



Courtesy Gustavo Martini

Emerging Designers at Salone del Mobile and Beyond

By Olivia Martin

Gustavo Martini

Milan and Rio de Janeiro
gustavomartini.com

Milan-based product designer Gustavo Martini created a fluid, sculptural room for Salone Satellite as a response to what he sees as the transition between drawing and the physical production of an object. At 29, Martini has won numerous awards for his designs and is one of the founders of the Expo Design, an annual fair that promotes the products of design students. Called *Edge*, the graphic design and thin dark surfaces are meant to embody the intersection between object and architecture, imagination and reality. *Edge* pushes the concepts of furniture versus architecture and open space versus enclosed space.

From Salone Satellite and Spazio Orlandi to the Lambrate Design District and Atelier Clerici, this year's Milan Design Week showcased an unprecedented amount of talent challenging conventional approaches to architecture and design. Here are some of the brightest lights AN met.

On View



Courtesy BELÉN

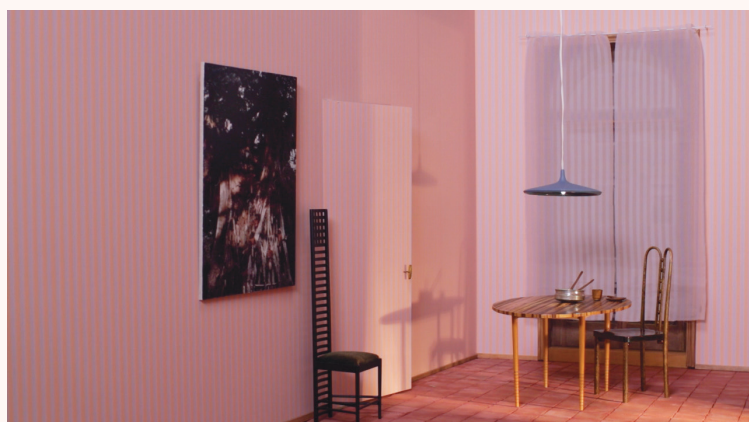


BELÉN

Amsterdam
burobelen.com

Brecht Duijf and Lenneke Langenhuijsen, founders of the textile company BELÉN, work with natural materials and colors to embrace what they call “the living interior.” According to Duijf and Langenhuijsen, the interior is not a curated construction, but rather “the decor of the human being.” With this in mind, the duo studied the discoloration of natural vegetal dyes and recorded their findings in what they call De-Colourchart. Out of this investigation, they are able to create textiles that can discolor intentionally over time and reveal new aspects about a piece of furniture.

For example, BELÉN’s Laying Bag—made in collaboration with Febrik using a special machine that weaves cylindrical fabrics—will slowly turn from pale pink to pale yellow with wear and exposure to sun. Given the way that it is woven, the fabric has folds that will remain pink, while its more prominent parts will turn yellow, emphasizing the tufted pattern. Other products, such as Merging Wallpaper, Living Textures plaster, Another Plaid blanket, and Fluffed rug also incorporate the De-Colourchart to display incredible trompe l’oeil effects that change with use, time, and perspective.



Courtesy BELÉN

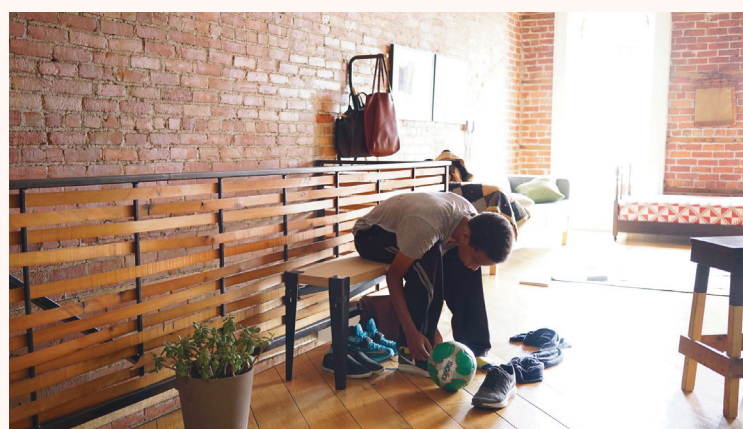


Floyd

Detroit, MI
floyddetroit.com

Detroit-based furniture company Floyd was born from a response to a modern quandary—balancing a nomadic, move-every-year lifestyle with a desire for high-quality furniture. Founders Alex O'Dell and Kyle Hoff created the Floyd Leg in 2013 as a solution: Its brightly colored steel legs let you transform any flat surface into a table via ingenious clamps. The legs arrive in their own carrying bag, and users simply clamp the legs onto a surface to set up and then unclamp them to take along to the next place as needed.

