

“ACTUALLY, WE WANTED TO DO SOMETHING ELSE: A TALE OF AGAPE – 1973/2023”

Agape unravels half a century of history in an exhibit interweaving values, thoughts, and designs centered around the bathroom.

In the evocative setting of Agape Bosco, nestled in the heart of the Mantuan countryside, the display runs from September 25, 2023, through March 31, 2024.





(September, 2023) - Established in 1973 by the Benedini family, **Agape** celebrates its fifty-year journey by sharing values, notions, and designs focused on the bathroom with the exhibit **“Actually, we wanted to do something else: a tale of Agape– 1973/2023”**, open from September 25, 2023, to March 31, 2024.

The exhibition’s title hints at a distinctive path, rendering Agape a unique gem in the realm of design. Its story owes its charm to its seemingly incidental beginnings. Nevertheless, it has been passionately shaped and nurtured by its key figures with unmatched dedication and depth. A legacy that mirrors the family and individual values of those who have molded it and continue its growth: brothers **Emanuele and Giampaolo Benedini**. From their ties to Mantua and its heritage to a design ethic underpinned by a relentless pursuit of uniqueness and consistency, their philosophy translates into a pioneering vision for the bathroom. The past 50 years are portrayed in four distinct narratives.

Agape’s vision through photography

A primary narrative showcases archival photographs. For Agape, photography transcends its documentary function; it becomes an art form beyond the product. Renowned photographers like Aldo Ballo and Andrea Ferrari, with Emanuele Benedini actively engaging in styling and set preparation, have been integral to this journey. Ad campaigns, catalogs, and display materials wherein setting, styling, and shots are harmoniously intertwined with product design. Every image tells a story, like the “Secchia rapita” basin. Designed by Giampaolo Benedini with pragmatic foresight for his young daughter Camilla, it featured wall mounts adjustable over time to accompany the child’s growth.

Reflections, memories, and thoughts

Complementing the images, in harmonious yet distinctive undertones, are the musings of brothers Emanuele and Giampaolo Benedini, both boasting a refined architectural perspective. Texts flow across two monitors, sketching their unique yet complementary personas through cherished memories and reflections. These snippets illuminate the warmth, humanity, and wit that make Agape stand apart. Visitors are drawn into an intimate ambiance, offering a behind-the-scenes glimpse of the past five decades.

A collection of products and prototypes

The exhibition juxtaposes finished products with select prototypes from the company’s archives. It’s an intuitive approach to depict Agape’s search for refinement around recurring design themes, tackled with varying technologies, materials, and design solutions.

The earliest beginnings are represented by the 1973 Mantus series, initially crafted for the Spanish department store “El Corte Ingles”. However, Erion, a modular furniture system, marks a more architectural approach. The collection includes other historic products like Pump (1985), where innovative ceramic use presages Patricia Urquiola’s later Cenote series. Another chapter unfolds with the Calvino accessory series by Enzo Mari for Agape.

From initially having Giampaolo as the only designer, since 1992, the firm expanded to other designers, boosting a more enriched vision filled with multiple creative energies. These early partnerships with figures like Enzo Mari and Pino Pasquali were succeeded by many more, including pivotal collaborations with Patricia Urquiola and Gwenaél Nicolas, always through a firsthand confrontation with Emanuele and the Agape Research and Development Center. Central to the exhibition is the prototype for Spoon, which debuted in 1998. This centerpiece tub marked a pivotal point for Agape in its commercial and international outreach. It is the time when the Benedini brothers can count on a balanced and inspiring synergy. Emanuele’s managerial acumen allowed Giampaolo to focus wholeheartedly on design and creative direction, resulting in a series of brilliant insights across design, distribution, and communication.



The droplet: a creative tribute to Agape

On display is an array of brand interpretations by creative minds and designers collaborating with Agape. Artifacts where the signature droplet is reimagined personally yet remain instantly recognizable. From Kostantin Grcic's ingenious, whimsical vision to Patricia Urquiola's evolving, colorful rendition. From Marco Carini's dreamy heart-shaped interpretation to Bibi Benedini's playful droplet whirl. Equally compelling, the droplet evolves into a manifesto under Leo Torri's hand, becomes an aphorism by Gwenael Nicolas, transforms into graffiti by Studiopepe, and turns into a collage of graphic and auditory symbolism by Elisa Ossino.

This dynamic evolution of Agape also resonates through continuous dialogues with designers. Just as in this artifact series, each contributor lends their unique touch to a catalog that, amidst a symphony of interpretations, retains its unmistakable identity. Consistently aligned with a vision of the bathroom as a private, sheltered architectural space, and with relentless, uncompromising design exploration.

