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SATURDAY SELECTS

Week of June 5, 2023

by Dan Howarth

A weekly Saturday recap to share with you our favorite links, discoveries, exhibitions, and more from the past seven days. This week: a set of velo-aesthetic chairs, a Scandinavian-inspired Brooklyn apartment, and a Barcelona apartment that's reminiscent of a Venice marriage pic.

Interiors

Lemon meringue pie was the first thing that sprung to mind upon seeing this apartment in Barcelona's Eixample. The pastel yellow walls and ceilings, the sky blue doors, the neutral vintage tiles of the whipped egg meringue and slices of yellow. The pantry here is applied as a microcosmic series the floor throughout, and matched on closet doors, a pleasant, pastel yellow. Ceilings are painted a complementary sky blue, with the extra touch of color contrast in the otherwise white interiors. Sand green was chosen for the recessed sink and bathroom tiles. Delicious! Photos by Cristina Paterner

Discoveries

Diamanti Vetro's new Soho gallery-esque annex, located in the former loft of artist Marina Voth, was open during NYCDesign and we spent a glorious hour there, charging our phone in the sun amongst the antique Flemish tapestries, the new Sierra by Volta's Ivan Ramos and Jonathan Ward, and Ward's Lapel. Open by appointment and highly recommended. Photo by Clément Pascal

Nina from The Rug Company a collection of five graphic designs that offer a contemporary twist on classic Scandinavian rug patterns, available in several colorways/ sizes/weights. The Kelsey Series series includes Bone, with organic petal-shaped swirls, influenced by Surrealism. Then there's Plaza, a large carpet with a darker organic flor motif, and Tiles, which features a grid of tiles with a variety of textures and patterns. Grazia and Grace from Memphis Milano, Bouleard's soft colors and abstract shapes evoke Modernism in the American West, and Dancer speaks tools to Surrealism with bold and grounded and seemingly random design, all of each rendered by expert craftspeople in Nepal and were photographed in the home of Christian Straka.

"Modern self-primed" is how Polish designer Jan Kalarzewski describes his collection of contemporary furniture, which is made from MDF and finished with a matte aluminum. The pieces range from a low coffee table with a sculptural legs that have a Richard Serra vibe about them, down to a minimal jug that embodies a Giacometti-esque form. Despite the simple forms, the designs all required a complex process, based on traditional woodworking techniques, to shape and weld the edges of the metal sheets into the desired forms.

Quilting and batik is one garment! Clothing brand Ihsaan is only something with its Raj jacket, which is patchwork using the traditional dabing techniques by artisans in India. Ihsaan's Raj jacket is made from 100% cotton, and is inspired by the Indian flag. Suzi Kolb-Hong, so you can throw it over about any outfit on a cool spring or fall evening and still look effortlessly chic. The rose color of the silk tassel fabric is an extra bonus.

Back in 2020, we covered paper pulp the "X" material of the year. Kiwaku is part in parcel of the Kyoto-based Kiwaku Design Studio, and they specialize in paper pulp. The Brazilian designer has expanded its series, using leather colors and tassel-like motifs for even more impact. The standout has to be the yellow Chair No.3, which has legs that resemble a tassel. Chair No.1 is a bit more subtle, with a tassel-like motif on the vertical floor lamp in dark green, and frame an elliptical mirror in opposed red. A bright orange chair and a green vessel in ceramic, the first material de Melo experimented with before moving into paper pulp, are also included in the image.

The set of opulence sheds is courtesy of Chinese architect Wu Chenzen, who created the Tassel Pavilion for the Shenzhen Design Week in 2019. Wu Chenzen's "tassels are made of furniture." Using various material combinations to form three-point sashing structures, the aim was to produce volumes that would project the shadows of buildings. Probably not the most comfortable, but beautiful to look at!

Tongqu Zhang has tapped Chinese-American designer Farrah Gil to create his upcoming Tassel Collection, a collaboration between Zhang's brand Tongqu and Gil's brand Gil Collection, named after the mountain range where clay was mined for Zhang Dynasty porcelain. Includes sculptural serving platters, rice bowls, sauce dishes, and a chopstick holder, the collection is inspired by the tassels on Zhang Dynasty porcelain vessels, while the rice bowl, which is lifted on a small pedestal, is shaped to comfortably be cupped in the hand. A minimal white and black palette was chosen to help highlight the natural colors of the ceramic, and the brass-stained hooks add a glaze to the table setting.

Exhibitions

Scene highlights from the New Art Dealers Alliance (NADA) 2023 Viewing Rooms: sculptures by Rachel Mary-Mary that comprise mantled sheets manipulated to shape vase chunks of rock (Carvalho Park); a painting by Elias Lahutsava (Pangea) featuring a mixed-media composition of photographs, textiles, and paint (Pangea); a series of spilled pieces by Hannah Wan-Ek (Sphere); and a dreamy arch-shaped painting by Kirsten Lysaas Smith that looks like a portal into the center of a soap bubble (Carvalho Park).

There's been a noticeable return of tapestries to interiors of late, and British designer Sussy Cazalet's vibrant wall hangings are a welcome contribution. Her richly earth-toned, very mid-century woven designs were presented alongside the late Japanese ceramicist Taizo Kuroda's pure white porcelain vessels at Tristan Hoare's London gallery, for a 10-day exhibition titled Kyoto Sun last month. The stark contrast between their works, yet a similar approach to geometry, created a powerful dynamic through the rooms of the gallery's Georgian townhouse.

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UP AND COMING

Open Object is Crafting Globally-Minded Ceramics From China's "Porcelain Capital"

Contextualizing the work of Shanghai-based ceramic studio Open Object is a challenge; it feels starkly hybridized, a combination of East Asian craft traditions and Scandinavian aesthetics, playing into Westerners' misconceptions of Chinese artistic disciplines and histories. That tension is, to some extent, by design.

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EYE CANDY

This is the Coolest Furniture Coming Out of Ireland By a Mile

If you happened to step into the new Orior showroom during New York Design Week, you were rewarded with a serious feast for the senses — plush, vibrantly colored velvets, deep green marbles and glossy woods, all of it showing the mark of impeccable craftsmanship. Here was Atlanta, a sinuous cobalt-blue sofa wearing a tasseled skirt, and Nero, a glossy oak table with a Brutalist marble base. There was Mara, a walnut and marble credenza fronted by varicolored leather doors, and Futurist, a muscular couch whose tomato-red leather cushions sit atop ebony legs. This, you realized, was furniture with personality, and the coolest thing coming out of Ireland by a mile. So where exactly did it come from?

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SIGHT UNSEEN PRESENTS

Our 2021 Collection Launches Today on 1stDibs — With New Work From 16 International Designers

The pandemic may have prevented us from hosting our Offsite show this year, but we didn't want to entirely abandon our role as a platform for supporting the work of independent designers — especially since they haven't let it stop them from coming up with brilliant new ideas, even without a physical fair to debut them at. So for 2021, we decided to curate a special collection of furniture and accessories by 16 contemporary designers and launch it for sale exclusively on 1stDibs, starting today.

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