

| DESIGN EYE |
FRONT LINE

H&G's Barbara Chandler seeks out the new face of designer furniture



Designer-makers are commandeering the fronts of cupboards as platforms for new decorative techniques. Doors and drawers provide a blank canvas, and the result is storage furniture that is an exciting hybrid of art, craft

and function. Mineheart, mineheartstore.com, for example, has digitally printed its own quirky version of an Elizabethan portrait directly on to black lacquered doors with a satin finish. Equally arresting is the wood sculpture, or "3D marquetry", applied to cabinets by London designer Andrea Felice, afdesignslondon.blogspot.co.uk. An initial piece, Beelzebub, features a fly built up from shaped and turned pieces of wood, carefully crafted for a meticulous fit. Equally sculptural are Andrea's copper-clad cabinets with different planes and angles that catch the light.

London designer Violeta Galan, violetagalan.co.uk, learned traditional French straw marquetry in order to create her striking geometric designs, including the Tandem cabinet (pictured). "Straw may seem delicate, but when glued in place is surprisingly durable," she says. Suffolk artist Kate Noakes, katenoakes.com, re-veneers old furniture using her own unique process of inlaying metal with gesso, a plaster/resin mix which can be coloured to order. Also using older rescued pieces is Zoe Murphy, zoemurphy.com, who has perfected her own way of printing images inspired by her seaside home town of Margate on drawers and doors.

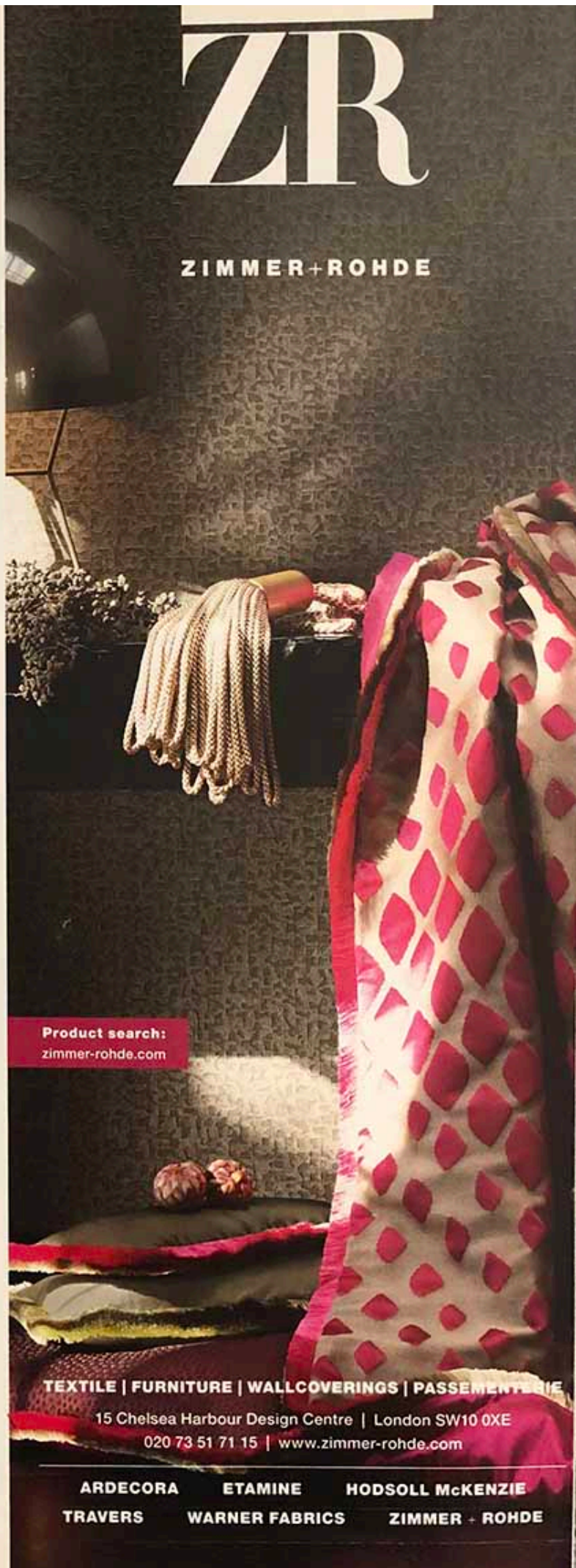
Such one-off pieces are inevitably expensive, but the trend is already filtering down to the mass market, with a screen-printed pop-art design on a cabinet called Viola included in the spring collection from Habitat, habitat.co.uk. Even Ikea, ikea.com/gb, is offering its Stockholm cabinets in new bold blocks of colour. ■



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