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Focus: Home Interiors
Art In Interiors
International Review:
Australia
Floor Coverings
New Products
The Diary
At Last
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Room 2: Bathtub by Agape, designed by Patricia Urquiola, and candles by Boho

Cairo calling

A bold new design initiative makes the most of the city's history and contemporary design

A new design show made its debut in Cairo last month. +20 Egypt Design, took place from June 3 to June 7, coinciding with Furnex, Egypt's furniture and home furnishings trade fair. A government-funded, design led initiative and a long-term project for the country, it aims to place Egyptian design and Cairo, a rapidly emerging player on the cultural scene, onto the international design map.

Curated by Italian designer, Paolo Navone, +20 Egypt Design was organised by DesignPartners in collaboration with the Egyptian Furniture Export Council (EFEC).

It presented the history of a large international, cultivated and open-minded family; narrated through installations in different rooms of three historical Cairo homes. The installation wove together local and international designs, incorporating international brands as well as local Egyptian designers such as Karim Mekhtegian (founder of Alchemy), Cherif Morsi and Shahira Fahmy.

Set against the culturally and historically rich backdrop of Cairo, with a contemporary and contrasting edge, the event combined new and old with a contemporary product list which included Moroso, Kartell, Luceplan and Alessi.

The three historical houses dedicated to the exhibitions (Suhaymi from the 1648, Kharazati from 1881 and Gaafar from 1713) are rare examples of true magic Egyptian spaces, once occupied by important local personalities.

Products showcased were selected from the best Egyptian design companies, as well as these international brands. The final result was a fascinating juxtaposition of tradition and innovation, local and international, classic and modernity; an aesthetic melting pot of different cultures. Paola Navone has always been interested in mixing and melting together traditional elements in innovative ways; for +20 Egypt Design, Navone played with space, volume and light, contextualising local Egyptian product design with international global brands.

Other important cultural initiatives and appointments enriched the event: the first pop-up edition of the Design Library, a series of design talks, where international designers and entrepreneurs shared their experiences.

"It is very important for us to promote design in order to increase and further develop the local culture. We want people from Cairo to understand and feel the uniqueness of the design experience, through the involvement of the industry within the production of mass-produced products. +20 Egypt Design will also promote to the international design community, the potential of Egyptian design, both on production and trade/market terms," said Ahmed Helmy, EFEC chairman

Maurizio Ribotti, DesignPartners CEO, commented: "We are proud to be involved in this important project for Egypt and will bring our passion for design, our love of the fresh and new and our quest to make design and creativity central to this country's economy."

The show was organised across five different sections:

- Services: business lounge, press services, customer services and welcome registration point;
- Culture: DesignLibrary pop up edition, Design talks and ZonaTortona movie premier;
- Entertainment: opening event, special dinner, mini market (local product) and hotspot visits;
- Collateral activities: factory visit and Furnex exhibition; and
- Communication: branding activities, media relation and PR activities.

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Room 12: Armchair by Shoulah Furniture, lamp by Luceplan, and stools by Alchemy



Room 21: sofa by Eklego

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