

THE WORLD OF INTERIORS

SEPTEMBER 2024 £5.99

THE WORLD OF INTERIORS SEPTEMBER 2024



What's in the air this month

by David Lipton

Armchair Unraveller

Small numbers have large possibilities. Just six eight-stud Lego bricks, for instance, can be combined in a staggering 915,103,765 different ways. Though not quite on that scale, Martino Gamper's latest take on the humble chair, a piece of furniture that has preoccupied the south Tyrolean designer for years, also allows for endless permutations. Looking to the abstract arrangement of forms that constitute language – which is just another kind of modular unit, after all – he has formulated a hieroglyphic alphabet ripe

for reconfiguration. Thus, the four parts – arms, seat, back and sides – are each available in three different shapes (all covered in Rubelli fabric) that can be assembled according to custom specifications. That's a mind-boggling 81 possible combinations. Shown below: 'Figura' armchair, by Martino Gamper, from £2,852 approx, with fabric. [Visit rubelli.com](http://visit.rubelli.com)

Pitcher Puzzle

For centuries mankind has been transforming clay into vessels of value. Such has been the Promethean power of artists through the ages.



French ceramicist Jacques Monneraud, however, has turned that principle on its head. Humorously disguised as cardboard prototypes, his vases are in fact artfully wrought from earthenware. Not that you'd know it; the skill lies in the deceit. Thus, Monneraud has conveyed corrugated fibreboard with a meticulous eye, its wobbly imperfections causing a double-take on first sight. All the more astounding, then, that he only came to the potter's wheel three years ago after a career in advertising. He has tapped into something more adroit even than the creation of value *ex nihilo*: the ability to make one look again and find originality in the ordinary. Shown above: 'Pitcher No. 24', £385 approx. [Visit jacquesmonneraud.com](http://visit.jacquesmonneraud.com)

Knots County

Fragile though it seems, lace has long been a fabric with a certain transformative power. In the 17th century it was the

very thing that elevated the French missionary John Francis Regis, who lifted women out of destitution by placing them in the lace trade, to sainthood. Later, in

the heat of industrialisation, its manufacture helped put Nottingham on the map. Its fortunes have languished since then, of course, but one resident of the city is committed to lace's comeback. Working with one of its oldest makers – operating since 1790 – textile designer Tori Murphy has produced a new collection of a product that deserves celebrating because of the history and craftsmanship behind it. To misquote the Big Bopper's 1958 hit, 'Nottingham lace and a pretty face [...] / Make the world go round'. Shown below: 'Lace Market', from £140 per m. [Visit torimurphy.com](http://visit.torimurphy.com)



Pillar of Strength

The Ionic order, with its cerebral associations bestowed upon it by Vitruvius, has long carried intellectual heft. But only something as solid as steel could have knocked Micah Rosenblatt, an academic specialising in Jewish mysticism, sideways into the path of practical design. The stuff rises all around him in New York, its light, tensile strength enabling buildings to reach to the skies, so all in all was pretty hard to ignore. Now Rosenblatt has wittily recast ancient idioms in this most modern of materials to create 'City Block', a debut collection of furniture and lighting that still taps into his academic hinterland by establishing the aesthetics of the imagination in the physical world. Thus, the 16 pieces explore how the contemporary fades into antiquity, only to be revitalised by something like metal. So he remains cerebral at heart. Shown below: 'Volute' lamp, \$4,750. Visit micahrosenblatt.com and frontgallerynyc.com



Kiln Switch

Michelangelo considered himself first and foremost a sculptor, so it's ironic that his undisputed masterpiece was the Sistine Chapel's painted ceiling. Commissioned by Pope Julius II – who had recognised his latent potential as a painter – the Florentine artist could fully flex his creative muscle in the medium of fresco. Alas, ceramic sculptor Simone Bodmer-Turner had no such inspired patron; indeed, it was finding herself kiln-less that pushed her to explore new materials. Last year she left her Brooklyn studio

and apartment – which housed all her kit – for the orchards of Massachusetts. That proved the catalyst. Pope or no pope, the lesson is the same: forced change can lead to revelatory results. Entitled 'A Year Without a Kiln', Bodmer-Turner's collection includes pieces made of wood, silk and lacquer – as well as this absorbing 'Tadpole' bronze bowl (left; \$2,500), produced in collaboration with a local foundry. Visit simonebodmerturner.com and emmacullygallery.com

In a Similar Vein

Wondrous deceit is the hallmark of Baroque decoration. Just think of all those ceilings that seem to disappear in frescoed skies or the kilograms of crystal suspended from chandeliers that still manage to look as light as air. No surprise then that scagliola – plaster that imitates marble – had its heyday in the 17th century. After waning in popularity, it is now back with a vengeance. A fascination with craft and materials led Martin Brudnizki and Nicholas Jeanes of And Objects to the work of the Kent-based maker Simon Collins, one of just a handful of scagliola practitioners in the UK. Despite his material's dissembling origins, Collins is most enamoured with its inherent properties: its smooth, polished touch, its versatility in colour and pattern, its infinite formal potential. Together the three men have collaborated on a number of pieces, a range of lamps being the most recent. Each one comprises three to four colours and represents a total of 40 hours of work. Shown, above right: 'Warford Red' scagliola table lamp, £2,200. Visit andobjects.com

Dapple Deckers

It was the poet/priest Gerard Manley Hopkins who praised God for 'dappled things – / For skies of couple-colour as a brindled cow'. Showing similar brio for the bucolic, British kitchen brand Plain English has looked to the colours of verdure tapestries, which appear as a mirror of Hopkins's lines, for its fifth paint collection. Working with art director Sue Skeen,



sometime stylist at *WoI*, the company has also found beauty in such speckled shades. The line-up includes eight colours with names such as 'Splash in a Bucket' ('Fill a metal bucket with water and look at the sky reflected in it' reads the poetic blurb). The company of course champions the craftsmanship involved in well-constructed carpentry, and this range adds further refinement to its designs. God, after all, is in the details. Shown below: 'Colour Collection No. 5', available only to the brand's customers. Visit plainenglishdesign.co.uk ®

