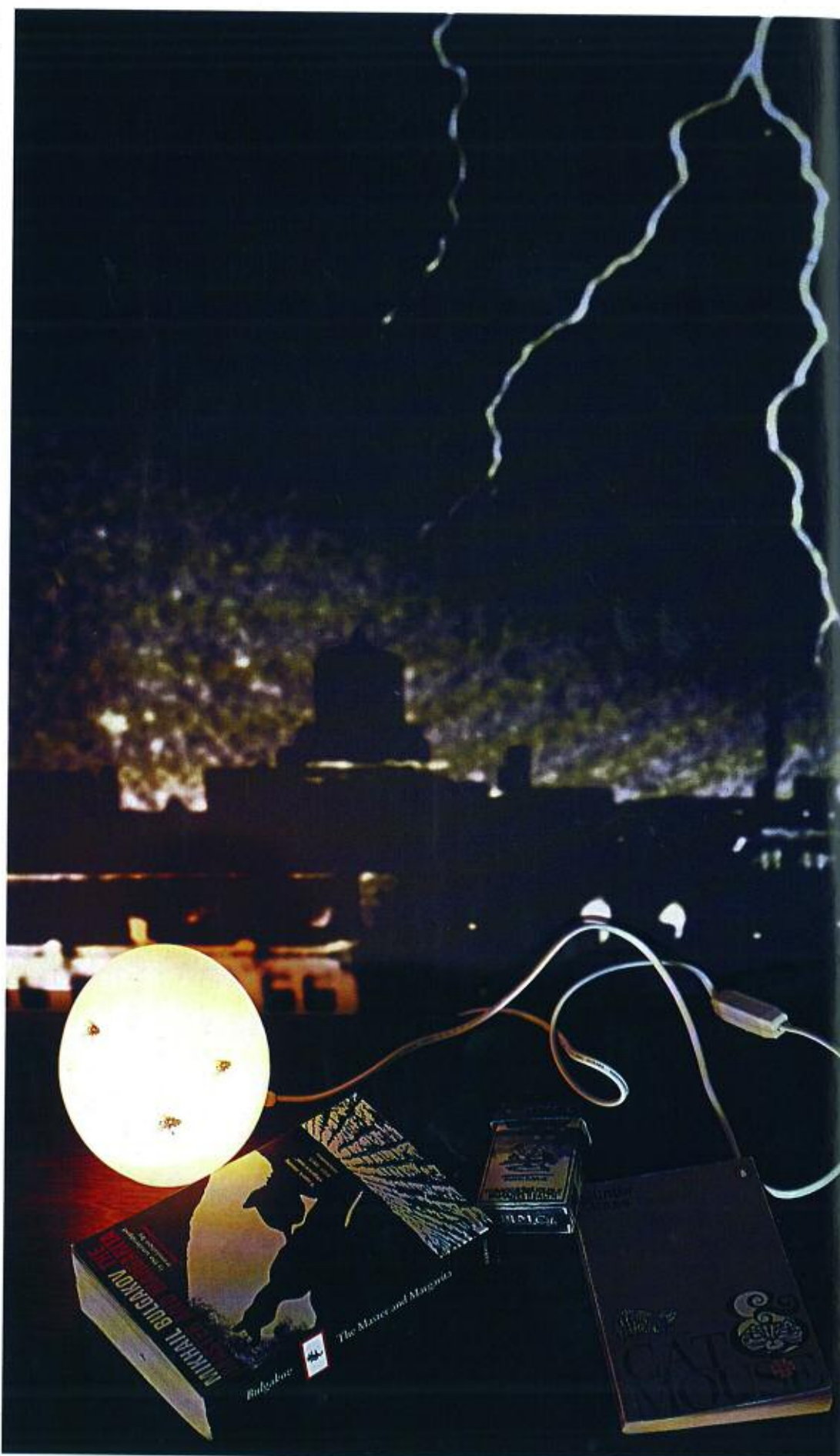


trario, ma non lo è. Cielo cupo grigio scuro che diventa wallpaper in camera da letto, tuoni che fracassano in silenzio e lampi che disegnano sghembe geometrie, sembrano rassicuranti, ma non lo sono. Sagome di insetti decorano un copripiumone a scacchi rossi e bianchi. Sono pur sempre scarafoni o no? E noi, non essendo Abigail, perché mai dovremmo trovarli, virgolette, carini? Su un séparé un branco di meduse galleggia al rallentatore in acqua. No, non sono meduse, ma paracadutisti, probabilmente in battaglia. Mosche gigantesche ronzano sulla superficie in metacrilato del tavolo in cucina. Per caso questa sera a cena è con noi Mr. Cronenberg? In cucina c'è pure un altro séparé, con un asino fatto a pezzi, per fortuna solo in fotografia. E poi il salotto... "morente", ossimoro di living. Gli scheletri fuggiti dagli armadi sono diventati fantasia, che decora tessuti e ceramiche. Scheletrini sulla sedia e scheletrini a scacchi, nelle piastrelle. Sulla parete bombe su bombe, appoggiato al caminetto persino un teshchio, dipinto di cielo azzurro con tanto di nuvolette serene, come un Magritte. Le orbite vuote osservano il vuoto. Probabilmente Mrs. Lane, si è divertita parecchio ad arredare la propria abitazione in questa maniera, a incidere ovunque e a chiare lettere le stigmate di un'arte dove il macabro si spinge oltre il comune senso del pudore. E anche noi, abbiamo scherzato un po', divertendoci a giocare "all'inglese" mescolando le carte tra un paradossale e l'altro. Sorry.

