

A photograph of a garden area next to a house. In the foreground, there are concrete steps leading up to a brick walkway. To the right of the steps is a garden bed with various plants, including a large hosta with broad green leaves, a cluster of yellow-green grasses, and a large, dark grey rock. In the background, there are several tulips in shades of orange and purple. A black garden light is visible near the tulips. The house in the background has brown siding and green shutters. The text "the catalogue for home enthusiasts" is overlaid in white, lowercase letters across the middle of the image.

the catalogue
for home
enthusiasts

watermarks

(the catalogue for home enthusiasts)

susana oliveros amaya

I don't usually write, but I am really happy. I'm telling you the truth.

After reading, we were not sure how easy it would be. It works well (when it works). I wasn't sure how hard it would be, or if it would work at all! I was having trouble replicating/blending the area. It really throws you off if you don't draw your own line- even though you should be able to just follow their grid.

I returned it because even though it was very realistic, it was incredibly thin. Wish I could use more, but I guess you get what you pay for.

We found this method the easiest and quickest way. Directions are simple, almost too simple. Made it sound too good to be true. That may have been my inexperience, not itself. Could have been completely my fault, but we tried so many different ways.

At the end I did it. I could renew my coffee table for only \$10 and worked out perfect for our daughter's Pirate ship for Halloween! I thought it would be tough, but it's easy. Great value for good quantity. Overall, pretty happy with the results.

Not bad to install. They generally say you need two people

to do this. I would say given the direction, we needed three, I needed an extra person to help.

Just put up, so no insight regarding how long it will last, but I will say once I got a system going, the rest went up flawlessly and very quickly. Don't get caught short! I could have folded it over the edge, but I wanted as few seams as possible. It's fairly delicate, you have to be careful with it. It is good, so be gentle and take your time.

I did love it, but I thought it would be more "real". Like slats put together, which it is not. But it is very cool and it is very positive and encouraging to see it at the start of each day.

I am a HUGE fan and this is by far the most realistic look I've seen!! What a cozy, rustic feel. It was hard to work with at first, but it came out great, I had so much fun.

This is actually good. This stuff is awesome, beautiful, unbelievable, it looks lovely. Thankfully the pieces blended in together very well, I liked it. The end product was literally amazing! You should see our bathroom- velvet walls.

Hope this helps anyone looking for advice!!

para henry y rufo

WATERMARKS (the catalogue for home enthusiasts)
Susana Oliveros Amaya (1992-)
Providence, Rhode Island

[Previous text taken from Amazon customer reviews]

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Last year, I went to Wendy's because they had a \$1 "value menu", and even if I do not eat French fries often, they are probably near the top of my list of favorite things I really like but should not eat. As I waited sitting in one of the booths, I noticed that they had installed a glass that separated the tables from each other. The curved glass was installed on top of a rectangular partition, such that its green-organic shapes looked like the leaves of a snake plant growing out of the wood. Apparently snake plants, or sansevierias native to West Africa, are among the top ten plants used in offices and malls to separate spaces and decorate interiors.

The last time I went back home for the summer, my mother had decided to get a small carpet to be placed by the shower that had different grey and white circular shapes. They looked like rocks, but it was jarring to feel my wet feet on top of furry rocks that did not feel like standing on top of a rock. My mom had also bought small lavenders for the bathrooms, and left them on top of the toilet. Even if lavender is commonly used in bath and beauty products, since it is appreciated for its smell, the plastic lavender from my house was odorless. It was as if preserving the form of the flower would

somehow convey its smell. Tiles became reminiscent of different kinds of stones and bathroom top tables were supposedly polished blocks of granites or marble.

How is the *Black Gold Snake Plant- Sansevieria- Impossible to kill!- 4" Pot* from Walmart, the *Artificial Potted 24" Snake Plant* from Floral Home and Wendy's *SXW-019GF Green Frosted Fern Natural Window Film* working differently? They all rely on an understanding of interior space and a specific definition and desire of nature. Wendy's plant-like dividers become commodities, or images of commodities, at the endpoint of a history of flowerpots, industrial plastics, and traditions of room division and home decoration. Its definition is rooted in a division between human and nature as separate entities and contribute to what is culturally perceived as natural.

This division further enables the ongoing commoditization of different forms of "a natural world", one that creates the sensation that the bathroom should feel like being in the middle of the forest, or taking a shower under a disinfected waterfall. Rocks become soap dispensers and plants and flowers blossom everywhere in different forms. All leading to



Roll over image to zoom in



me, back in Wendy's, enjoying my delicious French fries in the middle of a snake plant plantation.

From the floors to the walls of kitchens, hotels and restaurants - all the way from hospitals waiting rooms, shopping malls, banks branch offices to bathroom utensils- things seem to be designed as resurfaced products. Covered and wrapped surfaces with skins, layers and veneers. These materialities produce hide, reveal, confuse and reshape objects, producing over stimulating and suggestive spatial narratives oriented by taste, class and gender.¹ By complicating the limits that divide humans and objects, these products also destabilize the relations between decoration- architecture and the natural-artificial while authoring new materialities that become ideological watermarks.

As Arjun Apparaduai states, when exploring the stories of things, "one should ask questions similar to those one asks about people".² Their lives go beyond their physical limits, they mingle and mix with other things, ideas and bodies. At the same time, our own associations combine them and entangle those stories from specific perspectives that are inevitably fragmented. If objects' lives exceed

CaseFan 3D Bath Treads Slip Removable Vinyl Co Art Home Decoration,6F

by CaseFan

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- Creative 3D peel and stick waterproof and wear resistant
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- Using:Please install as dots sequence ,and squeeze out air bubble if any andfirmly press the sticker onto bathtub surface during installation
- Attention:Please keep the bathtub floor surface dry and clean before you stick.After installtion,you'd better wait about several hours to make it firm enough before touching water.Take care of soap or body wash to avoid slipping

Compare with similar items



the period in which they are with us, then taxonomizing the material language is a way of exploring surfaces as places of meaning. Faux or material finishes constitute a phenomenon that is by no means recent and specific to any place, and its circulation and genealogy operates in different levels, and generates new meanings across contexts.

This text aims to lay the grounds of these questions in order to build threats that can expand on top of each other. *Remolding Wood, Veneering Walls, Liquid Surface* and *Spatial Trailers* transition circularly from solids to liquids, from the floor and walls to the space as a whole. By jumping from the chair of a scholar to the one of a sales-person, the language of this project decidedly settles within the struggle of precision. A struggle that is based on finding ways to twist the complicit relationship that I have with these products.

This catalogue of catalogues come from having to build an IKEA room for the first time in the unbearable hot weather of August, from learning how to grocery shop in the US, from looking into the windows of the financial district downtown

Providence, from filming in Savers, from having to go to a newly renovated orthopedic center, from enjoying the magic of Amazon delivery, and lately from browsing retailer websites and reading a lot of customer reviews.

¹ Sara Ahmed, "Orientations: Toward a Queer Phenomenology," in *Queer Phenomenology* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 543-571.

² Igor Kopytoff, "The Cultural Biography of Things," in *The Social Life of Things: commodities in cultural perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1986), 66.



remolding wood

nature and the interior space



nding subtle design elements found in craftsman furniture's chamfering techniques with the intricate facets of jewelry, the Archer collection achieves an interesting transitional aesthetic. The vanity brings texture and visual depth to the collection, while the fixtures combine curved and beveled edges to an array of design motifs.