To request images, interviews, and information please contact

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Press kit

bit.ly/Agape_50°_Anniversary

About the authors of the Agape drops: bit.ly/LeGocce
(to scroll move the cursor from left to right)

Notes for editors

Agape

Agape has been synonymous with design culture for 50 years. The brand, founded by the Benedini family, offers hundreds of products that meet every functional need in the bathroom. Washbasins, faucets, furniture, bathtubs, lights, and accessories designed by masters of contemporary design and architecture. Timeless objects that naturally develop an intense dialogue with any space, becoming elements of Agape's architectural vocabulary. International by nature, Agape also has deep ties to Mantua, the Renaissance city and extraordinary architectural workshop where its headquarters are located.

agapedesign.it



1974-Mantus



1975-Erion



1980-Makerio



1981-La secchia rapita



1984-Ritz



1990-Memory



1998-Spoon



1999-Woodline



2000-Foglio



Roberto Barazzuol



Bibi Benedini



Marco Carini



Britt Moran (Dimorestudio)



Emiliano Salci (Dimorestudio)



Leo Torri



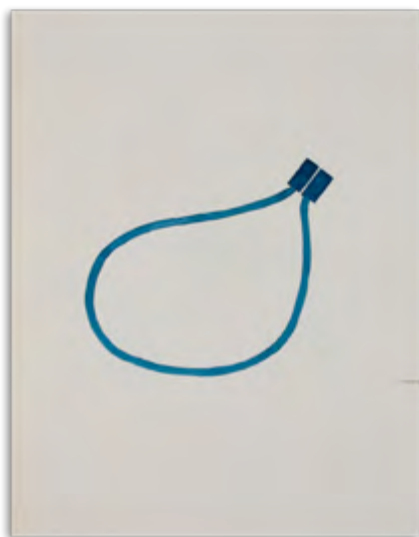
Patricia Urquiola



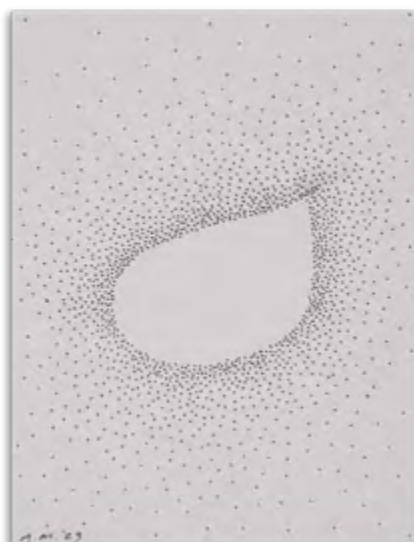
Elisa Ossino



Daniele Dalla Pellegrina



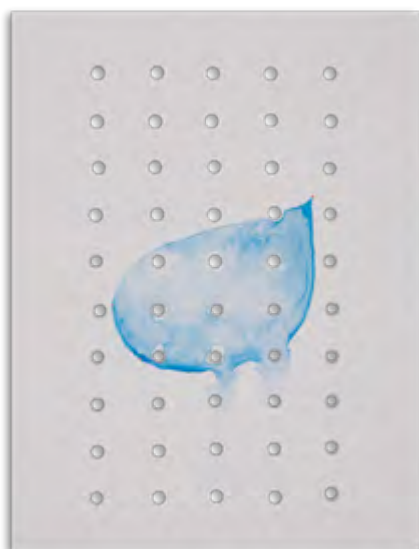
Fabio Bortolani



Andrea Morgante



Kostantin Grcic



Paolo Lucidi



Luca Pevere



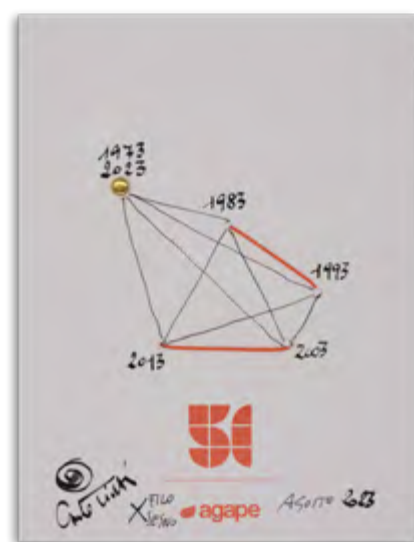
Giulia Mojoli



Studiopepe



Gwenael Nicholas



Carlo Tinti



Exhibition



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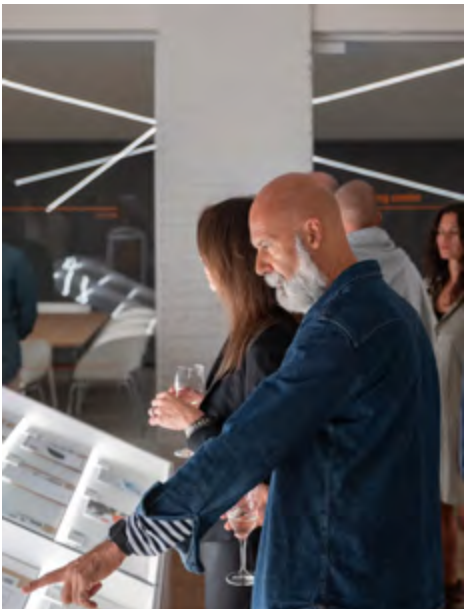
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