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# FRAME



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FUTURE STUDIO : YAYOI KUSAMA : MARTÍ GUIXÉ : ROSSANA ORLANDI : ALASDHAIR WILLIS : CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE PRACTICE



**DESIGN AFTER THINGS**



THE MINIATURIZED CHAIR GARDEN THAT JAPAN'S OKI SATO (NENDO) PLANTED IN THE HEART OF MILAN ENCOURAGED THE 'GROWTH' OF PRODUCTS IN A MORE NATURAL, ECO-FRIENDLY WAY. PHOTO FILIPPO BAMBERGHI

## RETHINKING THINGS OR HOW TO GET RID OF STUFF

At this year's SALONE DEL MOBILE, opportunity arose from loss, volcanic ash promoted land travel, engineering elicited poetry and, most of all, things receded.

WORDS SHONQUIS MORENO

In April, at the international furniture fair in Milan, swathes of yellow paint were dispersed over the asphalt and façade of Spazio Fendi. If you stood on a single unmarked coordinate leading to the building, the yellow marks suddenly reconciled within your field of vision to form an unbroken circle in the belly of a square. Inside, the Design Vertigo exhibition hosted by Italian fashion house Fendi and Design Miami continued with three eye-bending art installations – and involved no furniture at all. 'This show is intended to make a statement about embracing momentary chaos,' Design Miami founder Ambra Medda explained amidst the tumult and din of Vertigo's opening party. 'It's about people accepting that boundaries don't mean what they used to mean. And that this is an opportunity.' It could have been a slogan and a caveat for anyone

wracked by the generalized anxiety of today's prolonged economic troubles – not only for denizens of the design industry. At this year's Salone, opportunity arose from loss, volcanic ash promoted land travel, engineering elicited poetry, strength fortified sparseness, and not all design companies exhibited tangible work. There was only one eruption, but the event smouldered with contradictions being rubbed together. Most of all, things receded.

### 01. MAKE EXPERIENCES.

Medda was not alone. The furniture fair offered a variety of furniture-free installations. In fact, those mounted by Japanese electronics firms, such as Sony, Toshiba, Canon and Panasonic, proved to be almost gadgetless. Each emphasized an immersive experience supported

by a behind-the-scenes product rather than a display of products. Design is still seen as an act of giving form to matter, but in a world of social-media marketing and total branding, the design of experiences that elicit emotion has long since superseded the logo. This year, companies with the money to do it right finally did it right.

For Toshiba, architect Makoto Tanijiri built a white room obscured in a thick mist illuminated with coloured LEDs and evoking endless space. The point? To demonstrate the precision and expressiveness of an already familiar technology and, through Tanijiri's design, to engineer a little piece of poetry. Canon also reached for the expressive limits of its (not new and not even completely high-def) digital-imaging systems. Projectors mapped images onto the white surfaces of a room-sized polyhedron from over

a dozen seemingly impossible angles. Most visitors probably left La Triennale convinced that this technology was new.

Sony, however, was alone in commissioning an environment around a product in development. It is a chip capable of integrating electronics, light and sound into furniture and architecture, for instance, giving a lamp a secondary function as a speaker while offering an unprecedented clarity of sound. 'Consumer electronics companies have a dilemma: the traditional branded boxes that used to sit in our living rooms are becoming obsolete,' says Edward Barber of UK studio BarberOsgerby, which padded the whole space thickly with pyramidal anechoic-foam tiles. 'Technology is becoming more subtle and embedded, the products are dissolving, and brands are losing their physical place.' The resulting environment communicated the virtues of the product immediately: services can be grafted onto space rather than remaining awkward prostheses to it. Whereas the installation remained functionally pragmatic, it engaged people emotionally – something that conventional showrooms try but, more often than not, fail to do.

Another integration of space and services took place at the Flos booth, where bite-sized vignettes illustrated various ways to build lighting into architecture and have the equipment recede. 'Material is pervading our lives less and becoming more fluid,' says Flos president and CEO Piero Gandini. 'Increasingly, we will have the perception of light in our homes instead of the perception of lamps, the perception of emotion instead of an object.' The show wed familiar LED technology with a featherweight but robust composite (a plaster substitute) to show how design plus technology can liberate the indoors (if not us) from a tyranny of 'things'.

### 02. SLIM DOWN. NOTICEABLY.

Maybe it's the climate of austerity and the belt-tightening? Product designers were shedding pounds and slimming down, favouring paper-thin profiles, gossamer lightness and even invisibility – trying to consume less and make more of what they do consume.

First, they made surface double-task as structure: the mould for Studio Hausen's latest throne-like armchair consists of a high-performance textile that, when inflated, becomes load-bearing.

Then they whittled structure down to a powerful petiteness: Japan's Oki Sato of Nendo not only planted a miniaturized Chair Garden but also presented his nearly two-dimensional Cord Chair, with its 15-mm-wide, wood-veneered, how-can-these-possibly-bear-weight legs.

