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MILAN



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Six pieces from one week in Milan, and the year of thinking that followed it.

Featured on the cover: Giselle's Milan apartment.

Photographs of Milan Jewel by Giselle Koy.

FROM THE EDITOR

Milan is not a destination. It is a frequency.

Every year the city transmits something, through the showrooms, the palazzos thrown open for the week, the side streets where the real work is always happening, and the rest of the design world spends twelve months trying to decode it.

The main halls announce the week. The rooms I remember are usually three courtyards in, behind a door someone has propped open. In the corner of a courtyard installation. In the conversation after the lights go down. In the object that stops you without knowing why.

This issue is my translation.

What I brought back from Milan this year is not a trend report. It is a set of convictions. About rarity. About craft. About the difference between a room that photographs beautifully and a room that holds a life. About the Italian lineage: art, research, making, industry, and what it means to carry that forward without nostalgia.

Nina Yashar called rarity an attitude and a receptivity. I have been thinking about that ever since.

This is the issue where we talk about what rarity actually means, and what it costs to pursue it.

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THE MOOD

*One courtyard, and most of what this
issue is about.*



The marble wall in the kitchen, the seam running the full height. Milan Jewel, the morning before the week began.

MILAN JEWEL



THE SIGNAL

What Milan Is Actually Saying

*On Salone Raritas, the Italian lineage, and why
the 1% of the hunt has never mattered more.*

Nilufar sets rare twentieth century pieces beside work commissioned this year, and lets the room make the argument for both.

NILUFAR DEPOT, MILAN

Salone del Mobile launched something new this year: Salone Raritas. A dedicated section for rare objects, antiques and high-craft pieces. And it matters. You feel it in the hand before you see it.

What Raritas is naming is something the best interiors have always known: a room built only from what was easy to find will never fully settle into itself. The rare piece is not the exception to the room. It is the reason the room works.

I have spent my career looking for those pieces. At the stone yard at dawn. In the back rooms of estate archives. At his bench, in the room where it is made.

The hunt is not romantic. It is disciplined, patient, and often expensive in ways that have nothing to do with price.

The Italian design tradition is humanistic: art, research, craftsmanship and industry held together in one lineage. Sottsass. Branzi. That is the tradition I studied at Istituto Marangoni.

It is the tradition I carry into every room I design, regardless of budget or geography.

What Milan reminded me this year is that the lineage is not a museum piece. It is an operating system.

The designers who are doing the most interesting work right now are not nostalgic for it. They are fluent in it. They know the rules well enough to know exactly which ones to break.

That is what I brought home. Not objects. A recalibration.

