

V&A

MILAN  
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VAN

the best of the  
Milan Furniture Fair

We have driven back from the Milan Furniture Fair with the latest products launched there. See what we packed in our van...

Milan is the undisputed international capital of furniture design. Powering this is the astonishing annual event, the Salone del Mobile (furniture fair), which takes place over one week in April – this year from 10-15 April.

This year more than 1600 exhibitors filled the massive Milan fairground, attracting in excess of 175 000 visitors. In the four decades since its inception, the Salone has witnessed design revolutions and the emergence of trends in international design thinking, from Pop to Postmodernism to Minimalism.

It is the talking-shop and shop window for the furniture industry. It is also a test-bed and barometer of international design trends.

The Salone was conceived in 1961 to stimulate exports of Italian furniture, which were then virtually non-existent. Design-led companies gathered in a single pavilion in 1965, forging the fair's identity as the place to see emerging trends. By the end of the 1960s furniture exports were a significant element of the Italian economy, contributing to its image as a forward-thinking European nation.

The Salone is primarily a trade event, but it has become an integral part of design culture too. In 1987 the Italian furniture fair organising committee Cosmit was awarded Italy's most prestigious design award, the Compasso d'Oro, for its contribution to growth in Italian design and manufacturing. It won it again in 1998 for its corporate image.

Since the 1980s the Salone has spawned a thriving off-site international fringe scene. This

year it included some 220 independent exhibitions.

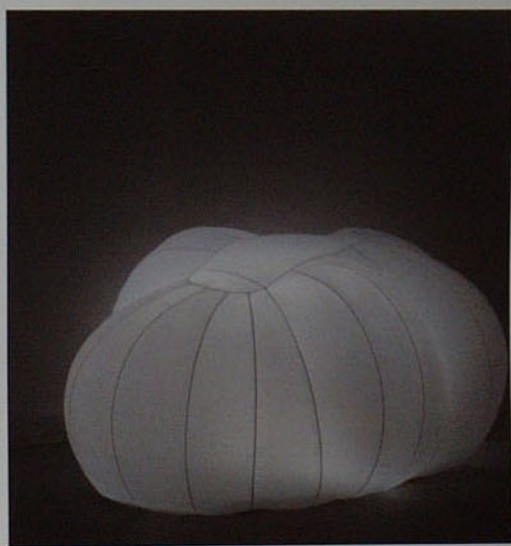
brochure produced by  
**DESIGN WEEK**

## DESIGN MANIFESTOS

New ideas about how we live and the objects we should live with are regularly presented in Milan during the furniture fair. These are often concept-led designs that are not always intended to go into production, but are shown as thought-provoking comments on the nature of furniture and products. Issues such as the tension between craft and machine production, the personalisation of anonymous industrial products, the sustainability of manufacturing and the longevity of objects are common themes. Since the early 1990s Dutch group Droog Design has presented influential collections responding to these themes, though many others also take their design manifestos to Milan.

### Cloud by Monica Förster for Snowcrash

Förster's Cloud portable room uses Rip-stop nylon and an electric fan. The idea is a response to open-plan working and living and is inflated in a couple of minutes. The fan keeps air-pressure higher inside than out.



### Get Set by Arik Levy for Snowcrash

Levy's Get Set modular office system combines medium-density fibreboard, polyester fibre, aluminium and polypropylene to create a range of flexible storage. Sweden's Snowcrash creates radical elements for workspaces.

'April, Milan, the Salone del Mobile. It's all about enjoying the first days of spring. And it is all about a nervous bazaar of information, news, gossip, meeting everyone and anyone. For one week every year Milan is the place to be.'  
Konstantin Grcic, 2002



### Clothes Hanger Lamp by Héctor Serrano for Droog Design

Serrano's simple idea to combine clothes hanging with light comprises an acrylic hanger on to which is attached a compact fluorescent lamp. It featured in Milan's Hotel Droog exhibition for which the avant-garde Dutch collective replaced one everyday object in each room of an existing one-star hotel with a thought-provoking alternative.



### Mother and Child by Matali Crasset

Mother and Child was Crasset's entry for a competition to reinvent the traditional one-legged Swiss milking stool that farmers wear strapped to their waists. The show of entries was staged in Milan by the Swiss Cultural Centre.