And then they simply made it vanish. For Kartell, which has been leading the transparency train in recent years, Tokujin Yoshioka made a family of see-through furniture called The Invisibles. Like the designer's one-off glass Chair That Disappears in the Rain (2003), the new pieces appear to disappear despite their unprecedentedly thick polycarbonate construction and sharp edges.

### 03. PUT IT ONLINE.

So it was going, going, gone. From immateriality, we turned to virtuality. Dutchman Maarten Baas rendered one of his physical (as well as

performative) designs virtual. His Analog Digital Clock records a man as he replicates a digital clock by painting over and wiping clean a series of glass panels. Baas translated this into a €0.79 iPhone app sold only online. For anyone looking for an actual timepiece – in the form of a screensaver – this was, however, a missed opportunity. Instead of selling an artful design en masse, Baas is hawkling affordable art. And by setting up as an (analog) exhibitor in a room in Ventura Lambrate this year to 'show' the product, he seemed to miss his own (virtual) point.

## 'Boundaries don't mean what they used to mean'

### 04. REMAKE; DON'T MAKE.

Don't make new stuff; renew the old. Designers honoured existing objects through interventions that imbued them with a sustainability they may not have possessed in their initial incarnation and a value that they did not always deserve in the second. Just as overwhelming advances in technology revitalized craft, an oversaturation of disposability has designers casting about for ways to revalue things at an emotional or a material level. Sometimes underscoring an object's original story did the trick: Dutch designer Piet Hein Eek assembled a chandelier from several lamps bought at a flea market. Sometimes designing a false history, unrelated to the object's primary purpose, gave it a fresh lease on life. And sometimes authorship more than artistry was used to inflate the value of rescued things: Saved by Droog featured thousands of banal objects, from matchboxes to glassware, that were purchased at liquidation sales. Fourteen brand-name designers were invited to give each generic product a makeover before tagging them for sale in lots (photographs of the proud purchasers of each lot were displayed conspicuously, creating a sense of . . . peer pressure). Certainly, the plain handkerchiefs embroidered laboriously with news stories selected from the web earned their price tag, thanks to the careful handiwork. But a chunky wooden dining table laser-cut with a text exhorting its owner to donate 'enough money that it hurts a little' to charity before (presumably ever) sitting down to a meal struck a sanctimonious note that seemed to match the title of the show.

### 05. MAKE GOOD THINGS, OR DON'T MAKE ANYTHING AT ALL.

'Saved by Ventura Lambrate' is what could be said of the week itself. In Zona Tortona, the great design (and it was there) had to be culled from among décor, heavy-handed marketing and redundant registration lines. But on arriving in Lambrate, visitors caught sight of the first example of good design at the metro station, where a trail of easy-to-follow signs led to the remote exhibitors' blocks. There, even the exhausted industrial architecture helped set the stage for a cultural experience that stood in stark contrast to the commercialism of Tortona.

'The Salone this year was much more daring than last, despite the financial climate,' says curator/organizer Margriet Vollenberg of Organisation in Design. 'You felt that the exhibitors were ready for a new start and that the public was ready to be surprised again.' Lambrate's 30 exhibitors knew that Tortona would attract approximately 100,000 visitors; Lambrate topped out at 30,000. But the resulting presentations, exuding an atmosphere of renewal, were far more like gallery shows than trade-fair satellite events.

Curated by Ilse Crawford, the Design Academy Eindhoven exhibition was rich with the many questions it asked, including 'Why do we design?' Surprisingly, though, it wasn't in Lambrate that this question was answered. We found the reply among the oddly juried, radically inconsistent but occasionally rewarding aisles of the Salone Satellite exhibition. Past a booth taken up by a clumsy (and inexplicable) water feature, past a tufted leather pig, an answer appeared on the rear wall of an empty and unmanned booth. This was the base of Brikolör, a two-year-old designer/manufacturer from Göteborg, Sweden. The mission of this not large and not well-funded firm is to make furniture with a 'guaranteed emotional and technical durability of 300 years'. Brikolör considers itself both an industrial company and an organization for critical thinking, and its ironic existence is predicated on the belief that the world does not need another chair. The company, financed entirely by its own designers, had planned to launch its first product this year and to show several prototypes. As a sign at the vacant stand announced, 'The work is done. But we're not happy. Just good enough isn't good enough for Brikolör.' Which, of course, raised a second question: what kind of idealist can afford, during a global economic meltdown, to make such a decision and then pin it to the wall of an overpriced *fiera* booth? 'It cost us a lot to do what we did,' admits Mathias Eriksson. 'But that's not how we look at it. This is not a setback. If we want to build the most beautiful company in the world, this is the price.' Cynics may question the motivation behind the company's *mea culpa*, but such scepticism is irrelevant. Brikolör's thing-free booth challenges the design industry to rethink its rationale, to embrace value and values, and to appreciate quality and accountability on the road to living well and designing sustainably. Is anybody listening? ■■■■

# SALONE DEL MOBILE

WORDS FEMKE DE WILD  
PHOTOS FILIPPO BAMBERGHI



SIMPLE A4 PRINT-OUTS LEADING TO BAAS'S APARTMENT IN LAMBRATE PRICED THE DESIGNER'S IPHONE APP AT 99 EUROCENTS.

