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Technology Meets Tableware

Words by Harriet Bowe

What you eat from is just as important as what you eat, artistically speaking, and there is a whole slew of surface designers that are crafting incredible tableware. Candid Magazine sat down with Nour al Nimer, founder of the aptly named London-based design company, Nimerology to learn about her technological approach to traditional design.

Nour's Constantinople collection particularly caught our eye in the exact same way that a Rorschach inkblot does - mirror imagery, exploding with colour and stacked with layers of far-reaching influence. The collection, Nour tells us, pulls from her father's vast collection of Ottoman art, textiles and manuscripts.

Articulated through a modern take on vintage illustration, unique patterns and historic photographs, Nour's design signature, encompassing hand drawn florals, iconic cultural figures and digital treatments, is compelling.

What initially drew you to homeware and digital print design? Why did you decide to make this your niche?

When I was at Central St Martins I came across a surface design course, and I realised that this type of art surrounds us on a daily basis. I believe surface design has not received the emphasis it deserves considering that it's a form of art that has the power to enhance everyone's lives continually.

I don't consider art a separate concept. I think it's everywhere and it has such an enigmatic way of improving every moment of our lives. In parallel I focused on homeware design in an effort to make my art a part of each moment, each day and become a part of lasting memory.

Nimerology allows the consumer to utilise art in the everyday world. Do you think technology helps to bridge the gap between art and function?

Yes, technology definitely helps art come to life; it enables art to be more accessible and widespread.

How does the world of digital enable you to translate surrealism into functional, fashionable art?

In digital print I can visualise my product in-depth during creation. Hence digital technology helps fine-tune my art, therefore improving it. It helps me translate my vision into the final 3D product more accurately. In addition, I feel more confident with my end result with the help of digital

design as I can create more samples at every step and make decisions accordingly. In this manner, I feel that my final designs are more intricate than they would have been without the help of digital technology.

Your latest collection etches tiny sultans, embroidered rose beds and the Blue Mosque onto bone china plates, tiles and teapots and we love how mini sultans are hidden inside mugs and bowls. Can you tell us how you do this, and how hand drawn craft and technology come together?

I am sure each artist has developed their own unique process in transferring their imagination to their art. For me it's a process that encapsulates traditional processes with modern ones. I hand draw patterns and designs and then via computer software, will manipulate them into enriched methodologies of complex pattern.

Artists are really pushing the boundaries of what print and pattern can look like when art and technology collide. Do you think using a computer takes away from the level of craftsmanship in art? Or are you defining a new kind of craftsmanship?

I would say it's a new kind of craftsmanship, but I am a bit hesitant in using the word 'new.' When you come to think of it, anything that's new is an extension of the prior knowledge and experience in its respective field. For instance, we have many forms of modern dance but even something modern such as hip-hop has been influenced by traditional ballet.

I view my art as a progression and I use traditional means as well. Modern technology enables me to combine such methods and enhance them by providing me with more tools. So maybe it's more accurate to say it's not a new craftsmanship, but a new string in the bow of existing craftsmanship.

Nour's work has been exhibited in several galleries across London and the Middle East. Her tableware, along with home furnishings including cushions and furniture, is available to view and purchase at CONCEPT on KINGS on the King's Road in London's Chelsea.

Nour also offers a bespoke service and can work with anyone, anywhere: info@nimerology.com

