

DESIGN

# An insider's guide to Milan's extravagant design fair

Nick Vinson selects the standout presentations from Il Salone del Mobile



Photographs from Susanne Thun's book *In the Summer of 2009*, tracing the design work of her husband, Matteo Thun, left

WALTER PEEFFER

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**T**his year saw the return of Milan's furniture fair to its traditional April spot after a cancelled fair in 2020, a mini post-Covid affair in September 2021 and a hybrid in June last year. Designers, architects, hoteliers and clients flocked back to the city, which delivered fantastic design and spring sunshine. Outside of the main grounds, officially known as Il Salone del Mobile, Milan plays hosts to Italian and international furniture and design brands as well as luxury houses for what is referred to as Fuorisalone — outside of the fair. Palazzi, museums, galleries, cloistered courtyards and even private homes, many usually hidden from view, make up the venues where designers dream up spectacular settings to stage their products. Here is a selection of the most memorable moments.



The Loro Piana installation by Cristián Mohaded  
AQUILAMATTIA.IT

## Loro Piana

The luxury brand began as a textile mill. Now its interiors division, known for its fine fabrics and carpets woven from noble fibres, has begun to develop furniture. *Apacheta* was a bold installation inside the Cortile della Seta – the silk courtyard – in the maison’s Milan headquarters. The Argentinian designer and artist Cristián Mohaded, inspired by the landscapes of South America, imagined towers up to eight metres high, finished in dead-stock cloth, to showcase his new furniture collection: a sofa, armchairs, a bench, stool and tables, upholstered in alpaca, cashmere, silk and vicuña, the rarest fibre of all – one of the sources of this precious fleece is, not coincidentally, Argentina.

[loropiana.com](http://loropiana.com)



The Hermès Maison space featured a framework of iron rods and plaids by Pierre Chapin

MAXIME VERRET

## Hermès Maison

La Pelota is a sports hall in Milan's Brera neighbourhood and has been home to Hermès during the furniture fair for some time now. This year an imaginary house was constructed, the structure shown just as an outline, made of a framework of iron rods, traditionally used to reinforce concrete. The crisscrossing grids and lines created pleasing patterns that look different from every angle. Inside, decorative ceramics by Jochen Gerner, lighting by Harri Koskinen and handworked plaids and rugs by Pierre Charpin were displayed.

[hermes.com](https://www.hermes.com)



"Stick" chairs by Jonathan Anderson for Loewe

LOEWE

## Loewe

Jonathan Anderson has made Loewe an essential stop during the fair since the brand first presented in 2015. In the cloistered courtyard of Palazzo Isimbardi the designer showed 30 "stick" chairs, some new but many antique, all uniquely embellished with woven leather, shearling, raffia or foil, and eight paper loom chairs. The chairs with their rudimentary construction were given a new "personality" in the hands of Loewe's artisans and the one-off pieces sold out at the end of the private view.

[loewe.com](http://loewe.com)



Floating pyramids by AB+AC Architects for Fantini Mosaici

ABAC ARCHITECTS FANTINI

## Fantini Mosaici

Milan's design week is not just about furniture. Fabrics and finishes are essential ingredients in architecture and interior projects, and their producers need to dream up exciting ways to showcase them. Arianna Bavuso and Andre Chedid of AB+AC Architects created a spectacular setting for Fantini's mosaics with the clever use of mirrors. It was like entering a kaleidoscope with a floor of floating pyramids made of sodalite stone, Calacatta Lasa white and Botticino marble.

[fantinimosaici.it](http://fantinimosaici.it)



Palazzo Orsini, the venue for the Armani/Casa showcase

ARMANI/CASA

## **Armani/Casa**

Giorgio Armani presented his new range of outdoor furniture in a 17th-century palazzo in Via Borgonuovo 11 that he bought in 1996. Most Fuorisalone events are open to the public, so the Milanese jumped at the chance to enter the courtyard, take the impressive staircase to visit the first-floor haute couture salons and walk in the back garden where the Armani/Casa pieces were shown. The historic location has never been open to the public before, so the queues ran down the street for the duration.

[armani.com](http://armani.com)



Matteo Thun, photographed by Walter Pfeiffer  
WALTER PFEIFFER

## Matteo Thun

In 2009 Susanne Thun and her two sons, Constantin and Leopold, embarked on a trip from Switzerland to Italy alongside the art photographer Walter Pfeiffer. Thun wanted them to see the work of their father, the architect Matteo Thun, so they visited his buildings and discovered some of his design work, with Pfeiffer making a humorous photographic record. Fourteen years on, Susanne has published a book based on the trip: *In the Summer of 2009*, published by Scheidegger & Spiess and launched with a lunch at Thun's Milan architecture studio. Families are integral to the furniture industry in the city — most producers are in the hands of the second and third generations — so this was a clever and highly personal way to do a design book.

[accartbooks.com](http://accartbooks.com)



Tacchini Flock chairs by FormaFantasma

ANDREA FERRARI

## **Tacchini Flock**

Andrea Trimarchi and Simone Farresin of FormaFantasma proposed new upholstery stuffing for four classic Tacchini products including the Lina armchair by Gianfranco Frattini, shown here. Their approach was inspired by old mattress production processes and involves using surplus sheep wool from small producers instead of unsustainable, oil-based industrial foam stuffing. This also supports sheep farmers, so is a win-win solution.

[tacchini.it](http://tacchini.it)