MAARTEN BAAS TRANSLATED THE PHYSICAL ANALOG DIGITAL CLOCK HE DESIGNED LAST YEAR INTO AN IPHONE APP SOLD ONLY ONLINE. HE RENTED AN APARTMENT IN LAMBRATE TO PRESENT THE CONCEPT.

'The iPhone app is intangible and inexpensive, which makes it affordable for lots of people. But for me, work is never about money. I'm always looking for the right application for the right object. An iPhone app was ideal for the Analog Digital Clock; in other cases, an expensive limited edition may be the best solution. This isn't a stunt; that would be too easy. I back this product all the way.'

**MAARTEN BAAS**  
DESIGNER

maartenbaas.com

CHAIRS BY MARTINO GAMPER, JERSZEY SEYMOUR AND JAIME HAYON FOR MAGIS ARE ALL TRYING TO BE INVISIBLE.



THOMAS HEATHERWICK'S SPUN CHAIR FOR MAGIS MULTITASKS AS A (SOMEWHAT) FUNCTIONAL OBJECT, AS A SCULPTURE AND AS AN EXPERIENCE. VISITORS TO THE MAGIS STAND IN RHO FIERA WERE INVITED TO SIT IN THE CHAIR AND TEST THEIR SPINNING SKILLS.



FLASH FACTORY, A TOM DIXON CONCEPT, IS THE DESIGNER'S WAY OF DEMONSTRATING THAT THE PROCESS OF MANUFACTURING AND SELLING PRODUCTS CAN AND MUST CHANGE.



TOM DIXON WANTS TO 'TAKE THE CONSUMER TO THE FACTORY'. AT HIS STAND IN MILAN, 'FACTORY WORKERS' IN OVERALLS ASSEMBLED DIXON'S ETCH CANDLEHOLDER AND PENDANT LAMP, BOTH AVAILABLE AS FLAT-PACKS.

'We have coupled two worlds, literally and figuratively. Studio Job's objects and my lamps merge together quite naturally. Although the work has a very uncomplicated look, a lot of cutting-edge technology lies beneath the surface.'

**PIEKE BERGMANS**  
DESIGNER

[piekebergmans.com](http://piekebergmans.com)



PIEKE BERGMANS AT THE WONDERLAMP EXHIBITION, WHICH INCLUDED SEVEN OBJECTS THAT SHE DESIGNED IN COLLABORATION WITH STUDIO JOB.

HANGING ABOVE EXHAUST PIPES THAT EVOKED A FACTORY-LIKE ATMOSPHERE, TOM DIXON'S VOID LIGHT WAS A HARBINGER OF LONDON'S UPCOMING OLYMPIC GAMES. LIKE THE OLYMPIC MEDALS, VOID COMES IN GOLD, SILVER AND BRONZE.



CANON USED A NOT-ALTOGETHER-NEW TECHNOLOGY FOR AN INTRIGUING INSTALLATION IN WHICH PROJECTORS MAPPED IMAGES ONTO THE WHITE SURFACES OF A LONG, CURVED PLATFORM AND A ROOM-SIZED POLYHEDRON FROM OVER A DOZEN SEEMINGLY IMPOSSIBLE ANGLES.



DUTCH DESIGNER DANNY FANG'S POLYCARBONATE ROCKEFELLER CHAIR (PART OF THE HIDDEN HEROES EXHIBITION) BOASTS A SOLID BASE THAT BECOMES LIGHTER TOWARDS THE TOP. TO ACHIEVE THIS EFFECT, GAS WAS INJECTED DURING THE MOULDING OF THE CHAIR.



'In 2007 I took off for Hong Kong to set up my own design studio. I work for local and foreign companies, with a focus on Asian manufacturing. An exciting new development involves the production and marketing of my plastic chairs in collaboration with a Chinese partner. It hasn't been easy, but making such good headway gives me a buzz. Slowly but surely, an awareness of design is emerging in Hong Kong and South China.'

**DANNY FANG**  
DESIGNER  
fangstudio.com



AT SUPERSTUDIO P10, SEVERAL INTRIGUING INSTALLATIONS ACCOMPANIED THE LAUNCH OF PHILIPS' FIRST COMMERCIALY AVAILABLE OLED MODULE, LUMIBLADE. INFRARED SENSORS IN THE LUMIBLADE REFLECTIONS MIRROR WALL REACTED TO THE PRESENCE OF VISITORS, CAUSING THE OLEDS TO DIM.



