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Natural integration

Note Design Studio creates Milan showcase for Vestre Habitats collection

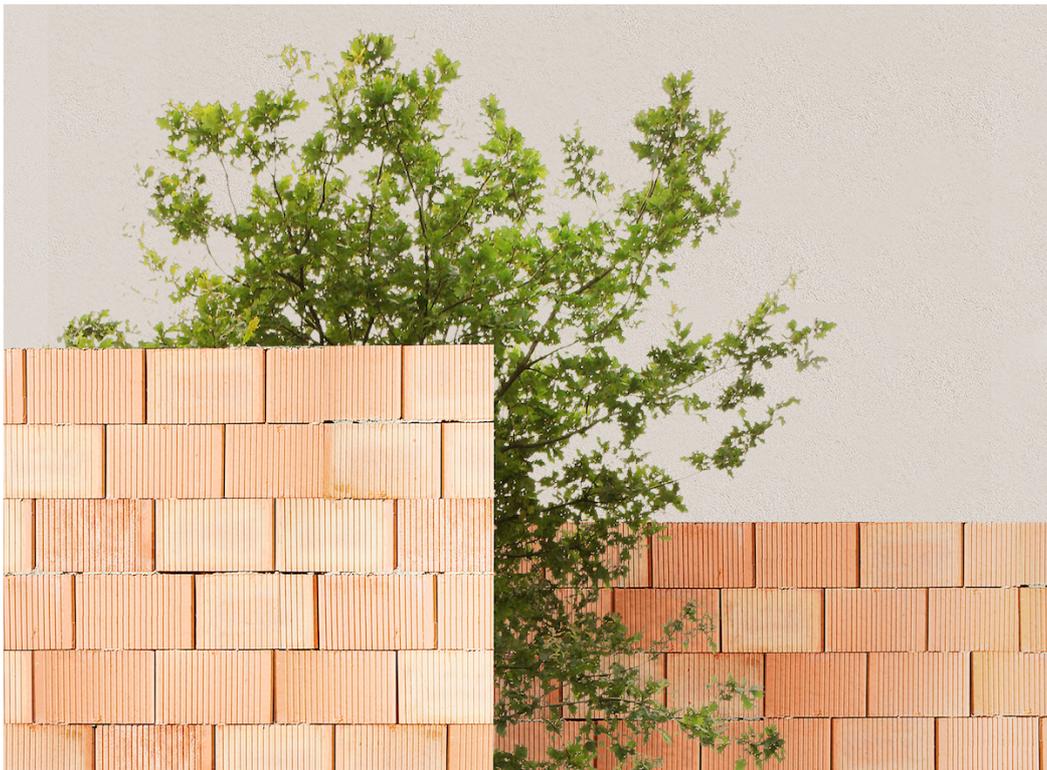


Illustration by Note Design Studio, for Vestre at Milan Design Week 2021.

5–10 September 2021

With the global design calendar being all but festival-free for the last 18 months, the return of Milan Design Week in September is a hotly anticipated event. This year's Salone will give design brands the much-missed opportunity to showcase their products and personalities to the world once again – expectations are running high and the pressure is on to make it count.

To welcome sustainable Scandi outdoor-furniture brand Vestre back to the forefront of the international design stage, Stockholm's Note Design Studio is designing an

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immersive experience that will bring the beauty of nature into the urban heart of Zona Tortona.

A champion of urban biodiversity – bringing the outdoors inside

Note's installation has been devised to introduce Vestre's new Habitats collection – an experimental family of outdoor furniture and other smaller pieces designed to seamlessly integrate with the nature that surrounds them. By serving humans, animals and flora equally, the pieces offer a template for furniture that works in harmony with the landscape, rather than being simply imposed on it – a new category of furniture that is both visually and functionally connected to its surroundings. The concept for Habitats has been developed in collaboration with René Hougaard, the designer and architect behind ARDE, and Alexander Qual, design director of Rethink Studio.

To reflect Vestre's vision of ecological sustainability, Note developed the concept of a biodiverse utopia that visitors could – not just look at – but physically enter into and explore.

"Vestre is introducing Habitats during this year's fair – a beautiful utopian idea where design plays an important role in promoting biodiversity in urban spaces. We wanted to physically manifest this utopia, not only to inform the visitors, but to have them experience it. Small details such as shape, colour or the exact form can be easy to forget as time passes by, but how certain events and situations make us feel is something people never forget."

