

## Drafting Futures. Conversations about Next Perspectives

*Four days of conversations between project and visions; two round tables on the new business opportunities. Among the protagonists: Valeria Segovia, Bjarke Ingels, Lesley Lokko, Paolo Sorrentino.*

Following last year's success, the **2025 edition of Talks and Round Tables** will be back with a packed cultural programme, again entitled **Drafting Futures. Conversations about Next Perspectives (Pavilion 14)**. Curated by **Annalisa Rosso, Editorial Director & Cultural Events Advisor** of the Salone, the programme will focus on the transmission of knowledge and experience, prompting reflection on the opportunities and responsibilities we have today towards a tomorrow that is already present.

As well as being the leading business occasion for the furniture industry, the Salone del Mobile.Milano is an **indispensable cultural point of reference**, testament to the fact that direct encounters and the exchange of points of view provide opportunities for growth with virtuous, crosscutting repercussions. The new programme, in the dual formats of **Talks (in the morning)** and **Round Tables (in the afternoon)**, will feature some of the most interesting personalities in international design, aimed at showing how **planning, design, art, direction, set design and writing** are able to decode the present and predict the future, triggering insight and imagination. To open the works will be **Valeria Segovia (9<sup>th</sup> April)**, Principal and Design Director of Gensler in London, the world's largest architecture firm in terms of revenue and number of architects with clients in more than 100 countries – recognised as a talented architect who has always been committed to reducing environmental impact and improving the wellbeing of the communities with which she works. After all, one of the protagonists, Architect **Bjarke Ingels (10<sup>th</sup> April)**, Founder and Creative Partner of Bjarke Ingels Group, will invite us to explore the ways in which materiality, technology and human interaction can redefine the future of urban planning. **Lesley Lokko (11<sup>th</sup> April)** – Architect, Curator of the 18<sup>th</sup> International Architecture Exhibition of Biennale di Venezia, Founder of the African Futures Institute – will teach us that at the heart of every project is a princely and decisive tool: imagination. **Paolo Sorrentino (12<sup>th</sup> April)**, Oscar Winner Filmmaker will conclude the Talks telling us about waiting, the theme of his installation project at the Salone, in dialogue with **Antonio Monda**, Journalist and Professor at New York University.

The afternoon **Round Table** events will be devoted to discussions between authoritative voices on crucial areas of design and architecture today, under the headings **The Business of Design: Global Perspectives on Trade, E-Commerce, and Distribution (10<sup>th</sup> April)** and **The Business of Hospitality: Where Design Meets Functionality (11<sup>th</sup> April)**.

The venue for this packed programme will be **the Drafting Futures Arena**, created by **Formafantasma**, recycling the seating from the last edition, which will host the **Salone Library** project for a second year: a selection of books suggested by the speakers themselves with light as their focus.

## Drafting Futures. Conversations about Next Perspectives

Curated by Annalisa Rosso  
Drafting Futures Arena by Formafantasma  
Fiera Milano, Rho – Pav. 14

### TALKS

Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> April

11 am, in English

**Valeria Segovia**, Principal, Design Director Gensler London  
in conversation with **Massimo De Conti**, Architect, Journalist

The future of buildings hinges on how we define great design. It's time to shift our perspective—not just valuing materials that come straight from the earth, but celebrating those that have lived past lives, transformed and repurposed for a new era. Reused and recycled materials carry an inherent beauty, rich with history, while biomaterials—literally alive with potential—offer groundbreaking opportunities for innovation in the construction industry. Every layer of a building's past deepens its story, creating spaces imbued with meaning and connection. In many ways, the “new” new build is made from old parts, reimaged for a future that embraces sustainability and creativity.

Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> April

11 am, in English

**Bjarke Ingels**, Architect, Founder and Creative Partner Bjarke Ingels Group  
in conversation with **Oliva Sartogo**, Co-Founder & Architect Lead VIV Arts

As cities rapidly transform, Bjarke Ingels' architectural vision redefines the relationship between space, materiality, and interaction, echoing Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology. In *Phenomenology of Perception*, he posits that space is a lived experience, shaped through movement, matter, and sensory perception. We do not merely inhabit the world—we engage with it in an embodied, dynamic way. In Ingels' architecture, this idea manifests in urban spaces that transcend functionality, becoming environments that actively shape experience. Through material experimentation—from the structural solidity of brick to the fluidity of light—and the integration of technology, his work transforms built space into an immersive, interactive organism. Rather than static constructs, his spaces evolve as arenas of play, relationship, and perception. In conversation with Oliva Sartogo, Ingels will explore these themes at Salone del Mobile 2025, reflecting on how materiality, technology, and human interaction can redefine the future of urban design.

