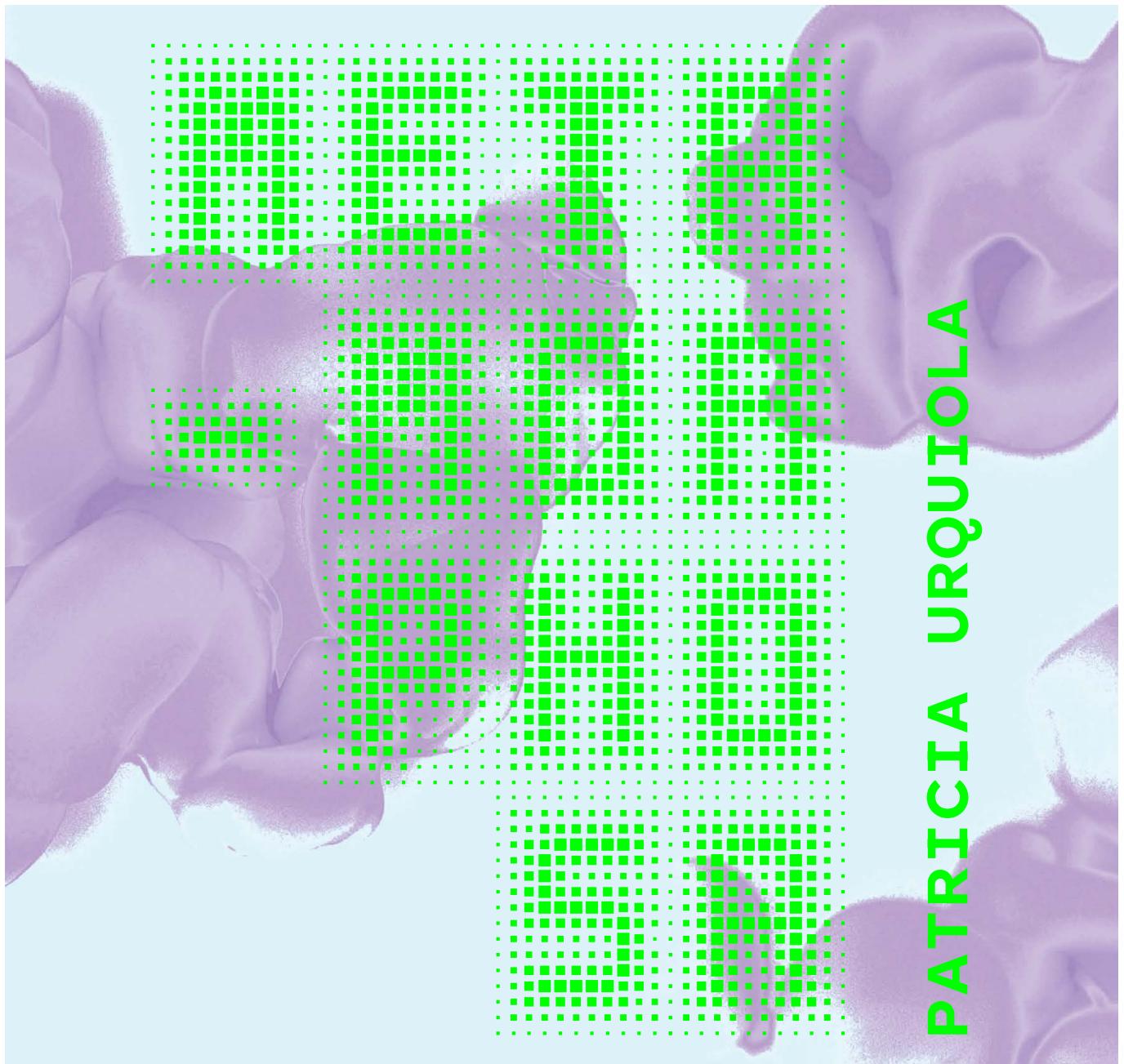




centre for innovation
and design
at Grand-Hornu



PATRICIA URQUIOLA

Press
release

PATRICIA URQUIOLA META-MORPHOSA

Curator: Patricia Urquiola & Marie Pok
Scenography : Studio Patricia Urquiola

December 14, 2025 → April 26, 2026

EXHIBITION

As part of EUROPALIA ESPAÑA, the CID is keen to welcome internationally renowned architect and designer Patricia Urquiola. Born in Oviedo in 1961, she studied architecture at the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid. She completed her studies at the Politecnico de Milan, where she was taught by Achille Castiglioni. This meant that as her career continued, she was able to learn from Italy's grand masters, working in particular with Vico Magistretti. She set up her own studio in 2001. It now has around a hundred employees, working in the fields of product design, interior design and architecture. Her client list is as impressive as it is eclectic, demonstrating the scope of her influence in this field. Her furniture, objects, accessories, textiles and ceramics stand out thanks to the approach she takes to materials, transforming them with colours and patterns.

Through a selection of works from the past five years, ***Patricia Urquiola. Meta-morphosa*** presents Urquiola's ongoing research into materials and making: furniture, textiles, and surfaces where craftsmanship and technology, tradition and regeneration, experimentation and sustainability come together to create new hybrid forms. The final room reveals the intimate core of this exhibition. At its centre, a large tapestry recalls the journey of Saint Anthony in the desert of the Thebaid, a metaphor for learning and transformation. This reflection extends into a conversation with philosopher Emanuele Coccia on the gentle and inevitable transformation that connects all forms of life.

