

“There’s a universality emerging in the language, a reminder that we are all plugged into this same energy”

—GABRIEL HENDIFAR, APPARATUS STUDIO

precursors from the previous editions of the design fair. These larger-than-life installations are the perfect allegory to borderless design—just like their global creators, these creations are shared and liked the world over. “As our collections grow and we take on new materials and scales, we have to look outside. For us, it’s always about finding partners and craftspeople who are working at the height of their craft, no matter where in the world they are,” notes Gabriel Hendifar, creative director at lighting studio Apparatus, who often works with a 300-year-old porcelain studio in China and recently designed a textile based on the Persian marquetry technique Khatam with Pierre Frey and Le Manach, a French textile house. “There’s a beautiful poetry in the process, the combination of cultures centuries in the making,” adds Hendifar.

It’s apt because Salone, which attracts over 4,00,000 visitors from over 181 countries, is also the hotbed of global collaborations. For their latest collection, Visionaire tied with global talents like Hong Kong decorator Steve Leung, Russian interior designer Maria Serebryanaya and Italian artist Roberta Verteramo. “It often happens that by magic and affinity, we get into a dialogue with artists or designers. These roles often interact with each other and then a desire arises to develop a project together,” says Eleonore Cavalli, art director at Visionaire. Merging Medieval with Modern, Art Deco with Art Nouveau, design is no longer a stickler for genres. “Our King’s Cross is a crossroad between East and West,” adds

Cavalli of a bar unit that juxtaposes the simplicity of Ming-dynasty furniture with the meticulousity of Roman city planning.

It’s clear that Salone is a place where geographical borders are as blurred as the disciplines that co-exist in making great design. Take for instance, Italian-Brazilian fashion accessory designer Paula Cademartori, who collaborated with Bitossi Home and Funky Table on a line of

vases inspired by South American flora. For the Spanish porcelain brand Lladró, Dutch designer Marcel Wanders created a line inspired by the Japanese kintsugi technique, while Hong Kong-based interior designer André Fu turned to Jaipur’s Jantar Mantar observatory for his debut collection. Adds Hendifar: “There’s such an inspiring freedom in this. Not only to be able to use the world for talent but to free up the way people look at new work, detaching it from where it is coming from. There’s a universality emerging in the language, a reminder that we are all plugged into this same energy and working to create beauty and desire in the world.”

No wonder, industries ranging from fashion to automobiles and disciplines spanning technology and science to art want to get a piece of Salone. “I don’t think we are making product for an ethnic culture, but rather for a tribe of people who live across continents that share a certain mindset,” says fashion designer JJ Martin, who brought her signature prints to homes last year with La Double.J’s collection of tabletop items and ceramic vases. “People have been mixing styles and cultures in their homes, gathering influences from their voyages. And with Instagram, you can see (and buy) Peruvian carpets next to the Guatemalan baskets and Swedish printed trays.”

Salone encapsulates our life and society at large through its colossal showcase. Whether it is bringing together designers who thrive at the intersection of fashion, art and interior design (*Life in Vogue* reimagined the workspace using talent as diverse as Irish fashion designer Jonathan Anderson to Beirut-based designers David/Nicolas) or presenting objects that can incite a feminist protest in our #MeToo era (at the Duomo, a giant outdoor chair created by B&B Italia to celebrate its 50th anniversary was confused to be a symbol of female oppression featuring a female body pierced with arrows), good design can stir conversations and offer an insightful commentary on our age.

For our round-up for 2019, we look at compelling designs that blur the boundaries in not just the literal sense, but also spatially. From places to products, here is a round-up of all the reigning trends from Milan. >



‘Bloom’ vase by Paula Cademartori



The *Vogue Italia* office reinterpreted by Jonathan Anderson during Milan Design Week