

Tina Norden

The Ask

How can we look to design history to design for today and tomorrow?



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Whatever criticism we might leverage on Milan every year (the queues, the irrelevance, the size), it is still the key fixture in the design industry calendar. It remains an opportunity to immerse ourselves into design, into an amazing city, explore the sublime and the ridiculous, meet friends, colleagues and heroes; and see ideas and conversations come alive. It's an excuse to treat gelato as a legitimate meal option. It always allows a glimpse into where the design industry is heading and what the 'trends' are (though I am not a fan of the idea of design as fashion) – with more and more content focused on the 'thinking' part rather than necessarily 'making' or launching product.

One noticeable common thread this year was a look to the past, and not just in those halls marked 'Classic Design'. There was a joyful rediscovery of mid-century design. It never went away, but it was never this present at Salone. Jil Sander's beautiful new colour edition for Thonet's S64 chair is a great example of a classic design reawakened for the future. At the other end of

the spectrum Saint Laurent launched a Charlotte Perriand limited edition: a selection of beautifully crafted pieces from her oeuvre with price tags to match the collector's status. Nilufar featured classic George Nakashima and India's Phantom Hands presented a reissued collection of Geoffrey Bawa furniture. A highlight was Desjar's launch of original Anni Albers fabrics in the newly renovated Torre Velasca, a double act of iconic mid-century designs that both felt truly reinvigorated and of the moment.

It was very interesting to see so much classic design being shown at an event focused on now and the future. I am always accused of being a Modernist (not an insult in my book), so the renewed interest and relevance of these pieces is a delight for me. It shows the outstanding and timeless nature of these pieces and proves that era remains relevant.

These designers were breaking new ground, without considering short lived trends. They wanted to change the world, the way we live, through

design. We can take a lot from this. Whilst not everything we come up with has to change the world, it should be thoughtful, answer a need and respond to its context and brief rather than to trends or social media.

This is not unique to Modernism of course and there are many examples of design pieces from other periods that have equally stood the test of time. But to my mind, mid-century pieces stand out as still as modern as when they were conceived. Maybe the fact that these pieces, this movement, are a result of uncertain, challenging, yet groundbreaking times resonates with us today? Designers were risking their livelihood and reputation by reinventing and challenging convention rather than following the status quo. That to me is remarkable and adds another facet to these pieces, that even without this background knowledge are stunning. And design that stands the test of time has to be more sustainable than lots of forgettable pieces that feel irrelevant by the following year.

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NEW PRODUCT LAUNCH

PORT-X

As part of this year's Clerkenwell Design Week, ABL took part in the vibrant Venue Project showcase, presenting a range of smart workspace solutions. Alongside our trusted selection of power modules and accessories—including cable management, monitor arms, and CPU holders—we were proud to unveil exciting new product highlights.

Making its exhibition debut was our 80 mm grommet Port-X power module, designed for seamless desktop integration. Also featured for the first time in the UK was the Flip-S in-desk power module, following its successful launch at Orgatec last year.

These additions reflect our ongoing commitment to delivering smart, functional solutions for the modern workspace.



PORT-O
60 mm grommet



FLIP-S
IN desk power module



FUSION
UNDER desk power module

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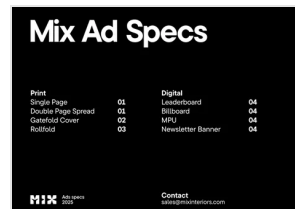
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