Floyd has since created bench legs, shelves, a platform bed (The newest piece, launched November 2015), candleholders, and more. All products are manufactured in the Detroit region, and customers are encouraged to purchase their corresponding parts locally as well. And, in a welcome departure from the Shinola, Made-in-the-USA precedent, Floyd has maintained reasonable price points so that its products are easily attainable.



Courtesy Floyd



Opendesk

London, UK
opendesk.cc

Originally from architecture and design firm 00, the founders of Opendesk harness the power of digital fabrication to usher in what they call “the third industrial revolution.”

Opendesk is an online furniture platform that hosts design files from over 600 international designers under the Creative Commons license. Anyone can download licensed digital-fabrication files for free and then take them to his or her local manufacturers to realize the concepts. “It’s like a recipe for furniture,” said Joanna Wlazlak, marketing coordinator.

Users can customize dimensions, receive quotes from their local fabricators, and view how many times the design has been downloaded by others. A product can be designed in London and made in Hong Kong, Kansas City, or anywhere else and be locally produced each time. Opendesk’s end goal with this system? Open up the global furniture supply, focus on real people in the design industry, and “turn traditional economics on its head,” no less.

Courtesy Opendesk

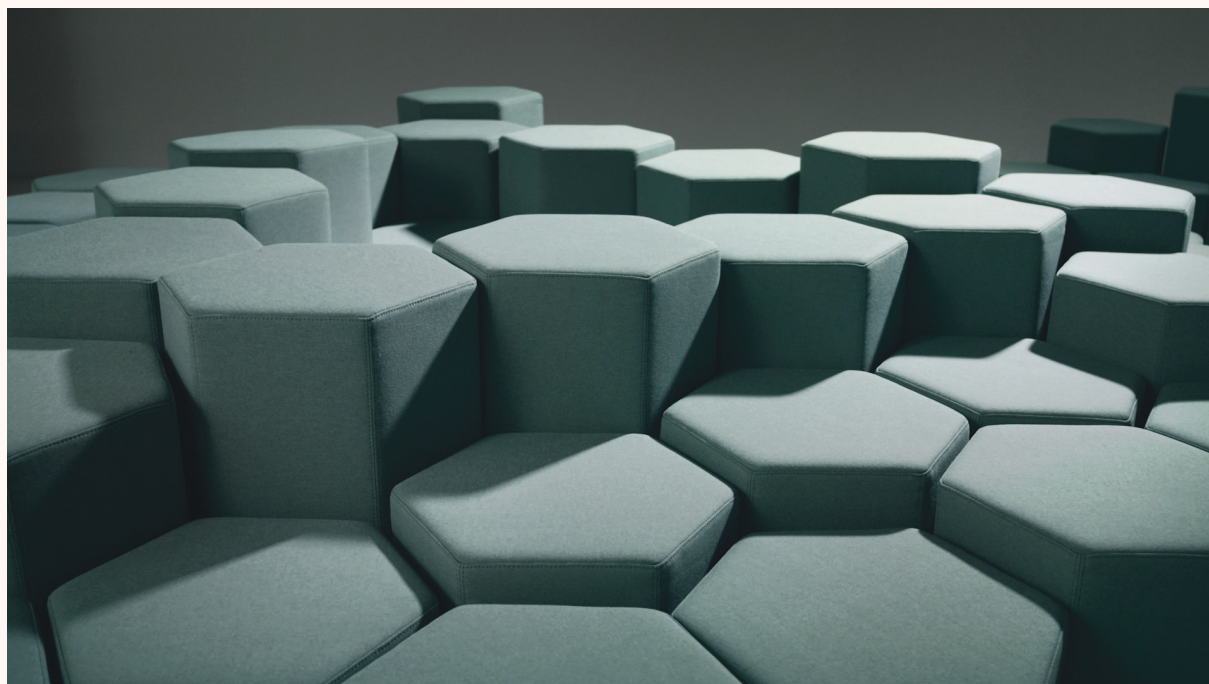


Photo by Mybossas

Architecture alla Milanese

By Olivia Martin

Though the industry continues to discuss how much art, architecture, and design should overlap, some of the most striking contributions to Milan Design Week came directly from architects. Whether trying their hand at product design or crafting installations, architects continued to push the limits of how we interact with our built surroundings.

