

Modern Sensibility

B&B Italia × Design Anthology

Italian designer Monica Armani has forged a compelling oeuvre with B&B Italia, marked by a modernist approach with contemporary and heritage gestures



Monica Armani's long-standing collaboration with B&B Italia continues to bear fruit, most recently in a fresh series of Allure O' tables with the iconic Madison mirror's shape and new versions of the Flair O' armchair and Heri O' chair. The designer's distinct modernist sensibility — and the names of the pieces — pay homage to Jackie O. 'I love many things from the 60s, first of all fashion and graphics. Jackie O is a style icon, a pioneering woman in many ways. I've always admired her,' Armani says. Here, she speaks with us about her approach and oeuvre.

***Design Anthology:* Your pieces for B&B Italia all have a very clear sense of structure. Does that come from your training as an architect?**

Monica Armani: I've always embraced the maxim quoted by great masters, 'from the spoon to the city and vice versa'. My design and architecture are different only as a matter of scale and obviously function.

You've said that your designs are about family. How does that manifest in the O' range?

There's always an idea of collection in the basis of my projects. I think that today's international-style interior design is increasingly sophisticated, and therefore creating a broad family of products is essential. I always try to give a lot of soul to the objects I design, and people seem to appreciate that. So it's nice to create products with the same common thread over the years. This is also how my work with B&B Italia aims to create authentically long-lasting objects, of great value over time and with an eye to sustainability.

This year I'm remaining faithful to this concept with a new version of the Flair O' chair that's wider in proportions, in perfect balance between a low dining chair and an easy chair; plus the Heri O' chair, designed for a table height of 66 centimetres high, which makes for a way more relaxed experience at the table; and a series of smaller Allure O' tables — side and coffee tables that reinterpret the graphics of the 60s.

Some of your pieces, like the Flair O', combine contemporary manufacturing and traditional craft. What drew you to that, and how has B&B Italia made it possible?

I always talk about how endless curiosity is the engine of my creativity, and around this value I've built an organised and disciplined approach: my manifesto 'design in molecules'. I also constantly explore the great manufacturing history of my country, Italy. We use this work whenever possible, reinterpreting it with my style.

Allure O' and Flair O' are the expression of the great Italian manufacturing traditions of which B&B Italia is one of the best interpreters. Working with their teams makes every challenge possible.

How has B&B Italia responded to the range of materials you want to create in?

B&B Italia has become a major company in our field thanks to its search for innovation, which I think represents the DNA of the brand. In working with them there are no boundaries of technology and materials. But of course, every project must be brought back to its essential meaning and must be produced to their unique level of quality.