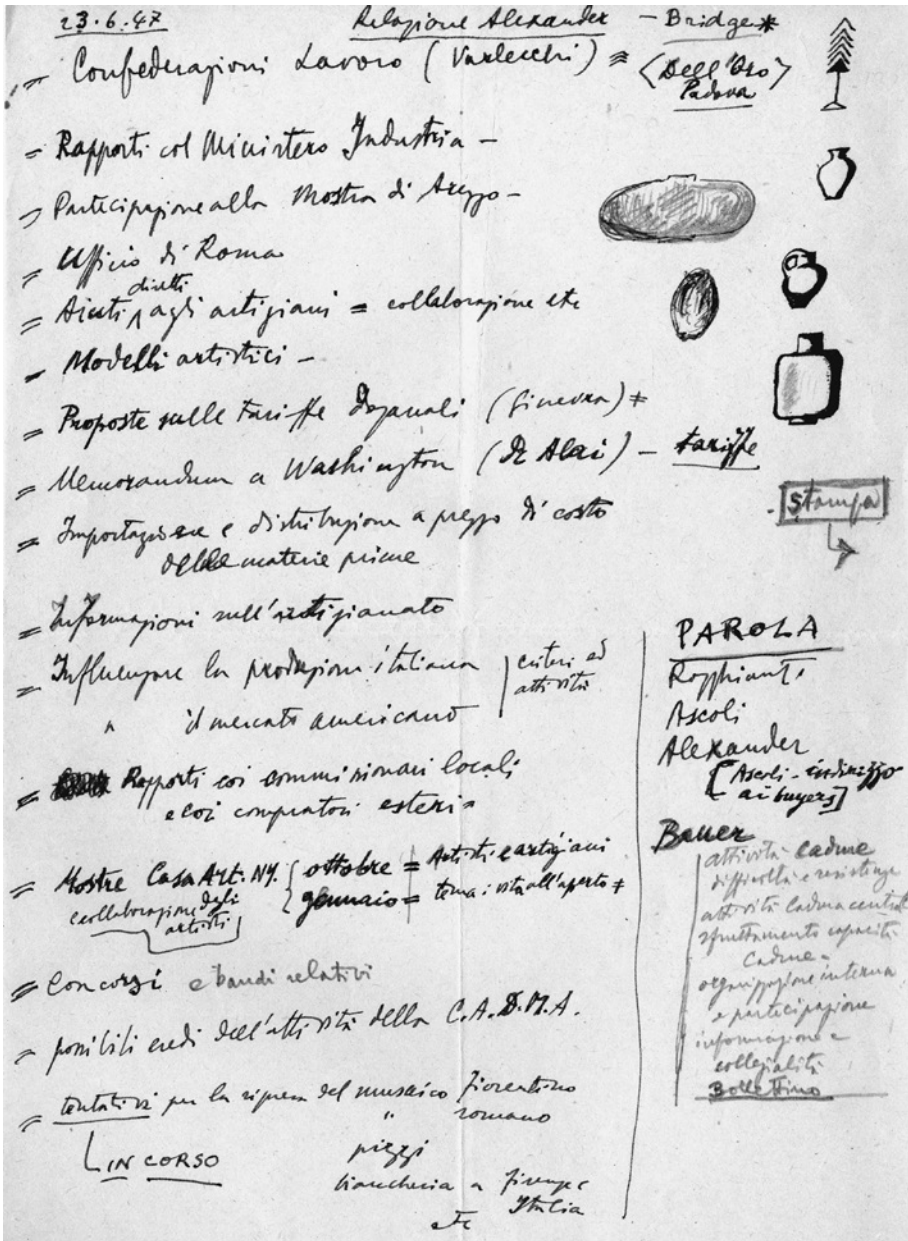
Within the framework of the United States' control over Italy, HDI and CADMA wanted to quickly address the economic crisis that the war had brought on the Italian craft sector. The most suitable criteria and principles for its relaunch and subsequent stable future were identified as resuming exports as soon as possible. In addition to the economic aspect, the political one should not be forgotten: in a broad sense, reactivation of the market and trade

⁴ FR, ACLR, *Cadma*, b. 1, f. 2. Following that visit, CADMA was established in Florence and governed by principles and purposes similar to those of the HDI. It was based in Florence, at the Istituto d'Arte in Porta Romana. CADMA Presidential Committee 1945-1948.

⁵ Pellegrini 2018, pp. 53-56.