Purist single sconce (K-14483-B)
 Purist robe hook (K-14443-B)
 Purist towel ring (K-14441-B)
 Purist 18" towel bar (K-14435-B)

Purist thermostatic valve trim (K-T14488-4-B)



Whole Foods plants grow over the cash registers. Buying is an accomplishing experience that resembles foraging in the woods. The refrigerators, covered with rustic white oak wood adhesive paper, are the footprint of a narrative that reinforces the return to idealized agricultural practices. A spatial staging that is meant to create the feeling of being closer to the land and the “natural world”. These finishes constitute a “definition of nature as anti-artifice [...] [that erases] the human presence in our bastions of Nature, and the definition of artifice as anti-nature [...] [that erases] the nature used to manufacture it. [...] [Spaces are designed as] gardens [that] tempts us to live within [the] illusion... that it is something natural, not the creation of artifice”.³ The anti-artifice (wood vinyl) recovers the human presence from the anti-nature (the refrigerator) and thus, narrow the space between food production and consumption, making it appear as direct.

We wander around the isles, picking up our food with the satisfaction of bringing home the anti-artifice in itself, [the finest natural and organic foods available](#). Wood becomes this double materiality between what is conceived as artificial and what is constructed as natural, while projecting

these notions outside of what it contains.

It looks like wood has been redefined. Just as the odor-less plastic lavender in my bathroom, wood has gone through a process in which its materiality has been reshaped, stretched, squeezed, flattened and adhered. These new morphologies have made wood malleable, thicker, brighter, lighter. What is the difference between the white oak lumber, the “untouched” piece of wood in the forest and the faux wood plank wallpaper? These products act exponentially in the ongoing commoditization and branding of nature.⁴ Wood was commoditized through a process that added value from the moment of exploitation and extraction. Through time, the industry has produced new materials that are both, on the one hand, referencing wood in its “primordial” form and, on the other, contributing to the production of new forms of wood.⁵

An online research on wood throws hundreds of different types of products: hardwood floorings, wood laminate, composite decking, wood hardwood/ softwood/ MDF/ barnwood boards, wood deck tiles, laminate veneers, wood veneers, decorative paneling, plastic wood lattices, wood fencing, plastic wood table cloths, wood fabrics and wall

textured wood stickers.

Overwhelmingly, The Home Depot’s online wood catalogue ranges between standardized lumber boards to [eco-friendly makeup](#), wood- made out of recycled wood combined with plastic bags- designed to have [the natural embossing of an exotic wood look](#). The Home Depot’s real hardwood floor is [made out of natural materials](#), easy to install, 100% Waterproof against [everyday spills, and scratch & dent resistant](#). The floor can take [traffic demands of your family and pets](#) all while offering [warmth, cushion and comfort](#). The menu is sorted by types, color- Bamboo, Oak, Hickory, Maple and Acacia- species and plank width- Bamboo Flooring, Engineered Hardwood, Solid Hardwood, Cork Flooring, Parquet Flooring, Wood Moulding & Trim. After selecting your first choice, say “species of wood”, the system released 513 results. You are given then the option of further filtering again by “installation method”, “price”, “flooring product type”, “color”, “brand”, “location”, “moulding”/“trim”, “hardwood floor features”, floor surface texture and water protection.

What else could they have? The filters open new options to be filtered again and again in a

HOW TO INSTALL HARDWOOD FLOORS

game where you are in the power of choosing, until you find the floor that is just right, the one you have always wanted with the ideal qualities and the perfect price. The website's excess of categories triggers the excitement of knowing they really have all the imaginable options that are available in the market, and results in the climax of the satisfaction of having been fulfilled.

There are so many options to outfit a living room with teak wood furniture- one of the most expensive and durable types of wood. Adhesive papers, for example, respond to a logic about use value, one closely linked to differentiation in quality and price. From car vinyls, decorative contact papers to kitchen countertop adhesives, the great amount of papers that are available in the market are destined for very diverse purposes. Moreover, you can find them on craft stores, online retail companies and Dollar Stores, so their price varies dramatically. Quality, and therefore cost, is often associated with the thickness of the paper and the durability of the adhesives.

However, the notion that these materials are sold as easy and cheap solutions to what otherwise would be more expensive, may also constitute



evidence of how the home furnishing and decoration industries have understood class and taste. The sheer variety of woods represent the symptom of the ways in which design has rectified social and economic differences by making them natural.⁶ I promise that no online wood catalogue or retailer will not ever judge your decisions, you can choose the fancy teak wood look, then click on the lowest price filter and take home your teak wood product without any questions. It seems as if accessibility is not an issue but a source of ongoing diversification.

In the 2009 movie *He's Just Not That Into You*, Ben (Bradley Cooper) and Janine (Jennifer Connelly) are renovating their house. There is a short scene in which they are in what appears to be a corridor from The Home Depot. Ben shows his wife two samples of hardwood floors asking for her to choose:

Janine: ... [points to one of the samples] *That one*
Ben: *You sure?*
Janine: *Yhea!*
Ben: [smiles]... *No! It's laminate!*

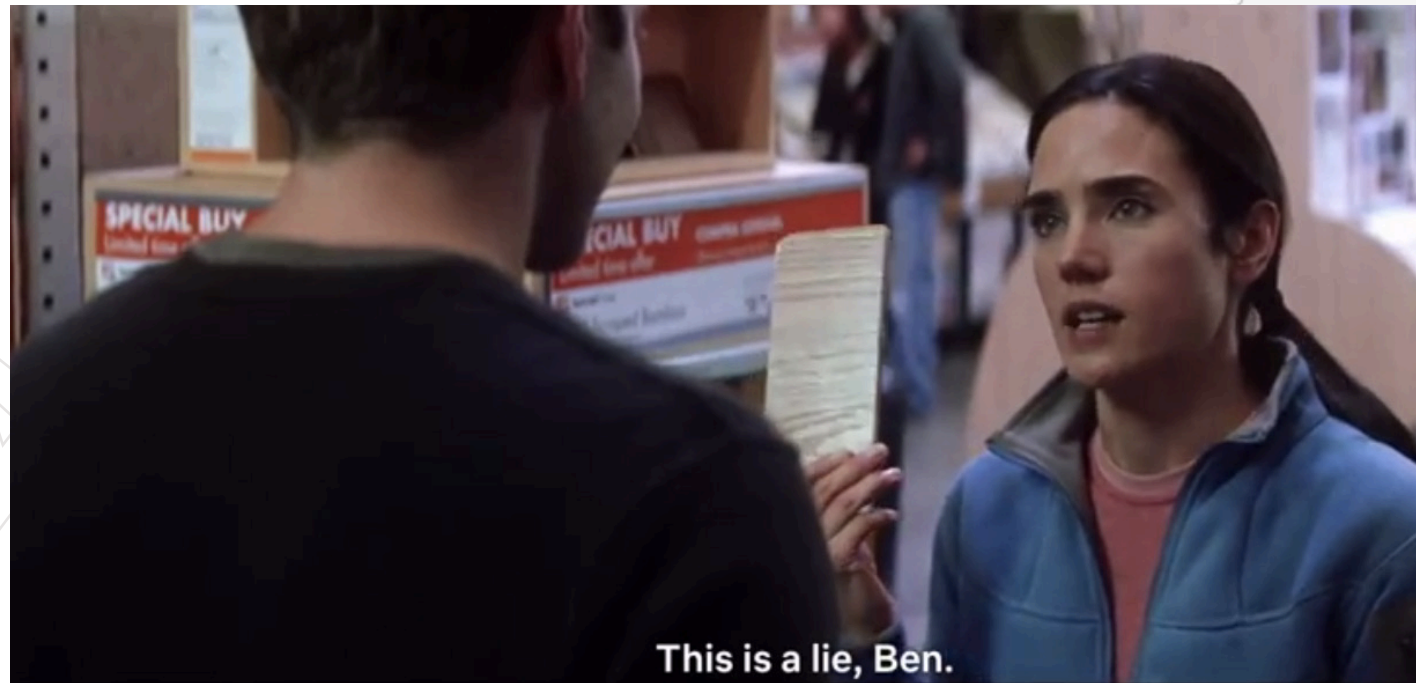
Janine: *That's not real hardwood floor!?*
Ben: [smiles and nods] *No. I know it's exactly like it but it's like 1/100 of the cost!*
Janine: *Ha...* [smiles] *I still want to get the real wood*
Ben: *What!?* [smiles surprised] *You can't even tell the difference!*
Janine: *That's not the point*
Ben: [gets serious] *Well what is the point?*
Janine: *It's just...* [smiles] *No, I don't like the way that is pretending to be wood. If you're not wood, don't try to look like wood!*
Ben: *I don't think it's pretending!*
Janine: [pauses, gets serious and then takes the piece of laminate from Ben's hands and holds it up next to in her face] *This is a lie, Ben. Just be upfront and tell people what you really are!*

