Like every year, at the end of the Design Week of Milan, the same-old farce of figures (and visitors) takes place and whoever gives the highest ones, as in a fishing contest whoever catches the biggest one. No one makes a difference among typologies, subtractions, message, purpose of the events, as long as the biggest crowd is reported, and any means is legitimate. It is not important to make a distinction among operators and creative groups of youngsters full of beer (irregularly sold cheaply in the streets of design) or the parades with drums or irrelevant masquerades like sumo fighters with huge fake bellies wandering around the showrooms. There are then the “easy-click” ones, attracted by spectacular installations such as the zipper on the facade or the pierced-woman-chair by Gaetano Pesce, that have a little to do with the design news but seem to catch the public eye. The compelling question spreading among the operators at the end of Design Week is “how many people?” where each one hopes to defeat the other and often bluffs. I don’t think anyone can give an exact number, divided per district, presences, as there are no actual measurement tools. Many visitors widespread all over Milan, queues, traffic jams, it is impossible to know how many of them were actually motivated and how many arrived out of curiosity or to share the party or create chaos, or to lose themselves into the movida resurfacing here and there, especially in the evenings and on weekend. The problem appears repeatedly every year.

At Superstudio we have chosen selection and quality, with a mandatory registration, for respect of the companies and professionals that are the framework of the Design Week and the ensuing economy. This worked as deterrent creating a happy island. 80,000 registered visitors and over 2,200 journalists is a result that makes us proud. Just like the 45,000 focused visitors of the week at Triennale that definitely do not weigh less than the titanic crowds that invaded the streets. Also the 1,200 cultured visitors registered per day at the new stage of temporary design of Teatro Parenti made the manager-director Andreé Shammah pleased. Because everything is relative. Maybe even the 250,000 passers-by reported by Brera District or the 150,000 ones communicated by Tortona District, excluding passers-by and party-goers, shouldn’t be regarded as satisfactory data? And what about the over 1,500 events? Maybe a reflection is starting that “less is better”? Is it possible that in a Milan brimming with improvised design, only selection may save quality?
LATEST APPOINTMENTS

TRENDS AND AUTHENTICITY

Just a few months since the beginning of 2019 Superstudio already boasts a rich season of events all dedicated to fashion, art, design and technological trends.

Let’s begin from sustainable fashion with White Street Market hosted in January and that will be back in June. The Italian appointment dedicated to “street” fashion, from left to right, a fair, a meeting point and a landmark for the whole world of street culture. 60 top brands, from Timberland to luter, from New Balance to Pony, have set up special showcases and captivating expositions inside Superstudio, to complete a calendar full of activities, presentations, happenings and much more in the Tortona district. The ethical trend in today’s fashion has been highlighted with the set up of Venere degli Stracci by Michelangelo Pistoletto a reminder of the need to give new life to discarded clothes. For skateboarding, that will become an Olympic discipline in the forthcoming Tokyo Games 2020 an indoor half pipe has been created for live exhibitions and artists’ boards by The Skateroom.

From street culture to “Salone della Cultura”. An event with pavilions dedicated to old books, new ones, used ones, courses, exhibitions, workshops and conferences. An event that encourages the awareness and collaboration between two entities, the one of the modern book and of the old or used book.

With Affordable Art Fair, the fair that revolutionized the way of collecting contemporary art, hosting over 80 selected local Italian and international galleries, the emerging and prominent artists works, all under 6000 euros. A moment of encounter, exchange, research, and sharing of the latest trends of contemporary art, in a dynamic and welcoming environment.

New appointment with Talks 2019 by TeamSystem dedicated to the digital transformation of companies and professional practices on the topic of “people at the centre of digital transformation”. Works began with a plenary session, followed by in depth analysis of subjects such as Digital Experience in selling, Big Data but also to new boarders such as Blockchain and Artificial Intelligence.

On the other hand, in line with traditions, the 32nd edition of Milanofili, the most important national philatelist fair supported by Poste Italiane. The collectors’ cornerstone in all its most authentic forms: stamps, comic strips, vinyl records, vintage pens, miniature trains and historical cars. Visitors were able to complete their own collections and discuss about the pursuit of rare items.

This year’s great new entry has been an exciting boxing ring packed with champions. “We are very happy to bring boxing back in Milan, a city including sport among its excellences, particularly in a special location always hosting great International events of fashion and design that liven up the city every year”, this is what Veronica Di Quarturo, Executive Vice President of DAZN Italy said about her choice during the presentation of the second edition of Matchroom Boxing Italy at Superstudio.