But what this exhibition reveals most astonishingly is Patricia Urquiola's inner world. Her imagination runs remarkably free, not only in her personal works but also in her industrial production. Hybrid creatures, marine organisms or insects, winged figures or monsters intrude upon numerous projects. Dragon legs and tails have sprouted on her stools, critters have become embedded in a parquet floor, while marine or flying beings dominate a magnificent rug. The culmination of this immersion in Patricia's imaginary world is the final room, which reveals a large tapestry recounting the journey of Saint Anthony in the Thebaid desert, a metaphor for learning and transformation. All around, iconographic elements of this scene are displayed. This reflection continues in a conversation with the philosopher Emanuele Coccia on the gentle and inevitable transformation that connects all forms of life.

Although deeply personal, the exhibition *Patricia Urquiola. Meta-morphosa* addresses a universal theme. It questions our own relationship to change, to the transformation of our world, of matter, of our perception of beauty... The result is a new aesthetic, a true formal and cultural mutation. A fluid and elusive personality, perfectly navigating this context animated by (even) contradictory currents, Patricia Urquiola shows that the omnipotence of imagination allows us to adapt and transform ourselves in a world in turmoil.

Hybrida
Capodimonte, 2022
© photo Francesco Squeglia



INTRODUCTION TO THE CATALOGUE

CATALOGUE

Texts by: Anatxu Zabalescoa, Susanna Campogrande, Marie Pok

Conversation: Patricia Urquiola and Emanuele Coccia

Format: 21 x 26 cm (portrait)

