

# Wallpaper\*

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NOVEMBER 2020

## NATURAL SPLENDOUR

An elevating take on time-travelling art,  
environmentally conscious architecture  
and nature-loving design

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# CONTRIBUTORS



**SOPHIE LOVELL** ▲  
**Writer**

Family businesses are the backbone of the German economy and, as our longstanding Germany Editor, Sophie Lovell has visited a fair number of their offices, many of which are in surprisingly lovely locations. One such is the Jacobys' David Chipperfield-designed HQ, which she toured with co-director Ellen Jacoby (page 134). 'Ellen loves the new HQ as if it were her own home, which, in a way, it is,' says Lovell. 'A highlight was the brunch by in-house chef, Michael Wibbeke.'



**ALEXANDRE GUIRKINGER** ▲  
**Photographer**

Long-time Wallpaper\* contributor Guirkinger has travelled the world on assignment, but was able to stay close to his Paris home to photograph French artist Sophie Calle at her base in Malakoff (page 088). With black-and-white portraits of the likes of Jane Birkin and Céline Sciamma already under his belt, Guirkinger had no trouble capturing Calle's spirit. Some of his photographs, accompanying artist Tarek Atoui's sound experiments, are currently on show at the Fridericianum in Kassel.

**FRANK BOWLING** ▼  
**Artist**

Bowling lists 'painting, cricket, jazz and pig's trotters' as interests on his Facebook profile. Small wonder that he responded to our Artist's Palate invitation with a recipe for his signature pig's trotters in vodka and beer (page 170), a slow-cooked dish that can be prepared ahead of a long day at the studio. A master of colour and expression, the British-Guyanese painter found belated recognition last year, at the age of 85, with an acclaimed solo retrospective at Tate Britain.



**CHARLOTTE TAYLOR** ▼  
**Creative director**

For this month's Space story (page 146), Taylor and collaborator Joe Mortell created dreamlike virtual sets that take furniture into the great outdoors, responding to a wellness-inspired concept from Wallpaper\* interiors editor Hannah Jordan. 'My approach is very analogue; I start with a series of hand drawings and annotations,' says Taylor. 'Joe translates these sketches into 3D models and landscapes, and we work together on the scenes' final appearance.'



**PAUL PHUNG** ▲  
**Photographer**

This month we tasked the London-based Phung with photographing artist Sarah Sze in New York (page 118). 'It was the most challenging shoot I've ever done via Zoom,' says Phung. 'Sarah told me she felt we both played the role of the photographer. It was such a memorable shoot and a sign of the times ahead.' Known for his monochromatic, cinematic imagery and striking fashion shoots, Phung is now working on a new book featuring portraits of dancers.



**SCOTT MITCHEM** ▲  
**Writer**

Wallpaper\* stalwart Mitchem, a fan of all things design and all things Brazilian, was delighted to interview revered architect Marcio Kogan for us about his new furniture for Minotti (page 074). 'It was an honour,' says Mitchem. 'Marcio and Roberto [Minotti] are lovely people, both quick to praise their teams before taking any personal credit.' A self-described 'hotel geek', Mitchem particularly enjoyed discussing the process of conceptualising a virtual luxury oceanfront resort with Roberto.

Design



# Tokyo story

Marcio Kogan draws on his travels in Japan to create new seating for Minotti

WRITER: SCOTT MITCHEM



It's not unthinkable that, after a long and complex collaboration between one of the world's most renowned architects and his industry-leading client, one might use the F-word to characterise the other. But when Marcio Kogan and Roberto Minotti describe each other as 'family', it's still a bit surprising. Perhaps more surprising is that this genuine warmth extends across their teams – even after their most recent collaboration, a multifaceted, multinational effort, delivered on schedule in the face of the Covid-19 crisis.

