

ONE OF WILDING STUDIO'S HISTORIC PAPERS IS JOINING WITH SAMPLE DESIGNS FOR THE 'WALLPAPER PROJECT' PARTNERSHIP WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN QUEENSLAND. LEFT TO RIGHT: 'WOLF DREAM' BY ARTIST ANNE WALLACE; 'PORTRAIT WALLPAPER' BY SADIE CHANDLER, AND 'WALPAPER' BY MEGAN KEATING.

# WILD TIMES

William Wilding's Melbourne studio is mining the past for wallpaper designs and crafting its own original archive.

IF THE WORDS of 19th-century British poet, socialist and designer William Morris "Have nothing in your houses that you do not know to be useful or believe to be beautiful" were to slip from the lips of Melbourne aesthete William Wilding, an arts and crafts advocate creating beauty in a parallel period of artless mass-production, they'd sound so "now".

Leading a tour through a revived Victorian terrace wallpapered with the work that emanates from his studio, Wilding makes it clear that he is a "conduit" ('entrepreneur' smacks of the capitalist). >



ROB McHAFFIE, LEFT, GAVE HIS DESIGN FOR THE WALLPAPER PROJECT RANGE, 'I GOT YOU, BABE', A MODERN-DAY PARADISE-LOST SPIN. APPLYING ARTS AND CRAFTS ETHICS TO THE RESTORATION OF THIS LIVING ROOM, ABOVE, THE WILDING DESIGN STUDIO GAVE VICTORIANA NEW VITALITY. MEGAN KEATING'S 'WARPAPER', SHOWN HERE IN CRUMBLY SPECIAL EFFECT AS PART OF THE COMPANY'S MARKETING MATERIAL, BELOW, MAKES A DECEPTIVELY SWEET STATEMENT ABOUT ARMED CONFLICT.

< He is at pains to explain that the bespoke interior and communication design company he conceived four years ago, when part of an arts collective in Germany, is not a creative autocracy but a collaborative studio that exists to realise extraordinary visions. "The people I represent go under the name Wilding, which looks like it's about me, but it's not," says the serious young insect who has gathered under his 'William' wings design talent "in no particular order": expat German designer Esther Wilding (his wife), interior designer James Lamb of Carr Design, photographer Jens Waldenmaier, and graphic designers Caitlin Ziegler and Simon Mundy.

"In the Webster dictionary, 'wilding' has two definitions: the second is the [old Saxon] understanding of a wild tree burgeoning from the seed of dropped fruit and beginning this endless cycle of regeneration," he says. This keynote of creation outside the strictures of cultivation marks all Wilding design – which at its most accessible is wallpaper.

"This is the tangible entrance into the studio," he says, running his hands over a hallway dado that, invoking the spirit of William Morris in pattern and process, is the exquisite result of exhuming an original 1883 English wallpaper from under six layers of paper and browned-off varnish and reproducing it in exhausting hands-on process and detail. "It is one aspect of the studio's wallpaper production – we work collaboratively across disciplines to produce unique bespoke outcomes for architects and designers. >



< "But we also connect with other 'Wildings' to create extraordinary things," he continues.

He refers not to branches of his own family, but to like-minded "conduits", such as Simon Mee, collections curator at the University of Southern Queensland, who spend their working lives dropping the seeds of wild ideas outside the fields of bureaucratic prescription.

"He's got this huge vision, sees for miles," says Wilding of the "fearless" USQ curator. "The Wallpaper Project grew from our shared interest in applying contemporary art to traditional wallpaper designs and processes."

Tapping Mee's talent, and that of art world "hotties" Rob McHaffie, Anne Wallace (with Aaron Hill), Lisa Radford, Tiffany Shafran, Sadie Chandler and Megan Keating into the ethically and aesthetically driven processes of his studio, Wilding collaborated with the group to produce art wallpapers for a touring exhibition that has shown in Queensland and Victoria

"We are taking it to Berlin and Milan," says Wilding, who plans to play with ideas at Victoria's State of Design Festival in July before seeding them globally. "It's our job to get these aesthetic messages out, put spirit back into space with the hand, so that people can begin to feel again. If they can feel, they can understand what it is like to hurt." Perhaps Wilding is wallpapering a desire to redress a spiritual malaise. "Sustainability is just living an ethical life," he says, "doing the best you can." ANNEMARIE KIELY  
*Wilding studio, www.wilding.net.au.*

COMMISSIONED TO RESTORE A DOWN-AT-HEEL VICTORIAN TERRACE, ESTHER AND WILLIAM WILDING, **RIGHT**, TRAWLED THE ARCHIVES BEFORE PRODUCING DETAILED, HANDMADE WALLPAPER DESIGNS FOR A SITTING ROOM, **BELOW**, AND THE FORMAL DINING ROOM, **BELOW RIGHT**.