PRODUCT DESIGNERS WERE SHEDDING POUNDS AND SLIMMING DOWN. AMONG NENDO'S LATEST WORK WAS THE NEARLY TWO-DIMENSIONAL CORD CHAIR, WHICH HAS 15-MM-WIDE, WOOD-VENEERED LEGS.



RATHER THAN MAKING NEW OBJECTS, MANY DESIGNERS UPDATED EXISTING ITEMS. PIET HEIN EEK ASSEMBLED A CHANDELIER FROM SEVERAL LAMPS BOUGHT AT A FLEA MARKET.

‘Enzo Mari’s ideas on the use of the most elementary and affordable materials are particularly relevant at the moment. There’s got to be a story behind every decision you make as a company.’

**VILLE KOKKONEN**  
DESIGN DIRECTOR, ARTEK

artek.fi



AT SPAZIO ROSSANA ORLANDI, DUTCH DESIGNER PIET HEIN EEK GAVE A FINAL TOUCH TO AN INSTALLATION MADE FROM SECOND-HAND LAMPS.



ARTEK DESIGN DIRECTOR VILLE KOKKONEN SEATED ON ENZO MARI’S SEDIA 1, WHICH WAS INTRODUCED IN 1974. THE PIECE IS SOLD AS A KIT COMPOSED OF PINE BOARDS, NAILS AND INSTRUCTIONS. ALL THAT’S NEEDED TO ASSEMBLE THE CHAIR IS A HAMMER AND A STEADY HAND.



‘I don’t brief my designers. They make whatever they want. All I do is show the results. Currently much of the work focuses on restoring nature to our lives. People are becoming more reflective. It’s as if everybody is growing up and beginning to understand that there’s more to life than work and money.’

**ROSSANA ORLANDI**  
GALLERY OWNER, CURATOR

rossanaorlandi.com

ROSSANA ORLANDI IN AN OLD VW BEETLE THAT DESIGN DUO BOKJA DECORATED WITH A VIBRANT COLLAGE OF RECYCLED FABRICS.



BOAZ COHEN AND SAYAKA YAMAMOTO, THE DESIGN DUO BEHIND BCXSY, PRESENTED ORIGIN PART I: JOIN, A SERIES OF FOLDING SCREENS CRAFTED BY MR TANAKA, A MASTER OF TATEGU, TRADITIONAL JAPANESE WOOD JOINERY. IT TOOK THE ACCLAIMED WOODWORKER A FULL MONTH TO REALIZE EACH OF BCXSY’S COMPLICATED AND UNUSUAL DESIGNS.

DESIGNED BY THE CAMPANAS, AN UNDULATING INSTALLATION OF ENDLESS LAYERS OFFERED VISITORS TO THE COSENTINO STAND MORE OF AN EXPERIENCE THAN A STRAIGHTFORWARD PRODUCT PRESENTATION. THE TOUCH-ME TEXTURED WALLS, REMINISCENT OF SEDIMENTARY ROCK DEPOSITS, CALLED ATTENTION TO ECO BY COSENTINO, A COLLECTION OF COUNTERTOP SURFACES FEATURING 75 PER CENT RECYCLED MATERIALS.



REUSE WAS AT THE HEART OF NEARLY EVERYTHING DISPLAYED AT SPAZIO ROSSANA ORLANDI. ADORNING ONE GARDEN WALL WERE SCULPTURES FASHIONED FROM VINTAGE TAPESTRY BY FRENCH ARTIST FRÉDÉRIQUE MOREL.

‘We are living in a time of great change, and it’s completely altered our idea of what is valuable. In the past, we accumulated tangible possessions. Now we no longer look for objects but for senses and emotions. Design is not only form; when we look at something, we also listen to the sounds it makes and inhale its scent. So many factors influence an object.’

**TOKUJIN YOSHIOKA**  
DESIGNER  
tokujin.com



THE IDEA FOR THE INVISIBLE COLLECTION DATES BACK THREE YEARS, TO THE MOMENT WHEN CLAUDIO LUTI, CEO OF KARTELL, FIRST SAW YOSHIOKA'S GLASS BENCH. THE DESIGNER FAVOURS THE USE OF TRANSPARENCY IN HIS WORK 'BECAUSE OF HOW IT CATCHES THE LIGHT'.



RIGHT OUT FRONT WITH ESTABLISHED & SONS' LATEST PROJECTS WERE THREE MODELS OF BERTJAN POT'S NEW CHAIR: JUMPER.

‘We wanted to leverage the brand of Established & Sons by creating a strong business element and by truly penetrating the online market, which will open the way for new customers and, in turn, feed into our current core business. Last year saw a 50 to 60 per cent increase in online sales; the design industry is lagging behind. Our products will be available for a short time only. Involvement is more important than volume, and speed is vital.’