**In queste pagine:** prototipo di lampada da comodino decorata con insetti. Coperta in cachemire a scacchi con motivo a insetti. Dice Abigail: «Penso sia divertente mettere un murale con una tempesta elettrica sopra il letto». O no? Coperta in cachemire (disponibili in vari disegni e colori) € 500.

**Nelle pagine precedenti:** ironia e provocazione non si fermano nemmeno sul tavolo della cucina (78x78 cm). Il piano in vetro ha il motivo *Fly in the Sky*.









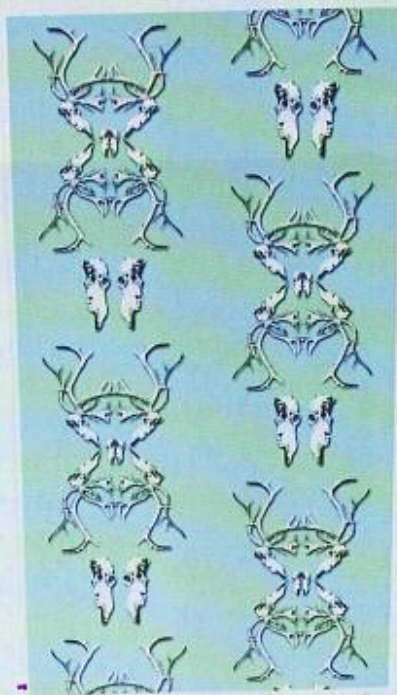


## MADAME LANE

Trentasettenne, londinese Abigail Lane è a capo del gruppo di interior designer "The Showroom Dummies" costituito con la tedesca Brigitte Stepputis (1956) costumista e attuale dirigente couture per Vivienne Westwood; allo stampatore inglese Bob Pain (1955), la cui azienda Omnicolour fornisce servizi specializzati a designer, artisti e aziende varie, e al trentacinquenne Edwin Wright, anche lui inglese, allestitore. Il mondo di Abigail Lane è situato tra arte e design, decorazione e magia. I suoi primi lavori emersero nel 1988, come parte della cosiddetta "Freeze Generation". Poi ci furono le collettive al Centro Pompidou di Parigi, alla Biennale di Lione, al Magasin 3 Konsthall di Stoccolma. Ora è arrivato il tempo delle personali.

