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PERSONAL EXPRESSION

Architect and designer Antonio Citterio, renowned for his work for Bulgari and Flexform, sheds light on his professional journey.

By Drew Linsky

Architect, furniture designer and industrial designer Antonio Citterio (citterio-viel.com) is the first to point out his curious, self-directed professional journey. And his candor is disarming. "I started doing this when I was 13 years old," says the Milanese master. "I never worked for another office. I started myself. Maybe it's a mistake not being influenced by other artists."

"My father had a little factory to produce furniture, and I just knew when I was really young that I wanted to do art and design," he continues. He marks the career milestones: winning his first design competition at 18, opening his practice at 20, working for B&B Italia early on with the

legendary Gio Ponti. "It took years for me to understand his stature," Citterio says. "But at the end of the day that's my life."

Citterio explains that he became a designer "because nobody believed I could do architecture." Of course, that changed and the inexhaustible workhorse, who has had a staggering creative output (clients include Vitra, Flos, Hermès and Technogym), shifts easily between disciplines.

This year he's unveiling a new collection for Flexform (flexform.it), even as he remains immersed in the details of Arte Surfside (artefurfside.com), an exclusive 16-residence building he's creating in collaboration with Kobi Karp. The moment brings together



Clockwise from top: Architect Antonio Citterio; Adda bed from Citterio's new Flexform collection; the Arte Surfside residences in Florida.

the established and the new: Citterio has been the visionary behind the Flexform brand for 40 years, while Arte represents Citterio's very first built project in the U.S.

And there's nothing like it on the beach: "Miami is about layering a balcony atop a balcony atop a balcony," the architect says. "This is from my earliest memories of Miami. My first thought was: 'I don't want to do layers. I have to find a solution in order not to do repetition of a facade.'" His aversion to layering resulted in a skeletal pear shape that somehow manages to be light and elegant. The midrise structure recalls Louis Poulsen's iconic PH Artichoke chandelier (turned on its head) or an art deco version of a pagoda.

Whatever references Arte brings to mind, the edifice is in keeping with Citterio's dismissive take on styles. "I don't like minimalist," he says. "I like reduction and synthesis." Minimalism, the architect explains, is the same as baroque in its purpose to impress. Better, he implies, to create work that is meant to be enjoyed.



ARTE SURFSIDE RENDERING BY ANTONIO CITTERIO