– Jesper Mellgren, Note Design Studio

A one-way path winds through the venue on Via Tortona, taking visitors from a display of Vestre furniture in the courtyard into an interior area, where curving brick walls conceal an enclosed area at the heart of the space, a walled garden accessed and exited through narrow, corridor-like openings.

Inside, visitors are met with an explosion of greenery, where the Habitats collection is woven into an edenic landscape of trees, plants and flowers. Bringing the outdoors inside, the installation acts as a physical manifestation of the concept

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behind the Habitats collection – the idea that humanity and nature can coexist in balance and synergy.

Thanks to the curve of the walls, and the bend of the path, there are no clear sight lines throughout the space, just glimpses of what might lie ahead – glimmers of light through the gaps in bricks – which creates a sense of curiosity and intrigue, an incentive to keep pushing on through the installation and discovering what's coming next. The stand becomes a journey.

More than just a showcase for sustainability

Vestre's trailblazing sustainability ethos is reflected in Note's decision to reuse and recycle as much of the installation materials as possible. The 596 porotherm bricks that make up the interior walls, as well as loose marble gravel and the sheets of acrylic and plywood from which the installation is built, were first used in Note's stand for Vestre at Stockholm Furniture Fair 2020, which won the festival's award for best stand, largely thanks to its strong sustainability focus.

Now, those materials are being recombined in the service of a completely different stand design, supplemented by as few additional materials as possible. To minimise environmental impact, these will be obtained either from Vestre's own stores, or sourced locally, and rented in preference to purchased.

After the exhibition, all components will be returned, recycled or reused as much as possible. This is more than a showcase about sustainability, but one that puts environmentally conscious principles into practice.

A stage for new products

Note has used the space outside the walled garden to showcase pieces from several other recent Vestre collections. The area outside the venue will feature the Note-designed modular outdoor-seating system, Plinth, which launched earlier this year. Note's first product design for Vestre, Plinth is the result of the studio's exploration of how we interact with – and in – outdoor space, and is designed to be flexible enough to support our changing behaviours as attitudes and social norms shift. A colourful Pop collection of furniture, greens and planters also features.

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Inside, around the perimeter, other Vestre pieces exhibited include: the circular Stripes bench and planter; and the DOGA-award-winning Munch Collection of seating that Andreas Engesvik and Jonas Ravlo Stokke designed for the new Munch Museum that opened in Oslo last year.

A platform for The Plus



Image of The Plus, courtesy of Vestre.

One corner of the installation will be dedicated to Vestre's new facility in Magnor, Norway: The Plus – set to be the world's most environmentally friendly furniture factory, generating 55% less greenhouse gas emissions than a conventional manufacturing plant. One of the principal aims of the project is to attract visitors, who will have the opportunity to enjoy a 300-acre public park, as well as watch Vestre furniture taking shape via an accessible rooftop viewing platform.

Note's display will showcase the architectural spectacle of The Plus, while communicating Vestre's peerless environmental approach, radical transparency and dedication to the circular economy and achieving UN Sustainable Development goals.

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A long-standing partnership

2021 is the third year in which Note and Vestre have been in partnership. Through previous collaborations at major international design fairs, and the launch of the Plinth product line, the two companies have built a strong relationship built on shared curiosity, mutual trust and unfettered creative scope.

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Notes for editors

For more information about Note Design Studio and Vestre's Milan installation, please contact sabine@zetteler.co.uk

Vestre at Milan Design Week

Officine Cova, via Tortona 31, Milano

5–10 September 2021

Note Design Studio

Founded in 2008 by Johannes Carlström and Cristiano Pigazzini, Note is a Stockholm-based design studio working across the fields of architecture, interiors, products, graphic design and design strategy. Now comprising a large and varied team of designers, Note has grown to become one of the most internationally admired names in Scandinavian design, working with a wide range of international design brands and winning a steady stream of design awards.

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Vestre

Family-owned since its foundation in 1947, Vestre is a leading manufacturer of sustainable furniture for public spaces and urban environments. From its Oslo headquarters, Vestre collaborates with designers and manufacturers across Scandinavia to produce sustainable outdoor furniture. All materials are sourced in Norway and Sweden, and the production runs on 100% renewable energy. Vestre's products can be found in numerous locations both in Norway and around the world – from King's Cross in London to Times Square in New York.

vestre.com