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Reinvente: A Hybridized Home Collection

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REINVENTÉ: A HYBRIDIZED HOME COLLECTION

by

VALERIE QUINN WOCKLISH

Under the Direction of Michael White

ABSTRACT

The design world is constantly reinvigorated by influences from exotic lands, foreign peoples, and eras passed. Art Deco and Moroccan design are two distinct styles that penetrate product design, architecture, and interiors. These styles, while seemingly separate, experienced a unique overlap during the French colonization of cities such as Casablanca and Marrakech. The presence of Art Deco in a primarily Islamic and Moorish environment resulted in a unique hybridized style that has been scarcely examined in both the academic and design communities.

As designers continue to be inspired by global trends and ethnic cultures, variations and reinterpretations of significant periods continue to be reborn. I am posing the question of what this hybrid would look like today if it was further expanded upon. REINVENTÉ is an interiors collection consisting of product designs that further explore this hybridization, and expands upon how it could be reimagined in contemporary times.

INDEX WORDS: design, exotic, Art Deco, Moroccan, product design, variations, architecture, interior design, French Colonization, Casablanca, Marrakech, Islamic, hybridization, hybrid, Moorish, Mauresque, trends
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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
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REINVENTÉ: A HYBRIDIZED HOME COLLECTION

by

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May 2017
DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my parents, who have always encouraged me to reach for the stars, and have nurtured, supported, and been loyal patrons of my creativity over the years wholeheartedly. I would also like to thank my uncle, artist Jeff Kell, for being a constant source of professional knowledge and incomparable inspiration. Many thanks to Sameer Nair for always believing in me and my work, and for being a rock of constant support over the past two years.
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1 INTRODUCTION

“Design is like a language. It is often specific to a place and its overall culture. The same symbols and patterns resurface in different forms and styles and they serve as both the source and the result of creative inspiration.”

~ Herbert Ypma, Morocco Modern

For my thesis exhibition REINVENTÉ, I have chosen to further explore the impact that Art Deco design had in Morocco (which resulted in a much lesser known style referred to as Mauresque). I am taking a more in-depth look at Mauresque (or Neo-Morrish) architecture, its origins, and how the results of this stylistic movement could further inspire product design within the interior design community. Since entering graduate school, my travels abroad to regions that have been heavily influenced by this style have inspired much of my work. Such influences have also encouraged me to explore some of the more complex relationships in world history that have had a deeper impact on design than what many people would realize.

My desire to reimagine a more contemporary version of this architectural hybrid has led to a full interiors collection consisting of casegoods, textiles, lighting, and artwork. As I entered the final year of my MFA, I also began to concentrate on learning how to incorporate and re-translate current trends into my designs. I explored a variety of different line weights, colors, materials, and construction techniques in order come to up with the most interesting, and reinvigorating designs possible. This work has led me to my final thesis exhibition, where I have aimed to breathe new life into one of the most interesting stylistic hybrids of the past.

Most of my designs were displayed as prototypes, while some of the lighting designs have been fully realized, and have gone through the complete manufacturing process. Some of the
designs are more hybridized than others, while some of the designs are more specific to either Art Deco, or Moroccan design. The primary goal was to reinvent the fusion of the two styles by way of a collection, so inherently, some products may favor one influence more so than the other.

2 CHARACTERISTICS OF ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE

To have a firm understanding of Moroccan Architecture and Design, one must first understand Islamic Architecture and Design, as all that we know of present day Morocco is rooted in Islamic origins. In Kubilay Kaptan’s *Early Islamic Architecture and Structural Configurations*, Kaptan discusses the swift spread of Islam after its establishment, which included vast areas of Northern Africa, the Middle East, and large parts of Southeast Asia. One of the main hallmarks of Islamic architecture is the lack of figurative images, as religious beliefs heavily discouraged such representations. This lead to a heavy emphasis on multifaceted geometric patterns, and scrolling vine-like ornamentation. Stylized forms of animals and plants later developed as areas controlled by Persia (present day Iran), took more control of the aforementioned areas. It was during these formative centuries between 226 and 641 that Roman Byzantine influences, as well as Persian influences re-molded much of Islamic art and architecture.