Number of pages: 172 printed on GalerieArt Volume 150g FSC

Cover: FSC hardcover

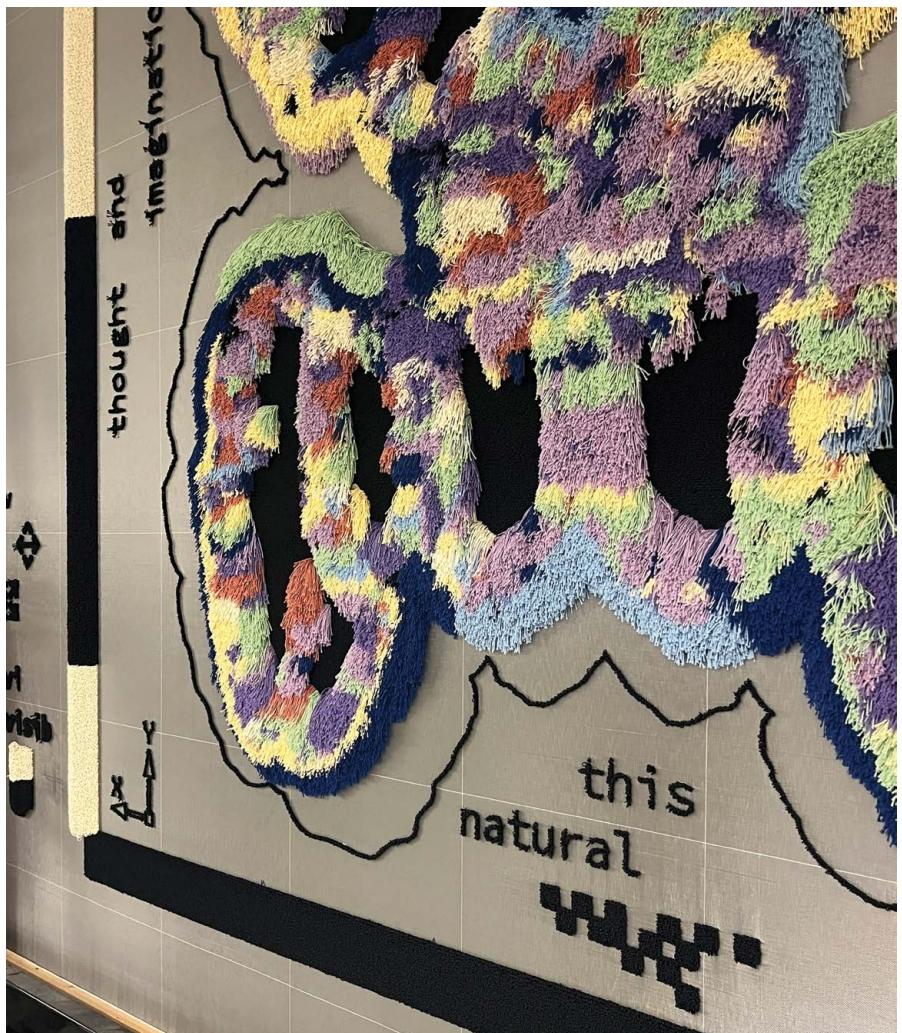
Bilingual edition French/English

Retail price: EUR 39.00

Forming/deforming, composing/decomposing/recomposing: every designer is faced with these mechanisms for transformation. Over the last thirty years, digital tools have streamlined formal and technical mutations, resulting in a new aesthetic, reflected in organic, moving, dynamic, deconstructive 3D imaging. Another issue at this time is the fact that the necessities of transition have driven industry to develop recycling capabilities, materials derived from waste, as well as alternative forms and techniques. The outcome is a brand new aesthetic, shaped by this research, a real formal and cultural mutation. Our environment is changing as we gradually adapt our manufacturing and construction processes. This change takes forms that can sometimes be repellent or frightening, far removed from comfortable, familiar norms. When faced with change, humans tend to come to a standstill, to resist in some kind of status quo, to reject the “monster” that could trigger the metamorphosis.

Philosopher Emanuele Coccia, who can see our paralysis in the face of change – in an environment that we have ourselves turned completely upside down! – imagines himself as a cocoon, to reconnect with this transformative power: “Wrapping yourself up in silk until you have cut yourself off from the world for days and days. Building yourself a soft, innocent egg inside of which you can let your body do its job. Experiencing such a radical change that the world itself will never be the same. No longer able to see things in the same way. No longer able to hear things in the same way. No longer able to live in the same way.

