



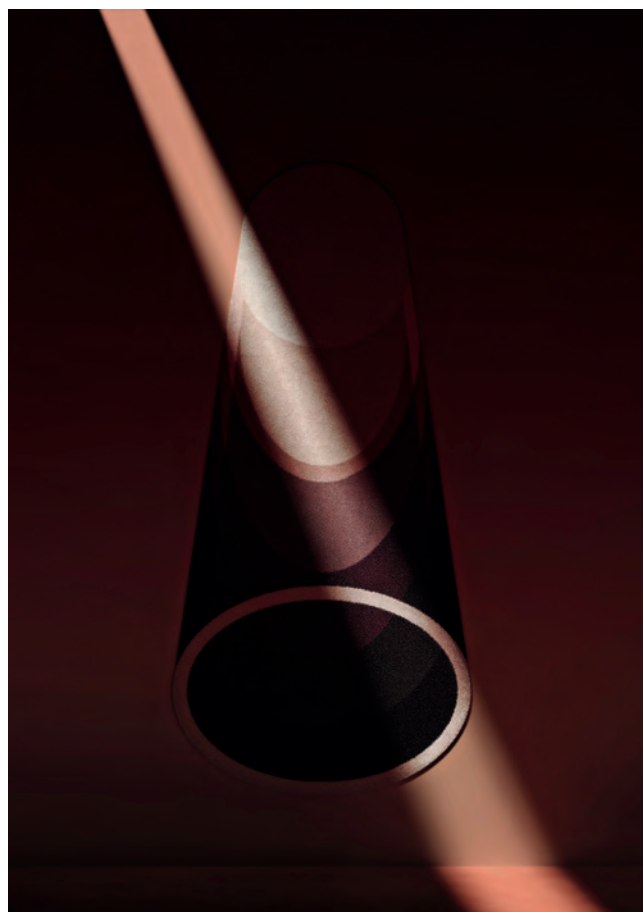
MARCH 2021  
UK £100 / EUR €109 / USA \$125

# 63

Colour Directions AW 2022/23  
Home & Belief  
Essential Continuity Colours

ColourHive

Colour Now AW 2021/22  
Early adopters: Cloister & Web  
Focus on digital



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# Overview

Reflecting many people's understandable reluctance to return to commuting and office life, this story examines the beguiling safety of the home and how tech is helping to support a seismic shift towards remote working.

You would think that the much welcome roll out of vaccines should mean that we are all impatiently waiting for a return to normality. Yet in some crucial ways, there will remain a reluctance to return to pre-Covid patterns of behaviour; most notably when it comes to commuting and office work. A study by Phillippa Lally in the *European Journal of Social Psychology*<sup>\*1</sup> found that it takes 66 days for new behaviour to become automatic.

With lockdowns for many around the world stretching into many months, to be at home rather than in the wider world now feels embedded, a habit that will be hard to break. What has made this change possible is tech. So, at its heart, this is a digital story.

Those that can have worked from home, and the ease and speed with which this transition has happened has led many to question the value of centralised offices. This in turn has had a profound effect on large urban centres. Several big companies do not intend to send their workers back into the office until the pandemic is well and truly over; by then homeworking may be so entrenched that there will be a strong reluctance to return to time consuming and costly commuting.

Already looking beyond the pandemic, many multinational companies have committed to allowing remote work to continue. Dropbox is to become a 'remote-first company', meaning that workers by default are based at home. Complementing home working, Dropbox Studios will allow workers to

meet, adopting a flexible approach to real estate. Likewise Twitter, Okta and Microsoft are all reported to be experimenting with home working.<sup>\*2</sup>

