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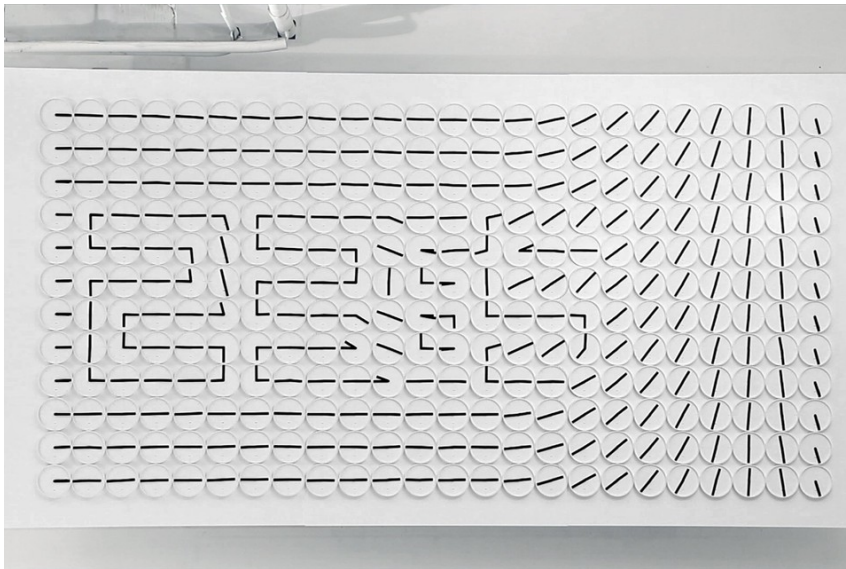
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U.S. | NEW YORK | NY CULTURE

Finding Beauty at the Cooper Hewitt Design Triennial

Exhibit features top recent design work around the central theme of 'beauty'



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By **ANDY BATTAGLIA**

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The eye of the beholder is in for a sight at “Beauty—Cooper Hewitt Design Triennial,” an exhibit featuring top recent design work from around the world. The fifth in a series inaugurated in 2000, the triennial surveys the vision of 63 designers working in vastly different fields, from furniture to product design to fashion.

This year’s theme, “Beauty,” is viewed through the prism of seven different categories: Ethereal, Intricate, Transformative, Transgressive, Elemental, Emergent and

Extravagant, with several designers grouped within each.

“What we’re seeking to do with this show is to have visitors experience and understand design and its play with the senses,” said Andrea Lipps, assistant curator at the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum and co-curator, with Ellen Lupton, of the show. “Design is utilitarian and very much about solving problems, but part of its function can be teasing our minds and heightening our senses.”

The exhibit, which opened Friday and remains on view until August, takes over galleries on two floors as well as the lobby, an elevator and hallways of the museum, which is part of the Smithsonian Institution network based in Washington, D.C. Below are seven highlights, one from each category.

Theme: Ethereal

Designer: Humans since 1982

Created by a design duo in Stockholm (both of whom were born in 1982), this monumental timepiece features 288 clocks sweeping through synchronized, abstract movements until, every 60 seconds, the hands collectively spell out the correct hour and minute of the day.

The kinetic action is mesmerizing as wild lines and designs take shape. And when the clocks’ hands come together to configure numbers, they illustrate a conceptual conceit: digital time displays made from whirring analog clocks.

