

Words and Pictures

Noteworthy new publications, chosen by Anna Rose Hughes

Neo-classicism to Pop: Late 18th & 19th Century Textiles, and Twentieth Century Textiles

Sue Kerry and Francesca Galloway (*Antique Collectors' Club, £35 each*)

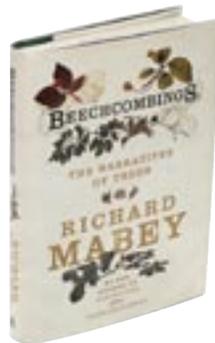
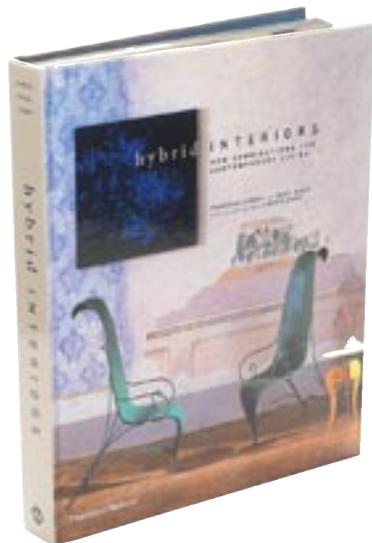
These stunning editions, published to correspond with a series of exhibitions at the Francesca Galloway gallery last year, provide a detailed representation of the textiles industry in Europe over the last few centuries. The focus of both books is a vividly photographed selection of fabrics, chosen for their relevance to the history of design. Each example is accompanied by an explanation of its design and manufacture, enlivened by anecdotes about its background; all are placed in context by well-researched, thematic introductions. In the first book, which particularly - and inevitably - focuses on France, the rises and falls of the industry in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are interwoven with political and social change, from the neoclassical beauty of Lyonnaise silk to the imperial motifs of the Napoleonic era. Also examined is the impact of industrialisation on English textiles, and the counter-response of William Morris. The twentieth century, covered in the second volume, saw further advances in techniques and production methods: manufacturers used the adventurous patterns of artist-designers - such as Dufy and Bonfils - to overcome the insecurity of the interwar years, adapting to changing consumer demands to develop a new 'contemporary' style that continued to evolve. Towards the end of the century, a return to the archives and the reworking of many of the fabrics illustrated here, proved the longevity of textiles design over this extended period. **ARH** *H&G* readers can buy the two volumes individually at £30 each (inc p&p*), or both for £55 (inc p&p*), by calling 01394-389977 and quoting 'H&G February'



Hybrid Interiors: New combinations for contemporary living

Francesco Alberti and Daria Ricchi (*Thames & Hudson, £24.95*)

Interior decoration and fashion are two butterflies wafting on the same breeze; just as hemlines go up and down and colours change with the seasons, so the inexorable pendulum of taste drives us from opulent rooms to minimalism and back again. In the Eighties we loved houses crammed with antiques, their walls heroically paint-magicked and hung richly with beribboned pictures. As a reaction, in the Nineties all this was swept away, to be replaced first by cool chrome and matt-black leather, and then, as the 'New Age' new century dawned, by the palest neutrals, natural materials and acres of empty space in lofts punctuated by iconic designer pieces. So where next? The authors of this intriguing picture book identify the next big thing as a style that combines elements from all that has gone before; not a compromise, but rather a synthesis of aspects of historical decoration and the sensibility of modernist and minimal design. This is not an entirely new idea. In the Sixties, David Hicks boldly combined grand antiques with startling new fabrics and colours, and since then some of the most interesting decorators have rallied to the cry of 'best of the old, best of the new'. Featuring the houses of artists, architects and collectors, this book originated in Italy and, perhaps unsurprisingly, illustrates that this 'hybrid' style is one that works best in extraordinary spaces such as a crumbling palazzo or a brilliant new-build. **Stephen Calloway** *H&G* readers can buy a copy for the special price of £20.95 (inc p&p) by calling 08450-585878 and quoting 'H&G offer'. Offer ends May 31, 2008



Beechcombings: The Narratives of Trees

Richard Mabey (*Chatto & Windus, £20*)

The Great Storm of October 1987 uprooted 15 million trees in the south-east, destroying swathes of forest and parkland. Within a few years, rows of sickly nursery-grown saplings were struggling, while self-sown seedlings, in places where nature had been left to her own devices, were thriving. Had we left the fallen trees 'horizontal' instead of bulldozing them away, Richard Mabey writes, nature would have done her restoration more efficiently than our clumsy attempts. The cataclysmic effect of the Great Storm on the physical landscape, as well as on our perception of trees, is the starting point of this book. In *Beechcombings*, Mabey brings together a story of trees (mainly one species - the beech), political and economic history, and his own musings on nature. He writes on global warming, the destruction - or 'coniferisation' - of ancient forests, the iconic meaning of trees, the concept of the picturesque, and also of 'the beeches that stole my heart'. Mabey moves easily between these topics, and few writers can interweave personal insights, intellectual history and botany to create such a mesmerising and evocative account of man's relationship to nature. **Andrea Wulf** *H&G* readers can buy a copy for the special price of £17 (inc p&p) by calling 01206-255800 and quoting 'House & Garden'



Master Drawings of the Italian Renaissance

Claire Van Cleave (*British Museum Press, £19.99*)

Drawing, or disegno, was the foundation of all the visual arts of Renaissance Italy. The drawings of the highest quality selected for this book are mainly from the pre-eminent collections of the British Museum and the Louvre. Most are working drawings, representing the different stages involved in producing a finished painting: from blocking out the basic composition, through studies of individual figures and groups, details of hands, legs, torsos, faces, or the fall of drapery, to full-scale cartoons and final designs squared for transfer. A few are highly finished, intended as gifts or for submission to patrons to gain approval of a scheme. The illuminating introduction provides a guide to materials and techniques. But the pleasure lies in studying the plates and their accompanying descriptions, which bring to life the moment of creation, that magical conjunction of mind and hand, idea and form. Even Leonardo's drapery studies seem alive. This beautifully presented book should be on the compulsory reading list of all art students, as a source of inspiration and, through unremitting practice, aspiration. **Celina Fox** *H&G* readers can buy a copy for the special price of £15.99 (inc p&p) by calling 020-7637 1292 and quoting 'RO46'. Offer ends March 31, 2008