Kaptan then begins to expand upon how all Islamic art and architecture are merely a means of Islam passing on their faith, in a metaphysical sense. Expanding upon that, Kaptan explains that much of Islamic architecture is rooted in a precise balance between total abstractions and organic forms. “For Muslims, abstraction helps free the mind from the contemplation of material form, opening it to the enormity of the divine presence”. ¹ In this quote, Kaptan further magnifies Islamic

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artists and the ways in which they utilized surface adornments that were often characterized by repeating and intensifying patterns, created to evoke a feeling of never-ending timelessness. Some of the finest examples of Islamic architecture are mosques which exemplify not only elements of purely Islamic influence, but that also pay significant homage to Romanesque and/or Persian inspiration as well. Key elements of Islamic architecture focus around concentrating on replications, even proportions, overall balance, and highly emphasized gradations (the advancement of a hierarchy of thoughts and concepts realized in finely coordinated structural placements). Kaptan also discusses architectural elements of these early Mosques and their accompanying structural systems, which exhibited hypostyle like halls as seen in the Great Mosque of Cordoba (See Figure 2.1).

Islamic builders were also famous for using a wide variety of pioneering structural techniques. Some of the most famous techniques specific to Islamic builders were the two arch forms known as the horseshoe arch, and the pointed (or ogival) arch (See Figure 2.2). They were also famous for producing a structural technique that created multiple niche-shaped vaulting units that were interlocking and load-bearing, known as *muqarnas*. Muqarnas, while structurally sound and used to create support on a large scale for domes, eventually became known more for their ornamentation and meticulously detailed, faceted surfaces (See Figure 2.3).
Figure 2.1 Great Mosque of Cordoba. [Photograph] Retrieved from https://courses.lumenlearning.com/arthistory1-91/chapter/great-mosque-of-cordoba/

Figure 2.2 Arch forms and structural configurations. [Illustration] Retrieved from https://www.quora.com/What-should-I-know-about-Islamic-art
A perfect example of Islamic architecture (which is heavy in Persian influence) is the Imam Mosque (See figure 2.3). This exemplary specimen of the style is so rich and incredibly complex that it almost leaves you with a feeling of bewilderment. The heavy ornamentation of the structure, the use of bright striking colors, and the intricate honeycomb effect created by the muqarnas filled dome is simply incredible. The dome and the structure-turned-decorative muqarnas are what inspire me the most, and are what sets this style apart from every other ceiling or dome I have ever seen. While varying shapes and forms have in fact been added to create the muqarnas, the dome actually appears as though it has been chipped away at to create complex, negative forms that recede into space. My perception of this dome is that even though the viewer is looking up, the ceiling of the dome creates the effect of falling in. This notion of creating an illusionary effect is what inspired me the most from this specific style.
Figure 2.3 Imam Mosque. Le Roy, Kares. Persepolis [Photograph] Retrieved from http://www.karesleroy.com/persepolis/
3 A BRIEF HISTORY OF ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE IN ANDALUSIA

Andalusia (Al-Andalus in Arabic) is a southern territory in Spain comprised of eight provinces: Almeria, Cadiz, Cordoba, Granada, Huelva, Jaen, Malaga and Seville. In Jerrilynn D. Dodds *Al-Andalus the Art of Islamic Spain*, Dodds expands upon the impact that the beginnings of Islam had on this geographically secluded region (See Figure 3.1). Given the isolated nature of the area, both medieval Christian influences, as well as Islamic influences were all but lost over time and sadly have become all but banished from the history of the area which is now present day Europe.

During Muslim rule, however, Islamic architecture flourished while also embracing and promoting the principles of their Romanesque predecessors, Dodds explains. Islamic builders incorporated everything from horseshoe arches to columns and Corinthian capitals, but always made sure to alter these components in either plan, elevation, or layered decoration, so as to further emphasize their Islamic supremacy. While this specific, architectural Islamic decree was able to dominate the region from one dynasty to the next, migration and exploration would soon leave them with many more stylistic influences to incorporate.

