

THE AUSTRALIAN ●

WAS

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People watching

Brunello Cucinelli | Ewan McGregor | Leonardo DiCaprio | Miuccia Prada | Elsa Schiaparelli | Watch Special



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01 Symbolic victory

Designer Mark Landini endured a near-death experience shortly before the most dramatic moment of his career. Invited to compete for the redesign of Loblaws food store at Toronto's famed Maple Leaf Gardens, he was eating lunch before pitching to the store's Canadian owners when he choked on a slice of steak. And being English-born and educated, he was reluctant to holler for help. "It's true what they say, that your life passes before your eyes," he recalls. "But I just thought, 'I can't die, it's such a good presentation'." The slither of steak finally "popped out" and an hour later he made his pitch. "It was joyous because in the first place I survived, in the second I won." The Maple Leaf Gardens project was a great get. Built in 1931 as a home for the Toronto ice hockey team, the arena holds a special place in the Canadian imagination. "If you put the Opera House together with the MCG, the

Sydney Cricket Ground and Auckland's Eden Park, then multiply the cultural significance by 10, you get some idea of its importance to the average Canadian," suggests Landini, creative director of Landini Associates, a design and brand consultancy with a global presence operating out of a converted warehouse in Sydney's Surry Hills. Landini was sensitive to the building's traditions but not that sensitive. During his eventful pitch he told Loblaws its cherished Depression-era building was ugly. "To everyone's surprise," he says, "they agreed." The end result is a confident reworking of the 7900sqm space using vivid colours – red and orange – in concert with glass, steel and concrete, as well as plenty of historical references is a 12m sculpture, a gleaming maple leaf of blue plastic fragments assembled from old stadium seats.

02 Light in the tunnel

2012 is the "on" year for the Sydney Biennale and this year the Emerald City's international festival of contemporary art turns 18: legal drinking age! It kicks off on June 27 and this year's artistic directors, Catherine de Zegher and Gerald McMaster, have put their focus on storytelling. A prominent visual teller of tales is Dutch techno artist Daan Roosegaarde, whose installation (pictured) in the "dog-leg tunnel" on Cockatoo Island uses motion-detecting sensors in their hundreds that dim and brighten in proximity to people. Roosegaarde, who lives and works in Rotterdam, is sponsored by Scanlan & Theodore. The art-savvy Melbourne fashion label, with nine stand-alone Australian stores, has previously collaborated with artists Bill Henson, David Armstrong and Nan Goldin to bridge fashion and art.

03 Precious purses

When does a handbag become not just an objet d'art but a work of haute bijouterie? When it's conceived by Pierre Hardy. Hermes, in partnership with Hardy, has released a line of bijouterie inspired by the handbag and ornamented with exquisite materials: rose gold, white gold, diamonds. There are four of these miniature, whimsical sacs-bijoux, to be worn as bracelets, and all are crafted over many months by silver and goldsmiths. Nausicaa is the chaste island princess in Homer and she lends her name to a sac-bijou of great style and almost Attic simplicity, which is crafted from a woven gold mesh and adorned with 1811 diamonds of 28.87 carats. There is nothing antique about the price of €500,000 (\$630,000). Chaine d'Ancre, in white gold and diamonds, is more free form in its evocation of anchor and entangled chain, of shipwreck and treasure. Kelly and Birkin (pictured) are both riffs on classic Hermes bags. Kelly is finished in crocodile scales; Birkin is a blend of Ottoman and Byzantine ornament fashioned from 2712 diamonds of 89.22 carats and priced at €1.5 million.

Rain makers

04 There are few brands that celebrate bad weather quite like Burberry. Its famous trench coat might have started life in the trenches of World War I but it has endured as the chicest way to keep the rain out. At the Autumn/Winter men's collection shows in Milan in January, the brand's creative director Christopher Bailey sent his elegantly tailored models down the runway holding the ultimate English accessory – an umbrella. And what umbrellas they were. Burberry's smartly hued brollies were finished off with a range of knobs and handles, some fashioned into the heads of dogs or ducks, others covered in studded leather. The collection itself, which was full of rich velvets and tweeds, garnered high praise from fashion editors but it was the very cool umbrellas that seemed to be on everyone's wish lists. burberry.com

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WORDS: DAVID MEAGHER, LUKE SLATTERY

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