**ALASDHAIR WILLIS**  
COFOUNDER  
OF ESTABLISHED & SONS  
establishedandsons.com



ESTABLISHED & SONS SEES ITS ESTD COLLECTION AS A GOOD WAY TO TAP INTO THE E-COMMERCE MARKET.

AT LA PELOTA, WE FOUND ALASDHAIR WILLIS (RIGHT) AND DESIGN DIRECTOR SEBASTIAN WRONG NEXT TO BEND, A SIDE TABLE DESIGNED BY WRONG.





PATRICIA URQUIOLA SEATED IN THE THE DWELLING LAB, WHICH APPEARED IN A COURTYARD BORDERED BY THE SHOWROOMS OF KVADRAT AND FLOS, A SPACE TEMPORARILY TRANSFORMED BY A VIVID YELLOW BACKDROP.

FIVE ANGULAR 'CONES' FLARING OUT FROM A BMW 5 SERIES GRAN TURISMO REVEALED THE CAR'S INTERIOR FEATURES TO VISITORS VIEWING THE INSTALLATION FROM EVERY POSSIBLE PERSPECTIVE.



THE DWELLING LAB WAS DESIGNED BY PATRICIA URQUIOLA AND GIULIO RIDOLFO WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE COLOURS OF THE INSTALLATION. KVADRAT WILL PRODUCE THE NEWLY DESIGNED FABRIC.

'We're in a period that calls for showing serious products and concepts. It's not the time to play and to present prototypes that will look entirely different when they get to the manufacturing phase.'

**PATRICIA URQUIOLA**  
**DESIGNER**

[patriciaurquiola.com](http://patriciaurquiola.com)

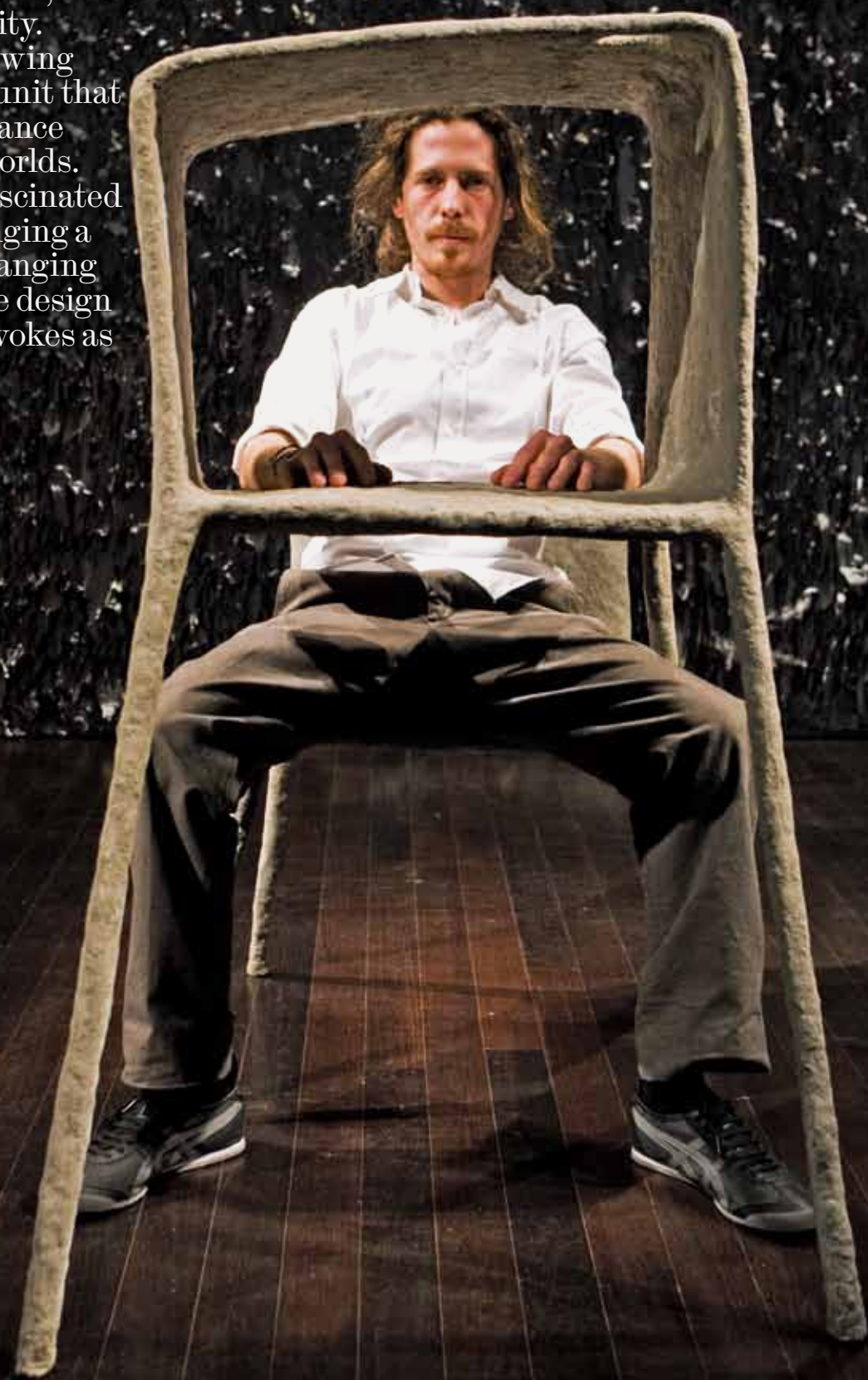
MAKE GOOD THINGS OR DON'T MAKE ANYTHING AT ALL – A RECURRING THEME CLEARLY EXEMPLIFIED BY VITRA, WHICH SHOWED ONLY A FEW NEW PRODUCTS IN FAVOUR OF TURNING THE SPOTLIGHT ON THE VITRA HOME COLLECTION. GRABBING CENTRE STAGE (QUITE LITERALLY) AT THE STAND WAS CHAIRLESS BY CHILEAN ARCHITECT ALEJANDRO ARAVENA, WHOSE SIMPLE STRAP FACILITATES THE ACT OF SITTING ON THE GROUND. A HANDY TOOL FOR TRAVELLERS, STUNT, OR A SERIOUS PRODUCT?