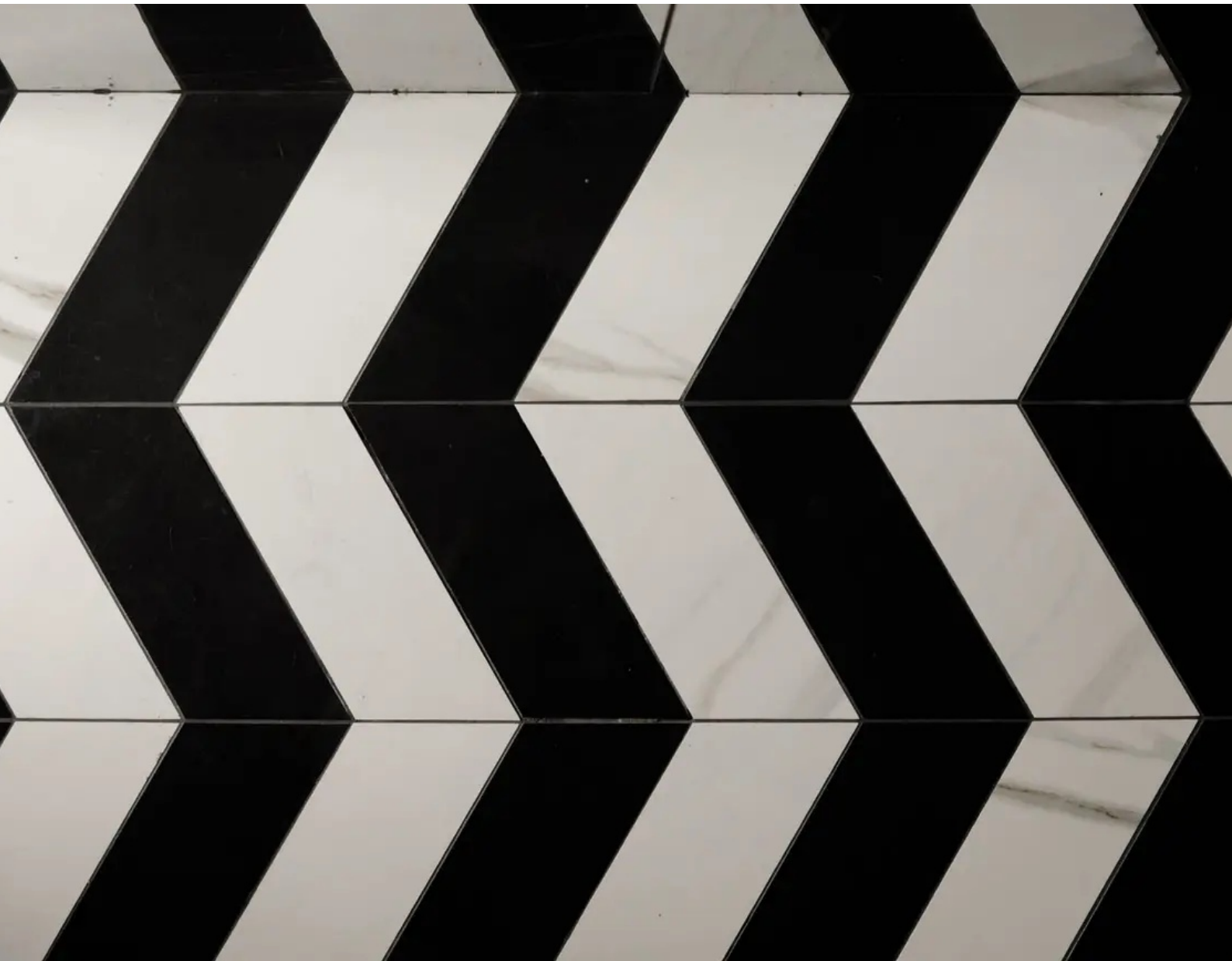
Salone del Mobile, Milan.



*Doing less, at a standard almost
nobody is willing to pay for.*

Hermès Home. Folded wool in mustard and stripe, the monogram in gold.
The clearest argument of the week for doing less at a higher standard.

SALONE DEL MOBILE ·
PAVILION 9



THE OBJECT

The Room That Holds

*Why the rare piece is never the exception. It is
the reason.*

There is a moment I watch for in every finished room. It comes just before the client finds their words. They step in, they go quiet, and for a few seconds nothing is happening except that the room is working.

I call it the silent frequency. It is what I am designing toward in every project.

The rooms that achieve it are never the ones with the largest budgets or the most impressive sourcing. They are the rooms where one decision was made that made every other decision legible.

Usually it is the rare piece. The object that was not supposed to be there. The one that took six months to find, or arrived from somewhere unexpected, or was made by someone who does not do custom work but agreed to this once.

In Milan Jewel, it was the artwork running the length of the long wall. Remove it and the room becomes a very good renovation. Keep it and the room becomes a conversation.

This is what I mean when I talk about the 1% of the hunt. I am not looking for the most expensive option. I am looking for the thing that unlocks the room. The thing that makes you understand, standing in it, why all the other choices were made.

*When I find it, everything else
becomes easy.*

THE OBJECT · MILAN JEWEL

THE EDUCATION

5 Things I Learned in Milan Design School

What Istituto Marangoni taught me that no amount of sourcing ever could.

In the course Interior Design for Design Professionals at Istituto Marangoni, I had a front row seat to the ethos of the design capital of the world, as well as Design Week. Here are my top five nuggets.

1 Design for Human Connection

Design is there to make people smile. That defines the Italian approach: purposeful creations that blend comfort, well-being, and delight to elevate human experience.