The Almoravid dynasty was a Berber imperial dynasty of Morocco, which persisted in its attacks of Islamic-established kingdoms in Andalusia. During these invasions, the Berber’s brought with them a whole new world of stylistic influences that would have a direct impact on the courtly-arts of the formerly sheltered region. With Andalusia previously having been geographically closed off, new art and architecture now began coming across the Strait of Gibraltar. Artisans and craftspeople from the peninsula were beginning to work in cities like Marrakesh and Fez, and were bringing back their findings to cross-pollinate with old-world Islam.
Dodds explains that during this time stuccoed brick piers fringed by vaulted arcades became the basis for a new type of traditional architecture. Other attributes that became synonymous
with this new set of traditional standards came from Cordoban wood-workers, who began creating works out of decorative geometric convolutions that would become synonymous with the region of Andalusia for hundreds of years to come. So as it was, two ancient styles were finally merging and began redefining new styles of their own all together.

4 CHARACTERISTICS OF EARLY ARCHITECTURE IN MOROCCO

The original inhabitants of Morocco were various groups of “barbaric” tribes known as the Berbers. The Berbers were the pre-Arab inhabitants of Northern Africa, and dominated Morocco for thousands of years. In Herbert Ypma’s *Morocco Modern*, many contemporary influences that have become synonymous with present day Moroccan designs are examined. Fortunately, he also sheds some light on ancient influences that date back to more tribal times. Ypma also explains that prior to Islam arriving in Morocco in AD 680, ancient Moroccan people, or Berbers, were famously resistant to any other form of centralized government, or religion for that matter. Even the Romans’ efforts were wasted in trying to mandate any order amongst the various combatant tribes.

Due to their geographical proximity to the Southern Sahara and the Atlas Mountains, the Berbers were infamous for having complete control over precious trade routes, and in crossing extremely unforgiving terrains to reach cities such as Marrakech. Ypma describes the Berber’s as having carved out an exclusive market for themselves, one in which they could charge heavy tolls to guarantee safe passage. This way of life led many Berber’s to live in fortified mud castles that were often situated along the paths their tribes were patrolling. Merchants were allowed to seek shelter in these mud castles so long as they were paying the toll – and no merchant ever was audacious enough to stay anywhere else.
Ympa goes in to greater detail describing these huts as being built with mud bricks that were reinforced with lime. These individual structures were referred to as a *ksar*, or as *ksour* if there were more than one. They were fortresses that could stand as their own individual castles, or as an entire villages; either way, they were built for protection from invaders, thieves, or even other conflicting Berber tribes. In terms of trying to understand materiality, and the various origins of Moroccan design, the ksours are an excellent place to start. As with this type of construction and everything thereafter, all inspiration has come from or been inspired by Mother Nature. See figure 4.1 below for an example of what the construction on a typical ksour village looked like.

![Figure 4.1 Ksour Construction. Ympa, Herbert. (1996) [Photograph]. In Morocco Modern, p. 69](image)

Due to the materials used for this construction method, even for experts in the field it is very hard to identify how old these structures are. A ksour that’s one hundred years old could
look almost identical to a ksour that’s one thousand years old. Having been built with mud and brick meant that these structures were frequently rehabilitated and/or rebuilt entirely over many generations. The humble origins of Moorish architecture give great insight as to why (present day) natural materials, finishes, and construction methods are still primary pillars of the style. Ympa continues his elaboration on the ksars and ksours, and as to why evolutions of the design were often embellished with eye-catching geometric motifs (see figure 4.2 below). “Berbers believe not only in the meditative and aesthetic aspect of decorations but also in its supernatural power. Decoration is believed to hold a talismanic power known as bakara, a means of deflecting the dreaded evil eye.” Geometric motifs are one of the most well recognized and synonymous elements of modern day Moroccan style.

