



FINANCIAL TIMES

smart arts

SEPTEMBER 22 2018

how to spend it
special arts edition

SEPTEMBER 22 2018

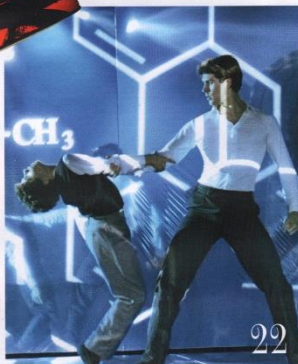
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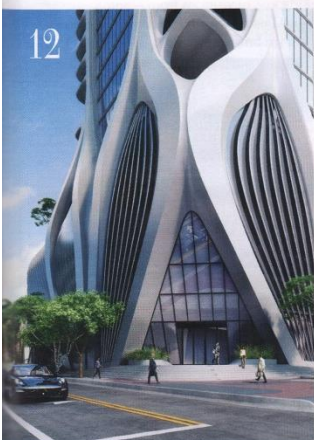


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TWITTER.COM/HYTS EDITORIAL ENQUIRIES 020-7873 2023 ADVERTISING ENQUIRIES 020-7873 4208 COVER IMAGE by Danian Fox, see page 36 How to Spend It magazine is printed by Wyndham Peterborough Limited for, and published by, The Financial Times Ltd, Number One Southwark Bridge, London SE1 9HL. Origination by Dexter Premedia

Far right: Röhrlisberger
wood, steel, glass and
lacquer Mondrian cabinet
by Koni Ochsner, £12,490



Let us rewind to 2015 and the Tate Modern show devoted to the late French abstract artist Sonia Delaunay. Her vibrant paintings are drawing huge crowds and among the throng, textile designer Ptolemy Mann is ecstatic. "To say the show blew me away is an understatement," she says. "I pretty much ran back to the studio and created Sonia [a hand-dyed and -woven flatweave rug, made to order, £2,160] as a purely intuitive response to her use of colour and pattern."

Cut to 2017 and interior designer Natalia Miyar is gazing at David Hockney's painting *Henry Geldzahler and Christopher Scott* (1968-9) in Tate Britain's blockbuster retrospective. What intrigues her is a huge pink sofa. "I found it fascinating that the centrepiece of a sparse, masculine portrait of two men is actually an incredibly feminine, voluptuous Hollywood Regency-style sofa upholstered in pink velvet," she says. "It's quite unusual and iconic and certainly one of the coolest sofas I've seen. I used the painting as inspiration for a new interpretation in smoky-blue velvet with more comfortable proportions [price on request, pictured overleaf]. I'm using this showstopper in a master bedroom and designing the room around it."

Fine art has long stimulated practical creativity – what is new, however, are the design and manufacturing technologies finessing the marriage of aesthetics with three-dimensional functionality. It's catnip to artists seeking an extra dimension for their work and to designers looking for inspiration.

A case in point is Yinka Shonibare's *Windy chair* (edition of three, £160,000). Earlier this year, the British-Nigerian artist – whose work is in the Tate collection, Smithsonian and New York's Museum of Modern Art – installed his *Wind Sculpture* in Central



THE ART OF LIVING

New experimentation with boundary-breaking technology is fusing art and design in ever more expressive ways, says Nicole Swengley

Park, emblazoned with the bold batik textile pattern that has become a signature of his work. "The sculptures developed out of the sails in my piece *Nelson's Ship in a Bottle*, commissioned for Trafalgar Square in 2009," he says. "My art is usually autonomous – you can't do much with it – and I wanted to see if I could evolve that project into a cross between art and furniture. I did the original sketches for the design and worked with Carpenters Workshop Gallery to develop them into the Windy chair." The piece (pictured on final page with *Wind Sculpture*) is crafted from hand-painted aluminium, stainless steel and resin and is both functional and aesthetically engaging – it resembles a swathe of batik fabric unfurling in the breeze, just as Shonibare's sculptures do on a grander scale. "It's a piece of art when you're not sitting in it," he says.

