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THE WALLPAPER ISSUE

When were wallpapers first used?
What was wallpaper art like?
How different are wallpaper
styles around the world? Why is
innovation in wallpaper production
so important?
There's so much more to these
pretty spreads that make our rooms
delightful. Let's explore it all in the
wallpaper issue.

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- A Brief History of Wallpapers •
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St Laurent - De Gournay - Chinoiserie Wallpaper

A BRIEF HISTORY OF WALL-PAPERS

In 200 BC, during the Qin Dynasty in China, the first wallpaper was apparently made of rice paper. Eventually, the urge to add some life and expression to the room may have taken over.

Voilà! The decorative wallpaper was born. This was also the time when trade from the Silk Route took paper to the rest of the world, along with the wallpaper.

By the 16th century, block printing techniques were used to print chinoiserie, Moorish and Eastern patterns. But these exquisite wallpapers were reserved for stately homes and exclusive spaces. Eventually, the Industrial Revolution in the 18th century changed the very fabric of manufacturing. Because of mass production, common homes began using wallpaper in their drawing rooms. Companies like William Morris and Timorous Beasties owned budding enterprises in England.

Swan Rush and Iris - 1875 - Walter Crane

William Morris was a poet, fantasy writer, textile designer and a part of the British Arts and Crafts Movement. He, along with his friends Charles Faulkner and P.P. Marshall formed the Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co. This firm influenced interior decor in Victorian England with their fabrics, furnishing and wallpapers. Since the British Arts and Crafts Movement spread across the colonies in America and Asia, it wasn't long before these artistic wallpapers became popular in these locations too. Today, Morris and Co. still sell their wallpapers across the globe.

Chinoiserie and block prints dominated the 1800s in England. But across the pond, rustic American homes sported prints like Toile de Jouy. Later on, studios like Dorothy Draper and Clarence House made their mark on the wall.

The 70s were not far behind with Woodstock colours and abstract patterns. Ever watched one of those family entertainer TV series that were made between the 1960s and 1990s? Have you ever noticed how the set decor of the classic American or British home was almost iconic with its floral wallpapers? Companies like Timorous Beasties and Cole and Sons produced just that! Heavily detailed wallpapers. Each era had its own design influence and artistic quirks.





Banana Palm Leaf Wallpaper - William Morris

WALLPAPERS TODAY

These days wallpapers are made from environmentally friendly materials with digitally printed surface pattern designs. Even the glues are flame-resistant, fungus and moisture-resistant. Some wallpapers come with a spongy layer that can absorb sound waves. This can be a lifesaver for someone with a small recording studio in their garage.

However, even to this day, wallpaper designs are an opportunity for homeowners to express themselves. An eight year old could get excited about a Spider man wallpaper, a banker might like an abstract print, a traditional person might like florals and those with exotic tastes might prefer paisleys. If you are a designer yourself, then by all means custom-made is the way to go. Good ole Adobe Illustrator and a colourful imagination are all you would need.

Sauvages de la Mer Pacifique - Jean-Gabriel Charvet - Manufactured by - Joseph Dufour





Temples in the Sky - Chimerous Beasts



WALLPAPERS OF THE FUTURE

Not everybody uses a straw every day. We mostly drink straight from the glass or water bottle and yet, companies are getting creative with paper and metal straws to save the turtles. Think about how much wallpaper it takes to cover a single room and how we actually use that space every day. Shouldn't something so ubiquitous have equally the same focus as planet-friendly straws? This is where the scope for material design comes in.

