

WHITE TRASH
DEN AMERIKANSKA
DRÖMMEN
NEW YORKS
NYA MODESCEN
LOFTLIV
LALA-LAND
PIMPA MINA
TRASKOR

+70
SIDOR
MODE

VILDA KONSTVÄSTERN

USA

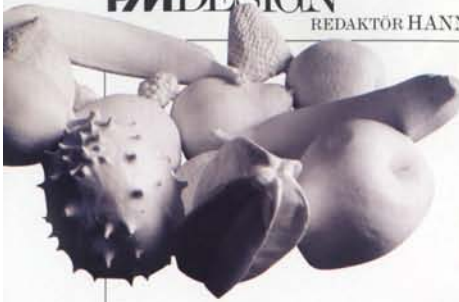
SUPERSIZE ME
HÅRD FORD
CELEBSJUKAN



INREDNING
MODE
DESIGN

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Från vänster: fruktskålen *Mixed Fruit*, vinstället *Wine Rack* och kroken *C'mere*, alla ur Harry Allens serie *Reality*.



Från vänster: Papperslampan *Lamp lamp*, sparbössan *The Pig* i guld och vasen *Grid Dubble Vase* för Esque.



Till höger: Dörstoppet *Rollerstop* är den nyaste additionen till serien *Reality*.



SAMPLADE FORMER



Alla produkter i Harry Allens *Reality*-kollektion har fått sin form från något som redan existerar: Sparbössan *Pig Bank* har fått sin form från en uppstoppad grisulning, dörstoppen *Rollerstop* från en gammal rullskridsko och klädhängaren *C'mere* är stöpt efter formgivaren Harry Allens egen hand.

– Folk reagerar väldigt olika på produkterna. Vissa blir förvånade, andra äcklade. Men det är bara roligt. Efter ett tag upptäcker de att de faktiskt tycker om dem, förklarar Harry Allen.

Vad är tanken bakom kollektionen?

– Jag ville att den skulle vara anti-design, bara bestå av lånad form. Lite som när man samplar musik.

Harry Allen är i dag en av USA:s mest omtalade formgivare. Utöver sin kollektion *Reality*, som säljer bra världen över och kontinuerligt växer i omfång, har han bland annat samarbetat med Knoll, Umbra – och Ikea. Han arbetar dessutom som inredningsarkitekt, med en rad uppmärksammade inredning-

ar bakom sig. En av dem är för butiken Moss, som under hans ledning förvandlades till ett helvitt laboratorium för tio år sedan.

– Jag är fortfarande stolt över Moss. Butiken är konsekvent och det älskar jag. Inredningar ska liksom omsluta besökaren, förklarar han.

Men handen på hjärtat, hur står det egentligen till med USA:s designscen? Vartör hör vi så lite om amerikanska designer?

– Jag skulle kunna skriva en hel uppsats som svar på din fråga, men felet ligger inte hos oss designer. USA har bra designskolor och duktiga formgivare. Däremot saknas stöd uppifrån, från regeringen, och från lokala producenter. Dessutom är vi väldigt isolerade, geografiskt. I USA är man mer inriktad på industri och föredrar designgrupper framför individer. Det tar bort en del av designyrkets glamour, förklarar Harry Allen.

– Men det finns hopp. Just nu börjar det handa en hel del intressant i Brooklyn, Philadelphia och Los Angeles. Det är bara att vänta och se.