⁶ FR, ACLR, *Carteggio generale*, Ascoli Max. Letter dated 14 November 1945. The letter is written in Italian.

⁷ FR, ACLR, *Cadma*, b. 1, f. 2.



1. Notes by Carlo Ludovico Ragghianti regarding a meeting with Max Ascoli, Ramy Alexander and Riccardo Bauer with a list of CADMA's activities, 23 June 1947

relations between the two nations meant freeing Italy from the shadows of its recent past. It is therefore worth emphasising how the initiatives promoted by Ascoli and Ragghianti arose from the desire to participate once again, after the Resistance, in a tangible way in the redefinition of the country's destiny (fig. 1).

From CADMA to CNA

After brief but intense activities, HDI and CADMA disbanded between 1947 and 1948.⁸ They were temporary assistance organisations whose sole aim was to provide an initial contribution to resolving the stalemate in the Italian craft sector caused by the global conflict. Later, in the wake of the initiatives already undertaken, their baton had to be picked up by more continuous and structured solutions. In April 1948, in order to obtain an important loan granted by the Export-Import Bank of Washington – a credit institute that had already undertaken financing transactions for other Italian productive sectors – a National Artisan Association called CNA, was set up. The organisation was backed by a government guarantee and was therefore able to absorb the huge sum allocated of more than four million dollars.⁹

In legal terms, the CADMA disappeared, but the HDI was still active for some time, so much so that it participated, with private capital, in the establishment of the new organisation. The President of the CNA was Ivan Matteo Lombardo (a socialist and at that time Minister of Industry and Trade). He was also chosen for his special relations with foreign officials and apparatuses: he later became Minister of Foreign Trade from January 1950 to April 1951.

There were considerable elements of continuity between the bodies managed by Ascoli and Raghianti and the CNA. First of all, old CADMA collaborators such as Ramy Alexander (who would become vice-president of the CNA) and Riccardo Bauer (President of the Società Umanitaria in Milan and one of the founders, together with Raghianti, of the Partito d'Azione) were on the Board of Directors of the new organisation. Another similarity that linked CADMA and CNA was the organisational structure of the headquarters. CADMA had its head office in Florence, the headquarters of many of Raghianti's other cultural and political initiatives.¹⁰ The Roman branch however, headed by the writer Alberto Carocci, had already been organised by early 1946. Subsequently, several regional committees were set up (Campania, Lombardy, Veneto, Emilia Romagna and others) in order to profitably control local artisan production.

The Lombardy committee was chaired by Riccardo Bauer and several architects and designers from the Milanese scene were also involved, starting with its *deus ex machina*, Ernesto Nathan Rogers, at the time director of the magazine "Domus". Raghianti also involved several designers in the various regional branches of CADMA: in addition to Rogers, Franco Albini, Mario Asnago and Ignazio Gardella for Milan; Mario Labò for Genoa; Carlo Scarpa for Venice; Giovanni Michelucci for Florence; Carlo Mollino for Turin.¹¹ These were people

⁸ FR, ACLR, *Carteggio generale*, Sforza Carlo, Firenze, 12 December 1947.

⁹ Pietrangeli 2022, p. 10.

¹⁰ Mingardi 2020, pp. 109-110.

¹¹ FR, ACLR, *Cadma*, b. 1, f. 3. Loose sheet with handwritten notes by Raghianti.

with whom Ragghianti had already had the opportunity to collaborate on several occasions.¹² The territorial organisation of the CNA followed the example of CADMA. It had a head office in Rome and other sites, with some CADMA offices converted into CNA offices, such as the Istituto Veneto per il Lavoro in Venice and the Società Umanitaria in Milan. New offices were also opened in Naples, Messina and Florence.¹³ It was in Florence, and more precisely at the Uffizi Gallery, in August 1950, that all the objects chosen were collected and photographed and then sent to New York for the first stage of the *Italy at Work* exhibition, which opened on 29 November of that year.¹⁴

Alongside signs of continuity, some differences between CADMA and CNA also emerged. In particular, the two organisations were set up with different bylaws and therefore did not have the same purposes. In order to have good quality materials available to introduce into the US market, CADMA was financed exclusively through donations and could not engage in for-profit activities or competition with commerce and industry. So it was not a commercial entity: its function was solely to assist and facilitate the production and, thereafter, the introduction of Italian handicraft products into the United States.¹⁵ In this sense, the case of Faenza is emblematic as it was one of the Italian cities most affected by war destruction and one of the world's leading centres of excellence in the field of ceramic production and processing.¹⁶ As of September 1946, CADMA and HDI undertook to provide economic aid to the teaching facilities of the International Museum of Ceramics and local ceramic production through the ad hoc construction of nine electric kilns which were essential for the activities of the Ceramics Cooperative.¹⁷

The CNA instead managed a loan of around two million dollars to be repaid with interest between 1950 and 1951. It did not therefore make generous free donations to artisan companies or individual artisans, rather it was a matter of economic supplies on credit.¹⁸ The organisation therefore had decidedly more commercial characteristics and expertise than CADMA-HDI.