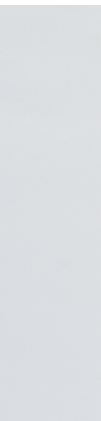
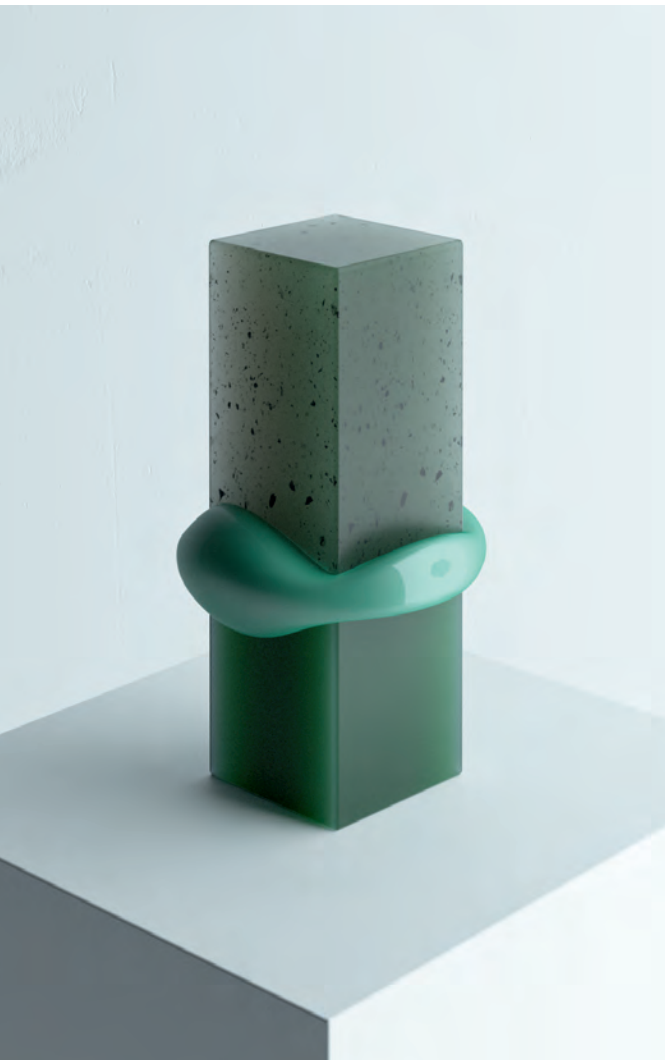
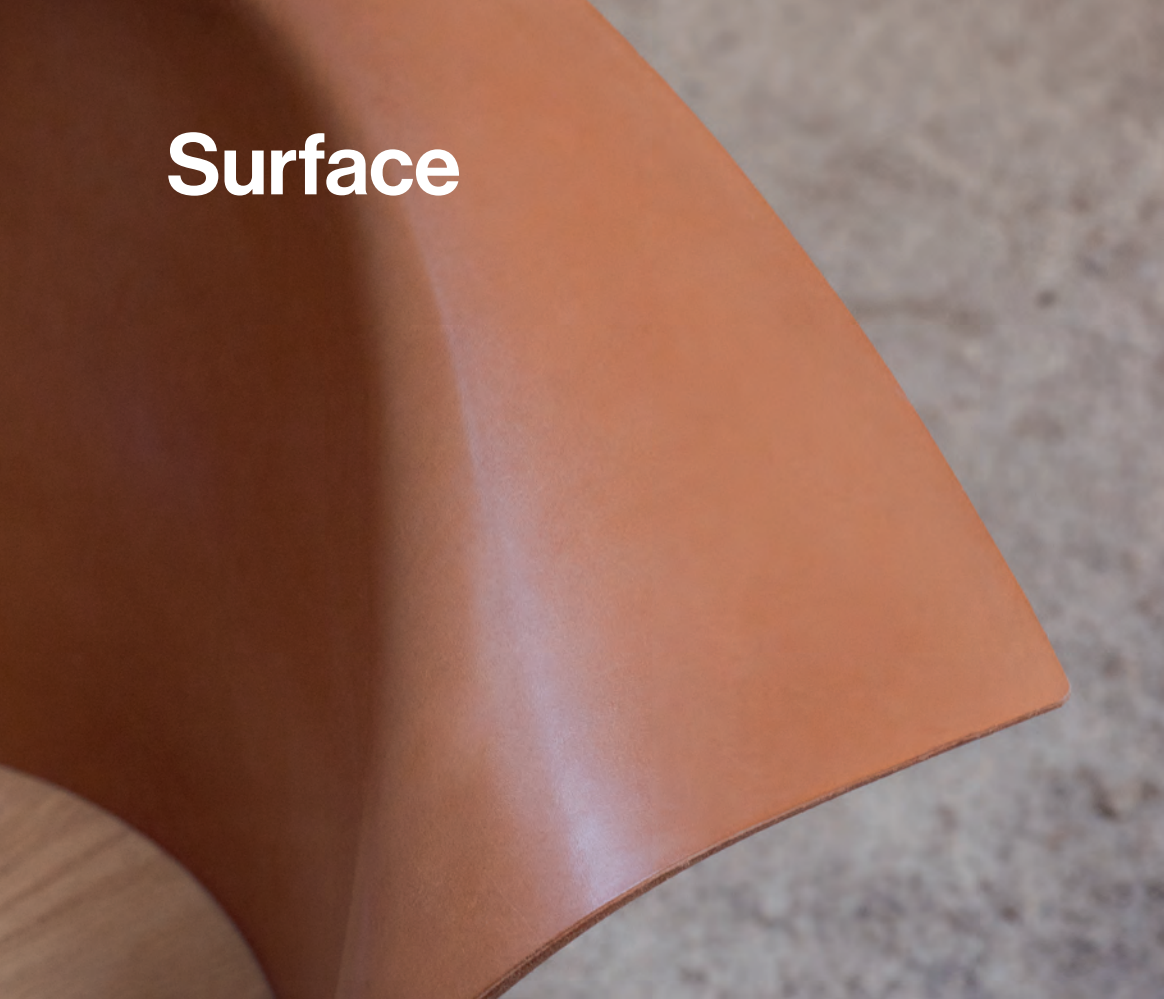
Inevitably, this story charts the exponential growth of the home office. In recent housing sales, home offices have been cited as high priorities. Tech, so important and visible in offices, now needs to be subtle and unobtrusive in a domestic setting. New and increasingly price competitive haptic tech is already refining product design in this sector, utilising touch surfaces and making devices smoother, more tactile and instinctive.