L'ultima lo scorso ottobre al The Zoo Art Fair di Londra, ma ha esposto anche al Distrito Cuatro di Madrid, all'ICA di Londra e presso il Museo di Arte Contemporanea di Chicago. Tra gli ultimi progetti la collaborazione con la Mulberry per la quale sta elaborando elementi decorativi ispirati al Natale. Una collezione di T-shirt è in vendita direttamente dal suo web site. Showroom Dummies Limited, 3rd floor unit 3, 92 White Post Lane, London [info@showroomdummies.com](mailto:info@showroomdummies.com) [www.showroomdummies.com](http://www.showroomdummies.com)

**In questa pagina:** la designer Abigail Lane al lavoro nel suo studio fra cataloghi e fotografie. **Nella pagina a sinistra:** appesi alla parete, progetti per la carta da parati con renne per Mulberry. Mentre sul pavimento si vede la stampa di una scena di corrida dal titolo *Bull Rhapsody*, uno dei lavori più recenti di Abigail. **Nelle pagine precedenti:** il wallpaper con gli scheletri (una specie di marchio di fabbrica), la mosca sul cuscino al centro, il corvo sulla sedia. Eppure il living mantiene una sua classicità. Come se la provocazione fosse riassorbita in un ordine estetico.



by long linen awnings. The furnishings feature a masterful mix, including pieces designed by the likes of Le Corbusier, Franco Albini and Eames with chairs custom designed by Lina Bo Bardi herself. But there is also a lot of spectacular antique furniture, marble sculptures and locally crafted items. The space is fluid and open, broken up and delimited only by the furnishings themselves: a circular table in marble and metal for the dining area right next to the large kitchen; chairs in leather and tubular metal for the lounge area around the handsome stone fireplace; a big office desk and metal bookcases on the studio-library. An engaging mix of antique and modern elements that is still completely contemporary, everything, from the interiors to the architecture of the house itself.

from page 238

## **THE WORLD OF LINA BO BARDI**

Italian by birth, Brazilian by adoption, Lina Bo Bardi is a true pioneer architect. She began her sensational career in Italy together with Gio Ponti. In Brazil she was in the avant-garde with the likes of Niemeyer and Burle Marx. Here is her story by Filippo Romeo

Italy's Gae Aulenti, the Anglo-Iraqi Zaha Hadid, Japan's Kazuyo Sejima and France's Odile Decq and Manuelle Gautrand: you can count the number of masters of contemporary architecture on the fingers of just one hand. And although the number of women in the leading ranks of the architectural firms is on the increase (Lise Anne Couture of New York's Asymptote, Elizabeth Diller of Diller + Scofidio, Louisa Hutton of the Anglo-German firm, Sauerbruch Hutton Architects), they are still a rare exception. This is true, despite the constant progress and inroads made by the women's movement, the emergence of women managers and all the efforts in the area of equal opportunity. This is why a case like that of Lina Bo Bardi, a female architect who began her career way back in the Forties, cannot help but inspire admiration. Winner of the grand prix of Latin-American architecture for her last work, the new prefecture of San Paolo, this remarkable designer, who became a Brazilian by choice, enjoyed a varied career, engaging in a broad range of design activi-

ties, everything from theatrical sets to costumes, from graphic design to urban planning, from furniture to jewelry. She was an expert at integrating international style with local culture. More than ten years after her death, her extraordinary talent can be rediscovered in an exhibit entitled, Lina Bo Bardi, Architect. The recovery of authenticity, curated by Luciano Semerani, Antonella Gallo and Giovanni Marras (International Gallery of Modern Art, Ca' Pesaro, Venice, through 15 November), mounted by Molteni, and by means of a catalogue, Lina Bo Bardi, Architect, published by Marsilio. Born in Rome in 1914, she received a degree in architecture at the end of the Thirties. This marked the beginning of an exciting and very successful career that saw her working together with the masters of modern architecture. Beginning with Gio Ponti, under whose tutelage Aquilina Bo learned the ropes as an apprentice, working steadily from eight in the morning to midnight, helping to design everything from memorable pieces of furniture and various objects to large buildings. This was during the war and Lina, in order to pay for her studies in Milan, also worked as an illustrator for various magazines and newspapers, including Stile, Grazia and Domus. During the height of the German occupation she accepted the position as editor of Domus and, all by herself, using only old publications as a guide, organized and put out the issues of the magazine. At the end of the war in Rome she met the architectural critic, Bruno Zevi, who had just returned to Italy from exile in the United States to found the Organic Architecture Association. With him she published a new magazine by the emblematic name of: A - Cultura della Vita. Eventually, she fell in love with journalist, Pietro Maria Bardi, and moved with him to San Paolo in Brazil. This move opened a new chapter, the beginning of a new adventure, embraced with enthusiasm, together with the great masters of Brazilian architecture: Lucio Costa, Oscar Niemeyer, Burle Marx and many others. In 1951, the year in which she built Casa de Vidro (shown in the preceding article), she decided to embrace Brazil as her "chosen homeland". She explained the choice this way: "When you're born, you don't choose anything, it's totally a fortuitous event. I wasn't born here, but I chose to live here. This is why Brazil is my country in a double sense".

