

JOHANNESBURG

Johannesburg is the second biggest city in Africa, and far and away the richest: the total worth of its nearly 6 million inhabitants – half of whom are under 24 years old – reaches a level of 239 billion dollars (Cape Town, ranking second, has 131 billion). In the luxury market, sales have soared to 2 billion dollars per year.

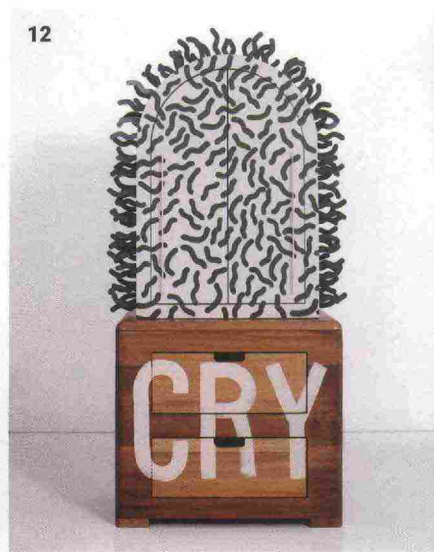
So it should come as no surprise that here in Johannesburg Robert Marengo and Paco Pakdoust, in 2019, opened Il Lusso, an enormous emporium of contemporary lushness – 5000 square meters on five levels – rigorously Made in Italy. Inside this glass and concrete building designed by Paragon Group, the leading Italian furniture companies have gathered, from Flexform to Molteni &C, Paola Lenti to Giorgetti and B&B Italia.

“Entering here, one has the impression of being in the center of Milan, strolling through the ‘real’ stores of these iconic brands,” the magazine *Objekt South Africa* reports. According to Paco Pakdoust, who since 1997 also produces beautiful handmade carpets (Paco Rugs), “the companies have all be carefully selected to represent Italian luxury design, with an accent on quality and tradition.”

Since taxes on consumption are very low in South Africa, products can be sold without added costs, in spite of transport, making them affordable on the local market.

“Il Lusso will be the finest design experience in South Africa for years to come, and it is definitely a must for all design lovers,” *Objekt* continues.

In South Africa – where “crafts might be old hat, but design is young,” as someone said – interest in furnishings has reached a peak, as demonstrated by vibrant galleries like Southern Guild, specialising in African creative talents (such as Andile Dyalvane and the duo Dokter and Misses), and Design Joburg, the country’s cutting-edge fair in this field. The fair is held at the Sandton Convention Center, in the same suburb that plays host to Il Lusso.



8, 9, 10 Some spaces of the design emporium Il Lusso, in Johannesburg, founded by Robert Marengo and Paco Pakdoust. The structure, an entire building, has an architecture that lends itself to representing the world of different brands. **11, 12** Interior of the Southern Guild gallery and a work by Dokter and Misses, artists they represent.