

DESIGN IS HUMAN

isola

Milan Design Week 2025

7 — 13 April, Isola Design District

**Design is Human: Isola Design Festival
2025 reshapes the role of humanity-
driven design**

The 9th edition of Isola Design Festival www.isola.design/milan-design-week-2025 organized by the digital and physical design platform Isola, **will welcome visitors during Milan Design Week, from 7 to 13 April 2025.**

Isola organizes two Press Tours to visit the main exhibitions: Press Tour 1 on Monday 7 April at 14:30 and Press Tour 2 on Tuesday 8 April at 10:30. To participate RSVP: press@mintlist.info.

Over the years, and more recently with the launch of its Dubai outpost, Isola has evolved into a global platform by staying true to its origins while embracing fresh perspectives in contemporary design. The 2025 edition pays tribute to these roots with the theme **Design is Human, a powerful reflection on the role of people in the design process.** Design should start at a human scale, ultimately enhancing the well-being of both people and the planet. Design is Human highlights the fusion of traditional mastery and digital innovation, reaffirming that **human creativity remains at the core of meaningful design.**

Bringing together international designers, studios, creators, and manufacturers, Isola Design Festival 2025 champions a humanity-driven approach to design, exploring **themes like social impact, environmental responsibility, functional design, locally sourced materials, and the fusion of digital and artisanal crafts - shaping a new, people-centered design movement.**

*“Design is Human” calls for a deep reflection on the relationship between people and design, to consider how design choices shape our lives, communities, and the environment. **True design has to begin with a focus on the human experience** and every decision and innovation should be guided by empathy, understanding, and respect for the diverse needs of all people. Nowadays, designers are asked to do more than simply creating visually appealing or efficient products. They must **approach each project with a sense of responsibility**, recognizing the broader impact their work has on society and the planet. This means balancing creativity and innovation with a deep commitment to sustainable practices, ensuring that every design solution contributes positively to the environment and future generations.”*

— affirms Gabriele Cavallaro, co-founder and CEO of Isola Design Group.

At BasicVillage

As the district has expanded and evolved in recent years, alongside the heart of the neighborhood, **a new venue, BasicVillage** (*Via dell'Aprica 12, Milan*) has been added to the circuit, infusing the area with fresh creative energy. Originally built as a rubber factory, this early 20th-century complex is located in the Eastern industrial heart of Isola, near the former Farini railway depot.

Within its various spaces, Isola will cultivate an atmosphere of creativity and exchange. **BasicVillage will be the centerpiece of the festival** with three carefully curated collective exhibitions. Isola Studio's team (consultancy lab of Isola Design Group) led by creative director Elif Resitoglu presents **Conscious Objects, Isola Design Gallery, and Openspace**, each highlighting innovative approaches to contemporary design

Conscious Objects is an exhibition that engages visitors through multiple senses—hearing, playing, touching, tasting, and interacting—sometimes even becoming part of the experience. **Imagine a chair that works only when sitting together, objects that adapt to the user's needs, or a table game with playing cards to taste.** Showcasing visionary designers and innovators, the exhibition merges sustainability, functionality, and playfulness with digital, robotic, and human craftsmanship. Designed with a human-centric approach, each piece balances flexibility, experience, and technology while addressing environmental impact through innovative materials and ethical production. Visitors can also explore the creative and technical processes through screens displaying product insights, production footage, and interactive elements. Part of the exhibition set up will be realised with glass bricks by **Carro srl**.

Participating designers and design studios include: Abalon | Ana Bridgewater, Alessandra Galli, Anouk Verstuyft, Archeomaterico / Davide Balda, Atelier Makr, Biomaterials Library, Davina Atallah, Eva Korae, Feral, Ilaria Critelli, Isaac Regier, Ksusha Fedya, Lee Szmelcman, Lu Grompone, Lynn Gong, Martina Gentile, Matthew Berkshire, Michela Puglia, MONOLIT, Natalia-Anastazia Bakula, Nima Biodesign, NOI Creative, Nowo By Oliwia Ledzinska, Patch Design, Sangosanya Annahololade, Shaghayegh Ranjbar, Siyu Liu, Sølvbergbols, Studio Dina Lebbar, Studio Eggi, Studio Tuut, Sungjun Yu, Yarden Shahar, Yile Zhang & Xinchun Wang, Yosuke Shimano, Yu Xinnan, Yuya Zhou, Zhichen Qian.