from page 242

## **BLACK COMEDY**

Beware of irony, Rilke used to say, use it parsimoniously. This is even more true regarding today's urge to shock. And yet Abigail Lane and her associates proceed heedlessly in their provocative manner. Skeletons, insects and explosions everywhere. The final effect, surprisingly enough, is very elegant and very British

by Maurizio Marsico

"Thinking ill of someone may be a sin, but you're practically never wrong." A quip credited to Giulio Andreotti. Arsenic and new lace. The ancient and accepted Scottish Rites. Clockwork Orange. Jack the Ripper and The Elephant Man. Requiem masses sung by Elton John. Sid Vicious and Madame Tussaud. Winston Churchill and Mr. Hyde. A wedding and four funerals. Steam Punk and Rare Roast-Beef. They don't get much sun in Great Britain and this probably explains their penchant for mystery and high tolerance for the gruesome. In England they laugh (in their tight-lipped way) at ghosts and joke about death (in their tight-lipped way) and pain is almost always a pleasure (endured, you guessed it, in their tight-lipped way). It's certainly a far cry from Naples, where the mere mention of certain taboo subjects sends people into paroxysms of superstitious gestures meant to ward off evil. As a matter of fact, black humor was invented in England, that perverse realm where they drive on the left and even have picnics in picturesque cemeteries you can simply stroll into like a park. This said, if the whole world thought like the English, it would be easier to understand the British soul and not just theoretically. And running across a house like Abigail Lane's, of all places, right in the heart of London, wouldn't strike one as strange at all. But, the rest of the world does not happen to think like the English. Here gloomy gray skies inspire bedroom wallpaper, as thunder breaks the silence and bolts of lightning design jagged geometric patterns, shattering any hope of reassurance. A hope that is further dispelled by the alarming outlines of crawly insects adorning the red and white checked duvet cover. They are just harmless cockroaches, right? As for us, not being Abigail, why should we find them even the least bit cute or, God forbid, cuddly?

Floating across a screen one discovers a school of eerily suspended jellyfish. No, they're not jellyfish at all, they're paratroopers, probably in battle. Giant flies buzz about on the methacrylic surface of the kitchen table. Are we by any chance expecting Mr. Cronenberg for dinner this evening? In the kitchen there's another screen, featuring a dismembered horse, fortunately the operation was only photographic in nature. And then there's the "dying" (as opposed to living...) room. Here the skeletons liberated from the closets have become a leitmotif adorning fabrics and ceramic tiles. Little skeletons on the chairs and little checked skeletons on the tiles. The walls are adorned with hails of falling bombs and there's even a skull on the mantel of the little fireplace, painted in sky-blue and complete with fluffy white clouds, like a Magritte. The hollow sockets stare out into empty space. No doubt Mrs. Lane had quite a jolly time decorating her own home in this way, clearly imposing the hallmarks of a very particular style throughout, a look in which the macabre is taken well beyond the boundaries of traditional modesty and decency. We have also been joking a little, amusing ourselves by pretending to be English, shuffling the cards on you between one paradox and another. Sorry.

