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## Sicily looms as tripwire over Italy's fiscal plight

PALERMO, SICILY

Island's high public debt reflects a larger battle for the prime minister

BY RACHEL DONADIO

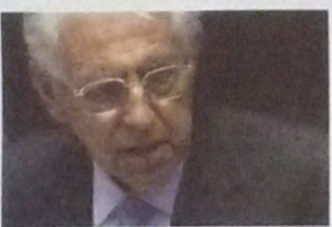
As Prime Minister Mario Monti fights to protect Italy from the contagion driving up its borrowing costs to perilous levels, one region in particular has been in the spotlight: Sicily, which some fear has become the "Greece" of Italy, at risk of defaulting on its high public debts.

Mr. Monti wrote to Sicily's regional president last week warning that he had "serious concerns" that the region was at risk of default, a day after an official in the Sicily branch of Italy's leading industrialists association called for the island to be put into receivership by the central government to clean up its finances.

When headlines about a potential Sicilian default ricocheted around the globe, the government quickly played down concerns and said it would send €400 million, or nearly \$500 million, to ease Sicily's liquidity crunch so it could continue to pay salaries and pensions. One government official said that Mr. Monti's letter had been intended for domestic consumption and that Sicily's woes could not cause contagion to other Italian regions.

But amid Europe's debt crisis, all local politics have become international. And the flare-up over Sicily highlights the challenges Mr. Monti faces in trying to use the external pressure from European leaders and international markets to push Italy's political class to cut costs that have ballooned after decades of a patronage system in which the government was the primary means of employment.

It also was a stark reminder of Italy's national fragility as Mr. Monti struggles to prevent it from requiring a bailout that would come with onerous terms that have helped drive the Greek and now Sicily, PAGE 3



Prime Minister Mario Monti wrote of "serious concerns" that Sicily could default.



Anguish and optimism in a tent city Syrians in the Islahiye, Turkey, refugee camp receiving food. The Islahiye camp is a place of defiance, but also a place of hope. Syrians here, cheered by the success of rebel forces on their home ground, calmly insist that their enemies are weakening. [global.nytimes.com/middleeast](http://global.nytimes.com/middleeast)

## U.S. focuses on efforts to topple Assad government

WASHINGTON

Officials hold talks with Turkey and Israel over managing a collapse

BY ERIC SCHMITT AND HELENE COOPER

The Obama administration has for now abandoned efforts for a diplomatic settlement to the conflict in Syria and is increasing aid to the rebels and redoubling efforts to rally a coalition of like-minded countries to forcibly bring down the government of President Bashar al-Assad, U.S. officials say.

U.S. officials have been in talks with leaders in Turkey and Israel over how to manage a Syrian government collapse. The U.S. defense secretary, Leon E. Panetta, is headed to Israel in the next several days, following up on a visit last week by President Barack Obama's national security adviser, Thomas E. Donilon, in part to discuss the Syrian crisis.

In a sign of the escalating seriousness of the Syrian crisis after a week of intensified fighting in Damascus, the capital, and the killing of Mr. Assad's closest security aides in a bombing attack, the White House is now holding daily high-level meetings to discuss a broad range of contingency plans, including safeguarding Syria's vast chemical weapons arsenal and sending explicit warnings to both warring sides to avert mass atrocities.

The United States has regularly discussed with the Israelis how they might move to destroy Syrian weapons facilities, U.S. officials said. Washington is not advocating such an attack, the officials said, because of the risk that it would give Mr. Assad an opportunity to rally support against Israeli interference.

U.S. officials say they will not provide arms to the rebel forces; Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar are already financing those efforts. But officials said the United States would provide more communications training and equipment to help improve the combat effectiveness of disparate opposition forces in their widening, sustained fight against Syrian Army troops. It is also possible the rebels would receive some intelligence support, the officials said.

By enhancing the command and control of the rebels' formations, largely by SYRIA, PAGE 4

STREET BATTLES AND STRIFE IN SYRIA

Government forces fought to regain control over areas that rebels claimed to have seized in recent days. PAGE 4

## Myriad questions trail massacre suspect

AURORA, COLORADO

As profile takes shape on Colorado gunman, no simple answers emerge

BY JACK HEALY AND SERGE F. KOVALESKI

Killing a dozen people and wounding more than 50 others here was apparently not enough for James Eagan Holmes, according to the police. Inside his otherwise ordinary apartment lay an intricate series of explosive booby traps, seemingly designed to kill anyone who entered while pursuing his trail.

Mr. Holmes, 24, who the police say brought terror early Friday to a mid-night movie screening in this Colorado community, also left behind a litany of questions, many of them focused on how and why a once-promising student

could now stand accused of being the lone gunman behind the deadliest mass shooting in Colorado since the attacks in 1999 at Columbine High School.

