The Designers Behind the Style

An illustrated talk by MoDA’s Assistant Curator Maggie Wood
Lucienne Day and her mother Dulcie, early 1920s
L: Lucienne Day, c.1941
R: Day’s Horses Head fabric, 1940
L: Etruscan Head, Marion Dorn, 1936
R: Day’s *Horses Head* design, 1940
Fluellin, Heal Fabrics, 1950
Calyx, Heal Fabrics, 1951
L: Calyx, Heal Fabrics, 1951

Right: Untitled, Marian Mahler for David Whitehead, 1953
HEAL'S FABRICS from 10'9 a yard

You will find them in London at Heal's and throughout the country at most leading furnishers. Or, write to Heal's for the name of your nearest stockist.
L: *Provence*, John Line, 1951
R: Robin Day’s ‘low-cost living room’, 1951
L: Article from *House & Garden*, July 1952
R: Ad for Smirnoff vodka, mid-1950s
L: artwork for fabric design, 1950
C: Stella, Cole & Son, 1951
R: ceramic design for Rosenthal, c.1957
Terence Conran, c.1952
L: Conran design for David Whitehead, c.1952
R: Paolozzi design for David Whitehead, c.1952
Two David Whitehead ads featured in the *Daily Mail Book of Ideal Homes*
L: 1951/2, R: 1952/3
DAVID WHITEHEAD FABRICS

Good fabrics in well conceived designs help to characterise a room and contribute to the balance of the colour scheme. Here is shown a small selection of David Whitehead fabrics to give you a hint of their possibilities.

Martha Harder has conceived this bold and effective four-colour machine print, which will be at home in any room. It may be shown in four colour treatments. 6d. 6d. per yard. 46 in. wide.

A leaf-printed design from Tinous Canvas. Machine printed in three colours with four alternative colour combinations. 6d. 6d. per yard. 46 in. wide.

Subtle in its simplicity, this is another fine example of Tinous Canvas's contemporary designs. A 6-colour machine print available in three colour ways. 6d. 6d. per yard. 46 in. wide.

Manufactured by
D. WHITEHEAD LTD. Higher Mill Rossendale Lancs.
also 4 New Burlington Street London W1
L: Ad for Midwinter, *House & Garden*, April 1957
R: Ad for *Conran Fabric*, op. cit
Setting up house the hard way

We are not just another young couple who stumbled across an 18th-century house, dirt cheap and re-modulated it with grey, initiative and '90s. We didn't have those dollars life-changing Victorian fix-ups to fall—imperfect—into. How are we marries sitting snugly behind them, and there was no art in which to discover a dusty but exquisite Sheraton table next to a Louis XVI chair that only needed re-upholstering to look perfect. Luckily, we didn't have a good-old一定能 who would value, like tea stained Whiter, shown for a miserable week, now that we learnt passage in a luxurious bed. Water, we really bid for anything at a country auction; the prices were always too high when the bidding started. And, finally, we didn't paint the whole house and to buy the new in one week, only taking time off to knock a joiner's name of Charles at a King-street outlet. It took all our spare time for two months to lay the living-room floor; our marriage bands broke up: it started because of the many bitter words about the right way to apply Pergamon. But we admitted as a production for junk shops, although some of the cases we had aimed seemed to contain nesting hips, which alone expensive at half the price.

We made four small rooms at the top of the house (part of a mudly-built Rowan tower) into one large space being common. We have discovered two drawbacks: one was that the woman generally stay in his country, except at meals, but where we gave a party in the living-room for his first birthday we had to hire the main bathroom with the sofa to prevent the child from falling down a vomit. The second drawback, is that although in theory it is a good idea to be able to work and listen to the conversation going on in the living room, in fact, the conversation tends to be distracting to the cook who is tempted to wander away from the stove and join in some fascinating gossip only to be sharply recalled by something burning or boiling over. We are often asked if cooking suits are not a nuisance too, although we did plan to prepare them by having an extra man we find we do not need one.

