

BUSINESS OF HOME

BOH

ISSUE 29 | FALL 2023





LEFT:

Blackthorn wallpaper in Autumn by Ben Pentreath for Morris & Co. envelops the designer's bedroom in Dorset, England.

It's a philosophy that still resonates, and has inspired a growing number of designers in today's world of fast furniture and fleeting decor trends. "We are in an era when integrity of making, and a sense of timelessness, are of particular value," says British designer Ben Pentreath, who frequently draws from the period for his projects. "Where have things come from, and how are they made? With what and by whom? These are the questions that the early Arts and Crafts [proponents] were asking every day. One hundred years on, those values feel pressing."

The furniture designs that defined the Arts and Crafts movement—as well as the American Craftsman and Mission styles that followed—were thoughtfully understated, masterfully crafted and emphasized the beauty of natural colors and motifs. "The British pieces are generally lighter and display more rounded edges, curves and carving; while Craftsman furniture, exemplified by the designs of [turn-of-the-century American manufacturer] Gustav Stickley, is much more massive in feel and footprint, with very simple, board-like profiles and exposed joinery," explains John Smirollo, president of Incollect, the online design, art and antiques marketplace behind the The Gallery at 200 Lex. While the styles varied across continents, key shared elements included rich earth-toned palettes, organic materials and dexterous details, ranging from hand-carved spindles to lathe-turned bobbin legs and mortise-and-tenon joinery.

At the center of the movement was a radical socialist named William Morris, an artist and textile designer who co-founded the decorative arts and furnishings company Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co. in 1861 along with six of his fellow pre-Raphaelite friends, including painters Ford Madox Brown, Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Edward Burne-Jones. Their work ran counter to the prevailing items on the marketplace: "At that time in Britain, wealthy and middle-class homeowners tended to furnish their homes with overly ornamental, machine-made items," says Sidwell, who oversees the Morris & Co. archive, which is now owned by Sanderson. "Morris was frustrated that he wasn't able to buy the kinds of simple, hand-made furnishings that he wanted for his own home, which led him and his collaborators to design their own commercial furnishings."

The founders sought a simpler life and, more specifically, a return to hand-crafted decoration. In the early years, Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co. produced stained

On the Beat

Mission Accomplished

With an emphasis on sustainable materials and honesty in craftsmanship, the design elements and ethos of the late 19th-century Arts and Crafts movement continue to endure today.

BY CAROLINE BIGGS

Though simple in design, Arts and Crafts-style furnishings are wild in spirit. Born in response to the first-ever wave of mass-produced furniture that came to dominate the Victorian era, the British movement rose to prominence in the latter half of the 19th century with a mission to raise the standards for the decorative arts.

"For the pioneers of the Arts and Crafts movement, their work was largely in contrast to the machine-made home items of the industrial age," says Catherine Sidwell, senior archivist at British luxury furnishings company Sanderson Design Group. "They rejected heavy ornamentation and the imitation of materials."



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

At The Craft House Inn in Santa Barbara, California, designed by Hearth Homes Interiors, a spindle bed brings a dexterous touch to a guest room; Farrow & Ball's De Nimes sets a serene tone in the foyer; and House of Hackney's Herbarium wallpaper infuses a guest room with Art and Crafts-inspired drama.

glass, metalwork and tiles. By the 1860s, the company had expanded into furniture and textiles, which included everything from embroideries and cloth wallcoverings to printed cotton upholstery fabrics and woven wools used as curtains, tapestries and carpets. "Morris's vision was counter to the fashions and trends of the day," says Sidwell. "He saw historic hand-crafts as contrary to industrialization and the capitalist system of mass production."

Morris's textiles, in particular, perfectly illustrate the ethos of the movement. Drawing from his early childhood experiences of wandering throughout the Epping Forest in greater London, seeing original medieval tapestries hanging in Elizabethan lodges, and reading romantic literature and writing poetry, Morris created hand-loomed

fabrics and block-printed wallpapers that featured flat, two-dimensional representations of natural forms. The work was in striking opposition to the ornate flora and fauna motifs that characterized the industrial age. "His preference was not to copy nature but to represent it without creating shading and effects that imitate nature in three dimensions," explains Sidwell.

