

20.06.13

Disegno No.4 is out, buy it in the Disegno Boutique

Disegno. Daily

NEWS

OPINION

INTERVIEW

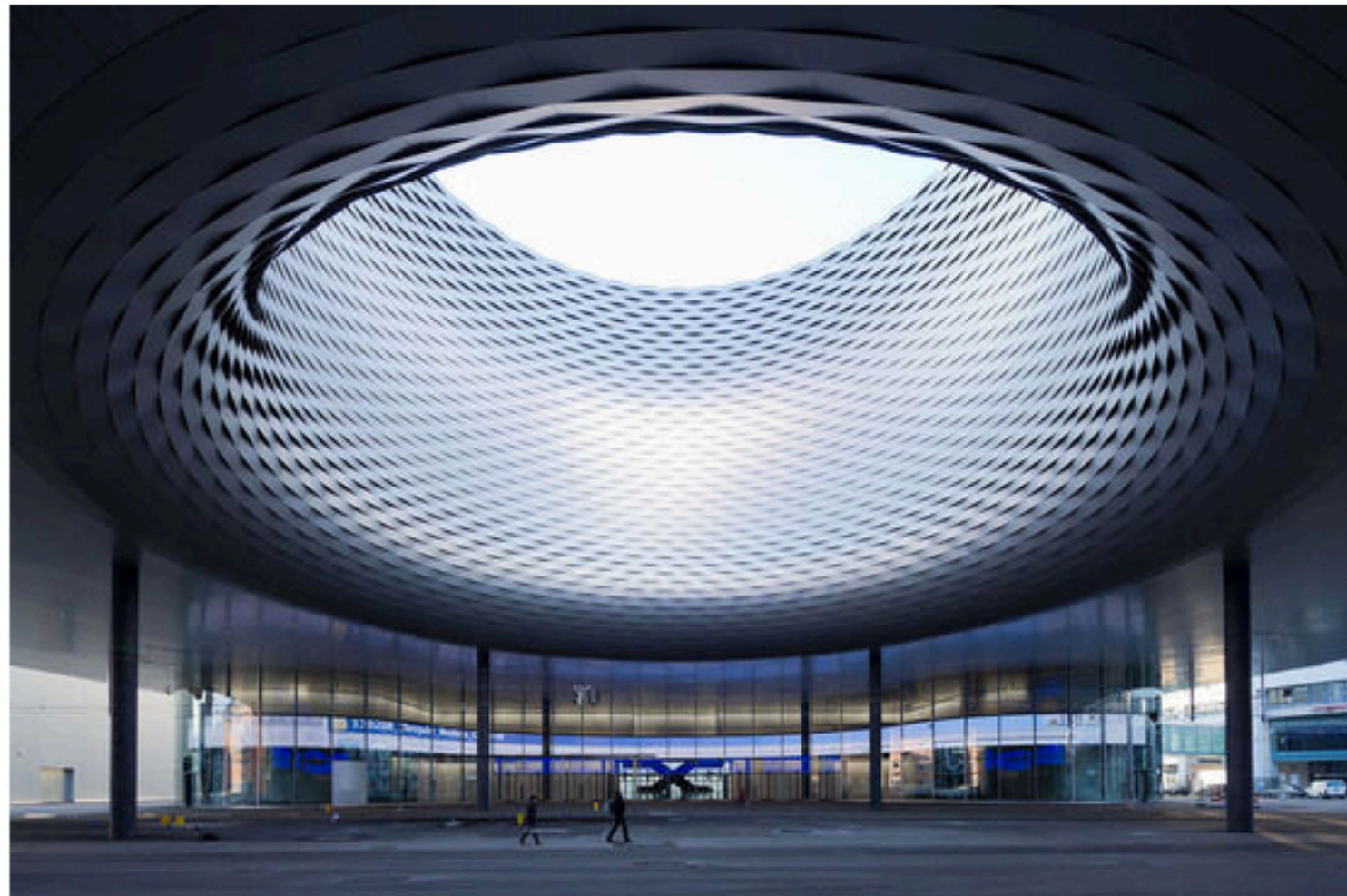
FEATURES

MAGAZINE

SALON

LESSON

Messe Basel, the new venue for Design Miami / Basel 2013, designed by Herzog & de Meuron



DESIGN MIAMI

[Click for gallery 1 of 6](#)

Design Miami / Basel 2013

Basel

10 June 2013

To learn more about what's new at Design Miami/ Basel this year, we spoke to its director Marianne Goebel.

RELATED STORIES

DESIGN MIAMI

Five themes from Design Miami Miami

05 December 2012

Goebel, who took over as the director of Design Miami/ Basel in 2011, provided us with a guide as to what to look out for when visiting the fair. Her selection for the key things to seek out include the fair's new venue - Messe Basel, designed by Herzog and de Meuron - the W Hotel Designers of the Future Award winners, and a new performance installation by Judith Seng.

How will the new exhibition venue impact Design Miami this year?

This year is the 8th edition of the fair and it's our 4th venue. Traditionally, Design Miami has always invested in architectural or cultural landmarks in Basel. It began in a church and then moved on to the markethalle, an old market hall which has the largest concrete dome in Europe. From there it went to a former industrial hall from the 1960s and now into this state-of-the-art exhibition hall designed by Herzog & de Meuron.

