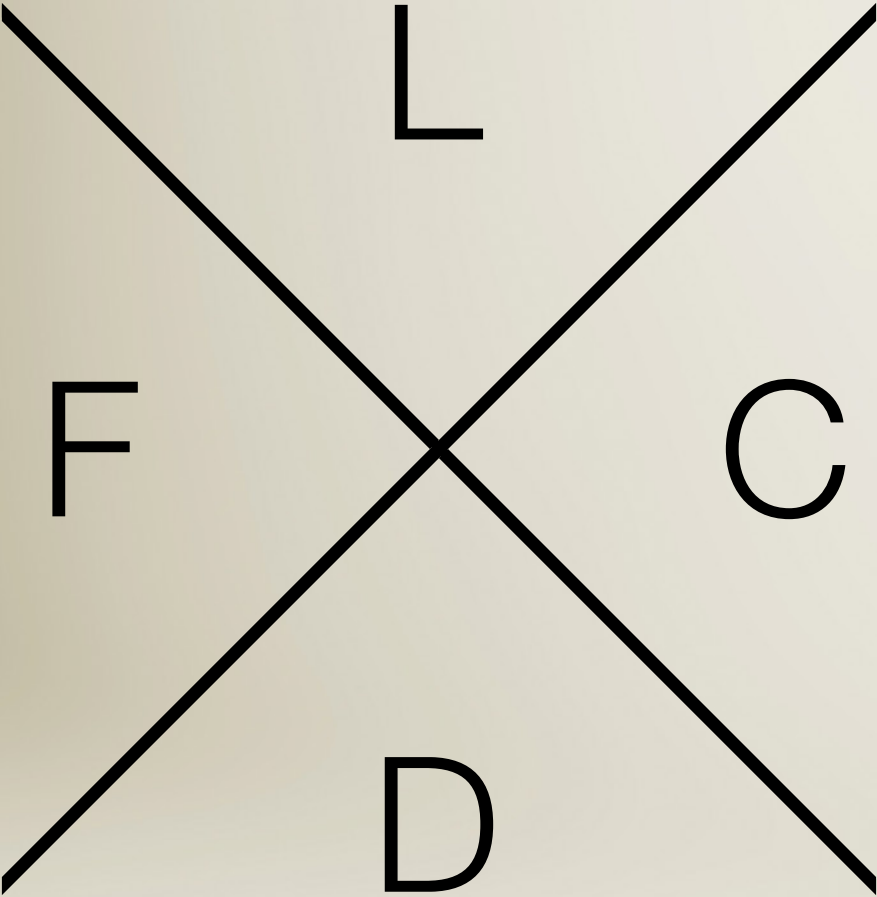


Lake Como Design Festival

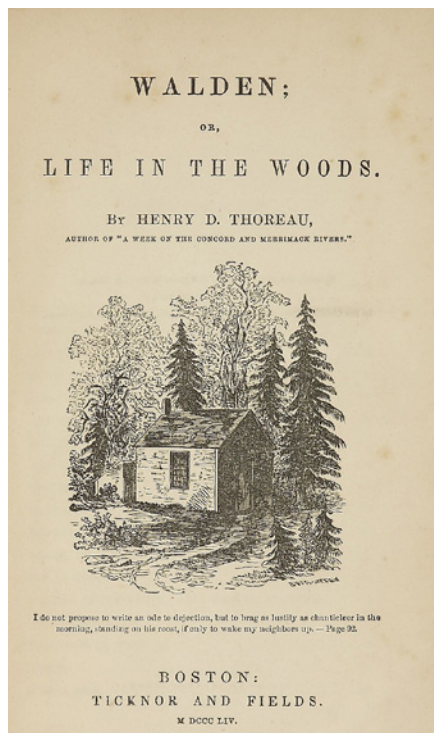


CONTEMPORARY DESIGN SELECTION

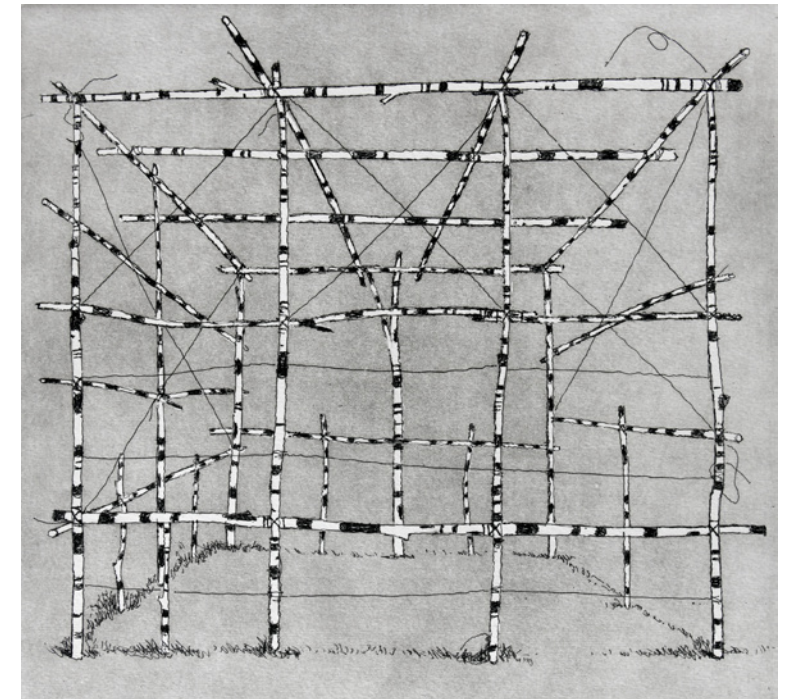
confine

12 — 20 September 2026

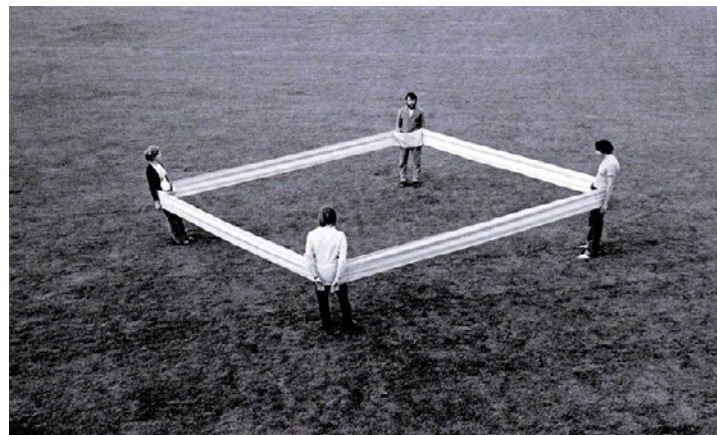
Lake Como Design Festival announces its eighth edition, taking place **from September 12th to 20th, 2026**. ***Confine*** (Boundary) is the central theme of this new appointment. A boundary not only as a line that divides territories, ideas, states of mind, or levels of consciousness, but also as a point of encounter—a space that defines while connecting. It is a zone of tension and transformation, of contact and exchange. To reflect on this theme today is not only to question where “the other” ends, but to rediscover ourselves — to understand who we are and the direction we wish to take. Nine days of exhibitions, installations, and talks will unfold across a network of venues, offering multiple perspectives on the concept of the boundary.



Richard Proenneke, Twin Lakes, 1968



Architetture povere, Andrea Branzi



Four Body Weights, Franz Erhard Walther, 1968



Teeter-totter wall, Ronald Rael+Virginia San Fratello

We live in an age in which the concept of borders has returned to the center of political, social, and cultural discourse. Walls, fences, spontaneous barriers, frontiers, controls: **the language of separation** shapes the space we inhabit. But borders are not just dividing lines: they are also **thresholds**, meeting places, and devices for negotiation. The word itself, from the Latin *confinis* (*Con*: "with" or "together" and *finis*: "end," "limit," or "boundary", indicates **what is shared**: the meeting point between two territories. It is a **common space** that can be defended, but also **reinvented**. Borders can be rigid—walls, fences, ghettos—or “soft”: a membrane that filters, protects, connects. Thinking of borders as **thresholds** means overcoming the logic of closure to restore their vital and creative value.