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In further examining Moroccan architecture, in Morocco Modern Ypma continues to expand upon critical components of the style, and elaborates further on the use of color.
Morocco’s use of color since the beginning of time has been deeply rooted in nature, and bursts of highly saturated shades are used in common fashion on everything from pottery and artwork, to painted walls and windows. Why was color so important? When a variety of the villages and towns in the area were set against such a vast mountainous region, it was very easy for their homes (traditionally made from brick and mud) to become lost and blend in with the surroundings. The Berbers eventual use of color was a reaction to the often drab and unforgiving climate that they lived in. Adorning their homes with colors such as emerald green, burnt umber, cobalt blue, and lemon yellow allowed them create the contrast and vibrancy they longed for. Color is also seen as a means of warding off evil spirits – as the spirits (in theory) become distracted by the bright color at the door and will be uninterested in entering the home (see figure 4.3 below).
Figure 4.3 Painted Doorway. Ypma, Herbert. (1996) [Photograph]. In Morocco Modern, p. 92
Ympa also delves into addressing different techniques used to adorn and enhance buildings in Moroccan culture, an ancient tradition known as zillij. Zillij, an Islamic word in origin, is the practice of creating complex mosaic designs by combining hand-cut tiles. The patterns created by these alluring mosaics are extremely striking and often very colorful. Why are there so many geometries in Moroccan design? As mentioned previously, Moroccan design is rooted deeply in Islamic beliefs and customs. Islamic tradition bans the depiction of anything that lives on the ground (a very pagan type of practice). Therefore, in the Islamic community, they have always looked to geometry as a means of expressing themselves. The complex and incredible extent to which these geometries have been expanded upon over the years is a true testament to some of the most challenging projects generating the most superb results.

Thus, the use of tiles carries on as being a pillar for Moroccan design. Top architects and designers in the country continue to try and reimagine and reinterpret their own contemporary variations of zillij. Such reinterpretations are sometimes more complex than their predecessors, however they can also sometimes be more simplified. See below (Figure 4.4 and 4.5) for different examples and interpretations of zillij from Morocco Modern.
Figure 4.4 Zellij. Ypma, Herbert. (1996) [Photograph]. In Morocco Modern, p. 99
Figure 4.5 Zillij, Number 2. Ypma, Herbert. (1996) [Photograph]. In Morocco Modern, p. 103
5 CHARACTERISTICS OF ART DECO

In Victor Arwas’s *Art Deco*, we are given a brief introduction to Art Nouveau, which is the stylistic movement that Art Deco was essentially a reaction to. Art Nouveau was an attempt to revitalize the styles of the early twentieth century, and suggested that general design direction should be rooted in nature, and that it should focus its efforts on bringing organic shapes to life via inherently simple materials such as wood. Artists and designers were tasked with viewing items like furniture as no longer primarily functional items, but rather sculptural art forms.

Art Deco formally began in France with a longing to return to early eighteenth and nineteenth century styles that were to be altered in order to reflect the luxurious, glamorous and technologically savvier ways of life in the 1920’s and 30’s. Arwas explains how the mannerisms of Avant Garde movements such as Cubism, Fauvism, Futurism and Abstraction played a major role in the type of stylizations that would define Art Deco design. He also explains that the principles behind the Art Deco style are not as drastic as people might think, but are rather rooted in surface treatments and their applications, versus the notion of whole deviances from prevailing designs. It is this principle that allows us to see a rather seamless transition of the movement, which was primarily led by liberal designers who had liberal patrons.

Most of the original creators of the Art Deco movement had been trained in more formal settings as either painters, sculptors, or architects, and very few of them would have been considered true “craftsman”. Given the nature of their backgrounds, most of the early designs in this movement were conceived from artist’s minds, and in general were non-functional pieces that were focused solely on attaining visually pleasing ideals. Romantic expressionism was replaced by abridged structures that focused on angular abstractions and geometric forms. Strong primary colors were being experimented with, and details of silver and gold were often used to
exude opulence. Unique construction materials were desired, as were combinations of exotic materials that previously would have never been combined. Surface adornments typical for Art Deco furniture might include a mother-of-pearl inlay, or some type of heavily embossed parchment that was stretched to create a new façade on a large surface area. Andre Groult’s *Shagreen Covered Wood Chair*, made for the Societe des Artistes Decorateurs at the 1925 Paris Exhibition is an excellent example of simplified shapes being paired with the surface ornamentation of uniquely paired materials (see figure 5.1).

