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'I find it hard to get old'
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News Briefing

UK public finances plunge to new low

The UK's public finances have deteriorated faster than

Sea power Tall ships gather for international



A tall ship glides past the Burbo Bank wind farm on its way into Liverpool's port yesterday. It was one of many racing festival, part of which is being hosted by Liverpool in its capacity as European City of Culture

Banks' cash calls

Fundraising blow for Barclays and HSBC

percentage of investors to have... The bank rally helped the... sales up their sights. The bank... FTSE 100 record its first weekly...

Design Decade 2000s

In the final part of the series, Josh Sims focuses on the noughties.

2000

The Dutch design collective Droog defied furniture design's conventions when it launched in 1996 with provocative, high-concept pieces that were also affordable. But it was designer Marcel Wanders who was the shape of things to come, with both elite design companies such as Flos and Cappellini and important museum collections showcasing his work. A key piece of the early noughties was his VIP Chair, which he designed for the 2000 World Expo. Upholstered in wool felt, with flared trouser legs set on wheels, it was typical of Wanders' otherworldly, intellectual yet humorous style. His polyamide Airborne Snotty vase, from 2001, which mimicked a flick of mucus caught mid-air after a sneeze, became an unlikely modern collectible. "Everything has been thought of before... the real problem is to think of it again," Wanders says.

2002

With its metallic leaf forms and DIY arrangements, Tord Boontje's Wednesday Light was an antidote to the cold rationality of modernism. It blurred the lines between art and craft and proved a bestseller through retailer Habitat. Boontje's trademark is to blend the high-tech with the artisanal to create furniture, glassware and lighting that is contemporary yet homely. "I am interested in 17th-, 18th- and 19th-century objects [for their] sensual use of materials and surfaces. Many of these techniques were very labour intensive. New industrial processes let us explore these sensual qualities again," the designer says of signature pieces such as 2001's Horse vase and 2002's Blossom Chandelier. Lighting designer Georg Bedale joins Boontje in taking a crafts-based approach to product design: he sculpts lights from industrial laminated tape in varying thicknesses to allow different levels of light to penetrate.

2004

Handmade from black, epoxy-coated metal and ebony, using 17th-century techniques, the F-System collection was graphically geometric and rigorous. Its designer, Hedi Slimane, was a fashion rather than a furniture designer – then the maverick head of Dior Homme. The F-System, itself a collaboration with Comme des Garçon's Rei Kawakubo, was part of a trend for furniture by fashion designers: while many dabbled in homewares, Ralph Lauren, Jasper Conran, John Rocha and Giorgio Armani all launched full furniture lines. "In fashion we're selling more than just a well made dress. We're selling a point of view. It makes sense to extend that to include furniture," says Conran. The fashion industry's successful cross-over shows



its understanding of marketing and image, textiles and texture. But although Paul Smith styled his one-off Mondo collection for Cappellini, he says he doubts the two disciplines will merge: "If Tom Dixon came to me and said he was designing clothes I'd think: 'what do you know about it?'"

2005

Committee designers Clare Page and Harry Richardson created their expensive, award-winning Kebab lamp (left) – a collection of found items skewered on to a pole – to explore definitions of "taste" and to question our consumption of material goods and the inevitable waste this produces. This decade witnessed a new wave of designers shunning the eco label but nevertheless working with sustainability as the driving force – Ryan Frank, Humanscale and Emiliano Godoy among them. These designers were some of the first to put aesthetics on a par with ethics, using beautiful woods – especially bamboo and coconut, reclaimed or from sustainable forests –

biodegradable upholstery, eco-friendly Provista plastic, organic bedding and chemical-free foam. Godoy argues: "The more we see the consequences of 150 years of unplanned and irresponsible industrialisation, the more we will be inclined to choose products that promote responsible production and consumption. In other words, more bad news will promote better design."

2006

Product and furniture designers often neglect bathrooms. Not Jaime Hayon, whose Artquitect collection turned the bathroom from a clinical space into a room for functional, curvy, colourful furniture that could also be placed elsewhere in the home. And it introduced a distinctive, timeless aesthetic that was modern while simultaneously looking to the past – itself a characteristic of noughties design. He gave classical details a makeover in

high-tech materials in memorable lines such as 2006's BD Showtime collection (below). Hayon,

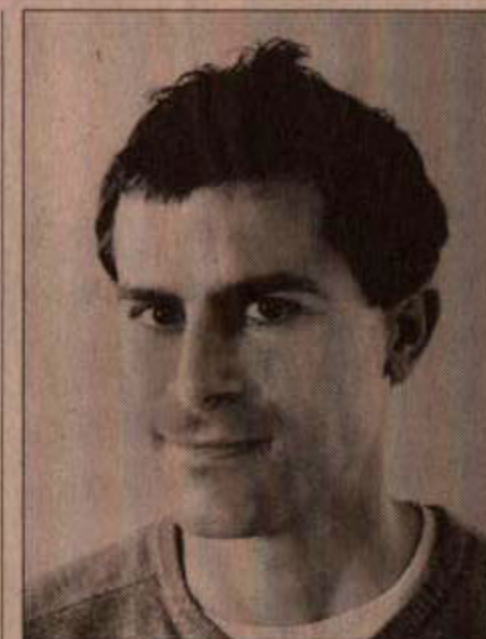


a household-design name in the making, has seen a phenomenal rise: appointed head of design at Benetton's Fabbrica research centre in

1998 when he was just 25, he has only been working on his own projects since 2004. He started with a range of sinister plastic dolls and has since devised figures he describes as representing "a virgin army defended by supersonic pigs", as well as clever designs such as his Pallucco cabinet-within-a-cabinet.

2008

The Stack chest of drawers by designer Shay Alkalay (right) challenges notions of what this traditional piece of furniture should be; providing units that can be stacked to the preferred height with drawers that can be opened in two directions. And he has created an eye-catching, irregular form in the process. The piece is just one of those from a number of up-and-coming designers assisted by design hothouse Established & Sons. The name might suggest a faux old-time Englishness but the company is anything but. Its remit is quietly patriotic: the company strives both to foster British design talent – emerging as much as established – and to



encourage foreign talent to work in Britain. Among the names it has brought to the design-conscious public are BarberOsgerby, Amanda Levet and Alexander Taylor. Indeed, Established & Sons, set up in 2005, lays down a new blueprint for design companies: many of its product lines come in limited editions, it has a public face in the form of its own gallery and its typographic image is simple yet striking – at this year's Salone del Mobile in Milan, for example, Established & Sons stood out thanks to a 40 x 6m typographic wall of English sayings. This is design company as design brand, with the cachet and cool of a fashion brand.