To complete the overview on the first few months of the year, we remind the great success of the 19th edition of Superdesign Show 2019. With over 2,200 journalists among visitors. A work of research, based on “Only the Best” mission focusing on the theme on Innovation&Tradition and a strong presence of Asia, with Japan, Indonesia, Korea.

Martina Cinquegrana

The kaleidoscopic world of butterflies in the tower by Matteo Thun at Superdesign Show 2019.

NEWS

DON’T MISS IT

THE ‘EXHIBITION THAT DOESN’T EXIST’ CONTINUES

Over one thousand five hundred people were able to admire the immaterial exhibition of Toys by Flavio Lucchini, on show at Superstudio Più during the latest Superdesign Show. An important figure, considering that imaginary large sculptures appeared in the empty space only after downloading the FlavioLucchiniArt App and following the instruction given by Sense-immaterial Reality, author of necessary technology. The incredible exhibition that allowed to admire the art works in all its details and viewpoints and also take a photo with them, was very successful and aroused great interest, so much that a replay is already planned during the year in London and Dubai. However, before moving abroad, the “Unreal but real” exhibition by Lucchini will be back in Milan for the whole month of May, set up in MyOwnGallery, in via Tortona 27 bis. visits every day in small groups by appointment.

SUPERSTUDIO PIÙ DYES BLUE

Original or imitation, natural or bleached, slim-fitting or cigarette-straight, cropped or skinny… blue jeans are an icon of style and is regarded as the most versatile item of clothing, an essential evergreen in every wardrobe. It is no coincidence that Première Vision, company organising fashion and textile fairs from the 70’s, chose to celebrate it in all its forms with a great event dedicated to denim. The Denim Premiere Vision event, for the first time in Milan, will be hosted by Superstudio Più on the forthcoming 28th and 29th May. Not an accidental choice Milan, the capital of fashion, boasting a long tradition connected to denim, with many brands that used it in a creative way developing iconic products. This year the Salone is organised in inseparable and complementary themes; on one side fashion with trends in the whole supply chain, on the other, sustainability. Among them, the smart creation project intends to provide evidence on sustainable innovation, circular economy and responsible project planning in the sector. 28/29 May - Superstudio Più

SPYDER KOREA’S RUNWAY AT SUPERSTUDIO 13

Runway shows are back at Superstudio 13, bringing back the opportunity to present collections in the area for both Men and Women Fashion Week, entering leisurely in the calendar of the great runways and fashion events always more present in Tortona district, next to Armani, Fendi, Zegna, Moncler, and many other. And while Men Fashion Week in Milan is drawing closer and White Street Market will be on show at Superstudio Più, in Superstudio 13’s large space, a runway show by Spyder Korea well-known fitness and lifestyle brand, will take place. 17th June, via Forcella 13. For info and booking contact: info@superstudio13.com

A LIVE GATE

Launched for Design Week 2019, a large video wall that points out the entrance of Superstudio Più and invites you in. On screens that take up to 40,5 metres, an alternation of names and activities of the permanent occupants, schedule of the forthcoming events, news images and previews, create an enormous moving newspaper wall. It is the first installation of a kind, created by Wavéco, whose director described: “Traduction of Innovation in the perfect bond in this gate that follows the entrance’s solid and pre-existing form and adds a technological element that encourages the image communication, grabbing passers-by attention.

FASHION AND DESIGN

EVERYONE’S OWN WEEK?

Purists of design, promoters of the Fuorisalone as a phenomenon of widespread creativity, don’t appreciate this. They don’t appreciate that, with all its strength, has sneaked in, among small and big furniture brands, among manufacturers of super- technological devices and designers in search of visibility, subtracting spaces and attention. After years of investments and hard work to create an event that involves the whole city and that made Milan the world capital of design, here, among companies pride of Italian creativity but with turnovers that don’t withstand the competition, among the many pioneers and experimenters, among universities of the world and young talents that still struggle among insufficient budget and unreachable locations, appear on the same stage and at the same time the Great Fashion Designers and fashion shops that enjoy the party with some extraordinary setup or hosting pieces of design and therefore entering in the packed events schedule. They are glorious names, that evoke luxury and golden lives: Louis Vuitton, Hermès, Bulgari, and more such as Dolce&Gabbana, Tod’s, Miu Miu, Tommy Hilfiger, Blumarine, Paul Smith and many more, not to mention those who have been actually into decor, for years and not sporadically, such as Armani, Missoni or Versace. They have added, indeed, for the occasion, decorative objects of all sort, but they do however take attention and visitors away from the actual reason to be part in this Design Week: talk about tomorrow’s habitat, not of today’s clothes.

