

Viva Italia!

Erin Davis and Mike Cooper at the Royal Ontario Museum

[Animated ROM logo appears with sound sting]

[Erin Davis and Mike Cooper standing in front of Poster for the Vermont "Punt e Mes" by Armando Testa, at the beginning of the Italian Arts & Design: The 20th Century exhibition.]

Erin Davis: Hi there.

Mike Cooper: I'm Mike Cooper.

Erin Davis: And I'm Erin Davis. And we're from the morning show at 98.1 CHFI. I don't know what that is in Italian, and somehow I think today we should know.

Mike Cooper: It's very good, though. That means it's ah...

Erin Davis: *Molto bene.*

Mike Cooper: *Mol...* what is it?

Erin Davis: *Molto bene.*

Mike Cooper: *Molto bene.*

Erin Davis: *Oui. Si. Si.*

Mike Cooper: Yes, *Si, Si.*

Erin Davis: We're going to learn Italian, but mostly we're going to learn today about Italian art in the 20th century here at the ROM. It's the *Arts & Design - Italian: Arts & Design of the 20th Century*. And we're so excited because there are things here we have no idea what they are. But we kind of know what they are. Like look behind us. [Erin and Mike turn to the object behind them. The camera focuses on the object.] Come here.

Mike Cooper: You're going to *si si* something that you've never *si* seen before. [Mike laughs as he gestures behind him to "Pratone" Seating, Gruppo Strum] This is a chair. It's a...

Erin Davis: I know. [Erin also laughs and gestures behind her.] It looks like pylons or something and it's foam and we're not allowed to touch it. We're really not allowed to touch it. But, it's a chair.

Mike Cooper: But after hours, you jump on it, and you just find your position. Some mind created this bizarre chair, and apparently, it's very, very comfortable.

Erin Davis: Yes, it's called *The Big Meadow*. [Translation of original name: "*Il Pratone*".] Actually that was in "Bambi" wasn't it? [Erin laughs.] "The meadow!" Actually, no, it actually is [referring again to the object] a chair. We have Francisco Alvarez, who is the Director of Communications for the ROM, and he's going to be here with us, kinda showing us around to some really cool things. Things that, if we could, we could sit on, we could ride, we could wear.

Mike Cooper: Absolutely.

Erin Davis: You won't believe it. It's going to be great.

[Segment changes to Erin, Mike and Francisco standing by the sculpture "Testa di Mussolini (Profilo continuo)" ["Head of Mussolini (Continuous profile)"] by Renato Bertelli.]

Erin Davis: It would seem that, no matter how far back in history you go; whether far back in Florence and seeing what Michaelangelo or Da Vinci were doing, [camera focuses in on Erin and Francisco] or right up to the present, Italians have always had this way with lines and form and function, and nothing is by accident with them, is it?

Francisco Alvarez: The Italians have a real appreciation for everything that they do having a particular style, a certain quality. They're very self-conscious and they want to make everything that they do almost into a work of art.

Erin Davis: Now this thing behind us, Mike. *[Erin gestures to the statue in the case behind her as the camera pans out to include everyone.]* What would you say this is, if you were just going to look at it?

Mike Cooper: *[Mike turns to look at the object.]* Well, it's...to me it's very, very, very imaginative. To me, it's just very simple and it's not very complicated at all. It just looks like a piece of wood that's been turned on a lathe. *[Mike turns back to the camera.]* It's very simple.

Erin Davis: Okay. For me it looks like something on top of a hydro pole. You know those big glass things, if they still have those?

Mike Cooper: Yeah. One of those thermal conductors is kind of what it looks like.

Erin Davis: Sure. Wait 'til you see what it actually is. Francisco, why don't you do the grand unveil? *[Erin gestures to unveil the object.]*

Francisco Alvarez: *[Francisco also gestures to unveil the object.]* Well, this is actually a portrait of Benito Mussolini, done in 360 degrees. *[Erin appears behind the portrait, nodding her head, then returns to the front of the case with the others.]* So, if you look at any of the edges, you'll see a profile; but it's a profile that's continued around, all the way around. It's actually made of terra cotta, so it was probably done on a potter's wheel, and it was actually an official state portrait of Mussolini, but it expresses the modernity of the Fascist state.

Mike Cooper: How did he possibly even see that to begin with, in order to turn something like that? It's absolutely amazing.

[Camera zooms in on the object, then back to Erin, Mike and Francisco.]

Erin Davis: So this is from 1933. Do we know if Benito Mussolini liked it? Or, did he kind of lose his head over the whole thing?

Francisco Alvarez: Well, I presume he liked it, because Mussolini's mistress was actually one of the great patrons of these Futurist artists, so she influenced him to sort of take them on, and that's how they remained influential throughout this whole period of the Fascists.

Erin Davis: Excellent. All right.

Mike Cooper: It's amazing. Let's carry on.

Erin Davis: Or quit while we're ahead, not sure. *[Everyone laughs.]* Let's go.

[Segment changes to Erin, Mike and Francisco by the Vespa and Fiat display.]

