

MONACO, MARCH 2025
PRESS RELEASE

Francesco Vezzoli presents
KARL GOES TO MEMPHIS
Tribute to a historic encounter in Monte Carlo

Almine Rech Monaco
20 Av. de la Costa, 98000 Monaco
20 March, 2025 - 24 May, 2025

'Francesco Vezzoli presents: KARL GOES TO MEMPHIS. Tribute to an historic encounter in Monte Carlo' is Francesco Vezzoli's third solo exhibition at Almine Rech Monaco, on view from March 20 to May 24, 2025.

The show draws from one of the most original episodes in the history of 20th-century design—an **encounter between two giants of contemporary creativity: the visionary Karl Lagerfeld and Memphis, founded by Ettore Sottsass.**

In the early 1980s, Lagerfeld moved to Monte Carlo. He settled in the **Roccabella building**, designed by **Giò Ponti**. Unsatisfied with an ordinary home, **Lagerfeld decided to furnish the apartment exclusively with Memphis pieces.** Known for its bold, avant-garde, and provocative style, a truly extraordinary space was envisioned, where furniture, ceramics, lighting, and decorations coalesced into one surreal and provocative aesthetic.

The exhibition seeks to recreate, as faithfully as possible, the ambiance of Lagerfeld's iconic apartment within Almine Rech Monaco. With the collaboration of Memphis, **all of the pieces originally featured in Lagerfeld's residence are exhibited.**

Featured works include masterpieces by Memphis such as the **Carlton bookshelf** by Ettore Sottsass, the **Tawaraya Ring**, a "domestic boxing ring" that is a space and a furniture at the same time by Masanori Umeda, the **Super** table lamp by Martine Bedin, the **Pierre** table by George J. Sowden, the **First** chair and **Oceanic** table lamp by Michele De Lucchi, the **Brazil** table by Peter Shire, the **Hilton** trolley by Javier Mariscal, the **Astor** table lamp by Thomas Bley, the **Dublin** sofa by Marco Zanini, the "indoor skyscraper" **Plaza** by Michael Graves, the **Labrador** sauce boat by Andrea Branzi, and so on.

After many years, iconic Memphis designs also make a comeback, including Matteo Thun's **Sacher** hall closet, Javier Mariscal's **Colon** side table, as well as George J. Sowden's **Acapulco** clock and **Oberoj** armchair—each allowing visitors to immerse themselves in one of the most eccentric and creative visions of 1980s design.

Francesco Vezzoli creates eight new pieces on the occasion of this show: **embroidered portraits of Lagerfeld**, displayed in opulent baroque frames. These "emotional" works, inspired by photographs of Lagerfeld from that early period, offer a rare glimpse into his most authentic and spontaneous self. They portray a different Lagerfeld from the figure widely recognized today—an individual who loved nightclubs, the social scene, and the cultural exchanges that defined his era.

To further enhance the exhibition, a catalog designed by the renowned graphic duo Mathias Augustyniak and Michael Amzalag of M/M (Paris) complements the showcase.

«It is nearly impossible to find, in the history of 20th-century art and architecture, a creative collision as all-encompassing and intoxicating as the one that exploded in 1981, when Karl Lagerfeld entrusted Memphis with the aesthetic vision for his living space in Monte Carlo. This exhibition seeks to celebrate that utopian and surreal union—an exhilarating, unrepeatably marriage of avant-garde creativity and uncompromising vision. By revisiting this extraordinary moment, we aim to honor the

boldness and imagination that reshaped not only a space but also the very boundaries of art, fashion and interior design» – Francesco Vezzoli

«For Memphis, this project represents the closing of a full circle—one that began in Monte Carlo and now returns there. Francesco Vezzoli, a passionate admirer and connoisseur of the brand, offers his own interpretation of Memphis's first great devotee, Karl Lagerfeld, through a contemporary lens. Vezzoli channels the enduring spirit of Memphis, reimagining an important chapter in its history with his unique and disruptive vision—one that stays true to the Sottsass and his fellows' original boldness and creativity» – Charley Veza, CEO of Memphis

