

ELLE DECORATION No 369 SEPTEMBER 2023

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This year's Milan Design Week was a return to form, setting the agenda for 2023 and beyond. Here, we explore the moments that mattered...

WORDS AND PRODUCTION ALICE IDA
PHOTOGRAPHY VALENTINA SOMMARIVA

Agostino Iacurci 'Dry Days, Tropical Nights' with glo

By taking over Largo Claudio Treves, a soon-to-be-demolished building in Milan's Brera district, artist Iacurci found the ideal canvas to muse on the effects of the climate emergency. If you would expect a work of art inspired by the predictions of climatologists to be a dull affair, you'd be wrong. Realised in collaboration with neon experts glo, the space was populated by bright palm trees and cacti. Iacurci had never created sculptures in this medium before, but he sees the worlds of design and art blending in this way more in the future – 'a light sculpture becomes a lighting object – a lamp, in a certain sense – the moment it enters a home!' agostinoiacurci.com; discoverglo.com ▶



Patricia Urquiola

'Aquarel' collection for Budri

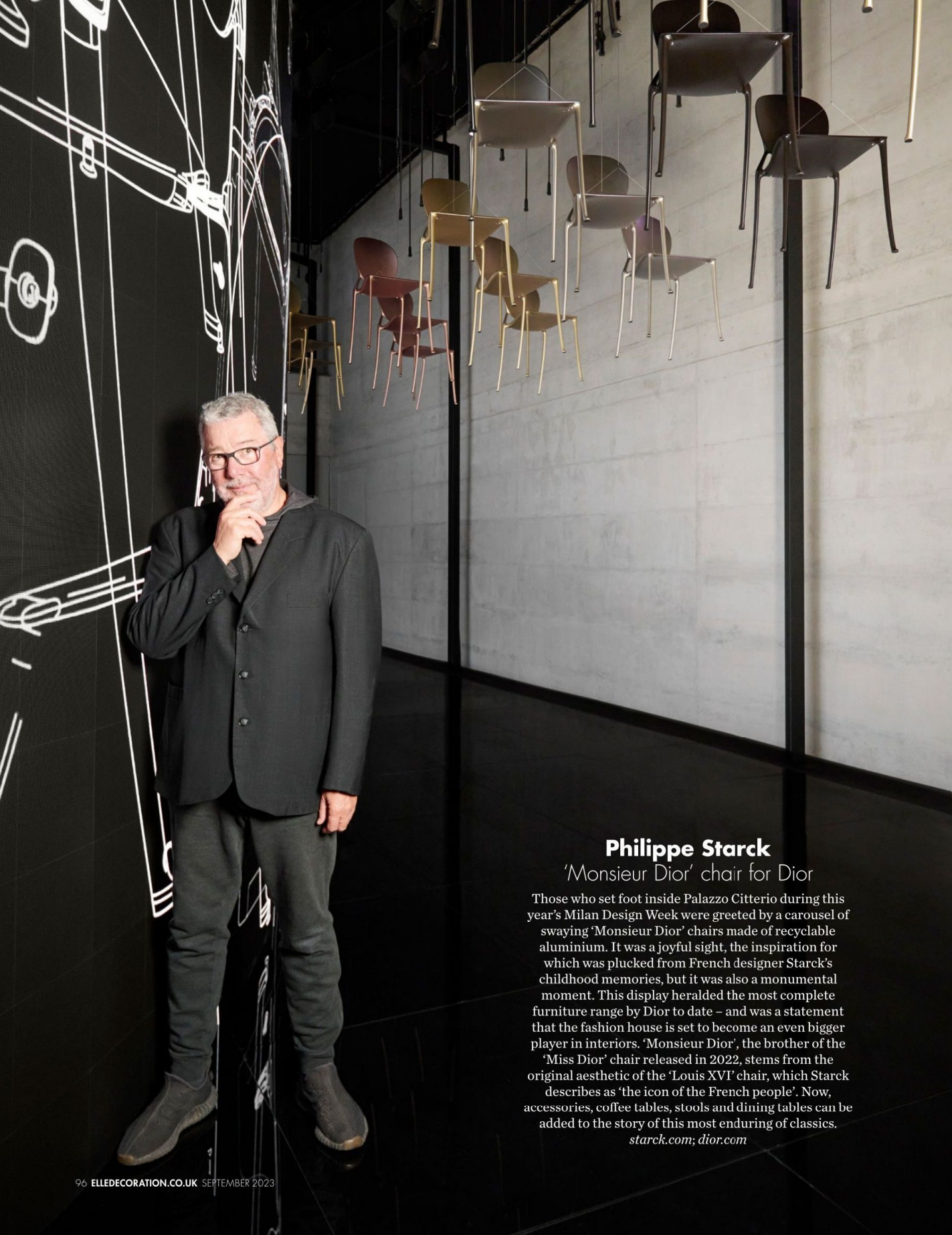
For Spanish architect and designer Urquiola, the point of her work, she tells us, is to 'look for the future in the present'.

