

ELICA GROWS ITS PRESENCE IN CHINA: A BOLD DEVELOPMENT PLAN, A NEW PRODUCTION LINE AND NEW SALES OUTLETS

In Shanghai, on 9th May, this iconic Italian company presents a solo exhibition of the work of artist Yang Zhenzhong, winner of the XVth Ermanno Casoli Award.

Shanghai, 7th May, 2015 - Elica, world leading manufacturer of kitchen hoods, intends fostering its presence in China and in the Far East through a bold development plan and chooses to present itself to the public and the press through the exhibition *Disguise* by the artist Yang Zhenzhong, curated by Marcello Smarrelli, opening on Saturday, 9th May 2015 at 5.00 pm (local time), at the Elica Showroom in Shanghai (till 9th June).

The company continually strives to fulfill the requirements of final consumers, providing them with perfectly balanced products both in terms of design and technology - aspects which have always distinguished the company - whilst respecting the local style and cuisine.

Elica has been present in China since 2010 and registered an increase of 35% in sales in 2014. To further improve this result, the development plan envisages the enhancement of its brand and products, both the ones imported from Europe and those locally manufactured. In March 2015 the product-line "Made in China" was inaugurated. The line was specifically developed for the high-end Chinese market, conceived and designed by a joint Italian-Chinese task-team, which took into account the requirements of the local cuisine, and was entirely produced in the Shengzhou plant.

For this purpose, Elica has finalized a partnership deal with the most important Chinese designers, thus paving the way to participating in important Chinese real estate projects in the reference sector, with household appliances manufactured inside the country.

"The Asiatic market enjoys a primary role in the company's internationalization strategy - comments Francesco Casoli, Executive Chairman of Elica. "For this very reason, we have drawn up an ad hoc development plan, which should catch all the opportunities and further increase our presence and share in the market in Asia, which now accounts for 3%. China plays a primary role in this development plan, not just as a market but also in manufacturing and logistics terms, which should go to serve the entire country. China, though, is not just a

business opportunity for us, but a country that has a millennial cultural background which is innovative and creative. Thus, we are very delighted to assign the XV edition of the Ermanno Casoli Award to a Chinese artist on a project which will be enjoyed by all of the local community”.

Elica intends growing and strengthening its identity in China, which is based on taking care of its product on the one hand and focusing its attention on people, starting from its employees, on the other. An approach that is in line with the activities of the Ermanno Casoli Foundation, which, for years has been engaged in the creation and promotion of projects, thanks to which contemporary art has been able to meet the world of the enterprise, with the aim of promoting innovative processes giving impetus to creativity and social cohesion.

The XV edition of the Ermanno Casoli Award was won by the Chinese artist Yang Zhenzhong with the project *Disguise*, which will be exhibited in the Elica Showroom in Shanghai from Saturday, 9th May to Tuesday, 9th June 2015.

Yang Zhenzhong had been invited to perform a task which involved tens of employees at the Elica plant in Shengzhou for two months. The artist has made masks with a 3D printer reproducing the facial features of the employees themselves, who wore them during their daily work routine. "With their mask-covered faces, their movements are always 'imposed' by an assembly line, but, thanks to this metamorphosis, they acquire the grace of a liberating dance", explains the artist. The performance, carried out by the employees inside the company, provided some material to film a video which, along with the 50 masks worn by them, will be the main *leitmotiv* of the Elica Showroom in Shanghai, which will also involve Elica products, reproducing the same atmosphere of the company where the work of art had been made.

The project Disguise by Yang Zhenzhong, curated by Marcello Smarrelli, will be on show in Shanghai from 9th May till 9th June 2015.

Ermanno Casoli Award - XV edition
Showroom Elica, Shanghai
Opening: Saturday, 9th May, at 5.00pm
Till 9th June 2015.

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The Elica Group

The Elica Group, under the chairmanship of Francesco Casoli and management of CEO Giuseppe Perucchetti, has been operating in the kitchen hood sector since the 1970s and is currently a world leader in terms of the number of units sold. Moreover, the company boasts a leading position in Europe for the design, production and commercialisation of electric motors for hoods and central heating boilers. With approximately 3,500 employees and an annual production of over 19 million units, the Elica Group has a production platform consisting of eight production sites in Italy, Poland, Mexico, Germany, India and China. Extensive experience in the industry, refined design, superior materials and cutting-edge technology ensuring maximum efficiency and energy saving are the defining traits of the Elica Group on the market, and have enabled the company to revolutionise the traditional image of the kitchen hood from a mere accessory to a design object capable of improving the quality of life.

The **Ermanno Casoli Foundation** was created in 2007 in Fabriano (AN), in memory of the founder of **Elica**. The Foundation has always been active in the creation and promotion of projects focused on the meeting between contemporary art and enterprise. Contemporary artists enter directly into the heart of the company and speak to employees in workshops and projects which stimulate creativity, innovation and an exchange of viewpoints, as well as improving the working environment. The Foundation is currently headed by Deborah Carè, with Marcello Smarrelli as the artistic director. The science committee includes leading figures from the Italian worlds of art and culture, including Pippo Ciorra, university lecturer and Senior Curator at the MAXXI in Rome for the Architecture section, Pier Luigi Sacco, professor of Economics and Culture and candidate director of the Siena European Capital of Culture 2019, and Andrea Zegna, architect and curator of the Zegna foundation.

A bio- artist

Yang Zhenzhong (born in Hangzhou in 1968) lives and works in Shanghai. He has been using various techniques and materials since 1994, ranging from photography to installations, from videos to multimedia, also inventing original “low-fi” technical solutions. In his works, Yang makes often use of a direct and ironic construction style, aimed at examining the relation between people, space and their different life styles, also criticizing the ethical values of the Chinese contemporary society. Thanks to this approach, which combines metaphor and paradox, Zhenzhong intends to question the current era, by denouncing, even in a humorous way, the problems the contemporary society is going through.

He has exhibited at the most important biennial and triennial shows in the world, including: the Biennale (Biennial) in Venice (2007, 2003); Asia-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (2006); Fukuoka Asian Art Triennial (2005); Guangzhou Triennial (2005, 2002); Shanghai Biennale (2004, 2002).

Among his more recent exhibits, we mention: Overpass (Canvas International Art, Amsterdam, the Netherlands, 2008); Yang Zhenzhong (Nikolaj Copenhagen Contemporary Art Center, Denmark, 2008); Foreplay (ShanghART H-Space, Shanghai, 2006); Yang Zhenzhong (Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, U.K., 2006).

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