ABOUT FRANCESCO VEZZOLI

Francesco Vezzoli was born in 1971, in Brescia, Italy. He studied at the Central St. Martin's School of Art in London. One of the most successful contemporary Italian artists, his work can be described as a series of strong allegories about contemporary culture, with a rich subtext of elaborate references involving video installations, petit-point embroideries, photography, live performances, media experiments and -most recently- classical sculpture. In 2017, he produced a live opera performance for the 40th anniversary of Centre Pompidou and in 2019 he brought the exhibition Huysmans Critique d'Art: De Degas à Grünewald, sous le Regard de Francesco Vezzoli at Musée d'Orsay in Paris. In 2021, Vezzoli worked with Fondazione Brescia Musei on the exhibition project Palcoscenici Archeologici, and again that year he was the protagonist of the Francesco Vezzoli in Florence exhibition, with two new sculptures in Piazza della Signoria and Palazzo Vecchio in Florence. This made him the first living Italian artist to produce a site-specific work for Piazza della Signoria, creating an interaction between contemporary art and the city's historical heritage. His latest exhibitions, 'VITA DVLCIS: fear and desire in the Roman Empire' at Palazzo delle Esposizioni in Rome and 'Museums of Tears' at Museo Correr in Venice, allowed him to relate his recent artworks, respectively, to Roman archaeological masterpieces and Italian historical paintings. His works have been selected four times at the Venice Biennale: at the 49th, 51st and 52nd art editions held in 2001, 2005 and 2007, respectively, and at the 2014 Architecture Biennial. His works have also been featured in other international exhibitions such as the Whitney Biennial 2006, the 26th Biennale in Sao Paulo, the 6th International Biennale in Istanbul and Performa (2007 and 2015). He has also held solo shows around the world in venues such as the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York; Tate Modern, London; MOCA, Los Angeles; MOMA PS1 in New York; MAXXI, Museo Nazionale delle Arti del XXI sec, Rome; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Kunsthalle, Wien; Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich; Museum Ludwig, Cologne; The Garage CCC, Moscow; The Power Plant, Toronto; Jeu de Paume, Paris; Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Turin; Museo Serralves, Porto; Fondazione Prada, Milan; Le Consortium, Dijon; Fondazione Museion in Bolzano and NMNM- Nouveau Musée National de Monaco. His work has been shown, among others, at: the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Whitechapel Art Gallery in London, le Grand Palais in Paris, Museo del Novecento in Milan, Palazzo Grassi - François Pinault Foundation in Venice, Fabric Workshop and Museum in Philadelphia, Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art in Rotterdam, the Migros Museum in Zurich, Neues Museum in Weimer, Pirelli Hangar Bicocca in Milan and Musée National Picasso in Paris.

ABOUT MEMPHIS MILANO

Memphis was born from a cultural movement initiated by Ettore Sottsass in 1981 with the intention of giving life to products he designed and to products designed by a group of young architects and designers with whom he interacted, among which Aldo Cibic, Marco Thun, Marco Zanini, Martine Bedin, Michele De Lucchi, Nathalie Du Pasquier and George Sowden. Memphis was born as a lab for the development of new project ideas and soon became a cultural phenomenon. With Ettore Sottsass as the point of reference for the group, and with Barbara Radice as artistic director, the first collection was presented at Salone del Mobile in 1981. From the start, Memphis design has represented a new expressive concept that is tied to new shapes, new materials, new patterns, and that has redesigned

living habits by revolutionising their logic and conquering the design world. Recently acquired by the Italian Radical Design group, Memphis continues to influence the public's taste in the fashion industry, in cinema and in television. To this date, Memphis' liberating spirit is a source of inspiration for many.

memphis.it | [@memphis_milano](https://www.instagram.com/memphis_milano)

For press inquires memphis@gcagency.it

ABOUT ALMINE RECH

Almine Rech is known for its representation of minimal, perceptual, and conceptual artists such as James Turrell, John McCracken, and Joseph Kosuth, occupying spaces in Paris, Brussels, London, New York, Shanghai and most recently opening locations in Gstaad and Monaco. Almine Rech says "Art is the unique field that has freedom of expression" and she loves to meet and develop relationships with artists who use this freedom to contribute to contemporary society. Almine Rech is also the co-founder of FABÀ (Fundación Almine y Bernard Ruiz-Picasso), which is dedicated to upholding Pablo Picasso's legacy as well as maintaining an extensive archive of his works alongside contributions and collaborations with modern and contemporary art in international institutions and exhibitions.

alminerech.com | [@alminerech](https://www.instagram.com/alminerech)

For press inquires press@alminerech.com