Within a decade, the company's designs found mainstream success, but the brand struggled to meet the high demand with its slow, small-batch production processes. In 1875, Morris bought out his partners' shares and relaunched as Morris & Co. Under his direction, the company flourished. By 1881, he opened a textile printing workshop in Merton Abbey Mills in South London, complete with a water wheel for mixing dyes and land on both sides of the River Wandle, where he employed skilled weavers and local apprentices. Among them was textile

designer John Henry Dearle, who eventually took over the company's creative direction after Morris's death in 1896.

Today, Arts and Crafts-descendant designs and ideologies are reemerging in modern interiors, at a time when sustainable materials, biophilic elements and proof of the human hand are more valuable than ever. "We truly believe that the quality and character you get with a bespoke furniture piece or a Morris & Co. print stand the test of time," says Katie Labourdette-Martinez of California design firm Hearth Homes Interiors, who with her partner Olivia Wahler recently designed The Craft House Inn in Santa Barbara in homage to the style. "With how fast design cycles move these days, and with the prevalence of fast fashion in furniture, people are coming back to the ideals that were central to the Arts and Crafts movement: quality, craftsmanship and humanizing design." ■



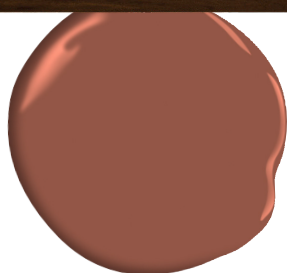
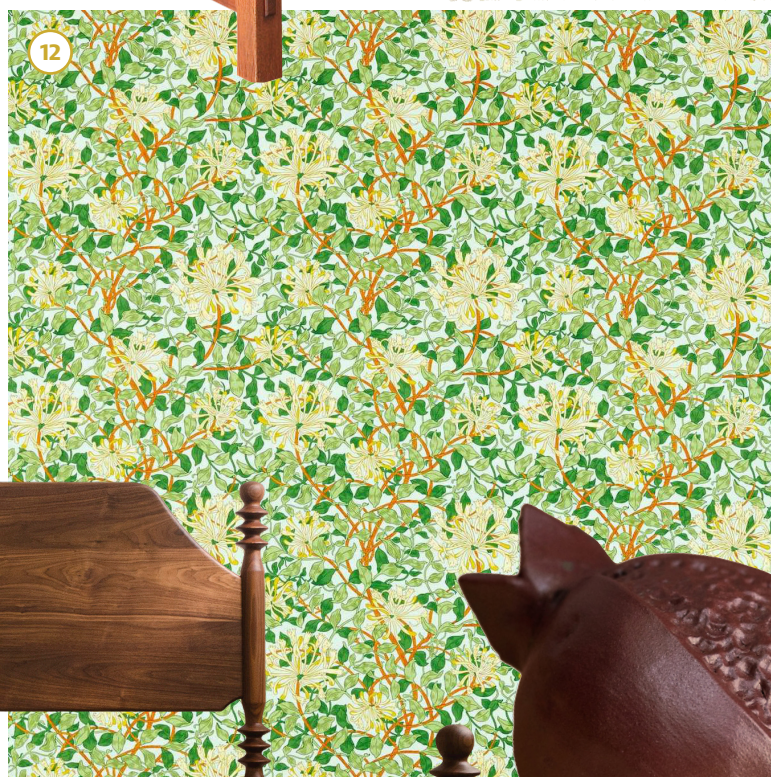
Craft Fair

The season's chicest finds pay homage to the dexterous designs of the Arts and Crafts movement.

BY CAROLINE BIGGS

1. A sleek black painted finish brings the spindled *Bench with Back* by **Studioilse for De La Espada** straight into the 21st century.
2. Fashioned with petal-shaped shades, **Currey and Company's** *Iota 3-Light Round Multi-Drop* pendant evokes one of Morris's naturalistic patterns.
3. Ginny Macdonald's *Topia 6-drawer dresser* for **Lulu and Georgia** is made from solid ash wood and boasts wood-turned details for added appeal.
4. Morris's iconic 1876 design meets the modern age in Morris & Co.'s *Pimpernel Ink* wallpaper for **McGee & Co.**
5. Marble feet and bullnose edges soften the zigzagging legs of **Orior's** statement-making *Hemlock console*.
6. **Abner Henry's** *Continental Trestle table* puts a curvy spin on traditional trestle-style dining tables.
7. Bobbin legs and round drawer knobs give the *Jenny Lind Maple Wood Spindle 3-Drawer kids desk* at **Crate & Barrel** a playful dash of spherical drama.
8. **Studio Sam Klemick's** eco-conscious *Side Table* draws inspiration from topiary plants and is built from Douglas fir salvaged from demolition sites.
9. Marcin Rusak embeds real flowers in resin to forge the top of the *Flora Hyde Park low table* from Twenty First Gallery in New York, available at **Incollect.**

