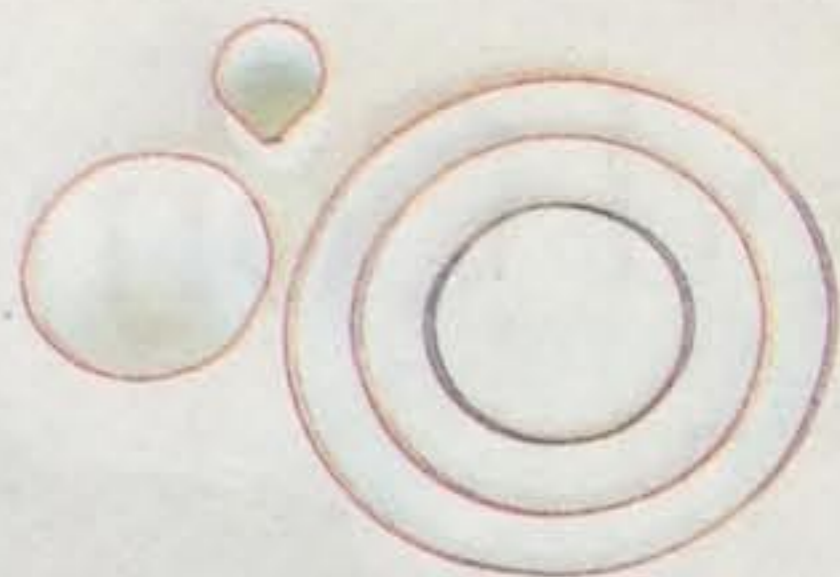


Kohler Moxie shower head with integrated speaker, \$199, left; Normann Copenhagen Tea Egg infusers, about \$17 each, right.



Abbeses ceramic set at Poketo, from \$7.50 (for small plate).

# More Than Meets the Eye



Mohair throws by D. D. and Leslie Tillett at the Museum of the City of New York, \$1,250.



Ballpoint wallpaper by Alissia Melka-Teichroew for Roll-out; \$10 per square foot.



Skull corkscrew by Carl Auböck II, \$250, left; lamp by Lihtan, \$250, above; tote bag by Lauren DiCiccio with the Workshop Residence, \$35, right.



3-D-printed bronze pencil sharpener by Norie Matsumoto; about \$340.

Succulent ornament from Flora Grubb, \$22.



Sewing box cabinet by Kiki van Eijk, about \$54,000.



Book rack at Uncovet, \$157.



Bird in Tree stacking cups by Chris Koens, \$54 for set of four.



Cutting boards from Makers & Brothers, from about \$36, left; coasters from Gretel, \$32 for set of four, right.



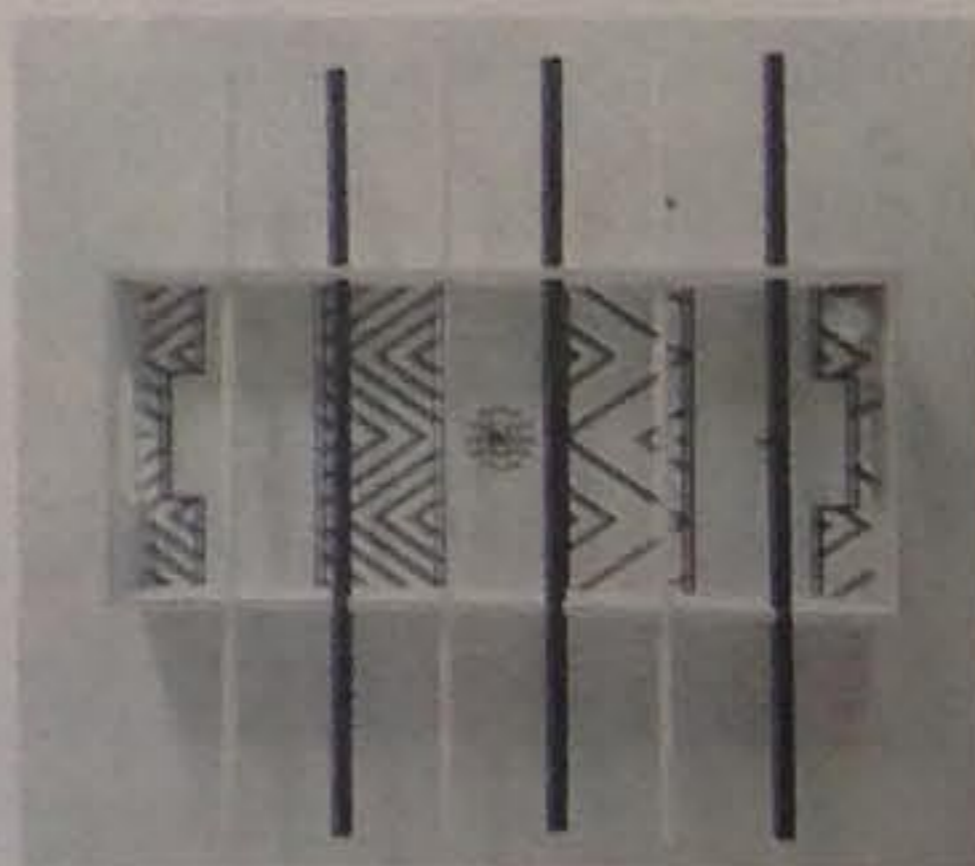
Candle holders with storage compartments by Marie Dessuant for Another Country, \$59 to \$79; \$207 for set of three.



Tiles by Peggy Wong for Clé, \$120 to \$275 each, left; My New Flame LED light by Ingo Maurer and Moritz Waldemeyer, \$500.