Equally appealing as both furniture and artwork is the Letter series of tables by Dutch designer Reinier Bosch, referencing the comic-book style of Roy Lichtenstein's pop-art paintings. Bang (\$18,000, pictured below) and Varoom (\$21,000; each in an edition of three) are crafted from mirror-polished stainless steel and Plexiglas, while tiny LED lights illuminate the letters. "Even though I use design language to convey my emotions, I find it interesting to play on verbiage too," Bosch says. "The letters have their literal meaning, but are also aesthetic objects in their own right."

Finding an empathic language that speaks to others also sparked Pinch Design's Alba furniture collection. "We discovered Ben Nicholson's sculptural relief work [1934] in St Ives. It has a chalky finish and we were struck by how calm it appeared, while a second, quieter rhythm was created by its lines and three-dimensional planes," says Pinch co-founder Oona Bannon. "That's completely our language – we're always attracted to art or design with a tangible gentleness; there's a sense of something going on under the surface. Alba appears to be a random collection of squares and rectangles, applied in various thicknesses – it's striking yet has the same level of calm and detail as Ben Nicholson's work." The collection includes a sideboard (£5,875 in oak; £6,140 in walnut or cherry, pictured on final page; bespoke sizes price on request) with lacquered relief-panel doors opening to reveal timber-lined interiors.

"It's not needy – it's quietly confident," Bannon says.

In stark contrast, Dutch artist Piet Mondrian's punchy colour-blocked abstracts generate attention-demanding furniture – and the artist, widely recognised as the founder of the de stijl art movement, is a constant source of inspiration for many designers. The late, great 20th-century furniture designer Eileen Gray channelled Mondrian when creating her linear De Stijl side table (£2,598). The piece graced Gray's own living room and is said to have been one of her favourite designs. Shiro Kuramata's Homage to Mondrian cabinets (from £10,227), designed for Italian manufacturer Cappellini in



"Hockney's portrait features one of the coolest sofas I've seen. I used it as inspiration for a new interpretation in blue velvet"

1975, instantly recall his compositions and remain part of its collection, having been put into production in 2009, while Swiss manufacturer Röthlisberger recently introduced a new edition of Koni Ochsner's Mondrian cabinet (two styles, each in a signed edition of 20, example pictured on previous pages, £12,490).

This piece, originally designed in 1976, faithfully reiterates Mondrian's colours and space divisions while updating proportions for contemporary use.

Creating three-dimensional forms from painted, figurative objects is challenging – but the results are breathtaking. The Salvador Dalí collection of furniture and lighting by Spanish manufacturer BD Barcelona remains faithful in every detail to the artist's paintings – gaining approval from the Gala-Salvador Dalí Foundation. Its success lies in Dalí's friendship with the company's co-founder Oscar Tusquets Blanca. In 1972, Dalí appointed Tusquets as architect of the Mae West room at the Teatre-Museu in Figueres and tasked him with recreating his iconic "lips" paintings as a sofa (their design is not to be confused with Dalí's earlier collaboration with Edward James, producing

just five pieces). A polyethylene version of the sofa for outdoor use (£2,131) remains a BD Barcelona bestseller.

Tusquets was fascinated by Dalí's 1930s sketchbooks, and it was within these pages that he found drawings created for the furniture and interior designer Jean-Michel Frank – and brought the Bracelli lamp (£6,180), with its gold-leaf zigzag pedestal, into production. He went on to recreate the surreal Leda chair (£25,108) and low table (£20,310) from Dalí's 1935 painting *Femme à Tête de Roses* (chair pictured overleaf with the painting). The feet of the three-legged polished cast-brass chair slip into high heels, while its curving backrest segues into a hand. A brushed-brass table crowned by a Carrara marble egg makes a fittingly idiosyncratic companion.

Similarly, Dalí's surrealist *Singularities* painting (1936) is the source of BD Barcelona's Vis-à-Vis de Gala loveseat (£32,677), which has silk button-back upholstery in Schiaparelli pink and also exists as a limited edition black version (£38,766) of 105 pieces. Its sinuous backrest is trimmed with polished cast brass in the shape of an arm, which embraces those seated and merges into a feminine hand sporting a "bejewelled" bracelet on one side and a masculine hand with a wristwatch on the other.