COS x Sou Fujimoto

Forest of Light

Japanese architect Sou Fujimoto's *Forest of Light* installation with Swedish clothing company COS took place April 12–17 in Cinema Arti, a theater originally built in the 1930s by Italian architect Mario Ceregini in Milan's San Babila district. Cones of light were used to both reference the theater's history and create an interactive environment. "People meander through this forest as if lured by the charm of the light. Light and people interact with one another, its existence defining the transition of the other," Fujimoto said in a press release.

Carlo Ratti Associati

Lift-Bit

Carlo Ratti Associati debuted the first ever "Internet of Things" sofa, Lift-Bit, at the XXI Triennale International Exhibition. The sofa is a digitally reconfigurable modular system, and a user can raise or lower each of its modules by waving his or her hands over the piece or through a mobile app. Bluetooth connects these commands with a linear accelerator that will transform the system into a chair, chaise longue, bed, or any unspecified shape. If left unaltered for too long, Lift-Bit will become "bored" and start shape-shifting on its own to reengage the user—an homage to British architect Cedric Price's 1970s *Generator Project*.



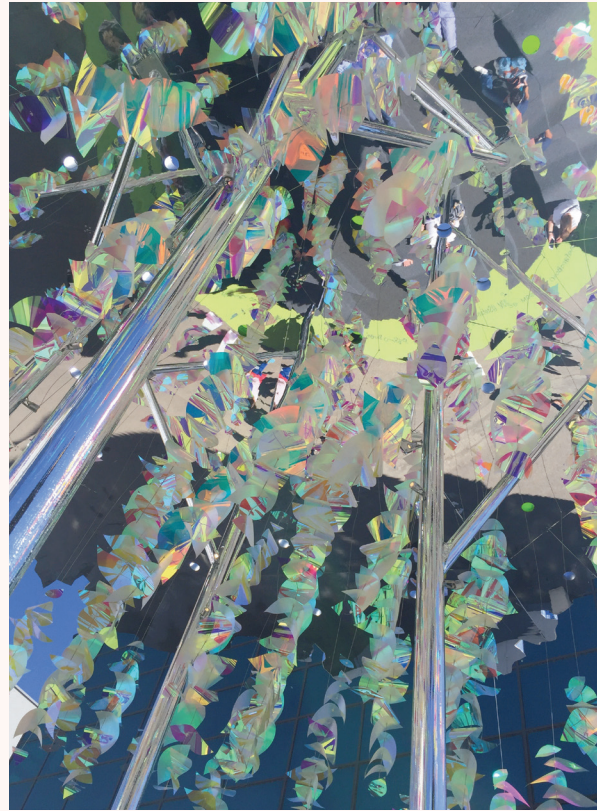
Photo by AN



Stefano Boeri Architetti

Urban Tree Lounge (above)

Created in collaboration with 3M for the SuperDesign Show's Materials Village, the Urban Tree Lounge demonstrates how the artificial can replace the natural in the urban design world. In the lounge, people rested comfortably on the sinuous plastic benches and watched the light filter through metallic leaves as they charged their devices on the numerous USB ports—the ultimate futuristic interpretation of a tree.



Courtesy Stefano Boeri Architetti / Photo by AN

MAD Architects

Invisible Border (below)

Light in both material and presentation, MAD's installation in the courtyard of Università degli Studi di Milano is made of ETFE, a flexible polymer that interacts with the wind and reflects the colors around it, resulting in a subtly shifting canopy. The installation is part of Italian magazine *Interni's* *Open Borders* exhibition. MAD sought to playfully subvert the idea of a border as a closed, unapproachable space, creating instead an open, permeable "border" that converses with the university's historic loggias and garden.



Photo by Moreno Maggi