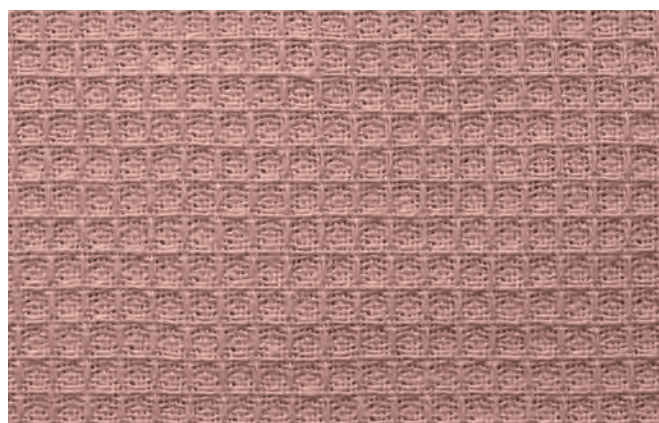
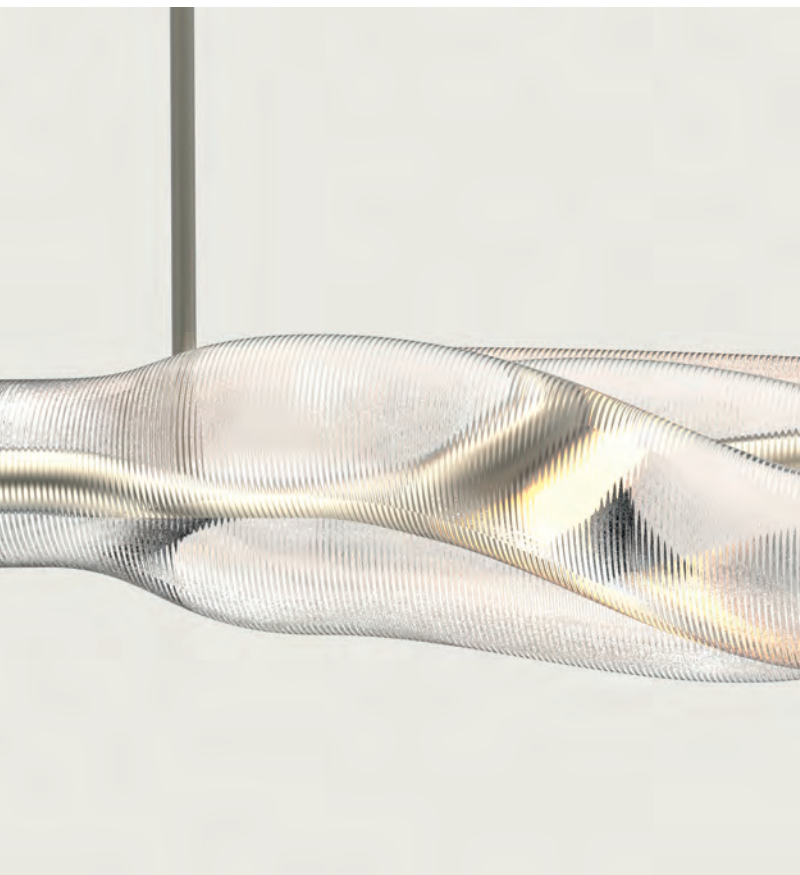
Going further still, Zoom meetings may be just the beginning. The 2022 ANA Avatar prize is offering \$10 million to create an avatar system that can transport

human presence to a remote location in real time; the aim is to make the user feel like they are actually there.

