



Introduces



PHOTOGRAPH BY ALAN KEOHANE

Louis Barthélemy's Erotic Tapestries

Five years ago, the French textile designer and illustrator Louis Barthélemy was developing prints for Salvatore Ferragamo while splitting his time between

Paris and Marrakesh, where he liked to wander the souks in search of inspiration. On a trip to Tangier, he came across “Mère et Fils”, a 2014 book of photographs by the now 61-year-old French artist Denis Dailleux, who lived in Egypt for many years. The images, at once erotic and tender, were of shirtless male Egyptian bodybuilders photographed with their mothers. Barthélemy, now 30, was so struck by them that he decided to go to Cairo himself, where he fell in love with the chaos of the city. He later moved there, into a spacious but faded '60s-era flat. One day, he visited a tiny stall south of Bab Zuwayla in Suq al-Khayamiya (“Tentmakers’ Market”), where an artisan named Tarek Abdelhay Hafez Abouelenin was hand-making a *khayamiya* — a vibrant

quiltlike work featuring ornate appliqué patterns sewn onto a plain cotton canvas backing, a textile that has been used to cover the insides of tents at weddings, celebrations and funerals for over a millennium. Not surprisingly, the meticulous, time-consuming work is a dying art (most contemporary *khayamiya* are digitally printed), which made Abouelenin’s work all the more extraordinary. The two men agreed to collaborate on a different sort of *khayamiya*, one that would stray from traditional arabesque and calligraphic motifs — and would defy the Islamic taboo against both realistic representation and homoeroticism.

“I drew a fantasy — a naïve and sensual scene of an imaginary gym on the Nile,” Barthélemy says. Then, once he and Abouelenin had determined a palette (cornflower blue, seaweed green), Abouelenin began stitching. The result, a

The central pharaoh figure in “Les Dieux du Nil” was inspired by a 1978 Jean-Paul Goude image of Grace Jones holding a microphone while in a dancer’s pose. Barthélemy’s work was shot at the Riad Mena & Beyond in Marrakesh.

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lush 70-inch-by-70-inch (approx. 178-cm-by-178-cm) tapestry depicting muscular Egyptian men lifting barbells and kettlebells amid stylised palm trees and native birds, was purchased by Barthélemy's friend, the hotelier and creative consultant Philomena Schurer Merckoll, who hung it in her cult favourite hotel, Riad Mena & Beyond, back in Marrakesh. In mid-October, Barthélemy will debut a collection of six more tapestries that elaborate on the same theme at Tawlet, a cultural culinary hub in Beirut, Lebanon. "One of the pieces is a pharaonic take on the Parisian cabaret Crazy Horse," he says.

As much as Barthélemy's work is a celebration — of pleasure and of craft — he doesn't shy away from certain tensions. "I'm very aware of the fact that in Islamic countries, women are covered but men are allowed to be quite exhibitionist," he says. "This has become even more exaggerated on social media and is something I want to explore." When asked about potential accusations of cultural appropriation, he responds, "To me, it's appropriation if a luxury house takes a craft as it is, for purely commercial purposes." He's been inspired by the socially minded mid-20th-century Egyptian architect Ramses Wissa Wassef to start a workshop in Giza where laypeople can experiment with khayamiya, adding, "I've realised this initiative really moves me beyond the purely creative side of making things; there is a community that I want to nurture." — Gisela Williams

Roll



With It

The ReFa Rhythm retails at \$420.

THERE ARE FACIAL ROLLERS and then there are ReFa rollers. These Japanese-made tools are charged via a solar panel, so you won't ever need a charger nor batteries. The newest roller, the ReFa Rhythm has been designed to mimic the effects of shiatsu — a Japanese form of massage that roughly translates to finger pressure. Designed with 50 evenly-spaced projections, this stimulates the mimetic muscles in the face to diminish tension and improve your circulation. Used just after your skincare, this is a perfect nighttime ritual as it helps get rid of any lingering stiffness in the facial muscles, thus helping you unwind before bed. — Renée Batchelor