Other substantial differences concerned the supply of raw materials that were lacking or absent in Italy following the Second World War, as well as relations with the design culture which had to certify the artisans' work. CADMA and HDI were able to buy cheaply in the United States items that were unobtainable or too expensive in Italy.¹⁹ With the resources and materials provided by the two organisations, high quality sample objects were created to be presented to

¹² Mingardi 2019, pp. 41-50; Caccia Gherardini 2018, pp. 91-100.

¹³ Mingardi, Turrini 2021, p. 100.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*.

¹⁵ FR, ACLR, *Cadma*, b. 1, f. 4, HDI-CADMA Brochure. *Per gli artigiani esportatori*, p. 10.

¹⁶ Ballardini 1945, pp. 43-50.

¹⁷ FR, ACLR, *Carteggio generale*. Ballardini Gaetano. Letter from Ballardini to Ragghianti, 13 September 1946; FR, ACLR, *Cadma*, b. 1, f. 2. CADMA activities 1946-1947.

¹⁸ FR, ACLR, *Cadma*, b. 1, f. 4, HDI-CADMA Brochure. *Per gli artigiani esportatori*, p. 10.

¹⁹ Mingardi, Turrini 2021, pp. 87-88.

American business circles as the best examples of Italian craftsmanship. For this purpose, multi-faceted strategies were designed, such as effective workshop collaboration between artisans and artists in order to offer more original production content. Documents relating to the first meetings of the Presidential Committee of CADMA include a list of the painters and sculptors to be involved in the production of cartoons and drawings which would subsequently serve as a model for the object created by the individual artisans or by the manufacturers concerned: among others, Giorgio Morandi, Carlo Carrà, Lucio Fontana, Renato Guttuso, Luigi Spazzapan and Filippo de Pisis are mentioned.²⁰

Both the purchase of raw materials and collaboration between artists, designers and artisans continued even while the CNA was active. However, unlike HDI and CADMA, the CNA only supplied material from Italy or from other countries with the exception of the USA for which it was not possible to take advantage of the direct concessions of the Export-Import Bank. Furthermore, it promoted Italian craftsmanship also in Latin America, Europe (Germany, Sweden and France) and North Africa.²¹

To speed up the successful achievement of the purposes of their bylaws, from the end of 1946 CADMA and HDI sent a series of information bulletins to artisans on American market trends and the names of possible buyers. Distribution of the publications allowed the two organizations to provide the further technical and material assistance necessary to develop new export sources, especially among small and medium-sized producers. Besides others, CADMA also awarded scholarships to allow both new graduates from art institutes and self-employed artisans to perfect their skills by attending specialized workshops without the need for immediate earnings. In addition, HDI and CADMA set up competitions on product design topics. The Faenza example is paradigmatic in this case too. In fact, in April 1947 the 6th National Ceramics Competition was announced, open to ceramic producers, owners and managers of factories and artisan workshops, and artists.²² Given the different nature of the funds it drew on, CNA did not promote any of these initiatives where there was such a direct relationship between the funding body and companies.²³

From the House of Italian Handicrafts to the *Italy at Work* exhibition

From the early stages of the establishment of HDI and CADMA, the board of directors had a common desire to organize a permanent exhibition of Italian artisan samples in New York to give US buyers greater purchasing opportunities.

²⁰ FR, ACLR, *Cadma*, b. 1, f. 1. Activities 1945-1948.

²¹ Alhaique 1950, p. 28.

²² FR, ACLR, *Cadma*, b. 1, f. 1. Activities 1945-1948; Ballardini 1947, p. 98.

²³ Alhaique 1950, pp. 10-11.

