

Press Release

The Salone del Mobile.Milano makes its debut in Lagos and sets its sights on new African markets.

26th October 2026

Salone del Mobile.Milano

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The Salone del Mobile.Milano World Tour will touch down in Nigeria on 21st and 22nd October for Lagos Design Week 2026, the epicentre of the new pan-African creative scene. Amidst fresh creative visions and international dialogue, the first edition of the IDEA Honours will recognise Marva Griffin Wilshire, founder of SaloneSatellite, architect and critic Lesley Lokko, and artist Yinka Shonibare.

The Salone del Mobile.Milano is visiting **Nigeria** for the first time, with a stop-off on **its World Tour**, as part of **Lagos Design Week**. On 21st and 22nd October, **Marco Sabetta, General Manager of the Salone del Mobile.Milano, and Marva Griffin Wilshire, Founder and Curator of SaloneSatellite**, will meet with the local community of architects, interior designers, developers, businesses and institutions. The aim is to gain a closer understanding **of the evolution of the Nigerian market and to open up new collaborative opportunities between the professionals shaping demand in the country and the Salone's international network of companies and designers**. This dialogue will continue in Milan with the **65th edition of the event, at Rho Fiera Milano from 13th to 18th April 2027.**

The choice of Lagos forms part of the Salone's strategy to combine the consolidation of its key markets **with the exploration of new commercial and design territories**. Nigeria offers a context for **building relationships with clients and distributors**, **understanding** the **needs** of **designers**, and **engaging with** a **community** of **designers** and **manufacturers** committed to developing the local industry. Taking part in the 2026 edition of Lagos Design Week will further efforts on both these fronts, linking market opportunities with the exchange of expertise.

In **2025**, Italian exports from **the furniture sector** to Africa accounted for **448.4 million euros**, up **13.1% on 2024 and the highest figure for the last ten years.** Within this framework, **Nigeria** remained the **fourth-largest African market**, after **Morocco, Libya and Egypt**, at **41.6 million euros** and a **27%** increase**, representing** an additional **8.8 million euros** compared with the previous year.

In the first half of 2026, **Italian exports** from **the sector** to **Africa** stood at **191.3 million euros**. **Nigeria** retained its **fourth place on the continent**, **at 15.6 million euros**. **Bathroom furniture**, **exceeding 2 million euros** in the Nigerian market, **is seeing growth of 108.6%.**

Marco Sabetta, General Manager of the Salone del Mobile.Milano, had this to say: *"The competitiveness of design companies also depends on their ability to interpret different ways of living, cultures and needs. The climate, the materials available, the use of space and people's habits pose specific questions for designers and manufacturers. Engaging with the Lagos community can offer companies new perspectives on the products and solutions to be developed , and provide local designers with more direct access to manufacturing expertise and international partners. We believe in the sort of exchange in which everyone contributes*

their own knowledge and finds opportunities to develop it further. For the Salone too, this means returning to Milan with new questions that can guide our work."

Founded by **Titi Ogufere**, **Design Week Lagos** is a **pan-African platform** that brings together designers, manufacturers, investors, institutions, students and the public through exhibitions, talks, installations, educational programmes and events dedicated to the relationship between design and industry. The 2026 edition will be based primarily at the refurbished National Theatre and will involve other venues across the city. The theme **Making a New Africa**, accompanied by the focus **From Material to Market: Designing for Scale** will invite reflection on how to transform the continent's materials, research and creative talent into products, manufacturing capabilities, businesses and access to markets. With **Marco Sabetta and Marva Griffin**, the Salone will be bringing **projects for the upcoming edition** to Lagos and **sparking discussion on the role of design in business development and on opportunities to give new talent a platform on the international stage.**

The IDEA Honours ceremony, scheduled for 21st October at the National Theatre, will be one of the event's highlights. The **awards celebrate figures who have helped transform architecture**, **design and culture on an international scale**. Alongside **Marva Griffin Wilshire**, who **will receive the Architectural Legacy Honour**, **Lesley Lokko** – the Ghanaian-Scottish architect, lecturer and writer, and founder of the African Futures Institute in Accra – will be awarded **the Architectural Leadership Honour**, whilst the internationally renowned British-Nigerian artist **Yinka Shonibare** will receive the **Cultural Impact Honour**.

The IDEA Design Legacy Honour 2026 recognises Marva Griffin's contribution to the international design community and her commitment to identifying and supporting emerging talent, creating **opportunities for these young designers to engage with the industry**. The award plaque, designed by the architect and artist **Demas Nwoko**, was inspired by her Tree Habitat concept.

"I am honoured to receive this award. SaloneSatellite was created to give many talented young people a real opportunity - to showcase their work, engage with companies and find someone willing to believe in their ideas," commented **Marva Griffin Wilshire**. *"I would like to thank Titi Ogufere and Lagos Design Week for recognising the value of this commitment. I dedicate this award to the designers who entrusted us with their first projects and to the companies that were willing to engage with them. Being here is also an opportunity to discover new African talent and to continue creating the conditions that will enable young designers to forge their own paths*."

Also on 21st October, Marva Griffin will be in conversation with Lesley Lokko, former curator of the 18th International Architecture Exhibition at the Venice Biennale. **Lokko** was a key figure in **the 2025 edition of Drafting Futures. Conversations about Next Perspectives**, the programme of talks and round-table discussions at the Salone del Mobile.Milano curated by Annalisa Rosso, with a session devoted to urbanisation in Africa, education and the role of the younger generations. The Lagos event will further this dialogue, **bringing together two experts that have made access to the profession and support for talent a central pillar of their work**.

This international tour leads up to the 65th edition of the Salone del Mobile.Milano, taking place from 13th to 18th April 2027 at Rho Fiera Milano. The focus remains on the companies and events that make up the exhibition system: **the Salone Internazionale del Mobile, the International Furnishing Accessories Exhibition, Workplace3.0 and S.Project, along with SaloneSatellite**. **Euroluce**, the biennial event dedicated to lighting, will return with the second edition of **The Euroluce International Lighting Forum**, an opportunity for dialogue amongst the international community of lighting designers, architects and researchers.

Making its debut, **Salone Contract**, featuring the **Masterplan by Rem Koolhaas and David Gianotten / OMA**, is designed to connect companies with architects, developers and clients involved in major projects in the hospitality, residential, workplace and public space sectors. **The Salone Contract Forum** will explore the changes in demand and the design market. **Salone Raritas**, the platform dedicated to unique pieces, limited editions and high-end creative craftsmanship, curated by Annalisa Rosso and with exhibition design by Formafantasma, will also be back, with **India Mahdavi** among the first key figures to be announced.

The Nigerian event forms part of **the 2026–2027 World Tour**, developed **with the support of the Italian Trade Agency (ITA/ICE), the diplomatic and consular network, and the Italian Cultural Institutes of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation**. The programme extends the Salone's reach into markets throughout the year, with initiatives tailored to **local contexts and focused on direct engagement with businesses and professional communities.**

Salone del Mobile.Milano
Global Press Office

For more information or interview requests, please get in touch with the Press Office.
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