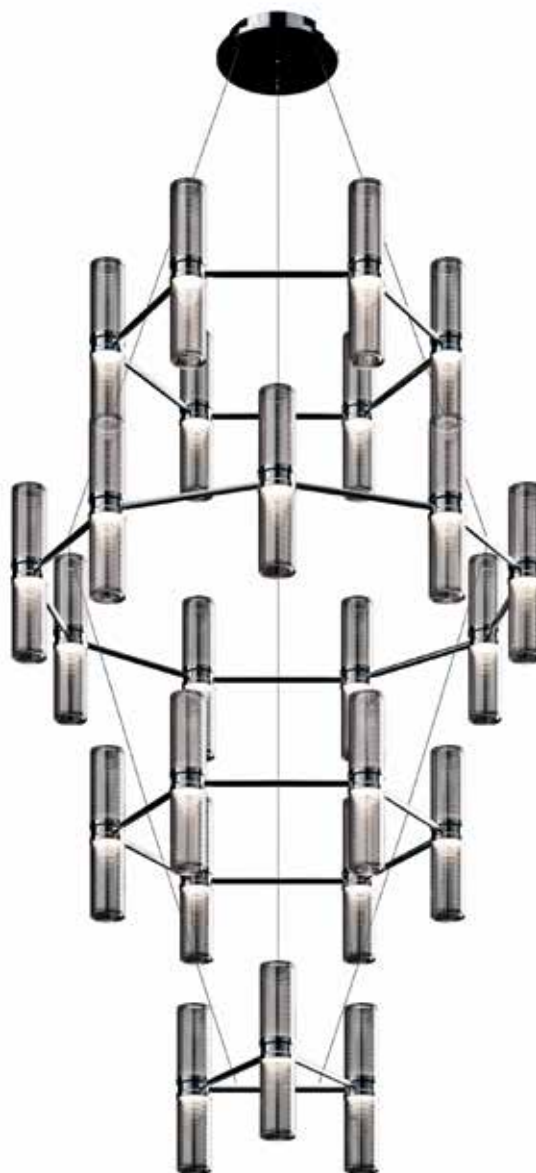


A Study in Contrasts

Designers are talking about creating inner – and outer – balance more than anything else these days, making the stark combination of relaxed whites and dramatic blacks a clear favourite, while graphic patterns add both an effortlessly chic and timelessly modern complement to the classic pairing. The proof came this past April at Milan's famous Salone del Mobile design fair, where global makers made an impressive case for integrating the sum of all colours – and its counterpart – into our homes.

By Katharina Hesedenz



Clockwise from left: Forty years since **Flexform** launched its now-iconic Max sofa, original designer Antonio Citterio has upped the ante with the Supermax, which offers more space, improved upholstery and a lower seat – not to mention an attention-commanding black-and-white backrest, flexform.it; **Artemide's** Zephyr presents a modular lighting system with many possibilities: users can decide for themselves how many of the cylindrically shaped double diffusers they want to mount on the connecting element, which can be stretched straight, curled into a circle or zigzagged, artemide.com; a passion for expressive shapes is evident in the work of designer Lara Bohinc, who conceived the Emmeline vase for cult Milan label **Driade**. A celebration of the female body, the intriguing vessel was inspired by Emmeline Pankhurst, the prominent suffragette, driade.com



Swiss maker **USM** has been known for its strictly monochrome pieces for the better part of 60 years, making its first experiment with a zigzag pattern eminently collectable. The trio of limited-edition black-and-white models – including the highboard, above – was created in collaboration with artist Claudia Comte, usm.com



The paradisiac world of Henri Matisse offers a wellspring of inspiration for the descendant-run **Maison Matisse**, which this year invited British talent Faye Toogood to reinterpret an original ink drawing from 1943. The result is the Tenture rug, made from hand-knotted Himalayan wool and imbued with hypnotic lines and strokes, maison-matisse.com

"Veo looks like a painting," says designer Sebastian Herkner of his room divider for **Zanat**. "The surface of the individual wooden elements is hand-carved using a traditional Bosnian technique called *Konjic* [named after the city where it originated]. This gives the piece an extra dimension." The fact that the striking screen can be extended by any number of segments probably does, too, zanat.org



In 1957, Eero Saarinen set out to clean up the "ugly, confusing and unrestful world" he observed under chairs and tables, making history with the goblet-shaped mono-leg Lounge table that maximised legroom. This year, **Knoll** adds a new height – 64 centimetres to the original 72 – to reflect modern sensibilities, knoll.com



The year's pieces see all manner of knots and braids in unexpected materials and shapes. This includes Shibari, Studiopepe's chair for **Visionaire**. Its arm- and backrests, comprising upholstered rolls and intertwined like oversized ropes, are certainly attention-grabbing, as is its name, which refers to the Japanese art of erotic bondage, visionaire-home.com



With its always surprising, often poetic concepts, Japanese design studio **Nendo** manages to fascinate year after year. Its glass Drift cabinet for **Glas Italia** was inspired by branches and leaves floating down a river; the water's surface is interpreted with an acid-treated matt finish, and flotsam by a black oak storage container, glasitalia.com



Living Divani's Ark takes the sculptural-armchair genre to the next level. "The idea was to create an armchair object, almost like a graphic sign," says its designer, David Lopez Quincoces. The chair's refined wooden surfaces and perfect balance of straight and curved lines add the finishing touches to a dazzling silhouette, livingdivani.it

Cloud, **Lasvit's** interactive chandelier, offers an innovative and playful approach to the light-and-dark trend. The featherlight optical-fibre installation meets the desire to look up into the sky to the stars, no matter where you are in the world. Creative director Maxim Velčovský also sees the piece as a symbol for energy and information storage, lasvit.com



What's special about **Dibbern's** Lumen table lamp is its coloured-glass shades, which can be combined with two fine bone china light cylinders, depending on the mood. Simple hand movements switch it on or off or dim. In the end, there is more room for experimentation than Tobias Grau's simple design might suggest, dibbern.de



Hermès never fails to live up to its reputation as the global paragon of timeless elegance and peerless craftsmanship, and the Canapé Hermès is a prime example. The fine black leather piping of the off-white sofa is sewn with such precision that Instagram aficionados have referred to it as "piping porn", hermes.com



PHOTOS COURTESY THE COMPANIES