The 6th edition of **Isola Design Gallery** celebrates **unique and handcrafted products, collectible design that tells a story**, customizable pieces that grant an experience. Isola will transform the space into an immersive showcase of diverse lifestyles, bringing together designers from different backgrounds. The exhibition will feature **a variety of setups, from futuristic living concepts to contemporary interiors**, where each collectible piece interacts thoughtfully with the others. This dynamic display will highlight how diverse interiors can be designed to reflect different ways of living. Part of the exhibition setup features terracotta materials provided by **Solava**, a Tuscan manufacturer known for its high-quality craftsmanship in terracotta production.

Participating designers and design studios include: 4 AM Product Design, Aleksandar Osei Lartey, Alessandro Pagura, Alicoban, Alissa Saito, Apuana Mosaici S.r.l., Arkitetoria, Atelier Marée, Atelier Tas, Athime de Crecy, Baker Glassworks, Basia Pruszyńska, BioLogicDesign / Chih-Chieh Huang, Bluba Studio, Burkhard Schittny, C'est Un Cest, Con.creta, D'ark Atelier, Derangedesign, Dorit Provizor, Dublo Studio, Francois Kessler, G & L Studio, Hyunju Roh, Irsystem Co., Ltd., Isen Wu, Jake Heyer, Jan Willem Van Elten, Jingnyu Wang, Jiyoun Woo, Karin Borovcova, Kiady Rotovoson, Kiti Kurarova, Living Cult, LOBO Atelier, Lucas Cambier, Lucia Kruzlicova, Ma_st_ar, Madelon Uljee, Magdalena Jenik, Maison Cedrat, Marco De Gregorio Architect, Mugen By Sana Alam, Nermin Habib, Ng Design, Nicholas Alexander, Nicol Belci & Neža Kravos, Orfeo Studio, Pelin Alkan Studio, PFEIFFER STUDIO, Phèdre Barbas, Philipp Aduatz, Pulpas Studio, Riolab Ceramics, Ronja Reigstad, Rory Noble-Turner, Salak, Sara Codarin, Shinjae Kim, Spazio Project, SPHAER, Šimon Valovic, Studio Francesca Müller, Studio Jonathan Radetz, Studio Kája, Studio Kallang, Studio Maria Yared, Studio Shoo, Taftique, Tom Schoonhoven Studio, Tenam Ft Cuemái, Valentine Chauvet, Victoria Dabdoub, Vitalli, Wisse Trooster, Xiangzhi Zhao, Yingjun Ren, Zeoform, Zihui Design Studio, Zihua Wang, Zuzana Zmatekova.

Openspace is a dynamic hub for **bespoke companies, brands, and startups across industries such as circular design, material research, and manufacturing with a focus on craft, in-house production, and digital hybridation.** Exhibitors present cutting-edge products and services, each reflecting a unique, forward-thinking approach. The space also serves as a platform for visitors, design enthusiasts, and participating talents to connect with industry leaders, explore potential collaborations, and gain valuable insights into new materials and processes that can shape their design journey. A talk and workshop area is part of the show with designer seating by **HeFlies srl**.

Participating designers and design studios include: Forge Mobili - Inci Mutlu Milano, Lux Temporis, Mosh x CabinetOseo, Murals Wallcoverings, Rehemptation By Husarska, Studio Shablool, Thayra Correia, Youssef El Hadi Studios.

Within BasicVillage's exhibitions, Isola will introduce a unique olfactory identity with three exclusive fragrances by **Narici**, an Italian perfume startup by Alessandro Commisso. Each scent, crafted with Italian farms and distilleries, revolves around a rare natural ingredient.

