

01/05/18

Frame NDL

N°5

Diffusione 35.000

Pag.150

True blue or phony baloney - can AN IMITATION outshine the real

Alpi, Accessori Arredamento



OBJECTS

True blue or phony baloney – can AN IMITATION outshine the real deal?

FACES – From fake leather with the look and feel of real animal skin to laminates that resemble hardwood and quarried stone, computer-made simulations of natural materials are everywhere. Scarcity, moral issues and costs behind the production of sustainable and convincing alternatives that are used for a plethora of purposes. Most counterfeits are too good to mimic an original material in detail, but in the same way that many people question the paradoxical concept of ‘vegetarian meat’ –

it's fair to ask why newly developed synthetic substitutes aimed at product and interior design would want to mock what's already on the market. A new generation of designers is playing with consumers' perceptions and expectations of materials whose surfaces have the visual features of one thing and the physical characteristics of another. No less deceptive but more surprising, the projects shown here set a new standard for mimicry in design. – FK



Courtesy of Alpi

Different from conventional veneers, those produced by Alpi are made by pressing thin sheets of various tree species into blocks that reveal an 'artificial' woodgrain pattern when sliced. The patterns can be influenced by dyeing, sequencing or bending the sheets prior to the application of pressure. KENGO KUMA used such techniques in his two intriguing collections of veneer for Alpi: Maritime Pine and Japanese Cedar.

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