This scene happens just before he reveals to Janine, his high school sweetheart, that he has slept with someone else- Anna (Scarlett Johansson), the charming yoga teacher aspiring to be a singer. In fact, the conversation readily transitions from

the floor, to their relationship. We know by that moment in the movie, that Janine and Ben have had problems as a couple. She insists on getting the expensive hardwood floor, because beyond the fact that the samples look the same, the “real wood” represents her need for an honest and faithful relationship.

Janine’s position suggests that the things she owns somehow reflect what she thinks and stands for. Her house, as her relationship, have to be built on “truth”. Her life cannot be as “fake” as laminate. From the conversation, it is clear that price is not an issue. In fact, for a hypothetical Ben and Janine that live on the minimum wage, laminate would be the only option. The choice to imbue one's floor with emotional weight, is constrained by access, and so the middle-class Janine would have to stand for her principles while standing on laminate.

Janine defines both herself and the type of floor she wants, through “distinguishing” herself in relation to a fake-real binary, she establishes an aesthetic distinction by which she classifies herself.⁷ As Bourdieu states, consumption involves deciphering and decoding the layers of meanings; the social hierarchy of the consumers comes from a cultural



hierarchy, which predisposes taste to function as a marker of class.⁸ We can imply Janine's background and upbringing when she opts for the hardwood floor, as it has given her the elements to decipher the "cultural code" to understand that "real wood" is at the top of the hierarchy and thus that her decision constitutes a "legitimate relationship to culture".⁹

We witness Janine decorating and meditatively organizing the new house by herself during multiple scenes. Changing the house mirrors her own renovation, the ratification of "her beliefs". Material finishes definition of nature not only suggest a gendered understanding of decoration and construction but also what is perceived as natural/normal. We learn that choosing implies the possibility of reinventing oneself. She represents the woman from all of the decoration catalogues and magazines. Just as the woman from the 1950s Nima Wood's advertising, she is the Martha Stewart that stands for her moral values as she teaches us the "right" "joy", "warmth" and "livability" of wood. She has completely interiorized the class and taste hierarchy imbued in wood as anti-artifice.

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I wanted a distressed brick accent wall but my limited budget would not let me have a real brick wall.

★★★★★

July 16, 2018

NIMA WOOD
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NATIONAL LUMBER MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION

I wanted a distressed brick accent wall but my limited budget would not let me have a real brick wall.

★★★★★

July 16, 2018

I wanted a distressed brick accent wall but my limited budget would not let me have a real brick wall. I purchased a few of these panels and used a German Smear technique I found on youtube using spackle and created my "Brick" wall. Turned out nice. I did try a test panel first and would suggest you place your test in the same room you will be creating the entire project. I found the way the light hits the spackle it could appear pink. The spackle looks better, but if the area is getting a lot of sunli may want to use a whitewash paint instead.



Materials are culturally and socially defined; they embody values and ideas that exceed their physical limits while they define us culturally and socially. Not only have these associations prevailed and evolved through time, but also grow complicated with the proliferation of options that the market has produced, a phenomenon grounded on the legitimation of socio-economic differences.

³ Price, Jennifer. "A Brief Natural History of the Pink Flamingo", in *Flight Maps: Adventures With Nature In Modern America* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 87-88.

⁴ According to Kopytoff, commodities are defined in relation to themselves- by being more exchangeable- but at the same time in relation to the whole system- by contributing to making things more exchangeable. (Igor Kopytoff, "The Cultural Biography of Things," 72-73).

⁵ Ibid.

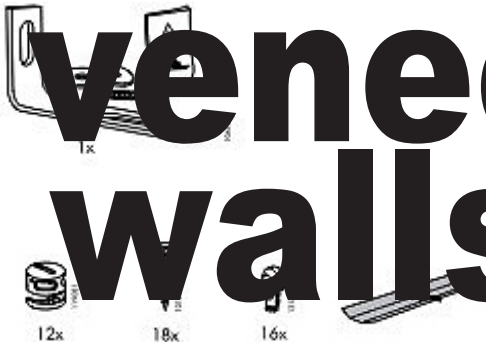
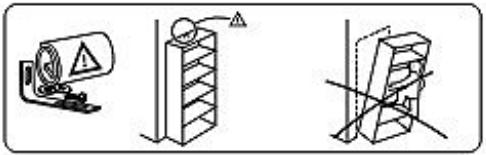
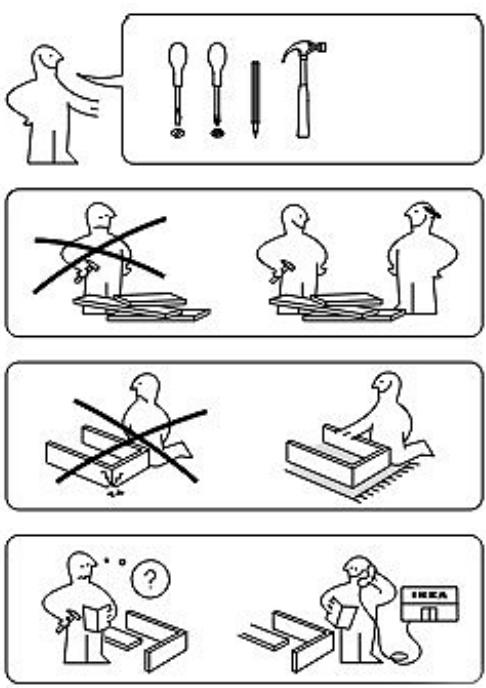
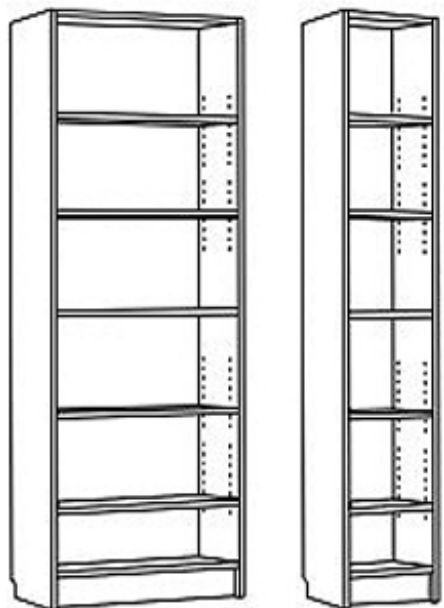
⁶ Forty, Adrian. "Differentiation in Design," in *Objects of Desire: design and society since 1750* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1992), 63-93.