Adding to the richness of the event, returning and new partners will come together at the BasicVillage, combining their diverse expertise:

The second edition of **ENHANCE** curated by Juan Torres for **DesignWanted** presents design as a catalyst for change and aligns with the seven Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) identified by World Design Organization members as particularly relevant to the industrial design community. The exhibition challenges the conventional boundaries of design, offering an experience that highlights design's potential to reshape society. The showcase invites visitors into a curated exploration of projects that transform deep research into tangible, meaningful solutions.

Participants are: Bundle studio, COMPOSITES, Debonademeo x CHROMA, Emeline, Joshua Klappe, Monostudio Associati, Ong, Shellf Life, Wah, Wilfried Becret, Zeoform.

Following the Dubai ceremony in November 2024, **Isola Design Awards Winners' Showcase** brings to Milan its 10 outstanding 2024 winners. Isola is also gearing up to launch the open call for the 5th edition with an official kickoff event during Isola Design Festival. The digital contest continues to inspire and encourage designers to push the boundaries of their craft. 10 are the categories: Furniture, Seating, Lighting, Tableware, Textile, Product, Material, Sustainability, Outdoor, and Innovation.

Participants are: Alonso Hernández, Deft Studios, House Of Piranesi, Jehnna Yang, Luca Maibach, Manuela Bucci / Missbucci, Moritz Scheffer / Luis Somasundaram, Nella Figueroa, Parali By Aarushi, Rosana Sousa.

IAAD., Accademia Italiana, and SAE Institute present *Bravery Bar*, an in-depth cultural and educational event designed through a joint project by 21 design schools. This new chapter **BE AWARE** is an initiative in inclusive design that pushes the boundaries of creativity. Sponsored by the Italian Paralympic Committee and curated by Danilo Ragona, the event features workshops set against the backdrop of the *Truly Design* exhibition, bringing together emerging designers and companies to develop innovative solutions in design and sports.

Within its showroom inside BasicVillage, **Very Simple: Kitchen** presents the collaboration with Studio Proba: an unprecedented reinterpretation of the iconic modular steel kitchens signed by designer and artist Alex Proba. An explosion of creativity and a symphony of colours come together to create sculptural elements that complement and envelop the brand's distinctive lines.

In the courtyard of BasicVillage, **SuperForma's** additive manufacturing customizes the bar counter with 3D-printed elements made from recycled PLA. Collected since 2020 through a network of partners, the material will be reclaimed at the end of the event and reintegrated into the production cycle. This modular installation showcases how design can truly achieve zero impact. Moreover **Studio X** collaborates with **Isola Radio** for the design of the DJ booth, a custom, handmade and colorful resin sculptural piece. The BasicVillage courtyard will be the setting for events, parties and Isola's community point of reference during Milan Design Week.

The District venues on foot

Showcasing how **design is deeply rooted in human stories, heritage, and hands-on creativity**, Isola Design Festival will transform the entire Isola neighborhood during Milan Design Week 2025 into the epicenter of exhibitions, installations, lively events, workshops, live demonstrations, and design talks. **The focus shifts back to the humans, including those of the neighborhood** whose identity and craftsmanship not only shaped the festival's early editions but also keeps the district's creative spirit alive throughout the year.

Starting from Via Farini, **Isola Studio** presents **Rasa — The Indian Collective** at **VIAFARINI** (Via Carlo Farini 35), curated by Nidhi Chandak and Varun E S, part of Isola Studio's team based in India. The exhibition celebrates India's rich craftsmanship, reinterpreted through the lens of contemporary design. Rasa (रस), a Sanskrit word, refers to the emotional experience evoked by creative expression. True to its name, the exhibition is an invitation to discover how design goes beyond mere aesthetics, becoming an emotional journey through artisans' narratives, cultural continuity, and innovation. **Featuring hand-blown glass, marble, textiles, terrazzo made from construction waste, sandstone, woven bamboo, and woodwork, the exhibition presents pieces by more than 15 Indian designers** and design studios that bridge tradition and modernity, celebrating the artistry and skill of Indian makers. Nouz3D, a large-format 3D printing company from India, manufactured the plinths and pedestals. In VIAFARINI's courtyard, **Arjun Rathi Design** presents *The Wishing Tree*; the installation, inspired by the sacred trees found in Indian temple complexes, invites viewers to experience a sacred space of contemplation, connecting tradition and modernity through glass.

