MILAN DESIGN WEEK 2018

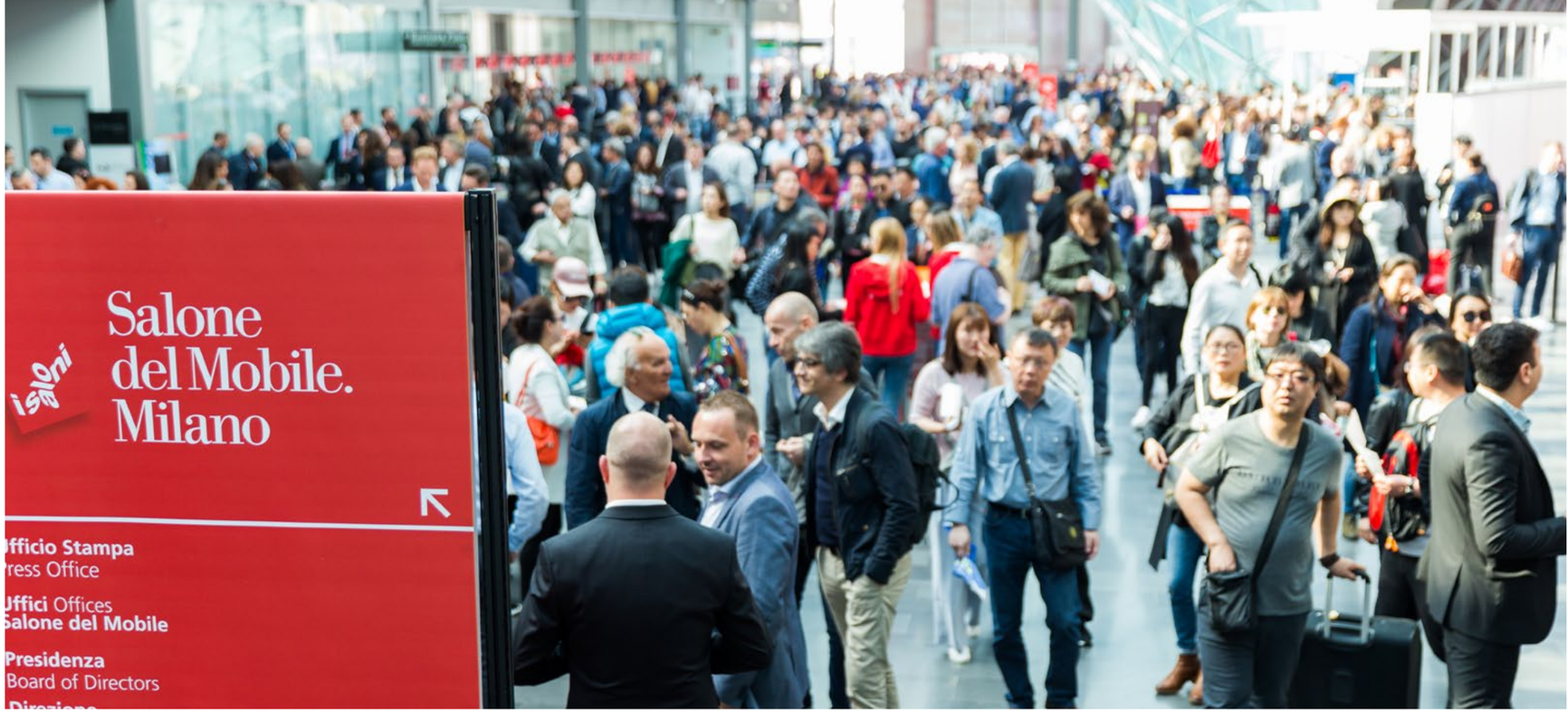


TREND REPORT
AUTHOR: JIM BIDDULPH

DESIGN INSIDER

ATMOSPHERE

Milan Design Week is a global watermark event with venues of all kinds, spanning the entire city, opening their doors to showcase and celebrate design. Now in it's 57th edition, the biggest of the shows Salone Del Mobile alone houses more than 2000 companies, 30% of which travelling from abroad to do so. This year marked it's first ever manifesto in an effort to promote the idea of new beginnings and renewal. Whilst aiming to consolidate it's established leadership role within design, the manifesto also urged exhibitors and visitors alike to go above and beyond, to aim for "sustainable quality, collaboration, inclusion and sharing" whilst simultaneously "valorising young talent and cultural heritage." Examples of such endeavour could be seen in spades across the entire city, whether in established districts such as Berra and Tortona, permanent design hubs as the likes of Rosanna Orlandi's and the Prada Foundation or in pop-up exhibitions in palaces, courtyards, galleries, disused railway arches and warehouses alike.



