

Quadrum SACA

The latest show offered good looks at new frames, graphics and technologies.

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Quadrum SACA is Italy's premier exhibition of frame mouldings, frames, art prints, and machines/equipment for framing. The show celebrated its 24th anniversary this year, drawing a strong international audience, with attendance up more than 6 percent over last year. This year's show, held in Bologna February 16-19, was the biggest yet, both in display space and number of companies represented. It featured top Italian manufacturers as well as exhibitors from the U.S., South Africa, Australia, and 26 other countries.

Each year the show uses a different color combination as a theme. This year the colors were rich, mid-value blue and warm beige. Show management said both the colors and the layout of the show were designed to promote business discussions as well as display products to their best advantage.

Frames

Quadrum SACA is divided into three main sections: frames, graphics, and technologies. Frames, which includes moulding and ready-mades, is the primary sector. SACA is a key source for importers and major distributors who shop for cutting edge mouldings and have an unparalleled opportunity to get a sense of the colors, textures, and profiles that represent current trends. Some of the mouldings are imported as-is by U.S. distributors. Others will be modified to suit current American trends, then custom-manufactured to create exclusive products for buyers. Some of the most unusual and "edgy" mouldings are experimental concepts designed to get attention and create excitement, but they can be an important influence on next year's moulding design trends worldwide.

The combination of established, incoming, and cutting edge trends in frames makes SACA not only an important show for wholesale moulding buyers but also a valuable resource for matboard designers and art publishers, whose products are eventually paired with many of these mouldings. As usual, the range of mouldings



The Technology section featured machinery for every purpose in framing, such as the Omega stand. There were also presses, cutters, packaging systems, paints, leaf, embossing wheels, and profile knives on display.



A salesperson demonstrated how to stretch a gessoed canvas on the Canvas Stretch Master.



Farné presented several new moulding lines including the Gauguin line, which features a selection of brightly colored and highly textured moulding.



Cassese showed a variety of machines including an automatic frame backing machine for installing Flexipoints and U-shaped staples.

was extensive and diverse, but some emerging trends stood out.

Wide mouldings continue to be important but were not given the prominent presentation this year they were the past couple of years. The same can be said for ornate mouldings, which were numerous but tended to take a back seat to simpler profiles with complex finishes. Linear mouldings, whether flat, slanted, defined with deep grooves, or made of several levels, were very popular.

The color statements were strong and straightforward, moving away from the muted colors of the past couple of years and towards intense, bright (sometimes very bright) versions. Single solid colors (white, blue, and even orange) on traditional ornate mouldings—often with a high gloss finish—were shown by several exhibitors.

Texture continues to be very important, whether created visually with mottled finishes or physically with carved or molded dimension. So are unusual surface techniques, such as bubbled finishes or rough stucco effects that appear to have been slathered onto the moulding. Patterns of grooves and swirls are carved or embossed. Moulding finishes are very complex, with layers of colors and metallic flecks, or bright colors paired with earth colors. Design motifs on frames are mainly organic-looking forms and various loose, broken shapes.

Plastic and MDF mouldings continue to serve a portion of the market and seek to expand their share as the quality of finishes improves to better replicate finishes on wood mouldings.

Graphics

The Graphics Sector featured many familiar American, Canadian, and British companies along with several Italian artists and publishers and a mix from other countries. The



Hand-crafted mouldings were exhibited as square-framed mirrors at the Vivama stand.

artwork showed a continuation and expansion of popular recent trends, such as:

- ◆ Large single flowers, especially tulips and poppies
- ◆ Abstract art in many variations
- ◆ Bright, vibrant, almost "electric" colors
- ◆ Strong overall presence of red and orange
- ◆ Bold graphics with simple shapes and black lines, like comic book or animation style.

Italian themes were very popular since many visitors as well as local shops were interested in pictures of Italy. Two booths offered antique etchings and documents while present-day Italian artists displayed modern and traditional paintings. A number of publishers featured hand-colored engravings of Italian scenes.

Technologies

The Technologies Sector provided an excellent opportunity to see production framing

machines in operation. A few notable examples included:

- ◆ The Canvas Stretch Master from GAPP Engineering Ltd., a pneumatic canvas stretching machine that can stretch a canvas up to 48" square in less than a minute
- ◆ A line of low-noise Mitre Cut Off Machines from Brevetti in a range of models that can make from 200 cuts an hour up to 800 to 1,000 an hour, depending on the moulding
- ◆ The Pro-Mat Computer Mat Cutter from Valiani
- ◆ Joining machines from Cassese
- ◆ Shrink-wrapping machines from Adpak.

Show organizers believe that Quadrum SACA is an accurate gauge of the economic temperature of the moulding and frames sector and provides early indication of variations emerging in the industry. This show is valuable not only for buyers of moulding, art, and equipment but also for designers and marketing departments of framing industry companies and representatives from related industries.

An informal survey of major exhibitors yielded the fol-



Nico Valiani demonstrated the Mat Pro computerized mat cutter, which is distributed in the U.S. by Fletcher-Terry.

Print publishers, such as the Italian company Pico Art, exhibited a variety of different styles of art throughout the show.



lowing opinions about the current and future state of the framing industry and the strategies they are using to meet the challenges:

- Advertising and promotion are more important than ever. Creating a successful product requires more marketing expense than in previous times (Cartel Import)
- To compete with Asian competition, moulding manufacturers need to focus more on "an artisan and quality product made for discerning customers" (I.Cor.)
- Consumers are more focused on originality and new color trends. "Today, collections must be really special and able to strike people in order to sell, while this was not the case only a few years back" (Farné Group).

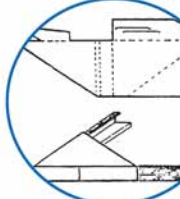


Next year's show is scheduled for February 15-18, 2007. Show organizers expect continued growth, noting an increasing number of inquiries from potential exhibitors in Russia and Eastern European countries that are interested in making an entry into the international manufacturing market. For information, visit www.quadrumsaca.com. ■

Vivian Kistler, CPF, GCF, has been tracking trends for nearly 20 years. As an active member and senior chairholder of the Color Marketing Group, she combines information from CMG, her extensive travels to foreign and American trade shows, and her personal system for tracking trends to evaluate and forecast color and design trends. She is the editor of *Color Names Reference*, which contains 37,000 color names and other information about colors.

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