‘As opposed to the massive, public and fleeting nature of the internet and the computer, what I look for in my studio are focus, privacy and intensity. That’s why I’m showing only one design: a unit that symbolizes the balance between the two worlds. I’ve always been fascinated by materials. Changing a material means changing the character of the design and the feeling it evokes as well.’

**NACHO CARBONELL  
DESIGNER**

nachocarbonell.com



NACHO CARBONELL SEATED ON A PROTOTYPE FROM THE DIVERSITY SERIES. VISIBLE IN THE BACKGROUND IS AN 8-M-HIGH WALL COVERED IN PAINTED PAPER SNIPPETS. EACH OF THE 20 PROTOTYPES THAT CARBONELL PRESENTED AT PALAZZO FERRE HAD A DIFFERENT FINISH.

‘You’re seeing two solutions to the problems of our time. Designers either go back to the absolute basics in a search for primitive materials and forms. Or they revert to modernism, which is a delight to the eye.’

**LIDEWIJ EDELKOORT  
TREND FORECASTER**

trendunion.com

LIDEWIJ EDELKOORT (RIGHT) AND HER AMERICAN AGENT, EMMANUELLE LINARD, IN FRONT OF THE WONDERLAMP EXHIBITION AT PIAZZA SAN MARCO 1.



BARBEROSGERBY'S INSTALLATION FOR SONY ENGAGED PEOPLE EMOTIONALLY, WHILE COMMUNICATING FUTURE APPLICATIONS FOR A PRODUCT IN DEVELOPMENT: A CHIP CAPABLE OF INTEGRATING ELECTRONICS, LIGHT AND SOUND INTO FURNITURE AND ARCHITECTURE.





MOROSO – ONE OF THE FEW COMPANIES THAT APPEARED TO HAVE CONTINUED ON ITS WELL-TROD PATH – PRESENTED A DELUGE OF NEW DESIGNS, INCLUDING DOSHI LEVIEN'S PAPER PLANES CHAIRS.

'I wanted to fully integrate object and interface, and in this design they are one and the same. Sliding the aluminium cap up and down allows you to adjust the volume, and rotating it enables you to change stations. It's as simple as that.'

**JOHN VAN DEN NIEUWENHUIZEN**  
DESIGNER

[hiddenradiodesign.com](http://hiddenradiodesign.com)

IT'S EASY TO CONNECT AN MP3, LAPTOP OR CD PLAYER TO JOHN VAN DEN NIEUWENHUIZEN'S HIDDEN RADIO, AS SHOWN AT THE HIDDEN HEROES EXHIBITION.



FRONT'S WOODEN CHAIR FEATURES A WOVEN COVERING OF NATURAL BIRCH BEADS, WHICH FILL THE SEAT LIKE FOAMING SOAP BUBBLES.



AMONG PATRICIA URQUIOLA'S DESIGNS FOR MOROSO WERE FOUR NEW PIECES. SHOWN HERE IS THE WOODEN ARMCHAIR KLARA.





MADE OF ENAMELLED CERAMIC, INGA SEMPÉ'S HORLOGE MURALE COMBINES THE SHAPE OF A CONTEMPORARY WRISTWATCH WITH THE PENDULUM-LIKE MECHANISM OF A TRADITIONAL WALL CLOCK.



