

Wallpaper*

THE STUFF THAT REFINES YOU

Memphis revival: the 1980s design movement gains fresh momentum with new shows and fashion collections

DESIGN / 21 MAY 2014 / BY KATRINA ISRAEL



A new monograph by Phaidon celebrates the life and work of founder Ettore Sottsass (1917-2007). *Courtesy of Phaidon*

'The night we launched Memphis, during the Salone del Mobile, we could not believe that the road in front of the showroom had to be closed after an hour, because so many people were on the street,' designer Matteo Thun told Wallpaper* in 2011 on the occasion of the group's thirtieth anniversary, adding, 'We did not intend to shock at all!'

Israel, Katherine. "Memphis revival: the 1980s design movement gains fresh momentum with new shows and fashion collections." *Wallpaper*, May 21, 2014

FRIEDMAN BENDA 515 W 26TH STREET NEW YORK NY 10001
FRIEDMANBENDA.COM TELEPHONE 212 239 8700 FAX 212 239 8760

Known for its Fisher-Price hues, bulbous curves, asymmetrical shapes and graphic structural forms, the movement has been making a steady comeback for some time now but, with a slew of recent exhibitions, and a new monograph by Phaidon celebrating the life and work of Memphis founder Ettore Sottsass (1917-2007), the creative industries are again in the colourful throws of a Memphis moment. Not only are archive pieces being given the spotlight once more, Memphis is also inspiring fresh works from a host of contemporary architects, painters and fashion designers.

This year's Salone del Mobile kicked off proceedings with 'La Collezione Memphis alle Stelline' at Galleria Gruppo Credito Valtellinese, offering the largest museum exhibition of Memphis ever presented in its birthplace of Milan. The event was such a success that it's to be shown again at the Pila Gallery from the 1-29 June. This showcase was also tied to Milanese furniture designer Giacomo Moor's 'Metropolis' presentation at Post Design, which is the brand name under which Memphis Company produces its new collections, and the gallery that exhibits Memphis' productions.

Jumping to Paris, the celebrations continued with French architect Charles Zana's staging of 'Vasi e Fiore', a curated collection of vases realised by the Memphis group and shown at Paris' Musée Delacroix. 'I discovered the Memphis movement while I was studying architecture,' explains Zana. 'Memphis is a true revolution in the world of design. It opened the way for new forms of design in the 1990s, distancing function and causing a more artistic attitude.'

The road to Memphis was forged in 1981 by Sottsass, and over the years involved up to 20 designers who shared his Post Modern aspirations, creating furniture, objects, fabrics, ceramics and buildings that sat somewhere between the realms of kitsch and futurism, quickly becoming a brash badge for 'New Design'.

Moving past Art Deco and Pop Art, the group admired the Bauhaus, but felt limited by their principals, and was perhaps best known for its colourful assault on interiors. This bold aesthetic has recently been referenced in American artist Hernan Bas' new exhibition titled, 'Memphis Living', on show at London's Victoria Miro gallery until 31 May. In his painting series Bas incorporates key

Israel, Katherine. "Memphis revival: the 1980s design movement gains fresh momentum with new shows and fashion collections." *Wallpaper*, May 21, 2014

FRIEDMAN BENDA 515 W 26TH STREET NEW YORK NY 10001
FRIEDMANBENDA.COM TELEPHONE 212 239 8700 FAX 212 239 8760

design elements of the movement's aesthetic that he first encountered through pop culture references in his youth. 'In my opinion, living "Memphis" means more than a love of bright colours, pattern and uncomfortable seating,' Bas reflects. 'It was an impassioned moment, a daring, bold-formed and wildly influential movement that is just catching our rear-view attention again.'

The fashion industry is similarly making sure Memphis has our full attention. American Apparel recently collaborated with core member, artist Nathalie du Pasquier on a 43-piece summer collection that's lavished with her graphic prints.

On the Spring/Summer 2014 runways, both Céline and Alexander McQueen embraced the movement's Mobilo-hued primary palette, while dizzying optical graphics were seen at Marc by Marc Jacobs, Opening Ceremony and Roland Mouret. Upping the showmanship, Karl Lagerfeld's Chanel 'art gallery' was dotted with Memphis-style sculptures - no doubt a throw back to his former Monaco apartment that was entirely clad in Memphis. Come Autumn/Winter 2014, Proenza Schouler also looked to the movement's upbeat energy and light-hearted humour, manifested in the show's onslaught of trippy graphics on pattern-blocked coats and dresses.

Sottsass may have left the group in 1985, with it disbanding by 1988, but the Memphis legacy certainly lives on, culminating with an upcoming talk by his wife Barbara Radice at London's Design Museum, offering an intimate insight into the world of one of the twentieth century's most revered design-thinkers and influencers.

Read more at <http://www.wallpaper.com/design/memphis-revival-the-1980s-design-movement-gains-fresh-momentum-with-new-shows-and-fashion-collections/7416#Z6JSEg8udaag9dAU.99>