

The Cutting: Edge of Wallpaper

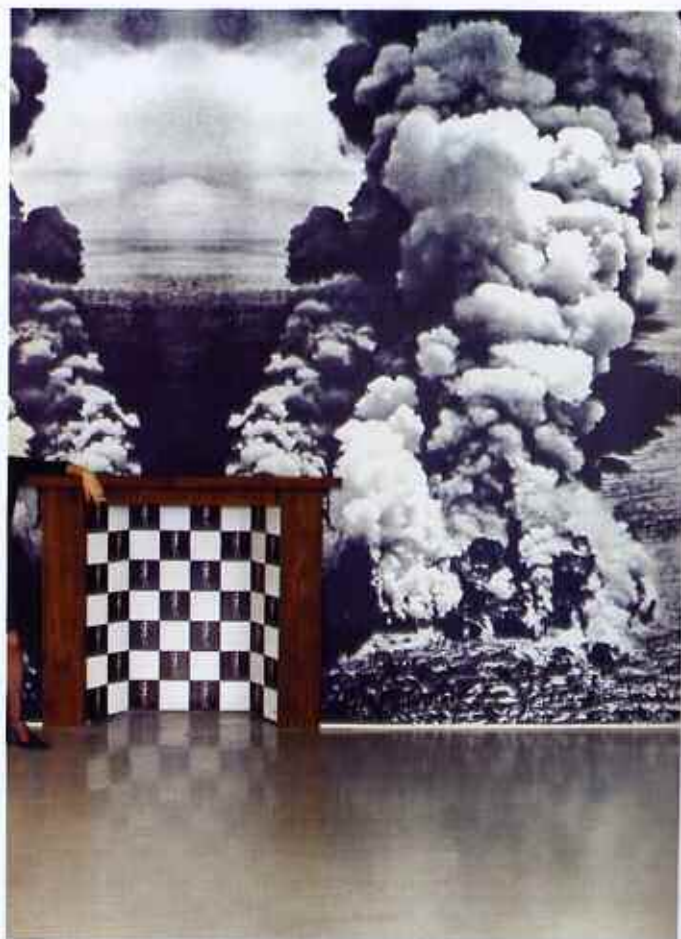


black dog publishing

Showroom Dummies

The design group Showroom Dummies, made up of Abigail Lane, Brigitte Stepputtis and Bob Pain, have a talent for turning disturbing and odd imagery into unthreatening and strangely beautiful wall-coverings. The highlight of their 2003 launch show was a room with a wooden fireplace coated in macabre skeleton tiles and surrounded by a mural-sized black and white photo of a volcanic eruption. This freeze frame of nature's fury lends an eerie stillness to the space. Another room featured a cashmere-covered bed with lizards, dogs and bugs flanked on either side by lightning bolts. The electric storm is mirrored on either side of the bed giving it a surreal quality. Despite the initial jolt, this horrific imagery always remains subordinate to Showroom Dummies' sophisticated designs and when incorporated as design elements, these images lose much of their bite. Their taste for predominantly stark black and white motifs is softened by their taste for luxurious and homely materials.

Their *Skeleton* wallpaper and matching chair covers, combine the humorous, the gothic and the contemporary. A model caravan, which they decorated has an uncharacteristically DIY feel but includes recurring themes such as the checkerboard, skulls and coffins, in a more varied colour palette. Other wallpaper designers tend to conceal such controversial images in more traditional forms or smuggle them in along with more innocent fare, but Showroom Dummies flaunt the strange and frightening and somehow manage to domesticate it.



Top right:

Volcanic Eruption Mural, London, 2003.
Photograph by Coco Amardeil.

Bottom right:

Skeleton Wallpaper, London, 2003.
Photograph by Julian Dodd.

Opposite:

A selection of details from their *Caravan* installation, 2006.