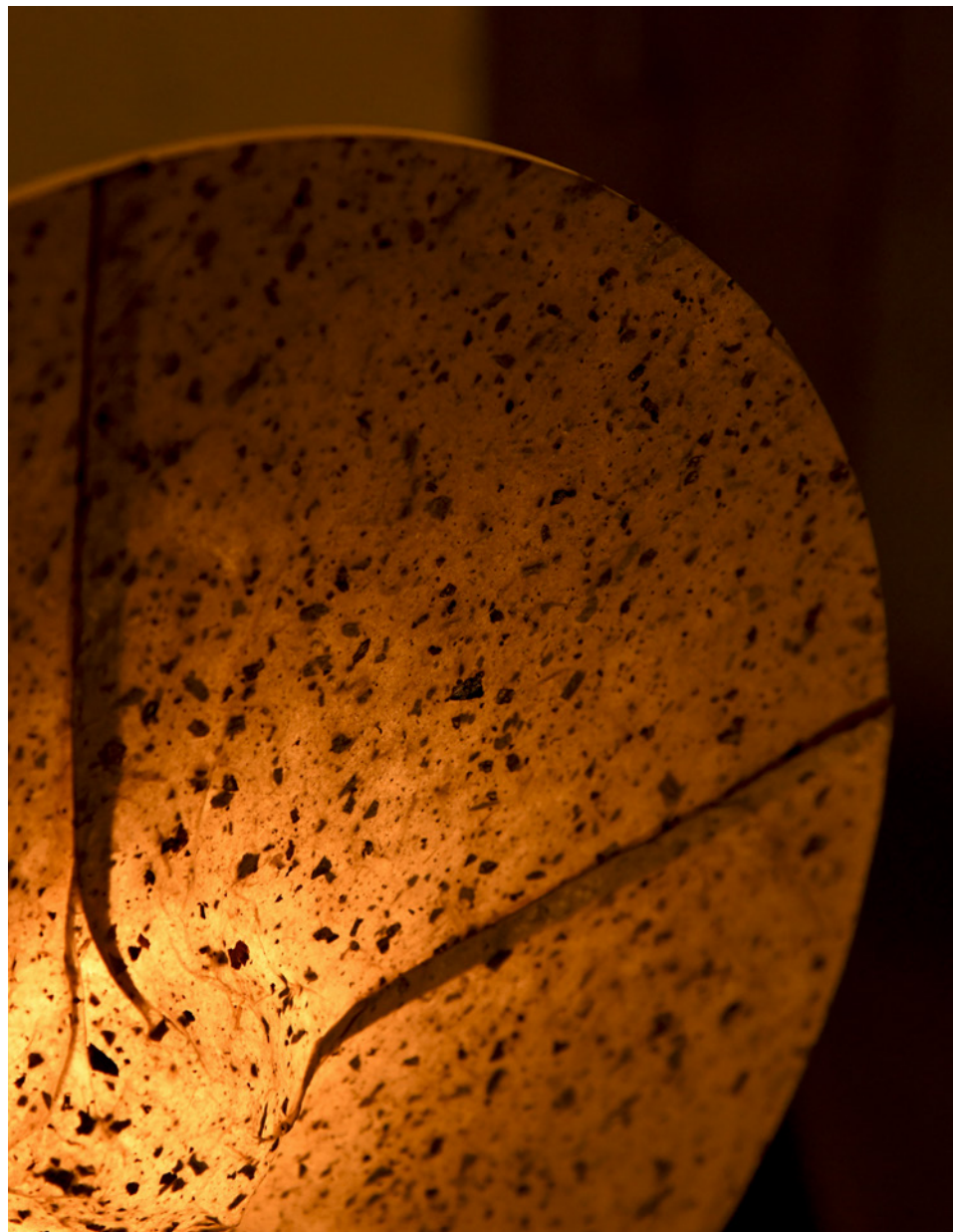
As the theorist of *liquid society* Zygmunt Bauman reminds us, “Borders are battlefields. But they are also ‘**creative workshops**’ where the seeds of future forms of humanity germinate.” They should not be understood simply as lines that delimit or separate—they are not horizons that divide different territories, spheres, or realities. On the contrary, the sociologist emphasizes, **the border is an interface**: a place of interaction, encounter, and exchange, where cognitive horizons and everyday practices intertwine. And it is precisely in these **liminal spaces**, wrote Tomás Maldonado, that our “design hope” resides: **the ability to imagine and build new worlds through creative practice**.

The theme of boundaries is central to **modern design**, which must make amends and question itself. Abandoning designs that are overly focused on the subject, decentralising and sharing the design process with other living beings (humans, more-than-humans) takes place in the **border space**: as Gloria Anzaldúa wrote, the **borderland**, the *Frontera*, is not a space of opposition but of **liminality**, of **marginality**, and it is here that revolutionary acts can take place. A space that is not outside but **deep within existence**, a **making-border** where we can exercise our human rights and responsibilities. The border indicates the space of **exploration**, of the **margin**, of **risk**. It is the area where design meets **otherness** and opens up to the **unexpected: peripheral territories, landscapes of transit, hybrid practices** that combine activism, design and sciences. Standing on the border thus becomes a **political act**: it means redefining what we mean by public space, community and freedom of movement.

