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## Pre-Fall Fashion Goes Eighties Postmodern—By Way of the Memphis Group

January 8, 2015 3:45 pm by [Laird Borrelli-Persson](#)

Echoes of the Memphis Group, the postmodern design collaborative that took hold of Italy in the eighties, are amping up pre-fall's traditionally retail-friendly collections, adding notes of color and fun to the lineups of such in-touch brands as [Proenza Schouler](#), [Christopher Kane](#), and [3.1 Phillip Lim](#). Founded in Milan in 1981 (and named after **Bob Dylan**'s "Stuck Inside of Mobile with the Memphis Blues Again" that was the soundtrack to the group's first meeting), the movement was led by former Olivetti designer Ettore Sottsass. The Memphis Group aimed to "go beyond beauty" with what they called "counter design," which challenged ideas of conventional "bad taste." Not only was their work boldly graphic—think squiggles and geometrics rendered in a Miami Beach palette tempered with black and white—but it had a puckish sense of humor, a commodity as precious in today's chaos as it was way back in the eighties.



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Casablanca Sideboard by Ettore Sottsass, Jr., 1981

Photo: © Philadelphia Museum of Art/CORBIS



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Chloé by Karl Lagerfeld, spring 1982

Photo: Michel Maurou/

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Ettore Sottsass–designed interior for Valentina and Cleto Munari  
Photo: Oberto Gili, *Vogue*, January 1985



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Christian Dior fall 2011 haute couture  
Photo: Yannis Vlamos/GoRunway.com

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Jonathan Saunders fall 2014

Photo: Yannis Vlamos/Indigitalimages.com

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Proenza Schouler pre-fall 2015

Photo: Courtesy of Proenza Schouler

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