

Wallpaper*

Formafantasma's new collection explores nostalgia and the queer identity

Formafantasma present 'La Casa Dentro' at Fondazione ICA Milano (until 19 July 2024), where they draw inspiration from the domestic sphere and their own nostalgic perceptions of home

By Laura May Todd
April 14, 2024



Formafantasma. The Home Within Exhibition view. Courtesy Fondazione ICA Milano and the artists (Image credit: Andrea Rossetti)

For as long as [Formafantasma](#), the [Milan](#)-based design duo made up of Andrea Trimarchi and Simone Farresin, have been operating as a studio, their work has largely been characterised by its rigorous academic approach. Previous subjects have included [the environmental effects of the wool industry](#), [contemporary forestry](#), and [the impact of technological waste](#). But for their most recent exhibition, 'La Casa Dentro,' which opened during [Milan Design Week 2024](#) at the Fondazione ICA Milano (and is on

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view until 19 July 2024), the pair looked inward, seeking inspiration from the domestic sphere and their own nostalgic perceptions of home.

Formafantasma present 'La Casa Dentro'



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The stark industrial confines of the ICA, located in Milan's southern periphery, provide the backdrop to what Trimarchi and Farresin describe as a personal reckoning with Modernism. According to the designers, recent upheavals in their private lives forced them to rethink what they once considered truths of the 20th-century canon: the centring of rationality over emotion; the dominance of industrial aesthetics; and, most importantly, the absolute rejection of anything that could be classed as feminine or queer. The pair, who are also a couple, see the exhibition as an exercise in unlearning principles imposed by formal design education. For the first time, they have introduced their own personal narratives into their work — one that began amidst the quotidian finery of the family home.



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'La Casa Dentro is referring to an interiorised version of the home that is a hybrid between personal memories and a more intellectual understanding of architecture and design,' the pair said in a conversation with curator Alberto Salvadori. Indeed, that hybridisation manifests in the literal sense. The collection is composed of furniture that contrasts strict Modernist aesthetics — curved steel and stark wooden planks — with elements they say reference their childhood memories of home like 'hand embroideries, painted floral patterns and silk volants.'



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For instance, a chaise longue — composed of a body made up of unyielding blue-stained wooden boards and a bent steel armrest — has been decorated with a single hand-painted flower. Next to it sits a chimeric armchair: the bottom half upholstered with floral-embroidered fabric and a pleated sofa skirt, while the back and armrests are again made of wood and steel, this time stained a pale pistachio green. The collection's standout piece, however, is a hanging lamp made up of a long horizontal cast glass shade suspended by steel rods. All along the metal supports, delicate glass flowers have been attached with metal ties, creating a sense of tension that feels as if it could shatter the fragile blooms at any moment.



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'We wanted to depart from this staple of modern design and to stress its implicit ideologies by pairing it with decorative patterns either painted or embroidered,' they explain of the collection. 'This isn't a postmodern pastiche, neither an ode to campness nor to kitsch. It is a romantic attempt to dignify personal memories and what is often culturally vilified, the decorative, the cute and, by extension of meaning, the feminine.'



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'La Casa Dentro' by Formafantasma is on view during [Milan Design Week 2024](#) and until 19 July 2024

Fondazione ICA Milano

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