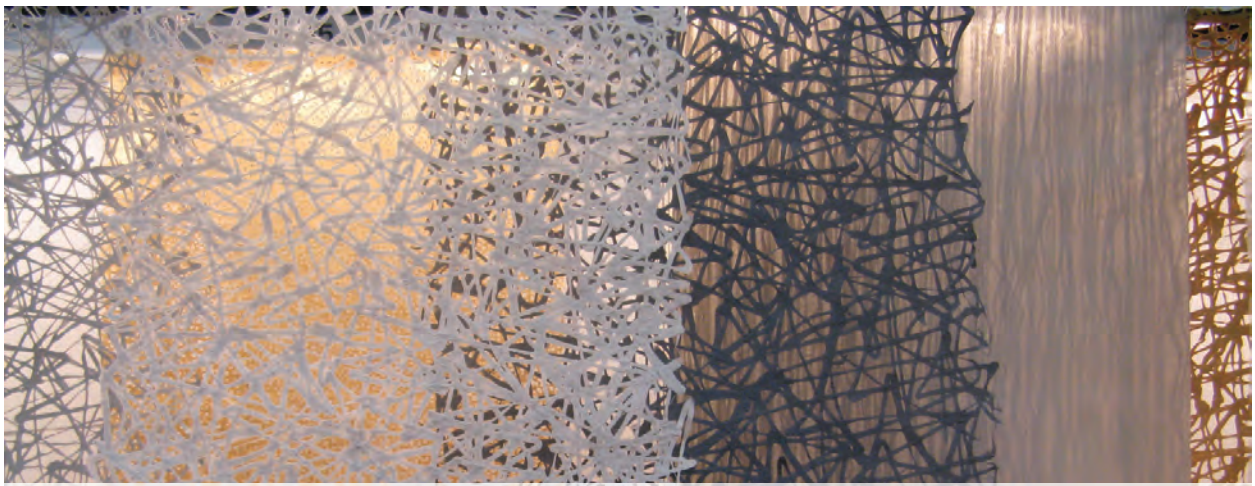
TEXTILES & TRENDS AT HEIMTEXTIL



OFF THE WALL
European manufacturers have always been ahead of the curve when it comes to wallcoverings. This year, they ventured out of the box to use wallpaper in different ways other than on the wall or by incorporating edgy materials into collections. WallTech, featured here, indicated these paper fabrics are not only sold for panel trackers, screen dividers, and roller shades, but wallcoverings too.

DEB BARRETT

Heimtextil kicked off the 2008 round of European design trade shows on January 9 to steady crowds and strong optimism by both visitors and exhibitors. Especially notable was the enthusiasm and commitments made by Eastern European and Russian buyers showing where the money centers are in home textiles these days. Two other main trends surfaced at the show: the worldwide increase in demand for branded and licensed articles, particularly in the luxury market. This creates an opportunity for these manufacturers to sell their wares to the booming Chinese market. Secondly, in many export-oriented nations, such as India, the weak US dollar is causing a fall in revenues and this has had a negative impact in attendance and buying.

As for the US, the good news is we spotted American window-covering fabricators and manufacturers that had either returned after a long absence or were visiting the fair for the first time. However, noticeably absent were major fabric jobbers (both exhibiting and attending) from the US, perhaps to instead journey to Paris' Editeurs showcase at Maison et Objet later in January or possibly, a reflection of the weak US economy.

The granddaddy of textile fairs has not set on its laurels, but this year has instead revamped some of its concepts to better align itself with the changing business models of its vendors and attendees. "Style is more than an attitude"—the motto of this year's Heimtextil—reflects a major conceptual modification to the fair. Under the umbrella term "More", Heimtextil presented products offered by premium suppliers of home textiles in a more differentiated and targeted way than ever before. Understanding that interior decorators rank among the most important Heimtextil target groups, three of the new initiatives were aimed specifically at them.

Concept Square: showcase: shop concepts and space-management systems by bedding exhibitors.

Crystal Waves: a luxury bath scenario in cooperation with Swarovski, Kludi, Bisazza, and Hoesch.

