HAWORTH

Salone del Mobile Milano 2023

Design Trends Report



Our key insights

We cannot see far into the future, but by watching subtle signs, we see the small beginnings of the season ahead. These subtle trends hint toward the new things to come. Leaves begin to sprout or lose their colour; the breeze gains a cold bite or eases into warmth; the light lingers longer in the evening or departs earlier in the day.

There is a familiarity with the rhythm of the weather; surprises usually come in the form of intensity rather than structure. Seasonal changes in art and design can be cyclical, like changes in the weather – but unlike the weather, aesthetics carry great uncertainty in the short term. Even with this uncertainty, subtle signs indicate possible directions, like signposts pointing into the fog. Design trends, if carefully observed, indicate a change in the season – and sometimes hint toward the character of the season to come.

At Salone, the world of art and design gathers to encounter and celebrate the aesthetic evolution unfolding over the world. Salone does not just reveal trends – it works as a catalyst to ignite them and a platform to establish them. And while all these exciting new things are not guaranteed to take root and spread in the future, they are certainly a hint of what may await us just around the corner.

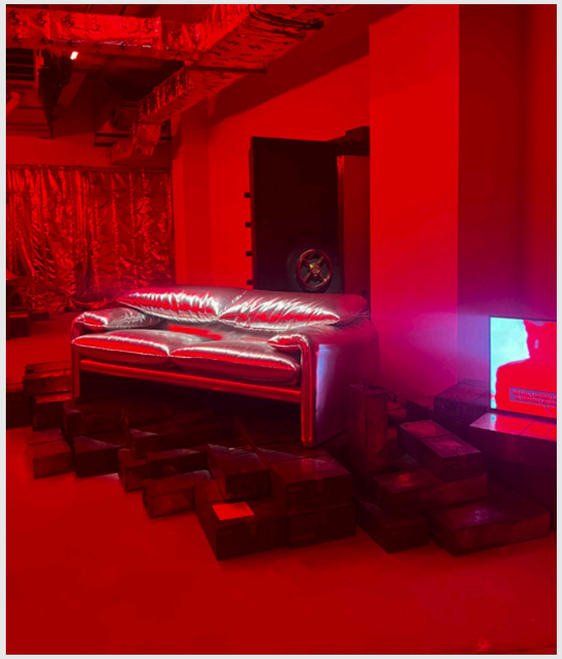
These are the seven trends that stood out to us at Salone 2023.

Trend #1

Metellica to the Future

We saw wide use of various metallic treatments and materials. These were evident everywhere, from interior installations to architectural sculptures to upholstered furniture. Reflective surfaces can transform matter, eliciting exciting and unexpected sensorial effects.

Louis Vuitton: Objets Nomades



Cassina Echoes

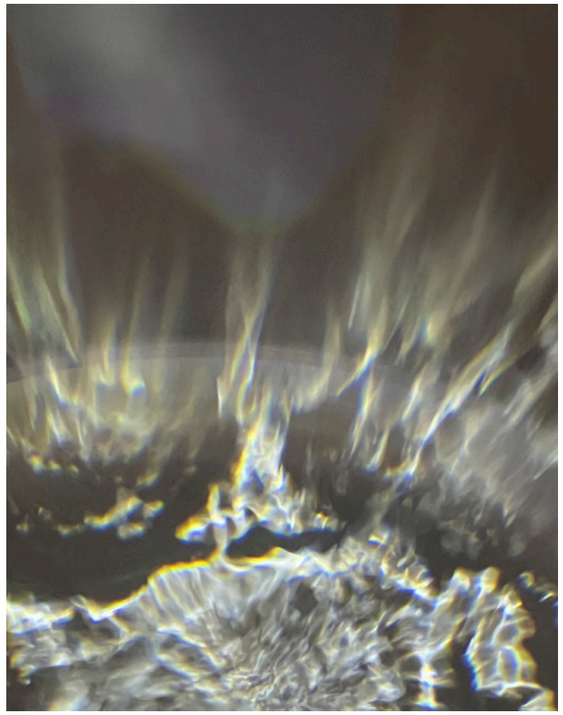
This transformative capability was explored in depth. Mirrored elements added a touch of luxury, as shown by the glitzy glamour of the Magistretti sofa upholstered in silvery fabric in Cassina's 'Echoes of 50 Years of I Maestri'. Metal was also used to evoke an industrial, everyday humility. One element of Cassina's 'Echoes' utilised reflective cladding that looked like what you'd find on an aircon duct; material normally hidden away was brought into the spotlight. One of the structures in Louis Vuitton's Objets Nomades used riveted sheet metal to achieve a similar effect.