In November 1946, HDI bought a small three-storey building on 49th Street, the interior of which was refitted by Gustavo Pulitzer Finali – a prominent architect already involved in naval outfitting and interior design for tourist and commercial facilities – with decorations by Costantino Nivola dedicated to crafts.²⁴ The HIH was born, home to the HDI’s permanent sample exhibition and a “disinterested mediator” between Italian manufacturers and the American market.²⁵

Our function must be to prepare a Noah’s Ark - wrote Ascoli to Ragghianti in December 1946 - Noah’s Ark is the House of Italian Handicrafts [...] The House of Italian Handicrafts should become operational in around one month. Then the serious music will begin. Each sample that arrives will be the subject of correspondence and an exchange of ideas between the House and you. From the House you will continuously receive suggestions, criticisms, requests for information [...] without establishing aesthetic standards [...]. There will be a margin of things that are liked there but not here, or that are liked here but are detested there, but there will also be an increasing number of articles that are agreed upon, and the collaboration can thus become more refined.²⁶

On 10 April 1947, HIH opened with a miscellaneous exhibition of objects selected by the CADMA Technical Committee and, between 1947 and 1948, six temporary exhibitions were organized presenting a remarkable range of themes, creators and productions.²⁷ *Italy at Work*, on the other hand, opened, as mentioned, in November 1950 in New York,²⁸ but it was conceived the previous year by the CNA when the latter came into contact with the Art Institute of Chicago (which had collaborated with the HIH for some time), which accepted the proposal and commissioned Meyric Rogers to curate it (together with Ramy Alexander, Walter Teague and Charles Nagel jr.). There are many continuities with previous experiences at the House in terms of both the organizers (two names above all: Alexander was among the curators, Ascoli was on the exhibition’s hon-

²⁴ *Sede dell’Handicraft a New York* 1948, p. 33; Dellapiana 2022, p. 109.

²⁵ FR, ACLR, *Cadma*, b. 1, f. 3. Foà’s letter to Ragghianti and other collaborators of CADMA, 17 April 1947.

²⁶ FR, ACLR, *Carteggio generale*, Ascoli Max. Letter dated 18 December 1946. After the closure of CADMA and shortly after of HDI, from 1949 management of the HIH passed to the CNA. Exhibitions were no longer set up at the headquarters, but rather the shop “The Piazza” was opened and aimed directly at private buyers.

²⁷ Mingardi, Turrini 2021, pp. 92-95.

²⁸ The *Italy at Work* Honorary Committee consisted of US politicians and diplomats. In addition to Ascoli and De Gasperi, Carlo Sforza (minister of Foreign Affairs), Ivan Matteo Lombardo (president of the CNA and foreign trade minister), Giuseppe Togni (minister of industry and trade), James Clement Dunn (American ambassador to Italy), Herbert Gaston (administrator of the Export-Import Bank), David Freudenthal (president of the HIH in New York) belonged to it. Rogers 1950b, p. 6.

orary committee), and the objects on display, the key players of the design culture presented, and the manufacturers involved.

Although the aims of the exhibition promoted by the CNA were the same as those organized by CADMA-HDI, i.e., the promotion of high-quality products capable of reinterpreting traditional forms and materials from a modern perspective and of penetrating the American market, *Italy at Work* was an exhibition on a much larger scale, travelling to twelve cities in the United States and it had far greater impact.²⁹ The greater economic resources developed by the CNA, the numerous and diversified production contexts involved, and much broader and more intense advertising hype made *Italy at Work* an exhibition event with a sounding board that was utterly incomparable to initiatives organised in the past.³⁰

Among the exhibitions organized by CADMA, two are particularly relevant because they involve numerous protagonists of Italian design and architecture that we will find in *Italy at Work*. *Handicraft as a fine art in Italy*, curated by Raghianti, opened at the HIH in December 1947, with a catalog designed by Bruno Munari. The exhibition focused on the relationship between art and craftsmanship, and for which an articulate design and production workshop was activated, only in part later landing in the exhibition. The following works, among others, were selected or specially commissioned for the event: fireplace frames made of decorated convex or flat tiles by Cascella; an additional fireplace by Leoncillo; chairs by Michelucci; screens by Fornasetti; lacquered coffee tables by de Pisis; mosaics by Campigli; ceramic plates by Morandi; a fruit serving set in ceramics by Sassu; numerous additional ceramic works by Fontana,³¹ Manzù, and Marini; silver and bronze crucifixes by Afro and Mirko Basaldella; jewelry and silver boxes by Guerrini.³²

In February 1948, the exhibition *Life in the Open Air* curated by the Lombard Committee of CADMA – particularly by Rogers, Gardella, and Fabrizio Clerici – was mounted, featuring architecture and a successful synthesis of the dialogue between arts and crafts with pieces by Luigi Brogгинi, Enrico Galassi, Bruno Munari, and Ettore Sottsass jr., among others.³³ This exhibition had a particular

²⁹ Ponti 1950b, p. 25.

