

HOME FURNISHINGS

Farrow & Ball tailors spectrum of shades to Muse Picasso showcase

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The company's interior experts are bridging the gap between high art and home furnishings in a new release. Image credit: Farrow & Ball

By AMIRAH KEATON

British wall covering maker Farrow & Ball is carrying the company's bespoke approach to home furnishings over to the art world.

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A new activation sees the interior innovator offering support in the form of ornamentation to a commemorative exhibition at the Muse National Picasso-Paris. Therein, Farrow & Ball bridges the gap between high art and home furnishings while capturing the benefits of color theory to all involved, as documented in a now-live campaign video.

Painting for Picasso

Farrow & Ball's artistic lead heads over to Paris to check out a presentation honoring 50 years since the death of the visionary that the museum is named after.

As it happens, exhibition spaces housing said objects have been decorated in 20 of the company's signature paint colors.

Farrow & Ball sends creative director Charlotte Cosby to the scene of the action the exhibition, which opened to the public in March, runs through Aug. 27, 2023.

A backgrounder brings light to the role the U.K.-based manufacturer's paints and wallpapers played in establishing the exhibition's aesthetic

Starting out by explaining the premise of her visit, a creative treatment cleverly begins in black-and-white as Ms. Cosby peruses the streets in an opening shot.

Slowly, the film's frames are filled with a spectrum of tones.

"The whole experience has been absolutely fantastic and very humbling, but to use the Farrow & Ball colors worked really well because [there's] such an extensive range," says Sir Paul Smith, art director of the "Picasso Celebration: The Collection In A New Light" exhibition, in the excerpt.

"I'm sort of quite used to playing with color so using the color," he continues. "Finding the color I wanted was great."



Image credit: Farrow & Ball

Mr. Smith sheds light on the planning process behind an accomplishment of this magnitude, keying both Ms. Cosby and digital onlookers in on what he estimates was a 200,000-item wide starting point for those artworks that would be included in the exhibition.

Since the project's origins aligned with COVID-19 pandemic occurrences, the curatorial team was forced to whittle down the bunch to final selections online and remotely during COVID-19, a challenge that came with its own unique considerations.

The background helps to contextualize the crucial role which the U.K.-based manufacturer's paints and wallpapers played in standing the exhibition up.

"The difficult thing is imagining the scale, because everything looks more or less the same on the screen," he says.

"You have the measurements of course but you're trying to put the rooms together to start with," he says. "But then I started noticing that there [were] a lot of paintings that have stripes in them."



Image credit: Farrow & Ball

"I selected six for this room, and then of course with your paint, I managed to pull out [these] colors."

Close-up video pans expose the soft edges of the pinstriped walls that round out the exhibition areas and enthrall the video's two touring subjects.

As Mr. Smith discloses, wall colors complement the patterns to be found in Picasso's work.

Picasso's obsession with bullfighting and matador culture struck Mr. Smith in a manner that yielded the selection of a "blood red" wall tone, as he describes.

Other standout portions of the exhibition speak for themselves, as both narrators go mute and cameras lend 360-degree views of the disparate displays.

Gallery guild

In terms of curation, shades are simply not the only factor at hand.

The curator's familiarity with a variety of mediums, including textures and Marquette-inspired creation, works to enhance the undertaking as well.

One of Muse Picasso's refurbished rooms hones in on the artist's nautical influences.

"This is the room for the mariner,' or the Breton shirt which [Picasso] was famous for wearing," Mr. Smith says.

Inside, blue-and-white-striped shirts descend from the ceiling, forming waves and adding a diversity of form to the feat. The walls encompassing related works are varnished in cobalt.



Image credit: Farrow & Ball

Mr. Smith even points to flooring that has been elevated the ground of one enclosed corner is covered in a material featuring a turf-like effect, giving visitors a real-life "Luncheon on the Grass" experience.

All-in-all, Farrow & Ball's campaign video succeeds in highlighting the ways in which an unmatched level of attention to detail on behalf of an expert curator, paired with the company's extensive color theory expertise ([see story](#)), has delivered a fully-immersive execution.

Much like the works that occupy the exhibition's walls, the collaboration is sure to be reflected upon for years to come.

"A few people have asked me that and I find it remarkably difficult to answer," Mr. Smith says.

"They've all got their own character really."

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