



## BIOGRAPHY OF ARMANDO TESTA

Armando Testa was born in Turin in 1917. He attended the Typography School Vigliardi Paravia where Ezio D'Errico, the abstract painter, introduced him to contemporary art, which would always hold great interest for him. In 1937, at the age of twenty, he won his first competition when he created a poster, featuring a geometric design, for the colour printing company ICI.

After the war he worked for prestigious companies including Martini & Rossi, Carpano, Borsalino and Pirelli. He was also working as an illustrator for publishing companies and established a small graphic studio. In the late fifties he taught and was the head of an artistic high school in Turin, which counted Michelangelo Pistoletto among its students.

The Armando Testa Agency was founded in 1956, specialising not only in graphic but also television advertising.

Additional corporate recognition of his work came in the form of an invitation to hold the chair in Design and Print Composition at the Politecnico of Turin from 1965 to 1971. In 1968 he was awarded the Gold Medal from the Ministry of Education for his contribution to Visual Arts, while in 1975 the Italian Advertising Federation presented him with a Gold Medal in recognition of the success he had achieved internationally. His agency grew to become the biggest one operating in Italy and continues to produce extremely successful advertising campaigns.

From the seventies to the nineties his focus was on graphic and pictorial research with unconstrained creativity.

From the mid eighties Testa worked not only in traditional advertising but was also involved in designing posters for events and cultural institutions and non-profit organisations ranging from Amnesty International to the Red Cross, from the Festival dei Due Mondi in Spoleto to the Regio Theatre in Turin.

Advertising was now being studied as an independent form of expression and communication and a number of Italian and foreign organisations dedicated anthological exhibitions to Testa, which often also included his pictorial work. Among noteworthy exhibitions are those at the Pavilion of Contemporary Art in Milan in 1984, the Mole Antonelliana in Turin in 1985, the Parson School of Design Exhibition Center in New York in 1987 and Los Angeles in 1988, the Circulo de Bellas Artes in Madrid in 1989. Also in 1989 Armando Testa was named an "Honor Laureate" at the Colorado State University in Fort Collins, where a personal exhibition was organised.

Armando Testa died in Turin on 20 March 1992, three days short of his seventy-fifth birthday. Exhibitions dedicated to him since his death include the personal retrospectives at the Palazzo Strozzi in Florence and at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem in 1993, at the Contemporary Art Gallery in Rivoli and Castel Sant'Elmo in 2001 and at the Institute of Italian Culture in London in 2004 and once again at the Pavilion of Contemporary Art in Milan in 2010.

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ARMANDOTESTA