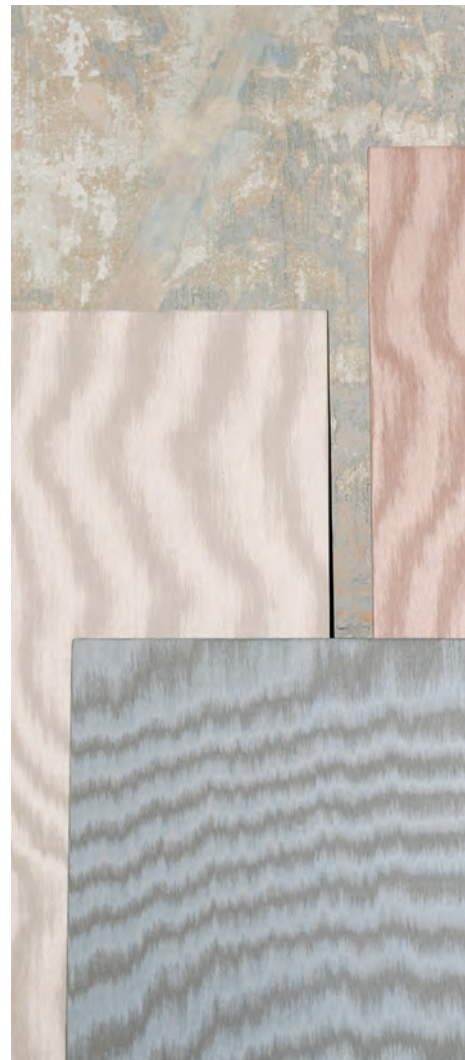
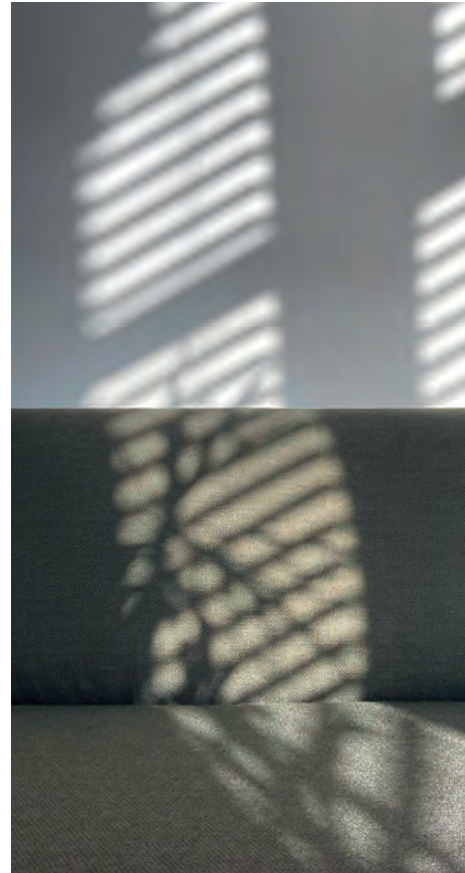
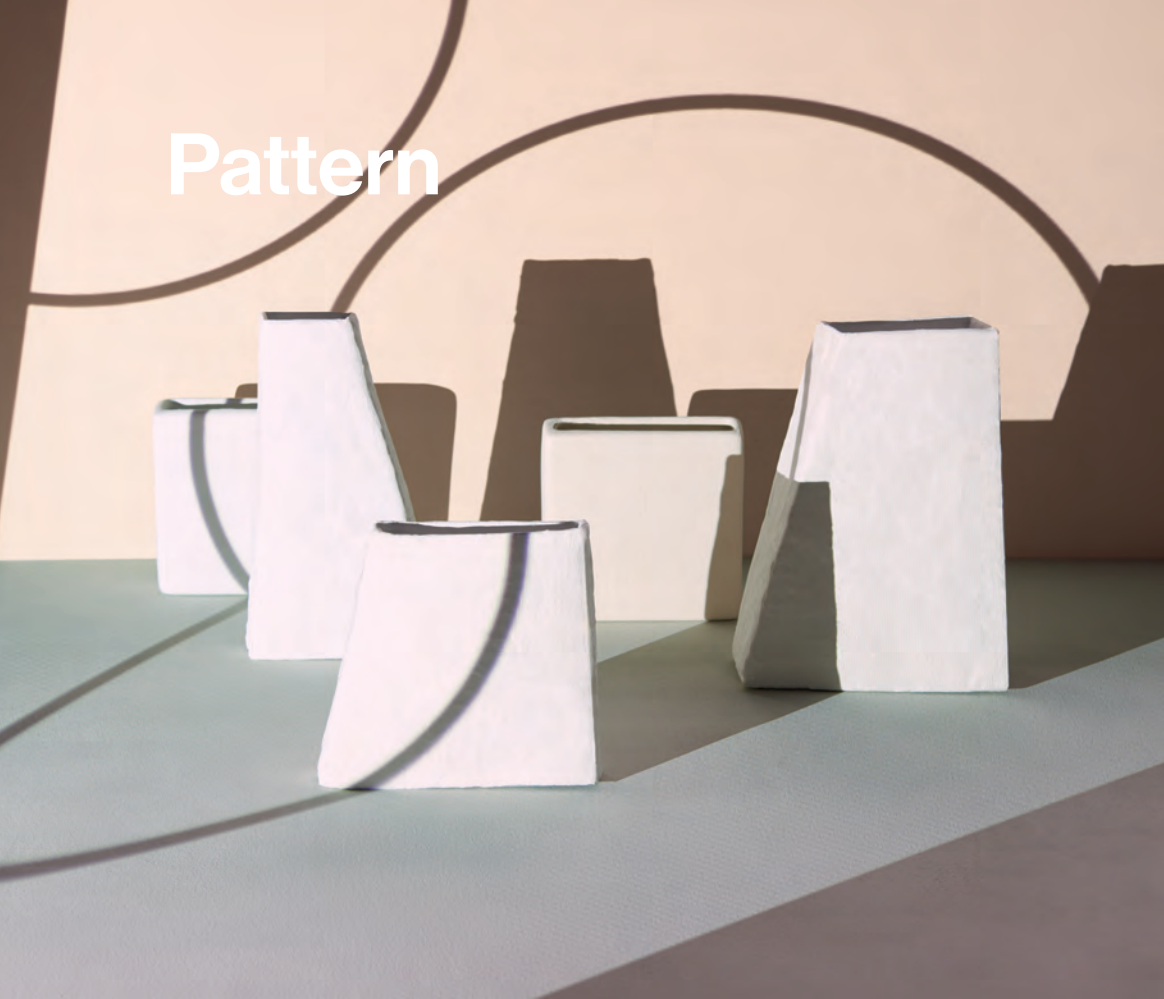
Retail too is redefining itself to suit Covid-19 sensibilities. Accelerating an already established trend for retailers to move business online, UK high street stalwart John Lewis is not alone in its intention to expand into more services including rental, resale and recycling, closing many stores and instead concentrating on digital channels. Smaller businesses selling directly to customers and using social media platforms as a virtual marketplace also look set to grow. Even exhibitions are redefining their parameters; a case in point, Dutch Design Week, held digitally last year, showcased innovative digital solutions. These included Movimento Club's exhibition, with ►

