

SIDE GALLERY

AFRA & TOBIA SCARPA



Round table model "Africa"

From "Artona" series
Manufactured by Maxalto
Italy, 1970s
Walnut

Measurements

147,3 cm diameter x 69,8h cm
58 in diameter x 27,4h in

Literature

R. Masiero, Afra e Tobia Scarpa, p. 28, Electa, 1998

Provenance

Private collection, Milano

Biography

Key figures in twentieth century Italian design and culture, Tobia Scarpa (1935, son of the famous architect Carlo) and his wife Afra Bianchin (1937-2011) began their long career together in 1959, designing the Pigreco chair at Franco Albini's decorating course. Both of them graduated from IUAV in Venice in 1969, and they worked together on dozens of famous projects, especially in furniture design, standing out as representatives of "architecture and design characterised by elegant, refined forms and choice of materials" (Treccani).

Without following the trends or passing fads, but "pursuing the ideal of a long-lasting, properly made product", Afra and Tobia Scarpa participated in the establishment of the company Flos (1960), for which they went on to design several lamps (Fantasma, Biagio, Papillona, Pierrot). The pair worked on many important commissions (including B&B, Cassina, Fabbian, Gavina, Stildomus, Veas); their armchairs, chairs and sofas include the Coronado armchair (1966), with its innovative use of polyurethane. In addition to industrial products, the Scarpas made an essential contribution "to the new need to organise and represent the enterprises of Veneto and Lombardy" (Cattaneo).

Winners of the 1970 Compasso d'Oro award, they established a very important long-term partnership with Benetton of Treviso, planning the knitwear factory in Paderno (1964), the plants in Castrette di Villorba (1980 and 1993), and restoration and conversion of Villa Spineda in Venegazzù (1999) as well as numerous shops (they also designed shops for C&B, Geox and Unifor). The Scarpas also worked on numerous restoration projects in Veneto, "striving to achieve a synthesis between ongoing experimentation with innovative solutions and in-depth knowledge of traditional building techniques".