

FORECAST

Age of consciousness

What does the future of design look like? Italian design maven

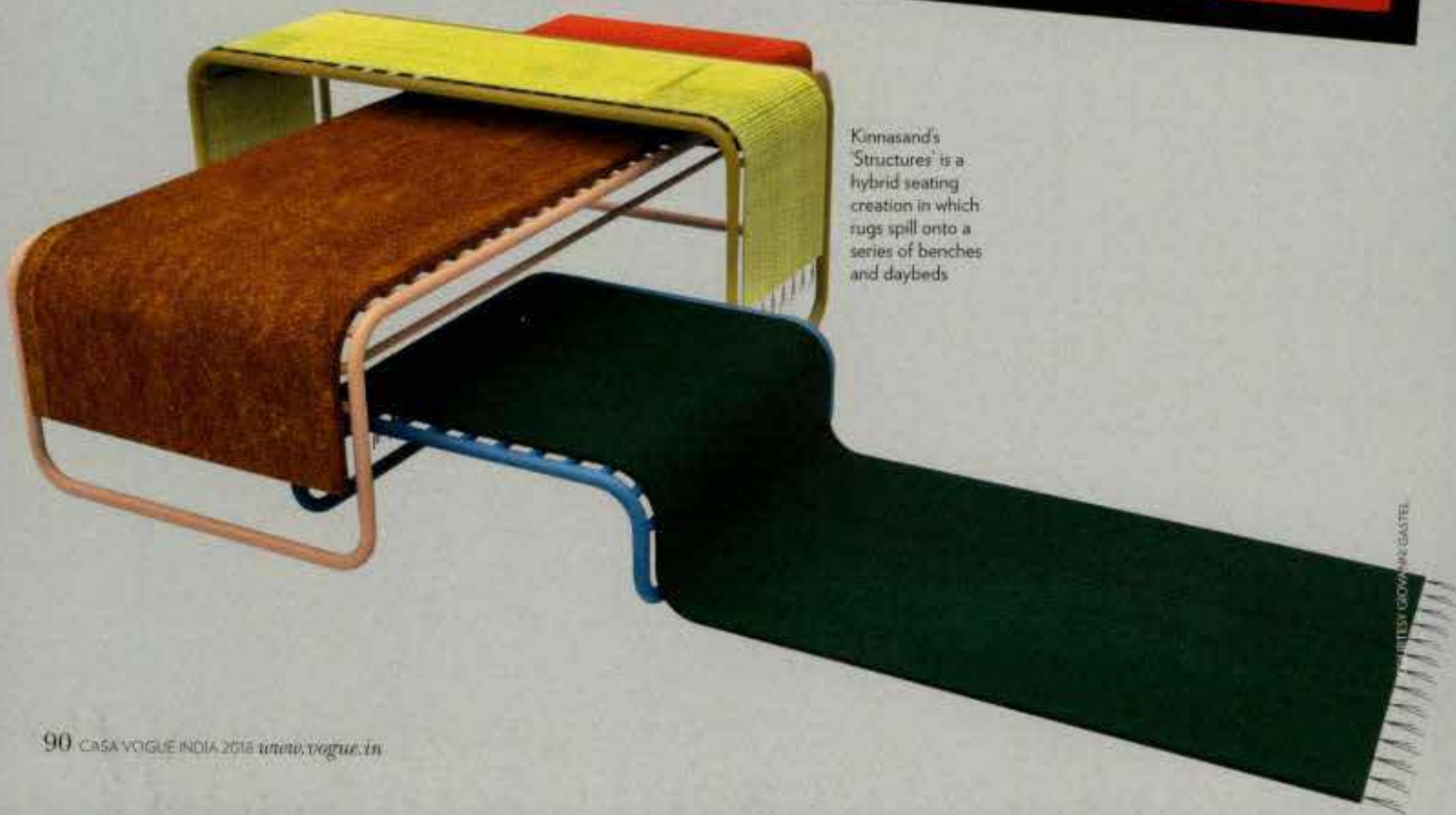
ROSSANA ORLANDI

says it's begun already—an era of conscious consumerism with a focus on sustainability.

By **CRISTINA PIOTTI**

Instantly recognisable by her characteristic silver hair pulled back into a perfect bun and large round spectacles, Rossana Orlandi, the iconic gallerist and curator, has an unerring eye for the best of global design—especially obscure new-wave designers. Orlandi started out as a textile designer in fashion—at which time she travelled across north India for her honeymoon, armed with a pair of scissors, collecting scraps of fabric—before becoming increasingly intrigued by interior design.

In 2002, she opened her eponymous concept store and gallery, Spazio Rossana Orlandi, and since then, her name has exemplified avant-garde interiors. Her eye for spotting cutting-edge designers is legendary; she discovered talents like Maarten Baas, Nika Zupanc and studio Formafantasma. From India, her gallery has exhibited pieces by Scarlet Splendour and Gunjan Gupta in the past. But far from resting on her laurels, the grande dame of design has now decided to embark on what she considers her new mission: to encourage environmental sustainability. For *Casa Vogue*, Orlandi articulates her predictions for the future of design.



Kinnasand's 'Structures' is a hybrid seating creation in which rugs spill onto a series of benches and daybeds



'Alex' chaise longue by Ecopixel is made using recycled plastic

CONSCIOUS CONSUMPTION

Salone 2018 marked the launch of Orlandi's new pet project, Senso di Colpa. Dedicated to raising awareness about ocean protection, it promotes the use of recycled plastic. Orlandi believes that recycled materials have enormous potential as a creative source, and recommends exploring what Jamie Hall from Pentatonic, Mattia Bernini from Precious Plastic Project, and Ecopixel do. "It's now clear that we have to change our habits, and consume in a more conscious way. And designers can be part of the solution," adds Orlandi, who besides launching *Guiltlessplastic.com* will promote an award recognising sustainable designers.