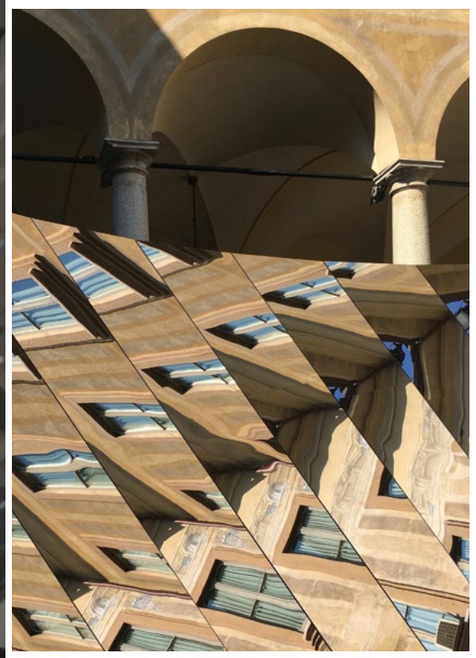








COS X Philip K. Smith III





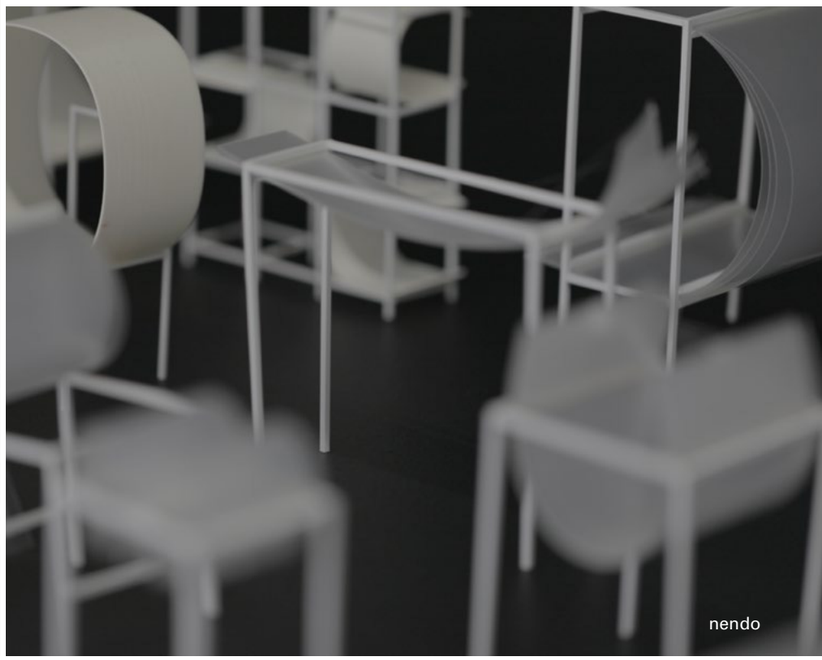


Caeserstone X Snarkitecture: Altered States

FOCUS - **ARRESTING SPACES**

With a wealth of big brands and an incredible array of ever-changing spaces visitors to the Salone are spoilt for choice when it comes to large-scale installations. COS invited Phillip K. Smith III to interpret the brand ethos in the creation of a series of sculptural forms. The largest of which, Open Sky, was housed in the courtyard of the magnificent 16th century Palazzo Isimbardi. The wall of angled stainless steel mirror offered a moment of calm amongst a busy city, prompting visitors to take in the surrounding architecture, whilst simultaneously seeking the best angle for their Instagram image. Equally as calming, Snarkitecture created Altered States for Caesarstone. The installation invited architects and designers to consider the future of the kitchen and how to use their materials within it via one it's central elements, water. Replacing light for darkness, Forms of movement by Tokyo based Nendo explored innovative alternatives to everyday objects including the zipper, the hourglass and lids to kitchenware, via acts of motion.

WATCH VIDEO ONLINE



nendo



Vitra

FOCUS - **LOOKING BACK TO LOOK FORWARD**

Taking over the former sports arena La Pelota, furniture super brand Vitra presented Typecasting. Curated by Robert Stadler, the exhibition represented a museum-like spread of the companies history on an enormous acid yellow plinth, “an assembly of iconic, forgotten and new Vitra characters.” Returning to Tortona, Moooi presented room