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Chaise Platform II, St. Moritz
PHOTO: SIMON BERTRANG

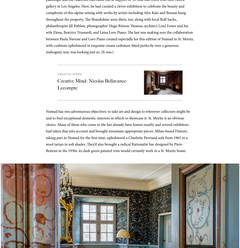
Major Works of Art and Design Converge at the Latest Edition of Nomad St. Moritz

The design fair like no other returns with incredible spaces conjured by Pierre Yovanovitch, Dimore, Francesca Neri-Antonelli, and more

BY CAROLINE HELLA
MARCH 11, 2022

"When this all started in Monaco in 2017, we didn't really know where it would lead," says Giorgio Pace, co-founder with Nicolas Bellavance-Lecompte of the Nomad Circle, which delivers boutique design fairs in fabulous locations including Venice and the South of France.

Back then, in late April 2017, the pair took over Karl Lagerfeld's former Monte Carlo mansion, the Villa La Vigie, and invited 18 galleries to participate. Last night, however, Nomad was back at the Chesa Planta in Samedan (a village next to St. Moritz in Switzerland's Engadin region) for the 16th time. This astonishing house was built in 1590 and extended in 1766, and its rooms are still filled with the wood panelling, orange-hued, Delft-tiled stoves, and cut-velvet wall coverings bestowed upon it over the years by its original owners, the de Salis family. (Now a museum, it is emptied of its own furniture each time the Nomad crowd moves in.)



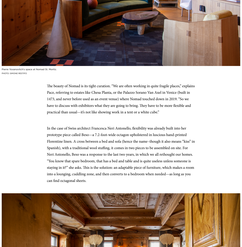
Dimore's space at Nomad St. Moritz
PHOTO: SIMONA BERTRANG

The opening afternoon on March 1 drew quite a crowd: Galerie Ivan and Manuela Wirth chatted with the Pace Barths family, who had taken a space to show 20th-century Japanese paintings, and the Waechters (she came out in support of 32-year-old Theo, who now runs a gallery in Los Angeles. Then, he had curated a clever exhibition to celebrate the beauty and complexity of this alpine setting with works by artists including Alex Katz and Bruneau Jung throughout the property. The Brandolinis were there, too, along with Lord Rall Sacks, philanthropist Jill Ehrlich, photographer Olga Bitzner Thomas, architect Lord Foster and his wife Elena, Beatrice Trussardi, and Lena Lam-Pasco. The last was making sure the collaboration between Paola Navone and Lam-Pasco created especially for this edition of Nomad in St. Moritz, with cushions upholstered in exquisite cream cashmere fitted perfectly over a generous mahogany seat, was looking just as. (It was.)

CREATIVE MINDS

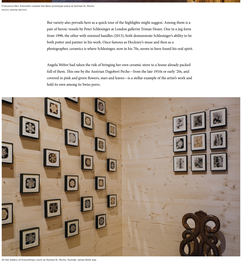
Creative Mind: Nicolas Bellavance-Lecompte

Nomad has two adventurous objectives: to take art and design to wherever collectors might be and to find exceptional domestic interiors in which to showcase it. St. Moritz is an obvious choice. Many of those who come to the fair already have homes nearby and several exhibitors had taken that into account and brought museum-appropriate pieces. Milan based Dimore, taking part in Nomad for the first time, upholstered a Charlotte Perriand sofa from 1963 in a wool tartan in soft shades. Nerol also brought museum-worthy material: Bar designed by Piero Bottoni in the 1930s. Its dark green painted trim would certainly work in a St. Moritz home.



Yvonnesheen gallery's space at Nomad St. Moritz
PHOTO: SIMONA BERTRANG

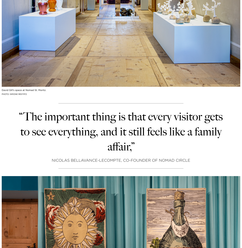
The French designer Pierre Yovanovitch has created an entire collection called New Alpine, which interweaves his love of art deco lines with oak polished to a matte finish. This is clean, contemporary furniture that nonetheless acknowledges its Jean French antecedents. In the case of two dining chairs upholstered in a vintage 1960s tapestry, in vibrant deep pink, lilac, and turquoise, there has an additional homage to Pierre Chareau, who loved to work with tapestry by Jean Lurçat in the 1920s. "I bought the tapestry in an auction," Yovanovitch told me. "So there will only be these two chairs – they are unique. But I love the combination of solid oak and the beautiful textile." New York readers will be interested to hear that Yovanovitch is opening his first US showroom in November, in Manhattan.)