SCRAP-BASED INNOVATION

Orlandi stresses that beyond planting more trees, we should be using less wood to combat deforestation. While bamboo can be a good answer to the growing demand for timber, she believes a new approach to design is in order—and the best example is Piet Hein Eek. The Eindhoven-based designer has built his business around saving discarded pieces of wood. "I've represented him since the conception of my gallery," says Orlandi, "His work is a great example of sustainability and recycling."



Hein Eek's two-seater is made from reclaimed wood



Ashanti Design works with African artisans on contemporary products

ARTISANSHIP REIGNS SUPREME

Orlandi views technology as fundamental to design, and artisanal products as a timeless necessity. She doesn't see it as a handcrafted versus tech war. Recognising the art of manually designed pieces, she speaks highly of Francisco Gomez Paz's ultralight Eutopia chair, made from Paulownia. "He personally made the chair, through a process of trial, error and precision," she shares. "Craftsmanship is so precious. In Italy, like in India, we should celebrate and fight to protect our artisans."



Paulownia, a fast-growing sustainable hardwood, was used in making the 'Eutopia' chair

NO LUXURY WITHOUT COMFORT

"I'm fed up with beautiful but uncomfortable chairs," says Orlandi. She asserts that we redefine luxury as having more to do with comfort and our need to be pampered. For her new restaurant, *Bistro Aimo e Nadia*, she wanted soft furniture, strong colours, and a cozy ambience ("no minimalism, no rigour, no neatness," she lists) peppered with pieces by Mayice Studio, Piet Hein Eek, and Nika Zupanc, as well as exclusive wallpapers from Etro Home. And, yes, super comfy seats like Jaime Hayon's Beetley Chairs.



Milan's *Bistro Aimo e Nadia* features Etro Home wallpapers

The 'Inerte Grafico' collection merges recycled plastic with concrete



THE NEW AGE OF OLD MATERIALS

All materials, even the more traditional ones, are now subject to major technical developments and aesthetic transformations. Marble, according to Orlandi, is one of the best examples. "I can now see different types that I have never seen in my entire life. Real marble, old marble, recycled marble...." There's even plastic that looks like marble—take a look at the top of *Studio Nucleo's* console at her gallery. "Also, we cannot forget terrazzo," she adds, recommending *Duccio Maria Gambi's Inerte Grafico* collection. ■



Open Sky was a site-specific installation by COS

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OPEN SKY: Designed for the selfie-loving generation, fashion brand COS collaborated with artist Phillip K Smith III to create Open Sky, a large-scale installation at Palazzo Isimbardi. The mirrored piece reflected its surrounding 16th century architecture, though most visitors were only keen to get an Insta-portrait.



'Charly' sofa, Gufram

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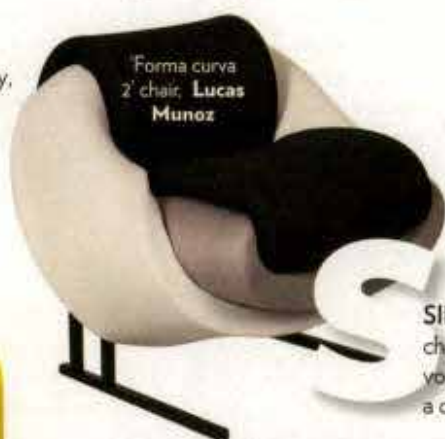
RETRO: The cyclical nature of design is probably what elicits reissues of iconic works. This year, Moooi co-founder Casper Vissers launched a brand called Revised, featuring products inspired by the 20th century, while Warm Nordic reissued Nordic designs from the 1950s and 1960s. Among one of the biggest retro hits was Gufram's shiny disco ball collection and designer Cristina Celestino's tram bedecked with coral silk brocade by fabric brand Rubelli.



'Menhir' bench, Dirk Vander Kooj



'Chiostro' sideboard, Artemest



'Forma curva 2' chair, Lucas Munoz

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SINUOUS: With bulbous chairs and curvy sofas, voluptuous silhouettes made a comeback this season.

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QUIRK: Ideas at Salone ranged from bizarre to bold, and part of the same was lighting expert Ingo Maurer's set of whimsical light bulbs attached to the tip of a plastic blue glove.



'Luzy take five' lights, Ingo Maurer

3D: Just behind the Duomo lay architect Massimiliano Locatelli's 1,075 sq-ft house made entirely from 3D printed concrete. Created in response to the affordable housing crisis, Europe's first 3D-printed house was apparently made in less than a week. Examples of the technique also reigned inside Salone—from ornamental 3D wall tiles to furniture suitable for indoor and outdoor use.



3D printed chaise longue by Philipp Aduatz

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UPCYCLE: "I want to change the meaning of plastic," said Rossana Orlandi as she launched her Guiltless Plastic project. Among the designers who inspired, educated, informed and improved was Dirk Vander Kooj, who creates furniture from recycled plastic, as well as Japanese designer Kodai Iwamoto who repurposed plastic to make blown vases. Also part of the sustainable brigade were fashion designer Eileen Fisher, who launched a project to recycle unused fabric scraps, and Danish textile company Kvadrat that invited seven designers to create furniture from end-of-life textiles.

COURTESY LANCE GERBER, LEONARDO SCOTTI, MASSIMO OSTOJA, INGO MAURER, PHILIP K SMITH III, STEFFANO LEGNANI, MOOOI, TEBERNA, STUDIO WOOD, AMONDO LAGNI, MARIAGIOIA