Participating designers and design studios include: A&f Design, Andblack Design Studio, Antara Decor, Arjun Rathi Design, Beyond Dreams, Dhaaga.designs, Hsc Designs, Intent Made, Kaarbhaar, Motionworks, Nimrat Narang, Oom Furniture & Living, Orikrit, Ozar Objects, Pramāna Design, Pravi, Rural Modern Glass Studio, Sutary, Studio Cumulus, Umeni, Vkr Studio.

Strolling through Isola's neighborhood, from Via Luigi Porro Lambertenghi to Via Confalonieri and Via Cola Montano, visitors will encounter guest exhibitions and interactive venues throughout its main streets:

Blurry Memories by Oculta Studio and Roman Vases by Federico Fiermonte at Bota Fogo (*Via Carlo Farini 36*). Oculta Studio explores fragility and transformation, revealing that even the most solid can crumble. Inspired by historical vases preserved behind glass in museums, this project challenges their static existence by reimagining them as dynamic vessels. Federico Fiermonte reinterprets the decorative elements of ancient Roman art in a contemporary style. Mosaic patterns and geometric motifs inspired by monuments are integrated adorning the center of their body. The space that serves as Bota Fogo's showroom year-round, during the Design Week will host wheel-throwing lessons and interactive workshops.

CONNECTED BY DESIGN, INSPIRED BY BEAUTY — La Vie En Gloss at BAM - Biblioteca degli Alberi (*Via Gaetano de Castilla 28*). Kérastase, with Gloss Absolu, presents an iconic installation that combines beauty, innovation, and sustainability. A contemporary greenhouse will serve as the backdrop for events, talks, and performances. Created by the agency LiveZone, the installation *La Vie en Gloss* will come to life through augmented reality: a digital filter will transform the floral setting into an immersive experience of lights and colors, blending the physical and virtual worlds.

Cross pollination by Pforzheim University: BA and MA Jewellery, MA Design & Future Making (*via Cola Montano 1*). An exhibition exploring diversity as a catalyst for evolution in nature. It examines the interplay of memories and materiality, cultures and form, glass and other materials, as well as the fusion of technologies. A dialogue between past and future, tradition and innovation, shaping a new perspective on design and transformation.

Design Thinking in the Ethereum Age at Stecca 3.0 (*Via Gaetano de Castilla 26*). An immersive exhibition by Appcon exploring design, self-discovery, and blockchain technology within the Ethereum ecosystem. Visitors can reflect on their role as creators and their connection to the community while uncovering Ethereum's potential for designers. Structured as a guided journey, each stage reveals new layers of artistic and technological interaction.

Deus Ex Machina: an ode to MDF by Arno Hoogland (*via Luigi Porro Lambertenghi 3*). MDF is often dismissed as one of the least sustainable and least attractive materials in interior design. Arno discovered a unique software that allows his CNC milling machine to "dance" with the material, creating unpredictable, organic forms through an interactive dialogue between designer and machine. Moreover the immersive installation *Temple of the Future*, built on-site from CNC-milled components, blurs the boundaries between craftsmanship, technology, and speculative design.

Fibre Fever! by Jack Brandsma and Rollo Stars by Lambert Kamps at WAO Isola (*Via Luigi Porro Lambertenghi 7*). Jack Brandsma explores material innovation by replacing conventional materials in existing designs with biobased alternatives. Using natural fibers like hemp and miscanthus, combined with potato starch as a binder or an additive to new bioplastics, the project pushes sustainable design forward. Lambert Kamps presents *Rollo*,

a dynamic light installation, and *Fat Furniture*, a series of interior objects inspired by rising obesity in Western consumer society. Rollo changes in size, volume, and light intensity as it rolls in or out.

NEW NORMAL 5 — Japanese Maison at Zetalab (*Via Cola Montano 2*). NEW NORMAL is a Japanese design project focused on “*Designs for the new normal in family businesses.*” By collaborating with company managers who are taking over family businesses and working alongside designers, they are developing products that will inspire new initiatives.