sets by New York designer Megan Grehl and Amsterdam collective Concrete Architectural titled Through the eyes of… Alongside side them were new surface materials and products produced for The museum of extinct animals which was inspired by drawings of lost animals. Stellar Works chose to use the streets of their native Shanghai as a visual reference for the backdrop of their juxtaposing exhibition of luxuriously crafted new furniture collections by Neri&Hu and Space Copenhagen as well as vintage reissues. Danish brand Hay teamed up with Sonos and WeWork to present their shared vision of the future of design. The collaborative effort spanned the old and the new, filling the historical Palazzo Clerici with fresh installations and homeware accessories.


Hay x Sonos


Hay x Sonos


moooi


moooi

FOCUS - **VENTURA CENTRALE**

Returning for it's second year, Ventura Centrale brings life and design to the ordinarily unused railway arches of Milan's Central Station. Pulling together a rich mix of renowned brands and emerging talent, each arch is occupied by a unique immersive installation. Solid surface supplier Baars and Bloemhoff returned with the third incarnation of Transitions, an exhibition that invites designers from their native Holland to reinterpret their materials. It's a truly international affair; Japanese brand Nitto launched Haru stick-on design with an explosion of colour, Parisan based Pierre Frey created a series of installations that question the role of the image in contemporary design for Fabrica, whilst Swiss furniture manufacturer Horgenglarus teamed up with Stephen Hurlemann to create a series of interactive wooden puppets.