Mr. Holmes had been a shy, awkward boy who once seemed quietly bound for big things. He was a science student from Southern California who won scholarships and internships, graduated "at the top of the top" from the University of California, Riverside, and moved to Colorado last year to take the next step: a doctoral program in neuroscience.

Now the University of Colorado says it is investigating whether Mr. Holmes used his position as a graduate student to order materials for the booby traps found in his apartment, The Associated Press reported on Sunday.

Mr. Holmes had an appointment at the university under a one-year Neuroscience Training Grant from the National Institutes of Health, said a spokeswoman for the university. The grant pays for six pre-thesis doctoral students

in the university's neuroscience program at the Anschutz Medical Campus. Such grants are usually quite difficult to obtain, going to only the top students.

But Mr. Holmes struggled through his first academic year at the University of Colorado, Denver, and had dropped out by this past spring. Neighbors from his gang-ridden neighborhood in Aurora described him as a solitary figure, recognizable as one of the few white residents of a largely Hispanic neighborhood, and always alone. Alone as he bought beer and liquor at neighborhood shops, as he ate burritos at La California restaurant or got his car fixed at the Grease Monkey auto shop. Alone as he rode his bicycle through the streets.

He appears to have sought companionship through the Web site Adult

SOME GAVE THEIR LIVES TO SAVE OTHERS

Their families, bonded in grieving, recalled the victims with a mix of love and the numbness of disbelief. PAGE 8

Friend Finder, posting a photo of himself with bright orange hair and saying that he was "looking for a fling." In an online profile, he described himself as a nice guy, or as nice as any man "who does these sorts of shenanigans," though the authenticity of the post could not be independently verified.

Some nights, neighbors heard loud music throbbing in his third-floor apartment, and often complained about it, or noticed a strange, purple light in the windows. Sometimes, the windows were masked by newspaper, as if he wanted no one to see inside.

On Saturday, the police chief of Aurora, Daniel J. Oates, offered an explanation for why that might have been. When the police arrived after apprehending Mr. Holmes outside the theater complex where the shootings had occurred, they found an apartment full of explosives and shells. The array had been designed "to kill whoever entered it," Chief Oates COLORADO, PAGE 8

## U.S. expands drug war to Africa

WASHINGTON

Crackdowns in Americas have led cartels to create new smuggling routes

BY CHARLIE SAVAGE AND THOM SHANKER

In a significant expansion of the war on drugs, the United States has begun training an elite counternarcotics police unit in Ghana and planning similar units in Nigeria and Kenya as part of an effort to combat the Latin American cartels that are increasingly using Africa to smuggle cocaine into Europe.

The growing U.S. involvement in Africa follows an earlier escalation of anti-drug efforts in Central America, according to documents, congressional testimony and interviews with a range of officials at the State Department, the Drug Enforcement Administration and the Pentagon.

U.S. officials are responding to fears that crackdowns in more direct staging points for smuggling — like Mexico and Spain — have prompted traffickers to

move into smaller and weakly governed states, further corrupting and destabilizing them.

The aggressive response by the United States is also a sign of how greater attention and resources have turned to efforts to fight drugs as the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have wound down.

"We see Africa as the new frontier in terms of counterterrorism and counter-narcotics issues," said Jeffrey P. Breeden, the chief of the Europe, Asia and Africa section of the drug agency. "It's a place that we need to get ahead of."

"We see Africa as the new frontier" in the war on drugs.

— we're already behind the curve in some ways, and we need to catch up."

The initiatives come amid a sharp increase in successful interdictions in Honduras since May — but also as U.S. officials have been forced to defend their new tactics after a commando-style team of D.E.A. agents participated in at least three lethal interdiction operations alongside a squad of Honduran police officers. In one of those opera-

tions, in May, the Honduran police killed four people near the village of Ahuas, and in two others in the past month, U.S. agents have shot and killed smuggling suspects.

To date, officials say, the D.E.A. commando team has not been deployed to work with the newly created elite police squads in Africa, where the effort to counter the drug traffickers is said to be about three years behind the one in Central America.

The officials said that if Western security forces did come to play a more direct operational role in Africa, for historical reasons they might be European and not American.

In May, William R. Brownfield, the U.S. assistant secretary of state for international narcotics and law enforcement, a leading architect of the strategy now on display in Honduras, traveled to Ghana and Liberia to put the finishing touches on a West Africa Cooperative Security Initiative, which will try to replicate across 15 nations the steps taken in battling trafficking groups operating in Central America and Mexico.

