



Haven (2024) by Danielle Mckinney
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BED ROTTING, ADULT BUNK BEDS, AND “BEDCORE”: HOW SLEEP CULTURE TOOK OVER THE WORLD

BY SYDNEY GORE
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With hibernation season upon us, there’s only so much time before we all surrender to bed rotting in our best sleepwear. Whether or not you keep up with the latest bedroom-related trends, sleep is officially the new luxury. We now live in a world where bunk beds aren’t just for kids (fully grown adults want to sleep in them too), and the same goes for dog beds made for humans. While the double-duvet method is saving some relationships, other couples have opted for sleeping in separate bedrooms. In the most elite circles, snoozing for 10 to 14 hours (and reaching the REM phase) is considered a status symbol—quite the reverse from an era dominated by girlbosses who only required a few hours of sleep to function at high capacity. Could this be the Little Bow Peepcore to Princess and the Peacore pipeline?

Maybe this is just the norm once you cross over into your thirties, but sleep is currency in my network. Everyone I know gets giddy talking about their sleep rituals, hacks, and hygiene. Instead of sending OOTD options to post on the ‘gram, my friends and I get off on unboxing our new bedding for all the world wide web to see. I fear we may be heading in the direction of turning into sleep snobs that judge based on thread count. (Navy sheets are the least of your problems, fellas...) For some people, identifying as a bed person has become their entire personality with or without the nap dresses and nightgowns.

Sleeping beauties

Looking the part is an important aspect of sleep culture that has bled into our post-pandemic lives outside the home. When Comme Si founder and creative director Jenni Lee introduced cotton poplin boxers to her line of functional and utilitarian products in 2020, she was looking to upgrade her own quarantine uniform: “a dirty old T-shirt” paired with her husband’s boxers. Lee’s elevated take on the boxer short meant applying Italian shirting material for a more refined look without sacrificing comfort.

Fast-forward to the present and you’ll spot Comme Si’s boxer shorts (and pants) out in the wild—women wear them to the beach, to the market, to the airport, to dinner dates, and everywhere in between. Lee attributes the hyper focus on sleepwear to a series of trends in beauty, fashion, and design converging. “There’s this blurry line now where in the past it might be you have pajamas and then you have outside clothes, but now there’s this category and we call it ‘loungewear,’” she says. “It’s just in between where you can wear it to sleep, you can wear it outside, you can wear it at home.”

Earlier this year, Comme Si collaborated with USM on a collection of custom furniture with a fresh, feminine sensibility—pieces include a vanity, relaxation platform, chaise lounge, folding screen, and sock dresser. Lee’s idea was to build off of our preexisting systems through functional products that could be integrated with the rituals and routines we already follow. (Naturally, there’s a matching wardrobe for anyone who wants to dress for sleepy success.)

Don’t forget to dress your bed

But indulging in stylish sleepwear is just the start of our rest-crazed moment. The concept of dressing up your bed is not lost on lifestyle brands like Magniberg, whose founders Bengt Thornefors and Nina Norgren come from a fashion background. The couple views bedwear as akin to clothing but for interiors, elevating the bedtime experience with premium pajamas that match the sheets on your bed.

“It made sense for us to translate our vision into something that’s such an integral part of daily life,” Thornefors explains in an email. “We would like to talk about the bedroom in a different context. It is not just a space for sleeping; you eat, have long conversations, maybe you work. You dream, think and read. You have sex. You spend a lot of time in bed. We wanted to present home textiles in a new way, giving people the opportunity to combine fabrics and to dress their bed as they dress themselves.”

Lee has recently noticed more people “embracing changing out their bedroom almost like they would a closet,” whether that be swapping the colors of their sheets based on the season or switching up the decor entirely. Thornefors chalks it up to the fact that “home decor is like a handbag,” serving as another extension of what we want to communicate about ourselves. “We believe it is time for people to dress their bedrooms or homes in the way they dress themselves; by adding attitude through mixing of materials and styles,” he says. “It can be through combining contrasting materials such as faded jersey against crisp sateen, or striped oxfords against poplin with mother of pearl buttons.”

When the bedroom is no longer private, but a public domain

No matter your age, location, or religion, the bedroom is considered a sacred space. In films and TV shows, it’s an “off limits” zone for teenagers to explore themselves in an otherwise terrifying world complicated by adults. During the aughts, millennials like me offered a glimpse into our seemingly messy lives by sharing photos of our rooms on Tumblr. (If you’re not having flashbacks of Sky Ferreira’s 2012 sleeper hit “Lost In My Bedroom,” then you might be too young for this discourse.) We ultimately paved the path for Gen Z to follow, but instead of consuming indie sleaze they drowned out the noise with “bedroom pop.”

While the nature of being voyeuristic online is nothing new to my generation, the traumatic experience of life in quarantine—a time where your bed felt like the safest place to be—might be a contributing factor to our collective obsession with bedrooms today. Mentally, I am still trapped in the Goodnight Moon room. “Obviously, we all share our lives on social [media],” Lee explains. “Previously, [the bedroom] would’ve been a very private space, but now people are taking photos in their bedroom and of their bed—it’s become this almost public arena.”



Memoir (2023) by Danielle Mckinney

© Danielle Mckinney. Courtesy of Marianne Boesky Gallery.

Back in April, I observed this idea through a different lens at [Marianne Boesky Gallery](#) during Danielle Mckinney's "Quiet Storm" exhibit. The New Jersey-based artist often captures her protagonists in the privacy of their bedrooms and other intimate settings reserved for leisure. The narrative behind these cinematic portraits is a larger commentary on breaking away from the busy routines that run our lives, a call to surrender to respite and pleasure from the comfort of home. Even her oil paintings, in which women appear naked in bed, aren't about the actual nudity itself (or the explicit acts that might have taken place there), but the grounded sense of vulnerability we feel while immersed in these dreamy domestic interiors. Given that we are all active participants of a society where sex still sells, Mckinney's work is the antithesis of voyeurism.