From left, Miu Miu M/Matching Colorstool, Home Sweet Home, Missoni, Versace Home.
ROOFTOUR IN MILAN

An ambitious project by CLEVERCities: to promote and create between today and 2023 green infrastructures and innovative natural solutions. Superstudio has been pioneering to this effort, and in 2014 it started on the first large urban vegetable garden in Milan, a green project by Fondazione Pistelotta, with the permanent “Third Paradise” installation by the well-known artist. The project continued on the occasion of Expo2015 with the first paddy field on roof by Coltivare la Città association. The Roof Tour supported by CLEVERCities ends right at Superstudio: on 14th June a guided visit from 5pm by Ambiente Italia in collaboration with ROOF-matters and Ordine degli Architetti di Milano. For info: arear5@superstudioopiu.com

THEN COMES THE ITALIAN ART PHOTOGRAPHY

“Man on the Moon” exhibition will be the protagonist in June, it recalls the Ghost Book theme, a new editorial and multimedia project on Italian art photography, founded by Giorgio Racca. Pier Paolo Pitacco, art-director and well-known artist at Superstudio for his numerous collaborations, in charge of graphics and contents explains: “Ghost presents original and uncommon stories, alternating great names and emerging young ones. The number 5 volume, just like the exhibition, is dedicated to the 50th anniversary since the Moon landing. About ten authors describe their personal vision of the satellite with their photographs. An evocative and fascinating exhibition along with a soundtrack that will blend traces of indie music with some from the 50’s, black rock, with local rap in a “masala” of surprising notes. Superstudio Più, 10th July. By invitation only.

PRESENTATION OF ARMANI’S BIOGRAPHY

Extremely reserved, unreachable, even algid: who is actually Giorgio Armani? The new book by Tony di Corcia published by Cairo Editore, tries to answer this question by interviewing journalists, fashion designers and important figures of culture, top models, actresses, going through the steps of an extraordinary existence that begins with its own brand in 1975 that then originated an international empire. On the fashion designer’s 85th birthday (11th July), Superstudio hosts the first preview of the presentation of the book that according to the author’s will, concentrates on the man, narrating Giò’s (as his mother Maria used to call him) childhood, fondness, friendships, personalities, feelings.

WOMEN’S SOCIAL: EVERYONE FOR FREEDA

A hundred thousand contacts to see Gisella Boroli’s brief interview on social Freeda dedicated to women who have something to say, is a very pleasing result. But nothing compared to the lighting set up to lunar cocktails, these by today’s most trendy bartenders, along with a soundtrack that will blend traces of indie music with some from the 50’s, black rock, with local rap in a “masala” of surprising notes. Superstudio Più, 10th July. By invitation only.

GREEN IS THE NEW TREND

Taking care of our planet. For Superstudio this is a priority at the base of many business decisions that have marked the year’s innovation. 100% sustainable power: in consideration of the large consumptions, moving from traditional to eco-friendly power has ensured a much improved ecological impact on environment. Smart air-conditioning: in large and industrial spaces heating is one of the items that mostly affect costs and, even more, pollution. The newly installed digital system allows to control temperature in the various spaces according to what is hosted, with a remarkable saving. A vegetable garden on the roof: if in Tokyo having a garden on the roof is a legal obligation, in a city with so much cement like our Milan it is not a popular habit. Since 2014 we have created a vegetable garden and a lawn covering a 700 sq.m. roof. The roof halted the heat production and we harvest what nature creates. All of these solutions allowed us to avoid spreading 382 tonnes of CO2 in the air and to... sustain sustainability.

MADE-YOUR-OWN-SALAD AT SUPERSTUDIO CAFÈ

A new management by New Team Banqueting group, that already manages Dada Café, Superstudio Più, starts at Superstudio Café next to Superstudio 13’s Café of Superstudio Più, starts at Superstudio Più next to Superstudio 13’s Café next to Superstudio 13. The new entry is the arrival of salads to be made at the café by architect Michele De Lucchi doesn’t undergo transformations nor does the cuisine by chef Michele Grassi. The new entry is the arrival of salads to be created as one wishes and with no limits. A healthy fresh and be-spoke proposal, with fresh ingredients. We look forward to see you!

