

## LATEST IN DESIGN TAKES FLIGHT IN FRANCE & GERMANY



BRIGHT YELLOW BY MATHIEU LEHANNEUR AT MAISON&OBJET

We trotted around the globe to uncover the hottest trends

Designers, dealers and professionals flocked to Paris and Frankfurt in January to view the latest and greatest interior design ideas. At trade shows like Heimtextil, Paris Déco Off and Maison&Objet, they discovered trends with strong staying power and emerging ideas that are shaping the future of home design and impacting the direction of the window covering field.

### SUSTAINABILITY'S STAY POWER

Against the backdrop of extreme weather and climate change mandates, the design industry is clearly making it a priority to improve sustainability. And this season's design shows proved there is no shortage of innovative ideas for achieving that goal with textiles. In fact, Heimtextil's theme—New Sensitivity—reflected a greater awareness of the environmental impact of textile materials and production methods.

"The fair has increasingly focused on sustainability as the urgency of every aspect—from circularity to innovative materials to fair trade practices—has come to the forefront," noted Saana Baker, textile designer and editor-in-chief of *The Textile Eye*.

On the ingredients side, manufacturers are moving beyond the ordinary and employing novel materials in creative ways. Among the many options on display were Bananatex (a Cradle to Cradle





Certified Gold fabric made from Abacá banana plants) and Persiskin's new vegan leather alternative made from the waste products of persimmon production.

When it comes to eco-friendly production techniques, the winter design shows highlighted the fact that the possibilities now abound. Beyond recycling and upcycling, manufacturers are turning to increasingly novel approaches to create sustainable textiles.

Exhibitors displayed techniques like 3D knitting that generates less fabric waste than weaving, along with bioengineered textiles—materials made from living organisms like bacteria, animal cells, fungi and yeast. polyesters and other synthetics still a mainstay of the textile industry, it was no surprise to find several companies touting solutions to improve polyester biodegradability. CiCLO featured unique technology that embeds biodegradable pieces into synthetics during manufacturing, allowing microbes naturally existing in certain environments to break down the material once it's disposed.

Perhaps the most encouraging sustainability trend is the growing feasibility of eco-friendly production. As Baker noted, "Some of these technologies are in nascent stages; but some, like cactus leather, are already used at scale."

3D-PRINTED VASES AT MAISON&OBJET







### COLOR AND TEXTURE REIGN SUPREME

Though the winter weather might have been dreary, the showrooms in Paris were awash in color during Paris Déco Off and Maison&Objet. Color options for fabrics and wallcoverings ran the gamut—from hues of green intended to calm and soothe to vibrant and sunny yellows that energize and uplift, as well as statement-making browns, rusts and gold metallics. Earth tones and neutrals remained popular, though they were often paired with bolder shades for a pop of color. And vibrant animal prints showed up on a wide range of furnishings and wallcoverings.

Elaborate, tactile embellishments and finishing features were also in abundance. For example, Harlequin displayed fabrics adorned with felt appliqué, creating an interesting 3D texture on window shades and furnishings. Samuel & Sons showcased its Oceanside Collection (replete with colorful tassels that add just the right touch on indoor or outdoor furnishings) and the new Bagatelle collection of fabric borders, tassels and fringes by celebrated interior designer Timothy Corrigan. But, of course, no Paris show would be complete without a nod to haute couture. That's just what exhibitors like Arte International served up, including wallcoverings that feature hand-embroidered designs, jacquard prints and loose threads.

The use of texture was equally prominent in the many unique wallcoverings on display at these popular design shows. From wood veneer and inlaid rattan to latticed designs made from mulberry, designers and manufacturers showcased creative ways to add natural, organic materials and tactile touches to the coverings that adorn our walls.



FORMAL PASSEMENTERIE AT HOULÈS



More broadly, there was a noticeable shift away from the minimalism that once dominated design. Instead, patterns were awash in florals and medallions, interiors sported more artistic layouts and a touch of whimsy was evident in textiles featuring animals and illustrated scenery.



### TECH STANDS FRONT AND CENTER

As technology continues to advance and the development of generative artificial intelligence (AI) marches forward, no industry will be left untouched, including interior design. The influence of AI was particularly evident at Heimtextil, where various exhibitors displayed products and services that leverage this burgeoning technology. Show visitors could try their hand at using AI to create textile images (courtesy of MANN D, a Denmark virtual and augmented reality company) or use the AI-powered FabricGenie tool to create custom fabric designs for window coverings and other applications.

Meanwhile, Maison&Objet's Rising Talent Awards took a slight shift this year, honoring young designers that fuse traditional craftsmanship with digital innovation. Given technology's pervasiveness across the design field, it wasn't surprising to find an entire award category dedicated to Tech Talents—including winners that leveraged techniques like robotics and 3D printing.

### WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR WINDOW TREATMENTS?

From colors to materials, from furnishings to accessories and from high tech to high touch, the winter design shows provided a window into what our industry can expect in 2024. As the newest design trends start to take hold, we'll see the effects across the trade.

Some designers walked away from the experience sensing that window treatments will begin to reflect an increased interest in formality, incorporating detailed embellishments and special passementeries.

"We'll also see items that look heavy (mimicking the bouclé you might see on a sofa) but are actually quite light and double-width," Baker suggested. And with science, technology and design intersecting, expect to see more tools that help designers visualize and specify window treatment textiles, more window covering fabrics made from novel materials and more emerging concepts that require a strong understanding of the science behind the product and perhaps new certifications. ▣



A PRINTED SILK MADKA AT NOBILIS



HANDWOVEN PANEL USING VENEER SCRAPS BY MARION PLAÇAIS AT MAISON&OBJET