The project then becomes a **practice of knowledge**, oscillating between discipline and interdisciplinarity, between prototyping and critical reflection, between uniqueness and reproducibility. In the field of independent design, when we talk about **reproducibility**, we do not necessarily mean industrial reproducibility, but rather the **capacity for expansion** and **dissemination, scalability** and **transferability** of a project, in this sense democratic, **accessible** and **adaptable**. These are valuable qualities, now more than ever.



Grond Studio (BE) – Seventh edition, September 2025



Studio Lilium (IT) – Seventh edition, September 2025

With its **Contemporary Design Selection**, the **Lake Como Design Festival** once again this year gives voice to a multitude of people and cultures who find here a space for reciprocity, learning, transmission and sharing. Designers, artisans, artists and researchers from countless places and backgrounds. Men and women on both sides of the border who, in this context, break down barriers, languages and distances, metaphorically converging in what the great French “gardener” Gilles Clément defined in his Manifesto (2004) as the *Third Landscape*, **a refuge for diversity**.



Ben Kicic x Veragouth x Xilema (USA/CH) – Seventh edition, September 2025



Selma Wallbom (SE) – Seventh edition, September 2025

Partnership

Lake Como Design Festival boasts collaboration with selected media partners who have contributed to the success of these sixth editions and believed in the quality of our journey. From 2018 to 2025 the festival has collaborated with:

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To participate

This open call invites to take part in the selection process for the eighth edition of the Lake Como Design Festival, within the “Contemporary Design Selection” section. **The deadline for submitting applications is April 30th, 2026.** After the selection, chosen participants will receive a participation contract, which must be signed and returned to the Organization, along with the participation fee. **The participation fee must be paid by May 15th, 2026.**

This year’s theme is **Confine** (i.e. Border), as outlined in the brochure. Projects will be considered eligible according to their relevance to the theme, as well as the quality of the piece and its development process. The selected works will be showcased in Como from September 12–20, 2026, within a group exhibition **curated by Giovanna Massoni** and **directed by Francesca Prandelli**. The positioning of the projects and the exhibition setup will be determined at the sole discretion of the curator and the director.



Marta Abbot (CZ-US/IT) – Seventh edition, September 2025



Agglomerati (IM) x Sho Ota (JP/NL) x Bianco67 (IT) – Seventh edition, September 2025

Giovanna Massoni (born in Milan, lives and works in Brussels) is an independent curator and consultant working in the field of design and visual arts. Since 2005 she has collaborated regularly with institutions for the promotion of Belgian and international design. Constantly searching for collaborative methodologies and innovative forms that can valorize and communicate the cultural and social value of design, she strongly supports this practice for its ability to facilitate openness, interconnections and interdisciplinary collaboration, today indispensable for the construction of a new ecosystem of values and objects.

Francesca Prandelli (born in Brescia, lives and works in Como) has been the coordinator of the Lake Como Design Festival since its first edition in 2018, and since 2021 she serves as the director of the Contemporary Design Selection. She came to this role after a long experience in the collectible sector, where she worked as a buyer and trend scout, honing a keen eye for quality, research, and the selection of unique pieces. As an art buyer for furniture and lighting brands, she brings to the festival an in-depth knowledge of production processes, market dynamics, and relationships with designers, artisans, and companies.

OPEN CALL

This open call is aimed at designers, artisans, architects, artists, companies, editors, galleries; duos of designers of different nationalities, genders and/or backgrounds; groups/collectives of designers; designers working in urban, rural or suburban communities; designers who collaborate with non-design businesses or associations (e.g. restaurants, reception homes, prisons, reception centres, etc.). Publishers and galleries are also welcome to sponsor participants and may submit one or more artists.

