In Milan, Plush Reality

At the furniture fair, chairs made of industrial waste and deep-cushioned sofas that provide infantile comfort
By JULIE LASKY

OME of the most thought-provoking ideas at the International Furniture Fair in Milan, which ended on Sunday, issued not from the thousands of exhibition booths and off-site venues or even from the lips of the designers, pundits and producers who bring this stalwart city to life every April. They were written on the walls.

"Thank Stark," read one such message, scrawled in the neighborhood of Ventana Lambra, where for the third consecutive year emerging designers have shown work and staged Gephal battles with the masters. The words accompanied a drawing of Philippe Starck’s Juicy Salt lemon squeezer from 1980, an aluminum teardrop on spindle legs with a knob intended for mashing citrus — but the artist had substituted a toilet paper roll for the lemon.

Such an irreverent treatment of a classic object suggests that Mr. Stark may have lost his mojo in today’s design world, but he shows no sign of receding from the scene. On the contrary, his notoriously paradoxical nature defined this year’s fair, which was marked by the contradictory pursuit of social consciousness and unbridled luxury.

AT HOME WITH

Dawn Kasper

Please, Don’t Feed The Artist

Beyond the velvet rope, living sculpture.

By PENELIJE GREEN

N most days, you can hear Dawn Kasper’s installation at the Whitney Bien- nial before you see it. Bastia Smith or the Beatles or an episode of "The Young Ones," a British sitcom from the ’80s, might play. Scatting on one of her many, many devices, spilling out into an adjacent gallery and accompanied by a throaty guffaw from the artist, whom you might then come upon sitting cross-legged on a mattress, wearing a Hawaiian shirt, eating a sandwich and entertaining a few strangers.

In late February, Mrs. Kasper, a Los Angeles performance artist, moved herself and the entire contents of her apartment-stash studio into the Whitney, where it and she will remain for the duration of the show (it closes May 27), in a kind of living sculpture she calls the Nomadic Studio Practice.

Though she is only 35, she has albums on vinyl, as well as VHS tapes and cassettes; there they are, stuck on the floor. This is partly because she has a fondness for old-media equipment and partly because she can’t afford to upgrade. Indeed, Mrs. Kasper’s finances haven’t allowed for a real studio since 2001, a common scenario in the life of an artist and one that generated this piece, which recalls the more festive aspects of Relational Aesthetics as well as a party in the room of a particularly moody teen-ager (Mrs. Kasper has sublets the room she rents in a two-room apartment in Los Angeles to a friend),

While Mrs. Kasper spends her nights sleeping in a rented room in Greenpoint, Brooklyn — the museum won’t allow her to sleep over — she has spent almost every day

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Housewares, Furniture and More

Resin housewares and glassware items will be up to 80 percent off at Dinosaur Designs, April 27 to 30 (the Insects Beetle Jug, regularly $90, will be $29); 331 Elizabeth Street (Prince Street), (212) 689-9323, dinosaurdesigns.com.

Contemporary furniture and decorative accessories will be up to 70 percent off at Leftover Luxuries, April 27 to May 6 (a John-Richard loveseat from Zarin Fabrics, regularly $6,950, will be $3,700); 134 Orchard Street (Delancey Street), leftoverluxuries.com.

A selection of lighting fixtures will be up to 80 percent off at Pichi Modern, April 28 to 30 (the Stargazer pendant lamp, right, originally $845, will be $89); 5 Hanna Lane, Beacon, N.Y., (866) 289-7705, nichemodern.com.

Some pieces of the Hennessy living room collection will be 30 percent off at Bina, April 29 to May 6 (the wood bookcase in gray-brown, usually $390, will be $190); (888) 434-6562, bina.com.

Handloomed rugs and runners will be up to 75 percent off at the Woodard Weave warehouse sale, April 30 to May 3 (the Dorchester star runner, originally $1,385, will be $395); 37-24 24th Street, Long Island City, Queens; (323) 889-2966, woodardweave.com.

Good deals may be reported to deals@nytimes.com.

CURRENTS

Paris Designers Create 'Works'

Roman and Erwan Bouroullec, the Paris-based industrial designers, spent the last few years on their latest book, "Works," which will be published by Phaidon next month to coincide with the International Contemporary Furniture Fair in New York. It is the brothers' second monograph, but the last one was nine years ago. "And I think this is the most important part of our work has been done since," Ronan Bouroullec said.

Unlike their previous books, this one wasn’t written by the designers (they left that to Janima Knudson, whose text was supplemented with interviews with Rolf Fehlbaum, the chief executive of Vitra, which makes some of their designs, and others). Instead, they focused on 480 photographs and illustrations. "We chose every picture, and how to organize them," Ronan Bouroullec said. "It’s like writing a song, and it’s something that comes naturally for us."

The book can be ordered for about $100 at phaidon.com.

FURNITURE

While you can furnish an entire house with midcentury classics, that has not always been true for outdoor space. But Cassina, the Italian furniture manufacturer, has taken a step toward rectifying that situation with the introduction of pieces by Le Corbusier, Charlotte Perriand and Pierre Jeanneret, reworked for outdoor use.

"This happened by accident," said Gianluca Armento, the company’s director. "My boss told me he wanted to bring a Pavillon Grand Confort — Le Corbusier’s tubular steel-and-leather armchair — onto the terrace, and I told him it wasn’t fit for outdoors."

Now, after 18 months of research and development, it is, and so are the LC1 small armchair, the LC1 armchair and two-seater sofa, the LC1 small armchair, the LCS stool, the LC9-P series of tables and the Tokyo chaise lounge by Charlotte Perriand, left. All of the pieces are upholstered in Sunbrella fabric and INOX steel was used for the tubular frames. Prices range from $1,050 for an LC1 Swivel stool to $6,190 for the Tokyo chaise in teak.

Cassina, 155 East 96th Street (Lexington Avenue), (212) 245-3331; and 151 Wooster Street (Houston Street), (212) 228-4886; cassinausa.com.

MoMA’s Latest Destination Is Mexico

The Museum of Modern Art Design Store’s new destination collection, introduced Thursday, highlights products made in Mexico. For the next few months, or while stock lasts, the shop will offer more than 100 items by 60 Mexican or Mexico-based designers — from tableware and decorative accessories to furniture.

It’s the 10th in a seasonal series, and Kathy Thornton-Bias, president of the retail division of MoMA, said it was a natural fit. "MoMA has had a longstanding relationship with MoMA Design Store since the 1970s," she said.