Chenille y Papillon, 2025
CC- tapis
© photo Studio Patricia Urquiola



Alder collection
Mater, 2024
© photo Studio Patricia Urquiola



1 <https://aoc.media/opinion/2018/11/05/theorie-de-metamorphose/>

Becoming unrecognisable. Inhabiting a world that itself has become unrecognisable. [...] I have often dreamed of that. With the power of caterpillars. Seeing wings emerge from your body of a worm. Flying instead of crawling along the ground. Leaning on air instead of stone. Switching from one existence to another without having to die and be reborn, and in doing so, shifting the world without even touching it. The most dangerous form of magic. The closest that life comes to death. Metamorphosis.¹ Patricia Urquiola is not someone who rejects change. From the very beginning, her work has embraced unexpected twists and turns, genre-blending, unpredictability and even complete mutation. The unfinished, the reconciliation between craftsmanship and industrial production, adapting to the constantly evolving restrictions and demands faced by industry and her engagement with the transition processes all reflect a body of work that is not confined by any form of systemisation, never making do with a particular achievement or a comfortable situation. Patricia Urquiola is a mercurial, elusive character, shaped by occasionally opposing currents that call her ideas into question, enriching them with wide-ranging inspirations: music, art, philosophy, literature, vernacular, anecdotes and the sweep of history...

2 Deleuze Gilles, Guattari Félix, *Mille Plateaux*, Paris, Les éditions de Minuit, 1980.

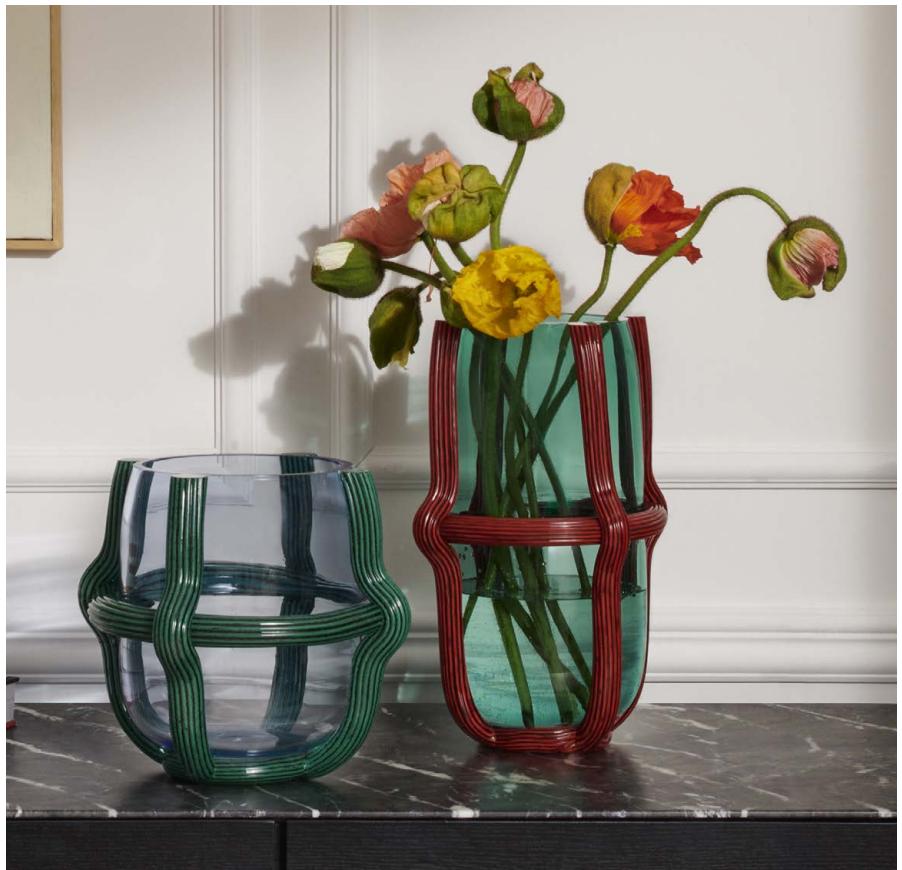
The Spanish designer's approach has also incorporated some of Bruno Latour's ideas on the connections between the human and the non-human, the natural and the artificial. Patricia Urquiola's most recent work tends to reconcile contradictions, encompassing them without any hierarchy, unearthing the links between different realities and establishing rhizomatic connections between her ideas. Her metaphorical vision of the relationship with nature, with others and with oneself, borrowed from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari², reveals in Patricia Urquiola an ability to hop from one subject to another: like the microscopic roots of a tree, her thoughts blend with those of others, without any preconceived plan, intersecting, expanding, fertilising and multiplying. These reflections give rise to different creations, or should we say creatures, strange personifications that sometimes border on the fantastical. The world of Patricia Urquiola is so packed with colours, smells, sounds, marks that blend into a synesthetic experience, that you can expect to see a fantastical being, an angel, a saint or some other living being, whether human or not, emerge from her immense portfolio.