TRENDS

COLOUR IS BACK

Two years ago it was the theme of the year of Superdesign Show 2017: “Time to Color” still a faint suggestion of a trend, of the innovative, brazen, generous use of the colours in the house, either pure or dusty or strong, or pastels or sophisticated. Today this trend has strengthened and is changing the home and hospitality panorama, giving vibrant new life to sofas, walls, objects and even bathroom fixtures. This is how, at the recent Superdesign Show, Normann Copenhagen, well known Danish brand and Giulio Cappellini have interpreted it for the Superhotel where design turns red orange green blue, daring without hesitation the rules of colour. Also significant is the return to the catwalk of the king of colour Benetton with a subversive “capsule collection” designed by Jean-Charles de Castelbajac, in a recreated “factory” setting complete with busy workers.

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From left. Superhotel by Giulio Cappellini; Benetton FW 2019-20 fashion show; Normann Copenhagen.
Your professional history is emblematic, especially in Italy. Is America always America? I would rather say that New York is always New York. Moma was an exceptional starting point. If you do something at Moma, everyone sees it. There are extraordinary curators in the world that have not the visibility and opportunities that I have. However things are changing. There are many Biennials, Triennials, Design Weeks that are becoming popular, in India, Istanbul, Mexico, for example. Curators search for innovation. Nothing better than having the opportunity to discover other cities.

Your vision of design is transverse and your exhibitions usually talk about big ethical and environmental issues. But can design redesign the world?

Nothing and no one can do it. General collaboration is necessary. Designers must change politicians, politicians must change the legislation, and then they must impose a new way to operate an industry. It is a complicated system. I always say the designers are the enzyme of innovation as they are those who turn technological and scientific discoveries into objects that people use. Then everything has a financial background, designers can do so much, help or protect people, but not by themselves. If designers don’t know a bit of politics, a bit of anthropology, a bit of business, they can stay relegated in the role of decorators. Aesthetics is extremely important, it is a communication factor towards other human beings but does not find an end in itself. I was shocked after having seen your Broken Nature exhibition at Triennale. Nature is broken and it seems impossible to repair it. And now? That is exactly what I wanted. I hope people come out of the exhibition with the same reaction. The curator group that worked with me has been outstanding. The exhibition is structured so as to begin a comprehension of the problems we are facing, but it was also very important to confront with everyday problems, from the biodegradable pregnancy test to the way to transport water in Africa. I would like people to leave the exhibition with an idea of what can be done at home.

What is design today? Planning, industry, science, technology, engineering, philosophy, history, future, aesthetics are all part of today’s design. With such complicated concept, how can it be represented? It is hard to embrace complexity, almost no one is able to.

Wholeness. It can be dealt with in pieces or trying to understand it as a whole, and computers help us so much in this. We should not be afraid of the science fiction type. Computers and artificial intelligence are tools that we have to understand complexity. The capitalist system is very complicated. It is difficult to comprehend the profits for the sake of profits. How can wealth be accumulated without the rest of the world going better. I see students with very clear ideas, they are hope.

Dematerialization is one of the ways of representation of design with video, augmented reality and virtual reality in many ways, and more that we probably cannot imagine yet. Is this the future of your mise-en-scène?

Not exactly. There is always a lot of space for more real, tangible expressions. If you have a look at the results of Lexus Design Award, where I was a jury member, there has been a lot of research and “material” representation. To give my vote I searched for a synthesis of many things, between science and form, and to find today’s objects drawing from the past, that combine technology and handicraft, such as the bra for women who had breast surgery. In Milan, two ways to represent design and production and culture of design presently co-exist. The Salone, with its great offers of new products reserved to professionals, with admission fee, and the Fuorisalone, with its spectacular installations, cultural moments, free and open to everyone. What do you think about this “system”?

I think there is not enough experimentation yet and that there is still too much prevalence of furniture. Our industry is extraordinary and took us to a level that we must never forget. The future however cannot be just dependent on the object and it is very important that manufacturing companies embrace other forms of design and visualization. I like attention to social issues but it is important to begin with a precise ethical purpose and that aesthetics is motivated and dragged by such purpose.

LUMINISCENCE COLOURS BY ARMANI

Armani’s great comeback in the top events of Design Week highlighted two unmissable appointments. The Silos exhibition of projects by great Japanese architect Tadao Ando, well-known author of Armani/Theatre, and the launch of new entries in furniture and household textiles in Ando’s Theatre that usually hosts Armani’s fashion shows. Here, in darkness, pieces of furniture with sophisticated colours and stunning installations, with polyurethane panels radiating colourful lights from above. An essential and effective mise-en-scène lesson, starting from common and economic materials.