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Flaneurs' delight

Always a bright spot on the January calendar, Maison & Objet's 2016 winter edition in Paris did not disappoint, offering a mind-boggling number of exhibitors showcasing the latest and greatest in interior design.

By Leslie Jen

Despite a struggling economy and the pall cast over the city through continuing acts of terrorism, the international design community rallied to show its full support, if the throngs of people crowding the cavernous halls of the Parc des Expositions de Villepinte were any indication. With the Now! Design à Vivre section having been moved to Hall 7, there seemed to be an endless array of products on offer to whet the appetites of those seeking cutting-edge innovation.

The pre-eminent European design heavyweights such as France's Ligne Roset and the U.K.'s Tom Dixon were supported by a greater variety of exhibitors, perhaps suggesting a larger global scope with increased representation from Asia and the Americas — a natural outcome of Maison & Objet's expansion into both of these continents. And a strong Nordic presence was manifest in what was

1 Gardin of Earthly Delights The creation of Belgian designer Emmanuel Gardin for Linadura, Ika is a pendant light constructed from a single sheet of birch plywood. Bent by hand into an ethereally light organic shape, Ika measures 120cm x 55cm x 15cm and indeed resembles the cuttlefish after which it is named. Gardin's focus on sustainability means that Ika is constructed of renewable and recyclable materials. Slit perforations in the birch result in evocative patterns of light and shadow being cast from a 22-watt 1250-lumen LED light source. www.linadura.com

2 Hello Hely Finland's Katriina Nuutinen consistently deploys an elegant design aesthetic, and the Hely lamp is no exception. With the finessed detailing skills of a jeweller, Nuutinen has created a coloured glass light fixture that resembles a bracelet of semi-precious stones. Clear and translucent orbs of glass in white, blue, grey and brown are strung together with stainless steel components, resulting in a form so irresistibly delicious it has been included in the Finnish Glass Museum's permanent collection. www.katriinanuutinen.fi

3 Forest Ranger Iceland's Kjartan Oskarsson focuses his practice on carefully considered lighting design projects that connect user and object. His designs provide a satisfyingly interactive and engaging experience; the ceiling-mounted Forester light is just one example. Inspired by a forest of trees and made of slender copper pipes attached to an oak-plated steel base, the fixture channels light through the pipes, which can be manually adjusted by the user to suit a variety of illumination requirements. Employing a LED light source, Forester is available in a range of different sizes. www.kjartanoskarsson.com

4 Shell Game As creative director and founder of Made in Ratio, the company that produces the Cowrie seating series, Australian-born, London-based designer Brodie Neill has drawn inspiration from the curvilinear forms of sea shells. An extensive research and innovation process bridges the handmade with the digital, resulting in an all-in-one plywood structure faced with natural ash, ebonized ash or walnut. The sinuous Cowrie is available as either an easy chair or an elegant rocking lounger. www.madeinratio.com

5 No Mess Founded in 2007 by Suzanne Potts, Nomess Copenhagen offers a glorious selection of products designed for the single purpose of making everyday life easier. The various pieces are applicable to both home and office environments, streamlining the storage and organization process in impeccably elegant Danish fashion. The cardboard display and tray boxes come in a variety of sizes and shades, offering an endless array of attractive possibilities for storage and display. Flexibility is key; smaller trays can be arranged within larger trays, and trays can stack to form triple-layer storage boxes with lids. www.nomess.dk

6 A Late Bloomer Based in the Philippines' Cebu province, furniture designer Kenneth Cobonpue has unleashed Bloom, a whimsically expressive seating option that is available as either an easy armchair or club chair, with a choice of fixed or swivel options. Its name reveals its horticultural inspiration; hundreds of fine running stitches radiate from the centre of the fabric seat, forming a fluid and pleated petal-like appearance. Handmade in microfibre stitched over a fibreglass-reinforced top, Bloom sprouts from a base made of steel. Bloom is offered in a multitude of colours: lime green, moss green, muted red, yellow, cobalt blue, tangerine and black. www.kennethcobonpue.com

7 Chiquita Banana Also designed by Kenneth Cobonpue, the Chiquita stool comes in a variety of candy-coloured shades that look good enough to eat. Set within a powder-coated steel base, the rattan poles forming the seat initially appear to offer an unforgiving and uncomfortably rigid experience. However, a concealed polyurethane foam layer allows the rattan to recede beneath weight or pressure, providing a welcome cushion for one's delicate bottom. Chiquita is available in muted red, sky blue, tangerine, silver, chocolate brown and black. www.kennethcobonpue.com

8 Sturdy As She Goes Venerated Canadian artist and designer Martha Sturdy made an impression at Maison & Objet with her gorgeously chunky and sculptural bronze, steel, cedar and resin artifacts. One of the most elemental and impactful pieces on display was the square table in the Floating series: sitting on a substantial steel base equipped with castors, the milky marbled top is made of a non-porous, scratch-resistant resin that outperforms glass or wood in durability. At just 16 inches high, this low table is available in a variety of sizes, and can be customized with a concealed interior light source to cast a luminous glow in any space. www.marthasturdy.com