When asked to comment on the American dream I was amazed at how it triggered a response in me. A defense. An apology. I am so sensitive in my role as an American these days - embarrassed by my government's actions. Don't get me wrong, I love my country and the opportunity that it represents, but I am not deluded that it is perfect. The American Dream seems like such an idealized notion - something from the optimistic 1950s not the current state of the world. To respond to the request with a graphic, to be published in Plaza magazine presented another challenge - it might be hard to distill complex thoughts into a light and cheerful image. I am an industrial designer, so I guess I could have designed the dream machine. I might still, but a couple of years ago I started working with text. I love the idea that if one decorates with words they are really decorating with ideas. A picture may say a thousand words, but pictures are already so informed. Words are so much more abstract and everyone brings to them their own experience. I want this to be my take on the American Dream, true false or otherwise, to which readers can relate or react. I hope to have enough text to form a beautiful flag image, and then my thoughts will become the flag. I saw this fantastic show at PS1, one of NY City's smaller, and most interesting, art museums. If you visit New York, make a day of it out in Queens, and you might combine it with the Noguchi Museum. Living in New York City makes up for all of the shortcomings of the United States as a whole. I was going to see the Olafur Eliasson installations there and I happened on one room of a show called "That Was Then ... This Is Now." It was a room filled with individual artist interpretations of American flags. It was inspirational. I had the American flag on my mind when Plaza sent its request for this page, and so the essay in the form of a flag was born. I wish I had better writing skills and could bring a tear to your eye, and I wish I had a personal story of immigration and struggle. I do not, but I will make due with what I have. Let me start with a definition of the American Dream that I found on Wikipedia: "The American Dream today often refers to one's material prosperity, which is dependent upon one's abilities and work ethic, and not on a rigid class structure. Although the phrase's meaning has evolved over the course of American history, for some people, it is the opportunity to achieve greater material prosperity than was possible in their countries of origin. For others it's the opportunity for their children to grow up and receive an education and its consequent career opportunities. It is the opportunity to make individual choices without the restrictions of class, caste, religion, race, or ethnic group. For others in this dream of choice and flexibility, the ability to wake up in the morning and decide to drive, cycle or take public transportation to work." The traditional concept of the American Dream lives on - work hard and anybody can make it in The USA. I think that is still basically true. That was the dream of my ancestors who came to the United States from Italy, England and Germany years ago. It is the dream of all of the immigrant labor that comes to the USA in search of work. Just by accident the other night in New York I ran into my friend Peter Hallen, a very talented Swedish architect/designer, and I explained the project to him. I asked him if Swedes even know what the American Dream is. He told me that people in Sweden have a very romantic notion of the American Dream and that might be why Plaza chose it as a theme for these pages. He referred to the same migration that brought my ancestors here. They came in huge numbers to better their lives and escape religious persecution. Thanks for sending all of your religious fanatics my way. Curiously, once I started this essay "The American Dream" was everywhere, including some graffiti on the wall on the corner of 12th Street and Avenue A, right near my studio. I think it was a new tag, or at least I never noticed it before. It reads "The American Dream is a Lie." I had to laugh. It got me thinking about how the American Dream of today differs from the American dream of our ancestors. Who knows what was on the graffiti artist's mind, but over the last couple of years one of the hottest political topics has been illegal immigration and what to do about it. For years we have neglected our borders, let cheap labor in, overlooked the illegal nature of the arrangement, let illegal workers stay and fuel our economy, and now everyone has different ideas about how to deal with all of these poor folks who have been living here, working here, and contributing to society on many levels - albeit illegally. Some want to throw them all out because they have broken the law and some want to give the current offenders amnesty because we let it happen. Most of these workers come from South and Central America. The whole issue presents a new, cynical twist on the American Dream. I'm not even sure where I stand on the issue. I certainly have employed a few "illegals" to help me in the yard, but I hate the fact that we must resort to such a system. In concept I'd much rather hire someone legal to work and pay them a decent wage. It makes me count my blessings. My dream was realized for me before I was born. My family had already arrived, worked hard and achieved success so my life has been relatively easy. I am very thankful. I think it is pretty great that the playing field was leveled so that people can get on to better life, and that people are not kept down based on some historic social hierarchy. What of this quest for cheap labor? Sometimes I wonder if it is healthy for America and the world. It seems we have built our country on a false economy, like some pyramid scheme. I have nothing to back this up, but what I wonder is where does it end? Who pays the final bill? And can it be sustained forever? I certainly don't know the answers, I'm not even sure if I am asking the right questions. To further compound the dread, now we are sending jobs away from the United States all together. Now we cannot even afford to pay our immigrants. It certainly depresses me, as a designer that we can no longer make anything in the United States. I rarely work on a project that has actually made in the United States. In their pursuit of the American Dream, many people forget about consequences. We have forsaken our craftspeople in return for a life filled with cheap goods. American dreams of prosperity have a dark side. The system that enables all of the cheap goods to flood the American market - is killing manufacturing in the US, and likewise killing the dream that created the demand. Who will come if there are no jobs? I really believe that when a country loses its ability to make its own goods that it is in trouble. Friends tell me it is just the market, supply and demand. It is a little selfish of me as I need factories to make my products, but making and building is part of human nature, a great creative part, and I think we will be worse