Tusquets – appointed by Dalí as a Gala-Salvador Dalí Foundation life patron – still supervises each



From top: Natalia Miyar bespoke velvet sofa, price on request, based on one depicted in the David Hockney portrait *Henry Geldzahler and Christopher Scott*. Atelier Van Lieshout Corten-steel Minimal Kiss lamp, price on request, which looks to Rodin's *The Kiss*. Reinier Bosch stainless-steel, Plexiglas and LED Bang table, \$18,000, referencing Roy Lichtenstein's pop-art paintings

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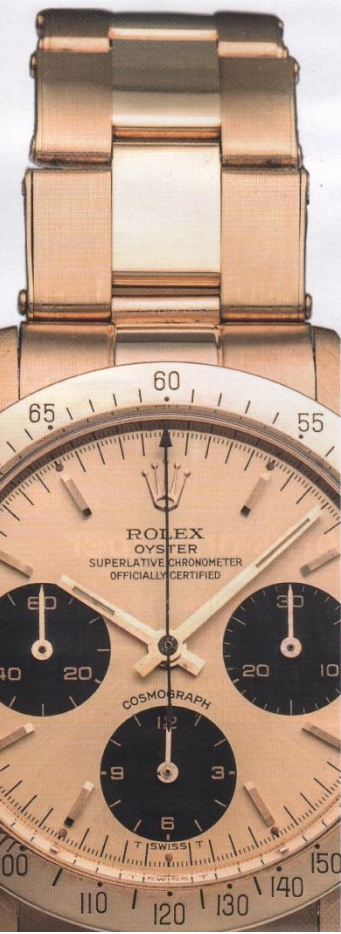
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Above: Dali's *Femme à Tête de Roses*. BD Barcelona brass Leda chair, £25,108, which was inspired by the painting



Above: The Rug Company wool Deltile rug by Trine Kleveland, from £1,987, based on her painting, *Blue Triangle*. Below: Achille Salvagni gold-plated bronze and onyx Bubbles wall sconce, £26,400, inspired by Jeff Koons

new Dalí design (and more are in the pipeline). "Dalí painted or drew images without needing to define materials or measurements, and so for this process needed to seek the advice of people close to him like Oscar Tusquets – who took into consideration his intelligence, sense of humour, surrealism and passion for detail," says Jordi Arnau, general manager of BD Barcelona. "Buyers are typically art collectors who love

Dalí's work and want a sculptural piece they can also use."

Designer Jake Phipps also evokes Dalí's surrealism in his smoked-oak Salvador mirror (£5,965), featuring an inner frame of polished brass that peels back to create unusual reflections. "The paintings of many surrealist artists were akin to windows into a strange world beyond waking life – often with an element of surprise," he says. Lighting, too, can take its cue from art.

Atelier Van Lieshout's Minimal Kiss lamp in Corten steel (edition of eight, price on request, pictured on previous page) references Rodin's famous sculpture, while Achille Salvagni's 24ct-gold-plated bronze and onyx Bubbles wall sconce (edition of 20, £26,400, pictured above) is inspired by Jeff Koons' pop-art aesthetic.

Art is also informing what is under our feet, with rugs being transformed into painterly canvases. "All my designs are inspired by artists, especially the abstract expressionists," says Ptolemy Mann. "Klee [hand-dyed rug, from £730] was directly inspired by the Paul Klee watercolours I saw at Tate Modern's retrospective in 2013 – but also by colour theory exercises that Klee and his Bauhaus colleagues taught. I wanted to explore the relationship between violet and yellow amid a series of tonal greys. For me, the Bauhaus represents a moment where fine art and design converged seamlessly." Similarly, a show of Balthus paintings in Venice led to Mann's hand-dyed, knotted-pile Balthus rug (limited edition, £6,000) using a similar colour palette across a grid of blocks. "I'm fascinated by the way he used

From left: Yinka Shonibare steel, aluminium and resin Windy chair, £160,000. His new sculpture in Central Park. Pinch Design cherry and lacquer Alba sideboard, £6,140, inspired by a Ben Nicholson relief



colour in rich, inky tones, chalky neutrals and fleshy purples. They really are quite strange and alluring – almost discordant,” she says.