Unique pieces, limited editions and serial products are admitted to the selection for the indoor and outdoor categories for a maximum of two projects per designer, **at least one of which must be a preview.**

**To participate, please fill out
the APPLICATION FORM by April 30th, 2026**

The participation fee of € 800 will only be requested from selected candidates. It provides a package designed to maximize the participant's visibility, ensure a professional experience and create genuine opportunities for networking and growth. The fee includes:

- N.2 press tours dedicated to national and international design media
- N.2 invitations to the opening event, an exclusive opportunity to meet participants, journalists, and sponsors
- N.2 unlimited-entry free passes for the entire duration of the Festival
- N.8 exhibition days open to the public
- Promotion in national and international magazines
- Dedicated content on the Festival's official website
- Features on the Festival's Instagram profile
- Insurance coverage for the work(s) for the entire duration of the event
- Professional handling and storage of the work(s)
- Guided visits to n.3 leading local companies, offering an in-depth look at the regional production landscape
- Meetings with prominent figures in the cultural and design fields to encourage dialogue and inspiration
- Networking sessions with architecture studios to create meaningful and potentially lasting connections

Optional: a dedicated photo shooting is available for € 250, including at least n.5 professional shots of the work displayed in the group exhibition. High-resolution JPG images will be delivered at the end of the Festival, offering valuable material for portfolios and promotional purposes.

Prices do not include 22% VAT, which applies depending on the following cases: Italian VAT number: +22% VAT, EU VAT number registered in VIES: VAT exempt, EU VAT number not registered in VIES: +22% VAT, Non-EU VAT number: VAT exempt, No VAT number provided: +22% VAT.

* If the installation and/or dismantling of the work requires particularly complex operations, such as the use of additional personnel and/or equipment, the Organisation reserves the right to charge the participant an extra fee. This will be communicated in advance through a specific quote, which must be approved before any work proceeds.

Transportation: The participant is responsible for all costs related to the transport and insurance of the work(s). Works may only be shipped in strong, transport-ready packaging starting Monday, August 24th 2026, with delivery required by Friday, September 4th 2026. The warehouse address will be provided upon confirmation of selection. Participants may also deliver their work in person or through an authorized representative directly to the exhibition venue. The delivery address and date will be communicated after selection confirmation. At the end of the Festival, works will be returned to the warehouse. Participants may collect their own work(s) there from September 23rd to October 9th 2026. From October 10th 2026, a storage fee of €25 per day will be applied for each uncollected work. Alternatively, participants may pick up their own work(s) directly from the exhibition venue on Sunday, September 20th from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM and on Monday, September 21st from 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM. For projects coming from extra-EU countries, the participant must appoint an Italian importer and ensure shipment under DDP (Delivery Duty Paid) terms, or alternatively, personally deliver the work to the exhibition venue. The Organization and the warehouse will not handle customs clearance on behalf of the participant and will not cover transport costs, taxes or duties. If the courier issues invoices for taxes or customs charges to the Organization or warehouse, the amount will be recharged to the participant, with an additional 20% to cover administrative handling fees.

Accommodation: The Festival takes place in September, which is a peak season on Lake Como. It is therefore essential to book travel and accommodation well in advance. Each year, the Organization arranges agreements with local accommodations at favorable rates. Available agreements will be communicated after the selection is confirmed.

Insurance: Works will be insured under a standard insurance policy for the entire duration of the Festival. The final insurance value of each work must be communicated to the Organization by July 10th 2026.

Promotional Material: Participants are allowed to provide only small-format promotional materials, such as business cards, flyers, brochures, postcards and similar items. All materials will be displayed in a dedicated area designated by the Organization, alongside materials from other selected participants. Promotional materials cannot be placed next to the exhibited project or integrated into the exhibition setup. The Organization will manage and arrange the promotional materials uniformly for all participants, following criteria that facilitate the public's visit. Participants are responsible for the quantity and replenishment of their own materials. The Organization does not guarantee continuous availability once materials run out. Any materials placed in unauthorized areas will be removed.

Withdrawal: In case of withdrawal from participation, the participant must notify the Organization in writing at info@lakecomodesignfestival.com. The Organization reserves the right to retain the full amount paid as a penalty for damages incurred. If the Festival is canceled due to force majeure or government restrictions, the participant will be fully reimbursed for the fee paid.

