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## Brand or Design?

Posted on [September 17, 2012](#) by [Studio](#)



Back in February's [Trend Arrival](#) posting, I discussed how the longstanding gap between fashion and interiors trends is fast closing, highlighting the quick translation of the New Minimalism trend seen on the S/S 2011 catwalks, to the 'Simply Flawless' trend for interiors in A/W 2011/12.

1

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With a multitude of Fashion Designers - from luxury brands such as Ralph Lauren, Fendi, and Hermes to high-street Designers like Julien Macdonald and Matthew Williamson for Debenhams - now creating interior product ranges and pushing into the realms of Interior Design, it is no longer a surprise to hear of such new ventures.

*"The link between fashion and home has never been closer, so it was a natural progression." Julien Macdonald*

We are now also seeing a growing number of collaborations between fashion houses and established Interior Designers and Architects...

[Rem Koolhaas](#) has a longstanding partnership with Prada: for 8 years, design studio [OMA](#) have been the creators of the Prada catwalk.

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— Autumn/Winter 2012 Prada catwalk

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#### RECOMMENDED



(Prada's A/W 2012 menswear collection was one of the major fashion influences for Scarlet Opus' A/W 2013/14 trend 'The Curator'.)







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Clockwise from top left: Flame Black; Optical Turquoise and Bayadere Pink; Optical Pineapple; Optical Blueberry; Optical Raspberry (as featured within Scarlet Opus' A/W 2013/14 trend, 'The H/ACKtivist')

These cross-discipline ventures are not simply a show of creative prowess, or further evidence of the closing gap between fashion and interiors, we're also seeing some unexpected partnerships in support of good causes. Fashion house, Marni, [exhibited a charitable venture](#) at this year's Milan Furniture Fair. A colourful collection of 100 wicker chairs made by ex-convicts in Colombia using Marni's reinterpretation of the traditional Columbian woven designs to bring the pieces in line with the fashion house. Along with this new line of furniture, Marni also presented the photographic project, 'L'arte del ritratto' (The Art of Portraiture), featuring portraits of the chairs with Marni employees, technicians, craftsmen, and collaborators. The profits from the sale of the chairs will be donated to the ICAM Institute of Milan whose aim is to help children of imprisoned women to grow up in a family environment.



So, do Fashion Designers and collaborative collections actually have a place in residential interiors? Do we like that we can now live with the same brands we're wearing? I asked a few industry friends for their opinions and here's what they had to say...

## TRENDS BLOG WORDLE



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Felt furnishings creator, Melissa Watts of [Maud Designs](#) says, "When I first started getting involved with interior products I felt as if the fashion houses should stick to what they do best, fashion". However, over time Melissa has realised that "a lot of interior Product Designers get their inspiration this way. Essentially the two are very much connected in my eyes".

In concurrence, Simon Scott, Australian kitchen Designer of [Simon Scott Design](#), has a fixed opinion, "Absolutely... consumers regard Interior Design as a part of the fashion industry today. Fashion Designers are creative in every sense and can use their skills in other ways. Any new contribution in any form of design is always welcome and encouraged".



Miss P spoke to celebrated Emirati Furniture Designer, [Khalid Shafar](#), about his views on the level of interest consumers have in decorating their homes with the same brand names they wear: "Not necessarily the same names they wear, but yes they will be interested in some fashion brands to decorate their homes depending on the brand's Home creations. I personally am a big fan of KENZO home for example and how the home decorations are nicely influenced by the Japanese culture. Also, I really like

ARMANI CASA lighting objects. Both brands I do wear. A recent admiration I have is for BOTTEGA VENETA's new home collection, such elegant and sleek objects – yet I don't wear BV. Therefore I believe it's our attachment to the *object*, regardless of the brand, that matters and influences our decisions and choices." When asked if it would be a difficult decision to consider collaborating with a Fashion Designer Khalid said, "I don't think it's a major decision or concern for me. On the contrary, I would be very interested in such a collaboration. I always have been interested to collaborate with Designers from industries other than product/industrial/furniture design. I believe the outcome of a collaboration between two Designers from the same domain/industry will be a great creation, whereas the outcome of a collaboration between Designers from different domains will be an extraordinary creation - and this is my creative aim. Such Designers will share their different expertise and inspirations in new creations that will connect the two different industries".



All very positive, but how do the home lines from Fashion Designers fare alongside established Interior and Home Product Designers? "Status is something that is achieved by consistent talent and skill in one's work, and can be held as highly by an international fashion brand or a local furniture or Product Designer renowned for their ability" says Scott. "If Fashion Designers want to diversify into home interiors and accessories, they must put as much time and dedication into that as they would put into their fashion design."

