

To Design, Perchance to Dream

BENEDETTA GRASSO (December 06, 2010)



From November 30 to December 18 2010 at Center 548, in Chelsea, the exhibit Perchance to Dream brings together an Italian icon, dancer Roberto Bolle and imaginative artist Robert Wilson as an opportunity to promote Italian design

What do Design and Dance have in common? At a first glance very little: the former focuses on a well constructed “still life”, with concrete fixed physical objects, while the latter embodies movement, change, lightness and often storytelling. Yet, especially in recent years, when it’s placed in the hands of talented artists, design has become about a lot more than planning a space or visualizing an atmosphere. It’s the true essence of 21st century modern art, it sets a mood or tells a story.

Design is also about innovation and quality and in this sense Italian design has always been associated with these traits all over the world. It shows a modern, technologically advanced Italy



constantly paying homage to the ancient aesthetic beauty in which it is immersed. So how do you combine these two very different artistic expressions? Through a more three-dimensional conception of Art in which one medium helps to enhance another - sound and light effects mix with stills and with sculptures - and through two people, an American and an Italian: the widely known experimental artist [Robert Wilson](#) [2] and the famous ballet dancer [Roberto Bolle](#) [3].

On top of this, add the location, New York City: a gallery in Chelsea which hosts an exhibit entitled Perchance to Dream that opened on November 30, 2010 as part of a much bigger set of events, partially focused on Italian design and partially on yet another collaboration of Roberto Bolle with an English artist, [Peter Greenaway](#) [4]. Perchance to Dream combines Wilson's and Bolle's points of view. As Wilson himself explained, after the cutting of the ribbon at the inauguration, a great dancer, an impeccable and extraordinary dancer like Bolle, "has an interior sense of movement and that movement begins with stillness". Working with Roberto made him realize how even a portrait is the perfect balance between relaxation and tension, and an object, much like the human body, has imperceptible, subtle changes that he tried to capture and convey creatively.

Mr Bolle (born in Casale Monferrato, Italy, in 1975) who has been trained since a very young age at [La Scala](#) [5] in Milan, interviewed at the event, added that for him there was never a doubt when committing to this project. "Both Design and Dance are an artistic and aesthetic expression and their mission is to research Beauty and spread Beauty. In everything I do, I try to create something beautiful, bring out the higher values that dancing represents".

The exhibit will run until December 18 and was created by [I Saloni Milano](#) [6] (along with FederlegnoArredo/Cosmit and ITC) as part of a celebration to honor Italian Design abroad and the 50th anniversary of the Milan Furniture Fair.

In Robert Wilson's "experience" the seven rooms in the gallery are dark and in the hallways the echo of gunshots and sudden thumps resounds. Most of the rooms feature still photos of details and partial black and white shots of Bolle's face and feet. In the actual portraits if you look closely the eyelids slightly move every now and then, therefore capturing those minimal movements within stillness. The larger rooms look like a De Chirico painting that has come to life. The homage to Italian design through physical objects, sculptures, ruins and symbols is more blatant in those. At the center is a room in contrast with the others: a wallpaper of roses on one of the room's sides, small red lights and a "peep-hole" in which a Technicolor picture of a clownesque Roberto Bolle is accompanied by circus-like music. In accordance to yet another of Wilson's main concepts: work with "counterpoints". He created this event on Italian Design with this in mind, the idea that to enhance an object, a room, a concept, you need something different that makes people see the main thing better, as he explained in his opening speech.

Umberto Vattani, the president of the Italian Trade Commission, introduced the artists and welcomed the guests underlining the importance of the 50th anniversary of the Milan Furniture Fair. He recalled how in 1972, at [MOMA](#) [7], there was the first exhibit on Italian Design, a groundbreaking event that introduced to Americans what now is recognized as one of the highest trademarks of the "Made in Italy" exports.

He also added that "in 1992 we celebrated 500 years from when an Italian discovered America (1492) and now Americans are discovering Italy" Rosario Messina (President, [Flou](#) [8]) declared that "in spite of the economic crisis Italian companies continue to invest in the American market and that it is important to benefit from creating a "system" that coordinates the initiatives linked to this business."

"Until today Design was connected only with creativity" Mr Messina said "but as tonight's exhibit demonstrates and also [Peter Greenaway's interpretation of the Last Supper](#) [9], design has become a form of Art and is interpreted this way. It's a language that can be understood everywhere in the world."

Roberto Bolle, an icon of Art, Beauty and Dance, is a physical embodiment of Italian talent and yet an international appeal and experience. He has performed around the globe (at the Met, for



example), he has collaborated with artists from various countries, danced for the Queen of England, the Pope and the most respected dancers in his field, he grew up in a modern, culturally open environment and he has a genuinely joyful and positive attitude about life and his brilliant and unbelievable career.

"I met Robert Wilson while we were working on a different theatrical project and from our encounter the idea to create these unique portraits was born. He's an exceptional, extraordinary person, very human and sensitive." "I feel the responsibility of being one of the representatives of Italy in the world. I'm proud of my country, especially when it carries works of arts outside of its borders, when it helps crating a work of art. I feel extremely lucky to represent what I feel are the highest endeavors for our country."

Perchance to Dream by Robert Wilson
Videoportraits featuring Roberto Bolle
A project by [Change Performing Arts](#) [10]
An initiative by I Saloni Milano
Presented by FederlegnoArredo/Cosmit
In collaboration with [The Italian Trade Commission](#) [11]
Supported by the [Italian ministry of Economic Development](#) [12]

Related Links: <http://www.robertwilson.com> [2]
<http://www.robertobolle.com> [3]

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Links

- [1] <http://iitaly.org/files/mg0055jpg>
- [2] <http://www.robertwilson.com>
- [3] <http://www.robertobolle.com>
- [4] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Greenaway
- [5] <http://www.teatroallascala.org>
- [6] <http://www.cosmit.it>
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