Past editions



Contemporary Design Selection 2025



Contemporary Design Selection 2025 – Workshop



Contemporary Design Selection 2025 – Closing





Contemporary Design Selection 2024 - Exhibition



Contemporary Design Selection 2024 – Talk / Jan Boelen (Atelier LUMA)



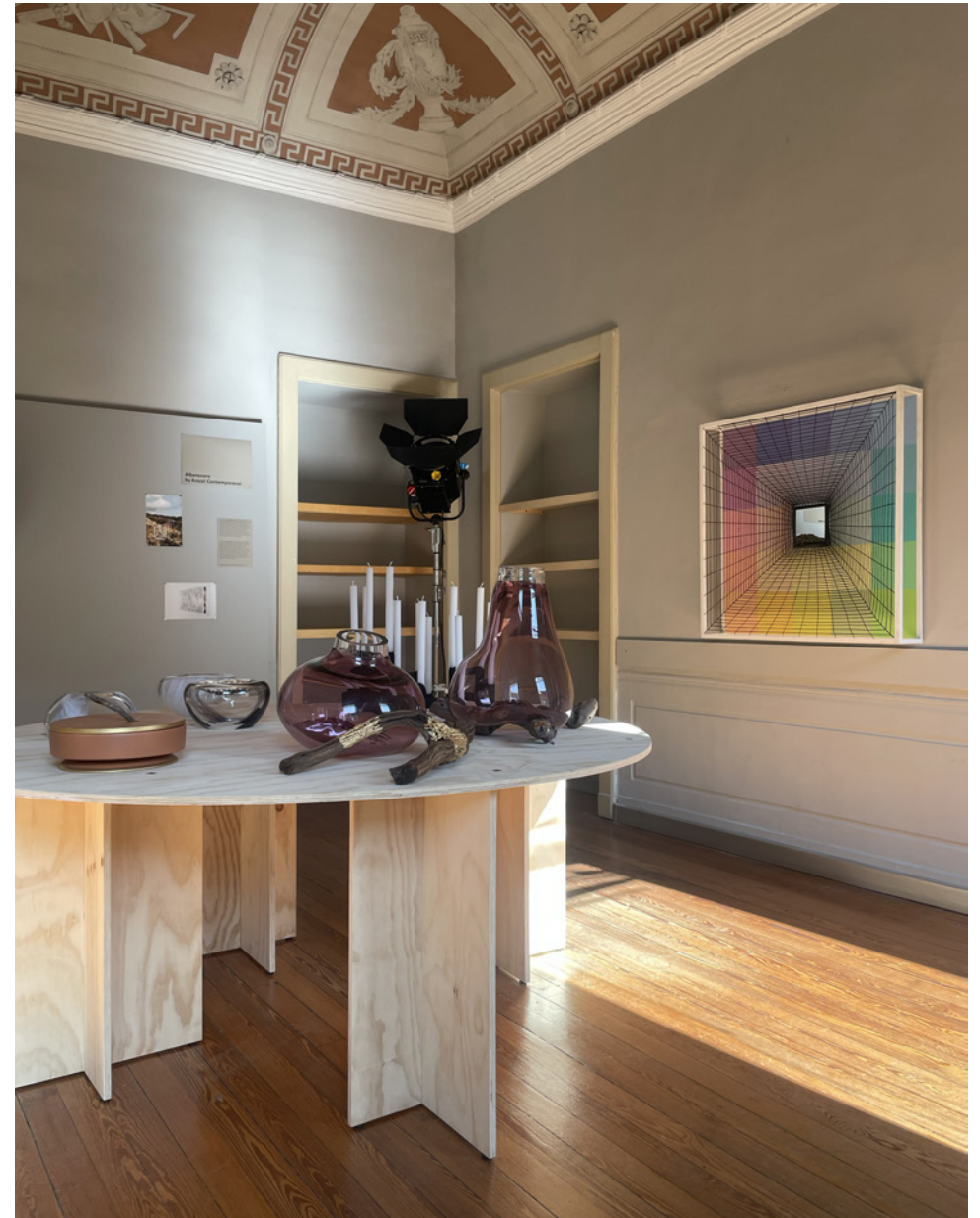
Contemporary Design Selection 2024 – Press tour