Mr. Brownfield said the vision for both regions was to improve the ability DRUGS, PAGE 4

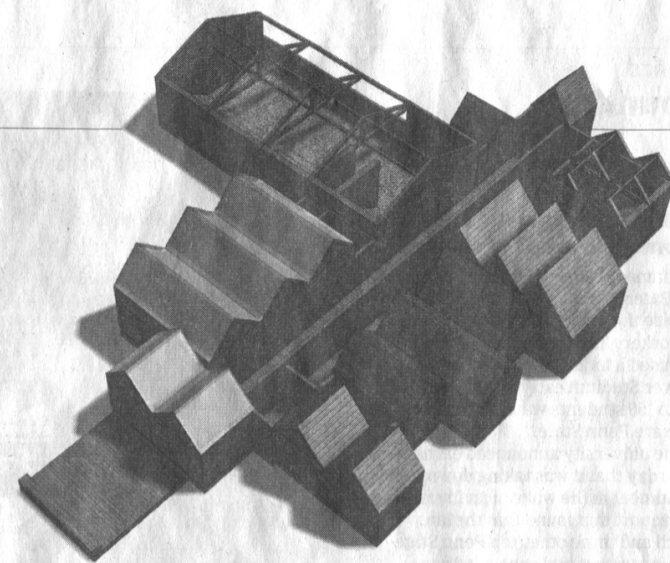


Dominant in victory Bradley Wiggins cruising to the finish line at the Tour de France in Paris on Sunday. The Briton's victory was the culmination of a strong and measured performance in the grueling three-week, 3,497-kilometer race. PAGE 9

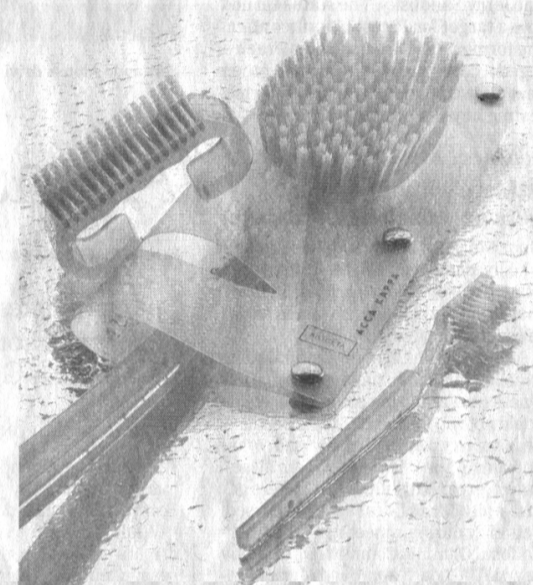
# Culture



MATHIEU LEHANEUR (ABOVE); SOMETHING & SON (TOP RIGHT)



Clockwise from left: the Digital Break, an urban shelter in Paris; the Barking Bathhouse community spa, built on the site of a derelict pub near London and which offers employment opportunities to local residents; and biodegradable BIOCETA brushes made by the Italian company Acca Kappa.



ACCA KAPPA

## Form, function and ethics

**LONDON**  
Some recent projects succeed in fulfilling both desire and conscience

BY ALICE RAWSTHORN

What do we want from design? Many thousands of words have been written on the subject, but to boil it down to bare essentials, every design project should fulfill its function, while also being responsible, ethically and environmentally, and desirable.

Sounds simple. Yet very few projects combine all three qualities. Whether because of budgetary pressures, production problems, lack of imagination or old-fashioned incompetence, one of the three is often sacrificed, usually desirability or responsibility.

Nonetheless, some projects do manage to be both responsible and desirable. Here are some recent examples, together with a couple of others that exhibit one of those qualities, but arguably not the other. Needless to say, they all fulfill their functions, otherwise they wouldn't be worth considering at all.

### 1. Responsible and desirable?

The spa. When the Barking Bathhouse opens Friday, the residents of Barking, an economically depressed suburb of East London, will be treated to a new community spa, developed by the eco-social design group Something & Son. Built on the site of a derelict pub, it consists of 10 darkened, prefabricated timber pods, reminiscent of farm buildings in nearby Essex and beach huts in Kent. Open until the autumn, the bathhouse, which is financed by the Create

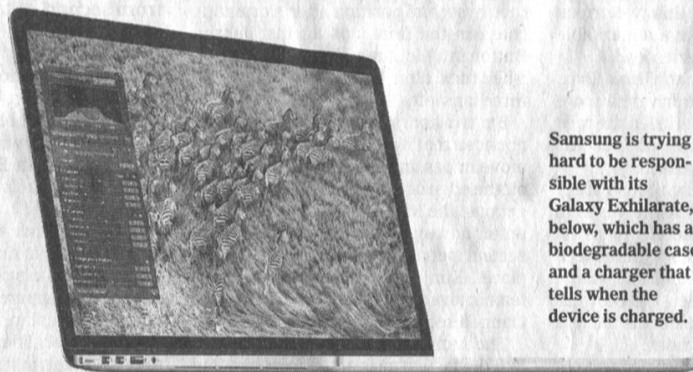
arts program, will contain massage and treatment rooms, a hot sauna, an ice room, a bar and a shingle beach.