Sapia, Yovanovitch's space at Nomad St. Moritz
PHOTO: SIMONA BERTRANG

The beauty of Nomad is its tight curation. "We are often working in quite fragile places," explains Pace, referring to venues like Chesa Planta, or the Palazzo Soranzo Van Axel in Venice (built in 1473, and never before used as an event venue) where Nomad traveled down in 2019. "So we have to discuss with exhibitors what they are going to bring. They have to be more flexible and practical than usual—it's not like showing work in a tent or a white cube."

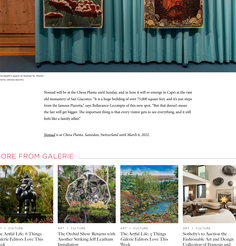
In the case of Swiss architect Francesca Neri Antonelli, flexibility was already built into her prototype piece called Rose—a 12 foot wide octagon upholstered in luscious hand-printed Florentine linen. A crew between a bed and sofa (hence the name—though it also means "kiss" in Spanish), with a traditional wool stuffing, it comes in two pieces to be assembled on site. For Neri Antonelli, Rose was a response to the last two years, in which we all sorbaught our homes. "You know that quiet bedroom, that has a bed and table and is quite useless unless someone is staying in it?" she asks. This is the solution: an adaptable piece of furniture, which makes a room into a lounging, cuddling zone, and then converts to a bedroom when needed—as long as you can find a surgical sheet.



Rose by Francesca Neri-Antonelli, shown at Nomad St. Moritz, Sustainable Design Gallery, a project of Lord Foster's Design in Coexistence
PHOTO: SIMONA BERTRANG

But variety also prevails here as a quick tour of the highlights might suggest. Among them is a pair of lamps, voiced by Peter Schlesinger at London gallerist Tristan Hoare. One is a jug form from 1998, the other with sunstruck bandlets (2013), both demonstrate Schlesinger's ability to be both potter and painter in his work. Once famous as Hockney's muse and then as a photographer, ceramics is where Schlesinger, now in his 70s, seems to have found his real spirit.

Angela Wolter had taken the risk of bringing her own ceramic stove to a house already packed full of them. This one by the Austrian Dagobert Peche—from the late 1910s or early 20s, and covered in pink and green flowers, stars and leaves—is a stellar example of the artist's work and held its own among its betsy peers.



Angela Wolter's space at Nomad St. Moritz
PHOTO: SIMONA BERTRANG

A completely new, satisfying, and subtner antiquous 6.5-foot tall pillar—of cemented polished steel forms—cast a dark at Stage gallery from Copenhagen and Brussels's early-bearer was. The young Paris-based artist Chloe Reyner more other works in foam and stone. But this metal piece, which sometimes shifts after up a sister collection in the Bellevue cold, is a showstopper.

Meanwhile, at the Gallery of Everything, founder James Brett was lurking in the visitors with a wall of small framed images of snowflakes. Created by the American Wilson Bentley, who from the age of fifteen in 1880 started analyzing the structure of snowflakes under an early microscope, the work is typical of Brett's curiosity about the further reaches of image-making. And in this mountain scenario, his white hump of these dainty works, on a bracketa wall, felt like the most perfect positioning.

Gallery of Everything's space at Nomad St. Moritz
PHOTO: SIMONA BERTRANG

"The important thing is that every visitor gets to see everything, and it still feels like a family affair,"

NICOLAS BELLAVANCE-LECOMPTE, CO-FOUNDER OF NOMAD CIRCLE

Alexander's space at Nomad St. Moritz
PHOTO: SIMONA BERTRANG

Nomad will be at the Chesa Planta until Sunday, and in June it will re-emerge in Capri at the vast old monastery of San Giacomo. "It is a huge building of over 75,000 square feet, and it's just steps from the famous Piazzetta," says Bellavance-Lecompte of his new space. "But that doesn't mean the fair will get bigger. The important thing is that every visitor gets to see everything, and it still feels like a family affair."

Nomad is at Chesa Planta, Samedan, Switzerland until March 6, 2022.

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