It's not only Fashion Designers crossing over, we also see other cross-discipline creations for the interiors market. At this year's Salone del Mobile, new brand [La Chance](#) was launched by an Architect and a Financier; amongst its growing list of Designers is [Note](#), a design studio from Sweden made up of a collective of Architects, Graphic and Product Designers. Under the La Chance umbrella they've created the rather architectural looking cork [Tembo](#) (Swahili for elephant) stool in both black and orange.



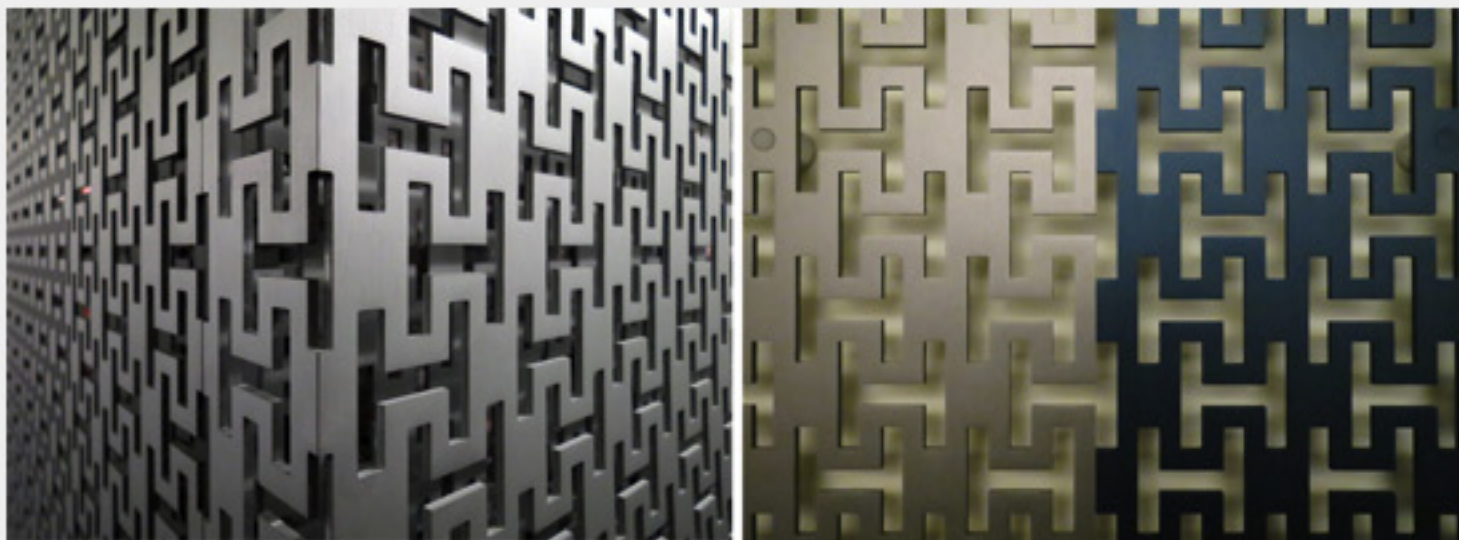
NOTIE



Top to bottom: Bolt stool; Tembo stool (Jekyll in black, Hyde in orange)

And, last year Japanese Architect, [Shigeru Ban](#), teamed up with Hermes to create an oriental style pavilion to launch the new furniture collection.





— Module H partitioning screen

So, do Fashion Designers contribute/need to contribute something extra to the interiors sector? Watts agrees with Shafar, believing that it comes down to a matter of personal taste over the brand, "People will generally buy what they like whether it be from a fashion house or up-and-coming interior product designer, if people buy it and it can be appreciated then I say produce it".



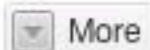
In conclusion, with so many exciting collaborative projects, the interlinking of design disciplines, and the appreciation of creative contributions in new areas, I wonder if fashion's place in interiors needs questioning at all!

Many thanks to Melissa Watts - currently developing a felted cushion range; Simon Scott - launching his kitchen design company here in the UK, on Wigmore Street in London later this year; and Khalid Shafar - recently launched his innovative Arabi chandelier, for contributing to today's posting. You can keep up to date with all their latest news by following them on Twitter [@Maud designs](#), [@KhalidShafar](#), and [@\\_SimonScott\\_](#)

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