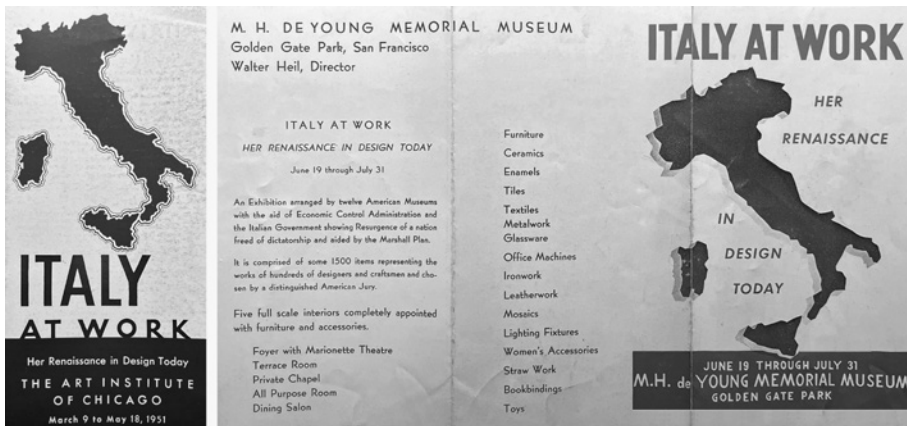
³⁰ AIC, RBLA, Department of decorative arts, *Italy at Work*, Correspondence and list of works.

³¹ On Fontana ceramic within the American context, see Bedarida in this volume.

³² *Handicraft as a Fine Art in Italy 1947*, pp. 8-9; FR, ACLR, *Cadma*, b. 1, f. 1. Ducci 2018, pp. 58-60. A number of documents related to possible artists to be exhibited at the exhibition are kept at the FC, ACLR: Afro, Mirko Basaldella, Enrico Boldoni, Luigi Brogгинi, Massimo Campigli, Pietro Cascella, Felice Casorati, Sandro Cherchi, Fabrizio Clerici, Pietro Consagra, Filippo De Pisis, Agenore Fabbri, Lucio Fontana, Piero Fornasetti, Renato Gregorini, Lorenzo Guerrini, Renato Guttuso, Leoncillo Leonardi, Carlo Levi, Paola Levi Montalcini, Marino Marini, Fausto Melotti, Giovanni Michelucci, Giorgio Morandi, Adriana Pincherle, Anita Pittoni, Armando Pizzinato, Emanuele Rambaldi, Giuseppe Santomaso, Aligi Sassu, Carlo Sbisà, Maria Signorelli, Ettore Sottsass jr., Enrico Steiner, Nino Ernesto Strada, Giulio Turcato, Gianni Vagnetti.

³³ FR, ACLR, *Cadma*, b. 1, f. 1, *Promemoria degli architetti Clerici, Gardella e Rogers relativo all'organizzazione della Mostra del gennaio 1948 a New York*, 17 luglio 1947. On the display of the

reverberation in *Italy at Work*, especially in the “five special interiors” set up by as many Italian architects (Clerici, Roberto Menghi, Gio Ponti, Luigi Cosenza, and Carlo Mollino), which, as in the CADMA-HDI exhibition, are important spaces within the exhibition itinerary.³⁴ In fact, these interiors aimed to constitute a sort of synoptic element of the whole, taking up its main themes to further lead the visitor into the spirit and sense of Italian production, thanks to “ready for use” environments in which all the best regional productions converge, under the direction of an organic project.³⁵ Unlike the exhibitions organized by CADMA, *Italy at Work* features a coordinated image, based on a traditional Italian identity and repeated constantly, or with minimal variations, for the 12 displays in as many museum venues (fig. 2). *Italy at Work* is in fact a project particularly devoted to communication and publicity, with widespread press coverage and a considerable enrichment of themed collateral events, where Italianness is the subject of reconstructions of situations, clothes and traditions that are transformed into successful social occasions.³⁶ A distinctive feature of the exhibitions organized at HIH that we find on a larger scale in *Italy at Work* is the simultaneous presence of different types of creative approaches. In each section, in fact, there coexist both pieces designed by well-known artists, designers and architects for important manufacturer-publishers, and elements conceived and made by individual



2. Official information leaflets of the staging of the *Italy at Work* exhibition in Chicago (on the left) and San Francisco (on the right), 1951

Life in the Open Air exhibition, see also Cordera 2022.