Horenglarus X Stephen Hurlemann

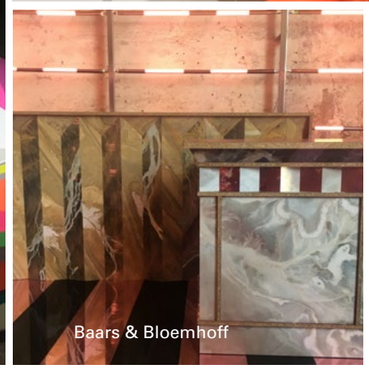


Baars & Bloemhoff



Nitto



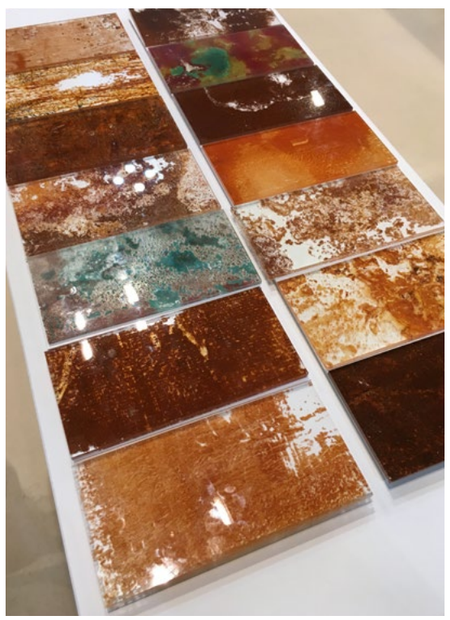


Baars & Bloemhoff

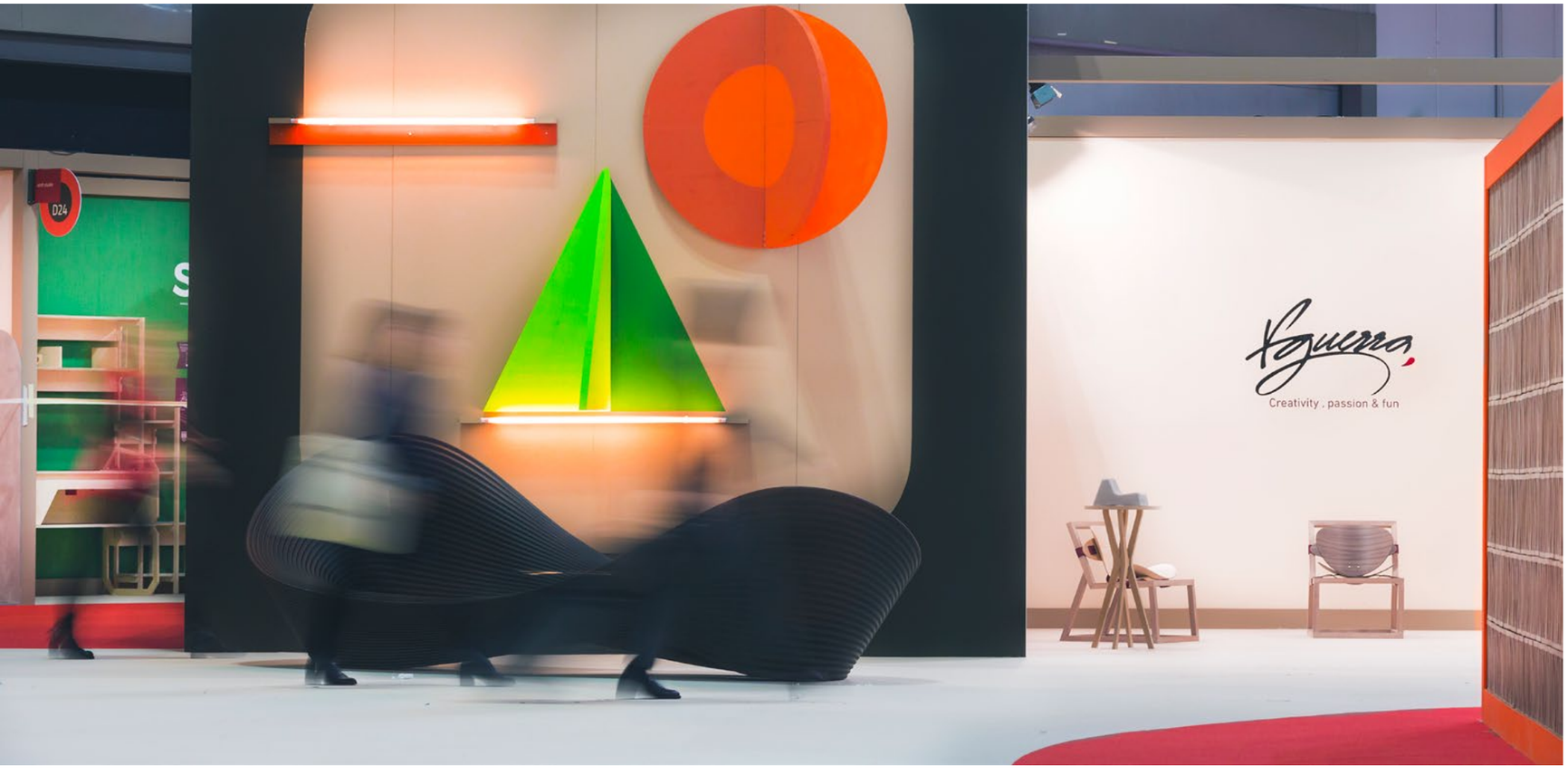
WATCH VIDEO ONLINE

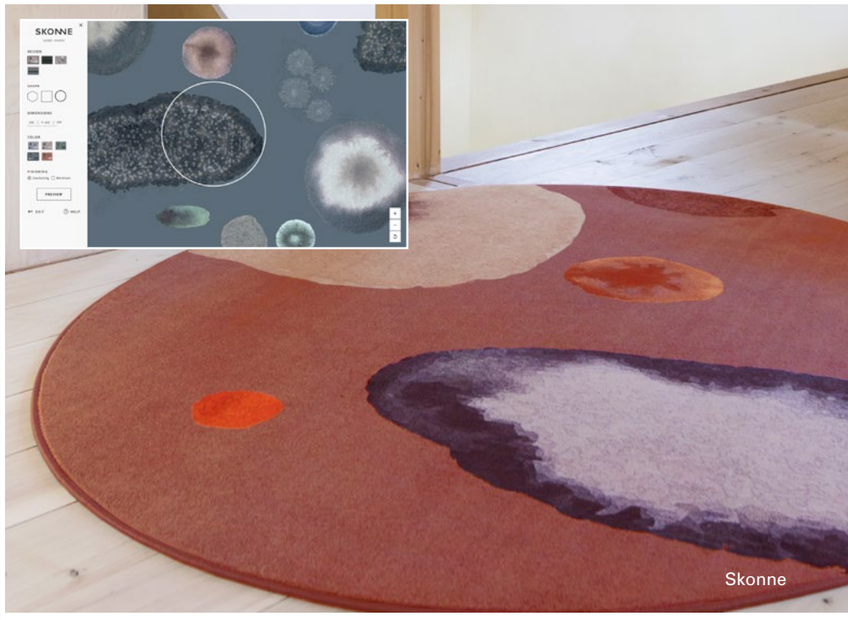
TRENDS - **CHAMPIONING THE NEW**

Carrying on the tradition set by previous incarnations of Ventura Projects events over in Lambrate, the inaugural Ventura Future exhibition turned its focus upon emerging design practices. Spread across 3 venues of significant cultural value, Loft, FuturDome and the former pharmacy faculty of Viale Abruzzi housed 82 exhibitors. An emphasis is placed on blurring the boundaries between traditional disciplines and cross-pollination. Skonne showcased their radical Carpet Creator, digital software that allows one to select a section of a pre-made pattern, which is printed onto carpet. A number of the exhibitors at Ventura Future also tackled issues surrounding waste as covered in the Waste No More trend. Over at the Salone del Mobile the incubator exhibition SaloneSatellite is a platform for designers under the age of 35. This year the event had African & Latin America Rising Design as it's primary theme, although design schools and individual practices from around the globe show their wares and hope to win a SaloneSatellite award, now in it's 9th year.










containerwerk


MINI Living





TRENDS - **COMPACT LIVING**

As the population continues to increase and more and more people find themselves in urbanised cities, space is becoming a premium. Alongside this, as the world becomes ever more digital, there is a growing trend for downsizing and editing our physical possessions. Individuals begin to seek out experiences ‘out there’ in the world or if not, on a screen or VR visor. Mini Living is a long-term research project set-up by automotive brand Mini to explore the future of urban habits. This year they commissioned Studiomama to create Built By All, a series of colourful living capsules that cleverly utilise a small footprint, whilst integrating maximum storage, sleeping and ‘action’ areas within. Visitors were encouraged to join in the process in the adjacent Factory of Ideas, where modular model homes could be created from an array of colourful blocks of material. Containerwerk repurposes disused sea freight containers, extending its life cycle beyond the average 13 years of usage. The aim is simple - to offer affordable but high quality living spaces.