Open-plan living has proven most successful with us, but she is partly because there plenty of room in the rest of the house, even though the basement is occupied by our housekeeper and the ground floor let as a self-contained B&B. Our bedroom is on the second floor and we cook in the first-floor studio. However, the atmosphere of quick conversation here may soon be desired across the metal soundproof doors, because the next room is the nursery.

Opposite: The dining area and kitchen of the spacious living room. The dark Pullman footstool blanket from Nietzsche as a rug. Gin and Tonic behind the dining chairs, and Binardi the Japanese sculpture, the latter situated in the corner. In front of the two large & masterful African stools set on white, stand Victorian corner sofas and chairs. If the room is ever to be altered, the wall behind the two rows of white kitchen units is faced with ceramic tiles in House & Garden's Drop Night.
Field Fare, late 40s/early 50s

Hill Brown Ltd.
Untitled, designed 1948, manufactured 1951, roller-printed rayon for the Rayon Design Centre
Colours fresh and clear as spring. A wide choice of designs by brilliant young artists. Guaranteed fast to sunlight and washing. Yet, in heavy spun rayon 45" wide, they're in most cases priced at under 15s a yard.

DAVID WHITEHEAD FABRICS
Groag fabric designs for David Whitehead

1952

1953
David Whitehead advertising

Ad from 1955

Fresh, new and gay—and moderately priced

Every year, a large group of new designs by Britain’s most brilliant young artists join the David Whitehead range of moderately priced contemporary prints. They aspirate trends in design and colour—something very hard to find, as a rule, in moderately priced fabrics.

These fabrics are as practical as they are beautiful—for they are roller-printed on 125” wide spun rayon, in colours guaranteed to be mild washing—a very important point for many climates. And prices come well within the medium category.

Besides these contemporary prints, which are available in cartoons as well as spot designs, David Whitehead makes a complete range of other furnishing fabrics of every style and type. For further information, please write to D. Whitehead Ltd, Higher Mill, Rawtenstall, Lancashire, England.

Ad appeared in Daily Mail Ideal Home Book 1955

Fresh gaiety at little cost

Nowing a brand new house or giving a fresh start to a well worn room? Then light-hearted David Whitehead Fabrics will brighten your life and keep your good books. Designed by four young artists in heavy spun rayon 60” wide, and fast to fade, Gill and washing, they come, in three sizes, only 8/14 or 9/18 a yard—and they are guaranteed. Ask to see them at your nearest stock. As well as these contemporary prints, David Whitehead leads the way in traditional fabrics with modern folk designs.
L: Mary Storr photographed at MoDA, Dec 2008
R: *Frivolite*, Mary Storr for John Line, designed late ’40s
L: Storr design for John Line, c. 1948 (BADDA 3158),
R: Ad for John Lines, featuring ‘Limited Editions’
Frivolite, Mary Storr for John Line, early 1950s
Six more wallpapers

1. One of the colourings in which John Line and Sons Ltd produce Henry Shaw's Country design.

2. Abstract shapes produce an effect reminiscent of the treatment of grounds in the design by Graham Robertson. It is hand-painted in white on ground paper by Cole and Son (Wallpapers) Ltd, Ltd Ltd.

3. Spring Flowers is a thin mixture of its name. It is a design by Margaret Dines, now machine-printed (in white) by Wall Paper Manufacturers Ltd.

4. Egyptian Pharaoh, like Spring Flowers, is a new W&J paper for the American market. In it, Prior Shallcross has created many motifs in a stylized style.

5. Roman, with its comic motifs, is produced in new versions, light on a dark ground, as illustrated, and dark on light ground. The two can be played in one room. Designed by Mary Shaw, hand-painted by Line's.

6. Native art inspired the Abbee pattern. Illustrated here in light colours, it is also produced in maroon and blue. Designed by Archibald Gibson, hand-painted by Line's.
Shenstone, Mary Storr for John Line, 1951
Want to see more?

Book an appointment in MoDA’s Study Room
to see more examples of 50s design

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