Her latest launch for marble expert Budri, displayed at its Milan showroom during design week, fits perfectly into this ethos. Crafted from Roman travertine and Iranian white onyx, the pieces in the 'Aquarel' collection – two dining tables, a coffee table, screen and wall cladding – are revolutionary, turning slivers of stone into a canvas coated in watercolour-like tones. 'The product is a mix of nature and artifice,' explains Urquiola. 'I like the encounter of the natural and the artificial – it's what our lives are like, isn't it?' patriciaurquiola.com; budri.com

Edward Barber & Jay Osgerby 'Tamburound' chair for Cassina

'There are only a few companies willing to experiment nowadays. That is not a criticism, it's a fact,' Osgerby tells us. 'It makes our work less fun!' 'In order to make good design, we need a challenge,' agrees Barber. 'We want to push companies to find new ways of doing things.' Thankfully, Cassina was one company happy to accept a challenge, working with the pair on 'Tamburound' – first shown at Milan Design Week – a dining chair whose seat and backrest swivel independently. barberosgerby.com; cassina.com ►





Philippe Starck

'Monsieur Dior' chair for Dior

Those who set foot inside Palazzo Citterio during this year's Milan Design Week were greeted by a carousel of swaying 'Monsieur Dior' chairs made of recyclable aluminium. It was a joyful sight, the inspiration for which was plucked from French designer Starck's childhood memories, but it was also a monumental moment. This display heralded the most complete furniture range by Dior to date – and was a statement that the fashion house is set to become an even bigger player in interiors. 'Monsieur Dior', the brother of the 'Miss Dior' chair released in 2022, stems from the original aesthetic of the 'Louis XVI' chair, which Starck describes as 'the icon of the French people'. Now, accessories, coffee tables, stools and dining tables can be added to the story of this most enduring of classics.

stark.com; dior.com

future of design



Faye Toogood 'Esquisses' collection for Maison Matisse

When it comes to the increased blending of the worlds of design, art and fashion, few are as well-prepared as Toogood, who returned to Milan Design Week in 2023 after a four-year break, during which she had been working on everything from clothing ranges to sculpture. 'I am always trying to avoid labels,' she explains. 'Having a child-like approach to life means I constantly question myself, try new ways of working and move between different fields.' Her new collection, 'Esquisses', saw Toogood challenge Maison Matisse, the design studio established by artist Henri Matisse's great-grandson, to transform her ink sketches, inspired by the still-life drawings in Matisse's 1943 notebooks, into furniture and rugs. fayetoogood.com; maison-matisse.com ►

future of design



Chris Wolston

'Flor de Una Noche' chandelier for Dolce & Gabbana

The 'GenD' initiative was created by the fashion house to spotlight young talent. Functioning like an artist residency, it has allowed each of the nine designers for 2023, all selected by Federica Sala, the opportunity to learn from artisanal Italian craftspeople. The experience was inspirational for American designer Wolston, who chose Murano glass as the medium for his striking chandelier that was displayed at Dolce & Gabbana Casa during design week. The piece's form is influenced by the Pitahaya bush that grows in the Colombian countryside, the flower of which only blooms at night, by the light of the moon. chriswolston.com; dolcegabbana.com

