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STYLE



THE FUN SPRINGTIME BUY...

'BUNNIES' WALLPAPER by Manhattan-based artist Hunt Slonem is produced by Lee Jofa. The pattern features a series of Slonem's Neo-Expressionist rabbit pictures (the original canvases fetch handsome sums at auction). He has been producing a bunny image a day since the 1980s and describes this repetitive way of painting as 'a form of worship'. To find out more about Slonem's art and method, turn the page (£290 per nine-metre roll; leejofa.com).

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Clockwise from above Hunt Slonem at work in his colourful Manhattan studio; original rabbit paintings and one of Slonem's many exotic birds; 'Hutch' wallpaper for Lee Jofa (£250 per nine-metre roll; leejofa.com)

THRILL OF THE HUNT

New York artist Hunt Slonem's fantastical paintings of bunnies and birds are the inspiration for his new collection with Lee Jofa

The Easter Bunny would surely find a warm welcome if he turned up on the doorstep of artist and interior decorator Hunt Slonem. Everywhere you look in his Manhattan studio, there are paintings of rabbits, butterflies and tropical birds in a childlike Neo-Expressionist style. And thanks to a collaboration with textile brand Lee Jofa, Slonem's menagerie will soon find its way into British homes on wallpapers, fabrics and rugs.

The son of a Navy officer, Slonem says his passion for colour and wildlife stems from a peripatetic childhood, spent on a series of military bases. In Hawaii he grew orchids, and in Nicaragua he chased butterflies. To this day, he needs to be surrounded by nature in his urban studio and is often to be found painting with an exotic bird perched on his shoulder; he keeps between 30 and 100 of them, housed in giant cages in his open-plan workspace.

As for the bunnies, they have become his signature. Slonem has been making his 'rabbit paintings' since the 1980s, when he realised that the year of his birth, 1951, was the Chinese year of the rabbit. Now, he describes them as his 'daily warm-ups'. Every morning he paints a bunny on a small panel before pairing it with an antique frame and adding it to the 'Bunny Wall' in his studio (the inspiration for the 'Bunnies' wallpaper by Lee Jofa, see previous page). An habitué of New York's flea markets, Slonem has filled his sprawling studio with a mix of Gothic Revival furniture, antique rugs and objets d'art. Fascinated? We certainly are, which is why we'll be reading Slonem's book, *Where Art Meets Design* (Assouline, £50), to discover even more about his colourful world.

WORDS: AMY BRADFORD (PICTURES: MARC TOULIGNANT (PORTRAIT), MARCO RICCA (MAIN IMAGE))