With this hall, what was really interesting for us was that it's a professional exhibition hall but at the same time it has a very strong industrial character. Inside the hall, there is a large interior funnel around a skylight, a strong, beautiful silo-like element clad in aluminium. It has a very strong architectural quality. We like to confront architecture with character rather than being in a completely neutral blank space.

The new building is right at the core of the Basel fairgrounds and we hope that we will have the pleasure of welcoming visitors who have never attended the fair before; attracting both a really general audience as well as the informed collectors. A really exciting aspect about this new venue is that we have an additional space which we did not have in the past. On the ground floor, we have an amazing event hall: a beautiful 2,000 square metre space with a sculptural escalator at the end. The fact that we have this hall allowed us to create a new exhibition format, which we call Design Commissions. Each year, for each fair, we can invite a new designer or architect to programme the space. This year we start with the German designer Judith Seng.

Can you speak a bit more about Judith Seng and her performance installation?

She is collaborating with dancers. It's really an experiment to see how she, as a designer, can collaborate with dancers, who come from a completely different perspective, to set up a production process. What we will have in that hall is an eight hours per day performance for seven days, which is like a full production cycle. We will have people who will prepare the material; a kind of wax which will be melted on stage. The material will rest and then the dancers will start to interact with the material to create objects. There's actually several cycles happening in parallel so every time you walk by, you will see a different step of the process.

It's really interesting because it's a complete abstraction of the design process. It's really about the dialogue with the dancer and two very different languages - her language as a designer and the language of the dancer. She told me the other day that it was really fascinating when one of the dancers told her that the material has changed their breathing. For the dancers, when they interact with the material, it's quite a challenge because normally a dancer interacts with a prop. A dancer does not usually shape a material.

What about the W Hotel Designers of the Future Awards as a platform for young designers?

This award is something that I'm personally very proud of as something I've inherited. Each year, three young designers or studios are selected and are given the opportunity to develop a commission for a specific piece that will then be shown to the audience at Design Miami. Additionally, in the long run, they can eventually work with W Hotel on a permanent installation in one of their hotels.

This year we have brought it to the next level by sending the designers on a mini-residency. We have three winners - Seung-Yong Song from Korea, Bethan Laura Wood from the UK and Jon Stam from Canada and the Netherlands - each of whom we sent to different destinations. Bethan went to Mexico City, Jon went to Verbier in the Swiss Alps and Seung-Yong went to Bangkok, to get inspired by the cities, look at local craftsmanship, traditions and culture. They also looked at the W Hotel in each place to see if there was a space they would like to intervene in.

Now, back from their residency, they have each created a piece which responds to our brief this year which was 'Making Connections.' We asked them to create or design a piece or an installation that connects international visitors with local communities. They really created something that allows both sides to interact.

The residencies are new this year and we were really happy with how well it worked since it was an experiment. To give you an example, Bethan developed something where she met a local manufacturer and a European manufacturer. She is doing something where she brings together these two experts who both bring different skills to the table. It's really a transatlantic collaboration. Jon, for his project, decided to work with a local photographer from Verbier whom he met while he went there. They have already made connections just by going there and the pieces very strongly reflect that.

This award can really become a launchpad for them to interact with the receptive audience that we have at Design Miami, which ranges from critics to museum representatives and enthusiasts of all kinds but then there's also the option that we can have a real commission in the second step with the W Hotel. It's the fourth year that the award is extended in collaboration with W who are curious to meet young talent to work with. They have really been an amazing partner and it has been a really positive experience for all parties involved.

What other new highlights should we look out for when visiting the fair?

We will have quite a lot of new work at the fair this year. For example, Libby Sellers, the gallery from London, will present a whole new series of work by [Anton Alvarez](#) with his [thread wrapping technique](#). Then we have a first time participant from South Africa called Southern Guild. They show work that is very strongly informed by the cultural context. There is, for example, a series of chairs designed by Gregor Jenkin, which he developed in collaboration with the fine artist William Kendridge. The gallery will show work by 16 different South African designers who each have very different styles. It's very eclectic.

We have a couple of contemporary galleries who will bring new work. Galerie BSL is working on a new piece with Nacho Carbonell - an oversized clock as a sculptural object. We have a first time participant from France, a new gallery called Ymer & Malta who will show work by Normal Studio and Benjamin Graindorge.

Also, as someone who was mentioned in the [Design & Jewellery](#) article in [Disegno No.4](#), Caroline van Hoek will bring a lot of new work. She is working with two designers: Nicolas Cheng and Beatrice Brovia. They developed a really interesting series of door handles and knobs - beautiful materials and also jewellery of all kinds, in the sense of wearable sculptures.

In summary, is there one thing in particular that you would like to mention that is different about the fair this year?

For us, it is a really important step to move into this new hall because it gives us the opportunity to grow both in terms of content and in terms of size. This is really a first step for the development in the next few years and we are very excited.

INTERVIEW Manijeh Verghese

Design Miami / Basel 2013 is from 11-16 June in Basel, Switzerland