Giuseppe Pagano’s “Mostra internazionale della produzione in serie” (VII Triennale, 1940): Framework and Preparation of Italy’s First Design Exhibition

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The Mostra internazionale della produzione in serie at the 7th Triennale in Milan in 1940, curated by the architect Giuseppe Pagano, was the first exhibition in Italy specifically dedicated to industrial design. Prepared by other exhibitions with a similar focus, and (grounded) based on a comprehensive theoretical and disciplinary reflection developed by Pagano, the exhibition (was – cut) intended to trace the landscape of what had been designed and mass produced at the end of the 1930s, through a selection of products representative of diverse typologies, including household utensils, furniture, motors, technological devices and typewriters. This exhibition, which this article intends to reconstruct and to contextualize within the framework of the development of design in Italy and with regard to Pagano’s ideals (in the framework of the specific path of Pagano), therefore appeared as a moment of collective awareness on the part of designers and entrepreneurs, and as an opportunity for identification and dialogue between corporate culture and the culture of design. From different points of view, this exhibition can be considered the date of birth, both symbolic and concrete, of Italian design.