SEKISUI: Beyond Smart Life & Mobility (*Via Luigi Porro Lambertenghi 6 — Galleria Bonelli & Candy Snake Gallery*). Manufacturing brand SEKISUI introduces a vision where intelligent design seamlessly integrates into everyday life, creating adaptive spaces that respond intuitively to human needs. At the core of this experience is the fusion of living and mobility spaces, a concept inspired by innovations in the automotive sector. By transferring advanced mobility technologies into architectural and interior design, SEKISUI crafts dynamic spaces that transform fluidly, enhancing both productivity and relaxation.

THE PINK CLOUD: Coffee, Cookies & Debate by Social Label (*Via Confalonieri 11*). Pink walls and an installation designed by Studio Boot in collaboration with Isola Studio will serve as a space for informal gatherings to discuss collaborations with companies, governments, and designers in the field of applied arts across Europe.

WORTH at ZonaK (*Via Spalato 11*) will showcase projects developed within its incubator programme dedicated to promoting transnational collaborations between designers, creatives, manufacturing companies (SMEs) and technology companies.

Moreover several studios, workshops and galleries located in the district will open their doors to visitors:

— **[1+2=8]** (*Via Thaon de Revel 10*). Designer Andrea Barra presents *Basi*, a refined collection of materials and colors for a wireless Qi charging base. Made from ceramic, marble, quartz, cement, wood, and Corian, each piece blends functionality with a rich tactile and visual experience.

— **Algranti Lab** (*Via Pastrengo 23*). Craftsman Pietro Algranti invites visitors to explore material reuse with *Piantar Chiodini — Crafting Show* between wood, iron, salvaged copper, tools and handwork.

— **Angelo della Pergola1** (*Via Angelo della Pergola 1*). The exhibition *Hommage* marks the 8th participation in Isola Design Festival. Artist Myriam Kuehne Rauner showcases sculptural pieces at the intersection of art and design.

— **artetica** (*Via Guglielmo Pepe 20*). A creative space promoting sustainable and artistic approaches to design will host an installation *Concept* for colorful sustainable textiles by Michael Rechberger, founder of a textile factory. With a strong focus on quality and local production, Rechberger creates a wide range of fabrics, from mattress covers to home textiles.

— **Boiserie Riva - RivaViva** (*Via Luigi Porro Lambertenghi 18*). *All the Lives of Wood* showcases the results of a design contest in collaboration with Legambiente, featuring works by second-year students from IED Rome. The exhibition reaffirms a commitment to nurturing young talent and fostering a responsible approach to contemporary design.

— **Brussels House** (*Via Gaetano de Castillia 23*). MAD Brussels and hub.brussels present *(UN)WRAPPED*, an exhibition exploring the act of unveiling. Draped fabric creates an atmospheric backdrop that enhances the structure and craftsmanship of contemporary design pieces.

— **Ceramica Ostile** (*Via Borsieri 41*). The space will showcase works by ceramic artists such as Caterina Maria Amato and Carlotta Nebuloni, offering visitors the chance to witness live craftsmanship throughout the day. On select evenings, themed workshops will invite participants to create their own pieces.

— **ErnestoShop** (*Via Antonio Pollaiuolo 3*). Tucked inside Frida bar’s courtyard, this concept store, founded in 2017, offers a curated selection of contemporary craftsmanship, blending Italian quality with European innovation and sustainability-driven design.

— **Fondazione TOG** (*Via Livigno 1*). TOG Foundation transforms its Center into a hub for inclusive design, hosting exhibitions, workshops, and discussions that highlight co-design as a driver of innovation and beauty, with a focus on improving life for children and young people with disabilities.

— **Green Island 2025. Fly Garden** (*Flying Tiger, Stazione di Porta Garibaldi, Piazza Freud 1*). A botanical and sensory eco-design journey that turns into a colorful pollinator garden, curated by Claudia Zanfi/Atelier del Paesaggio.

— **Moon Rabbit Lab** (*Piazza Tito Minniti 1*). In collaboration with Framas and Balena, FootLoop explores the future of sustainable, circular footwear. Two immersive pathways illustrate a shoe's lifecycle, culminating in a modular, evolving installation.

