

Mipel Promotes Strength of Made in Italy Among Handbag Brands

The four-day trade show saw a 6.6 percent increase in the number of visitors.

By WWD Staff on March 2, 2017



Geometric shapes like these were a key trend at the Italian leather goods fair.

Courtesy

MILAN — Mipel, with its 111th edition of TheBagShow at the Milano-Rho fairgrounds, highlighted the value of Made in Italy while promoting Italian handbag design to a broader consumer audience.

Sponsored by the Municipality of Milan, leather goods association Aimpes presented the exhibition “Inside out. The social life of bags” for the first time in the heart of Milan’s fashion district.

“Organizing an exhibition was the natural evolution of the project,” said Roberto Briccola, president of the fair. “Mipel is no longer just an industry trade fair, but a true vessel for the artisanal and cultural appreciation of what is Made in Italy. Promoted by Aimpes, with the support of the Ministry of Economic Development and of the Italian Trade Agency, the exhibition illustrated the history and design of bags from the early Fifties until today.

The show gathered 42 bags representing historic moments in Italian fashion, highlighting their role in the evolution of women in society. Participating brands included Borbonese, Bottega Veneta, Braccialini,

Bric's, Fendi, Ferragamo, Gherardini, Gucci, Leu Locati, Prada, Roberta di Camerino, Serapian and Trussardi. The exhibit will travel outside Milan in the next few months.

The exhibition was only one the latest initiatives by Aimpes and the organizers to raise the profile of Mipel. The four-day show closed Feb. 15 with a 6.6 percent increase in visitors, more than half of whom were Italians. Visitors from outside Italy increased 7 percent. This reflected the efforts made by Riccardo Braccialini, president of Aimpes, and Briccola, who worked together to improve the international profile of the fair.

Preliminary data released by Aimpes for the January to October 2016 period showed that revenues of accessories fell 2 percent to over \$7.5 billion, dented by a slowdown in exports, which totaled \$5.7 billion, inching up 0.9 percent.

"We've had a very positive response from the key markets concerned. Top of the list is Russia, up by 48.8 percent, Korea up 28.2 percent, the U.S. up 21.5 percent and Japan, up 15.7 percent," said Braccialini. Germany stood out with an 18 percent increase in buyers. "The forecasts for September show a consolidating trend thanks to the high degree of synergy between fashion and accessories fairs. For 10 days, from the start of Mipel [Sept. 17] to the end of Milan Fashion Week [Sept. 27], buyers will have a complete overview of our fashion know-how."

A standout at Mipel was Leu Locati. Every bag is produced in-house to ensure quality and attention to detail. Its new strategy, said owner Flavia Fumagalli, "is to focus on a wide selection of products that range from unstructured bags to evening bags with competitive prices."

At the fair, the company introduced a new bag with a handmade, geometric wood frame to mark the brand's 100th anniversary. "We created this model thanks to our constant research to conceive unique pieces," said Fumagalli.

In addition, Alessandro Oteri, whom Fumagalli described as "one of the most promising shoe designers," will create a collection of shoes for the brand.

Donatella Lucchi, though established, exhibited at Mipel for the first time with the Nur collection. President Marta Carpinelli said: "I always loved 'The Little Prince' by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry and I wanted to create a collection dedicated to stars, planets, moon, but also flowers, numbers and poetry, embroidery and prints to dive in a fantastic and slightly magical world that can make women dream," said Carpinelli.

Lara Bellini presented the evolution of her collection "Art Nouveau." As part of the Bellini family of architects, she said she "wanted to stay true to geometric and clean shapes." This season, she used varnished leather, which "gives an air of glamour, compared with suede that has a more casual character."

Silvia Giovanardi created special bags inspired by nature with colors and sophisticated natural fabrics. "In 2014, my husband and I went to Japan for our honeymoon and the majesty of the land prompted me to start drawing," she said. The first collection was aptly called Honeymoon. The brand was on trend with its geometric shapes.

As part of the Scenario sector, in collaboration with the Italian Chamber of Fashion, four retailers proposed four Italian designers selected by the association: The Seoul-based Ilmo, Galleria and Louis Club presented Paola Fornasari, Monteneri and Delicatezzen, respectively, while American retailer Jarbo presented Silvia Giovanardi.

Found at The Glamorous meeting point, sponsored by the National Chamber of Buyers, were Tessabit, which presented Officina del Poggio, by Texan-born Allison Nicole Hoeltzel, whose collection is made up of iconic models with elegant double-buckle closures; O' with Capsula promoted a new project of inflatable, floating, light travel luggage and briefcase with inside color coded tile-styled capsules; L'Inde Le Palais with Juree Erba, and Bernardelli with Irma Cipolletta.