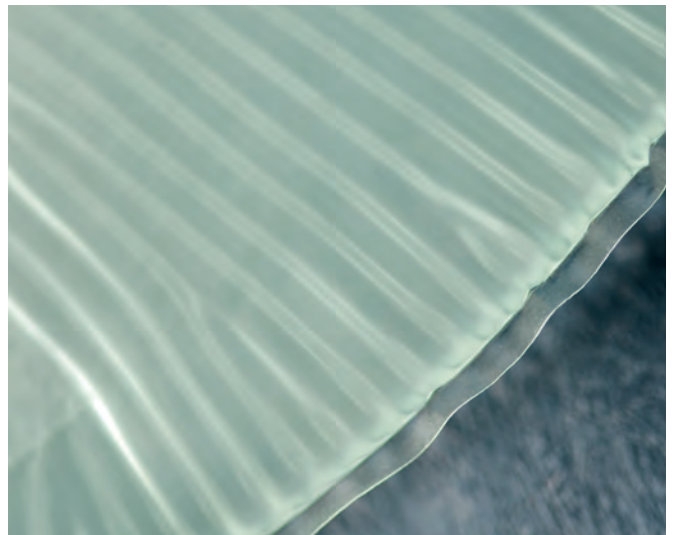
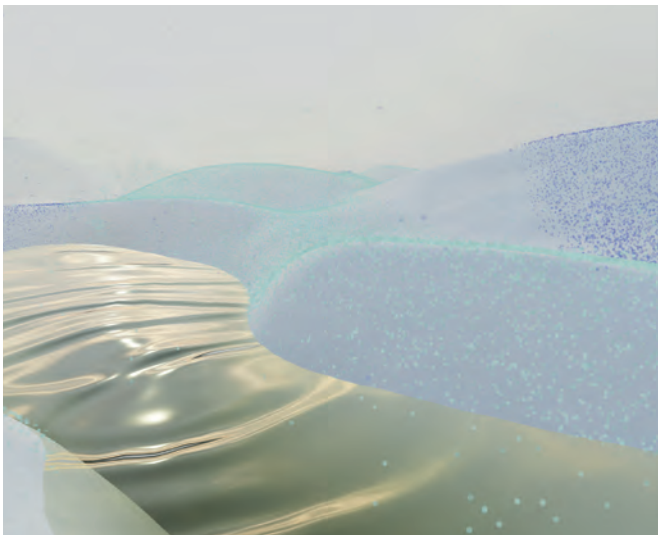
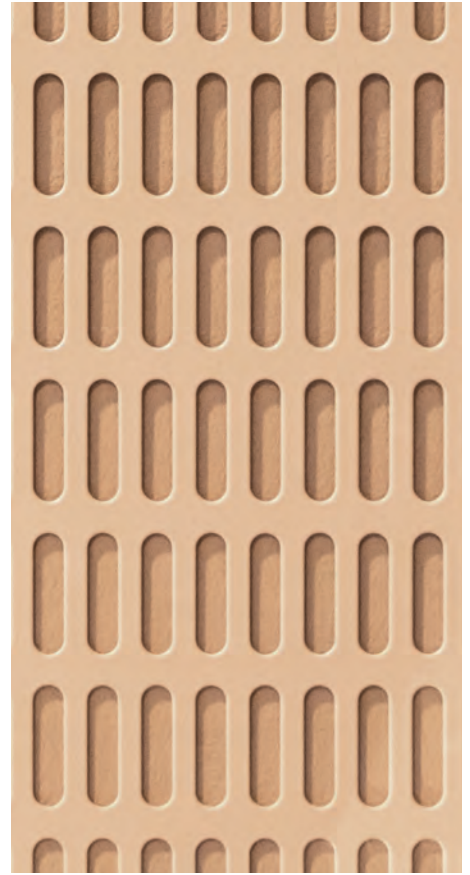
# Surface





# Pattern





# Regional focus

Any central theme revolving around tech and digital retailing will produce an uneven response globally, yet other elements of the story, encompassing risk aversion and climate change, chimed readily.

## Europe

For many, homeworking has become the norm, with tech development readily adapting. Online retail was already well established but has significantly grown its market share, in some cases negatively impacting the high street. This will continue as post pandemic recessions bite. Haptic and soft tech ideas are being examined and Europe looks set to comfortably adopt this approach moving forward. Likewise, rounded, amorphic shapes are already being explored by designers including Philippe Malouin for De Sede and Kristina Ziegenhagel.

## Middle East

The shift to remote working and home schooling has seen the rapid evolution of digital connectivity, facilitating online retail, education, business, health and social pursuits. Lockdown has prompted many to reconfigure and refurbish home environments, with technological appliances high up on the agenda; consumer spending on emerging technologies includes smart home devices, smart beds, robotics and Virtual Reality accessories. In essence, the home becomes an idyllic self-governed and personalised retreat.

## South Africa

There are currently a lot of empty offices and retail spaces as companies shift to working from home. Cities will adapt accordingly with urban spaces becoming suburban. For some, working and living from home needs to be balanced, making electronics softer and cosier, using natural materials like wood and ceramics. However, access to technology is still not widespread here, so some elements of this story have limited reach. Instead furniture needs to focus on functionality; for example clever space solutions for crowded living.

## North America

People have swiftly adjusted to socialising online and readily embraced new tech, with a large percentage of homes having at least one computer. The move to online shopping will continue, along with virtual experiences and entertainment. There are, however, some concerns about invasion of online privacy, along with fears that online environments could deepen cultural divides and feed political turmoil.





## Asia

Online socialising has become a new form of social engagement enabled by smoother platforms. Technological advances have also acted as a driver by bringing attention to homes as a space for everything, from socialising to shopping. There is an international feel to this story that plays to this region's receptivity to global trends. However, specific material touches, for example wood finishes and perhaps wicker, would bring a more regionalised feel to the theme.

## India

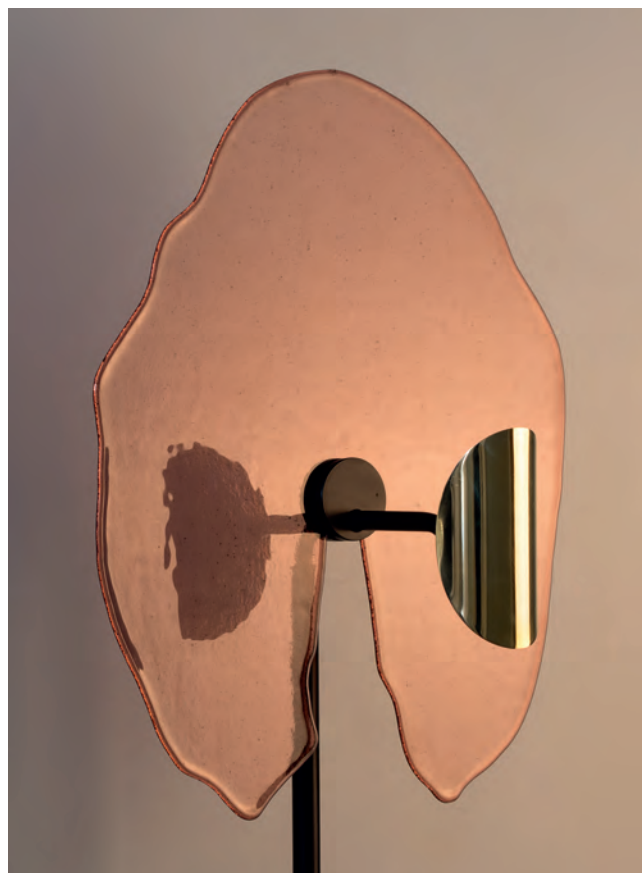
Traditional geographical boundaries like office, home and restaurants are now blurring. This approach entails new parameters for consideration, including the hybridisation of functions that permanently redefine product categorisation. Products will be designed and consumed in virtual contexts, with the emphasis on promoting living both minimally and mindfully.