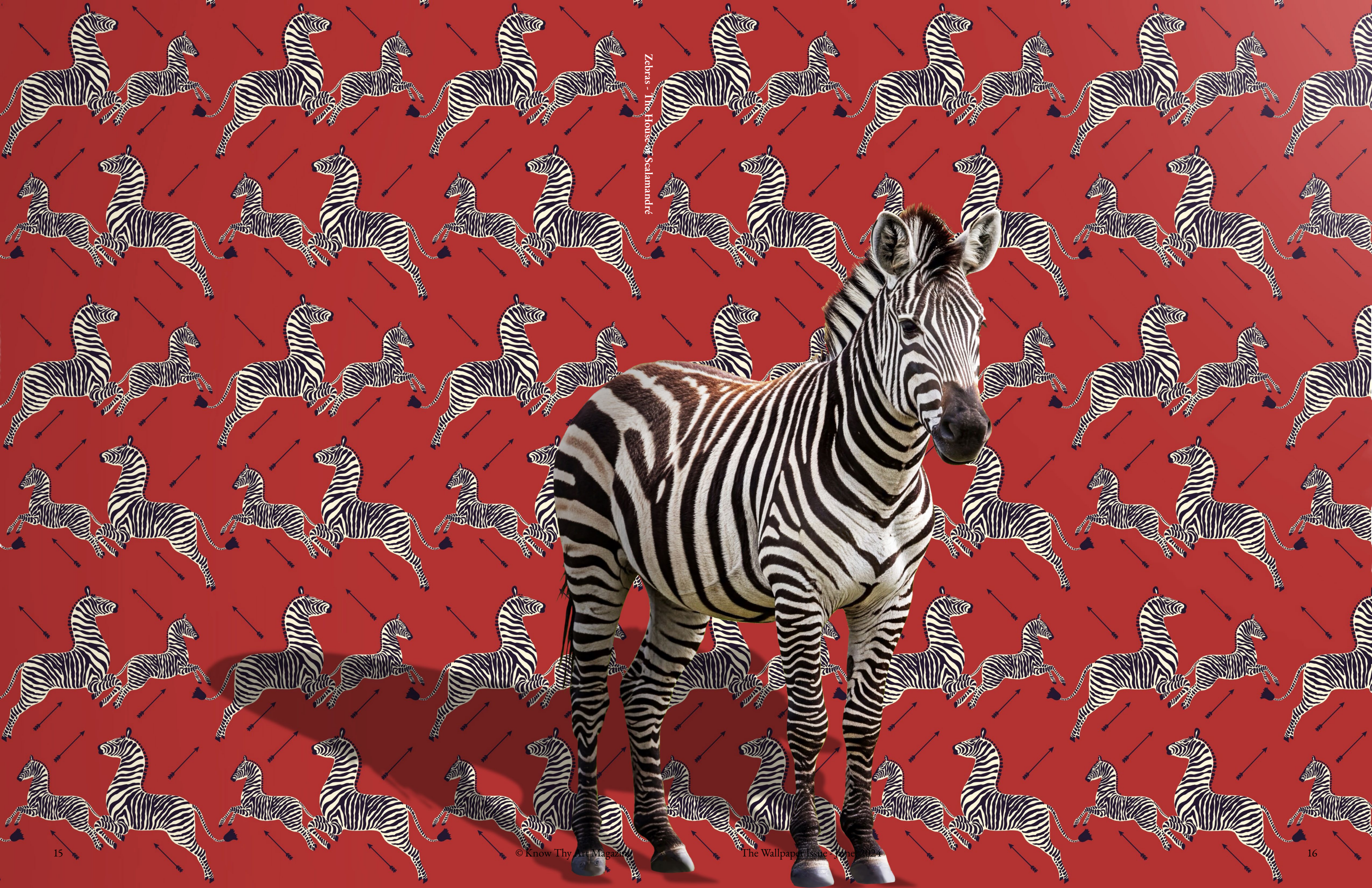
Wallpaper designs generally depend on changing trends and personal choices. However, it is the material design for the paper that might have scope for innovation. For a warmer planet, thermal insulation and UV protection would be a great addition to wallpaper choices. Also, making the material fully biodegradable would definitely add to its popularity.

If we are going to get totally creative here, why not bioluminescent prints that help you reduce your electric bills. Even contact charging stickers for mobile phones or stick on lights might bring some variety in the wallpaper market. You know... nothing too crazy like Willy Wonka's fruit print flavoured wallpaper.

SENSEI SPEAKS

“Your home is the backdrop
of your life,
whether it is a palace
or a one-room apartment
it should honestly be your own —
an expression of your personality.”

DOROTHY
DRAPER



Zebras - The House of Scalamandré



DID YOU KNOW?

- Oliver Cromwell banned the use of wallpaper in 1653 because he considered it unnecessary and vain. But when he died and Charles I took over, the use of wallpapers was reinstated.

- Apparently, Oscar Wilde's last words were "My wallpaper and I are fighting a duel to the death, one or the other of us has to go". (*sic*) This was in reference to the wallpaper of his hotel room at *d'Alsace* in Paris which, at the time, was a brothel.

- Marc Chavannes and Alfred Fielding invented bubble wrap to function as soundproof wallpapers. Since that business did not take off, they began selling it as protective wrapping material.

ASK THE EDITOR

How do I become a designer for home furnishing?

-Jess,
New Castle

A surface designer has the exciting job of making artwork for home furnishings like sheets, curtains, table covers, wallpapers and more. To be a surface pattern designer, it would be great if you were well-versed in making digital illustrations.

Practising how to create seamless patterns from spot illustrations and themed designs is a must. Learn to make designs using fixed palettes, consistent illustration styles and themes that you might like having in your own home. Look up "Surface Design" as a career to know more about this branch of illustration.



REFERENCES

In order of appearance:

- Cover - London Spring Flowers Wallpaper - Rabbitry_Anne
- Toile De Juoy Wallpaper Print
- St Laurent - De Gournay - Chinoiserie Wallpaper
- Swan Rush and Iris - 1875 - Walter Crane
- Banana Palm Leaf Wallpaper - William Morris
- Sauvages de la Mer Pacifique -Jean-Gabriel_Charvet - Manufactured by - Joseph Dufour
- Temples in the Sky - Timorous Beasties
- Autumn Haze Floral Wallpaper - Rabbitry_Anne
- Zebras - The House of Scalamandr 
- Bombay Summer Flowers - Rabbitry_Anne
- Pressed Dried Flowers - Rabbitry_Anne