⁷ Pierre Bourdieu, "Introduction and

the sense of distinction, from distinction: a social critique of the judgement of taste," in *Distinction: a social critique of the judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Boston: Harvard College, 1984), 403.

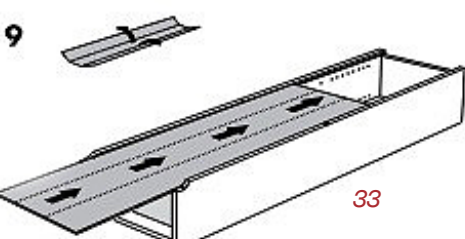
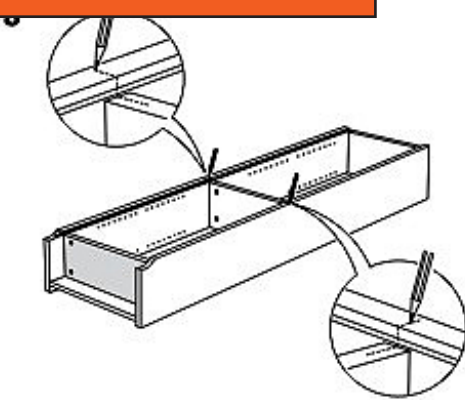
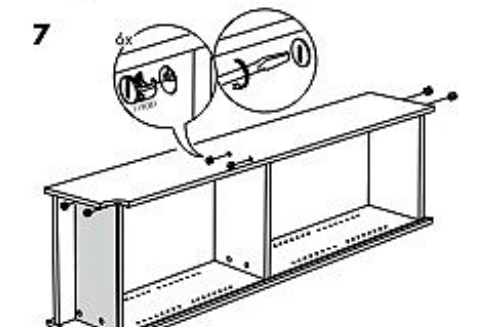
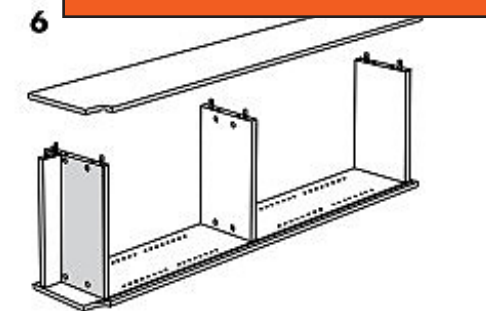
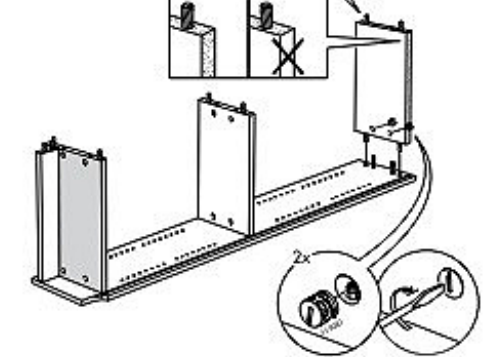
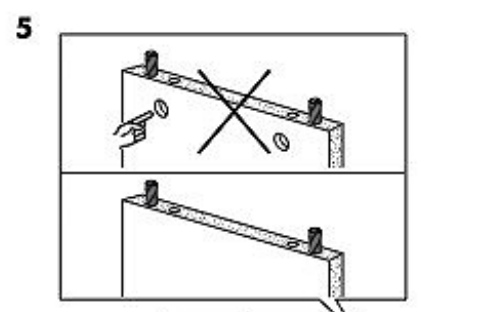
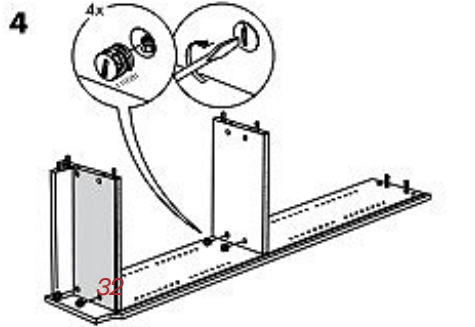
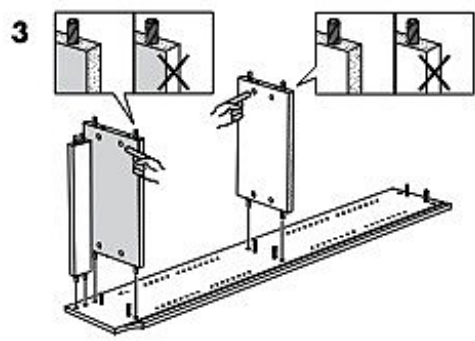
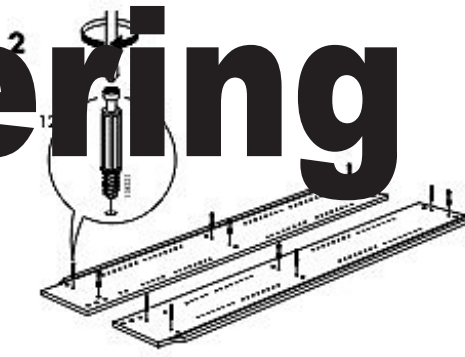
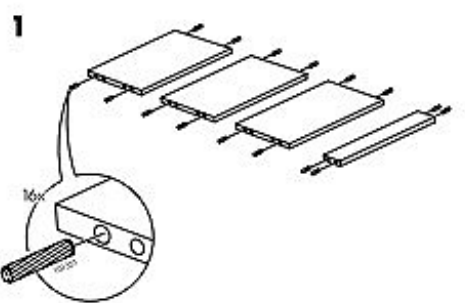
⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.



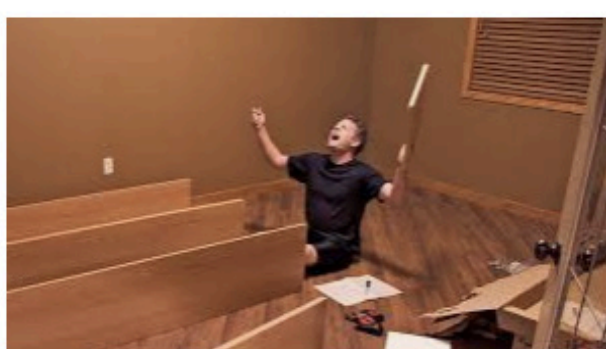
veneering walls

HOW DOERS GET MORE DONE

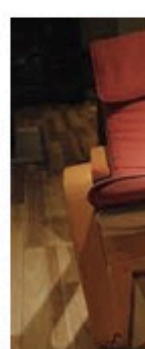




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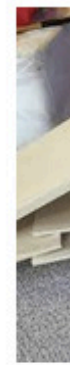
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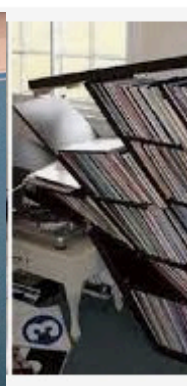
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Epic IKEA Fails That We...
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ninjajournalist.com



Ikea Fails That Are So ...
diply.com



flat pack furniture result in DIY ...
express.co.uk

The user friendliness of material finish products represents the displacement of specialized labor and skills, with what apparently is a democratic promise: anyone can do it. This process raises the question about what things are made versus what things appear to be. The egg that was added to the mix-n-ready cake recipe during the 1950s was a response to the lack of trust that cooks had regarding the authenticity of this preparation. The problem was not just reducing the labor of cooking into a two-step procedure of pouring the powder in water, but also what it meant not knowing what the cake was made of. When labor is re-established and defined, materiality becomes a space of doubt and contradiction.

