

# THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

This copy is for your personal, non-commercial use only. To order presentation-ready copies for distribution to your colleagues, clients or customers visit <http://www.djreprints.com>.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424053111904194604576580682164729092>

20 ODD QUESTIONS

## Rossana Orlandi, La Donna di Mobili

Her Milan shop is a laboratory of cutting-edge creation. Meet the woman behind all the taste and talent

September 24, 2011



GOOD EYE | Rossana Orlandi KAZUNORI HATAGUCHI

**SINCE TRANSFORMING** an abandoned Milan factory into her eponymous Spazio Rossana Orlandi showroom and gallery ([rossanaorlandi.com](http://rossanaorlandi.com)) in 2002, Ms. Orlandi has become a tastemaker and a champion of contemporary design, selling everything from no-nonsense aluminum cupboards to whimsical chicken-wire giraffe sculptures. The scion of textile industrialists, Ms. Orlandi, 68, started out as a fashion designer herself before turning her attention to promoting innovative product and interior design. A fixture during the annual Salone del Mobile design week in Milan, Ms. Orlandi, 68, spoke to us while preparing a solo exhibition of the designer Nacho Carbonell, whom she will showcase in November.

**The one design object I'd never sell** is my miniature brass Scivolavo chair by Alessandro Mendini. I can't separate myself from it.

My three essential wardrobe pieces are: a very thin white Aspesi rain jacket that I can keep in my purse, a light bag and comfortable shoes—Repetto ballerina shoes in summer and Ugg boots in winter. I admire shoes with amazing heels, which I think of as sculptures, but I really can't wear them.

**Every living room** should be comfortable and warm, with furniture that you can get up from easily. And ideally it should have a beautiful view. If you don't have a good view, photography or trompe l'oeil can give the effect of a beautiful vantage point. A great option is modular wallpaper made by the German company Bless, which has enormous photographs of creative rooms in Berlin.



Alessandro Mendini's Scivolavo chair

**In decorating a bedroom**, the most important things are bedside tables, lighting and music, preferably Mozart, my favorite composer.

**I wish I could find better** headboards for beds and round table designs, in any size. Designers have overlooked the importance of these items, and there just hasn't been enough research and

thought.

**In the kitchen I have to have** a knife that cuts well. The brand doesn't matter.

**The most overrated design trend** right now is eco-design. I'm very disturbed by claims that everything is sustainable, which I think is often not the case. Companies are exploiting that idea.

**What's missing** in the market is intelligent bathroom design for disabled people.

**My favorite hostess gifts** are white and black grapes that I grow in my arbor, and give as gifts in the fall. In the spring, I bring peonies. I have a marvelous garden of peonies. I adore flowers.

**My style in dressing** is very simple and minimal, but I always like to add interesting details and accessories. In decorating, I do the same, and always with a sense of humor.

**To add humor** to a home, you have to have courage in your choices. Mix different periods, do it with your own sense of style and taste and even add a few things that are "kitsch." You have to be daring and to find things that make you say "wow." It's important not to be driven by architects' rigidity.



Inside Ms. Orlandi's store FILIPPO BAMBERGHI FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

**When I travel**, the most important thing is to see my friends, and to experience a foreign city through them, not as a tourist. I have favorite places but I always want to go somewhere new.

**My gallery keeps itself fresh** just because designers know they're always welcome here. They drop off their things without my asking. Last week, the Swedish designer Johan Carpner dropped off his lamp, Luchsia, which combines different textiles. It's extraordinary.

**My ideal weekend** is spent in my country house, 30 kilometers from Milan, with my year-and-a-half-old grandson Giovanni, cultivating my flowers.

**When I think of Italian style**, it's very varied. Italians are extremely curious and very

well-informed. Milanese style is more closed—the Milanese are less curious and more conformist, with less wish to find new things.

**The secrets to working well** are elasticity and simplicity. It's important to be really open to all ideas, and to be able to organize events without much warning.

**My work space** is organized chaos. In my desk I put everything I need—magazines, newspapers, things that designers are suggesting to me. It's a great chaos, a great efficient chaos.

*—Edited from an interview by Jackie Cooperman*

Copyright &copy;2017 Dow Jones & Company, Inc. All Rights Reserved

This copy is for your personal, non-commercial use only. To order presentation-ready copies for distribution to your colleagues, clients or customers visit <http://www.djreprints.com>.