#### **MADAME LANE**

Thirty-seven years old and a native Londoner, Abigail Lane is the head of a group of interior designers called "The Showroom Dummies", composed of: Brigitte Stepputis (1956) from Germany, a costume designer and currently the head of couture for Vivienne Westwood; printer Bob Pain (1955) from England, whose company, Omnicolour, provides specialized services to designers, artists and various companies; and thirty-four year old Edwin Wright, also from England, a set and furniture designer. The world of Abigail Lane is an exotic cocktail of art, design, decoration and magic. Her first projects date back to 1988, and were considered part of the so-called "Freeze Generation." Then there were group shows at the Pompidou Center in Paris, at the Biennale in Lyon and at Magasin 3 Konsthall in Stockholm. Now has come the time for individual, one-person shows. The latest being held in October at The Zoo Art Fair in London, but she has also exhibited her work at the Distrito Cuatro in Madrid, the ICA in London and at the

Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago. Her most recent projects include a collaboration with the Mulberry Company for whom she is creating decorative elements inspired by Christmas and a fun collection T-shirts that are sold right on her website. Showroom Dummies Limited, 3rd floor unit 3, 92 White Post Lane, London info@showroomdummies.com www.showroomdummies.com

from page 254

#### **CHIAROSCURO**

**The white areas open up to emptiness, the space is white and amplified. Into the darker areas one has placed precious pieces of furniture and souvenirs of the past. In Kamakura, in Japan, an artist/intellectual decorates in a dialectical manner, intertwining Orient and Occident, light and shadow**  
by Ueno Asako

At a certain point in its history Japan was penetrated by Europe. The event was so momentous and traumatic that it defined an entire age, the so-called "Era of chaos." For the diehard Japanese conservatives the import of this phrase was indisputably negative. In addition to the tragic consequences of the Second World War, they were also compelled to suffer the iniquity of Western taste. But there were those, as always seems to occur, who were able to transform this moment of chaos into a platform for further exploration and dialogue. Kato, a student of Tatsuhiko Shibusawa, an exceptional specialist in French studies and, like his teacher, a resident of Kamakura, seems to offer alternative interpretations. An approach eschewing the tears of mourning, lamenting the sunset of a time-honored tradition; eschewing the antagonism so in vogue among young Japanese at the turn of the last century. At least this is the message conveyed by his home. Let's take a look.

Two areas have been set aside for mediation. A sort of mini-theater on the upper floor leaves the northern wall free for projecting the owner's favorite films, containing a rich collection of CDs and DVDs. In this room Kato uses music to complement his unique way of experiencing Zen. The other area, his study, is a small room surrounded by shelves overflowing with books. Forget the poetics of emptiness and absence, here it is the urgent necessi-

ty of function that has fashioned the space: full, and happy to be so. At least here. Something changes, however, on the lower level in the living room. Kato and his wife practice the traditional Japanese tea ceremony in their own way on the floor in front of the couch. The "Otemae" sessions can last several hours and they are held in a specially prepared room, but the couple only requires 15 minutes and that's enough for them. When the sun begins to set, Kazuko prepares sake and snacks and then the dinner in a clean, simple kitchen. Once again the style and ceremonial functions of the home are personal, breaking with all orthodox canons. As if the behavior of the inhabitants was guided by inner rules all their own. The home, Kato explains, is a special place where external time is of no consequence, where domestic time flows at its own pace. As for the relationship between light and shadow, in the living room, not only do you see it, you actually feel it; it's a palpable presence. The concept of substance, for the Japanese, corresponding to the shadow realm, is rendered tangible by antique furnishings, floral decorations and pieces of art. The realm of light, on the other hand, is manifested through the concept of the "Ma": the zone is empty and yet it is imbued with great significance and meaning; it encircles the fullness of the darkness, like a camera when the shutter is released to capture light. Moreover, emptiness as an autonomous expression is perfectly exemplified in the art of arranging flowers, ikebana. In other words, this home captures the essence of the Wabi-Sabi aesthetic vision, traditional and contemporary. A realism that is so mundane that it enables Kato to appreciate the beauty of a simple spider web. That's right, he allows the spider web to blossom, explaining that he feels the beauty of raw, unadorned natural things. Beauty can be found both in poetry and a broken cup.

from page 262

#### **IPERDÉCOR**

**A kaleidoscope home complete with Neapolitan talismans and vintage furniture, not to mention insects (painted ones), souvenirs, Hindu mythology, fantasy and geometry. The freedom to be oneself, but within the confines of a strict style. Where are we? In Milan,**