

A NEW TATTOO

As Cher once said, “For someone who likes tattoos, the most precious thing is bare skin.” But for Mama Tried Studios in Brooklyn, New York, that isn’t all that’s getting the needle anymore: today they will tattoo everything from laptops to chair legs.

Based on an engraving machine invented by Thomas Edison in the 1800s, the tattoo mechanism itself has gone relatively unchanged, but the canvas this fine art is being applied to keeps advancing at a rapid pace. Laura Antognozzi Peck, Allied Member ASID, and designer at Martha O’Hara Interiors, says their firm’s interest in tattooed furniture led them to Mama Tried Studios. “[They] completed an exquisite chair that we love. They tattooed a piece of cream leather fabric, which was then upholstered onto a traditional dark wood chair. The effect is gruesome and glamorous... Mama Tried Studios also creates pieces through laser-etching wood, leather and even laptops to give the illusion of a tattoo on a variety of surfaces.”

The look of a tattoo-print, if you will, can be widely found in other marketplaces and is expected to gain popularity. “We see plenty of faux-tattooed clothing right now, so it isn’t a stretch to think that we’ll be seeing the same in interiors,” states Antognozzi Peck. She adds, “Genuine tattooed leather furniture remains a radical/underground design statement, but we can expect to see tattoo-like graphics and faux-tattoo prints in the future of interior design.”

Local designers have started to take notice of this up-and-coming trend, as well. Often referred to as “gothic splendor,” the opposites-attract combination of detailed, hard-edged tattoos and period rich, historic furniture creates a very attractive aesthetic that easily lends itself to a penthouse suite or a suburban rambler. “It is really unique, unexpected,” says Antognozzi Peck, who is tempted to tattoo an antique chair of her own. As interior design goes, it is almost an unsaid rule that a space should provide at least one surprise, and this would certainly qualify.

For those of us who like the idea of a tattoo – but not the needle or the life-long commitment that typically goes along with it – perhaps this versatile route will be warmly embraced as the ink alternative! ■