Lotus Dreams



WITH ROOTS INGRAINED deeply in mud and a body submerged in turbid waters, the lotus flower grows and breaks into the surface overnight, only to bloom in sunlight for a day. Pristine and without an iota of dirt on its immaculate petal, the blossoming process is enrapturing and well-worth being a symbol of regeneration across several cultures. The very essence of this aquatic flower is reflected in the House of Harry Winston's Premier Lotus Automatic 31mm timepiece. A miniature floral sculpture comprising several layered petals, each sculpted in 18-karat white or rose gold and speckled with precious and semi-precious materials, is depicted onto the dial, almost as if it rises from a pool of mother-of-pearl to greet its wearer. With some inspirations taken from the house's Lotus Cluster fine jewellery collection, the timepiece recalls the house's scintillating history through an eclectic array of colours, shapes and textures. Both watches — the white gold model mimicking a winter flower in bloom, and the rose gold model featuring earth tones emulating the visual from a tiger's eye — have 147 brilliant-cut diamonds and seven marquise-cut diamonds atop the floral sculpture on the dial, while an open, sapphire crystal case back reveals the intricacies of the movement. Across the feminine 31mm diameter, the elegant timepiece is part of Harry Winston's first timepiece collection from 1989 and also boasts 58 brilliant-cut diamonds on the gold case. — Sng Ler Jun



Harry Winston's latest timepiece borrows the symbolism and beauty of an aquatic flower.

WITH NO LACK of product launches happening every year, navigating the beauty industry can be mildly overwhelming. If anything, the increasingly discerning and skittish consumer base is telling that the industry has showed no signs of slowing down. While industrial giants have long dominated the market, innovative disruptions by budding beauty brands can be influential in their own stride.

Launched by VF+c Group, a brand-new initiative, entitled 'Beaut to Be', is giving a voice to up-and-coming local and independent brands through a flagship series of immersive events that are meant to educate the community of the latest trends and movements. Backed by industry leaders, the pilot event provided consumers, talents and brands an offline touchpoint to socialise — amongst the featured indie brands from across Asia were The Min List and Blush with Me.

With plans to expand in the future, 'Beaut to Be' will continue to dedicate itself to build an experiential playground with more events to come. "Through Beaut to Be, we aim to build an offline experiential playground to strengthen the beauty ecosystem at large, through culture, collaboration and education, while enabling cross-border trade to be more permeable in various cities," says Amadea Choo, Founder of VF+c Group. — Sng Ler Jun

Another Face of Beauty

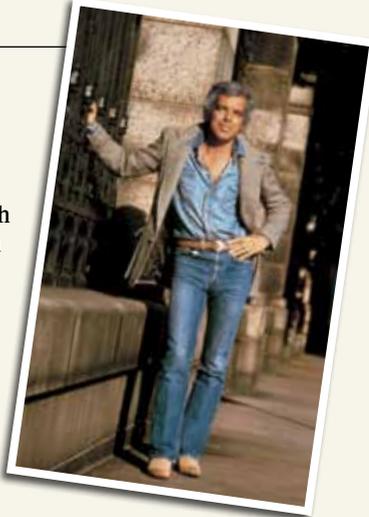


VERY RALPH

A DETAILED-GLIMPSE into the life of legendary fashion designer, Ralph Lauren, is set to air later this year in November. Aptly titled, "Very Ralph", the HBO documentary will cover everything from Lauren's formative childhood years in Bronx, his half-a-century long marriage with American author, artist and photographer Ricky Anne Loew-Beer, and his impressive career arc across the past five decades as he revolutionised American style with his eponymous fashion label.

Lauren, now 79 years old, is revered for his pioneering vision. Since the establishment of his label in 1967, the designer is a trailblazer in his arsenal — he was the first to establish a lifestyle brand which he later expanded to include home furnishings and was amongst the firsts to advocate for diversity on the runway.

Directed and produced by award-winning documentary filmmaker, Susan Lacy, the feature-length film extends beyond intimate interviews with the visionary himself to include family members, colleagues and other voices of authority, such as Anna Wintour, Karl Lagerfeld and Martha Stewart to list a few. — Sng Ler Jun



"Very Ralph" will premiere on HBO on 12 November 2019.

MINI MARKET



Givenchy Eden crossbody pouch, \$1,450.



Off-White Jitney 1.0 Cash Inside bag, \$1,420.

Structured Muses

This season, carryalls with a strong shape are imbued with an iota of punkish charm to become delectable statements for women on-the-go.



Roger Vivier Beau Vivier bag, price on request.



Bimba y Lola XL Golf leather cross-body bag, \$925.

Skin Elixirs



SULWHASOO'S NEWLY IMPROVED Timetreasure Invigorating line harnesses the vitalising properties of Korean red pine. The upgraded line is made even more potent with double the concentration of dehydroabietic acid — a powerful anti-ageing skin fortifier that is found in red ginseng. The line's packaging has also been redesigned and is now even more luxurious and weighty, while the new scent is calming and refined with hints of sandalwood. A new introduction to this range is the Sleeping Mask, which comes with its own, soft-bristled applicator brush. Apply a thin layer of this non-sticky mask over the face and leave it on overnight — you'll wake up with skin that feels firmer and look clearer. From \$165 to \$625. — Sng Ler Jun