Arwas describes in further detail some of the shifts that took place in Art Deco design during the mid to late 1930’s, which were the results of a variety of other movements, such as neo-plasticism, that had been gaining momentum in neighboring countries over the years. As the decorative environment continued to respond to the progresses in technological advancements, almost all ornamentation was being rejected and new materials such as plastic, steel and chrome became the materials of choice to be paired with geometric shapes and often chunky massing. Arwas states that at the lines were certainly blurred during those years leading up to Modernism, and that it is disputable as to whether or not Art Deco design really lived on past the Paris Exhibitions of 1925.
Figure 5.1 Andre Groult, Shagreen Covered Wood Chair. Arwas, Victor. (1992) [Photograph]. In Art Deco, p. 22
6 ART DECO IN MOROCCO

Since the inception of its first state in 789, Morocco had always been ruled by a series of autonomous dynasties, and was one of the only countries in northern Africa to escape Ottoman occupation. In Margarita Diaz-Andreu’s *The Archeology of the Spanish Protectorate of Morocco: A Short History*, Diaz-Andreu elaborates on the effects of Spanish and French colonialism during the early twentieth century. As various countries all vied and competed for many of the same territories (such as Morocco), the Treaty of Fez (which was signed in 1912) was what officially converted Morocco into an area entirely protected by Europe. With this treaty, Morocco was split up into three distinct zones: an international zone (located in Tangier), a Spanish Protectorate (located in Northern Morocco), and last but not least a French Protectorate (located in the South). See figure 6.1 below.

![Figure 6.1 Region of French Protectorate](http://uca.edu/politicalscience/dadm-project/middle-eastnorth-africapersian-gulf-region/francemorocco-1930-1956/)
In Pat Morton’s *A Study in Hybridity: Madagascar and Morocco at the 1931 Colonial Exposition*, Morton discusses the significant amount of capital that the new French colonial administration invested into researching the indigenous Moroccan culture. The new administration rejected half-hearted attempts to re-create French architecture and urbanism, and sought to establish a colonial style that truly combined the best of fashionable designs from France while harmoniously blending with customary Moroccan forms. This was referred by colonizers to as operations of hybridization.

While details of colonialism and how to move forward in urban redevelopments were being addressed in Morocco (primarily in cities like Casablanca and Marrakesh) – The Colonial Exposition of 1931 was simultaneously being held in Paris, France, and was mirroring the realities of the new merger. According to Morton, the Exposition aimed to display things in a very educational way, so as to show the probable future, but to also enlighten their fellow Europeans of present day challenges taking place in their new territory. Very few commoners were aware of what some of the difficult truths behind the civilization process looked like. Exposition designers wanted to portray a realistic depiction of what life in the colonies currently looked like – but to then share all the progressive and constructive affects that their local establishment was creating. The stark contrast of the various pavilions at the expose showcased the flagrant variations between that of the Art Deco style, and that of the pavilions that represented the more primitive culture of the Moroccan natives. The combination of these distinct styles in Morocco would soon prove to be a unique coming together between seemingly opposite societies.

The incorporation of contemporary European architecture (heavily influenced by Art Deco), with that of existing Moroccan architecture would prove to be one of the most exciting and exotic fusions of its time. In Charlotte Jelidi’s *Fez: The Making of a New City (1912-1956)*, she
expands upon the hybridizations of these metropolitan forms that were imposed upon original local forms. The new administration in Morocco had a fine arts department, who was responsible for trying to set a series of standards as urban development moved forward. New buildings were meant to take on a more hybridized approach, and while they were similarly supposed to evoke the contemporary avenues in France, they were also meant to suggest a certain likeness to the simplicity of the houses and other architecture original to the city. The goal was to create structures that evoked a sense of what was fashionable in France (Art Deco design), and to create a sort of architectural template to apply to all developments moving forward. The architecture was centralized around creating clean, simple lines and curated bursts of color. Modern art was applied with the intent of remaining in harmony with the existing sites and the associated climate.

Architecture in cities such as Casablanca began to strongly imitate Parisian Art Deco style, decked with details like wrought iron balconies, staircases, and carved facades and friezes. Some buildings maintained their original Islamic origins better than others, and there was a varying degree to which a true “hybridization” was obvious from structure to structure. Figures 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, and 6.5 exhibit classic examples of this Neo-Moorish (or Mauresque, for the French terminology) style.
Figure 6.2 Volubilis Hotel, Casablanca. [Photograph] Retrieved from http://shanghailander.net/2017/02/art-deco-overdose-in-casablanca/
Figure 6.3 Prefecture (Former Casablanca Police Headquarters). [Photograph] Retrieved from http://relations-nations-unies.agence-presse.net/?p=814
Figure 6.4 Cinema Al Falah, Casablanca. [Photograph] Retrieved from https://middleeastrevised.com/2015/06/
Figure 6.5 Rialto Theater, Casablanca. [Photograph] Retrieved from https://middleeastrevised.com/2015/06/