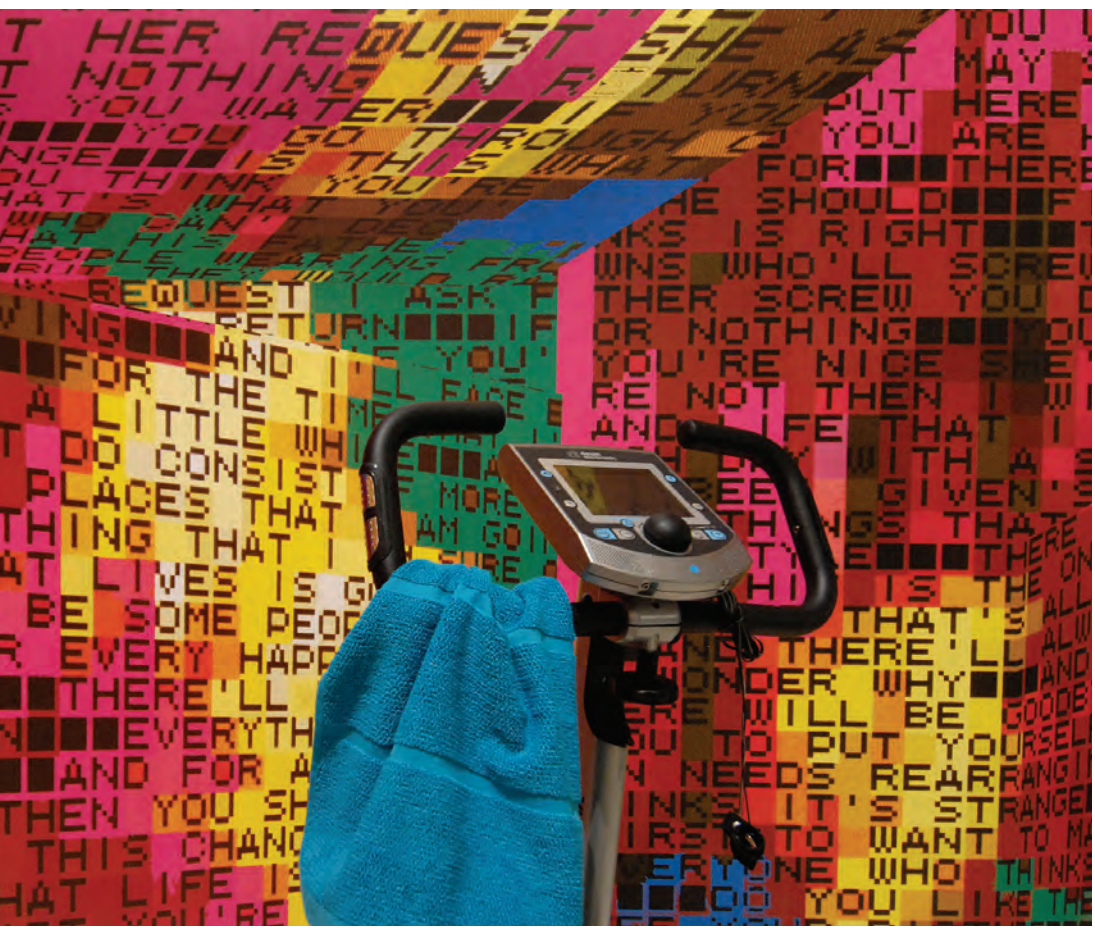
Competence Square: the result of a poll showing that designers wanted more information about contract products and services.

One of the highlights of Heimtextil is the presentation of the trend forecast for the coming 18 months. For the 2008/2009 trends, Heimtextil organized for the first time a Trend Table with five internationally acclaimed design studios: stijlinstituut amsterdam (The Netherlands), Carlin International (France), bora.herke (Germany), Concept Magenta (Switzerland), and Alvisi e Alvisi (Italy). The designers have summarized the four main trend currents under the motto, "It's time to be..." The trend theme captured the essence of the compatibility in opposites: tech vs. eco; minimalism vs. luxury; intelligence vs. intuition.

ORIGINAL
Handmade but cultivated: natural materials were given unaccustomed roles—felted, crushed, or embossed surfaces, some with wild and rough textures in nature's colors.

VISIONARY
The pursuit of the futuristic and ultra modern presented unusual materials in frosted pastels, accentuated by glossy coatings, metallics, and mottled surfaces.

MAGICAL
This trend moves to lacquer, glitter, vinyl, and crystal—all that shimmers and shines. It calls for mysterious shades of violet and the mix of satin and cashmere.