## Australia & NZ

With swift, early lockdowns in both countries, working remotely has grown exponentially to the extent that even with restrictions loosening, companies are allowing staff members more autonomy. There is an acknowledgement that work practices, whether conducted at home or in the office, should be equally productive and more flexible. Although comparatively in its infancy, online selling has flourished, despite courier systems being overloaded. Particularly marked is the increase of online food and deliveries from restaurants.

## Regional applications

Europe	Developments in virtual products will move on at pace. There will also be more growth in haptic tech here. In terms of broader potential, softer home tech and wearables seem likely applications, along with home accessories and rounded, plump furnishings that make the most of this highly commercial palette.
Middle East	Home interiors and exteriors best reflect this version of sustainable comfort, convenience and security. The advent of smart homes in the region makes the most of new tech including solar powered, climate controlled, HEPA-filtered environments. Likewise, hospitality and leisure developments aim for a home-from-home feel.
South Africa	With a firm accent on comfort, clothing and accessories have a strong appeal. Recycling and upcycling are already well established so designers and artists are comfortable with sustainability, rental, mending and reuse, aiming for a timeless approach to design. In architecture, spaces are becoming more multi-functional, adapting to current circumstances.
North America	Design references for this story include surreal digital renderings, holographic/3D imagery and interactivity. Materials in the USA tend to be minimal and sleek yet warm and comforting as opposed to more utilitarian options. With the growing use of online shopping, we will see technological adaptations including haptic tech, virtual tours and so on. There will be new ways of travelling, whether virtually or closer to home.
Asia	This palette is very versatile, not only for obvious choices like residential spaces but across a multitude of possibilities for calm and reassuring interiors. The colours would be ideal for hospitality and healthcare institutions where the sense of comfort acts as a foil as we emerge from the pandemic towards a better, safer future.
India	This story will inevitably manifest itself in technology, digital interfaces and animations. This can also extend into digital fashion concepts and homes. There are potential applications for Gen Z fashion and tech accessories, along with the expanding market for wellness spaces and wellbeing products for the over 55s. This colour scheme is also ideal for bedding and the home decor industry in general.
Australia & NZ	This is a great residential palette; an effectively subtle update on the wellness theme. Small accessories, especially in silicone, would be an ideal use of these soft colours. Wearables and the fitness sector in general would also be a key application. Other potential markets include bed linen, casual wear including indoor shoes, packaging for skin care and smaller homeware products.



# Special focus: Latin America

Despite huge connectivity challenges and tech growth significantly behind other regions, the pandemic has acted as a catalyst for rapid development that many have welcomed. There are now signs that future growth in 3D printing and other advances could happen sooner than previously predicted.

Staying at home has opened up the door for efficiencies that previously would have been deemed impossible in this region. Latino government institutions are no strangers to the long bureaucratic waiting line but, through necessity, have had to adopt online measures. Unequal access to the Internet impacts negatively on indigenous communities who live far from connections. Inevitably they are highly disadvantaged by this, leading to concerns of further division between rich and poor.

In 2018 approximately 59 per cent of people living in Latin America had access to the Internet. This figure is growing fast, up from 36 per cent in 2011.\* The consensus is that the pandemic has pushed this region into a further speeding up of online engagement; this move will have economic implications going forward. However, there will be significant regional and societal differences that continue to affect ready access.

Although the proportion of Latin American businesses selling online is still small, there has been a push in design and art to explore visual products in 3D media; so far this has been more about content than commercialisation. Now, 3D printing is also starting to be developed with potential opportunities for manufacturing bases. This development is being supported by the United Nations Industrial Developments Organisation, particularly in Uruguay and Brazil. More sophisticated developments like haptic tech may take some time though to filter through.



