



Vases Sestiere Collection Cassina © Photo Paola Pansini

Press
release

PATRICIA URQUIOLA METAMORPHOSIS

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

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INTRODUCTION

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 and Piero Lissoni. 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 her field. Her furniture, objects, accessories, textiles and ceramics stand out thanks to the approach she takes to materials, transforming them with colours and patterns. The exhibition at the Grand-Hornu predominantly focuses on Studio Patricia Urquiola's research over the last five years.

Hybrida 2022

© photo Francesco Squeglia



Hybrida 2022

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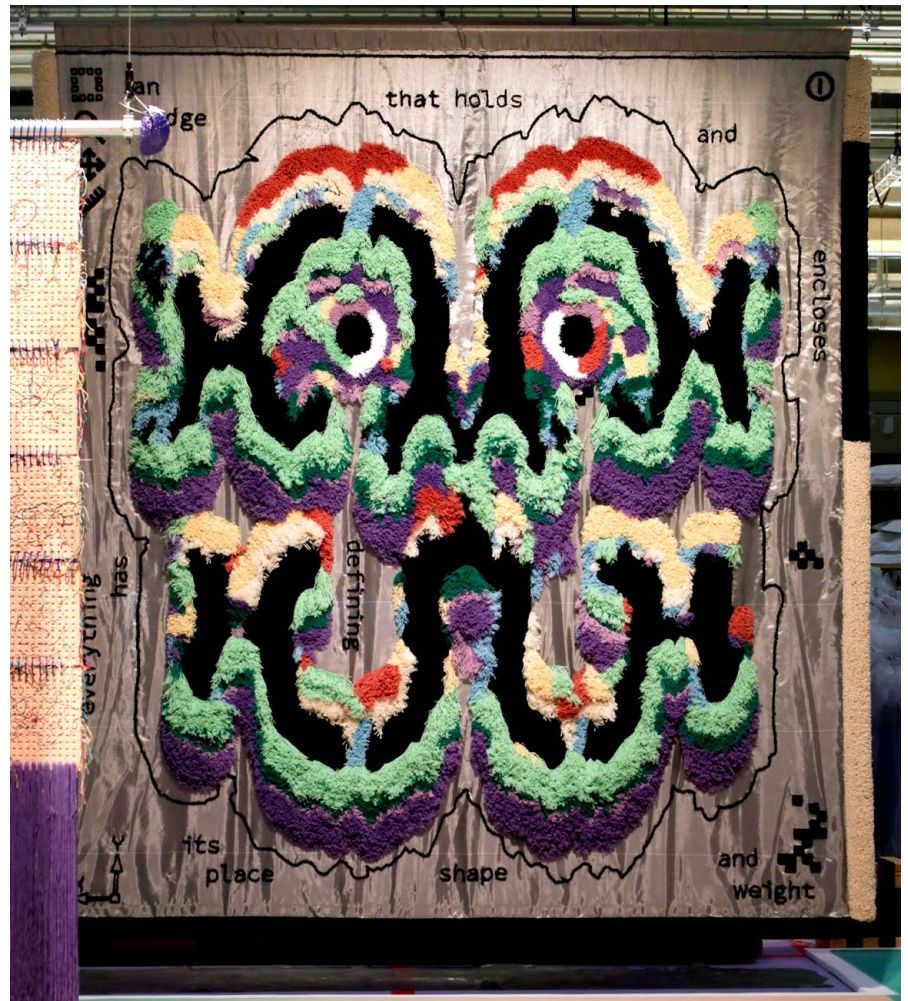


EXHIBITION

At a time when artificial intelligence is gradually shaking up some areas of the creative landscape, the exhibition **Patricia Urquiola. *Metamorphosis*** raises questions about our relationship with change, with how our world, matter, hierarchies, our perception of beauty, our story(ies) are all evolving... 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, deconstructivist 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 rubbish, 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. Patricia Urquiola is not someone who rejects change. From the very beginning, her work has embraced unexpected twists and turns, genre-blending and unpredictability. The unfinished, the reconciliation between craftsmanship and industrial production, adapting to the constantly evolving restrictions 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...

Among-Us, 2025
c-c tapis

© photo patricia Urquiola Studio



Alder collection, 2024
Mater

© photo patricia Urquiola Studio



¹Deleuze Gilles, Guattari Félix,
Mille Plateaux, Paris,
Les éditions de Minuit, 1980.

For some time, the Spanish designer's approach has 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. This metaphorical vision of the relationship with nature, with others and with oneself, borrowed from Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari¹, 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 figure emerge from her immense portfolio. 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. 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."²

² <https://aoc.media/opinion/2018/11/05/theorie-de-metamorphose/>

Console *Zaccaria*, 2024

© photo Cimento



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... Patricia Urquiola works alongside businesses as they carry out their research, shaping a formal understanding of these new materials. But it isn't only materials that she recycles: ideas can also be reinterpreted, going on to have multiple lives. And so alongside recent Studio Urquiola projects showcasing this research, historic models will also be on display in their original and current versions. Similarly, research or exhibition plans dreamt up years ago are brought back to life with a new perspective. The flow of Patricia Urquiola's mercurial ideas creep into the stables of the Grand-Hornu, opening up a world in which modern-day changes might defy visitors' expectations.

Vases *Sestiere* - Collection Cassina
Donation : Cassina
© photo Paola Pansini



Shimmer, high table
Donation : Glas Italia
© photo Glas Italia







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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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