This trend toward metallic, reflective surfaces carries a futuristic implication from two distinct angles: luxury and simplicity. The future can be suggested by luxurious, clean reflective surfaces, evoking a streamlined spaceship. The future can also be implied by a pared-back, industrial, straightforward clarity that echoes the near-magical simplicity of science fiction stories.



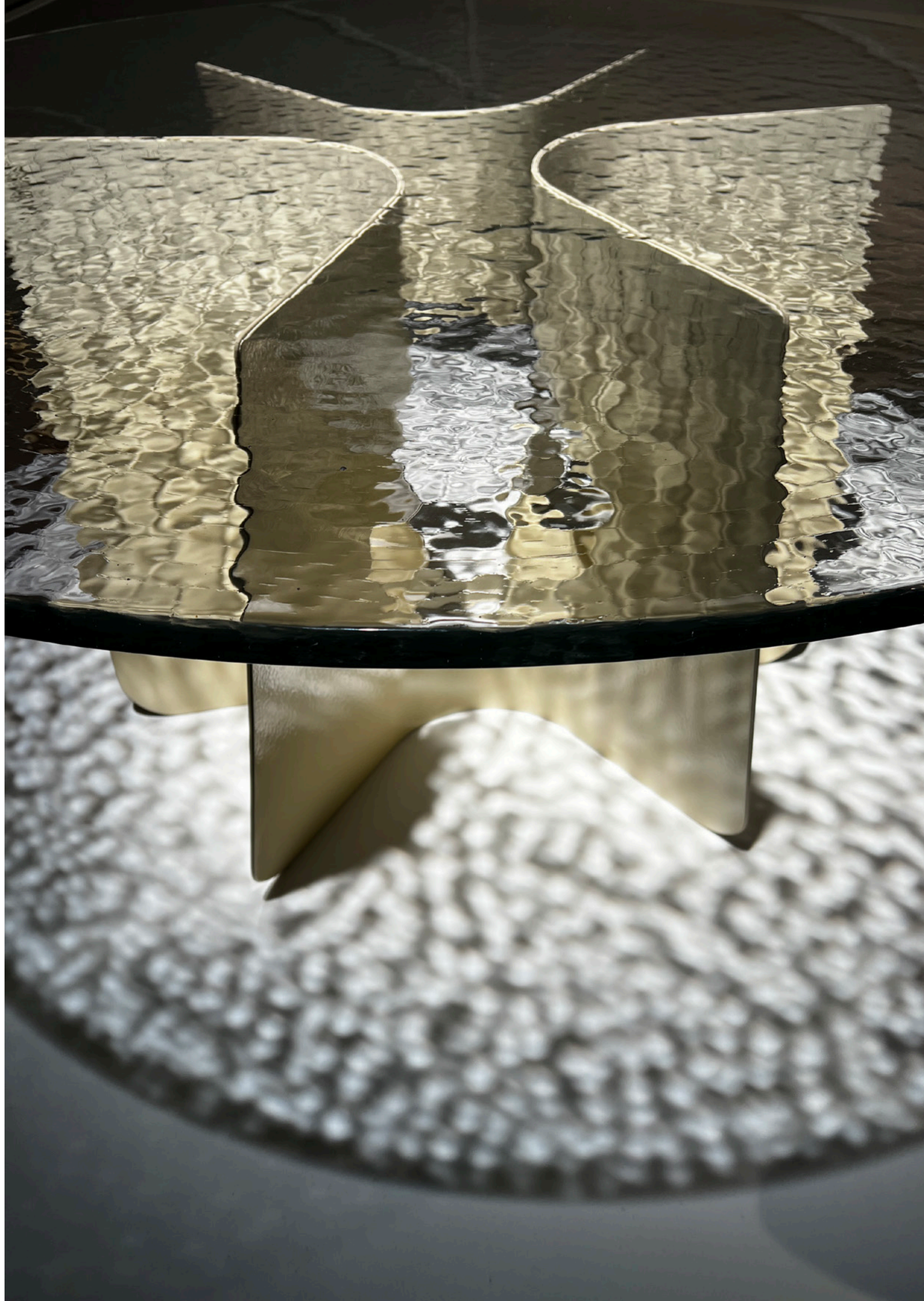
Alessi



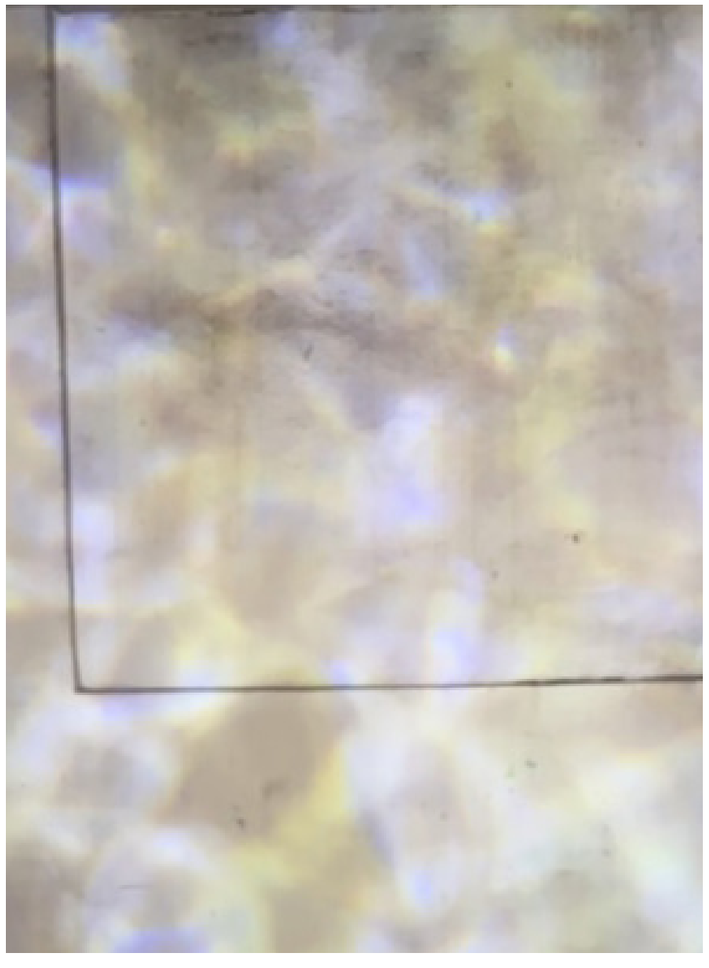
Humans have always been fascinated by water. We saw this fascination reflected in a growing trend this Salone: design installations inspired by water, light, vibrations, and resonance.