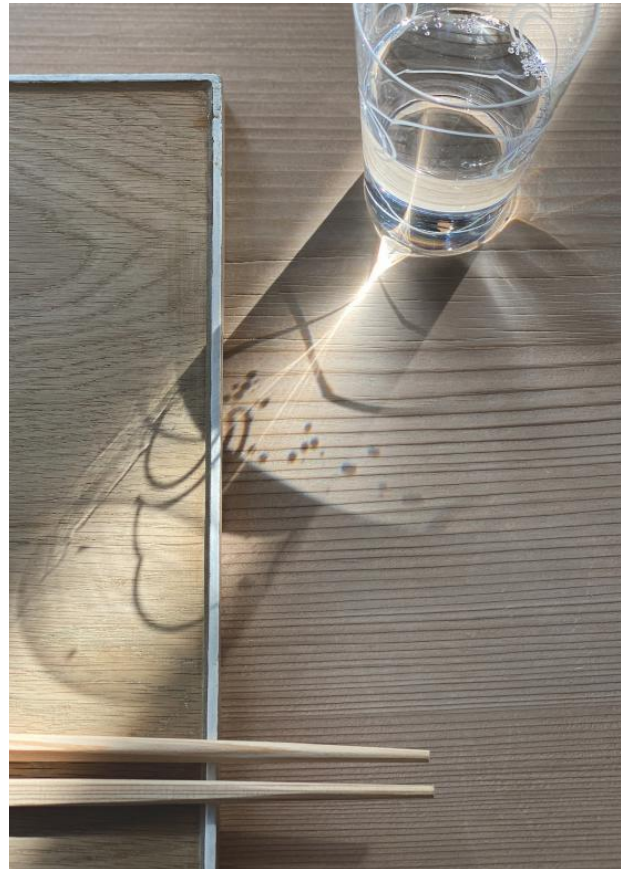
The lovefest is likely a reflection of their shared philosophy on the workplace. 'I saved all of my money early in my career so I could invest in creating the best environment possible in my office,' said Kogan. 'It was very calculated. Everything I do is with pleasure. I love the people that work in my office and they love to work here. The word 'family' is overused, but in this case it's accurate. Everybody is a friend. I care about them all. It's the same with clients. I don't work with anyone who I don't consider a friend. Everything must be done with pleasure.'

Of course, Minotti is a family business, founded by Alberto Minotti in 1948 and now run by his sons Roberto and Renato, together with the third generation: Alessandro, Alessio, Susanna and Leonardo. They have dozens of employees whose tenures go back decades, in an industry tradition that is uniquely Italian, and a network of international collaborators whom they consider extended family. 'We only work with people we have a good connection with, that's the most important thing. We have to have a good synergy with the people we are collaborating with, their culture, their passion for this job we share,' says Roberto.

Like all healthy relationships, this one with Kogan has grown organically over time. It started when Roberto requested a meeting while he was in São Paulo, solely out of admiration for Kogan's work. A friendship quickly began, but it would be four years before Kogan would receive his first Minotti commission: the 'Quadrado', a modular outdoor seating collection inspired by the classic teak duckboard used in yacht construction (see W\*235). Released in 2018, it became a runaway bestseller – which tends to strengthen a friendship.

For his contribution to Minotti's 2020 collection, Kogan had several ideas for indoor furniture in mind, but Roberto requested that he design pieces for both indoor and outdoor use – a brief driven in part by Kogan's incredible residential projects in and around São Paulo. 'It's hard to tell where the indoors ends and the outdoors begins. This is a common theme in our work. Everything can be open because the climate is so agreeable,' says Kogan. Celebrated in the pages of this magazine (see W\*246), in coffee table books and across social media, his residences are coveted by design enthusiasts the world over – including Roberto, a trained architect who first fell in love with the idea of indoor/outdoor living as a student, learning about the midcentury masterpieces of Richard Neutra and John Lautner. The brief was also driven by Minotti's ambitious expansion within the outdoor furniture market, to be supported by a new factory currently under construction near its HQ in Meda, Italy.