Sabine Marcelis

Beyond the Surface'
with SolidNature

Dutch designer Marcelis has a fascination with materials and the new technologies that are allowing them to be used in ever more exciting ways. 'It provides a whole new world of possibilities for designers to work with, which past generations didn't have,' she told us, while presenting her striking dining table, which could be found in the garden of SolidNature's exhibition during design week. After visitors emerged from the underground world of onyx created by Oma Architects, Marcelis's table appeared, seemingly glowing in the sunshine. 'A table is mostly defined by its surface, but I thought of the feet of the table as the most important part,' she says of her unique design, whose monolithic travertine supports dramatically break through the coloured-glass tabletop. sabinemarcelis.com; solidnature.com ▶



Rabah Saeid

Styled Habitat at Artemest's 'L'Appartamento'

This 1930s Milanese apartment in the 5Vie district was one of the most Instagrammed spots of this year's design week. Organised by Artemest, an online destination for Italian craft, the space was decorated by six interior designers from across the globe. One of the chosen few was Sudanese-American designer Saeid, whose studio, Styled Habitat, is based in Dubai.

Her design for the 'L'Appartamento' bedroom was, she says, 'a mix of contemporary with tradition, and Eastern references with classic Italian aesthetics'. Her timely aim was to demonstrate that 'we are not solely one thing in life'. It is her belief that, she adds, 'a life lived is constantly evolving, as our spaces should'. styledhabitat.com; artemest.com



future of design

THE CASSINA

Tobia Scarpa

'Eitie' lighting for Cassina

'I am not interested in receiving compliments for having made a beautiful object, I am interested in people,' Scarpa told us, while casting an amused gaze over the excitement that surrounded the launch of his design for the new Cassina lighting collection, presented during Milan Design Week in the brand's newly magenta-hued flagship showroom. Originally a wall installation for a church, the minimalist 'Eitie' will be released as a pendant, table and floor lamp. When asked what he thinks people love about his work, the designer, now in his 80s, was characteristically modest - 'It's not me who makes the pieces, it's the pieces that make me'. cassina.com ►

Marco Lavit

'Libra' table and bench
at Nilufar Gallery

Architecture and design are parallel paths on the same quest for young Paris-based creative Lavit, whose aim is to achieve true minimalism. For the 'Libra' table and bench, he experimented with calendaring metal (the process of smoothing and compressing it) to produce incredibly thin steel plates that sit on similarly delicate rings. 'I like working with pure shapes, but I always try to ensure it isn't too predictable or gratuitous,' he explains. 'My satisfaction with any piece I have created lasts about five seconds, then I move on to something else.'
atelier-lavit.com; nilufar.com





Felicia Ferrone 'Still Now. The Dinner' for Fferrone

'Objects don't have to be designed by any particular name to be beautiful or to communicate an emotion,' says Ferrone, the founder of eponymous glassware brand Fferrone who, for Milan Design Week, created a monochromatic tablescape in Villa Mirabello, a former hunting lodge built in the 1400s. By presenting every piece for the imaginary dinner party in deep blue, the intention was to concentrate not on the decoration of individual objects, but the eternal beauty of their forms. 'I collected the pieces over an entire year and hand-flocked them,' explains Ferrone. 'For me, this is what design should be: everlasting.' fferronedesign.com ►

Nika Zupanc

'Knitty' lounge chair for Moooi

Slovenian designer Zupanc has been collaborating with Moooi since 2007, with the creative and brand developing ever more inventive forms. This year, they took the design world's recent addiction to amplified curves and expanded it in a new direction, kickstarting the emerging trend for knotted objects (featured in our last issue). Made from interwoven padded tubular elements covered in quilted fabric, the 'Knitty' chair pays homage to the sailing world, as its structure recalls the ropes used to moor the huge cargo ships that fill the ports of the Adriatic Sea, much loved by the designer. What keeps Zupanc experimenting?

'I'm addicted to movement,' she admits. 'Not so much for my body, but for my head!' nikazupanc.com; moooi.com **ED**

