

design anthology

FAIR REPORT



MILAN DESIGN WEEK 2019

Welcome to the inaugural *Design Anthology* Milan Design Week Report. What you're holding in your hands has been produced as not just a guide to the best in show, so to speak, but as a memento, a souvenir, a keepsake — for those of you who attended as much as for those who didn't.

Salone del Mobile — the world's oldest and largest furniture trade fair — has grown to epic proportions to now include events, exhibitions and installations throughout the city for an entire week in April each year. It's considered by many of us in the industry a rite of passage, the Mecca for designers, a must-see. The one week of the year that our industry spends a year (or more) planning for, and the one week of the year that the international design community (which has expanded to now include architecture, interior design, fashion, technology and automotive brands) convenes in this relatively small Italian city to see, hear, smell and taste all things design. It's the most exhilarating week of the year, and the most exhausting.

A common theme in the discussions I had this year about why Milan was still the most important design event on the calendar (despite its size and despite growing competition) was just that: discussions. Dialogue. The conversations we have with other media, designers, brands and PR reps are priceless and are in many ways the fuel that keeps us going for the next 51 weeks. We were so fortunate to have spent some time this year with some of the industry's most talented and successful designers, as well as some exciting emerging talent, and we wanted to share those conversations with you. It wouldn't be a *Design Anthology* report without a focus on Asia, which we've extended to include APAC, where you'll see familiar names and hopefully some new ones.

My sincere hope is that if this report can impart even just a fraction of the excitement, exhilaration and inspiration that we take away from Milan each year, we'll have succeeded.

Until next time, ciao!

Suzy Annetta
Editor-in-Chief

MASTHEAD

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COLOPHON

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Noé Duchaufour-Lawrance

Atavistic Inspiration

AS TOLD TO
CATHERINE SHAW



This page, clockwise from left French designer Noé Duchaufour-Lawrance. Jablines I and Hov I from the Raw collection for Tai Ping, at House of Tai Ping Milan

Facing page
The designer feels that Taramsa I best expresses what he likes about stone



French designer Noé Duchaufour-Lawrance recently created his first collection of rugs — Raw — with Tai Ping. The inaugural exhibition of 11 hand-tufted rugs, created in collaboration with exhibition designer Clémence Farrell, transformed Tai Ping's new Milan showroom into an immersive sensory experience reminiscent of a mineralogy museum. Duchaufour-Lawrance spoke to us about his lifelong fascination with rocks and why he believes boredom is essential for creativity

DESIGN ANTHOLOGY: Your rugs appear as if they've been carved from stone. How challenging was it to translate your concept into luxury materials such as wool and delicate silk without losing the sense of texture?

NOÉ DUCHAUFOUR-LAWRANCE: I always start my designs by sketching, and the team at Tai Ping really respected the drawing for what it was, retaining the spirit of the drawing so that the rug exists as an object on its own.

So you don't use a computer to design?

No, I never sit down at a computer to design. Never. I use my computer to email and to correct images that I receive later on, but even my architectural projects start with a sketch and then 3D computer work is added afterward.

Do you start with an image already clearly defined in your mind or does sketching allow you to explore an idea?

With this project it was about exploring ideas. I didn't know the exact technique that I would use — I used stencils and tried a lot of different papers — but my inspiration is quite basic because I always refer to human interaction with nature. I have always been like that.

You sound like you're more a frustrated geologist than designer at heart.

Yes, I probably am. And I'm also a frustrated woodworker and farmer. The earth is pure and simple, and I love being connected with it. I grew up in Brittany and was always very close to nature. We lived in a small village where there was nothing else to do other than ride my bicycle and go to the beach. We didn't have a television. Even when it was raining I wanted to go outside because the house was boring.

Boredom can be a very powerful incentive to be creative.

Yes! I'm afraid that my children are not bored enough! It is good to be bored because that's the moment when

"I'm afraid that my children are not bored enough! It is good to be bored because that's the moment when you look at small stones, a tree — whatever is around you — and it becomes emotional."

you look at small stones, a tree — whatever is around you — and it becomes emotional. This relationship with what's around me is super instinctive for me. Humans have always tried to understand where we are and how to connect with nature and most people think they can take the lead over nature, but I think we have to be humble and respectful.

Was it your intention to bring a sense of nature inside?

That is exactly what I'm doing. I often say that the Japanese are the ones who understand this especially well with their internal garden or *niwa*. For me, it's about bringing nature inside and trying to create a connection that we've lost with earth. This collection comes back to the roots of creation because the first thing people did was to draw and work with stones, so it's like the first human creations, scratching on a rock.

The rugs don't just reflect the materiality of a rock but also take on the silhouette — what was your thinking behind this shape?

I didn't want a picture of a rug interpreted in a carpet. I was also thinking about drawings I'd seen that were an interpretation of ancient drawings of stones. Each rug has a different identity and different way of interpreting stone.

Is there one in particular that speaks to you?

Taramsa I, in white, really expresses everything that I like about stones because there's a natural imperfection in its sensibility. The cracks remind me of *wabi-sabi* in ceramics. That's the one that really speaks to me the most.

And what of the space? Your rugs are the first to be shown in Tai Ping's new showroom.

My biggest surprise was when I saw them on the wall. I thought, 'Wow! They don't have to be on the floor!' It's not that the rug is a piece of art, but shown like this it feels more expressive, like a tapestry. I also like the two pieces shown in the outdoor windows on either side of the entrance door. It's really amazing to see the dialogue between them.

