

MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME

Within the cavernous tent of Design Miami, the cohesive and inviting *Welcome!* installation by Chiara Andreatti celebrates Fendi's 10th year at the design marketplace, and demonstrates its enduring dedication to evolution and creativity, ZARA ZHUANG writes



FROM TOP: SILVIA VENTURINI FENDI AND CHIARA ANDREATTI, FENDI'S *WELCOME!* INSTALLATION AT DESIGN MIAMI

OPPOSITE PAGE: THE SOFA FROM THE *WELCOME!* COLLECTION, COVERED IN PEQUIN VELVET

TOURING THE EXPANSIVE Design Miami tent and presentations by more than 30 international galleries takes one on a journey through the wondrous and at times phantasmagorical possibilities of what a home could be.

It might be light and airy (Chicago modern furnishing dealer Converso brought in whitewashed plywood furniture by Swiss architect Albert Frey); riotous and frenetic (New York's Cristina Grajales Gallery showed bamboo and rock-climbing cord furniture by Doug and Mike Starn), or clean and angular (Galerie Vivid from Rotterdam presented Gerrit Thomas Rietveld's planar, sculptural Berlin Chair). Throw in a digital installation by Luftwerk for Perrier-Jouët, a deconstruction of Audi's new A8, and Airbnb's showcase of history shared between objects and a home's inhabitants, and the experience is overwhelming in the best sense of the word.

The exhibitors of the December fair typify Design Miami's curatorial acumen for bringing together multifaceted perspectives with a mix of materials to represent various design styles, time periods and geographical regions from the world's top galleries, according to its Chief Creative Officer Rodman Primack. A 20-percent annual growth in number of applications received proves its formula holds strong appeal and renown in the industry.

Having concluded its 13th edition, Design Miami has come a long way since it was conceptualised. "It was an idea that didn't exist — there wasn't a show that featured both contemporary and modern design," says Craig Robins, CEO and president of the real estate firm Dacra, which developed the Miami Design District. "[The fair] and the whole design business was much smaller, because there weren't as many collectors. Now there are shows that are imitations of Design Miami all over the world, and that's a flattering sign of success."

An early ally was Roman luxury powerhouse Fendi, which has taken part since 2008, when it presented *Design Talks*, featuring luminaries from Tom Dixon to the Campana brothers. The move was a bold leap into the unknown — Fendi was the first fashion brand to join Design Miami. The southern Florida port city attracted only vacationers and retirees, says Silvia Venturini Fendi, creative director for accessories and menswear at the company her grandparents founded in 1925. "We didn't know at all what was going to happen, but we just felt something was happening and we wanted to be part of it," she says. "Today it's incredible, you take a walk in the Design District and the [Wynwood] Art District, you really feel that the energy in the city has been transformed."

With 2017 marking Fendi's 10th year at Design Miami, the milestone project was entrusted to Chiara Andreatti. The Milan-based designer has created pieces for Bottega Nove, Mingardo, Non Sans Raison and more. Her choice reflects



Silvia's affinity with designers who "are able to show the human touch." Andreatti's appointment continues Fendi's recent move to offer young female Italian designers an opportunity to express their ideas on a global stage, initiated when architect Cristina Celestino was tapped to design the candy-coloured retro-inspired VIP lounge, *The Happy Room*, for its ninth presentation at Design Miami.

What Andreatti rolled out for Fendi was *Welcome!*, a refined space that exuded calm and restorative energy with its natural palette and rich textures, into which were woven signature design motifs of the House ("It's like entering a Fendi living room," Silvia says). Andreatti strived to recreate a stylish abode that put visitors and inhabitants at ease. "You open the door to your house and you say, 'Welcome!' — it's comfortable," she explains.

Contacted last January to helm Fendi's Design Miami booth

FROM TOP, FENDI'S 1971 ASTUCCIO FUR COAT; THE *WELCOME!* ROCKING CHAIR IN BURNISHED IRON FEATURES UPHOLSTERY IN OCHRE CUIO ROMANO LEATHER; FROM THE SAME COLLECTION, A TABLE MADE OF BAMBOO AND BRASS, AND A CARPET IN HIMALAYAN NATURAL WOOL EMBROIDERED WITH PUNTO SELLERIA THREADS



and the furniture and decorative pieces within. Andreotti was given free rein to bring her ideas to life. Together with curator Maria Cristina Didero, she decided on a warm, feminine space, welding industrial production and craftsmanship in the process, to highlight Fendi's rich historical language. Inspired by her travels to regions such as Yunnan and Szechuan (China) and Takayama (Japan) — she favours engaging with communities that maintain their personal values and traditions, she says — Andreotti built on her fondness for artisanal craft and organic materials to create one of the first *Welcome!* pieces. Her mammoth coffee table is topped with bamboo and arranged to mirror the asymmetrical pelt pattern of Fendi's Astuccio fur coat from 1971.

