

EVENTS/CAUSES

## Fondazione Furla celebrates 15 years of art with public exhibit

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*Growing Roots promotional image*

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By SARAH JONES

Italian leather goods label Furla is highlighting its foundation's artistic endeavors with a retrospective spanning the 15 years of its art award.

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Opening March 5 at the Palazzo Reale in Milan, "Growing Roots" brings together the 10 past winners of Premio Furla to explore the diversity of Italian art. This retrospective will help both commemorate Fondazione Furla's past while the exhibit's location will draw attention to the prize's move to Milan this year.

"I think that in design people are inspired by the past, what they see as the present and that which is in the future," said Kimmie Smith, co-founder/creative director of [Accessory2](#), New York.

"This exhibit allows Furla to honor previous winners while allowing the artists to put their fingerprint on what they have to say through the power of a collective transmedia experiential exhibition that allows the user to immerse themselves in the world at large," she said.

Ms. Smith is not affiliated with Fondazione Furla, but agreed to comment as an industry

expert.

Fondazione Furla did not respond by press deadline.

Rooms with a view

Growing Roots, curated by Chiara Bertola, Giacinto Di Pietrantonio and Yuko Hasegawa, will span 11 rooms of Palazzo Reale's Appartamento dei Principi.

One of the spaces is dedicated to educating visitors on the history of the award, with a layout designed by artist Riccardo Arena.

After the introduction, consumers can explore 10 solo rooms dedicated to each artist.

Sislej Xhafa, who won in 2000, focused his project on migrants trying to find their identity, while 2001 winner Lara Favaretto centered her art on the fragile and marginalized.



*Sislej Xhafa's Rocket Ship, 2011*

Artist Sissi created a performance work that brings anatomies to life. Massimo Grimaldi, the winner from 2003, used his project to attempt to redefine art, while 2005 winner Pietro Roccasalva tackled the contemporary ways painting has survived.

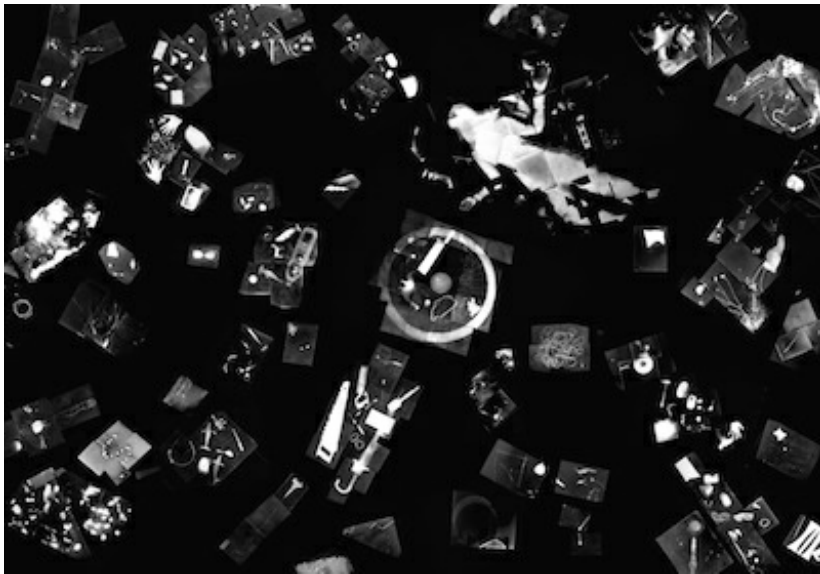


*Massimo Grimaldi's October 2014 Playlist, 2014*

Luca Trevisani's artwork evokes biology through plant and water. Alberto Tadiello, the

winner from 2009, crafted an energy field with both sound and silence.

Furla awarded Matteo Rubbi in 2011 for his interactive art that enlivens a white cube. The 2013 winner Chiara Fumai questioned the state of society.



*Matteo Rubbi's Carte du ciel, 2014*

The duo Maria Iorio and Raphaël Cuomo are this year's winners, who presented long-term research.

Growing Roots, sponsored by the Cultural Office of the City of Milan, is free to the public.

Extending the impact of the retrospective, will be a print catalogue available for purchase, which shares the story of the prize and its winners through essays by curators and artists Ms. Bertola and Mr. Di Pietrantonio.

A dedicated Web site lets an international audience take part in the celebration.

"Every brand wants to position themselves as being more than just the platform that they have created," Ms. Smith said. "They want to show that they have positioned themselves within the culture and can embrace properties that they may not do but support.

"Art is such a broad and specific medium and as a designer, this is a natural alignment to embrace in a number of ways," she said. "This also drives Furla as a brand to ensure that as they design they can take elements of the progressive art and bring it into the very designs that they generate from season to season as a form of inspiration."

#### Building new roots

Fashion labels frequently sponsor the arts through foundations, with many building permanent spaces within their home countries to make a consistent impact.

The Frank Gehry-designed Louis Vuitton Foundation opened Oct. 27, letting the public view its 11 galleries that promote 20th and 21st century artistic and creative movements.

CEO Bernard Arnault's art patronage is well-known, and this latest commission of the foundation, conceived in 2006, demonstrates a top-down commitment to the arts in LVMH. Located in the north of Paris, the 126,000 square foot foundation acts as a nexus

for the conglomerate's artistic activities ([see story](#)).

Also, Fondazione Prada, the apparel house's organization dedicated to the arts, is expanding its influence with a new permanent space in Milan, said an executive from the foundation at The New York Times International Luxury Conference in December.

With 144,000 square feet of exhibition space, the group of buildings will host performances, art exhibits and symposiums. This new compound joins two other spaces for Fondazione Prada, allowing the brand to further its art and culture outreach in Milan ([see story](#)).

These foundations enable two-way communication between the art and fashion worlds.

"Having a foundation that is within the art world allows you to stay relevant and to stay open to what is taking place within the varying facets of that area," Ms. Smith said. "It also encourages artists to understand that their work is appreciated within the luxury and heritage brands and creates an interest in maintaining an open dialogue between the communities."

Final Take

*Sarah Jones, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York*

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