Contemporary Design Selection 2024 – Closing



Contemporary Design Selection 2023 – Exhibition



Contemporary Design Selection 2023 – Exhibition



Contemporary Design Selection 2023 – Bookshop



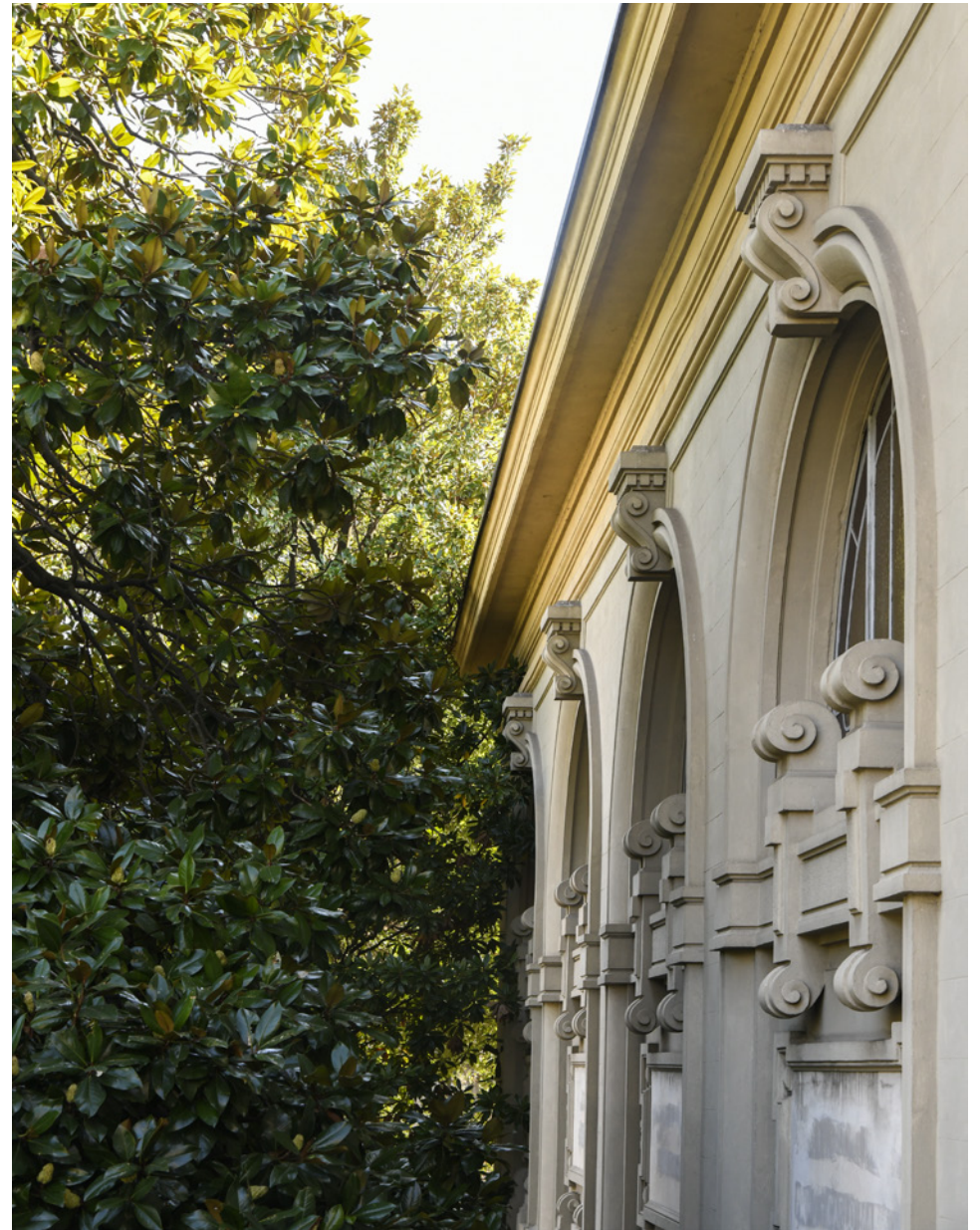
Contemporary Design Selection 2023 – Exhibition



Contemporary Design Selection 2023 – Exhibition



Contemporary Design Selection 2022 – Exhibition





Contemporary Design Selection 2022 – Press tour



Contemporary Design Selection 2022 – Exhibition



Contemporary Design Selection 2022 – Exhibition



Contemporary Design Selection 2021 – Exhibition



Contemporary Design Selection 2021 – Exhibition



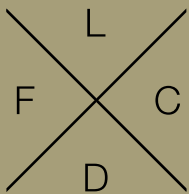
Contemporary Design Selection 2021 – Exhibition



Contemporary Design Selection 2021 – Exhibition



Contemporary Design Selection 2021 – Exhibition



Coordination

Francesca Prandelli

fp@lakecomodesignfestival.com

Organising committee

info@lakecomodesignfestival.com



Lake Como Design Festival
is a project by Wonderlake Como ets