10. Crafted with period-appropriate pinned mortise-and-tenon joinery, the *Spindle arm chair* by **Stickley** pays tribute to the enduring designs of the American Craftsman movement.
11. The *Blackthorn rug* in Petrol at **House of Hackney** is adorned in a sinuous, art nouveau–esque floral motif designed by William Morris’s protégé John Henry Dearle in 1892.
12. Morris’s daughter, May, came to work for his company in the 1880s, and soon after designed the legendary *Honeysuckle fabric*. Now it has been reimagined in a medley of contemporary hues by **Ben Pentreath for Morris & Co.**
13. Hand-crafted by Amish artisans in Pennsylvania, the *Pillar upholstered counter stool* in Natural Maple by **Bunn Studio for Radnor Made** features a gently rounded rectilinear silhouette for an of-the-moment Arts and Crafts–inspired look.
14. Turned wood posts lend a sculptural touch to **Jacob May’s** ebonized ash *Flora bed*.
15. **Dumais Made** sculpts each stoneware *Pomegranate* by hand to ensure no two are exactly alike.
16. The hand-carved varnished mahogany *Pisa object* by **Ethnicraft** mimics a lathe-turned table leg and doubles as a pen stand for corralling small items.
17. A muted paint palette of rustic *Georgian Brick* by **Benjamin Moore**, serene *Cloud Watching* by **Clare**, dusty *Grape Leaf* by **Portola Paints** and sunny *Light Gold* by **Little Greene** conjures the earthy colors of the movement.





Time Capsule

For Arts and Crafts pioneers William Morris and Emery Walker, decorating with nature and traditional handcrafts was an act of resistance that lives on.

BY CAROLINE BIGGS

Emery Walker was a British engraver and printer, close friend of William Morris and a key figure of the Arts and Crafts movement. The pair met in 1883, and a year later established the Hammersmith branch of the Socialist League. "They shared a love of books, book design, lettering and printing, and met socially with artists, architects and craftspeople through their membership in the Art Workers Guild," says Catherine Sidwell, senior archivist at Sanderson Design Group, which owns the Morris & Co. archive today. "Walker later advised Morris on the establishment of the Kelmscott Press in 1891, which published limited edition illustrated books."

The deep friendship between Morris and Walker—and their shared affinity not only for socialist causes but also the Arts and Crafts movement's aesthetic rebellion—is visually apparent in the latter's home at No. 7 Hammersmith Terrace in London, where Walker lived from 1903 to 1933. Though Morris passed away in 1896, Walker employed many of his designs throughout the space, including wallcoverings, printed cottons, woven wools and smaller tapestry and embroideries worked on by Morris's daughter, May Morris. The house also features a carpet designed by Morris himself in the 1870s, along with artifacts from other Arts and Crafts luminaries like architect Philip Webb.

Thanks to Walker's daughter, Dorothy, and her companion, Elizabeth de Haas, the original interiors of the iconic Arts and Crafts home remain intact today as a museum now known as Emery Walker's House, and is open for tours and group bookings. "The interiors of Emery Walker's House were created over time and are preserved just as they were in his lifetime," says Sidwell. "These two women wanted later generations to be able to see the decoration of this important and much-loved home."

CLOCKWISE FROM BELOW:

Handmade Arts and Crafts artifacts adorn Emery Walker's House at No. 7 Hammersmith Terrace in London, including a sitting room featuring original Morris & Co. designs and a bedroom outfitted with period motifs. Rambling Rose wallpaper in Twining Vine from the Emery Walker's House collection by Morris & Co. William Morris in 1874.