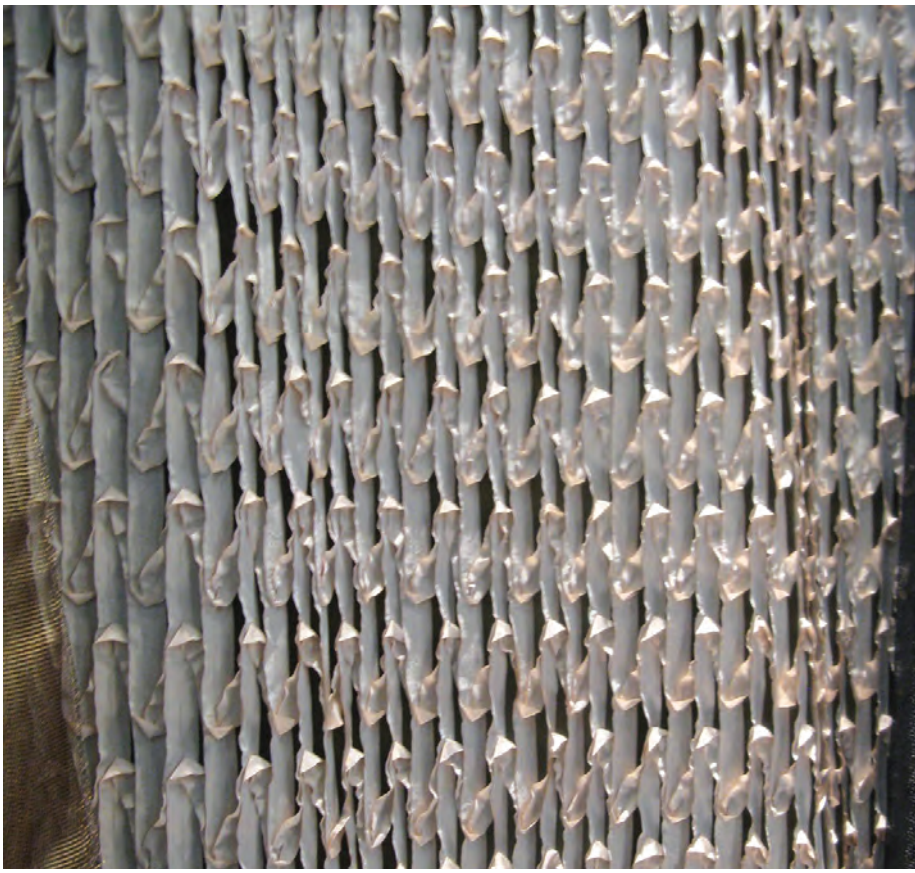
VIBRANT
Showcases high-tech images: neon lights, larger-than-life motifs in digital prints and graphics, plastic finishes, and pop colors against a background of white and neutrals.

Pages 72 and 73 offer a glimpse at the offerings throughout Heimtextil's show floor; find more highlights at www.window-fashions.com.

COLOR
What can I say? Hands down, black-and-white was the most popular color scheme.

TRIM AND TIEBACKS
My mantra, "more is better", was alive and well in the trim stands at Heimtextil. Crystal encrusted tassels, metallic leather gimps and braids, oversized tassels, and even eco-friendly collections were important. But the stand-out product was obviously tiebacks. Is this an indication we are tiring of the straight stationary panel on a rod? We saw fashion accessory–inspired looks, chains, silk floral cascades, plaited ribbons, airy wired looks, and mixed media tiebacks using unusual materials and industrial magnets, making application and customized treatments quick and easy. Ambiente design shot supplied by Heimtextil.

SOPHISTICATED STRUCTURES
[right] One of the biggest highlights at the fair was the amount of innovative and exciting textiles. Close examination of these textiles reveals surface design becoming more technical. Nets and mesh base cloths, waxy and chalky coatings, and chintz finishes were shown more often than not. The fabric from Dilhan is a ribbon that has been joined together to create yardage.



TRYING TO GET VERTICALS BACK ON TRACK
[left] Several manufacturers introduced the XXL vertical vane in an attempt to fill a niche between traditional vertical vanes and panel track blinds. Here Blome took it a step further by adding stained horizontal slats to their XXL PVC vellum vanes. Blome's XXL Vertical Vanes are shown here. **WF**