

Moscow Design Week Opens, Takes Over City

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Award-winning Spanish artist-designer Jaime Hayon gave a lecture Monday.

Moscow's first Design Week spread throughout the city Monday, the start of five days of events, ranging from lectures to exhibitions to film shows, that aims to give local designers a boost as well as show off the best in foreign design.

"When the crisis hit a year ago, furniture stores and factories began to close, and many were saying about design that 'the client is more dead than alive,'" said Alexander Fedotov, head of Design Week's organizing committee. "This was when I decided to return to the idea of a Moscow Design Week, whose aim is to help young talents find their manufacturer and teach people to see and love design, and to create a platform for further development of design in our country."

All types of design can be seen over the course of the week, Fedotov said: "industrial design, interior, graphics and design bordering on art performance."

The heart of events will take place at the Provision Warehouses and the Krasny Oktyabr chocolate factory, although dozens of other venues will also be busy.

Thirty city design studios will also take part in the event — each has been given a theme to work on for the week — creating a path through the city for design fans to go from one to another looking at the designs on show. The showrooms include the best of Russian design, such as Designet Studio, Design Studio of Artemy Lebedev and Open!Design Studio.

Young designers — in areas as diverse as furniture, accessories, work and landscape — will show off their work every day at the Provision Warehouses.

One of the most important parts of the week, Fedotov said, will be lectures aimed at students and up-and-coming designers.

Among those giving lectures will be Giulio Cappellini, a furniture designer whose work has been described as a “tutti-frutti,” mixing pop, computer tech and amebic forms, and French designer Ora-Ito, who rose to fame after designing an imaginary Louis Vuitton backpack.

Other famous names in the design world will also make appearances. Italian architect and designer Fabio Novembre curates a show about five design superheroes, of which he is one. The others — Maarten Baas, Luigi Colani, Jaime Hayon and Ora-Ito — will come to Moscow for the event at the Provision Warehouses.

Each designer’s style has been used to fit with a specific superhero. Clues as to what kind of superheroes each of the designers are can be found in vivid cartoon drawings on Design Week’s web site. Novembre has given himself wings and large Dr. Martens-style boots in the cartoon.

One of the few major female designers, Paola Navone, has designed the press lounge for the week in the warehouses. She will also give a talk on boutique hotels this week.

Another major venue is the Moscow Architectural Institute, where an exposition will look at the design of the environment and what befits amorous couples, families or pets, among others. Didier Danet, a well-known French landscape designer, will provide his own design show in the gardens of the institute.

Anyone wanting to see the latest Italian designs can visit Crocus City Expo, which hosts “the international version of I Saloni,” the Italian furniture trade fair, which has been running in Milan for nearly 50 years. French designs can be seen in the Manezh in a show called “Living the French Way.”

Organizers say they want to build on a Russian tradition of design, citing the work of Alexander Rodchenko and Kazimir Malevich in the 1920s, as well as on a tradition of artistic and technical education during the Soviet era.

“Moscow will become another world center of design,” Fedotov said optimistically.

Moscow Design Week runs till Friday. For a list of events, check out www.moscowdesignweek.ru.

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