off without it. Of course this is the first time in history that this has happened so who knows, maybe I will be wrong. I guess you can't blame the Dream for all of these problems, the dream is good, but it does have unforeseen consequences. And why do we need such an elaborate system of cheap labor? To make cheap goods of course - all those goods that American dreamers aspire to own. One of the first images that popped into my mind when asked about the American Dream was one of excess. The dream, apparently, has worked very well. I'm not pointing fingers; my carbon footprint is huge, probably much greater than the average reader of this magazine. I travel quite a bit, own a car, inhabit two homes, and I am a designer for God's sake; I am part of the machinery that creates the problem. I have really been trying to build some ecological principals into my practice, eat locally and lower down on the food chain, turn off lights, and re-use bags, but in light of how huge the problem is it feels like spitting into the wind. I am very worried about the state of the environment, and although it would be wrong to condemn those who are building their prosperity, that same prosperity could ruin the world once and for all. It has me scared. The American dream has produced a lot of very comfortable and very wasteful people. We take for granted things that the less fortunate prize. We have become complacent. It is easy to forget one's blessings, one's privileges and riches, when they have always been there. I am guilty of this. And there is just too much stuff in the world. Too many cheap goods, too much packaging, too much waste. When I rail on about how much of a problem all of these cheap goods are friends tell me that it is easy for me, one of the privileged, to disparage those who need cheap goods. Do people really "need" all of these cheap goods? People need food and shelter but they don't need two cell phones or eight cashmere sweaters. They want that stuff, and I think the world would be a better place if people had to think more about what they consume. If gas was more expensive, workers earned real wages, prices would rise and less would get made, but rather than ten crappy toys, kids might end up with one good one that they would cherish. And they might have to use their imagination a bit more. Less, of a higher quality, consumed with greater consciousness. ... listen to me preach. My final thought is on the American Dream relates to its future. As it turns out just getting rid of the class system is not really enough to allow prosperity for all. There are other forces at work to keep people from realizing their fullest potential including all kinds of prejudice, economics, luck, and on and on. Where one dream leaves off another begins. I am struck by the second half of the Wikipedia entry, the dream of choice. The romanticized American Dream only goes so far. How we can embrace what is great about the American Dream, a society that is based on rational thought and hard work, and evolve from there. Get beyond the lie. This is my dream - that humanity can learn to be generous and unbiased. My friend Neil always says "as long as no one is getting hurt, that doesn't want to get hurt, then it's alright by me." He is usually talking about sex, but it goes for most human interaction. Neil is a genius. The problem is no longer the structure of society (that was solved with the enlightenment and the resulting reorganization towards a system of rational laws) it is the individual mind. Even the best most rational political system still allows room for interpretation and that is where people can get in there and screw it up for others by imposing their morality and protecting their interests. The US is a large diverse country, filled with many people of many different beliefs, but truth be known we can be very small-minded. There are not many ways in which I can claim to have been treated unfairly in my life. I have had a great education, the support of a loving family, and have been presented with one opportunity after the other. I have work, food, and shelter, and my life is plentiful. My immediate family consists of two Basset Hounds from Göteborg and a loving partner, John, from Norway (as you can see, I love my Scandinavians). That brings us to my sexual orientation. What does this have to do with anything? Well, in the USA to be gay is to be a second-class citizen. My sexual orientation makes it impossible for me to marry. I cannot form a civil union with my partner of eight years, we do not have the rights to visit each other in the hospital, and we are not allowed to share resources as heterosexual couples can. I will not play this up for dramatic effect; this is not a life or death situation, but it is unfair. It is the one aspect of my life where someone else's belief trumps my freedom, and I resent it. My dream for America is that we can get beyond religious belief, or antiquated notions of right and wrong and just apply Neil's law. My life in no way harms anyone else. It might offend, be considered deviant, or go counter to people's beliefs, but I'm a lover not a fighter. So in this way, even though the monarchy is still in place and I am sure there are all sorts of prejudice and injustice lurking in the corners of Swedish society, Sweden fulfills my dreams more than America. I commend your system of civil unions for all. The great thing about America is that there is a system in place for dissent, and I hope that before long my sexual orientation will not be an issue. I hope that with effort and a rational political system the injustice will be righted. Once again, thanks for sending all of those religious fanatics my way. But look at how far we have come, we have a black candidate for President, and a woman (however scary she is) running for vice president. She, I believe, would certainly try her damndest to hinder my freedom based on prejudice and her religious belief system. So as it turns out, my relationship with the American dream is double sided. On the one hand my life is the product of the 19th and 20th Century dreams of religious freedom and economic equality, but on the other hand I dream of an even fairer future where the American Dream frees itself from history and extends itself to all aspects of social equality. In the mean time I hope we can keep dreams of prosperity from trampling the earth. Despite it all I am proud to be an American and of the freedom that affords me. I wrote much of this essay on a plane, having just visited Tokyo and London for work. Great cities and people, but I have to say, it is always good to land back in the USA ... to continue my pursuit. Thank you for hearing me out. Big kiss to all of my friends in Sweden, Harry.



HARRY ALLEN

- Jag älskar mitt land, men skäms för många av de beslut som min regering tagit, skriver Harry Allen i början av sitt bidrag till The American Dream.

Harry Allen är en av USA:s mest framgångsrika formgivare, uppmärksammad för så vitt skilda produkter som griskuldingen Pig Bank och sin uppdatering av Johnson&Johnsons första hjälpen-väska.