'We worked for three years on the launch of our company and were ready to roll last year; we didn't want to postpone our plans because of the crisis. Our target is the middle segment of the market - no gallery prices, but not too cheap either. A relatively small number of furniture companies are active in this sector. Even though our first year wasn't easy, we managed to expand the collection this year. We want to make honest products with the best designers, using attractive and sustainable materials - products meant to last.'

**MASSIMILIANO IORIO**  
CO-OWNER OF MOUSTACHE

moustache.fr

MOUSTACHE OWNERS MASSIMILIANO IORIO (RIGHT) AND STÉPHANE ARRIUBERGÉ AT THEIR STAND IN ZONA TORTONA, SEATED AT THE INSTANT TABLE DESIGNED BY MATALI CRASSET. ABOVE THEM HANGS BERTJAN POT'S FOLD UP LAMP.

A WORK OF ART BY FELICE VARINI MARKED THE ENTRANCE TO DESIGN VERTIGO, AN EXHIBITION HOSTED BY FASHION HOUSE FENDI AND DESIGN MIAMI. THE SHOW FEATURED THREE MORE INSTALLATIONS - AND NOT ONE STICK OF FURNITURE!



'Actually, I had decided not to design anything new this year, but unexpected events in my private life prompted me to make exactly what I wanted to make: objects without a story that are based purely on intuition. What interests me most is the idea of creating invisible things, things that don't stand out but that are valued all the more for their subtlety. I'm tired of products that demand attention - and of all this show and pandemonium. And I don't want to be photographed either. Being an important designer isn't my top priority.'

**BERTJAN POT**  
DESIGNER

bertjanpot.nl

THE FOLD UP LAMP, DESIGNED BY BERTJAN POT, ILLUMINATES THE INSTANT DE VIE COFFEE TABLE AND THE INSTANT ARMSEAT (LEFT) BY MATALI CRASSET. THE RED CHAIR, PETITE GIGUE, IS THE WORK OF FRANÇOIS AZAMBOURG. INGA SEMPÉ'S HORLOGE MURALE IS ON THE WALL.



EVEN THE SWAROVSKI CRYSTAL PALACE INSTALLATIONS WERE LESS BLING AND MORE POETIC THAN THOSE FROM PREVIOUS YEARS. VINCENT VAN DUYSSEN CONTRIBUTED FROST, A FOREST OF GLOWING 'BEAMS', AND MIRROR WALLS MADE THE SPACE SEEM TO GO ON FOREVER.



ISABEL BERGLUND ARRIVED IN MILAN WITH ALL SORTS OF KNITTED DESIGNS, INCLUDING A CABINET, A TREE AND A CHAIR ABOVE WHICH A HAIRPIECE SEEMED TO FLOAT.

CERAMIST LOUISE HINDSGAVLE SHOWED THE PET, A MECHANICAL STOOL – UNFORTUNATELY, WE SAW NO EVIDENCE OF ITS MECHANICAL DEXTERITY AT THE EXHIBITION – AND HER FIRST PIECE MADE USING WOOD AND TEXTILE.



WOULD YOU MIND? – AN EXHIBITION HOSTED BY DANISH CRAFTS IN ZONA TORTONA – DISPLAYED WORK BY 12 DANISH DESIGNERS. ROSSANA ORLANDI'S SMALL SATELLITE PRESENTATION INCLUDED A LARGE KNITTED TREE BY ISABEL BERGLUND AND MATHIAS BENGTSSON'S PAPER CHAIR.



THE FLOS STAND AT SUPERSTUDIO PIÙ SHOWED VISITORS HOW TO INTEGRATE LIGHTING INTO ARCHITECTURE IN SEVERAL VERY SUBTLE WAYS. THE PRESENTATION EMPHASIZED THE ABILITY OF DESIGN COMBINED WITH TECHNOLOGY TO LIBERATE INTERIOR SPACES FROM A TYRANNY OF 'THINGS'.



'I play with abstractions of classical objects or archetypes in architecture. Some of my works are literal quotes from the past; others are more abstract. I'm an extreme minimalist by nature. Technology now finally allows me to encapsulate light in a very small container.'

**RON GILAD**  
**DESIGNER**

[designfenzider.com](http://designfenzider.com)

RON GILAD BELOW HIS LUCERNARIO LIGHT FOR FLOS; THE LAMP WAS A FEATURE OF THE COMPANY'S SOFT ARCHITECTURE EXHIBITION AT SUPERSTUDIO PIÙ.



MAKOTO TANIJIRI OF SUPPOSE DESIGN OFFICE.



THE WHITE ROOM THAT ARCHITECT MAKOTO TANIJIRI OF SUPPOSE CREATED FOR TOSHIBA WELCOMED VISITORS INTO A SEEMINGLY BOUNDLESS, MISTY, INTERACTIVE ENVIRONMENT ILLUMINATED BY COLOURED LEDS.