³⁴ Ponti 1950b, p. 25. For Ponti's room, see Dellapiana essay in this book.

³⁵ Clerici 1950, p. 31.

³⁶ See evidence in the form of pamphlets and journals held at the AIC, RBLA, Department of decorative arts, *Italy at Work 1951*, Box 3, Flyers, magazine, pamphlets. On this topic, see also essays by Cordera and Rossi in this volume.

anonymous makers or by widespread production collectives (as in the case of the weavers' manufactory in Capri).³⁷

In the first Brooklyn and Chicago exhibitions we find unique pieces of applied art alongside objects of use with a successful popular taste. In the latter case, even the toys that CADMA had proposed in the 1947 Christmas Gift Exhibition return in *Italy at Work*, as happens with the famous doll Cristina designed by Countess Mariuccia De Lord Rinaldi.³⁸ Among the ceramics we may list works by artists such as Lucio Fontana and Fausto Melotti, both of whom had already been featured in CADMA exhibitions, Antonia Campi³⁹ and Leoncillo alongside tableware from the manufactures of Albisola, Faenza, Nove and Vietri.

The furniture section includes furnishings designed by Albini, Gardella, Molino, and Caccia Dominioni; a mosaic by Nivola; and upholstery fabrics made to designs by Pulitzer and his wife. Thus, one registers, in most cases, still recurrences with respect to CADMA's scope. Likewise, it is necessary to note some discontinuities between the two contexts we are comparatively analyzing: for example, Sottsass jr., who was active for CADMA with furniture and textile designs, as well as present in the first exhibitions of the House of Italian Handicrafts, was not involved in the traveling exhibition.⁴⁰

From the events examined between CADMA and CNA, the distinctiveness of an operation in support of Italian design and manufacturing culture conducted by men who certainly combined cultural militancy with political commitment emerges clearly. They were not content with an ephemeral commercial effect but helped refound the statutes of winning creative and executive quality for many decades to follow. The idea of staging an exhibition as wide-ranging and articulate as *Italy at Work* was already *in nuce* within the HIH program, and CNA was picking up CADMA's baton with the task of managing the large sums of money that the US government allocated to do so. Woven into this context are different but equally strategic types of parallel presences for cultural and economic exchanges between Italy and the United States since 1945: promoter-mediators, designers, and manufacturers. Some of them are still active today: Salvatore Ferragamo⁴¹ and Richard Ginori, the Linificio & Canapificio Nazionale, the Bertozzi textile printing factory, Raffaello Bettini's Florentine hat factory, and the Cooperativa degli Artieri dell'Alabastro of Volterra.⁴²

³⁷ AIC, RBLA, Department of decorative arts, *Italy at Work 1951*, Box 3. Exhibition records.

³⁸ FR, ACLR, *Cadma*, b. 1, f. 1. *Circolare informativa sull'attività della CADMA*, Firenze 31 ottobre 1947; AIC, RBLA, Department of decorative arts, *Italy at Work 1951*, Box 3. Exhibition records.

³⁹ On Antonia Campi, see Pansera in this same volume.

⁴⁰ Zanella 2017, pp. 157, 165-166.

⁴¹ On Ferragamo's production within the postwar context, see Martin in this book.

⁴² Turrini 2018, pp. 85-96.

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L'esposizione itinerante *Italy at Work: Her Renaissance in Design Today* (1950-1953) è al centro di un'indagine svolta nel quadro di quell'ampio orizzonte internazionale che ha contribuito, nel secondo dopoguerra, alla costruzione della retorica e alla fortuna del Made in Italy.

Ventitré saggi di studiosi afferenti a sedici istituti e università italiane e straniere costruiscono la trama di un racconto polifonico e multidisciplinare, che vede coinvolti gli ambiti della storia dell'arte e dell'architettura, delle arti decorative e del design, dell'industria, della moda e della museologia. Attraverso la rilettura della bibliografia di riferimento, e sulla base di documentazione archivistica inedita, si è cercato di restituire la complessità dello scenario in cui si svolse la mostra, la sua organizzazione, gli attori, gli interessi economici e politici, gli stili e i riferimenti culturali che portarono al buon esito di un'iniziativa – e ai suoi esiti successivi – volta a presentare la ripresa dell'Italia sul palcoscenico del mondo.

Lungi dal costituire un punto di arrivo, il volume si pone quale avvio per lo sviluppo di ulteriori ricerche e nuove riflessioni.

