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Must-See in Milan

The 62nd edition of Salone del Mobile promises even more surprises than its usual slate of installations and product releases—including a fascinating curation by David Lynch.

Once known as the gritty, industrial heart of northern Italy, Milan emerged in the mid-20th century as one of the most exciting design hubs in Europe, if not the world—a title it still holds today, as evidenced by the annual pilgrimage of design lovers to Salone del Mobile. Running concurrently with Fuorisalone, or Milan Design Week (April 15-21), the 2024 edition of the fair will have more than 1,900 exhibitors.

In February, Salone announced that it had tapped director David Lynch—yes, of *Twin Peaks* fame—to curate a space called A Thinking Room. Known for his evocative and thematically driven sets, Lynch was chosen for this unexpected collaboration based on his unmatched creativity and ability to design immersive, mind-bending worlds. “Every year [we] propose new events that span from culture at large to product culture,” says Maria Porro, president of Salone del Mobile. “This

one from David Lynch will be on the production of interiors and on how deeply this relates to the interiority of those who furnish that space not for a mere decorative reason but because it’s experienced as an external projection of the self.”

To celebrate the 15th anniversary of SaloneSatellite, a hub dedicated to designers under 35, there will an exhibition at the Triennale di Milano museum exploring the program’s inception, evolution, and future, along

A pick from Milan’s doyenne of design, Nina Yashar, the new Glaze tables from Draga & Aurel will debut through her popular gallery, Nikafar, during Milan Design Week.

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with the talents who have gone on to succeed in the industry. (Noted past participants include the founder of Nendo, Oki Sato, architect Cristina Celestino, and industrial designer Sebastian Wrong.) Also opening at the museum are two not-to-miss exhibitions. *I Am a Dragon: The True Story of Alessandro Medini*, presented with Fondation Cartier, is a retrospective on the life's work of the titular architect, while *The Imperfect Home* brings French designer Inga Sempé's latest creations and drawings to life in a domestic-inspired staging produced by Sempé and Toronto-based architecture practice Studio AC.

Outside the fair, several collective shows have sprung up, most notably—and popularly—Alcova, a roving platform created in 2018 by two young designers looking for an alternative to the traditional design-fair model. Taking over abandoned buildings in or around Milan, Alcova fills them with work from established and emerging

designers, architects, students, and artists. (Previous Alcova participants include Lindsey Adelman, Lukas Peet, and Maximilian Marchesani.) This year's iteration will happen in two sites: the 19th-century Villa Bagatti Valsecchi and Villa Borsani, the nearby modernist masterpiece planned by architect and furniture designer Osvaldo Borsani for his family and completed in 1945.

Working in the realm of collectible luxury design, Baranzate Ateliers and Galerie Philia focus on slow craft and hand-forged goods. The former is occupying a 1950s industrial building on the city's outskirts to show work from experimental creators such as Zaventem Ateliers, Arno Declercq, and Studio Khachatryan; the last will present a new collection of stone and wood furniture. Near the Fondazione Prada, at Spazio CB32, Galerie Philia will stage the first solo show of French designer and sculptor Jérôme Pereira. In *Celestial Attraction*, Pereira, who trained in geophysics, plays with

materials—one chandelier includes branches found in the forests near his studio—to create functional art with an otherworldly feel.

Other must-see-and-do highlights include an open studio with Piero Lissoni, where guests can grab an espresso and see the architect's latest work; Kohler's annual large-scale installation (this year in partnership with S.R.A., the design studio of Samuel Ross); and anything hosted by Nilufar, a multilocation art and design gallery founded by Nina Yashar, whose forward-thinking approach to conceiving spaces has galvanized her place at the forefront of the industry for more than three decades. This year, Yashar, who's known for juxtaposing rare vintage pieces with contemporary works, will curate *Time Traveler*, a journey through the annals of design history meant to look at how objects can reflect who we are as humans—and how we arrived where we are today. **Rachel Galleher**

Below, clockwise from left: Two heavy-hitting Italian brands, Poltrona Frau and Fornasetti, are teaming up to release a limited-edition (only 50) interpretation of the former's Vanky Fair NC armchair; a recreation of Joe Colombo's futuristic Additional System—modular furniture comprising six configurable cushion slices—will appear at Salone del Mobile, courtesy of Tacchini and the Joe Colombo Archive; Meronym is a series of monolithic objects crafted from Belgian black marble by Studio Khachatryan, which will present at the Baranzate Ateliers show.



TACCHINI ADDITIONAL SYSTEM BY JOE COLOMBO; ANDREA FERRARI



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