

Themes come true at International Gift Fair

NEW YORK — Word from the White House is that the economy is alive and well, and there was evidence of same at last week's International Gift Fair, the premier market for housewares, home design, kitchenware, floral accessories, and other products that fall into the catch-all category of "gifts." More than 45,000 people attended the market from around the world, many of them retailers scouting out products likely to be "trending up," to use the vernacular of the trade.

The truth is, in a crowded field of nearly 3,000 exhibitors that seems only to be growing, "we find it very hard to see any real trends," says Quinn Halford, editor-in-chief of Gifts & Decorative Accessories. "I think of them more as themes." These would include the influence of fashion on home design, "like bright colors and stripes on everything from stationery to home decor"; a profusion of beach-themed items; and a growing sub-category of pet products. Also, retro themes refuse to die. Those '60s shag rugs, chartreuse vases, and cube nesting tables are being reissued and proclaimed "gorgeous."

Amid the sea of new products, which are available now or soon will be, here are a few that stood out.

LINDA MATCHAN



Art in a minute

Blik is a design company for the time-crunched. Based in Venice, Calif., Blik creates eye-catching wall graphics that are self-adhesive and removable; you can design a mural in minutes. The selection is vast. Designs include dots, paisleys, boxes, robots, special agents, aliens, scientific equations, and, now, elephants and giraffes for kids. Each kit contains one large (20-inch) graphic animal and three 10-inch ones; the giraffe comes with a set of branches, and the elephant with decorative spirals. \$50. Order at 866-262-2545 or whatisblik.com.