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Paris Design Week 2020

Recap of the design event that thrilled Paris for 10 days with a backdrop of sustainability and commitment of the industry.

Some may have doubted how September 2020 would lead the way to recovery, but Paris Design Week concludes with an empowering assessment. From September 3 to 12, the 10th edition of Paris Design Week took place in a festive atmosphere. The whole industry of design, home décor and lifestyle was definitely committed to make it a momentum. With more than 200 locations, that encompassed brand showrooms, galleries bringing together emerging talents and international designers, and public landmarks hosting ephemeral installations and exhibitions, this session, which had set itself with the ambitious goal of supporting the revival of the capital, seems to have fulfilled its mission. This fall, at the heels of Paris Design Week and with the addition of The Digital Fair*, which was hosted online from September 4 to 18 and led by the same Maison&Objet teams, design professionals will not be short of any inspiration!

A Unifying Event

Thanks to the support and mobilization of institutions such as the Ateliers de Paris and various public institutions such as the City of Paris, the Mobilier National, the Eiffel Tower, the National Archives, the French Institute as well as participating design schools such as the Saint-Etienne Design Biennial, the Institut Français du Design and many others, Paris Design Week shone this year more than ever. Through the prism of design, the City of Lights has remained faithful to its image as a bubbling and creative city and reasserted its position among the great design capitals.

For ten days, Paris Design Week was an opportunity to see, meet and exchange ideas with all the key industry players. By bringing together major brands such as Roche Bobois, Cassina and Vitra, along with the interior designers and decorators who opened their galleries, these ambassadors of French taste around the world like India Mahdavi, Charles Zana, Tristan Auer invited by Architectural Digest France, or the young talents who shared their explorations to make our houses more sustainable, Paris Design Week embraced a large qualified and curious audience.

A global reach despite a challenging context

Bringing international visitors or exhibitors in Paris was one of the great challenges of this session. Nevertheless, Paris Design Week succeeded in showing several international proposals. In the framework of Paris Design Week Factory, this included, amongst others, the first selection of the Maison&Objet Design Award China, a creative competition organized with the Chinese group ChaoSang which aims to promote Chinese designers internationally, the Collectible Fair (Belgium), the D17/20 workshop which brought together French designers and craftsmen from South East Asia, Golden Edition and Art of Connection, both serving as representatives of South Africa, and the creations of Italian designer Cristina Celestino for Maison Matisse, the Lebanese duo David & Nicolas for Pierre Frey, and the Costa del Sol project at the Spanish Embassy.

*see dedicated press release

This diversity in the programming allowed a wide outreach for this very special edition. More than 80 French journalists and influencers were welcomed during the first two days of the event and the international media - Italy, Germany, India, the United States, Spain, Israel, Poland, Bulgaria, Russia, Greece, Japan, Vietnam, etc. – largely reviewed the event, which was finally quite atypical in the COVID-19 context for its dimension. Usually organized as a sister event to the Maison&Objet trade show, which this year could not be held in a physical format and instead offered its first Digital Fair, it was consequently Paris Design Week's challenge to make the spirit of Maison&Objet vibrate in its 2020 edition.

Through an intense program of conferences - some of which were held live and broadcast online, and others that were completely digital – Paris Design Week proposed themes that resonated with current trends and contexts, such as sustainability commitment that breathed new life into the design, decoration and art of living sector, enabling international professionals to benefit from inspiring content to feed their activities and strategic orientations through the end of the year.

An event acclaimed by Parisian visitors

An estimated 100,000 visitors flowed throughout the event, including more than 15,000 design enthusiasts for the exclusive spaces of Paris Design Week Factory and its three locations in the Marais. These locations highlighted a glimpse of young French designers and recent graduates from French design schools, some of whom have already been spotted by prestigious awards such as the Grands Prix de la Ville de Paris, the Rising Talents Awards of Maison&Objet and the RADO Star Prize. Visitors were able to discover one of the strong themes of this edition, now present more than ever: sustainable creations and conscious design. Research on transformed and recyclable organic materials, virtuous industrial processes, and set design created in a green perspective included allowed the participants to show their ingenuity. A convergence of creative visions was observed, gradually leading design and its end-user towards a house that is definitively evolving towards a lighter ecological footprint.

On social networks, we noted a great success of some installations and unexpected discoveries: Pierre Gonalons at the Hôtel de Soubise, whose private apartments are usually closed to the public, the archives of the Féau&Cie woodworks, open for visits this once as a one-off for the event, and the famous Bishop stool by India Mahdavi dressed by Emaux de Longwy. The growing interest in the inspiring alliance between design and great craftsmanship can be seen here as a new aspect of a typically French culture. The Mobilier National exhibition at the Eiffel Tower, which featured a retrospective of designer metal furniture, also welcomed the exceptional visit of Brigitte Macron.

This year, Paris Design Week succeeded in achieving a balanced synthesis between business and culture, a dynamic that is so characteristic of the design industry, by bringing together professionals and the general public in a enjoyable atmosphere.