Theme: Intricate

Designer: Vlisco

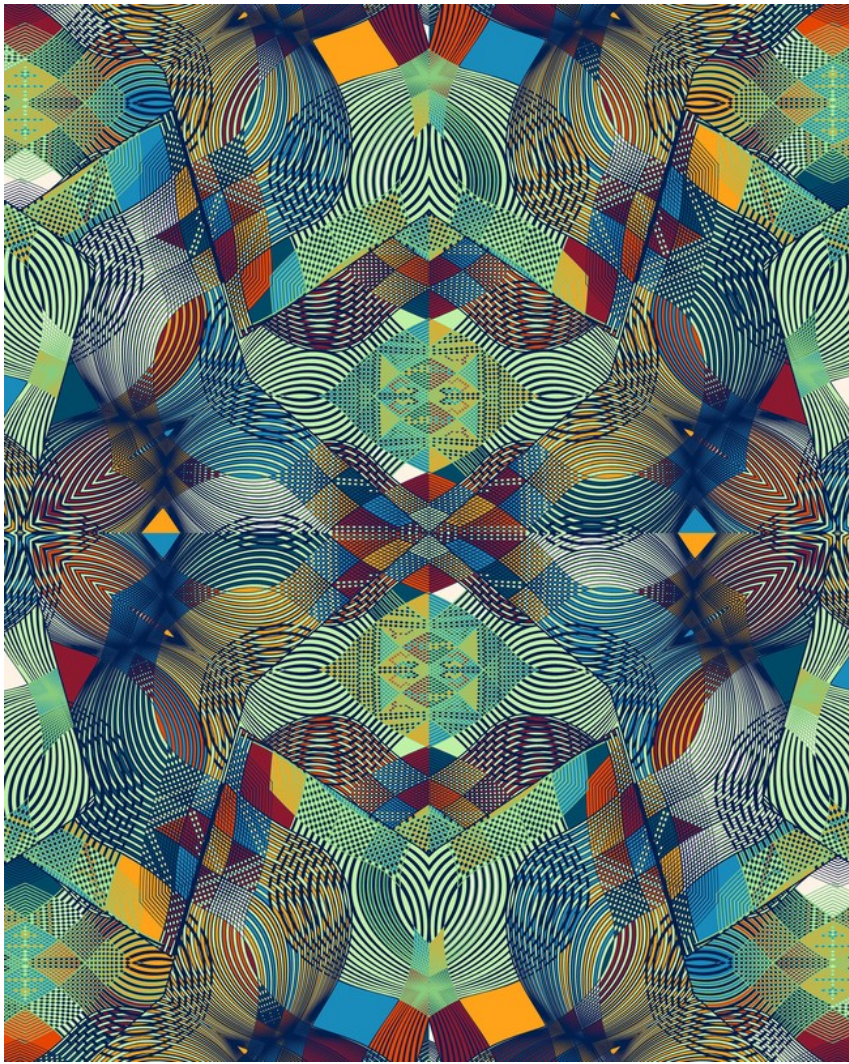
Textiles by Vlisco, founded in the Netherlands in 1846, tend toward vivid, hypnotic patterns that have found favor in Africa, where they are fashioned into clothes that seem to flicker and blink as they move.

The “wax print” designs are applied to cotton via an Indonesian batik process, and the resulting patterns—displayed on a colorful mannequin in the museum—are often made in dialogue between the Dutch designers and the African traders who use them.

Theme: Transformative

Designer: Brynjar Sigurðarson

During a trip to a tiny fishing village in Iceland, Brynjar Sigurðarson took some tips from a local shark hunter and wound up with his Silent Village collection of furniture crafted with homegrown techniques.



Visco's 'Java,' from the Think collection, 2015 PHOTO: VLISCO NETHERLANDS B.V.

Employing knots and knitting patterns used for fishing nets, he affixed earthy elements to simple structures, such as a side table adorned with bits of rope, feathers and fishing hooks, and a large shelving unit accentuated with chains and fur. The results are burly and delicate, rugged and refined.

