

Trend Spot

Your global inspiration resource

DISTINGUISHING GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

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MORE ADVENTURESS Interested in experimentation, risk-taking, and pushing the envelope design, More Adventuress explores more fully the intersection between art, design, craft, and contemporary culture.

January was a whirlwind: Three separate international interior-design shows in three different weeks, each with a customized but still interrelated set of trends.

It's a fantastic opportunity to compare and contrast the many different ways similar looks, behaviors, and styles can be interpreted by the various "trend committees" of these major design shows.

We'll start in chronological order, so first up is Heimtextil. With a new trend advisory board in place, the Heimtextil trends open with a bold manifesto, "It is only now that the new millennium is beginning to take shape... and we recognize that it's time for change... we need to look to the future rather than referencing the past. We are on the brink of a change in aesthetic direction towards a new purism..."

The important points of this manifesto are:

- Decorative & whimsy replaced by objectivity and clarity
- Origin and history lends authenticity
- Production with honesty adds value and credibility

- Perfection is admired and imperfection is attractive
- Texture is equally as important as appearance

Keep these points in mind as we review other show's trend themes, and for those of you who have been following this column for a while, you'll recognize several topics we've addressed over the past few years. Here's a brief recap of the Heimtextil trends—for more details, see the December issue of *Window Fashions*.

VISIONARY A cool, neutral palette punched up with a brilliantly saturated yellow and an intense violet. The overall mood is futuristic and slightly technical with an unconventional approach to shapes and materials.

ORIGINAL A comforting palette based on warm browns and greens with accents of soft coral. This is one aspect of "eco", where handmade meets sophisticated through the use of materials such as hemp, bamboo, pineapple, banana, nettle, and soy.

MAGICAL A dark, moody palette with rich jewel tones set against shaded values of black, brown, and grey. This is an overall melding of traditional luxury looks—NeoClassic, Art Deco and High-Style Modernism—in a contemporary manner.

VIBRANT The pop art 80s-flashback palette with magenta, bright cobalt, a clear true mid-green set off with another bright yellow, black, white, grey, and taupe. The inspirations include both Memphis work and the high-tech look of contemporary sports paraphernalia.

At IMM Cologne, which opened just days after Heimtextil closed, its trend board developed four themes that played with the idea of contrast/contradiction.

OUTSIDE IN A modern approach to "eco" where the natural/artificial boundaries are blurred. The palette is almost equally balanced between cool blues, greys and greens, and warm pink/terra cotta hues.



BOHO SOUL Vibrant and emotional, Boho Soul seeks out compelling patterns, colors and motifs from all cultures and all eras, combining them in deeply personal, idiosyncratic fashion to create a post-modern take on ethnic chic.

NEO NATURE Another take on the technical vs. organic debate, and here the focus is on shape and surface—membranes, honeycomb, and Fibonacci structures. The palette is split between nature-inspired greens and browns and cooler, more techie blues and violets.

DESIGN SCHOOL Exploring the irreverence and sense of play that informs much of contemporary design, with a fittingly bright palette based on updated versions of the classic Crayola eight-pack.

PRICELESS The “design as art” approach with custom or limited-edition pieces sold to collectors. Everyone wants to own something perceived as unique, rare, and all but unattainable. This is the deepest, richest palette, grounded in shades of blackened violet, blue, green, and brown with surprising hits of red, bright turquoise, Easter-grass green, silver, and gold.

The highly regarded trend presentations at Maison & Objet are among the largest

and the most elaborate of the European trade shows. For the January 2008 session, the theme was Onirique, meaning relating to or inspired by dreams. The emphasis is on unexpected aesthetics, dissolution of pre-formatted styles, and the significance of imagination. What ties the three themes together is a focus on eccentricity, transfiguration, surrealism, and irony.

PRESQUE LÀ A curious aesthetic of absence and lack—whiteness and emptiness as another way to reactivate desire.

TRANS-FORM Introduces products that break away from the norm through unique uses of material. Fabrics, metals, shapes, and forms are stretched, tortured, spliced, and grafted to create radically redefined contemporary fantasies.

BIZARRE BAZAAR A playground or a minefield, depending on your perspective: Random combinations of pattern and color, disturbing trompe l’oeil, and exaggerated forms all work against our desire for reason through obviously manipulated appearances.