Mark Rothko's abstract expressionism is evident in Kvadrat's Sienna rug (from £1,127), which launched in April at the Milan Salone del Mobile. The watercolour effect owes as much to hand-felting techniques as to designer Hella Jongerius' expertise in colour. “I'm fascinated by the quality of colours in paintings where the many layers of oils create hues with enormous richness and depth,” she says. “In this rug we too applied the technique of layering colours, but using thin sheets of wool.” The art-to-rug journey is also championed at London design store Aram, where Ricky and Mika Burdett's hand-knotted wool rug entitled Lunch with Zeev (£1,365) takes

inspiration from Cy Twombly's etchings, and Edward Jones' hand-knotted Untitled rug (£2,895) draws on Sonia Delaunay's work.

Contemporary Norwegian artist Trine Kielland, meanwhile, has reimaged her abstract *Blue Triangle* painting as Deltile – a hand-knotted wool rug (from £1,987, pictured on previous page) for The Rug Company. “*Blue Triangle* works off a 4,000-year-old geometric pattern I discovered in Sri Lanka's Golden Cave Temple, where – at first glance – it seemed as if the ceiling was covered with rugs,” she says. “This sparked my desire to convert my painting into a rug. I learnt that just as I use pencil and paint as an artist to create my work, the weavers use yarn. The finished rug is as much a piece of art as my original painting.” ♦

HOME IS WHERE THE ART IS

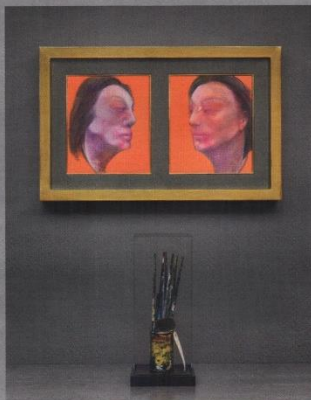
Achille Salvagni, 12 Grafton St, London W1 (020-7409 0026; achillesalvagni.com). **Aram**, 110 Drury Ln, London WC2 (020-7557 7557; aram.co.uk). **Atelier Van Lieshout**, ateliervanlieshout.com and see Carpenters Workshop Gallery. **BD Barcelona**, bdbarcelona.com and see Mint. **Cappellini**, 150 St John St, London EC1 (020-3039 3034; cappellini.it). **Carpenters Workshop Gallery**, 4 Albemarle St, London W1 (020-3051 5939; carpentersworkshopgallery.com). **Eileen Gray**, see Aram. **Jake Phipps**, 01748-826 394; jakephipps.com. **Kvadrat**, 10 Shepherdess Walk, London N1 (020-7324 5555; kvadrat.dk). **Mint**, 2 North Terrace, London SW3 (020-7225 2228; mintshop.co.uk). **Natalia Miyar Atelier**, Unit 21, Chelsea Wharf, 15 Lots Rd, London SW1 (020-8629 5510; nataliamiyar.com). **Pinch Design**, 46 Bourne St, London SW1 (020-7622 5075; pinchdesign.com). **Priveekollektie**, +31416-858 424; priveekollektie.art. **Ptolemy Mann**, 020-7357 7101; ptoleymannrugs.com. **Reinier Bosch**, reinierbosch.com and see Priveekollektie. **Röthlisberger Kollektion**, roethlisberger.ch and see Aram. **The Rug Company**, 555 King's Rd, London SW6 (020-3369 3916; therugcompany.com). **Yinka Shonibare**, yinkashonibaremb.com and see Carpenters Workshop Gallery.

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New hang from September 2018



A visit to the Francis Bacon MB Art Foundation, a non-profit institution, provides a fascinating journey into Francis Bacon's work, life and creative process. Our new hang offers a singular way to discover around a hundred items dedicated to the British painter (paintings, graphic works, photographs, objects found in his various studios, letters and working documents), including works by artists who knew Bacon or were influenced by his oeuvre. A room dedicated to his Parisian studio completes this re-hang. Free guided tours take place every Tuesday and on the first Saturday of each month, by appointment only.