HOTEL RCA, AN EXHIBITION HELD IN A VACANT WAREHOUSE IN VENTURA LAMBRATE, PRESENTED WORK BY STUDENTS ATTENDING LONDON'S ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART. HARRY THALER'S SHELVING SOLUTION, TWIST & LOCK, PAIRS SPECIAL CRATES WITH AN INNOVATIVE LOCKING SYSTEM. THE POSSIBILITIES ARE ENDLESS.



ILSE CRAWFORD (HERE IN THE COURTYARD OF THE FOUR SEASONS HOTEL, ON VIA GESÙ IN MILAN) CURATED THE DESIGN ACADEMY EINDHOVEN EXHIBITION, WHICH ASKED SUCH RELEVANT QUESTIONS AS: WHY DO WE DESIGN?



‘Good designers have always asked themselves why they are making something and why now. The economic crisis hasn’t changed their approach. The industry itself has changed, however. In the past, designers worked mainly for manufacturers, but the added value of design lies at the beginning of the process. Consultancy will become more and more important; it’s a whole new area. Since the crisis, people want to invest only in something that has longevity, sense of place and identity. They want more than lipstick on a pig.’

KIEREN JONES CAME UP WITH COMMUNITY COMMERCE (RIGHT), WHICH IS BASED ON THE IDEA THAT PERSONAL MICRO-FARMS CAN HELP COMMUNITIES OF ALL SIZES TO SOLVE ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS. VALENTIN VODEV DESIGNED AN ELECTRIC TRICYCLE, WHICH HE CALLS BIQUATRO (LEFT).



ON THE PLAZA OUTSIDE SUPERSTUDIO PIÙ, VISITORS LAZING IN FATBOYS WENT ROUND AND ROUND ON THE FIRM'S CAROUSEL: THE SALONE AS AMUSEMENT PARK.

**ILSE CRAWFORD**  
**DESIGNER**  
studioilse.com

'I'd never designed a chair before, and here I had the opportunity to do just that - and in a context that was exactly right for me. Not only does Mattiazzi know a lot about wood; this is a company that's been manufacturing chairs for years for the likes of Zanotta and Moroso. That meant I could rely on the knowledge and support of an expert to realize a design that illustrates what I see as the essence of wood.'

**SAM HECHT**  
DESIGNER



THE LOGIC BEHIND SAM HECHT'S DESIGN OF THE BRANCA CHAIR FOR MATTIAZZI TAKES ITS CUE FROM THE WAY IN WHICH BRANCHES GROW ON TREES.



WORK BY STUDENTS FROM ECAL APPEARED AT SPAZIO CORSO GENOVA 7. LAETITIA FLORIN'S TRAYS AND BOXES SHOWED SIGNS OF 'PLASTIC SURGERY', WHICH WAS ALSO THE NAME OF HER PROJECT.



CAMILLE BLIN'S GRADIENT LAMP (2009) FEATURES TWO COMPONENTS: A TUBE OF ANODIZED ALUMINIUM, WHICH HOLDS THE LIGHT SOURCE, AND A SILK-SCREEN PRINTED GLASS DISC - WITH A GRADATION FROM BLACK TO TRANSPARENT - THAT ALLOWS THE USER TO CONTROL LIGHT INTENSITY.



MILAN'S 2010 DESIGN CARNIVAL OCCUPIED THE ENTIRE CITY, AS IT DOES EVERY YEAR. UP AND DOWN VIA MONTE NAPOLEONE, CARS AND PEDESTRIANS MOVED BENEATH A PARADE OF LARGE LAMPSHADES.





'People often associate simple strips of bamboo with Third World products. By applying the material in a contemporary way, you can give it a new, industrial connotation. Bamboo grows super fast. It's really unnecessary to make yet another product out of plastic.'

**LYNDON NERI AND ROSANNA HU**  
DESIGNERS, AND OWNERS  
OF DESIGN REPUBLIC

neriandhu.com

THE EMPEROR AND THE BIRD BELONG TO A RECURRING THEME IN CHINESE FOLKLORE. THE EMPEROR LAMP THAT NERI&HU DESIGNED FOR MOOOI REFERS TO THIS TRADITION.

MOOOI PRESENTED ITS LATEST COLLECTION IN A DIORAMA-LIKE INSTALLATION. ENORMOUS TWO-DIMENSIONAL MODELS OFFERED VIEWS OF REAL-LIFE PROTOTYPES.



'The world has a need for things that are more personal, things that are more fanciful - at least I do. A product may begin with functionality, but surely it can't end there. My feelings on the subject have actually intensified in recent years. I want to make products that people never want to part with - like an antique Chinese cabinet that stays in the family forever. It's a way of establishing ourselves in a greater context and of putting history back into design.'

**MARCEL WANDERS**  
DESIGNER

marcelwanders.com

MARCEL WANDERS SEATED ON HIS MONSTER CHAIR AT THE RECENTLY OPENED MOOOI SHOWROOM IN VIA TORTONA.

