

**BENETTON ICON STORES:
A TALE OF MANY VOICES AT THE SALONE DEL MOBILE 2012.**

- ***Objet Préféré/Objet Coloré Exhibition at the Triennale di Milano.***
- ***Trendsetting Benetton stores in Milan, Barcelona, London and Paris open to creative design and to new customer experiences.***
- ***The icon.benetton.com portal for open multimedia experimentation.***
- ***Fuorisalone events at the Sisley store in Piazza San Babila and other topical locations around Milan.***

Ponzano, April 16, 2012. Design and creativity enrich the identity of objects and the atmosphere of places, and through the web they bring together the community, young ideas and different cultures. This is the thread running through the series of projects labelled **Benetton Icon Stores**, the Group's network of trendsetting shops revamped to become international focal points of fashion, web culture, publicly-participated multimedia experimentation and lifestyle. Following the exhibition at the prestigious London Design Museum inspired by the Colors magazine trilogy (*Happiness, Shit and Transport*), open from 3 to 13 April, it is **Milan's turn, as United Colors of Benetton presents the exhibition *Objet Préféré/Objet Coloré* at the Triennale di Milano, starting 17 April, to coincide with the Salone del Mobile 2012.**

Objet Préféré/Objet Coloré is an exhibition structured in two collections, created by Fabrica, Benetton Group's communication research centre. The first, *Objet Préféré*, is a series of items of furniture created following an intense and fruitful workshop, involving Fabrica and the cultural centre *Grand-Hornu Images* in Boussu (Belgium), around a "favourite object". The result was fifteen pieces of furniture, a perfect combination of the creative and design talent of Fabrica's young designers and the technical excellence of Grand-Hornu; Fabrica's partner in the development of the *Objet Préféré* portion of the exhibition, *Grand-Hornu Images* is a non-profit association that has carried out extensive work to promote the heritage of the Grand-Hornu centre, including developing a series of cultural events linked to design and the applied arts. The association has organized numerous international exhibitions over the years and is today a point of reference for this type of initiative. The second, *Objet Coloré*, is a system of store display fittings designed to showcase United Colors of Benetton apparel and accessories; modular and flexible they offer a variety of personalised solutions, mixing forms, surfaces, and multicoloured geometries, in line with the distinctive elements of the brand.

The Triennale di Milano exhibition continues at **Benetton Icon Stores** in Milan (Corso Vittorio Emanuele), London (Brompton Road), Barcelona (Portal de L'Angel) and Paris (Boulevard Haussmann), with the presentation of a selection of pieces from the *Objet Coloré* series, and with the concurrent projection of pictures from the Triennale di

Milano exhibition in their **Benetton Live Windows**: large high-definition videowalls, which transform traditional store windows into high-tech multimedia screens, giving rise to a new customer experience where the individual's approach becomes a participatory experience.

Internauts can take an active part in Benetton events through ***icon.benetton.com***, the portal that links up with the four key cities, where the contents generated by this interaction will be published. The portal can also be used by anyone who chooses to send their contributions - videos and images - to see them online on the hi-tech network of Benetton store windows: an advanced multimedia experiment, creating a close link between the Benetton world and the talent and expressive abilities of young people.

Others events run by Fabrica for the *Fuorisalone* include:

La Dame aux oiseaux, a live performance in the windows of the **Sisley** store in Piazza San Babila: a skillful ceramic decorator paints a collection of fine porcelain birds created by the historic Portuguese firm Vista Alegre (Sisley Store, 17 - 22 April). A series of metal items of furniture designed by Sam Baron/Fabrica provide the backdrop;

the presentation of ***Villa Necchi. Details of life and new visions***, a collection of design objects, created in partnership with prestigious Italian companies, reinterpreting certain details of the splendid house in the heart of Milan, now owned by FAI^(*), (Villa Necchi Campiglio, 13 April - 6 May);

the exhibition ***Searching for Cassiopeia***, a collection of 12 seats - unique pieces that combine different techniques and materials - conceived by the creatives at Fabrica and the fruit of a workshop with the *Italian Chair District* in Friuli Venice Giulia (MOST. Museo Nazionale della Scienza e della Tecnologia, 17 - 22 April).

* *Fondo Ambiente Italiano, an organization which safeguards Italian heritage*

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