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Worldly Wise

With art, science and imagination, the *Green Home* explored a multi-faceted approach to living in harmony with the natural and built environment.

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Here is what happens when the interior décor fair Abitare Il Tempo and the ArtVerona exhibition clash. Ideas fused and new shapes were born. The former, in its 24th edition and the latter, now in its fifth year, have made a name for themselves in their own right. But this year, with the unique mix of interior décor and art culture for the first time, the must-see events offered much food for thought for its visitors.

Among them was a collection of homes that offered varied interpretations of how man's different lifestyles relate to nature. One of these was the *Green Home* by Robert Semprini. It was a house as seen through the eyes of a child, but designed with the sensibilities of an architect.

Formally, the house was a three-dimensional realisation of how a child would draw a house when given paper and pencil. But more than this, the *Green Home* was essentially a showcase of sensible design from the inside out. From the structure of the house, which was done in collaboration with Subissati, to the 20 pieces of furniture and fittings within it, the house viewed what quality living means from different angles.

Mindful of nature's strength, the pre-fabricated wooden home was designed to be resistant against the destruction of earthquakes. Aware of the Earth's vulnerabilities, it made use of natural materials, such

as natural cork for superior insulation. But beyond its structural plusses, what lay within the home deserved much merit. All the furniture and fittings were inspired by the soft curves of Mother Nature and, therefore, built without corners. They all aligned themselves to the idea of a child's world where everything is designed to be safe and non-threatening.

The *Rolling* staircase, with its smooth pebble-like surfaces, was designed by Semprini for Italian luxury staircase manufacturer Edilco. Its handrail, clearly unconnected from the smooth glossy surfaces of the staircase treads, offered a sculptural trick of the eye.

The *Uluru* seating, unlike the light and delicate *Rolling* staircase, literally grounded the space. Its large size and stark resemblance to a rock offered an invitation to children and adults alike to seek refuge within one of its niches, not unlike what one would do when chancing upon something like it in the forest.

A thoughtful exhibit, its cabin-like appearance cut a cool contrast against the collected composure of the *Casa Colombo* by Carlo Colombo and others exhibited in the same hall, all of which similarly explored the relationship between man and nature, albeit in different ways. ■