In 2011, “The IKEA Effect”: When Labor Leads to Love”,¹⁰ presented the analysis of a series of studies of people assembling IKEA products. The paper proves individuals show an increase in the valuation of self-made products. This occurs in the case where the outcome is achieved successfully, which means when the product has been correctly assembled according to the instructions provided by the manufacturer. How is this valuation shown and measured? Is this at all the case of material finishes

as well?

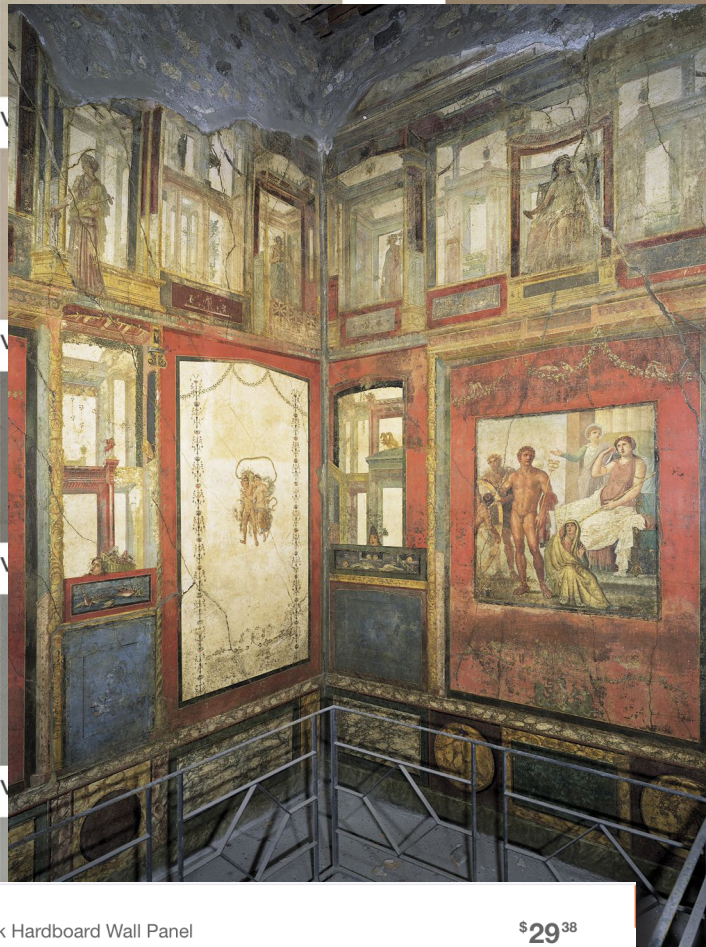
A first glimpse into the genre of customer reviews reveals the word love is in fact commonly used among English speaking buyers. Nonetheless, “love” appears the same way as other expressions of compliment: “great quality finishes”, “good value, good product”, “works perfectly...”, “nice and smooth”, “I love how it turned out...”. This is, of course questionable, since it assumes this increase of valuation can be measured in a format that is designed as a written reflection of a customer's experience and feedback on products or services. The formulation is not geared towards describing the type of relationship customers have with the final project. Instead, it reveals specific information about functionality, installment, and outcome. However, even if these pieces of writing operate under a commercial logic that apparently leaves no space for affection, when it comes to describing the effects, customers thrill in poetic excitement;

Lime plaster is quite literally the earth on your walls. The interplay of natural light and lime plaster is exhilarating. It appears as if there's simultaneously a warm light emanating from within the plaster and a vibration of light hovering above it. The effect is a

feeling of lightness and stillness in the space. It's these qualities that pair so nicely with a minimalist aesthetic. The plaster both warms up a pared-down space and enhances the focus on the essential.

This rhetoric contrast with the direct language that is used in the instructions and manuals of use. Lime Plaster is one of the well-known techniques of faux marble, marbleizing or Venetian Plaster that takes the tradition of Italian Plaster and translates it into a step-by-step procedure that is used and taught in DIY tutorial videos, craft workshops and all sorts of publications. Whether it is the one or the two-color plaster technique, the homemade finish, the synthetic or authentic method, or the classic marmorino, understanding Venetian plaster implies following a set of fixed instructions. Choose a plaster, gather your tools and lay down tarps, prepare your walls, apply primer, let it dry. Prepare your trowel, apply the first coat, apply the second coat, let it dry, burnish the surface and finally apply a topcoat.

This technique constitutes a particular case within material finishes, since it has its roots in a historical tradition that goes back to Roman



frescoes and Pompeii villas. Amazingly, this nearly 10,000 year old finish has the flexibility to marry well with nearly any design scheme from Old World Tuscan to ultra-modern and anywhere in between. It can be the big wow statement in the room, or quietly sit back and be subtle ambiance. There were different ways in which this technique was used in Roman interior spaces. These handmade marble frescos divided the wall into sections that framed narrative scenes, in order to create the illusion of a tridimensional space that grew within the depth of the wall. The technique was done as an architectural element intended to create an effect beyond a surface. “Architect, landscape designer, and wall-painting workshop operated in dialogue with one another, for the diverse media share not only a common vocabulary of [materialities], plants, water features, wildlife and statuary but also a set of spatial principles”.¹¹ Inhabiting a space whose physical limits were defined by marble veneering, generated the illusion that the whole space was constructed with this material.


The transition from a specialized labor to a commoditized product means that the process of resurfacing walls and floors has become standard-

Model # 278844 ★★★★★ (224)
 1/4 in. x 48 in. x 96 in. Kingston Brick Hardboard Wall Panel \$29³⁸

Product Overview Specifications Questions & Answers **Customer Reviews**

Turned out Great!
 ★★★★★ June 11, 2018 Recommended Product

I watch too much HGTV. I had an idea to brick one corner area in a small room. Waited for my husband to be out of town so he couldn't object. The panels are reasonably priced and very easy to install. I used sheet rock screws to attach to the wall. Intended to use grout or mortar for German schmear, but it ended up being too much stress trying to find which product to use. I used sheetrock mud which I'm familiar with. Was able to apply and wipe/sand off easily to achieve desired look. I used a coat of clear varnish to seal. I was going for a little more white...some of the white disappeared with the coat of varnish. I had planned on adding another layer of mud and recoating the varnish but just wanted to wrap up the project....figured I could do so later. I love how it turned out! Very pleased with the end result.



ized, which results in the acceleration and simplification of the process where the materiality of a space can be changed. The promise of satisfaction is guaranteed since products are easy and fast to use: installing a wall should feel like doing a puzzle, it should be fun, simple and most of all cheap! When laminates, wall papers and adhesives first appeared in the 1950s, the design, size and format of the packaging obeyed a logic that was based on the existing forms of retail. They had to be easily displayed in stores, as well as transported by their customers. IKEA's flat-packs represent the ultimate case where design follows the logic of jointure, and its stores epitomize a spatial architecture driven by the logic of self-assembly products.