7 CONTEMPORARY TRENDS IN MODERN TIMES

Trends are constantly changing, constantly being reprocessed, and are literally circumnavigating the world on a daily basis. Man has been seeking exotic inspirations from faraway lands since the beginning of civilization. Sometimes traveling to a new place or a new culture can teach us new techniques that improve things in one way or another. Sometimes new places and new cultures simply inspire us with unexpected beauty, or enchant us with exciting
colors, shapes and patterns that bring us happiness. One thing is for certain though, and that is that design is constantly changing and is constantly being reinterpreted and reinvented as it makes its way from country to country, and from era to era.

So how do designers, architects, and artists predict these trends in order to stay ahead of the game, and two steps ahead of the consumer? While approaches vary from one design industry to the next, Martyn Evans’ *Trend Casting for Design Futures* examines the methodology behind it. Poignantly, Evans’ research states that trends are not inventions – but rather advanced reinterpretations that merely need to be delivered to the people. Two of the primary components Evans discusses as critical mechanisms to designing for the future are forecasting, and scenario planning. And as designers, we are in a constant state of designing for the future – designing for problems that have not yet happened, or designing for needs that have not yet have expressed a need to be met. Evans relays the importance behind designers being able to think of the future in a way that considers matters of utility, ease of operation, appropriateness to a specific audience, sustainable longevity, production considerations, and overall appeal.

Thankfully (or unthankfully) depending on what your tastes are, there are a number of organizations that conduct their own research to inform the rest of us, and our respective industries, as to what the new trends will be. One of these such companies would be the world famous *Pantone Inc.* (best known for their color matching system). Once an advertising company that began in the 1950’s, Pantone has since become *the* company who tells everyone else what the Color of the Year will be (based on extensive international research conducted every year). This color will then present itself in a wide variety of industries in the year to come – in everything from home furnishings to fashion on the runway, and everything in between.
Harper’s Bazaar is a fashion magazine that reports on all things trendy and beautiful, especially pertaining to the fashion industry. On December 8th, 2016, the magazine released an online publication titled AND PANTONE’S 2017 COLOR OF THE YEAR IS…..unexpected.
Pantone 15-0343 TCX Greenery, a bright yellow shade of green, according to Pantone, is a color that symbolizes a reconnection with nature, and a desire “revive, restore, and renew”. The fashion industry historically debuts the new color before many of the other product design industries catch on, see below for designs in Seis Marjan’s collection that showcase an exciting shade of Greenery (Figure 7.1). Below (in Figure 7.2) are a variety of other product types from other industries that launched following the same trend in their respective shades of the color.

EXPLANATION OF MY INFLUENCES: CREATING A COLLECTION

Going back to the most original method of seeking inspiration for new trends, my story begins like that of so many others – with traveling. In the summer of 2015, I had the opportunity to study abroad in Spain for one of my art history courses. There are no words to describe what an inspiring, beautiful country this was, and the designer in me has never felt more stimulated and excited to create after returning from a trip. I studied much of Antoni Gaudi’s work in Barcelona, which was awe-inspiring to have been in the presence of, and I studied a great deal of art, architecture, and design in the South of Spain (Andalusia) upon my visit to the city of Malaga. In Malaga, you could literally see years of architectural hybridizations taking place.
right in front of you. All of the moments in history where this fantastic city experienced a rebirth are still there to retrace today. From the Roman ruins, to the Muslim mosques, to the Moorish fortresses, the city of Malaga truly told a beautiful tale.

Upon returning from my trip, I began doing extensive research on Andalusia, and learned more about its rich history that transcended across the Strait of Gibraltar so many years before. While learning more about Morocco, and its unlikely design history - much to my surprise, and much to my delight, I stumbled upon Art Deco in Morocco. Was this possible? A place where two of my two favorite design styles had once been united? I couldn’t believe it, and what’s more is that I couldn’t believe that there was SO little research and documentation about such a unique blip (if you will) in architectural history. And then that was it – I had my challenge: to reinvent the architectural hybridization between traditional Moroccan architecture, and Art Deco designs of the early twentieth century. The goal of my collection was to continue exploring this hybridization, and to reinterpret what the coming together of these two styles meant through contemporary product designs for the home.

