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Emerging Italian designers create furniture in response to Rick Owens' work



Jennifer Hahn | 3 hours ago | [Leave a comment](#)

[Rick Owens'](#) clean, brutalist lines are contrasted against the "childlike touch" of contemporary Italian design in the Rick Owens – Dialog with Emerging Italian Designers [exhibition](#) curated by [Galerie Philia](#) as part of [Milan design week](#).

On view at [Spazio CB32](#) near the [Fondazione Prada](#), the show highlights work from eight young designers based in Italy alongside pieces by fashion designer [Owens](#).



The exhibition features work by Rick Owens (above) alongside emerging designers such as Agustina Bottoni and Pietro Franceschini (top)

The emerging designers' pieces were created in response to well-known pieces by Owens including an antlered table from his [Evolution series](#) and the geometric [Alchemy chair](#).

"When you talk about contemporary designers between 20 and 35 years old, 80 per cent of them were inspired by Rick Owens," [Galerie Philia](#) co-founder Ygaël Attali told Dezeen.

"In design, some pieces are nice looking but they don't have an aura. Rick Owens pieces aren't even trying to be nice looking. They're not trying to be comfortable or appealing. They're just there and if you like them, you like them."



Owens' Square Alchemy chair is paired with a Morghen chandelier and table by dAM Atelier

Among the participating designers are [Agustina Bottoni](#), Como-based duo [Draga & Aurel](#) and architect [Pietro Franceschini](#), who also co-curated Galerie Philia's recent exhibition in New York.

All were contributors were chosen by Attali for their irreverent style, which complements and contrasts with the comparative gravity of Owens' work.



A chunky side table is made from Calacatta Viola marble

"The idea is to create this a dialogue between Rick Owens' heaviness and power, and these airier, softer tonalities that Italian contemporary design can offer," Attali explained.

"In order to create a dialogue, you need to have two different viewpoints because if they're too similar, the dialogue is not that interesting."



Owens' pieces are accompanied by work from eight Italian designers

In [the exhibition](#), the objects are arranged into small clusters, which Attali describes as "scenes".

Owens' custom Ophelia chandelier, formed of black, interlocking ovals, hangs at the centre of the space. A nearby brass fixture by design duo [Morghen](#) is illuminated using similar, narrow LED strips but features a more organic shape reminiscent of a tree branch.

Underneath, a minimalist table crafted from oxidised stainless steel by bespoke furniture studio [dAM Atelier](#) is paired with a blackened bronze vessel and candle holder by Owens.

Other vases, urns and bowls from the series, many featuring bulbous bodies and triangular feet, are presented on an undulating marble coffee table by Milanese architect [Lorenzo Bini](#) as well as on Franceschini's onyx plinths, their delicate black veining matching the colouring of the homeware.



Lorenzo Bini's marble table is paired with bronze pieces by Owens.

Another piece by Franceschini, the zoomorphic Urania marble chair, is offset against one of [Bottoni's](#) dainty glassware designs, a floating vase held upright by a jagged rock placed on its base.

Taken together, Attali argues these pieces serve to emphasise not just the influence of Owens but also the unique qualities of Italian design.



Other pieces from the bronze series are showcased on Pietro Franceschini's onyx plinths

"Galerie Philia also works with designers from the Netherlands, Belgium and Denmark, and when I compare them to Italian design it's very different," he explained.

"In Italian design, there is always this playfulness, this softness, this honest, childlike touch."



The exhibition is on show at Spazio CB32 in Milan

Founded in 2015, [Galerie Philia](#) is a contemporary design and art gallery with outposts in Geneva, New York and Singapore.

Earlier this year, the gallery hosted [an exhibition in Manhattan's art deco Walker Tower](#), showcasing more than 70 works by 40 international designers including a chubby pink concrete chair by Studio Noon.

Photography is by [Maison Mouton Noir](#).

[Rick Owens](#) – [Dialog with Emerging Italian Designers](#) will be on display at Spazio CB32 in Milan until 10 September as part of [Milan design week 2021](#). See [Dezeen Events Guide](#) for an up-to-date list of architecture and design events taking place around the world.