

EVENTS/CAUSES

Luxury brands turn out for Milan Design Week to showcase past and present

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Instagram post for Missoni Mirroring

By SARAH JONES

Home furnishing and fashion brands alike are showing off their design acumen with displays and events during Milan Design Week and concurrent furniture trade show Salone del Mobile.

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Luxury Daily

From April 14-19, Milan is the host of a bevy of exhibits, in-store events and new product launches. Coming together for this event ensures brands a large international audience of potential clients who are design minded, as they flock to the city to see what's next in the world of design.

"The Salone is the most important furniture show in the world, so its visibility is international," said Marco Sabetta, general manager of the Salone del Mobile. "Quality and innovation of the products are its value.

"The Salone del Mobile is visited every year by more than 300,000 people from 170 countries," he said. "These figures speak by themselves.

"Visitors are not only architects and designers but more specific trade operators like buyers, retailers, general contractors, facility managers, developers etc. plus more than 5,000 journalists from over 70 countries plus only for two days the general public. All this wide spectrum of visitors allows brands to reach a wide and different kind of public."

Meeting in Milan

A number of brands have displays at the 54th annual Salone del Mobile.

Versace is unveiling two new lines in its display, La Coup des Dieux and Greek. The brand let consumers participate in its breakfast April 13 live through Twitter's Periscope ([see story](#)).

Missoni has planted "The Garden of Delights" at both its Milan showroom and Salone del Mobile, with botanical prints displayed surrounded by accents such as shoji screens.

Outside of the trade show, the brand is also hosting "Missoni Mirroring," an installation featuring light, sound and exclusive video. This also serves to show off the brand's knitted frame mirrors and Richard Ginori vase collection.

Embedded Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/nOca4eoLhaM>

A Game of Mirrors

At Museo MA*GA, Missoni will present a retrospective on its house's "innate sense of style," exploring its use of color and pattern.

Roche Bobois has a booth showing off a number of its fall collection furniture pieces, from sofas and tables to graphic armchairs.



Roche Bobois at Salone del Mobile

Hästens will have sales and leadership representatives on hand to help facilitate business collaborations, helping the brand in its international expansion.

For Salone del Mobile, Fendi is showing off its relationship to the design world through a collaboration with Campana Brothers, who incorporated more than 100 of the brand's Bag Bugs into "The Armchair of A Thousand Eyes." This chair on display is based on the

Campana's Banquete, a famous style featuring sewn together stuffed animals.



Fendi's Armchair of A Thousand Eyes

Emilio Pucci also partnered with a designer, with a World of Pucci edition of its Madame chair by Philippe Starck. The chair references the Pucci scarves by the same name, which show architecture and landscapes of world capitals, including Paris, New York, Rome and Shanghai, the last of which is a debut for Salone del Mobile.



Emilio Pucci's Madame chairs

Armani is commemorating its 40th anniversary as well as Salone del Mobile with an invitation-only exhibit of design items, including the 40 iterations of the limited-edition Justin desk. Clients, press and trade can register online for an invitation.

At the fair, Poltrona Frau will be sharing its new products for 2015 in an exhibit by Michele De Lucchi, who took inspiration from a series of verses from Giuseppe Ungaretti about true love.

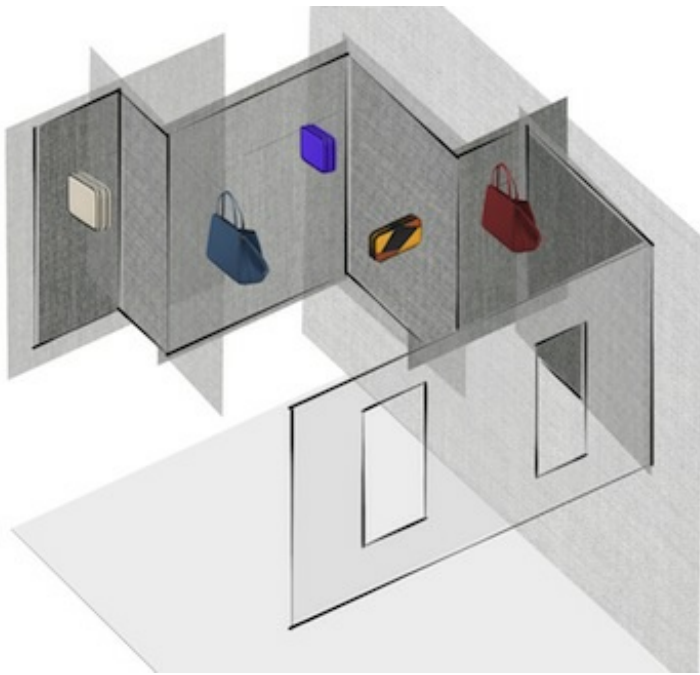
Valextra similarly teamed with a designer, collaborating with Martino Gamper for a handbag line and in-store display, a first for the brand.

Mr. Martino blurred the lines between the street and inside the store, covering the floor

inside the doorway with the same stone seen outside, creating a herringbone pattern. This solidifies the brand's relationship with the city.

