

COLANI – BACK IN JAPAN

An exhibition in the Museum for Art and Design, Kyoto Institute of Technology, Kyoto, Japan: June 21 – September 19, 2005

On the occasion of Germany Year in Japan, which the German President and the Japanese Crown Prince will open on April 4, 2005, we are launching a major exhibition on the futurist ideas of Luigi Colani, the German designer,. It will be held at the renowned Museum of Art and Design of the Kyoto Institute of Technology – Kyoto is a city that reaches many minds, from Tokyo and Japan to the rest of the world.

The idea behind the exhibition: to showcase the work and commitment of one of the few German designers to become famous in Japan in the 1980s and take this as the lever to present his oeuvre as a whole while also emphasizing the impact of Japan in the work of a truly magnetic German designer.

The impact of Japan: the re-focus on nature, the wish to strike a balance between nature and technology, the emphasis on form. What makes Colani's work so fascinating when seen through Japanese eyes is the way he transposes these principles onto the modern technological world.

He watched how water flowed. New shapes for faucets arose. He studied how birds flew. New aerodynamic ideas took flight. He investigated how the hand functions. And more ergonomic appliances were born. This dovetailing of nature and design is a centuries-old tradition in Japan. Which is no doubt why in the 1980s the Japanese admiringly termed his work the "Biodesign of Tomorrow". Not to forget the Romantic qualities such shapes breathe.

The famed Kyoto Institute of Technology is an ideal partner for the exhibition project, as it is in a superb position to do full justice to both the technological and cultural implications of Colani's oeuvre.

The exhibition has four focal points:

1. Germany

Here we focus on the ICE high-speed trains, studies for Thyssen/Henschel and the Maglev projects. Moreover, this section also presents the streamlined trucks Colani has developed since the first oil crisis back in the 1970s.

2. The Futures Future

This section concentrates on Colani's Ylem design manifesto that covers all areas of life and civilization, e.g., futurist living, the city and long-distant transport, production and the world of work in the future of tomorrow.

3. Japan

Here, we trace Colani's influence on Japanese camera design. The exhibits document all stages in the development of the revolutionary Canon T 90, not to mention asymmetrical cutlery, spectacles, lighters, earphones for Sony and futurist airplanes and space gliders. The highlight: the re-discovered "Fuyo Robot Theater", now on view for the first time since 1985.

4. Biodesign of Tomorrow

This section is an homage to the early Japanese Colani publication of the same name dating from 1983 which was issued by the journal "Car Styling". On view are Colani's science city in a human form for the Yangtse Kiang delta, biomorphic studies, and biomorphic ergonomics.

Luigi Colani, born 1928 in Berlin, is one of the outstanding trailblazers of organic design. He became world famous in the 1960s with his eye-catching designs for cars, yachts, sanitation ceramics, and consumer goods. Under the impact of the oil crisis, in the 1970s he dedicated himself to creating alternative vehicle concepts – from compact car to giant truck that remain definitive to this day. At an early date, Colani emphasized the importance and evolutionary potential of design, thus often pre-empting major trends by decades.

In the 1980s he worked both in Europe and Japan, decisively influencing the path camera design was to take. Through careful observation, Colani derived many of his shapes from nature's own unmistakable designs – he is firmly of the opinion that nature has already perfectly solved many of the tasks of design.

As an independent designer, Colani has established an outstanding worldwide reputation and is currently active in just about all fields of the discipline. Numerous shows and a major international biography of his oeuvre have placed his futurist approach to design firmly in the international design community's limelight.

March 30, 2005

Exhibition schedule:

June 21 – Sept. 19, 2005

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