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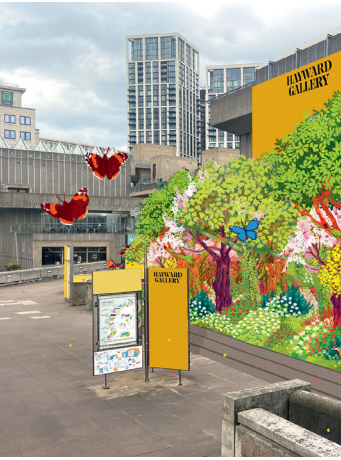


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MILAN DESIGN WEEK

118 COLOUR NOW — REVIEW 2024



StudioNotte | Photo Andrea Leonetti



We+ Japan | Photo We+Japan Masayuki Hayashi



Audrey Large at Nilufar Depot | Photo Ruy Teixeira

It felt like this year there was a concerted effort to leave the constrictions of the past few years behind, and instead maximise on all the opportunities a real-life event could offer. Hence a week packed with unashamedly sensorial experiences, a celebration of the importance of touch, sound, sight and smell.



TON



Les Eaux Primordiales x DWA Design Studio



Maximilian Marchesani at Nilufar Gallery



Alcarol



Forma Rosa Studio



Hemmo Honkonen



Imperfettolab

Projects that explored sensorial responses abounded. Among many others, at Alcova, Les Eaux Primordiales x DWA Design Studio presented an exploration of fragrance as a science and an art. At Isola, the Take Care exhibition, curated by Tellurico, also used scent to help raise awareness around issues of food inequality. SolidNature's Beyond the Surface experimented with light, sound, touch and scent in an immersive experience exploring our response to stone. And Hemmo Honkonen presented Audible Furniture, a collection with sounds triggered by interaction.

Gleefully abandoning any form following function rules, other designers openly lauded, collaborated and experimented with the freedoms and possibilities of digital design and its associated aesthetics. There was more extraordinary work from Audrey Large at Nilufar Depot, her distinctive molten forms seemingly hinting at monsters on an epic scale. Ryan Decker also showed 'digital apparitions,' AI fragments and textures at Alcova, as did Forma Rosa Studio,

deftly blending digital and hand-crafted elements.

Ethereal, Gothic elements emerged, spindly and delicate as a witch's kiss. There were ghostly combinations of twisted branches, feathers, aluminium and glass at Nilufar Gallery, in the shape of Maximilian Marchesani's ceiling lamps. We+ Design Studio from Japan presented Haze, impossibly intricate forms of copper wire shaped by hand like fine lace, while at Maxalto there were trembling, delicate mobiles of leaves and flowers by artist Karolina Maszkiewicz.

Tied, trussed, strapped and encased in metal, plump soft furnishings appeared to be fighting to burst out of their constraints. It was a neat trick that gave structure to shapes that might otherwise appear saggy and unformed, allowing for interesting contrasts. Examples were spotted at Tacchini and also at StudioNotte, where references were made to the hormone oxytocin and its links to love and arousal.

Starting to gather momentum, our story Mine's (2024/25) geological

elements, along with topography, were explored by several designers. Alcarol's new geomorphic collection featured an armchair, low table and poufs inspired by geological processes. Erode, by Annabel Maguire looked at changing rock forms on the UK coastline, while Imperfettolab presented Arenaria; boulders made from light fibreglass formed into sculptural groups.

Finally, the ever-ubiquitous utilitarian aesthetic telegraphed a slightly nostalgic American High School energy this year. Pale shaped ply, coloured sheet metal and plastic tables, desks and chairs all borrowed from contract but were clearly intended for the broader residential market too. Multi-coloured combinations enriched stackable chairs, as seen with Blond's Peel chair and at Midj, while other furniture altered heights with wood dowelling or exposed bolts, spotted at Imola Balogh. There was also an interest in graphic devices, including graphs and pierced dots in the back of furniture, seen at TON and Seledue. ▶



Robbie Goodall | Getty Images



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