The heart of the offering is the 'Daiki' chair series, inspired by the lobby of the original Hotel Okura Tokyo. Kogan has travelled to the Japanese capital just after Christmas for the past six years running. >>



**'I don't want to do anything but walk and discover Tokyo and experience this amazing culture'**



Opposite, main picture, an outdoor version of the new 'Daiki' chair, by Marcio Kogan/Studio MK27 for Minotti, features a curved teak clam-shell and removable cushions upholstered in water-repellent polyester fabric. Clockwise from above, Kogan's highlights of his time in Japan include, the 'super elegant' Yakumo Saryo restaurant; street finds such as this 'casual encounter' in the residential area of Nakameguro; and Tanikawa House in Nagano Prefecture, 1972, by Kazuo Shinohara, 'a Japanese architecture masterpiece'

## Design

'All I do is walk. I never have a plan. I don't want to do anything but walk and discover the city and experience this amazing culture, which is the exact opposite of Brazil in so many ways. I think I took 2,000 pictures on my first trip. I was fascinated. Every morning, the only touristic plan we had was to go to the Nezu Museum, which was a 90-minute walk from our hotel. On our way, we stopped at a second-hand shop, then a ceramics studio, a café, a bookstore. We never made it. And that was fine with me,' recalls Kogan.

It was on one of these endless strolls that he came across the Hotel Okura, its midcentury lobby originally designed by Yoshio Taniguchi in 1962 (see W\*8) and demolished in 2015 despite protests by modern preservationists. 'I loved the atmosphere there. It was a masterpiece of interior design, very elegant, serene, timeless,' said Kogan. 'When I was there, I decided to make a tribute to this hotel and thought that could be a piece of furniture.'

Kogan pitched his idea in an unconventional way. 'Minotti never imagined I would make a movie,' he says, a filmmaker at heart. It took only two minutes, 57 seconds for the shock to wear off and for his elegant, passionate film about the project to win approval. 'It was poetic. I loved it. It was an original way to tell the story of a project. I thought it was in line with Marcio's spirit; I just loved it,' says Roberto.

The resulting 'Daiki' series lives up to its lofty genesis, a simple, perfectly proportioned design concept that, like the original Hotel Okura lobby, is at once classic and modern. It's the perfect result for Minotti, a brand itself built on walking the fine line between tradition and innovation. 'Daiki' is a blend of both, and includes an indoor armchair, with a shell in either Bolivian rosewood or ash veneer, and an outdoor armchair and dining chair. Teak is used for the outdoor versions, which allow for continuity with interior spaces featuring 'Daiki' or other Minotti pieces – a strategic priority and personal preference for Roberto. With the series, Kogan recalls the

same sense of timelessness that made Taniguchi's interiors worth fighting for.

Ultimately, Kogan contributed two additional series, the 'Linha' tables and 'Boteco' sideboards, to Minotti's extensive 2020 collection – which also includes designs by a global collection of designers, among them Nendo, GamFratesi, Christophe Delcourt and the company's own art director Rodolfo Dordoni. In total, there are around 40 original products, each with variations that translate to over 400 new items.

Creating the context within which Minotti products are presented each year is a critical part of the company's process, and the Covid-19 crisis only added pressure and complexity to an already ambitious release. Roberto, ever the architect, designed a virtual modernist retreat, the Seaview Resort and Lodges, a fictitious five-star resort that gracefully spills down a mountainside in the city of Carmel-by-the-Sea, California. Here, the influence of those famous residences by Kogan, Neutra and Lautner come to 'life'. The hotel's public areas comprise a tiered series of lobby space, restaurants and poolside cocktail bars, all with spectacular ocean views and 'invisible' boundaries between them and their generous terraces. It's the perfect way to present the breadth and depth of the new collection in situ.

Ironically, this virtual resort and its accompanying launch video – which includes Kogan's short film – was a more concrete way to experience the 2020 collection, free from the pandemonium of furniture fairs and allowing for deeper understanding of the products' backstory. Global lockdowns forced the cancellation of Milan's Salone del Mobile, where Minotti's new collections would otherwise have been shown, but a temporary escape to an idyllic, if only imagined, resort in California was more than welcome. The project is so well done, it raises the question, does Minotti have plans to open a luxury hotel? 'We are focused on making furniture, but we never say never.' ✨  
[minotti.com](http://minotti.com); [studiomk27.com.br](http://studiomk27.com.br)

Below, the original 1960s Okura Hotel lobby by Yoshio Taniguchi and Hideo Kosaka, demolished in 2015 (and later rebuilt), provided some of the inspiration for Kogan's 'Daiki' series of chairs

