

Miguel Milá: A Life in Design

Press Release | twentytwentyone | London Design Festival 2026

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Exhibition: twentytwentyone 18c River Street London EC1R 1XN

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Few designers have shaped contemporary Spanish design as profoundly as Miguel Milá. Over a career spanning eight decades and more than 200 creations, he developed a design language rooted in functionality and restraint. Rather than pursuing novelty, Milá refined ideas over time, creating objects that solved problems with quiet intelligence, bringing comfort, order, and beauty to daily living without demanding attention.

Working at the threshold of craft and industrial production, Milá believed that every object should seek the materials and processes most appropriate to its purpose. His method was one of continual refinement, paring back the unnecessary, preserving what worked, and reinventing only what was missing or could be improved. This balance of craftsmanship, technical ingenuity, and industrial thinking became the defining hallmark of his work.

Born in Barcelona in 1931, Milá began his career assisting with interior design projects at the Federico Correa and Alfonso Milá studio, his brother's influential architectural practice. This led Miguel to leave architecture school to pursue design. Immersed in the ideals of the Modern Movement while developing practical skills alongside cabinetmakers, blacksmiths, and other artisans, he forged an approach in which ideas emerged through a close dialogue with materials, tools, and construction. As he often acknowledged, architect José Antonio Coderch profoundly influenced his thinking, teaching him that function should always come first while allowing room for the subtle irregularities that make objects feel human.

In 1957, Milá founded Tramo to produce the furniture and lighting he could not find for his interior design projects. Many of his most celebrated designs originated from practical needs, his own or those of his family, reflecting his conviction that the best objects emerge from real life rather than abstract theory. Throughout his career, he continually revisited his

designs, embracing new technologies only when they enhanced structural clarity, simplified construction, or improved performance without compromising their essential character.

Miguel Milá: A Life in Design curated by Santa & Cole and twentytwentyone offers a rare opportunity to discover the life and work of the "designer's designer" through the evolution of his creative process. Bringing together, original drawings, photographs, archival material, lighting, and furniture, the exhibition traces a life dedicated to design, revealing the ideas and the enduring principles behind one of Spain's most important creative minds.



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Image Credits

1. Miguel Milá, © Maria Espeus
2. Miguel Milá. Courtesy of the Milá family.
3. Cestita Alubat © Santa & Cole
4. Self-portrait greeting card by Miguel Milá. Courtesy of the Milá family
5. Rattan Cestita. TRAMO. Miguel Milá. Courtesy of the Milá family.
6. Miguel Milá © Miia, Six Studio

Notes for Editors:

Miguel Milá

Born in Barcelona in 1931, Miguel Milá is one of Spain's most influential designers. After beginning his career in interior architecture, he established his own design studio in 1958 and became a pioneering figure in Spanish industrial design, renowned for his timeless, functional, and understated approach.

Through work extending over eight decades, Milá has created lighting, furniture, household objects, and urban furniture that exemplifies elegance, simplicity, and enduring utility. His work has been exhibited internationally at the Triennale Milano, MoMA New York and is held in the collection of the Design Museum of Barcelona, which also preserves his archive.

Among the most celebrated designers in Spain's history, Milá has received the Compasso d'Oro Internazionale, the National Design Award and the Gold Medal for Merit in the Fine Arts, reflecting a career that has left an indelible mark on contemporary design.



Miguel Milá, image © Courtesy of the Milá family.

Santa & Cole

Founded in 1985, Santa & Cole is an independent editor of considered design, art and books based in Belloch, Barcelona. Rooted in a distinct cultural and ethical vision, the company is guided by enduring values that shape both its identity and its approach to creating meaningful objects.

Championing a timeless aesthetic over the pursuit of novelty, drawing inspiration from history rather than fashion. Its work celebrates the quiet significance of the everyday, finding beauty in simplicity and placing lasting value on quality, warmth, and comfort.



Santa & Cole Ebro Delta, image © Jara Varela and Marc Morro
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twentytwentyone

Founded in 1996, twentytwentyone celebrates outstanding 20th and 21st-century design from its shop at 274-275 Upper Street Islington, and showroom at 18c River Street, Clerkenwell. It provides design enthusiasts with a curated selection of furniture, lighting and accessories ranging from Bauhaus and enduring mid-century classics alongside established and emerging talents in contemporary progressive design.

Through twentytwentyone Contracts, the company also provides a dedicated service to architects, designers to specify exemplary furniture and lighting for hospitality, residential and institutional projects. Interiors furnished by twentytwentyone can be found at the Barbican, Tate Modern, V&A Dundee and numerous office, restaurants and hotel projects around the world.

twentytwentyone is committed to a constantly evolving programme of exhibitions, events and new product launches with the designers, manufacturers, and partners with whom they work.



twentytwentyone River Street Showroom, image © Joakim Blockstrom
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