TRENDS -
WASTE NO MORE

Whilst the gauntlet may have been thrown within the Salone Manifesto, there was much evidence to show that designers have already taken the initiative in engaging with sustainable practices and tackling waste. Eileen Fisher's installation DesignWork at Ventura Centrale was produced from textile waste and designed to encourage fashion brands to upcycle. Textile manufacturer Kvadrat returned with their Really project, inviting designers to show the potential of their Solid Textile Board, which is made from end of life textiles. The debate surrounding the over consumption of plastic and how to deal with burgeoning waste was felt across the show. Spazio Rossana Orlandi hosted a series of talks to address the potential of "guiltless plastic" at its directors bequest. Kodai Iwamoto showed blown vessels made from waste plastic, whilst ecoBirdy launched their new range of children's furniture from old and unused toys. Whilst the premiere of Rubdish offered a visualisation of the waste that finds it's way back to our plates.

Kvadrat



Ecobirdy



Eileen Fisher



Kvadrat



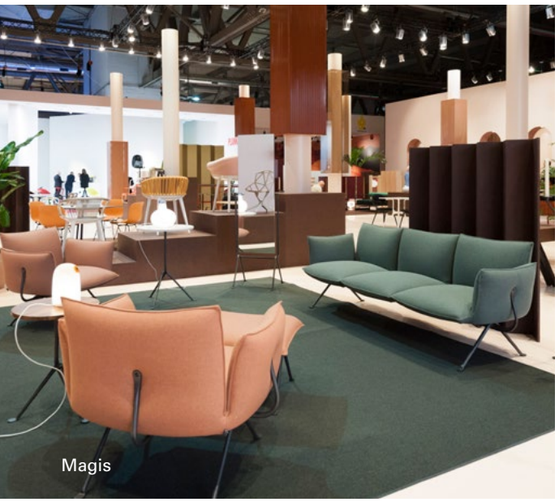
Rubdish



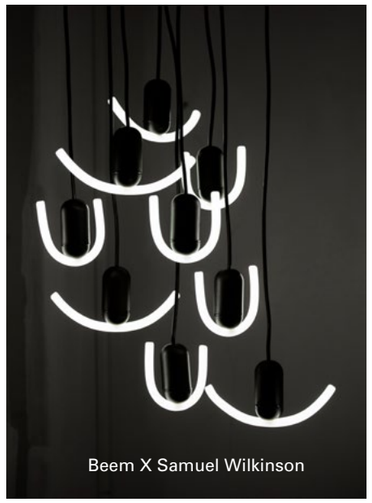
Kodai Iwamoto

TRENDS - **SOFT MODERNISM**

A notable styling direction in 2018 has involved clean and straight modernist inspired lines mixed with smooth and softening curves, with a particular emphasis on tall and narrow arches with circular forms. This was apparent in the blockbuster space designed by Moooi as well as a large amount of the furniture on display. Magis incorporated multiple arches within the structure of their stand, which shared a palette of warm and dusty reds, pinks, oranges and browns with the furniture within. Giopato and Coombes exquisite new brass lighting oozed with elegance, a perfect balance of fine straight and curved lines set against a rich warm rouge. This sensual palette and reoccurring form was at the very core of Cristina Celestino's new glazed ceramic tile exhibition, which subtlety straddled modernist and antiquity styles. Responding to an invitation from Seeds Gallery to reinterpret the steel tube, BCxSY chose to soften the linear form by creating arched forms from the warm brushed brass. Samuel Wilkinson chose a similar curve in the creation of his Smile lamps.



