



The Salone del Mobile.Milano puts the spotlight squarely on the future of the way we live with the great project Design with Nature by Mario Cucinella Architects

Design with Nature is informed by many different considerations: ethics, circularity, domestic space, participatory architecture and urban regeneration. It is a design and emotive exercise in pursuit of recycling and upcycling, entering into the debate on the importance of sustainable living.

How far has design come with regard to sustainability? Can we accelerate the ushering in of a new era in the way we live (in cities and at home)? What tools and concrete and up to date materials does design have to hand? These are just some of the questions to which the 60th edition of the Salone del Mobile.Milano aims to respond with the installation **Design with Nature**, curated by the architect **Mario Cucinella** and displayed in **S.Project's Pavilion 15**.

Conscious that the environmental challenge calls for a radical change of approach, new environmental education and an awareness that change is now possible, the Salone brought in **Mario Cucinella** to work together on the theme of **transforming the ways we inhabit the earth** and on the role of **architects** and **designers** as prefigurers of future spaces, in a bid to **(re)build** the difficult equilibrium between territory, city and landscape. Design with Nature therefore explores the themes of circular economy and reuse, starting with the idea that **cities** could be **possible "reserves" of the future**, where most of the raw materials used in construction could be sourced.

The installation channels three themes: **ecological transition**, the **home as the first urban building block** and the **city as a mine**, ranging over a large area that turns into both a landscape and a space for dialogue, a refuge for discussion, sharing, reading, and reflecting. **Two large tables**, 68x22m over 1,400 m², **narrate the materials for the ecological transition and the city** and represent **a space around which people can gather** because, after the events of the last couple of years, we've rediscovered the value of sociality, which needs to forge a new equilibrium with our surroundings (in terms of space and available resources).

This has informed the vision for **Design with Nature** as an **ecosystem**, as described by the founding architect and artistic director of **Mario Cucinella Architects**: *"A large space mindful of design and the environment, dedicated to the new sociality. An installation in which the word "ecosystem" is fundamental and with which we aim to show that our vision of the future needs to be ecosystemic and capable of bringing knowledge, skills and technologies together for a new generation of materials and design. The final and specific goal of "ecosystemic know how" – if we can call it that – will be to make life better through a rediscovered respect for nature."*



The display of natural and plant materials creates a sinuous, luxuriant “green” swathe, representing the importance of forging a new, fundamental and crucial friendship with nature.

Just as everything that makes up nature changes, has more than one function and more than one life, the same is true of the components of **Design with Nature, an assemblage of forms and functions** that will **find new lives and new destinations**: a small library for a school, a classroom, a chair for a public space, a table for a laboratory. The materials in this installation derive from **natural supply chains** – demonstrating that ecological transition is already ongoing and that businesses can be the catalysts of this change – or from waste products **upcycled and recycled**. Cities are rich fonts of the latter, veritable reserves of resources and materials recoverable through **circular processes**.

The project thus demonstrates how **vegetable and animal waste**, and waste generated **by human beings** – be it agricultural, industrial or urban – is already being **transformed into “something else,”** into new raw materials that give a second and third life to the material being generated. This means not just plastic bottles, waste from shoe making and furnishing processes, and sun awnings but the creation of new fabrics for the fashion and textile worlds; from coffee to floor coverings; from the skin and peel of fruit to leather; from mycelium to insulating panels – just to mention some of the new materials on show.

Design with Nature proves that we can come up with a different way of building and creating products in conjunction with nature, without continuing to consume raw materials but by triggering virtuous ecological behaviours.

A series of totems provides visitors with descriptions of the **natural, and not so natural**, materials, studied by MCA with the scientific support of Professor **Ingrid Paoletti of the Milan Polytechnic University**. Texts and graphics indicating **the origin, the transformation and processing stages, the use and the finished product**, narrate the new life of the material. The artwork by **Accurat** reprises the theme of sustainability, while the **video mapping** by **Zeranta** will present “the city as a mine” to the public.

For Mario Cucinella, sustainability is also a central factor in the education process, which is why there will be a presentation on **Sunday 12th June, in the SaloneSatellite Arena (Pav. 3)** of end-of-year projects by students at the SOS – School of Sustainability, the Masters set up by the architect in 2015. The event will be open to the public and in addition to Mario Cucinella, will also feature Aldo Colonnetti as scientific director and the students.

Design with Nature. For new materials. For a new habitat. For a better city.

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Press info:

Marva Griffin – Patrizia Malfatti

press@salonemilano.it