Mike Cooper: Talking about Italian Art & Design here at the ROM. If you've ever been to Italy, or to Europe, you've seen a lot of these Vespas that you see behind us. *[Camera focuses on the "Vespa 125" by Corradino D'Ascanio, with "Fiat 500 L" by Dante Giacosa behind.]* There are virtually millions of them in the world, and they're still around today.

Erin Davis [laughing]: Yeah, and they're hot even in Toronto of course. And this initially came from about the 1940s, Francisco? And this particular one is 1956?

Francisco Alvarez: Yes. This is all kind of post-war commercial production. Italy really tried to take a leadership role in design and production of certain kinds of commodities, and transportation was one of them. Because they had quite an unusual, kind of, infrastructure in Italy, and with the effects of the war and everything, they concentrated very much on certain industries, and transportation was one. You know the streets of Italy are very small and congested, so they developed this way of transportation that was very practical for their own environment, but seemed to resonate all over the world as a sort of new idea that expressed the whole spirit of the times, of the post-war period. *[Camera focuses in again on the Vespa and the Fiat behind it.]*

[Segment changes to Mike and Francisco standing by the case holding the Pucci dress.]

Mike Cooper: *Buon giorno.* Michaelangelo Cooperini. *[Mike points to himself.]* And I bring you *Erin Davisia*.

Erin Davis: *[entering with sunglasses on]* *Davisia. Grazie, grazie signor. E Francisco Alvarez. [Erin indicates Francisco.] Buon giorno.*

Mike Cooper *[addressing the camera]:* Italian Fashion.

Erin Davis: *Si, si.*

Mike Cooper: And look at this. *[Mike gestures to "Dress" by Pucci]* I have something exactly the same...in red. *[Laughter.]*

Erin Davis: Yes he does. He does. *[More laughter.]* That is a Pucci. It's beautiful. And how timeless is this? Mike, what year does it say? *[Erin points to the information card.]*

Mike Cooper: Ah, this is...

Erin Davis: 1963?

Mike Cooper: ... '63, ya.

Erin Davis: Wow. And look at it. *[Camera focuses in on a close-up of the dress.]* You could just picture Nicole Ritchie, or Paris Hilton, or anyone wearing this today. Couldn't you, Francisco?

Francisco Alvarez: Absolutely. You know, Pucci was one of the first international superstars of fashion, and certainly the first Italian that was internationally known. He started out as a sportswear designer, and he had this idea about creating clothing that you could just squish into your purse and then whip it out and it would be ready to wear for a cocktail event. *[Erin laughs.]*

Erin Davis: I wonder what kind of life he was leading. That's sounds wonderful.

Francisco Alvarez: That really speaks to our lifestyle today, don't you think?

Erin Davis: Oh, yes. Oh yes...

[Segment changes to Erin, Mike and Francisco by the "La Mamma" Armchair and Footrest.]

Erin Davis: This has been quite a tour, Francisco, but frankly I think we're ready for a seat...or several. *[Erin gestures to the furniture display behind them.]*

Mike Cooper: Now this one reminds me of my mother-in-law. *[Mike points to the red "La Mamma" armchair and footrest.]* Tell us about this one over here.

Francisco Alvarez: This red chair is called the "La Mamma" Armchair, and it's still in production today. *[Camera focuses in on the "La Mamma" armchair and footrest.]* It's actually soft foam covered with quite a stretchy fabric. The forms refer to very feminine shapes, as you can imagine, and it actually comes packaged between two sheets of plastic, flat, so that when it's delivered to your home, you simply unpack the pieces and it springs into shape. *[Francisco demonstrates for the camera, and Erin laughs, delighted.]*

Mike Cooper: Isn't that... that's crazy.

Erin Davis: Now, there's a lot of great form here. There's a lot of art, obviously, being the ROM. *[View of: "Tube" Chair by Joe Colombo, "Attica" Chair by Studio 65, and "La Mamma", with close-up of "Tube" Chair; followed by camera scan of group of chairs, ending with "Archizoom Associati Mies" Armchair and Footrest by Poltronova]*

Mike Cooper: It's amazing. Just the thought process in all this, it's absolutely brilliant what the imagination can do unbridled.

Erin Davis: And there is so much more to see. We've only shown you a little bit of it here today, but we hope that you're enjoying the Italian arts & design in the 20th century. *[Presented by Sentry Select Capital Corp.]* It closes January...*[Erin gestures to Mike.]*

Mike Cooper: January 7th, so you have a little bit of time to check it out for yourself. And then it all goes back to Italy. It's not on tour any more. It goes back to Italy and it's there to stay, so check it out. You've got until January 7th to see it for yourself.

Erin Davis: *Grazie signor.*

Francisco Alvarez: Thank you for coming.

Mike Cooper: Thank you very much.

Erin Davis: Thank you. It was lovely.

Mike Cooper: I'm Mike Cooper.

Erin Davis: I'm Erin Davis. We love ya!

Erin Davis and Mike Cooper [*waving as CHFI logo is shown*]: Bye. Bye.

[Video ends with animated ROM logo and sound sting.]