Trend #2

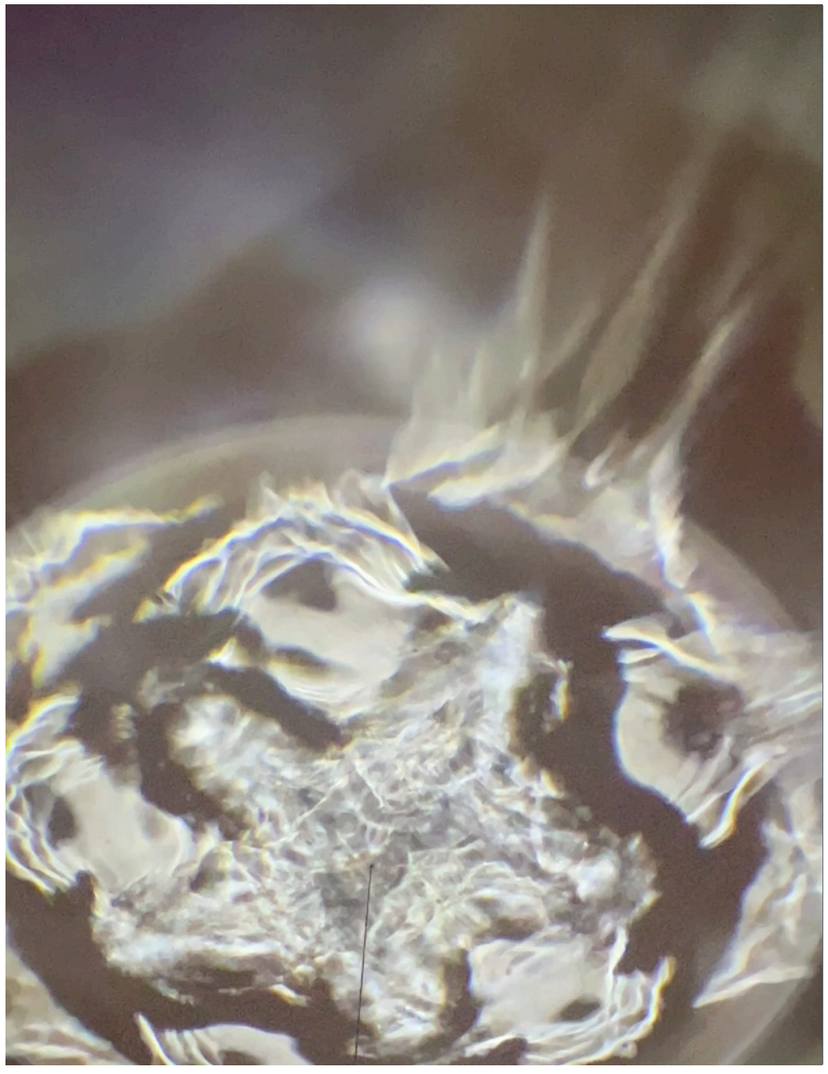
Liquid Fantasy



Google's 'Shaped by Water' was an intimate, sensory experience that used water to explore the feeling of being totally immersed in the present. Water and light articulated a vibe, making a felt sensation visible. Guests were invited to fully engage in the present moment. In one part of the installation, guests reclined to watch a symphony of light and water play across the ceiling.

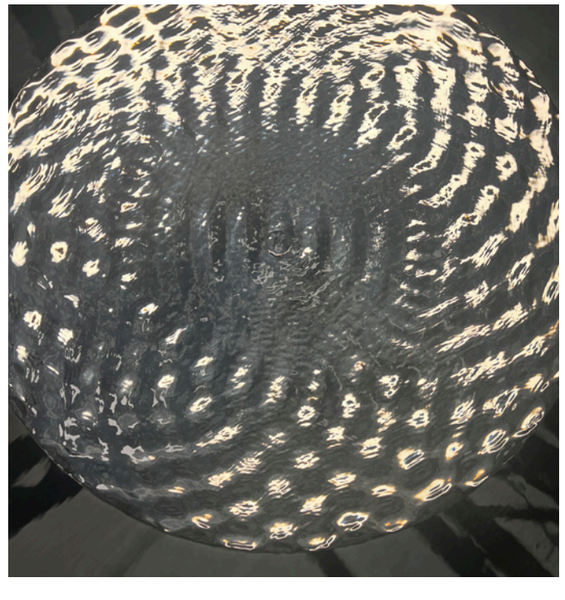


Aloca



Google- Shape of Water

Light flowed beautifully through a rippled glass top in Louis Vuitton's 'Objets Nomades'. Using light in this way called to mind the feeling of watching a storm through a rain-splattered window. Water has accompanied us in every stage of our human story. As interior spaces embrace wellness and presence, water will be our guide and inspiration again.