Conceived as a contemporary take on 19th-century public baths, the Barking Bathhouse is definitely desirable, and also responsible, particularly with regard to its efforts to engage with the local community. Treatments will be provided by local masseurs, manicurists and other specialists, thereby giving them the chance to meet future clients. Local residents can use the spa at a discount, paying £2 each, or about \$3, compared with £8 for everyone else. The food in the bar will be made from produce grown in nearby gardens and allotments, as will the products used for treatments.

Something & Son has also tried to minimize the bathhouse's environmental impact. Recycled materials were used wherever possible, including old railway sleepers for the foundations, scaffolding boards for interior walls and second-hand furniture. To save energy, the sauna and ice room are heavily insulated, and the former is heated by a wood-burning stove. And when the bathhouse closes in the autumn, the pods will slide off the sleepers before being taken away to be reused elsewhere.

The Wi-Fi shelter. Across the English Channel in Paris, the latest project by the French designer Mathieu Lehanneur shares the Barking Bathhouse's ecological objectives and community focus, but there the similarities end. Commissioned by the street furniture company J.C. Decaux, Escale Numérique, or Digital Break, as it is called in English, is a sleekly technocratic urban shelter on the Rond-point des Champs-Élysées in Paris where passersby can rest, chat, escape from the rain and log

The MacBook Pro is beautiful, but it sparked controversy recently when some fears arose that Apple might not have met certain environmental standards.



Samsung is trying hard to be responsible with its Galaxy Exhilarate, below, which has a biodegradable case and a charger that tells when the device is charged.

APPLE (ABOVE); SAMSUNG MOBILE (BELOW)

on to the Internet.

Made from wood, aluminum and concrete, it is furnished with swivel chairs sporting laptop rests and Wi-Fi sockets, and a giant touch screen relaying information about Paris. The shelter is topped by a green roof, which counters the environmental damage caused by the loss of greenery in cities like Paris, while providing something attractive for people to look at while walking past or peering down from nearby buildings.

The brush. Not that responsibility and desirability are the preserve of iconoclasts like Something & Son and Mr. Lehanneur, as the venerable Italian company Acca Kappa has proved by developing the BIOCETA range of biodegradable brushes. Founded in Treviso, near Venice, in 1869, Acca Kappa has made luxurious hairbrushes ever since and is still run by the same family. Its BIOCETA brushes are as pleasing to look at and touch as the traditional ones, but are made from a natural resin, made of

wood and cotton byproducts, that decomposes naturally.

### 2. Responsible but not desirable?

The smartphone. The world's phone makers are not known for their commitment to sustainability, but the South Korean company Samsung tries harder than most to be environmentally responsible. The new Samsung Galaxy Exhilarate smartphone has been certified Platinum, the highest possible rating, by UL Environment, a U.S. environmental standards organization. Made from 80 percent recycled materials, it has a biodegradable case and charger that helps you avoid wasting electricity by telling you when the device is fully charged. The Exhilarate is also relatively inexpensive, starting at \$49.99, or €41, in the United States.

Impressive though those achievements are, sadly, the Exhilarate's styling doesn't meet the same standards, especially the less than desirable design of its digital interface, which is the tech-



ie term for the words and symbols that flash up on the screen.

### 3. Desirable but not responsible?

The computer. Beauty is, of course, in the eye of the beholder but, personally, I not only consider Apple's new notebook computer, the MacBook Pro with Retina display, to be beautiful, but to have other desirable qualities, too. Admirably slender and light, it is just 0.71 inches, or 1.8 centimeters, thick, weighs 4.46 pounds, or two kilograms, and its screen has, in Apple's words, the "highest-resolution display ever on a notebook."

But is it responsible? The news a couple weeks ago that Apple had withdrawn from the electronic industry's environmental rating system, the Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool, or EPEAT, sparked a flood of complaints from customers and fueled speculation that the new MacBook Pro had failed to meet EPEAT's recycling standards. A week later, Apple issued an official admission that it had made a mistake, while announcing that it was rejoining EPEAT, which had given the MacBook Pro a Gold6 rating.

Embarrassing though the kerfuffle was, Apple was sensible to admit defeat, particularly as the fracas came so soon after the controversy over the employment practices of its Chinese subcontractors. And, just in case Apple or any other company had lingering doubts, the EPEAT debacle also proved that consumers do expect design to deliver both responsibility and desirability, not one or the other.

### ONLINE: MORE ON DESIGN

Read past columns written by Alice Rawsthorn at [global.nytimes.com/arts](http://global.nytimes.com/arts)