Raiz
Etel, 2020
© photo Etel



Driven by the need to carry on producing in a changing world – ultimately we are merely bodies in need of support, grounding and rest – Patricia Urquiola has developed some innovative research into all sorts of different materials. Transforming the material itself triggers tangible, sometimes spectacular physical changes, causing new forms to come out of her work. Recycling rubbish is an integral part of some of the designer's many experiments, leading to new solutions, from reusing wool and plastic to wood, glass and marble... The choice of material is moving towards more natural and more responsible resources. New materials come to light, influenced by, or incorporating life, like in the experimental research developed for the installation *The other side of the Hill* at the 19th Venice Biennale of architecture. Furniture is also evolving structurally. The industry now needs to take into account the entire lifecycle of a product, from production through to dismantling, sorting and disposing of its components. Digital technology has also had an impact on production processes and the formal language of objects. A new aesthetic is now emerging in her carpets, marked by a renewed expressiveness. Patricia Urquiola works alongside companies in this research over time, giving them shape and emotion. With her, the transition is an ongoing metamorphosis, open to a thousand sources of inspiration, from philosophy to art, from hagiography to science, from nature to design. The prefix *meta-* means beyond. The meaning of many of Patricia Urquiola's pieces goes beyond form: it lies in the ideas that have taken root and blossomed to give them life, in the transformative research that shaped them.