Trend #3

The Magic of Glass & Wonders of Italian Crafts

Our moment is fraught with opportunities for alienation. Some fear for the future role of designers as AI programs proliferate. Many people are experiencing physical isolation in an increasingly online world, and even design can feel more and more disconnected from tangible, manual processes.

Alcova



Dolce & Gabbana Ahyrun Lee

Dolce & Gabbana Bradley Bowers



We saw a trend at Salone that rose to match these concerns, as traditional, handcrafted materials and processes were embraced and local communities were actively engaged in design. It was particularly evident at Dolce & Gabbana's exhibit, where young designers from over the world were invited to create pieces that experimented with traditional Italian artisanship.

Soft Opening Lindsey Adelman



Dolce & Gabbana



The results were exhilarating. Feats of the impressive technical craft were formed using ancient techniques. Blown glass, terra cotta, wicker and wrought iron were some of the handcrafted materials used to create sophisticated, exuberant pieces. (Several also featured metallic, reflective surfaces, recalling the first trend we discussed.)

The trend toward handicraft elements celebrates the beauty of our human inheritance. As long as humans create, handcrafted processes will resonate with us.

We saw designers experimenting serendipitously with materials, textures, and patterns. Straightforward geometrical shapes received whimsical surface treatments.

Trend #4

Materials in Flux

In some spaces, we walked in and simply felt happy. These fantastical spaces offered moments of escape and play. Surprising combinations of colours, textures and reflections stimulated that playfulness. Missoni's lighthearted exhibit emblazoned simple geometrical shapes with perky patterns and bright colours. Mutina's stirring exhibit featured a chunk of material partially covered in paint, providing a snapshot of the design process as raw material is transformed by the vision of a designer.

Mutina



Patricia Urquiola
for Mutina



Acrylic Skyline
Universita Degli
Studi di Milano



Missoni

The idea of transforming straightforward, base materials into something new and exciting is particularly poignant for the world of the workplace. Even simple working spaces can become inspiring and whimsical with the proper treatment – so if you wish to make your uninspiring working space more playful, be encouraged: it is definitely possible!

Missoni

Trend #5

Celebration of Past & Present

We saw the past celebrated in several stirring exhibitions. Design masters, production processes, and traditional materials were brought into the present in unexpected ways.