Istituto Marangoni teaches craft, whether fashion, furniture, or interiors, that resonates emotionally while maintaining refined functionality. Keep it a human-centric focus, creating work that feels both considered and deeply personal.

The lesson is not that delight is decoration. It is that a room which gives nothing back is unfinished, whatever it cost.

2 Learn from Italy's Design Dynasties

Milan is the epicenter of design legacies, where generational craftsmanship fuels global influence. The houses here are worth studying less for their signatures than for how a workshop holds a standard across three generations.

At Istituto Marangoni, students immerse themselves in those legacies: studying ateliers, archives, and techniques, with visits to the studios where the work is still made.

MERIDIANI

MERIDIANI



3 Master the Art of Conceptual Sophistication

A great interior isn't a random assemblage. It's a cohesive concept, where every element aligns with a deliberate narrative. These timeless foundations ensure relevance, whether the design is neoclassical or avant-garde.

Milan's ethos embraces bold materials: marble, silk, leather. Paired with modern technology, like pixelated screens or sculptural light fixtures against aged villa walls. Students are taught to weave this contrast into spaces that are both inviting and provocative.

4 Technology as a Material

Digital fabrication, parametric modeling and interactive installation sit alongside the tactile soul of Italian craftsmanship rather than replacing it.

Picture massive, sculptural light fixtures illuminating faded villa halls, or screens casting dynamic patterns across ancient frescoes. This fusion of high-tech and high-heritage creates spaces that feel alive and innovative.



5 Show Off with Purpose

Milanese design thrives on spectacle, but it's never gratuitous. The city was the seat of the Western Roman Empire for more than a century, and it still celebrates materials that command attention: handwoven silks, burnished leathers, gleaming marbles.

Think heavy textures over a minimalist frame, or a single commanding piece anchoring a spare room. The key is restraint: spectacle serves the concept, not the ego.

High craft environments that feel grand yet approachable. This is the hallmark of Italy's ability to make extravagance timeless.

Five days of it, and the thing I kept writing down was not a technique. It was a posture.

Istituto Marangoni. Interior Design for Design Professionals.

END OF SECTION

A modern kitchen interior featuring dark, textured upper and lower cabinets. The countertop is a light-colored material with a marble pattern. A built-in oven is visible in the upper right section. The backsplash is a large, light-colored marble slab. A gold-colored faucet is mounted on the countertop. The overall aesthetic is sophisticated and contemporary.

COMING SOON

Stay at Milan Jewel. Learn Italian.

An idea that arrived quietly and won't leave.

I had an idea.

I think a lot of people would love to come stay at Milan Jewel and spend their mornings at the Scuola Leonardo da Vinci, one of the most respected Italian language schools in the city.

Two or three weeks. The kind of trip where you leave speaking differently and thinking differently.

The apartment is extraordinary. You know that. But what I've been realizing is that the experience of being in that space, in that neighborhood, in that city, is something that should be shared.

I am working on building it out as a proper short-term rental, and I want to create curated packages: accommodation at Milan Jewel, enrollment at the language school, a few things I have personally sourced from the city. Places to eat, makers to visit, the itinerary I would give a close friend.

I've had Milan Jewel for years. It took a quiet moment this year to understand what it actually is.

Sometimes you are so close to something that you stop seeing it clearly.

More soon.

MILAN JEWEL



MEET GISELLE

Giselle Koy

Interiors, architecture, curation.

I have been creating my whole life. The medium keeps changing. Metal became jewelry. Fabric became fashion. Then graphics, then sculpture, then six books. Rooms turned out to be the form that holds all of it.

Before anything else I ask one question: what is your heart's desire for your space? It is not really a design question. The answer has been a \$29 lamp. It has also been a sixteenth-century carpet from an auction room. What I am listening for is the same either way. The budget changes. The question never does.

Fine art degree, University of Texas. Sculpture major.
Interior Design for Design Professionals, Istituto Marangoni, Milan.
Six published books.
Invited to select Pantone's Colors of the Year.
Work in Austin, Sedona, Roatán, and Milan.
Palazzo Lavaca. Venus Villa. Minicircle. Milan Jewel.
Christie's. HGTV. Pantone. Helmüt.

gisellekoy.com

Everyone deserves to love their space.