The notion that form follows function triggers additional questions in the case of material finishes. Panels, usually used over indoor or outdoor walls and columns, generate a sense of volume by slicing the surface of walls into different shapes that, when installed, form the appearance of an organic material wall.

FauxPanels.com, specializes in great quality, realistic, lightweight brick, stone, rock and wood panels. These function not as a structural part of



Stone Wainscot

Images may be subject to co

Related images



a space, but as a way of upgrading a construction. [Whether refinishing a room in an old home or creating a nature-inspired sanctuary outdoors,](#) [FauxPanels.com](#) offers a beautiful look for a fraction of the cost of real stone, brick and wood. [With its interlocking finger design, the panels seamlessly blend together and further enhance the illusion of professional masonry.](#) Designed to [bring an elegant but down-to-earth look, panels capture the idiosyncrasies of genuine stone. A realistic look in its details that no one will ever guess the material was anything but stone, brick and wood.](#)

This process represents the standardization of construction materials, something clearly evident in case of the *Koni Brick Old Chicago Buff Thin Brick*. The bricks have to be glued against the wall, generating the effect of a regular brick wall when covering a complete vertical surface. The size and shape of this product carries on the standardized size of regular bricks (215mm x 102.5mm x 65mm), creating the illusion that the object is seemingly “complete”, and therefore as if it structurally defines the space. Walls are veneered to trick the eye by displaying the “right amount of volume”. However, if this does not define materiality, then how much

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Old Chicago Blanc 10.76 sq. ft. Faux Brick

4.5 ratings | 12 answered questions

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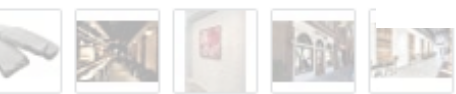
does it need to believe it does?

Perhaps [architectural surfaces](#) represent the tension between decorative and structural: through a veneered construction of thin changeable layers, structure is both reified and denied at the same time. Houses are built through easy-to-install skins of construction. The logic of easy-to-install housing then translates these new materialities off the floors and walls and into individual products.

Designed to hide pipes, pressure tanks and [wellheads that stick up right in the middle of the flower garden](#), rock enclosures [turn an obvious eyesore into a beautiful finished appearance. With a lightweight, extremely durable and incredibly realistic rock enclosure, an exposed pipe will blend right in with your existing landscaping. The results are remarkable!](#) Rock enclosures hide the undesired elements that disrupt the garden. Moreover, the apparent density of the rock constitutes the trick of an accessible interior.

Featured as an [incredibly durable line trimmer and impact resistance](#), the *Rock Cover Statue Garden Stone* sold on Wayfair’s website, announces what appears to be a contradiction. Defined as stone, and

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ART3D LLC

Natural stone mosaic tile for wall or floor

> [Shop now](#)

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Art3d Decorative Stone Mosaic Tile for Floor or Walls (4 Pack)
\$39.99 ✓prime

related ⁴² to this item

Partial view of a product listing on the right side of the page, showing a location pin icon, a price of 029, an 'Add' button, and a star rating of 4.5 with a price of \$109.99.

then as an artificial rock, Wayfair puts the buyer in the dilemma of figuring out the product by describing the material (stone), denying it (artificial rock), and omitting it (plastic?, fiberglass? etc.). Moreover, the *Rock Cover Statue Garden Stone* is not listed as a [natural variation type](#). In other words, the manufacturer's interest in specificity further complicates the discussion and Wayfair's insistence in labeling, on the contrary, results in the obfuscation of its materiality.

In a similar way, when it comes to adhesive papers, Wayfair's product descriptions continue to be vague and often contradictory. The *Bertsche Beachwood 18' Lx20.5" W Peel and Stick Wallpaper Roll* is [printed on a premium peel and sticky material](#). In this case we know by the name that this is in fact a type of wallpaper. Furthermore, if paper is made out of a combination of pulps extracted from trees, and ultimately from plant fibers that have been compressed, it is not too exaggerated to state that wood adhesive paper is a patterned wood inked over wood pulp. In a simplistic perspective, the *Bertsche Beachwood 18' Lx20.5" W Peel and Stick Wallpaper Roll* is, at the end, a redundancy, a tautology of wood. Wayfair's short description reads



DEKORRA
ROCK ENCLOSURES

DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO HIDE?

Introducing Dekorra Products long awaited model 115! Our most recent well casing and address rock designed to conceal and protect well casings or backflows and still add a little flair by accepting our custom address or name plaques.



as objects being made of a combination of other objects. It appears as if the [premium and sticky material](#) would not be simply paper. But then, how to understand what adhesives are made of, if it provides an anti-artifice skin that generates volume concealing the artifice of an anti-nature surface?

Would it change to know that the artificial rock made out of stone is made out of plastic? The plastic rock would mean that the rock is in fact a combination of synthetic or semi-synthetic organic and malleable compounds that have been molded into the form of a rock. Then, the polymer rock enclosure would be hiding the polymer tank in the garden. Consequently; the anti-artifice appears to be made out of the same materials as the anti-nature or, the anti-nature seems to be made out of the same materials as the anti-artifice. If the subject of question is not the constituency of materiality, is it form? Texture? The feeling of “literally the earth on the walls”?

In some sense, these concerns can be founded in a “depth interpretation”, which presupposes the existence of something original that is not accessible, a materiality that does not appear to be graspable. This derives in an unstable binary

020

interpretation of material finishes: these products “seem to be/but not really are” merely copies of an “original true materiality”. But why should we ignore the contradictions that arise when attempting to define what these “seem to be/but not really are” and what these “appear to be/but are not” made? I believe this operates in the same way as the circular and entangled methodology Jane Bennet introduces in *Vibrant Matter*- which I call “confusion through reinforcement”- based on repeatedly using words until they blur each other. The repetition and underlining of wood, brick, marble, rocks, nature and plants seem to be operating under this mechanism and a similar effect is produced, thus questioning the prescribed meanings and losing the definitions. Language ceases being an obstacle, but a place of reinforcement that defamiliarizes suppositions.¹²

Why does knowing that something “does not seem to be” what it “appears to be”, seem to be relevant? How much does it take for something to be legible as such and what is lost or gained in this process? For LuxeWalls.com, the discussion has nothing to do with truth but “authenticity”:

Rock C
See More fr



\$56.9

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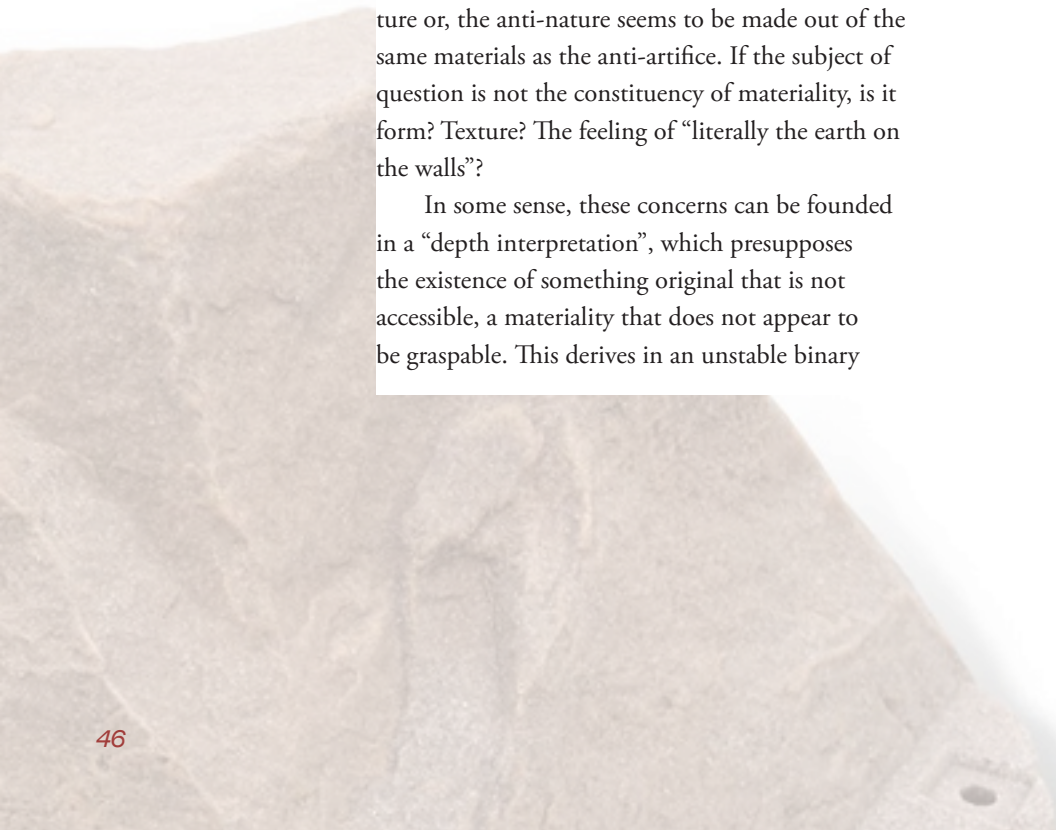
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Get it in 4-5 weeks

Ship To: 02906 - Providence ▾

Select Color: Autumn Bluff, \$56.99



Plainly put, faux means fake. A faux finish is meant to mimic the look of another genuine finish. (Like Faux marbling or Faux wood grain or many faux finishes that are intended to give the look of Italian Plaster) Italian Plaster however is something truly special. It has a look that can not be achieved with paint and glaze. It is an Authentic Finish! And what's more it is very easy to and cost effective to repair. It resists mold and can be applied in a variety of settings (even inside a shower) and is tinted the color of your selection.

LuxeWalls.com vehement text stumbles into a contradiction between fake as mimicry, in a fascinating struggle to define Italian Plaster, and concludes with a rather subjective appreciation; Italian Plaster is “truly special”.

Perhaps material finishes invite us to question the origin of materiality, but then ignore the answer, because at the end it is not relevant. In this text, just as the Lime Plaster description, the effects become the place where the rhetoric is able to exceed the ideas on labor and “molecular materiality”, to suggest a space for evocative reactions. This might be, at least for LuxeWalls.com, where ambiguity comes into play; when labor questions

knowledge, in the space of contradiction between decorating and constructing, between natural and artifice, between mimicry and authenticity.

¹⁰ Michael I. Norton, Daniel Mochon and Da Ariely, “The IKEA Effect: When Labor Leads to Love”. Harvard Business School, 2011.

¹¹ Bettina Bergman, “The Gardens and Garden Paintings of Villa A,” in *Leisure & Luxury in the Age of Nero: The Villas of Oplontis Near Pompeii*, ed. Elaine K. Gazda and John R. Clarke (Michigan: Kelsey Museum Publication, 2016) 96.

¹² Felski, Rita. “Critique and the Hermeneutics of Suspicion”. *M/C Journal*, 15 (2011). Taken March 2020. Available in: <http://journal.media-culture.org.au/index.php/mcjournal/article/view/431>.

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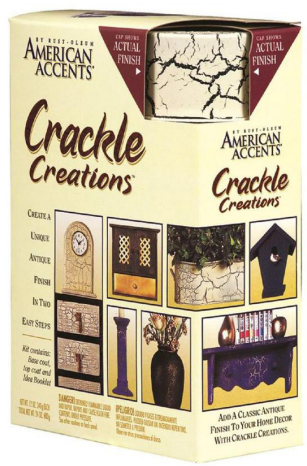
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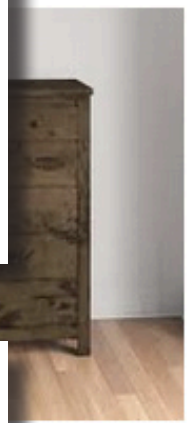
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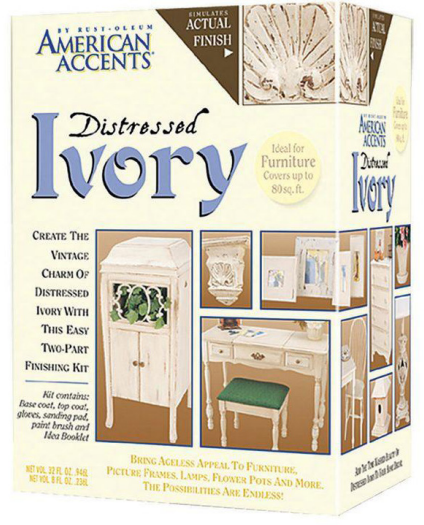
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Small project... big impact! American Accents, from the manufacturer of paints and coatings Rust-Oleum, offers easy-to-use-kits and spray paints to use on tables, lamps, planters, picture frames and many other craft-sized projects you're planning to tackle. Rust-Oleum hit a home run with what are very resistant paints. Mystic Caribbean Sand, Bleached Stone and Desert Bisque are some of the various Multicolor Textured Spray Paints available. In this case, toluene, acetone and xylene are the magic translation of the desert, bleached stone and the Caribbean sand into a single spray jar. These products suggest the possibility of something outside of itself, as they represent the potential of turning anything into the label that it comes while giving a nice textured finish. As long as you cover the object evenly, it dries to a nice factory look!

The world of spray paints not only makes evident that this translation happens in an indirect process, but it also enables the commoditization of what can be considered "non-material". What does it mean that there is not just a "natural" desire in the house of, say, stone, but also the "charm of old"?

The Distressed Ivory Kit is used to achieve a casual look in minutes, to easily simulate the shab-



by-upscale charm of old, weathered paint. If the discussion is no longer around a specific material, then it means the non-material becomes tangible, physical, homogenized and therefore reproducible. Packed in a spray; antiqueness, distressed and weathered qualities even accelerate and delay the effects of time and use. With the *Varathane Weathered Wood Accelerator*, you can get a [weather wood look in minutes!](#) The *All-in-one Crackle Creations Flat Antique Ivory Spray Paint Kit*, [contains everything you need to easily simulate the stylish effect of cracked paint.](#) However, it is advisable to [clean all surfaces thoroughly, just keep the can moving at a steady rate and you'll be fine.](#)

The world of spray effects ultimate market is the one of essences and perfumes. *Jasmine Cedarwood*, *Coconut Beach Woods*, *Patchouli Amber*, *Sweet Pea Pear* and *Mandarin Mimosa* are Glade's essentials collection of [simple, layered scents](#) that [breathe new life into your home.](#) Glade's website displays the variety of candles, wax melts, oils, gels and sprays that [enhance every experience.](#) These are adorned through a language that associates feelings and spaces to odors. With the opening slogan;





What will you feel?, DIY craft videos, recipes, and all sorts of great tips float and emerge over a white, blue watery/cloud background.