This delicate dance of intimacy is something that deeply resonates with Norgren and Thornefors as well. "When we started Magniberg, we wanted to tell a story out of the bedroom—how it was about more than sleeping," Thornefors explains. "I often think of the artist Tracey Emin's installation *My Bed*, where she refers to her lovers and the bedroom as a messy room full of emotions. It was unexplored territory back then. People didn't approach bed linens from that point of view. We felt that the market was stereotypical and a bit boring and correct, and wanted to present home textiles in a new context, giving everyday objects a personal and emotional energy."

Leigh Mckeown, cofounder of [ELLISON STUDIOS](#), believes this ongoing shift is a reaction to the mindfulness moment that serves as a luxury in our 24/7 digital lives. "As a society, we're now chronically online chasing the next digital endorphin hit," he says. "We are all realizing the effect that the constant need to check your notifications is having on our health and well-being and are trying to find the ultimate escape offline wherever we can."

Designer [Tiffany Thompson](#) of Duett Interiors insists that this movement reflects a broader focus on wellness that resonates with everyone. "People are increasingly looking for ways to improve their daily lives, and sleep plays a crucial role in that," she explains in an email. "This is especially true for those with demanding careers, entrepreneurs, and parents. We've long been told that you can get by on minimal sleep, but now there's a growing recognition of the importance of sleep quality and its significant impact on mental health and physical well-being. People are beginning to prioritize sleep as an essential part of their overall wellness."



Before they wake (2023) by Danielle Mckinney

© Danielle Mckinney. Courtesy of Marianne Boesky Gallery,

Pillow talk that's not all fluff

While attending Salone del Mobile and Milan Design Week earlier this year, I was intrigued by all of the surreal, sculptural statement pieces by designers like Faye Toogood, Willo Perron, Muller Van Severen, and Holloway Li that crossed my path. Last month, ELLISON STUDIOS. debuted a plushy new sofa called Stack that takes the concept of “pillow talk” to the next level of luxury. “Stack is inspired by the pillow forts of our youth—it’s a plush design that calls for lazing away the days, sinking into its pillow-like seat cushions,” Mckeown explains. “The movable arm cushion shape was based on a bedroom pillow, you can use behind your back, as an arm rest or as an actual pillow. We’re not saying you should joust with them, but in the interests of pillow forts you probably could. Each to their own!”

From JW Anderson’s cushion clutch and Acne Studios’s ruffled pink satin dress reminiscent of a bedspread, even the fashion world appears to be taking inspiration from the bedroom to the runway. For Tyler the Creator’s design debut in the home space, he collaborated with Parachute on a capsule collection of bedding. (Phoebe Philo’s \$2,000 pillow scarf is another accessory that inevitably divided the Internet.) Sure, there’s an element of kitschiness at play, but sleep as a theme also instills a sense of dreamy wonder while granting permission for playfulness. (I’m still thinking about the bed that Toogood designed for Birkenstock in 2022, a true masterpiece. That same year, Jacquemus and Tekla dropped a chic collection of sleepwear and bedwear that sold out within minutes upon release.)

Earlier this year, the Costume Institute at the Metropolitan Museum of Art curated an immersive exhibition called “Sleeping Beauties: Reawakening Fashion” that showcased a multisensory experience like no other. Last month, I was almost ready to book a flight to Lisbon after seeing Brooklyn-based designer Delia Kenza’s post from a coffee shop that looked more like the inside of a pillow fort. “Bedrooms have a unifying sense of relaxation and playfulness,” says Mckeown. “As a creator, you want to develop a product that your consumer connects with on a visceral and almost subconscious level. Sleep is that universal and undeniable human need we can all connect with.”

Thompson believes the theme of bedroom as a muse stems from a desire to evoke the inviting sense of comfort and sexiness that is associated with such an intimate space. “It feels like fashion’s way of connecting a brand or seasonal launch with consumer emotions,” she says. “These designs capture [a bedroom’s] essence, translating it into wearable art that resonates on a personal level.” The Portland, Oregon-based designer points to Mario Bellini’s La Bambole series as a primary example, noting how it feels like an oversized pillow both visually and physically. She also admires

the work of the Norwegian sculptor Håkon Anton Fagerås, praising his exquisite marble sculptures that resemble soft cushions, and Max Lamb's pieces for Acne Studios. "They have a delightful playfulness, resembling molded playdough, and exude a wonderful sense of comfort and approachability in any space," she adds.

Catching Zzz's, not L's

Creating a calming atmosphere is the most essential part of achieving a good night's sleep, whether that happens from the comfort of a bed or an armchair (Celestial's Sleepytime Tea bear continues to make a strong case for the latter). Starting with soothing sounds and scents, the goal is to foster a relaxing environment; Thompson opts for tracks on the Calm app that remind her of Miami beaches paired with an essential oil diffuser on full blast. (This is more of a frill, but I highly recommend investing in a bed tray to hold your bedroom belongings as well.) "I think every bedroom needs blackout curtains to keep out light, which can really disrupt sleep," Thompson adds. Other experts recommend tips like maintaining a room temperature of 60 to 67 degrees Fahrenheit, making a Sleepy Girl Mocktail, and bathing before bed to improve your rest. At the end of the day, your bedroom should be your personal sleep sanctuary—a delicious combination of sights, sounds, and scents that make you feel as blissed out, and drowsy, as possible.