

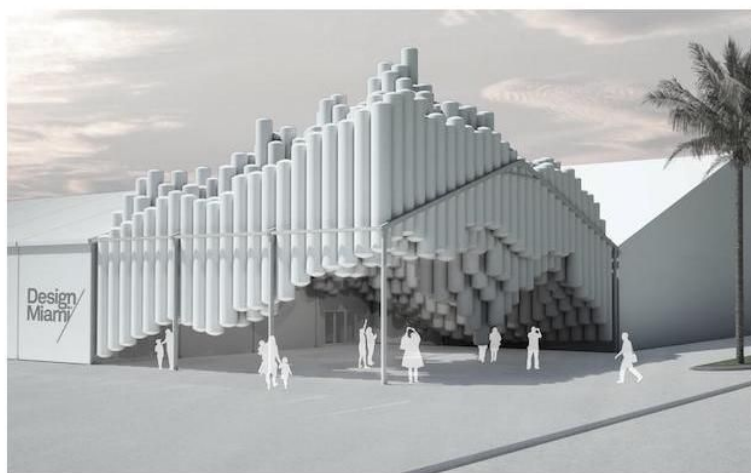
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At Design Miami, boundaries blur between creative disciplines

From December 5-9, influencers from the worlds of culture and business convene in South Florida for Design Miami. This year, there's a focus on interdisciplinary creativity.



By [Reena Jana](#) | December 4, 2012 -- 22:06 GMT (22:06 GMT) | Topic: [Innovation](#)



What does beautiful design *smell* like? Can art and architecture ever be considered one and the same? How does fashion relate to furniture, and what can creatives and executives in these fields learn from one another?

These questions and more are likely to be answered -- or at least pondered -- over and over, at [Design Miami](#) this week. It's an annual, ultra-chic convention that takes place from December 5-9 in Miami's Design District. The fair, which was founded in 2005, will feature 35 international design galleries showing exquisite pieces such as Swan Chair, an all-marble, curvaceous seat and matching marble ottoman by Satyendra Pakhale and shown by the Gabrielle Ammann Gallery. Or the LineLight, a sleek minimalist lamp that looks like floating, ghostly rectangles, by Jowanna Grawander and shown by the Carpenters Workshop Gallery. But beyond the lovely (and, needless to say, expensive) objects on display, a trend seems to be emerging at this year's Design Miami: that of designers and entrepreneurs seeking ideas and collaborations outside of their usual creative disciplines.

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Reflective of this trend: the recipient of the 2012 Designer of the Year Award, given by Design Miami. This year, it goes to [Acconci Studio](#), founded by poet-turned-performance artist-turned architect Vito Acconci, whose body-related art from the 1970s is taught in art history classes at universities and who soon will be designing a playground climbing structure in Miami set to open in 2014. On the opening day of Design Miami on December 5, a talk with renowned fashion designer Diane von Furstenberg, known for her iconic yet available-off-the-rack wrap dresses, will take place at the Design Miami venue. Her talk pushes the focus of the fair away from collectible, industrial design. (And as the [New York Times](#) noted last week, fashion brands are a big presence during the duration of Design Miami this year: Prada will be opening a store timed for the fair; and Cartier, Dior Homme, and others are hosting events in the South Florida city's Design District.)

And perhaps most intriguingly, on December 8, Design Miami partners with [Be Open](#), a think tank that looks at new technologies and business models and how they can be used to spark future innovation. They will present a discussion on "a holistic approach to user-oriented design through an Investigation of the multi-sensory experience," as the Design Miami website explains.

That varied panel includes, among others, Carter Cleveland, founder of the art-selling site [Art.sy](#), which is powered by a Pandora-style algorithm to match collectors' tastes with art and design collectibles; Dawn Goldworm, founder of "olfactory branding" company [12.29](#), which creates custom scents for hotels, stores, and other businesses and considers the smells intellectual property; [Tuur van Balen](#), a designer who along with collaborator Revital Cohen makes thought-provoking sculptures and art projects using real-world scientific equipment (such as life-support systems) or even life forms; and "eating designer" [Marije Vogelzang](#), who explores the role of food in cultural rituals.

"Design is a creative discipline that in itself spans a large spectrum, from products, interiors, graphics and fashion to food, scent, and interaction design," Marianne Goebel, director of Design Miami, said in an e-mail interview with [SmartPlanet](#) in the days leading up to the fair's opening.

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"Also, design is not created in a vacuum," she continued. "The design discourse and process embraces influences from many other disciplines. The access to new information and production technologies has gradually made the design process even more collaborative -- designers collaborating with specialists from other fields to create a final product or experience that cannot be easily classified."

Design Miami, and the theme of cross-disciplinary approaches to culture and its commercial side, can be considered part of a larger phenomenon related to one of the art world's most popular contemporary art fairs: [Art Basel Miami Beach](#), which also takes place from December 5-9. The two are so entwined that Art Basel, which originated in Basel, Switzerland in 1970 and takes place each summer (and later created its Miami offshoot in 2002), is also considered a sister fair of Design Miami Basel--founded in 2006. Got that straight, with all the interchangeable city references? To explain, the Miami design fair has its own offshoot, too, now in Switzerland. The symbiotic relationship illustrates the power of mixing two creative fields and sharing audiences to cultivate new attendees.

After all, these gatherings attract the same type of potential consumer: globe-trotting fans of contemporary culture, who seek out the latest trends, and who generally have deep pockets to purchase not only art works by popular painters and sculptors, but also furniture by trendy industrial designers. And during Design Miami and Art Basel Miami Beach, countless smaller fairs and exhibitions hoping to attract wealthy collectors and influential curators and critics, have popped up over the past decade.

Art Basel also has its share of cross-disciplinary programming this year. On December 9, for instance, it presents a panel on "The Artist as Musician," looking at how numerous international artists also perform music. It might seem to be a stretch to some; but considering the rising trend of multi-faceted creativity that's going to be on display in Miami over the next several days, it's not.

Image: Rendering of a sculptural outdoor pavillion at Design Miami, designed by Snarkitecture, courtesy Design Miami

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