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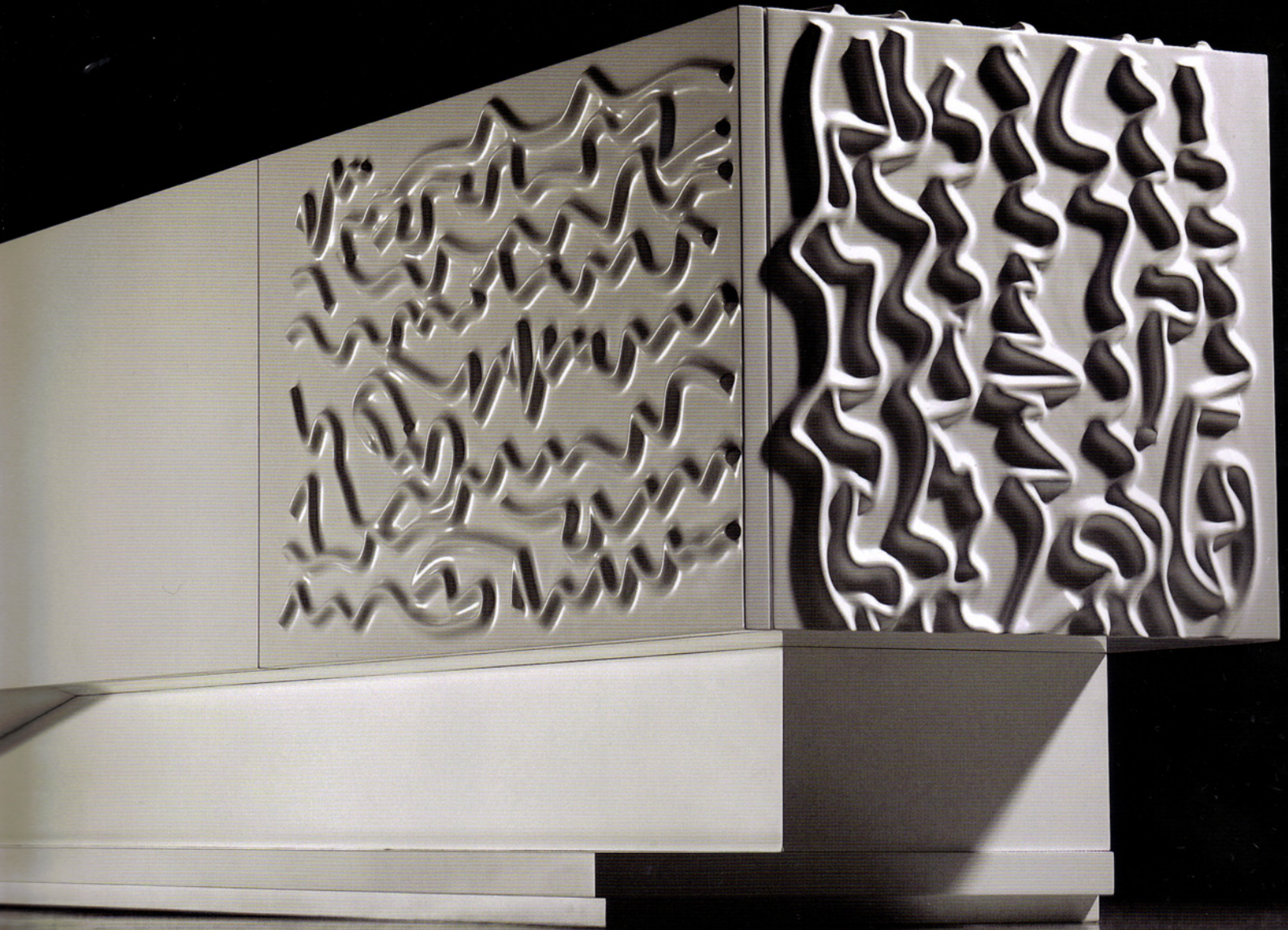
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HISTORY IN THE MAKING

The vintage appeal of reclaimed boards gives floors real character

DINING FOCUS

Products, projects and trends



The Right Lines

Portuguese furniture design stands out from the crowd

AUGUST 2010 / £4.99



CENTURY COLLECTION

By: **EVA ZEISEL** Fan: **ROBIN LEVIEN**

Words **JENNY BREWER**

I am hugely inspired by the work of Eva Zeisel. Most of her tableware is made from earthenware. This enables her to design many expressive and beautiful shapes because the material is fired at relatively low temperatures and is very stable during the firing process.

'Eva is 103 years old and still working. She has been massively influential so it is surprising how relatively unknown she is. I had the honour of nominating her as an Honorary Royal Designer for Industry in 2004 and, as a consequence, was able to visit her apartment in Manhattan. While we were there, one of Eva's manufacturing clients handed her a sample jug that needed her approval. Eva has peripheral vision so had to rely on touch to evaluate the sample. She held the jug in her hands for a few minutes, before handing it back and saying: 'It's fine.' I found this very moving — it reminded me that sensuousness is at the heart of all great designs.'



ROBIN LEVIEN has been a successful bathroom designer for 30 years and reached new heights last year when he was appointed Master of the Faculty of Royal Designers for Industry. Levien studied ceramics at the Central School of Art and Design and the Royal College of Art. He graduated in 1978 and two years later joined ceramic design company Queensberry Hunt, later becoming a senior partner. Here he developed the skill for which he is known — producing intelligent design accessible to the masses. In 1986, he launched the Studio Range for Ideal Standard, which is still in production and has sold more than 10 million pieces. In 1999, Levien and his wife, Patricia Stainton, set up Studio Levien, which designs for high-profile companies such as Villeroy & Boch, Dansk, Fratelli Guzzini and Ideal Standard. Levien has picked up awards from Red Dot, D&AD and FX. www.studiolevien.com

Inside story Eva Zeisel designed the Century collection for Hall China in the 1950s. It, along with the Classic collection, soon became one of the decade's bestselling dinnerware collections, admired for its pure organic forms and modern minimal aesthetics. The iconic pieces were a follow-up to Zeisel's well known All White dinnerware collection, created in collaboration with the Museum of Modern Art in New York. That project led to her solo exhibition at the museum in 1946 and her establishment as one of the world's leading modern ceramic artists. She went on to work with many important ceramic and glass manufacturers and department stores around the world, but the Century and Classic pieces remained her most successful and memorable. In 2004, Royal Stafford launched the Classic Century collection, distributed by Crate & Barrel. This collaborative project with Zeisel was based on the forms of the vintage designs and worked from the original moulds. www.royalstafford.co.uk



EVA ZEISEL is a ceramic artist with a fascinating life story. Born in Budapest in 1906, she began her career at 18 as a potter's apprentice and became the first female member of the Hungarian Guild of Potters. Following success at the Schramberger Majolikafabrik factory in Germany, where she produced some of the first contemporary geometric ceramics for the mass market, Zeisel moved to the Soviet Union in 1932 and was soon made Artistic Director of the Soviet China and Glass Industry, aged 29. She then moved to New York, where she was invited by the Pratt Institute to create America's first industrial ceramic design course. Zeisel has been awarded an honorary doctorate by the RCA, been named an Honorary Royal Designer for Industry UK and was invited to the White House on gaining a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Cooper-Hewitt Museum. www.evazeisel.org