Essences and perfumes are designed in order to fill in a space by referencing the same kind of specific elements as material finishes, the types of names that are used in these products coincide with the logic used by Rust Oleum spray paints: *Hawaiian Breeze, Cashmere Woods, Fresh Woods, Labdanum, Cypress, Sheer Vanilla Embress, Crisp Waters, Angel Whispers, Elegant Amber and Out*. Elements from nature move from outside to indoors to revitalize your natural habitat. Sensations, feelings and ideas collide in each product: Feel madly, wildly, deeply. Open up to scent. INNOCENCE. We have a fragrance for that. Liquids fall gently as a continuous fine mist in a transparent bottle to awake something real. The world of liquids seems as having endless possibilities, odors appear as the ideal space for a discourse that denies the difference between language and objects, between solids and non-solids.

Surfaces are linked with the notion of superficiality which often has a negative connotation, as it references the lack of a “deepness”. Shallowness

We have a fragrance for that.®

is considered valueless and the surface does not constitute a space of knowledge. Meanwhile, we are constantly encountering the surfaces of things, we relate almost exclusively to those creams that cover up what remains underneath. We enjoy sliding our eyes and breathing deeply into magical fragrances that bring us the ethereal, back and forth in time. We feel fulfilled with the liquids that promise to take us to the Caribbean, to fresh woods and crisp waters.

Surfaces have become liquids that are poured, printed, stuck, painted and easily exchanged. They create meaning through an expansion of possible relations that expand outward. Surfaces are then, a thick and rich “stratified [crust. A] wobby pile of increasingly nuanced readings [that are] anchored on the surface of the phenomenal world”.¹³ Then, exploring the rich crust is, above all, a way of digging into the structures of power and ideological codes that they retain.

TRUE

¹³ Kleinman, Kent. “Taste, After All,” in *After Taste: Expanded Practice in Interior Design*. (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2012) 29.

Spatial Trailers



Materials such as laminates and wallpapers first appeared with the suburban development and the beginning of the home building and construction industry in the post-war US society. The belief that the interior of the house could be easily customized, refinished, reframed and reorganized, both encouraged and supported the development of the home furnishing and decoration industry. Magazines like "A Thousand Lanes", published by Levittown, displayed home decoration trends destined for the rising homeowners and evidenced the promise of social mobility. The advertising industry of home-building, run by private enterprises, combined nationalist messages with concepts of security, stability and light after war; "ownership, [...] and individualism were the persuasions that consistently adhered to the project of building homes even as that process became more and more uniform".¹⁴ Material finishes formatted the space into an assembly line, the house was no longer life lasting and unchangeable.

What can be made now of a paradoxical discourse that encourages the possibility of owning and therefore individualizing a space, potentially empowering while at the same time making homog-

enized spatial formulas? If the fifties were linked to a nationalist project based on a middle-class promise of freedom and realization of the American dream, how are these new materialities ideologically coding spaces now? What kind of space are these producing? How did they become normalized architectural surfaces?

After a while, I started noticing the way spaces were constructed and designed and realized it was a matter of looking closely. I found them not just in fast food restaurants and supermarkets but also when I went to the hospital, in the bank, from the classroom to office and even on TV. Interior design trends now look like immersive sets for tv shows. Their morphology is based on the idea that it should be looked through a screen, from one point of view (the camera), a perspective that makes the space As-Seen-On-TV.

The house becomes a cinema and the bank customer service worker now sits on a TV news show desk. For the spectator, "the artful combinations among media invite [...] a freedom of experience, multiplying possibilities for the mobile eye [...], and establish[es] a game with reality that ends [...]"

up removing the divisions between materials. [...] [A] second, hybrid nature [...] [presents space] as a magical site”.¹⁵ Then, the staged experience makes the participant feel like the central character¹⁶: entering the bank office should feel like being the special guest of a tv show. Walking into the set where everyone is waiting and expected to clap at your entrance, except nobody really does.

We have interiorized the rules and desperately keep trying not to lose the right smell, to keep the smoothness of the smooth and texture where it should be textured. We love everything that feels new, we feel safe in the highly controlled remodeled-like-look ambient of shopping malls and airports. Spaces are hypocritically neutral and uniform, surfaces should constantly be refurbished as if they should maintain a render-like quality. Maybe this explains why Wendy’s fireplace looks like a screen, because it works like a projection. “It should look homey, but always a bit artificial (safely rebuilt, not natural). It should look well appointed, like brilliant packaging, but not superior”.¹⁷

Turned into timeless products, spaces are designed to be repeatable everywhere. Material finishes are meant to function as manufactured

un-temporary skins, yet ephemeral. The space is conceived as an assembly that should fit or otherwise be replaced, covered and fixed. The shortening of its lifespan accelerates and encourages the process of replacement. The sign is given by the imperfections or moments in which the surface is revealed as a surface, when adhesive papers start to peel off in the corner. Surfaces should not crack or age unless it is part of the plan, the bubbles from the vinyl feel uncomfortable and are read as a mistake,

These products represent the ongoing un-innocent design’s appetite for novelty and variety, one that ultimately reinforces notions of class and taste. As watermarks, these products create new materialities and prescribe not just who is meant to use them and how, but what happens and what does not within the spaces where they are used. We recognize them as something, but that what is referenced is meant to be ignored but not forgotten. Yet, they inevitably stamp the image and narrative that is produced with an ideology and desire for progress where things should always be better, faster, easier and cheaper.

However, the narrative often does fails and a

slippage is generated in the process. Things appear on a slant, and fall obliquely, perceived as off according to the normative dimension that operates as a corrector and straightening devise.¹⁸ In the moment in which these formulas are translated into contexts where the conditions are not in coherence with their expectations, when the trick fails to accomplish its prescribed outcome, and when these are taken more seriously than they should be, a misalignment is created and the potential for new meanings arise.

Not just when tricks are revealed as tricks, but also when they become something else and materials still push one direction but then take a different turn. The wardrobe does not quite fit in your Ford Ka, the shelves are not exactly straight, the bed does not fit the mattress and the cabinets do not line up. The tension between ideals and use opens a space for re-appropriation, one that can reveal and turn its socioeconomic codes against themselves. Perhaps these are precisely the moments of friction when these ideological watermarks can be disrupted; IKEA hacks follow IKEA fails.

But failing is, of course, a relative term. Though “failure” can be a great teacher, if you find

yourself more frustrated than inspired, you might need to reexamine to see if there’s anything you can tweak. Cultivate your excitement in the moment by taking time. Then, overestimate how long it will take. Think about what you will actually do. The quickest way to fail is to start only to realize it is out of your level. Is that an absolute show stopper?

There you are, working away and it doesn’t turn out as well as you would like... so you think it is a mess. Well, it could be a mess, but that doesn’t mean you have failed

¹⁴ Keller Easterling. “Subdivision Products,” in *Organization Space: landscape, highways and houses in America*. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999) 189.

¹⁵ Bettina Bergman, “The Gardens and Garden Paintings of Villa A,” 120.

¹⁶ Norman L. Klein, “Scripted Spaces: Navigating the Consumer-Built City,” in *Vatican to Las Vegas: The History of Special Effects*. New York: New Press, 2004. 321-329.

¹⁷ Ibid, 326.

¹⁸ Ahmed, “Orientations: Toward a Queer Phenomenology,” 561.

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