

Mainstream Brands Are Embracing Memphis, and Other News

Our daily look at the world through the lens of design.

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Tawaraya Ring (1981) by Masanori Umeda

Mainstream brands are embracing Memphis Milano again despite its anti-corporate ethos.

The loud and colorful style of the '80s-era radical design collective, which is the subject of a new exhibition at the Vitra Design Museum in Germany celebrating the 40th anniversary of its founding, is finding favor with brands like Target, Fila, Puma, and Wayfair despite the Italian group's anti-consumerism stance. "They tended to make these pieces in small batches, rather than mass-producing them," says Mateo Kries, the museum's director and curator of the exhibition. "They didn't like the idea that designers were contributing to the culture of overconsumption." The aesthetic had an indelible mark on the '90s, as seen in the geometric shapes and brash color schemes in the era's MTV videos, shows like *Saved by the Bell*, and Nike sneakers.

There's no definitive evidence that chance meetings at the office boost innovation.

Despite what influential industry leaders like JP Morgan CEO Jamie Dimon and Apple CEO Tim Cook say about in-person work leading to beneficial interactions, a growing body of evidence shows that it may even hamper creativity. "There's credibility behind the argument that if you put people in spaces where they are likely to collide with one another, they are likely to have a conversation," says Ethan S. Bernstein, who teaches at Harvard Business School and studies the topic. "But is that conversation likely to be helpful for innovation, creativity, useful at all for what an organization hopes people would talk about? There, there is almost no data whatsoever. All of this suggests to me that the idea of random serendipity being productive is more fairy tale than reality."