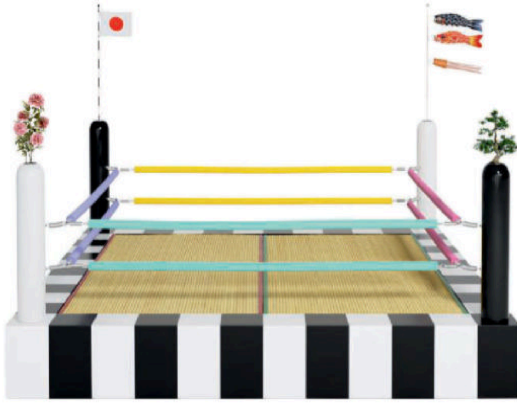


What's in the air this month

by David Lipton



Loll with the Punches

If the 1976 musical film *Bugsy Malone* teaches us anything it's that small children make great gangsters. The central conceit may be bizarre, but the result is no less compelling for that. No strangers to the triumph of eccentricity themselves, the Memphis designers were equally adept at distortions of context and scale. Created in 1981, and something of an emblem for Postmodern design ever since, Masanori Umeda's 'Tawaraya Ring' exemplifies everything that the radical movement's heavyweights were out to achieve: turning form and function on their head in an act of intellectual combat. Reduced in size for this 2.16 x 2.16-metre re-edition, it has lost none of its punch; in fact, it now comes with customisable pennants on top of the posts. All together now: 'So you wanna be a boxer in the Memphis ring?' Shown above: 'Tawaraya Ring 2 x 2', by Masanori Umeda, £21,700 approx. Visit memphis.it

Baa Tender

It was Mae West who famously quipped that 'too much of a good thing can be wonderful'. Doubtless the selective breeders of livestock in the

18th and 19th centuries would have gone along with the sentiment as well. For them bigger was invariably better – and continues to be with others, it seems. Championing the great American ideal are Adam Charlap Hyman and Andre Herrero, designer and architect respectively, who looked to the huge cuboid beasts of animal portraiture as the departure point for their latest offering of figurative floorcoverings – adding a dose of inspiration from Alexander Calder's lesser-known hand-knotted graphic tapestries for good measure. In this instance, they have elongated the form of a sheep to create something characteristically surreal. Produced in collaboration with US carpet-maker Patterson Flynn from hand-coiled abacá fibre, the result emulates

the curls of fleece and reminds us that there is often something sublime in the immense. Shown below: 'Sueño Grande' rug, by Charlap Hyman & Herrero, \$6,265. Visit pattersonflynn.com

Alive Streaming

Carved above the entrance to the Victoria and Albert Museum in London are the words of Sir Joshua Reynolds: 'the excellence of every art must consist in the complete accomplishment of its purpose'. So it is perhaps fitting that it was a course there that kick-started Jenny Stringer's vocation: block-print design. In the 30 years since, she has turned all manner of natural and geometric forms into fabric patterns, with the aim 'to give pleasure and possibly even joy'. Following in the furrow of those postwar masters of print, Peggy Angus and Edward Bawden, she uses linocuts and woodblocks to bring her designs to life. 'Mimram', for instance,



is inspired by a chalk stream of that name in Hertfordshire and features a diagonal sweep surrounded by the flora and fauna that typify Stringer's work. In celebration of her long career, three of her fabrics have been transposed on to wallpapers by Marthe Armitage to bring further joy to the home – a complete fulfilment of pattern's purpose. Shown above: 'Mimram' wallpaper, by Jenny Stringer, £66 per metre. Visit marthearmitage.co.uk





The Surreal Deal

One man's trash is another man's treasure, as the saying goes. At the 1936 Surrealist Exhibition in London, for instance, the poet Dylan Thomas was said to have wandered around offering visitors cups of string while enquiring whether they took theirs 'black or white'. Curiouser and curiouser. Indeed, the art historian Herbert Read couched this specifically British spin on the movement in the nonsense manner of Lewis Carroll and Laurence Sterne. And now, to celebrate that show's 90th anniversary, this year's Treasure House Fair, at the Royal Hospital Chelsea in London, is staging an exhibition of Surrealist works. Alongside the usual collection of top-tier paintings, sculptures and design, Southampton City Art Gallery will present a group

of masterpieces, including Paul Delvaux's dream-like take on an Annunciation – a heavenly sign, surely, that this is the place to find buried treasure. Shown above: Paul Delvaux, *Annunciation*, 1949. Treasure House Fair runs 24–30 June. Visit treasurehousefair.com

A Little Digging

Houseplants prefer jazz, studies suggest. (Unlike pet mice, who favour silence, though they've been found to appreciate a blast of Miles Davis now and again.) One wonders how on earth they thrived in the pre-swing 19th century, when they were first widely introduced into homes. Such questions matter, of course, given the huge rise in indoor gardening in recent years. Likewise, Ilse Crawford's collaboration with the Swedish

firm Skultuna, the fruit of which is this swish alternative to ungainly tools: a set in the same corrosion-resistant brass as Davis's trumpet, all designed to make horticulture far more stylish – jazzier, perhaps. Shown below: 'Nurture' fork, trowel and dibber, by Ilse Crawford, from £159 each. Visit skultuna.com



What Fresh Shell

Hans Christian Andersen – he of the fairy tales – described the buoyant thrill of travel as an opportunity 'to move, to breathe, to fly, to float'. He brought a similar vitality to story-telling, of course, along with adventure and emotional depth. The jewellery designer Arje Griegst, a fellow Dane, was a mould-breaker in much the same vein, defying the rigid lines of Modernism to follow the melting curves of water and ocean life. In the mid-1970s he brought that aesthetic, in the form of shells, those precious objects halfway between gemstones and fine china, to the porcelain company Royal Copenhagen. Half a century on, it is reviving this collaboration for a new generation. Through a technique whereby thin ribbons of wax are applied to the inside of moulds, a softly rippled texture is achieved – a testament to the technical bounds that are traversed by a collection emerging again out of its shell. Shown above: 'Triton' tureen, by

Arje Griegst, £2,330 approx. Visit royalcopenhagen.com

Home Tweet Home

From Claude-Nicolas Ledoux's infamous phallus-shaped brothel to Long Island's celebrated duck-like farm shop, design often speaks very openly about its intentions. So much so that the French coined a name for it, in fact: *architecture parlante*, a philosophy where form expresses function. Here, however, it might make more sense to speak of 'warbling architecture'. Long known for its bold, colourful and graphic fashion prints and ebullient homeware, Dusen Dusen has made its first foray into housing – for our feathered friends, that is. This particular hand-painted nesting box in the shape of its intended occupants was originally designed by Ellen van Dusen, the company's founder, and her father for an exhibition at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden and can comfortably accommodate species of the size of tits, wrens, nuthatches and swallows. Quite besides adding a striking touch to any garden, we hasten to add. That, at least, is what a little birdie tells me... Shown below: 'Stripe' bird house, £134. Visit dusendusen.com ®