Vases *Sestiere*
Cassina, 2022
Donation : Cassina
© photo Paola Pansini



Lazzaro
cimento, 2024
© photo Stefania Zanetti,
Matteo Bellomo



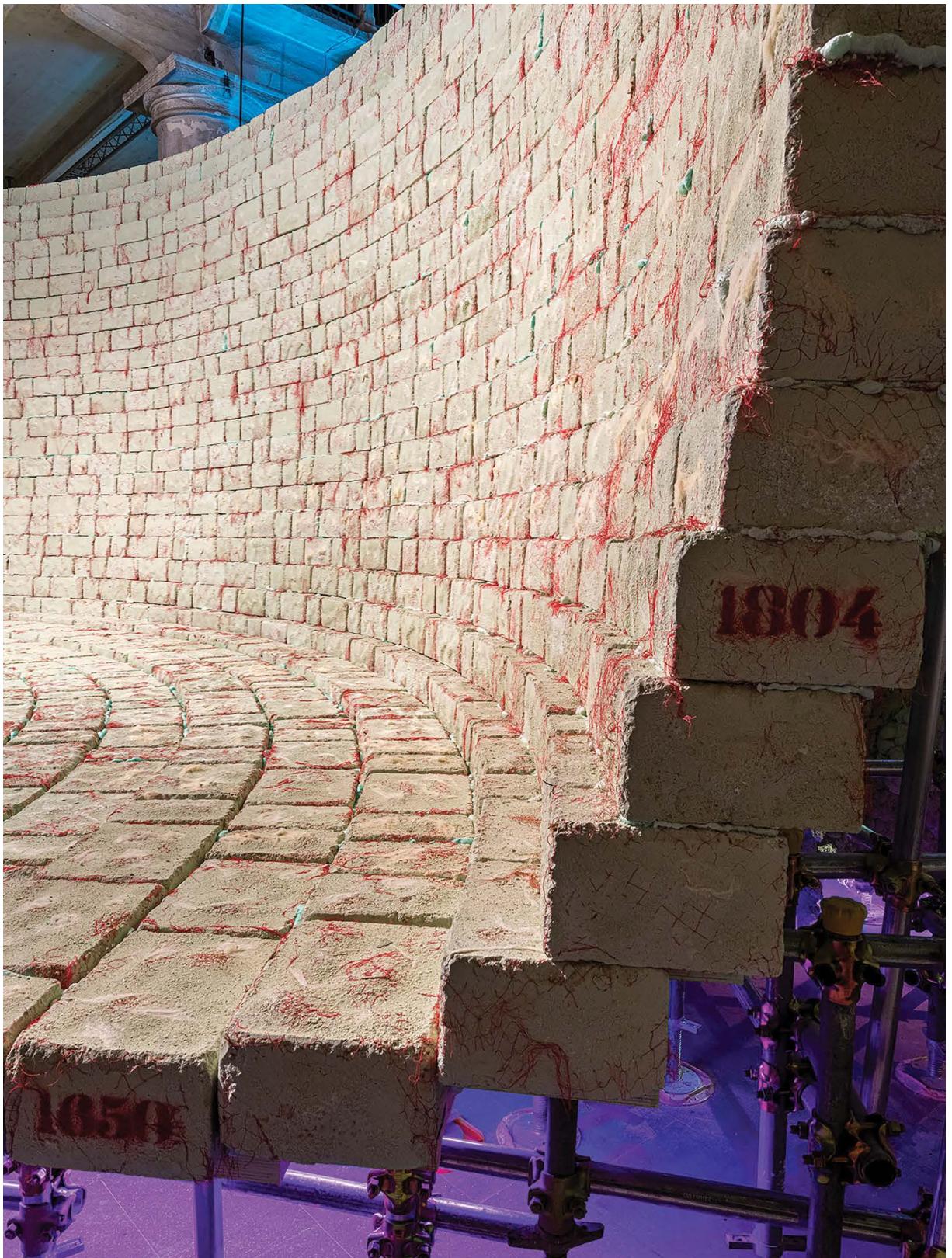
Cryptid
cc-tapis, 2025
© photo cc-tapis



The Other Side of the Hill

La biennale, 2025

© photo Alessandro Paderni



Shimmer stool
Glas Italia, 2015
Donation : Glas Italia
© photo Glas Italia



Mushmonster
Moroso, 2025
© photo Studio Eye





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OPENING TIMES

Every day from 10 AM until 6 PM, except Mondays.
The Grand-Hornu is closed on 24, 25, 31st December and 1st January.

The office can be reached during weekdays from 8 AM to 4.30 PM.

ADMISSION FEE

- Combined ticket for the Grand-Hornu site / CID / MACS: €10
- Discount: €2 or €6
- Group rates (minimum 15 ppl.): €6
- School groups: €2
- Free for children under 6
- Free entry on the first Sunday of the month
- Audio-guides for the historic site: €3
[FR / DUTCH / GERMAN / ENGL / IT / SP]

Free guided tours for individuals

- from Tuesday to Saturday at 11 AM for the historic site, at 3:30 PM for the design exhibition
- Sunday at 3 PM for the historic site, at 4.30 PM for the design exhibition.

BOOKING NUMBER

Advance reservation required for guided tours (by appointment) of exhibitions and/or historic site [FR / DUTCH / GERMAN / ENGL].

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reservations@grand-hornu.be

CATERING

Run by Chef Olivier De Vriendt, former second-in-command to Chef Sang Hoon Degeimbre at L'Air du Temps, Rizom offers a cuisine that is a cross between cultures.

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