Milan a magnet for fashion, luxury during the Furniture Fair

By Dominique Muret - April 8, 2019

For a week, all eyes will be trained on Milan and its world-famous Furniture Fair. In 2018, the event attracted nearly 500,000 visitors, compared to 300,000 two years ago, and the 58th edition that starts on Monday April 8 is expected to set a new record. The Salone del Mobile, the show dedicated to furniture and design, is scheduled from Tuesday April 9 to Sunday 14, but fashion labels will have a one-day head start with their own Milano Moda Design event, first introduced 12 years ago.

Several luxury names decided to sneak even further ahead, unveiling their installations on Friday April 5. Like Gucci, which inaugurated a temporary store in via Santo Spirito, within Milan's central luxury shopping district. The store, open until the end of June, is entirely dedicated to Gucci Décor, the home accessories line launched by Alessandro Michele in 2017. Or like the Rinascente department store’s ‘The Green Life’ project, produced with Dutch designer Sabine Marcelis, who last year also worked with Fendi.

Marcelis devised a series of green ‘islands’ scattered in various locations inside the department store and in its shop windows, featuring plants that appear and disappear behind coloured Plexiglas panels, while the store's entrance is now home to a Mediterranean-style promenade shaded by century-old olive trees. The Milanese and tourists alike are already flocking to the place, sitting down on the colourful benches beneath the trees to enjoy a chat in the shade. In the course of the week, the fashion labels showcased at Rinascente will go green, featuring original settings and ad hoc projects, like Ferragamo with its paper flowers, Claudie Pierlot with a special t-shirt and Marni with its Marni Market.

In the last decade, the Milanese event has grown so much in size that it has become a must for the fashion industry, always keen for fresh visibility and promotion opportunities. Alongside the Furniture Fair proper, held at the Rho-Pero exhibition centre, home to 2,350 exhibitors from 43 countries, there is the so-called Fuorisalone, the parallel off-show programme of happenings taking place throughout the city. This year, it features a myriad presentations and creative initiatives, with 1,200 events and also including the celebrations for the 500th anniversary of Leonardo da Vinci's death.

Such an exceptional context gives fashion labels an unprecedented promotional opportunity, and scores of them will be staging countless initiatives: from collaborations with leading design names to the launch of capsule collections, monobrand store openings, parties, exhibitions, galas and other events. The majority of these initiatives are part of the Milano Moda Design programme, run by the Italian Fashion Chamber (CNMI).

The 12th edition of Milano Moda Design will feature 37 labels and a calendar of 50 events and 14 collection presentations. It is above all a major showcase for some of Italy’s top fashion brands, each with their own furniture or home decoration line, like Armani/Casa, Etro, Fendi, Brunello Cucinelli, Missoni Home, Versace Home and Trussardi. In addition to the brands featured on last year's programme, the following will be showing this year: Borsalino, Dondup, Doucal’s, GCDS, Jil Sander, Iceberg, Isaia, Laura Strambi, Paula Cademartori, Sportmax, Technogym and Woolrich.

Parisian luxury labels will join in too, starting from Louis Vuitton, which features on the CNMI programme. The LVMH group's leading label is once again setting up shop in central Corso Venezia, moving from Palazzo Bocconi to Palazzo Serbelloni, where it will unveil the ten new creations of its Objets Nomades collection, first introduced in 2012, by several international designers. For the occasion, Palazzo Serbelloni’s courtyard will host a modular art work by Japanese architect Shigeru Ban, called ‘Temporary Paper Structure’.

Christian Dior will be investing extensively in the Salone del Mobile for the first time. After a first foray with Dior Homme in 2016, the other signature label owned by Bernard Arnault's luxury group is popping up in Milan with two new projects. The first is a capsule collection created with renowned Milanese interior decoration studio DimoreStudio, founded by US graphic artist Britt Moran and Tuscan furniture manufacturer Emiliano Salci, which collaborated in the past with labels of the calibre of Fendi and Hermès.
Also, Dior will present the Summer 2019 collection by Maria Grazia Chiuri and the Dior Maison collection, both at Antonia, one of Milan's edgiest fashion and accessories stores. In parallel, Dior is sponsoring the exhibition entitled ‘The Unexpected Subject’, focusing on the relationship between feminism and the visual arts, held at the Frigoriferi Milanesi Centre for Contemporary Art in Milan, from April 4 to May 26 2019.

Hermès will instead be based at the La Pelota venue, in a setting devised by Charlotte Macaux Perelman, deputy creative director of Hermès Maison alongside Alexis Fabry, which will host the luxury label's new home decoration collections.

Among sundry other initiatives, Paul Smith will launch a ceramic vessel collection in collaboration with 1882 Ltd., Canada Goose will celebrate rain in an installation created with Japanese artist Kouichi Okamoto, Indian-inspired British womenswear label Saloni will make over Milanese design store Nilufar with the clothes by designer Saloni Lodha, and finally Tod's will stage the ‘Tod’s No_Code Shelter: stories of contemporary life’ exhibition, in collaboration with architect Andrea Caputo.

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