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Fields of Vision, a site-specific commission by Rachel Hayes, presented by Giorgio Armani

(Image credit: Ivan Erofeev, courtesy of Nomad)

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Tales from a design weekend in the Hamptons: Nomad lands at The Watermill Center

Itinerant design fair Nomad made its USA debut with an inaugural edition at Robert Wilson's Watermill Center. Here's what went down

BY STEPHANIE MURG PUBLISHED 9 HOURS AGO IN [FEATURES](#)

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Fields of Vision, a site-specific commission by Rachel Hayes, presented by Giorgio Armani

(Image credit: Ivan Erofeev, courtesy of Nomad)

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Robert Wilson was the ultimate nomad. The Texas-born, Pratt-educated artist and theatre-maker moved easily and always: between cities and continents, cultures and disciplines, the expressive and the elusive, defying boundaries through the force of his vision and a compelling charisma. And so it's fitting that The Watermill Center, the laboratory for creative thinking that Wilson founded in 1992 in an abandoned Western Union building on New York's Long Island and described as his 'greatest artistic achievement', was the setting for the first American edition of Nomad, the globe-trotting showcase for art and collectible design.

Nomad makes USA debut



(Image credit: Ivan Erofeev, courtesy of Nomad)

Powered by extraordinary destinations, ranging from the Monaco villa once occupied by Karl Lagerfeld (another nomad *par excellence*) to the decommissioned modernist terminal at Abu Dhabi International Airport, nine-year-old design fair Nomad has emerged as the anti-fair. It doesn't layer atop a site so much as nestle and immerse itself within it, soaking up the power of a place to illuminating effects.

The prospect of a stateside debut at Watermill, home to a year-round artist residency programme and funded in part by one of the most highly anticipated bacchanals of any summer in the Hamptons, was suggested to Nomad co-founder and director Nicolas Bellavance-Lecompte by a trustee

or the centre some years ago and ultimately blessed by Wilson in spring last year, before his death on 31 July 2025 at the age of 83. (An age at which, he'd told [Wallpaper*](#) in an interview at [Watermill](#) earlier that year, he had 'more work than ever', including an installation destined for [Salone del Mobile](#).)



Gio Ponti x Robert Wilson

(Image credit: Ivan Erofeev, courtesy of Nomad)

'I think Robert Wilson liked the concept of Nomad very much, because it aligns with his way of being interdisciplinary and combining different cultures. We have a lot of common ground,' said Bellavance-Lecompte, an architect and curator. 'It was a whole process to consider how we could come here without invading, to do it in a respectful way that could also support and promote his work, and now to expand his legacy.'

Art, design and architecture at The Watermill Center



(Image credit: Ivan Erofeev, courtesy of Nomad)

An architect of time and space across hundreds of performances around the world, Wilson viewed The Watermill Center as 'my most concrete and accessible legacy'. He boiled down the institution's mission to four foundational principles: honour the present, look to the past, support the local community, and support the global community.

Wilson first came upon the ten-acre property in the mid-1980s, drawn to Long Island's East End by the beautiful light and a desire to trade Manhattan loft living for natural surroundings. In the crumbling, U-shaped industrial building – once a research hub that from 1925 until its closure in 1965 developed innovations including the high-speed fax machine – he discerned an appealing architectural simplicity and a beguiling surplus of windows.



Aurèce Vettier by Spaceless Gallery
(Image credit: Ivan Erofeev, courtesy of Nomad)

Aurèce Vettier (an art project founded in 2019 by Paul Mouginot and presented at Nomad by the Spaceless Gallery of New York and Paris) deploys algorithms to inform the creation of forms ranging from an Aubusson tapestry to a tree-like outdoor sculpture that evoked a glitchy mash-up of Claude Lalanne and Ingo Maurer. New York-based jewellery designer Ippolita Rostagno joined forces with Piotrek Panszczyk Burke on an installation of wearable nuggets of eroded gold, harvested from the Yukon using placer mining. 'Please touch them!' they encouraged.