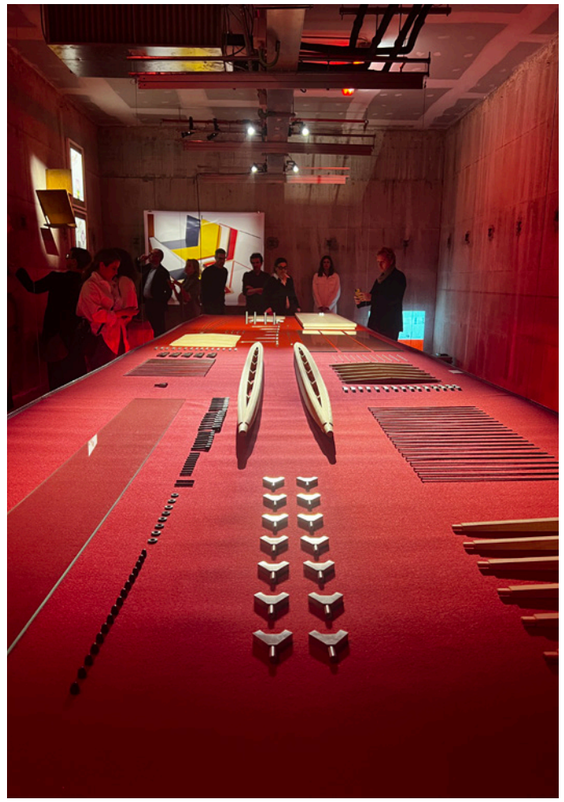
Alcova

Alcova's experimental installations were made from agricultural byproducts, algae, rice straw, salt and textiles. The objects were created using construction materials, fabrics, palm sheaths and plant-based shoes. Nature-based manufacturing techniques inspired by antique mattress production used surplus sheep wool to replace industrial foam padding – a material as problematic as it is prevalent. The exhibit made a theoretical claim quite tangible: the wisdom of the past will prove invaluable as we solve the complicated climate issues of our present.



Nature-based manufacturing techniques inspired by antique mattress production replaces industrial foam with surplus sheep wool promoting circularity of materials.