More accustomed to creating individual articles as part of her product design practice, Andreotti took on the challenge of building an entire collection, blending her language and personal vision with the luxury stalwart's DNA. A voluminous asymmetrical couch was upholstered in black and brown

velvet stripes reminiscent of Fendi's Pequin pattern. A vertical luminaire and parchment pendant lamps featured its Lace Up weave along the edges. Rocking chair cushions came in cuio romano leather in Fendi's shade of ochre. On top of paying tribute to house codes, Andreotti also referenced artist Koloman Moser and architect Josef Hoffmann, as well as the Bauhaus movement she so esteemed.

Developed in Veneto's Nove district, famed for its ceramics, and in Brianza, the hub of furniture manufacturing in Italy, Andreotti's pieces for *Welcome!* reflected her quest to showcase local craftsmanship. "The collaboration with the artisans, and the human connection between them and me, was vital for developing all these pieces," she says.

"The brand represents family and good Italian style, so [Andreotti] was very interested in good living," Silvia adds. "She chose these materials to create something that was close to Italy and also Miami — the wood, greens and natural tones are a homage to the tropical city."

Fendi's foray into furniture was not a frivolous flirtation with form. Since 1989, when it became the first Italian brand to initiate a line for the home with Fendi Casa, it's endeavoured to stay true to quality and creative design in both furnishings and fashion. "A blend of aesthetics and functionality, [which are] two important issues when you create a chair, a table or a handbag," shares Silvia of the company's ideology.

Such as when she worked on the diminutive Baguette pochette (proclaimed It bag after Sarah Jessica Parker tucked it under her arm in *Sex and the City*). It needed to be minimal in size but still pliable to hold a lady's essentials, hence she had to spend time to select leather of an appropriate weight.

"This is something nobody can perceive when buying [a handbag], but it takes long trials before achieving the right leather thickness," the designer says. "With design or fashion, you need strong aesthetics, but you have to work with technicians to achieve the result that respects the function — it's a [balance] of the rational and irrational."

This commitment to balance ensures that Fendi's presentations at Design Miami have remained wildly varied yet distinctly, coherently and creatively Fendi. "I think this is a project we can share a vision and not just be a sponsor," Silvia says. "We like to do projects we can be involved in, and give advice and help."

Synergy between the soul of a house and the artistic fire Design Miami collaborators bring to the table has birthed cohesive alliances that stand out for unmistakable wit and ingenuity every year.

As Design Miami's Primack reiterates, "The most successful collaborations we've done happen when brands have a community and a real identity. They're not looking for Design Miami to create their identity — they have one and we're excited about it." ■

HIGHLIGHTS OF FENDI'S 10 YEARS AT DESIGN MIAMI

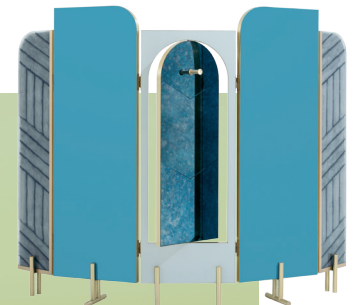
2009 Stereo Craft

Fendi collaborated with German engineer and designer Moritz Waldemeyer to create customised Gibson guitars, decorated with lasers and its leather and fur, for a live performance by rock band OK Go.



2011 Craft Alchemy

The performance project saw designer Elisa Strozzyk and artist Sebastian Neeb rework pieces of 18th-century furniture using Fendi's leathers, which they embossed, sewed as well as braided on-site.



2016 The Happy Room

Cristiana Celestino's collection drew on Italian design of the 1950s and channelled cheerful vibes with its cheeky details, such as butterfly backs of ear studs that were enlarged to become bases for low tables. Celestino also experimented with resin-treated fur for a tactile addition to a five-shutter screen.



2014 Roman Lounge

In a contemporary Fendi apartment, bespoke furniture by Dimore Studio — designers Emiliano Salci and Britt Moran — featured upholstery with the brand's leather and furs.