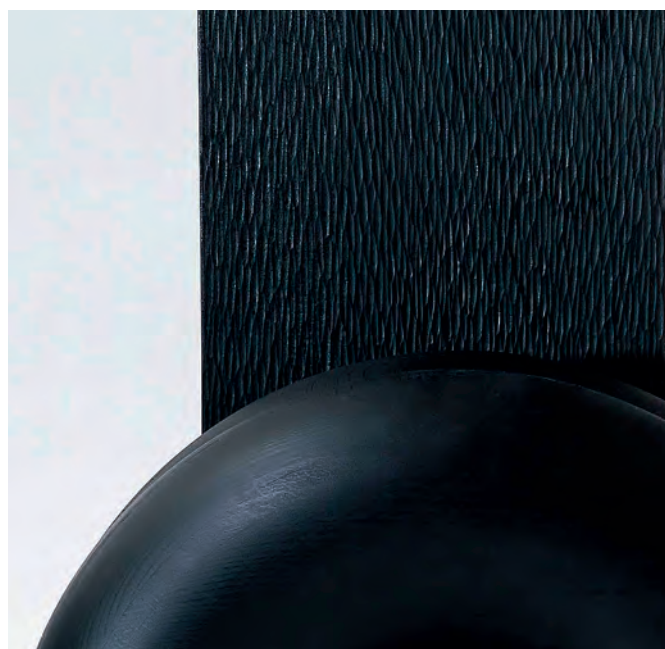
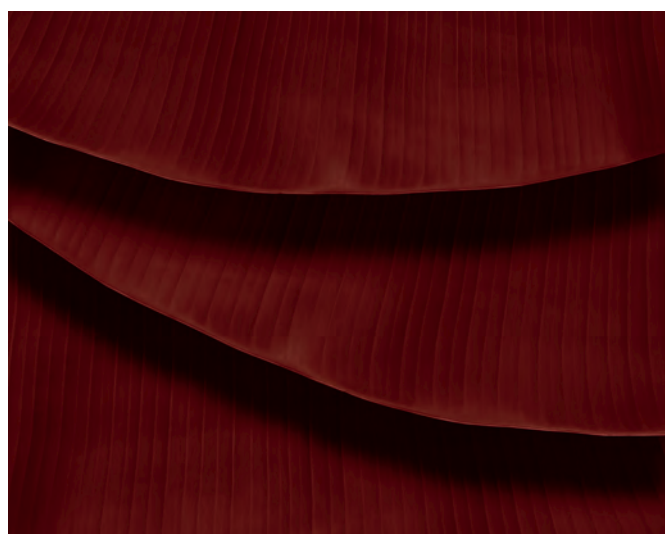
Staying at home during the pandemic has turned many people's attention inwards and there is more emphasis on textures and materials that focus on comfort. It needs to be noted that this only applies to specific social groups, as in an economy with often-informal employment working from home has not been an option for all. But for those that have been lucky enough to stay at home, a gentle neutrality is consistent with current trends in many Latin American interiors. That said, this palette would function equally well in government and educational institutions and hospitals.

*\*Figures for 2018 / statista.com*

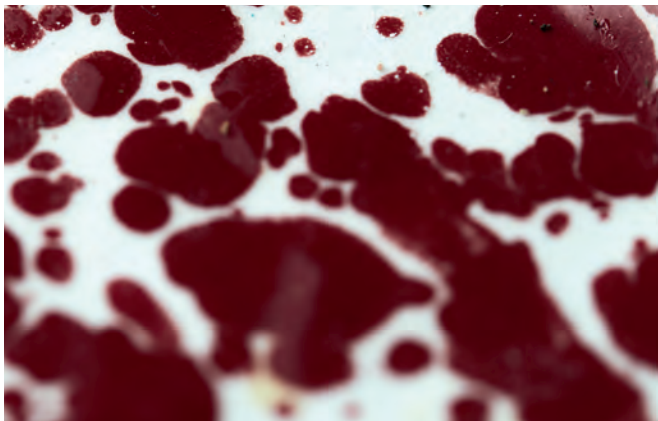
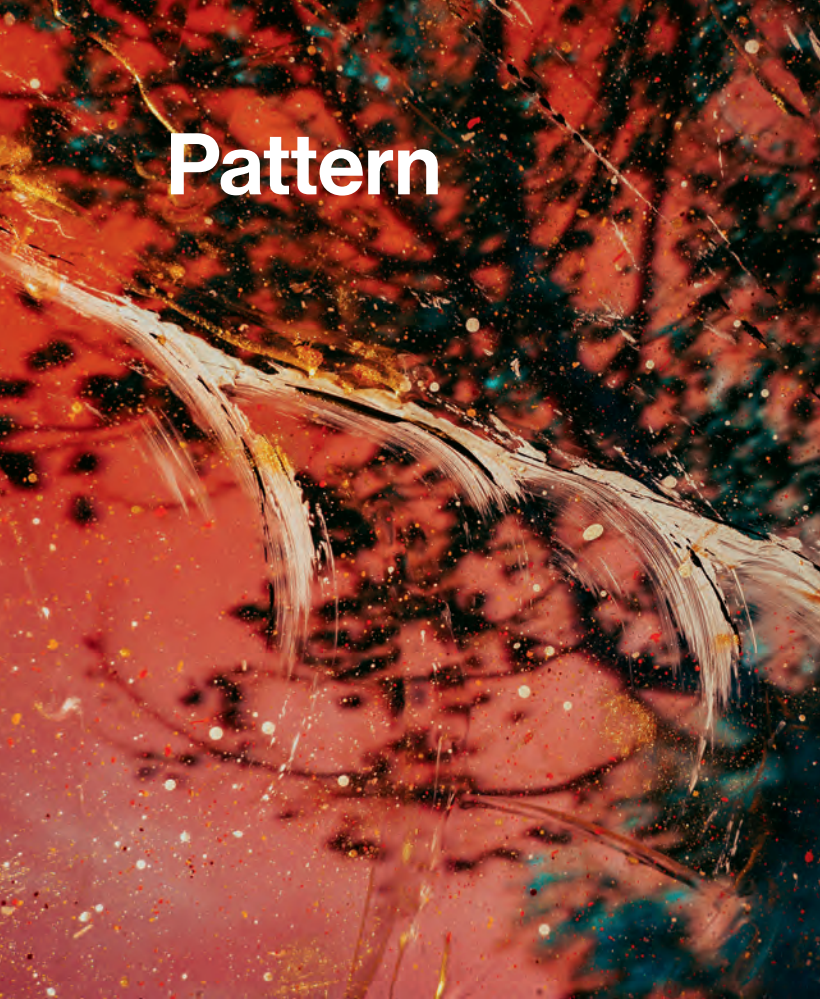


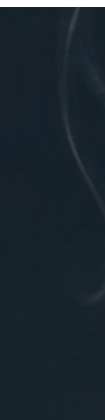
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# New material dimensions

As design in 2020 shifted online, digital art truly blossomed. The lack of physical events pushed creatives to come up with alternative ways to communicate designs to their audiences online. Though it may seem contradictory, these digital explorations are not an anti-material trend, quite the opposite; they lead the way to unexpected, tangible material futures. Marie Rouillon finds out more.