One of the most inspiring places I visited in Malaga was Alcazaba, an old Moorish castle and type of military architecture for its time. Alcazaba is built on a hill in the center of the city and overlooks the sea port with views as far as the eye can see. Below (Figure 8.1) is an exterior shot of the structure. From the outside, the configuration looks hard and almost cubist, but when you are inside viewing the citadels, everything changes and the saying rings true that you can’t judge a book by its cover. As you walk from one room to another there is a feeling of security, but also a sense of being surrounded by a certain organic abundance as you walk under one exquisite multifoil arch after another. These multifoil arches are massive in scale - as they are carved from heavy stone; however, they still provide a certain sense of delicacy. Below, in
Figure 8.2, I have also included an image from some of the photography I incorporated into my collection from the interior of Alcazaba. This photo accurately captures the more opulent, delicate side of the structure, and also served as inspiration for items in my collection.
These arches inspired me to create the drink table in my collection, which has its own unique multifoil motif that I designed. The organic shapes and the repetition of the arches are what I predominantly emphasized in this design, creating a more Moroccan feel structurally speaking. I chose to paint it a metallic gold to give it more of a luxurious feel like that of the Art Deco style, and finishes specific to that time. This table was designed using CAD software, and the motif was cut out using a CNC router. See below for Figure 8.3 for the final design.
The larger dining table I designed drew more inspiration from early Persian influences, and particularly the muqarnas that created the honeycomb like structures inside of Mosque domes. Even though you look up into these domes, this multi-faceted construction method gives the viewer a feeling of being drawn up, almost like the dome is sucking you in. I tried to create a similar effect with the dining table by replicating the same honeycomb effect that the muqarnas
created, except with more contemporary, clean lines (and instead of being drawn upwards, being sucked downwards). The black and white color selection was made in an effort to introduce a strong trendy (yet timeless) color combination. The application of the alternating black and white was meant to imitate the structural arches of the early Romanesque inspired structures (such as the aforementioned Great Mosque of Cordoba). See Figure 8.4 below for preliminary sketches, and then Figure 8.5 for the final product.

Figure 8.4 Valerie Quinn Wocklish: Dining Table Sketches
The dining chair was designed with the intent of being paired with the dining table, but only one chair was fabricated. Aiming to mimic the stair like effect of the table (as it recedes down into its center) the chair too mimics a stair like silhouette while also creating a geometric assembly similar to that of the Art Deco Style. The fabric chosen for the chair was a luxurious silver woven fabric, also meant to evoke a sense of luxury that was associated with Art Deco. Multiple iterations of this chair were designed before I landed on what I felt to be an appropriate final product. See below at Figures 8.6, 8.7, and 8.8 for different sketches that show some of my thought processes that took place during the design phase. The sketch in Figure 8.8 led me to the final product, seen in Figure 8.9.
Figure 8.6 Valerie Quinn Wocklsh: Chair Sketch 1

Figure 8.7 Valerie Quinn Wocklsh: Chair Sketch
Figure 8.8 Valerie Quinn Wocklish: Chair Sketch 3

Figure 8.9 Valerie Quinn Wocklish: Dining Chair
The headboard, the fan installations, and the mirror are all products that I’m going to discuss together, as they were designed to directly imitate one another. Silhouettes of fans were very common in both Moroccan and Art Deco styles, and popped up in a variety of products and art pieces for both style. Earlier in the paper I discussed the use of mosaic tiles in Moroccan design, and I talked about their significance from a stylization standpoint. Fan shaped tiles were very commonly used in Morocco to create zillij just about anywhere you looked, and fans were all over the place during the roaring twenties in Europe. Fans as accessories, fans as plant shaped wallpaper, fan graphics made out of industrial looking geometries. They were simply everywhere.