Folbot Gremlin folding kayak, \$1,295; below, foosball table by Fredericks & Mae, \$190.



The boards Mr. Legge is selling have a more sanitary provenance. Anyway, beech, he pointed out, has natural antibacterial qualities. And what could be more soulful than a tree?

Possibly a succulent. The San Francisco florist Flora Grubb is attaching the low-maintenance plants to hooks and selling them as Christmas tree ornaments (\$22 each; \$55 for set of three). She got the idea when she noticed that succulents wired into bouquets lived for months after their fellow cut plants had withered. When the holidays are over, she said, you can stick the ornament into dirt and tend it until it's time to harvest a new cutting.

As "somebody who works with plants everyday," Ms. Grubb added, "I really believe they exude something besides oxygen that makes people have peace."

Waldemeyer, a London-based designer, that yielded a black stick of a lamp with 256 LEDs simulating the look of wavering candlelight (\$500).

For Mr. Maurer, its soulfulness derives not from the lyrical idea of fire, but from the people involved in making it. "You have women sitting at the machine filling in the LEDs, and it all together creates an enormous, fantastic product and also a wonderful energy," he said. "You cannot construct the soul. The soul happens by doing it."

And yet, My New Flame is part of a pack of contemporary goods that try to soften the hard edges of invention by evoking nostalgia for what has been outdistanced or replaced.

One example is a manual pencil sharpener produced by 3-D printing in bronze (about \$340). Designed by Norie Matsumoto, a recent graduate of the Royal College of Art in London, it is meant as a tonic for most of the senses. You twirl the pencil, smell the freshly cut wood, watch the ruffled shavings pile up in the cage and luxuriate in the emotional Jacuzzi of imminent loss. (The project grew out of an assignment to design an object for the year 2020. Ms. Matsumoto believes pencils will still be around then, but in serious decline.)

In the survivor category one might add a brass-and-bamboo Skull corkscrew by the Bauhaus-trained designer Carl Auböck II of Vienna, which was introduced in the '50s and is now available from the shop at the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum (\$250). Not that corkscrews are endangered, but this one is unusually heavy, warm and comfortably fitted to the hand, said Clemens Kois, the editor of "Carl Auböck: The Workshop" (powerHouse Books, \$60).

The corkscrew continues to be produced in Austria to the exact specifications of the original, which is something like a miracle when so many other products have been cheapened and shrunk. And if the solid feeling of brass isn't soulful enough, the piece is named for the stylized skull face in the handle. The two larger "eye sockets" are for fingers to grip, and the smaller "nose hole" was intended for a sanctified ritual that continues to be practiced today.

Opening Coca-Cola bottles.

## From Page 1, This Section

ble and a jar of jeweled straight pins. And who knows? Maybe the Stompeez my fickle daughter longs for will be snapped up by another child from a future pile of worn merchandise.

Garage-sale items are vessels with emotions pouring in and out: their attractions diminish for their owners, yet accrue to strangers. A previous owner may scorn the loss of freshness, while a new one celebrates the layers of patina.

But objects don't have to be pre-owned to give you the feeling that they're possessed. This holiday season shows designers putting spirit into household goods by evoking fleeting moments, fragile materials and old memories.

They're capturing the security of the primal campfire with an LED lamp that flickers like a candle (Ingo Maurer and Moritz Waldemeyer, \$500), and conjuring childhood behavior with wallpaper that looks as if it's been scrawled on with a ballpoint pen (Alissia Melka-Teichroew for Rollout; \$10 per square foot). They're preserving their tourist photos in white marble tile (Peggy Wong for Clé; \$120 to \$275) and bringing a singular, un-frat-house style to foosball (Fredericks & Mae; \$190).

These goods all stand out because of their sensory and emotional dimensions — in a word, their soul. But what is it, exactly, that gives an object soul? I put it directly to the designers.

For Kiki van Eijk in the Netherlands, surprise is the animating force. Several years ago, she saw a hinged sewing box at a flea market in Paris and vowed to build a piece of furniture that sprang open the same way. Ms. van Eijk, whose grandmother was a seamstress, said she wanted the cabinet to have the intimacy of hidden nooks and the warmth of domestic craft.

She also wanted to be able to unfold it with a pinckle, a feat she finally brought off after many consultations with engineers. "It should be a miracle," she said, or at least feel like one. (Miracles don't come cheap; the cabinet sells for about \$54,000.)

For the artist Lauren DiCiccio, a soulful object is one that touches you every day, even if it's as despised as the generic white plastic sack that has been accused of destroying the planet. When San Francisco issued its first ordinance to ban plastic shopping bags five years ago, Ms. DiCiccio, who was living in the Bay Area at the time, reproduced the outcasts as embroidered cloth sculptures. Now she has created a functional version in taffeta with

her Thank You, Thank You tote (\$35).

"Even though the bags are terrible for the environment and wasteful and kind of silly, they are still so familiar to us," she said. "These disposable objects are as dear to us as hand-me-down jewelry from our great-grandparents, just because they surround us every day."

Jonathan Legge, a founder of the online design boutique Makers & Brothers, said that the spirit of an object comes largely from its material, "how it functions and wears over time." The cutting boards he sells, for example, are made of Irish beech harvested from fallen trees (starting at about \$36). They are beautiful, but so simple you might not think a narrative could be attached to them.

You would be wrong, Mr. Legge, who lives in Dublin, got the idea for angling the edges from a slab of timber he found in a Dumpster. Actually, he used the word "skip" instead of "Dumpster," so it took a reporter awhile to understand why his girlfriend didn't want him to bring the slab home. "I bleached it and scrubbed it up so it was clean," Mr. Legge said of his prototype. "I served some meals on it and started using it as a chopping board."