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Reisinger Studio



Reisinger Studio



@rachaellie



Reisinger Studio

We've been tracking the influence of digital art on the design industry since way before the pandemic. Leaving gaming aesthetics behind, online-inspired colours in particular have been observed in fashion, interiors, products and cosmetics for a while. Inspiration is increasingly being drawn from the works of innovative 3D artists, including The Fabricant for fashion, James Owen for impossible surfaces, Studio Brasc for escapist landscapes and Lucy Hardcastle for material dreams in ethereal colours.

With the advances in automation and artificial intelligence, it's easy to imagine a near future in which machines will create designs tightly tailored to consumer preferences. A recent find of hyper-stylised computer generated imagery is @rachaellie, the world's first fully automated autonomous 3D design influencer of Instagram. Programmed by Matthias Winckelmann, Rachael is designed to create one highly likeable 3D render every day and post it on the platform. Working with a large library of colours, objects and materials, her process is similar to how a human

would approach creating images or indeed objects. "There's a healthy amount of randomness combined with a good dose of artistic curation," explains Winckelmann. @rachaellie's images featured here were created exclusively for MIX Magazine.

Adding another layer of reality to digital work, 2020 saw a proliferation of renders featuring real life objects. This was especially crucial for brands, curators and galleries as a vehicle to present new designs to potential buyers. Using varying technologies, from 3D rendering and video, to ►

augmented and virtual reality, the artworks communicate information about the object's size, its relationship to the environment, but also its materiality, texture, colour and feel. This in turn allows the viewer to fully imagine how these objects or pieces of furniture would translate in their own homes. Of particular note are three digital exhibitions; soft-geometry's Imagined, for Uncertain Times, Adorno's Virtual Design Destination and Movimento Club's Milano Design City exhibition. All three took the decision to feature the objects on highly contrasting backgrounds, with radically different textures, but emphasised the digital or totally impossible and otherworldly qualities, allowing the real objects to come to the fore, with material properties further enhanced.

Although they create artworks together, Rebecca Lee and Signe Emdal have never met in person. Yet collaboration sees their very different set of skills combine in a perfectly creative mix; a 3D artist and a textile designer, pushing each other's craft to new levels. Supaform is another studio whose work is bridging real and digital worlds; some of the furniture pieces are real, some are rendered, and it is nearly impossible to detect which from simply looking at the images.

Taking this bridging of realities one step further, Reisinger Studio

is organising The Shipping later this month, the first 24-hour online auction of its kind, where ten digital pieces of furniture will be on sale. Out of the ten, only five will come with their physical counterpart. All ten digital collectibles will come in a format which can be implemented in any open world, with the promise that they will be iterated on in the future to remain compatible. Reisinger has been working across these two realms for a while; in 2019 he collaborated with product designer and textile expert Julia Esque to bring his Insta-famous CGI render Hydrangea Chair to life. The challenge of recreating the surface necessitated laser cutting hundreds of strips of fabric to create the thousands of pale pink petals.

Artur de Menezes also chose to push his Oil Chair into real-life production following the fantastic response the render received online. Six N. Five Objects, the new industrial design side of Studio Six N. Five, will be taking on the challenge. Experienced in translating 3D renders into real life objects, recent trophies created for the Material Designers contest were born as renders, with impossible looking shapes and surfaces, but have been successfully translated into tangible items that really require a second look (or better yet, a touch) to make sure they are real.

Wang & Söderström's recent range of objects developed for Hay is another

perfect example of this concept. Having originated in digital form, the objects were then 3D printed and later moulded in porcelain and stoneware at a ceramics factory. The different glazes, from shiny to matt and satin, look from another world, emulating a render effect. "It is in the unification of the physical and digital that there is the opportunity for new ways of sensing materials," the duo explains. Experimenting first in digital form allows them to simulate complex shapes and textures incredibly difficult to create by hand.

Also primarily a digital artist, Lucy Hardcastle's experiments in mouth blown glass started as an exercise in recreating her 3D renderings. The pictures of her pieces challenge expectations of what is fluid and what is solid, what is real and what is digital. As Hardcastle puts it "Digital makers are the new wave of crafts people."

It's easy to dismiss digital as the antithesis to material design, but there is now a strong argument that the opposite is true; digital artists are pushing the boundaries of tangible material design with the help of machines. Computer generated imagery inspires new products, colours and finishes by propelling further than manual experimentation allows. What's more, less physical experimentation and prototyping could also be one of the most sustainable ways of manufacturing



Another Artist for Movimento Club



Another Artist for Movimento Club

for the future; designers can test their creations on potential users in render form before thinking about production. With products then made to order, this could mean a zero stock, zero waste future, but with highly tangible and perfectly textured objects. ●

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Lucy Hardcastle



Six N. Five



Six N. Five



Wang & Söderström x HAY



Imagined, for Uncertain Times | Render SPOT studio | Curation soft-geometry