Three of the main colors I used throughout the collection were black, gold, and silver. I chose these colors to evoke materials and luxurious finishes used during the Art Deco era, and in order to enrich materials that in Morocco would have otherwise been more saturated to contrast with Morocco’s bleak environment. The headboard highlighted the tiles more than any of the other pieces, which were surrounded with a contemporary wood frame (see Figure 8.10). The mirror in particular was aimed to be more of a literal hybridization, as geometric metallic forms overlapped metallic mosaic tiles (see Figure 8.11). And lastly, the fan installation was a play on repetition and was meant to give the same sort of sense that a large scale wallpaper pattern would have given (see Figure 8.12). The colors in the fan installation are in keeping with the rest of the collection, and small mirror mosaics were added to tie in with finishes on the other pieces as well.
Figure 8.10 Valerie Quinn Wocklish: Headboard

Figure 8.11 Valerie Quinn Wocklish: Mirror and Console
Other products that were heavily hybridized were the nightstands and the console. In Morocco, some Art Deco structures were built brand new and to look just like what was being built in Europe. Some buildings however, were built in an effort to pay homage to the local architecture, and strived to showcase the modern touches of Art Deco while also highlighting the older, more organic styles of original Moroccan design. With these three pieces of furniture, I attempted to do exactly that.

The underlying structure is curvy, and mimics common silhouettes found in Moroccan architecture and furniture design. A second layer of angular chrome spokes were added to the front of the pieces, creating a sort of metallic cage around the piece with angular linear parts. A second undulating profile is created with these Art Deco inspired appliques, which creates a unique visual contrast. Combinations of different materials were also investigated, which was
very indicative of the experimentations seen in Art Deco furniture design. With the nightstands and console, I added mirror tops to the wood structure, chrome appliques to the faces and sides, as well as a leather inlay (to the console). The console can be seen above in Figure 8.11, and sketches can be see below in Figures 8.13 and 8.14, and 8.15.

*Figure 8.13 Valerie Quinn Wockish: Console/Night Stand Sketches 1*
The lighting I designed for this collection was a true exploration of shape, color, texture, and materiality. The large pendant light had a unique rippling profile that made the viewers eye move around the fixture without even being cognizant of it. The heavy black color on the exterior was contrasted by the surprising gold contrast on the interior of all the spokes. This particular light was still a prototype (as were the majority of the pieces in this show) and was made with painted MDF. See Figures 8.15 and 8.16 below for a process sketch for this light, as well as a close up of the final product.
Figure 8.15 Valerie Quinn Wocklish: Large Pendant Sketch
The smaller pendant lights were the only pieces in the show that were manufactured, and were perhaps among the most successful pieces in the spectacle as well. Art Deco design often abstracted geometric shapes, and habitually found ways to add a linear quality to even the curviest of forms. I designed this particular light with a tulip flower in mind, and wanted to maintain the original curves of the form, but also sought to give it a geometric, linear quality that
would further be strengthened by repetition. The materials equally represented Art Deco and Moroccan design principles, as plastic and resin experimentations were on the rise with Art Deco, and as wood was one of the primary materials used in Morocco. The two materials created a beautiful contrast, and the colors I chose to create the small pendant in were black, white and a shade of the 2017 Color of the Year, “Greenish”. See Figure 8.17 below for the yellow-green version of the pendant.

Figure 8.17 Valerie Quinn Wocklish: Small Pendant
Last, but certainly not least was the textile design I created for the Duvet. One of the recurring themes in Moroccan design was the repetition of geometric patterns. My goal with this pattern was to create my own geometric pattern that echoed motifs found in Moroccan design, and to create it by hand. Moroccan’s were very much so craftsman, so I wanted to pay homage to that by creating a motif by hand (rather than using a computer program). I chose a black and white palette to give it a high contrast, contemporary feel, and chose to use Sateen as the material in order to evoke the luxurious materials and fabrics used in Art Deco design. Figure 8.18 below shows some of my process sketches that I went through when trying to find the perfect motif, and figure 8.18 shows the final product.

*Figure 8.18 Valerie Quinn Wocklish: Duvet Motif Sketches*
9 CONCLUSIONS

Can the hybridization of Art Deco design and Moroccan design be reimagined in contemporary times, by way of an interiors collection consisting of products for the home? In reviewing the results of my collection, REINVENTÉ - I would say so. I feel that I successfully combined the historically significant elements of each of these styles, while creating a unique hybridized collection that pulled and combined characteristics of each. I felt that I was effective in helping viewers understand original aesthetic influences and their context, while also being able to relate to my pieces in a contemporary, domestic way.
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