Friday 11<sup>th</sup> April

11 am, in English

**Lesley Lokko**, Founder, Chair African Futures Institute  
in conversation with **Manuela Lucà-Dazio**, Executive Director The Pritzker Architecture Prize

Africa is the world's fastest-urbanising continent, yet it has the least number of schools of architecture and the least professional, conceptual and technical capacity to cope with this sudden and dramatic change from a largely rural to an overwhelmingly urban existence. With the construction industry accounting for nearly 40% of carbon emissions, this is a gap that the world can ill afford. Africa has one resource that the rest of the world increasingly lacks: a youthful population. With an average age of just under 20 years-old, half that of Europe and the United States, this is a population brimming with creative energy and ambition, if only we knew how to harness it. Is it possible that some of the answers

we seek about how to live more sustainably and equitably lie with the world's youngest – and poorest – people? It's not Africa's job to teach the rest of the world anything, least of all how to live a more balanced life, but it is possible that by listening more intelligently, seeing more perceptively and shifting perspective, the rest of the world may learn something from a place where they least expect to find solutions.

Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> April

11 am, in Italian (simultaneous translation to English provided)

**Paolo Sorrentino**, Oscar Winner Filmmaker

in conversation with **Antonio Monda**, Journalist

Waiting is a universal state of mind, a suspended time in which contrasting emotions are interwoven: hope and fear, impatience and reflection. In his installation *La dolce attesa*, Paolo Sorrentino explores this theme through the metaphor of a waiting room, in Pavilions 22-24. The space becomes the scene for an internal experience, a place that intensifies or lessens the tensions bound up with waiting. In a free and wide-ranging conversation with Antonio Monda, the meaning of waiting is questioned – is it an empty time or a space of possibility? What role does the context play in shaping our perceptions? Is waiting an exercise in faith in the future or a form of psychological imprisonment? These reflections trigger a dialogue that touches the existence of each one of us, revealing waiting as a profoundly human and irreducibly ambivalent experience.

## ROUND TABLES

Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> April

2.30 pm, in Italian

**Manufacturing excellence and Italian Style around the world: comparing experiences for growth on international markets**

Curated by Intesa Sanpaolo

Italian design, a reflection of Italian quality and beauty, creates connections with other Italian supply chains, promoting the spread of 'Made in Italy' products all over the world, while boosting both GDP and employment. This example of industrial and manufacturing integration, which has no equal anywhere in the world, has been a key factor in our country's growth at an international level.

Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> April

4 pm, in English

**The Business of Design: Global Perspectives on Trade, E-Commerce, and Distribution**

**Nivangi Davda**, Head Interior Design JSW Realty

**Dawei Wang**, Founder and President David Wang Classic Living Group

**Gilles Massé**, Design Curator, WallpaperStore\*, Frankbros, The Level Group

**Mohammed Habbas Al Mutairi**, Owner, General Manager Gallery Design

**Claudio Spotti**, Spotti Milano

**Stephan Weishaupt**, Founder Weishaupt Design Group

Moderator: **Anne-France Berthelon**, Journalist and Creative Consultant

In today's fast-evolving multi-cultural and technology-driven world, design extends far beyond aesthetics and function. It is a dynamic global ecosystem; a complex and highly competitive, interconnected business which fuses heritage and innovation culture and commerce, residential and contract, function and emotion, workplace and home, craft and industry, brick and mortar and digital, creation and curation. All that while navigating trade regulations and supply chain issues, not to mention new tools such as AI. To discuss the challenges and opportunities of this new era of the Business of Design, Salone del Mobile is honoured to host a round table and welcome an international multi-faceted panel of design experts who will openly share their respective views in an open conversation at the fair.

Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> April  
4 pm, in English

## **The Business of Hospitality: Where Design Meets Functionality**

**Pierre-Yves Rochon**, Founder and Global Design Director, PYR

**Elisa Orlanski Ours**, Chief Planning, Design Officer Corcoran Sunshine Marketing Group

**Andrea Obertello**, General Manager Four Seasons Hotel Milano

**Dino Michael**, Senior Vice President & Global Head Hilton Luxury Brands

Moderator: **Christele Harrouk**, Editor in Chief Archdaily

As luxury hospitality evolves, the need to balance aesthetics, functionality, and sustainability becomes increasingly important. "The Business of Hospitality: Where Design Meets Functionality" brings together industry leaders to explore the key forces shaping the future of luxury hospitality design. Examining how the definition of luxury has shifted in recent years, the discussion will identify key trends and transformations that have redefined guest experiences. From the influence of architecture and interior design on brand identity to the challenge of creating immersive, emotionally engaging spaces, the panel will address the evolving expectations of modern hospitality. Designing luxury spaces requires a careful balance between aesthetics, functionality, and a strong sense of place within a global identity. Sustainability has also become essential, showing that environmental responsibility and luxury can coexist. The conversation will further explore the challenges of creating spaces that are both harmonious and sustainable. Building on this, the roundtable will examine how spaces foster meaningful connections with guests, emphasizing the creation of unique narratives and the role of spatial psychology in shaping perception and experience. Finally, the panel will look ahead to the future of hospitality design, uncovering emerging trends, new hospitality environments, and expert insights into where the industry is headed in the coming years.

The Talks are recognised by the Italian National Order of Architects (CNAPPC – National Council of Architects, Planners, Landscape Architects and Conservators) as accredited educational initiatives, each one of which will therefore be worth 2 credits. To ensure credit recognition, pre-registration to the following forms is recommended: [www.salonemilano.it/en/events](http://www.salonemilano.it/en/events)