9 Succession Plan Founded in 2010 by Fredrik Fårg of Sweden and Emma Marga Blanche of France, the Stockholm-based design studio has distinguished itself through an experimental approach that utilizes ideas and modes of production borrowed from textile and fashion design. Available in a variety of shapes and sizes in either black leather or grey polyester felt, the Succession series of mirrors features soft, puffy contours that beg to be touched. The effect is achieved by tying ropes around the forms before briefly baking them at 150°C. When released from bondage, deep indentations from the rope remain, creating a compellingly patterned and textured surface. www.fargblanche.com



10 It's been a Slice Originally designed by Pierre Charpin in 1998, the Slice chaise longue has been reissued by Ligne Roset in all its technicolour glory. A club chair at its essence, the whimsically colour-blocked chaise longue can be infinitely extended in length through the addition of a footstool – or two or three. A sturdy wood/particleboard structure and a seat, back and armrest formed of high-resilience polyurethane foam comprise Slice; removable covers in 100 per cent virgin wool fabric come in delightful shades of teal, gold, violet, cobalt and sky blue. www.ligne-roset-usa.com

11 Radio Silence Portuguese company Wewood unveiled yet another elegant sideboard in their collection of exquisitely crafted furniture pieces. Radio is constructed of either solid oak or walnut, and features perforated doors that slide past one another to reveal two interior compartments. Its gently splayed legs evoke classic mid-century modern design, and the low-slung form makes it ideal for showcasing television and stereo components. www.wewood.eu

12 Boxing Day The ever-prolific Philippe Starck has designed a line of furnishings for Italian manufacturer GLAS Italia called, appropriately, BOXINBOX. Intended for storage and display, these pieces also perform double duty as low tables and consoles. Fabricated of laminated, thermo-welded extra-light clear glass, the outer box frames rest on a base of reflective polished stainless steel.

The ability to mix and match vibrantly hued and variously sized transparent glass storage units for placement within these clear glass receptacles offers endless possibilities for function and colour: violet, orange, green, yellow and warm grey are the options. www.glasitalia.com

13 Terra Firma Part of the parallel Paris Déco Off event, Italian company Alcantara occupied a small gallery on Place Furstenberg in the 6th arrondissement to launch their new Terra line of luxury textiles. As the name would suggest, the line is inspired by earth's varied landscapes: Vaalbara, Ur and Vendian are just a few of the richly coloured and textured fabrics that result from Alcantara's unique proprietary technology. With a specialized focus on manufacturing high-tech textiles for automobile interiors, the products are not only light, strong and durable, but 100 per cent carbon-neutral. www.alcantara.com

14 Rugrat The evocative drawings of architect Daniel Libeskind form the basis of luxury Italian carpet company Loloey's limited-edition rug collection. Exploring form, pattern and colour and inspired by the fractal geometries characterizing Libeskind's work, the vibrantly hued abstract patterns in the carpets are effected through a hand-wrought tufting technique utilizing luxurious 100 per cent bamboo silk. 10 carpets comprise this series, all of which reflect the architect's longstanding interest in the interplay between order and disorder. www.loloey.com

15 Spiritualized Solid European walnut is meticulously crafted to produce Ligne Roset's Spirit of Forest dining table. Peter Maly's design is premised on his

"search for expressive forms which are original...and a hope that [his] creations will endure for years." The smooth horizontal tabletop flows seamlessly like a waterfall into slightly canted legs through a curved dovetail joint. Spirit of Forest is available in lengths of 180 and 220 centimetres, but can be ordered in alternate sizes. www.ligne-roset-usa.com

16 Howdy Gaudí Named as Maison & Objet Designer of the Year for this edition of the Paris show, Spain's Eugeni Quitllet unveiled Pedrera, a chair designed for Vondom that takes its inspiration from Antoni Gaudí's La Pedrera in Barcelona. The curvy, sensual shapes of Gaudí's iconic building are evident in this lightweight stackable chair made of injected polypropylene and fibreglass. Suitable for either indoor or outdoor use, Pedrera is available in six colours: black, white, red, bronze, pistachio and ecru. www.vondom.com

17 It's Miller Time Launching for the first time ever at Maison & Objet Paris, the Miller lounge chair and ottoman appeal with richly hued leather and simple contours. Designed by Christoph Seyferth for Dutch company Functionals, Miller was inspired by legendary French designer Pierre Paulin and his leather butterfly chair circa 1963. The chair's frame and base are made of reflexive 18-millimetre powder-coated steel in either black or sand; wood under the seat provides a degree of shock absorption. 5mm-thick German leather is used for the seat and back, stitched and polished by a saddle-maker. Miller is available in natural, cognac, dark brown and black. www.functionals.eu

18 Spongebob Squaresofa Designed by Koichiro Kimura of Japan, the Miyavie sofa reflects an austere pared-down aesthetic that is distinguished by its material innovation. Thin filaments of polyethylene resin are intricately woven and heat-formed, incorporating pockets of air to create a type of high-performance porous styrofoam. The resulting material is assembled into seating components that offer an intriguing springy resilience, providing the utmost in comfort. Available in white only, the Miyavie line includes an arm and armless chair, as well as a square or round stool/table. www.miyavie.com