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Monocle Minute On Design

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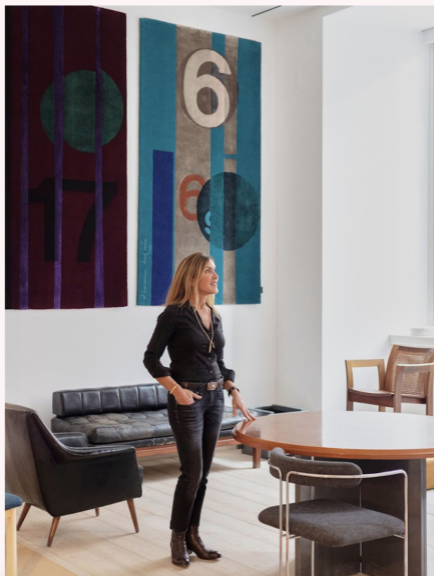


04/07

WORDS WITH... / INÊS COTTINELLI, PORTUGAL

Life after death

Portuguese designer Daciano da Costa built up an impressive body of work in the second half of the 20th century, creating furnishings that appear in notable buildings such as Lisbon's Centro Cultural de Belém. Demand for the work of the late designer has grown in recent years – but how does a designer rise to prominence after their death? In Da Costa's case, this posthumous flourishing is thanks in part to his daughter, Inês Cottinelli (*pictured*), who looks after his archive. Recently she helped two of her father's chairs enter the permanent collection of the Vitra Design Museum. We caught up with Cottinelli to find out more.



For the uninitiated, how would you describe your father's career?

If I were a historian talking about Daciano's work, I would say that there were three main areas. First, he was a professor: he introduced design as an autonomous discipline to the faculty of architecture at the Superior School of Fine Arts in Lisbon. Second, he was an industrial designer; his furniture-making collaboration with Portuguese factory Metalúrgica da Longra lasted for more than 30 years. Finally, he was an interior architect, with projects such as the National Laboratory of Civil Engineering from 1971. Today you can see it as it was 50 years ago. The Quadratura chair, which is now in the Vitra Design Museum, belongs to that work and is still there. That is the place to visit to feel my father's work; it's where he was a total designer.

You're a landscape architect by trade. What prompted you to join your father's studio?

In 2013 I decided to mentor in the studio that my father founded in 1959, with the purpose of extending and maintaining his legacy. The atelier is now a place where we can work and that we open to the public at times, so that they can see a little bit more of his pieces. We have some originals on show, as well as some of his reissues that are now available to the public. That includes the Alvor chair, which was designed for the Hotel Alvor Praia in 1967 and is now in the Vitra Design Museum.

Finally, what steps are you taking to build his legacy?

We're reissuing everything from his furniture to his tapestries. We believe that this communicates his graphic-design approach and the important fact that Daciano da Costa never saw boundaries between product design, object design and graphic design.

For more from Inês Cottinelli on Daciano da Costa, listen to 'Monocle On Design' or pick up a copy of our March issue.