— **Quadruslight** (*Via Angelo della Pergola 11*). Queenlight presents backlit artworks where painting, photography, and digital art merge with interior spaces, transforming walls and ceilings into dynamic, atmospheric installations.

A full programme of design talks, events, and gatherings will be unveiled in the coming weeks leading to the opening days.

Credits

Date

7 — 13 April 2025

Dove

Isola Design District

Opening hours

Monday 7 April

14:00 — 19:00

Tuesday 8 / Saturday 12 April

10:00 — 19:00

Sunday 13 April

10:00 — 15:00

Official event of Milan Design Week organized by Isola Studio

Press Conference location Partner | ZONA K

Material Partner

Solava, Carro Srl

Media Partners

Abitare, Archiproducts, Archipanic, Artribune, Collater.al, DesignTellers, DesignWanted, Dezeen, Elle Decor NL, Fuorisalone.it, ICON, IFDM, L'Essenziale, La Casa in Ordine, Living, STIR

Educational Partners

Accademia Italiana, IAAD., SAE Institute

Event Partners

24 PR & Events, Bonsai, Ceramica Ostile, HeFlies Srl, Mobbi, Narici, Nouz3D, Peroni Nastro Azzurro, Quadruslight, Soho House, Studio X, SuperForma, Very Simple: Kitchen

Press Release

Notes to the Editors

Isola Design Group provides visibility and opportunities to independent designers, design studios, and brands worldwide. The venture runs both Isola Design, the community platform featuring profiles, project portfolios, and direct messaging for the exchange of ideas, and the recently launched Isola Studio, a consultancy studio for future-thinking design brands and organizations.

Isola Design (www.isola.design) is the world's first digital and physical platform connecting independent designers and studios with industry professionals, brands, curators, journalists, and clients. Its dedicated curatorial team selects projects with a focus on sustainability, innovation, and handcraft.

Founded in 2017 in Milan, Isola Design District immediately became one of the main official areas of the Milan Design Week, with special attention to international and emerging designers. Isola Design also organizes various in-person events under the umbrella of Isola Design Festival, which takes place throughout the year, hosting dozens of exhibitions, hundreds of exhibitors, and thousands of visitors.

Since 2019, Isola Design has participated in the Dutch Design Week in Eindhoven, becoming the first Italian design district to participate in a foreign event. Isola Design expanded its borders even further in 2022, when for the first time it led a curated group of designers to the United Arab Emirates for Downtown Design during Dubai Design Week, and in 2023 by taking part in Material Matters at the London Design Festival and Tanween, Ithra's Conference of Creativity, the largest creativity platform in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Launched in 2021 with more than 1.500 designers from 65+ countries and 2,600+ projects published, Isola Design offers a community for creative people around the globe through its digital platform, with dedicated profiles and portfolio pages. The digital platform aims to spark direct community interactions, discussions, and the sharing of expertise.

In 2024, Isola Design Group founded Isola Studio (www.isola.design/studio), the new consultancy lab for design brands, organizations, and institutions. Dedicated to creating innovative solutions, Isola Studio shares its multifocal vision with design professionals, startups, companies, and event organizers. Already active in a hybrid form across many countries that are part of the global Isola Design community, Isola Studio has initiated international calls to connect design brands, from lighting to product design, with emerging talents. It has also crafted special setups for Italian companies with branches in Europe and the Middle East, as well as international organizations such as B&T (Turkey), iGuzzini (UAE), Ithra (Saudi Arabia), Masquespacio (Spain), Monkey47 (Germany), Re-Mat (Italy) and The Good Plastic Company (Netherlands), to name a few.

In June 2024 Isola Studio launched its first international design residency, Nitaj (www.isola.design/nitaj), an intensive programme dedicated to lighting design. Conceived for Sama Design – a product design and art studio based in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia – the residency began in Milan and culminated with an exhibition in Jeddah showcasing the works created by each participant.

Moreover, via the upcoming Marketplace by Isola, each verified designer and creative studio will get the chance to sell their physical products, digital assets, and NFTs.

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