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280



THE ART OF NUCLEAR WASTE

YONA FRIEDMAN
SIXTEEN* (MAKERS)

PLUS: SEWAGE AND ENERGY
AT THE LONDON OLYMPICS BY NORD
AND JOHN LYALL

E/c²

INFRASTRUCTURE



Above: Madame Dakar sofa by Birsel and Seck for Moraso was named after the capital of Senegal, where it was produced from woven nylon threads

SALONE DEL MOBILE 2009 MILAN

The annual **Milan design week** was as busy and vibrant as ever, despite predictions. *Vicky Richardson* and *Gian Luca Amadei* trawled the venues for the best new products and installations

Savvy visitors to Milan's Salone this year rented bikes: the sun was shining and it was the only quick and cheap method to traverse the less accessible parts of the city at speed. As usual it was a challenge to see even a fraction of the hundreds of displays, and it was even harder this year because (in an effort to cut back) rather than exhibit at the Rho Pero fairground, they tended to be scattered around the city.

The fashionable design district Zona Tortona claimed its highest visitor numbers ever – 107,000 – although the quality of displays was patchy to say the least. In the evenings, the via Tortona and streets around it were crammed with people taking in the festival atmosphere. Several displays used the street itself as a platform for design. Two initiatives, Milanomifamale (Milan

hurts me) and the Public Design Festival secured parking spaces to create places for people to perch on with a drink. The boutique Hotel Nhow, was one of the hubs of the area and though it has some fantastic industrial-sized spaces, it was filled with design junk (including hay bales wrapped in plastic and decorated with graffiti-art). The area's largest venue, the Superstudio, was also disappointing with Tom Dixon's Utility display and Moooi products among the few notable highlights. Veuve Clicquot's baffling display of objects that appeared to be made from its yellow packaging, served no purpose other than to advertise its brand.

There was a noticeable emphasis on process, with Craft Punk at the Fendi space, showing live making sessions using off-cuts of material; the pulp paper chair by Claesson





Koivisto Rune at the Superstudio, and the Bouroullec brothers' Vegetal chair on the Vitra stand at Rho Pero. Some design critics commented that the making process was being fetishised to make up for weak design.

Raw materials were also strongly in evidence. At Established and Sons, tulipwood (which is normally only used for the internal structure of furniture because of its uneven grain) was celebrated with a chaotic large-scale installation. It boasted that the timber will be brought back to the UK and recycled as furniture. B&B Italia constructed an untreated timber deck in its showroom where Antonio Citterio's Flat C wall system

was displayed with reams of white paper scattered from its shelves. Other companies such as Plank, with its new Monza chair by Konstantin Grcic, emphasised the combination of contrasting materials: ash wood and polypropylene. Ikea had a similar idea with its Slingra chair by Ehlén Johansson (albeit less elegant and finely made).

Overall, the highlights this year were not the new products – there were few that will be remembered in years to come – but the installations and collective exhibitions, such as Senseware at the Triennale, Memphis Blues at 10 Corso Como, and the eclectic displays at Spazio Rossana Orlandi.

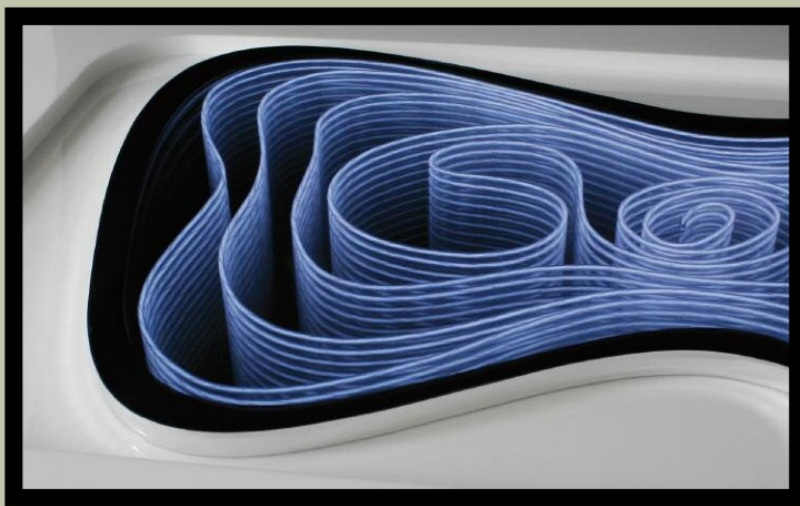
Left: A street installation in the Zona Tortona as part of the Public Design Festival



TRELUCE

MARCUS TREMONTI

In 2008, Tremonti presented at Milan as part of Swarovski Crystal Palace, but this year his small and exquisite one-man show at the Spazio Rossana Orlandi was more characteristic of his work. The display, by his New York-based company Treluce, consisted of hanging lights, wall pieces and tables. An innovative lighting designer, Tremonti uses architectural imagery and creates optical illusions to play with our perceptions of space. www.treluce.com



CRYSTALLISED WIND

SOU FUJIMOTO

The Japanese architect (see Blueprint interview, February 2008) created an installation for luxury car brand Lexus at the via Turati's impressive Museo della Permanente.

The Lexus initiative is admirable because it gives profile and resources to young Japanese designers and architects, often for their first venture into product design. Notable past shows include Kazuyo Sejima's chandelier in 2005 and Tokujin Yoshioka's Evolving Fibre Technology in 2006.

Fujimoto's piece, an acrylic bench, worked as an unusual one-off, but when displayed as a series, the installation resembled a fragmented ice flow or, with a bit of imagination, the rush of scenery from a speeding car.

The Lexus brief was to use acrylic to complement a full-scale transparent model of the Lexus LF-A concept car. Fujimoto's design began with a single slab of acrylic, with a 'still' flat top and a wavy underside to symbolize fluidity. The slab is then cut into five shard-like sections which rest on carbon fibre-reinforced plastic legs.

Fujimoto says that his first foray into furniture design has given him many new ideas for the future. 'It's a new exciting challenge,' he says. 'I'd like to use these materials in my architecture too. I hope I'm at the experimental stage of my work. I'd like to carry on developing new ideas.'

Fujimoto's Tokyo office is expanding and one of his most important projects for Tokyo University, will finish in the Spring of 2010.

www.lexus.com