Inside the store, the designer covered the walls with wool in beiges and pale greys to evoke the feeling of cafes.

At Salone del Mobile, Mr. Martino's concept for the store is brought to a display space. Magnets are placed on the walls and hidden beneath similar Kvadrat wool, enabling handbags with their own surreptitious magnets to be suspended from any part of the walls as if by magic. The layout will change each time a consumer asks to see a handbag, morphing throughout the show.



Sketch of Martin Gamper exhibit for Valextra

"The international Salone del Mobile is the most dynamic and global happening of Milano that involves the whole city, and our participation remarks the true and inner connection of the brand with the design world," said Sara Ferrero, CEO of Valextra.

"Since its inception in 1937, when the founder opened the first shop in the heart of Milano, the products have been inspired by the aesthetics of contemporary design and minimalist architecture, combining tradition and innovation, superb quality and functionality," she said. "Hence, the contamination with design comes naturally as well as the choice of collaborating with the Italian, London-based designer Martino Gamper: Martino is among the most inspiring designers of his generation dedicated to craft and invention as Valextra is associated with design, engineering and craftsmanship."

This helps Valextra communicate its brand story.

"This collaboration that will be presented during the international Salone del Mobile is only an initial step for a global strategic narrative that Valextra will develop in the next 18 months," Ms. Ferrero said. "The creation of beautiful and powerful installations, thought to showcase the Valextra product, will be the leitmotiv of the upcoming projects."

"Sharing the same values and speaking the same aesthetic language, the installations will be located in prime locations in the top hubs of the world, such as Milano, London, New York, Kong Kong, Tokyo to name few," she said. "The partnership of architects and designers will be based on collaboration with local established or up and coming talents unique for their country. The combination of location and great partners in coherence with the brand vision we believe to be a very enticing story of Valextra."

Outside of Salone del Mobile, Italian brands throughout the city are joining in Milan Design Week.

La Perla is showcasing a series of Esprit D'Atelier pouffes created to look like the brand's signature nervures technique at its Milan store.



La Perla pouffes

During Salone del Mobile, Marni is hosting the Marni Mercado del Paloquemao, based on the homonymous market in Bogota, Colombia. The brand has turned its showroom into a bright fruit market, which acts as the scene for woven tables and chairs, as well as painted plates, with everything crafted by women in Colombia who have achieved independence through their work.

After being open to the public through April 15, the brand will hold workshops April 18-19.



Marni Mercado de Paloquemao

On April 13, Bottega Veneta celebrated the opening of its new home boutique in the city, which presents its modern furniture against the backdrop of the Palazzo Gallarati Scotti from the 18th century.



Bottega Veneta home boutique

Yoox is bringing global consumers along for Milan Design Week through social media, sharing images of various displays. It is also hosting its own exhibit during the event.

Design showcase

Milan Design Week is traditionally a gathering of luxury houses.

Last year, home furnishing trade show Salone del Mobile kicked off April 8 in Milan, with luxury fashion brands using the event as a platform to showcase their interior collections.

Even if they were not showing in a booth at the show, brands incorporated digital

campaigns and charity initiatives to draw consumers interested in interior design to their stores. This provided an opportunity for brands that are not usually known for their home furnishings to remind consumers of the range of their merchandise ([see story](#)).

Italian brands often celebrate their shared heritage through large scale collaborative events.

For example, Italian fashion house Emilio Pucci caught consumer attention with an installation on the Baptistery of San Giovanni featuring one of its iconic scarf prints in 2014.

Pucci's "Monumental" display was part of the larger Firenze Hometown of Fashion event in Florence June 17-20 to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Center of Florence for Italian Fashion. A number of other fashion labels, including Gucci, Salvatore Ferragamo and Roberto Cavalli, also participated in the festival to help celebrate their Florentine heritage ([see story](#)).

Salone del Mobile has grown in its half century, helping brands to reach an international audience on a public platform.

"Strange but true the Salone del Mobile has not really changed a lot," Mr. Sabetta said. "It has become bigger and bigger. The Salone del Mobile, went 'international' in 1967, and over the years another six exhibitions became strategically attached to it, extending and enhancing the specialist nature of the goods already on exhibit at the Salone itself: the International Furnishing Accessories Exhibition at its 29th edition, Euroluce / International Lighting Exhibition at its 28th edition, Workplace3.0/SaloneUfficio 17th edition, SaloneSatellite 18th edition and in the even years EuroCucina/ International Kitchen Furniture Exhibition and the International Bathroom Exhibition, which next year will reach their 20th and 5th edition.

"The Salone was born from a specific request of some furniture makers to be helped in the promotion of exports of Italian furniture and furnishing accessories," he said.

"Saturation of internal demand in the wake of the post-war reconstructions suggested exports as a possible outlet, but the small Italian manufacturers were in no position to tackle this on their own. Summing up, the core of the Salone is always the same—changes are related to keep up with the changes of time and technology but not its true essence."

Final Take

Sarah Jones, staff reporter on Luxury Daily, New York

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