Theme: Transgressive
Designer: Delfina Delettrez

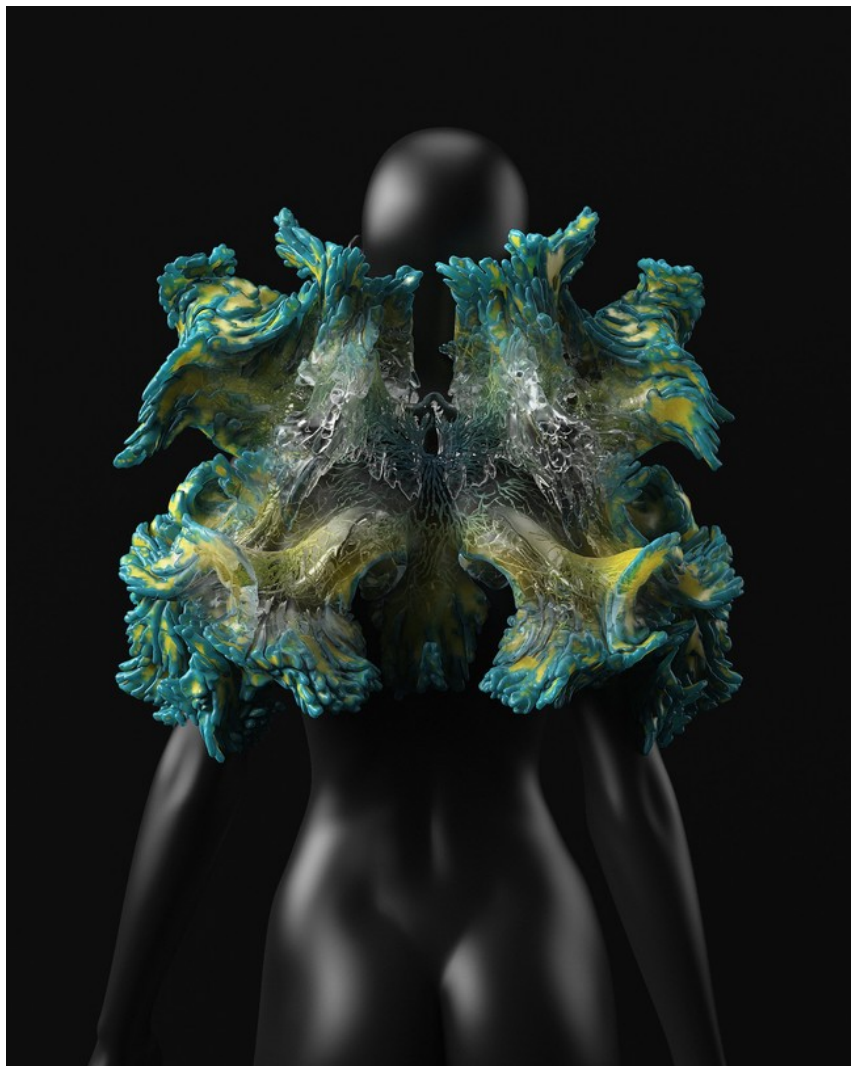
This Italian jewelry designer, a fourth-generation descendant of the Fendi family, evokes the fantastical history of surrealism in pieces that gleam and surprise. A

single earring, meant to be worn solo for the sake of asymmetry, dangles ruby lips beneath a pearl, in tribute to a brooch by Salvador Dali. Other pieces on display include a fiercely twisted nose ring with diamonds and white gold.

Theme: Elemental
Designer: Yeongkyu Yoo

From home bases in South Korea and Seattle, Yeongkyu Yoo designs clean, elegant objects that make technology seem pliable and soft. His bottle humidifier, like other pieces designed for his commercial enterprise cloudandco, is simple and austere, with a seductive white matte finish and a power cord that takes the form of a USB cable in bold, bright orange. Other pieces include an aluminum speaker unit with a leather strap that looks like a minimalist canteen.

Theme: Emergent
Designer: Neri Oxman



Neri Oxman's 'Otaared,' from Wanderers collection, 2014 PHOTO: NERI OXMAN

Born in Israel, Neri Oxman is affiliated with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Media Lab, where the routine workday can be devoted to designing products such as this “wearable, synthetic organ system” conceived for the sake of “enabling human survival on distant planets.” Materialized through 3-D printing, the theoretical body aid is part of a project that calls on ideas culled from robotics, material engineering and synthetic biology. It also comes in orange, for the astral traveler in need of a different look.

**Theme: Extravagant
Designer: Giambattista
Valli**

This cascading gown by Giambattista Valli represents the Italian-born designer’s forays into the realm of haute couture. Described on the display label as a “feathery tulle ball-gown skirt with piped pajama top,” it pours to the floor in a manner that signals both sensible wearability and high-fashion romanticism, with candy colors that sweeten the deal.

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