Magis



Beem X Samuel Wilkinson



Giopato & Coombes

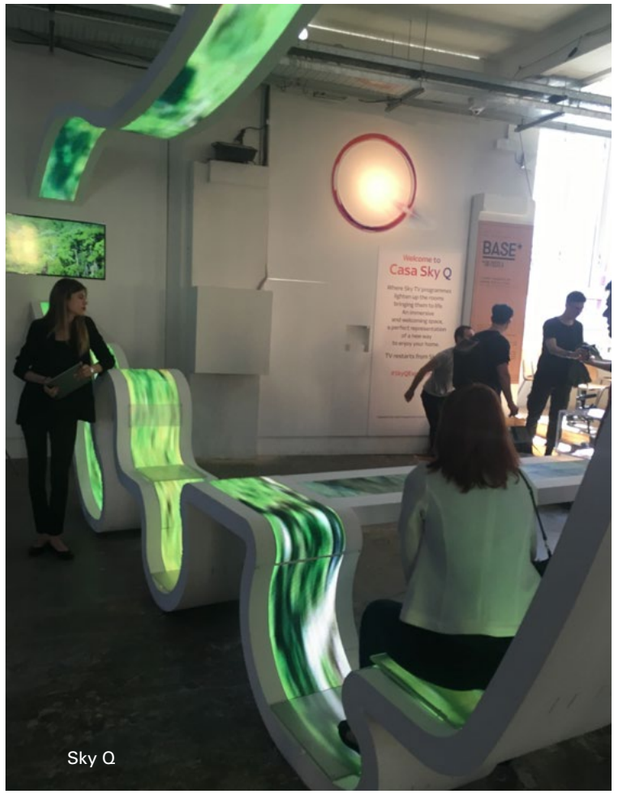


Moooi

TRENDS - **RESPONSIVE TECHNOLOGY**

Whilst it was not explicitly stated in the SaloneManifesto, one would expect cutting edge technology to be a feature of the show, and this year there was a move towards responsive technology. Sony captured the imagination with a series of sensorial installations. Each piece in Hidden Senses could be activated by human interaction, all expanding the horizons of everyday objects. Sky Q introduced their new multiscreen system with an installation of fluid screens with moving images that contoured around the room. German switch manufacturer Jung invited visitors into an interactive audiovisual 'playground' that served to highlight the various responses that their iconic switch can offer. Over at Spazio Rossana Orlandi, Google took up short-term residence to showcase Softwear, an exhibition that questioned potential of future synergies between everyday textiles and portable devices such as the mobile phone.


Jung



Sky Q


SONY


Curious Boy






Envisons


Missoni

TRENDS - **MULTIPLE COLOURS - BLEEDS AND BLENDS**

Whilst there is always an abundance of colour across the city, this year there were 2 strong trends running throughout the show. With the first, designers embraced a true maximalist approach, using multiple colours that sparked off of one another, blended or bled, to form riotous chromatic installations and products alike. Missoni adorned windows with a rainbow of coloured gels for their installation, which flooded the entire space within. Equally as impactful, Markus Benesch's playful furniture creations for Curious Boy used audaciously bright coloured resin inlays. The second edition of Envisions, an experimental collaboration between a team of young designers and Spanish timber manufacturer Finsa, boldly upped the scale, invention and breadth of colours this time around. Elsewhere, Altreforme launched their Raw+Rainbow series, whilst at SaloneSatallite Design Farm revealed new knitted chromatic textiles and Finnish designer Hanna Anonen showcased Cocktail, a light inspired by the colour of fizzy drinks.


Adrenlania


HAY


Kettal


Jobs


magis

TRENDS - **SHADES OF GREEN**

Perhaps as a progression of recent trends that engage with the principles of Biophilic design, where nature is bought into the interior environment, another colour trend at this years show was a move towards shades of green, most notably rich emerald tones and hints of sage. Darker greens were most prominent, as seen on furniture from Hay and Magis. Hem bought together multiple shades of green together to create a 2-tone fabric that adorned furniture and cushions. Italian chair manufacturer Jobs and outdoor furniture brand Kettal paired a scattering of greens with complimentary raspberry, burgundy and mauve. Swedish furniture brand Offecct and Italian manufacturer Adrenalina used more vibrant scarlet reds to accentuate dark greens. Away from furniture, Israeli studio Raw Edges created 30 spinning glass lamps in various green hues. Horah was inspired by a traditional Israeli dance of the same name and the gentle and constant motion, coupled with soft greens created a calming environment amongst the cut and thrust of the busy city.