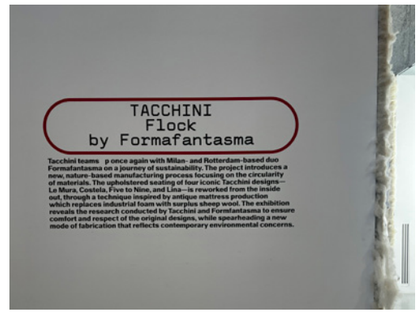




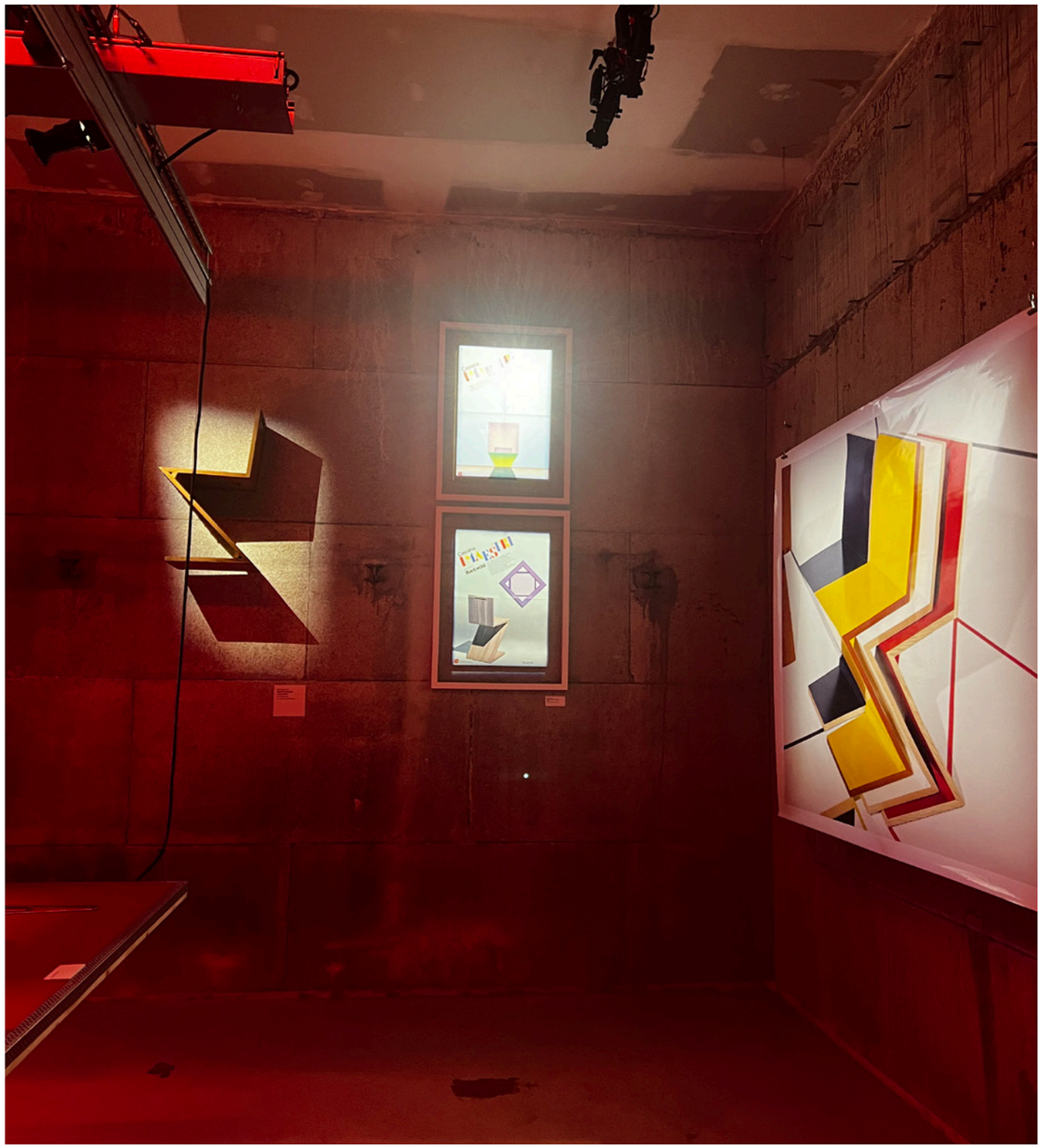


Past masters were celebrated in the present in a futuristic manner – collapsing broad swaths of time into simple, evocative objects that resonate with us across many generations.

Cassina's 'Echoes of 50 Years of I Maestri' celebrated the past with a new vision for the future. The exhibit featured the archival works of great Cassina masters – but rather than leaving the masters in the past, it brought them triumphantly into the present. In several facets of 'Echoes', the objects were stripped down so dramatically, to a level so raw, that it was almost futuristic in its simplicity (recalling Trend #1).



Formafantasma





Trend #6

The Art of Light

Colours arrived in the form of architecture of light and design in stunning settings presented from an idea by Elle Decor Italia, designed by Giuliano Andrea dell'Uva and Metis Lighting. Soft, warm pinks brought energy and dynamism to the space. Elsewhere, intense cool blues created an immersive, reflective atmosphere (recalling Trend #2).





Elle Decor

Thoughtfully crafted colour environments can help people focus, relax, and socialise. Broad generalisations can be made about the various effects of different colours, and we cannot deny that colour significantly impacts us. However, individuals largely determine this impact in a true ‘eye-of-the-beholder’ fashion.

In this era of hybrid working, one of the keys to an inviting, welcoming, life-giving workspace is offering people a landscape of settings they can choose from. That landscape will naturally need to consider providing a range of light and colour – allowing those who prefer intense, soft, warm, or cool lights to find a place suited to them.

A range of thoughtfully crafted colour environments affirms diversity and respects agency, helping the workspace to feel more human.

Trend #7

Tactile Textiles



Moroso



Moroso



We saw many iconic seating pieces modernised by the use of textured upholstery. Often these were boucle fabrics – distinct for their looped, curled ply that calls old, well-loved blankets to mind.

This deeply-rooted preference for homey, comfortable, tactile fabrics has been spurred on by the Work From Anywhere revolution. Thick, blanketed wools invite us in and make us feel welcome. In a hybrid workplace trend, this welcoming warmth is crucial to making people feel at home even when working in the office.

The response to an Archibald chair by Poltrona Frau is as iconic as the chair itself: anyone who sits in it will, almost without fail, play thoughtfully with the leather ‘ears’ on the armrests of the chair. For a brand as tightly associated with material quality as Poltrona Frau, this invitation to play is an engaging, immersive experience with a core material to the brand. By upholstering Archibald with boucle wool, Poltrona Frau brings that tactile material experience into the present moment – when we expect materials to be homey and comfortable.



Poltrona Frau

Cassina

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Trend #1

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Trend #6

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Trend #7

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Moroso https://moroso.it/?lang=en
Cassina https://www.cassina.com/ww/en.html

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