So, three shows, three sets of trends; what are some of the commonalities? Trans-Form and Priceless share a similar “design as art” theme with a focus on unique materials and methods and bespoke design, with aspects of Vibrant and the surprises of the Memphis movement, as well as the high-end Visionary theme. But Trans-Form also shares characteristics with Design School, especially an enthusiasm for often unintended or unexpected results of the design process, both of which show some overlap Visionary based on the appeal of the unusual. And, with its take on anthropomorphism, with products that show signs of growth, struggle, or reaction, Trans-Form is also in line with aspects of Neo Nature.

Bizarre Bazaar could serve as an umbrella trend for most of the Heimtextil and IMM trend themes, and for Trans-Form as well. Its overall focus is broader than the other trends and not defined by a particular style, instead the emphasis is on experimentation with manipulation of shapes, materials, and applications. The purpose of Bizarre Bazaar is to stretch our acceptance of what is beautiful, natural, and



DRAMATICAL Deep shadows and sparkling crystals; strange proportions and surprising juxtapositions; a fantasy of smoke and mirrors—Dramatical is a showcase for over-the-top design.



“right” for interiors, capturing what being at the leading edge of a trend is all about: unusual, surprising, and probably a bit discomfoting.

This leaves Presque Là as the only trend not otherwise referenced, and there are several reasons for this. First, there was not much “product” in the presentation to give the viewer a point of reference; in fact, one the largest spaces was given over to an enormous mattress, about 15' x 30'. A large flat-screen TV was placed overhead and as you lay on the mattress, a video of a red whale swimming in blue and white waters played for your contemplation. There was nothing else in the room.

When interviewed later, François Bernard said he created the all-white presentation because he wanted to wipe the design slate clean. “White is a luxury, and through white you gain a purity of design. There’s no hiding behind colors and pattern.” He seemed genuinely surprised

that some would view his presentation as minimalist, describing it instead as “radical maximalism”. Upon first viewing, his sparsely accented all white rooms could be dismissed as an insider’s dreamy fantasy, but after seeing aisles and aisles of products made from all over the world, designed to satisfy the desires, whether real or imagined, of consumers from most of the world, Bernard’s “radical maximalism” begins to seem compelling. After all, who hasn’t wanted the chance to start over?

And how do the 2009/2010 trends developed by the Grace McNamara Inc. (GMI) trend team compare? There are many shared themes which have been in play for several years now. The mood of irreverence, shock value, and humor are aspects we’ve explored through Iconoclastastic, East Village, and Renegade Craft; while the continued demand for contemporary takes on classic traditional designs we’ve identified as Vie-Luxe, Five-Star Living, Brownstone, and Eden-

ism. Eco-sensibilities and importance of origins and connection to the artist have been part of our Global Market, HyperRegionalism, Namaste, and Connect trends. And we’ve discussed the “design as art” movement several times through Loft, Chymestry, and Extreme Connoisseurs. The sense of magic, mystery, and surrealism that seems to be part of much contemporary design has been addressed through Alchemy, Futuristic, Hide-Tech, and Multiple Personalities. All these ideas and many fresh new developments are combined in the four 2009/2010 GMI trend themes.



JETSET NEXT An updated take on traditional, JetSet Next references menswear patterns and materials; timeless classics such as damask, toile, and paisley; gleaming metallics and shining patent finishes; hide-embossed leathers and suedes—giving it all a slightly irreverent, prep-influenced tweak.

MORE ADVENTURESS is our update on Multiple Personalities, Loft, Cabinet of Curiosities, Chymestry, Extreme Connoisseurs, and Universal Neighborhood. It is a trend that balances risk-taking with a thorough understanding and appreciation of the traditions that the experiments play off. The color palette is grounded by a rich blue, a sharp red, and an earthy, natural green. A set of three muted semi-neutrals add complexity while two different browns serve as pivotal swing colors.

BOHO SOUL Boho Soul grows out of Chic Kitsch, Empathetic Explorers, Global Market, Brownstone, Renegade Craft, Multiple Personalities, East Village Cabinet of Curiosities, Personal Iconology, Connect, and Futuristic. This relaxed trend welcomes influences from nearly every era and every culture; it's an irreverent and personal mix that is both lively and sensual. Brilliant updates on jewel tones and a true indigo blue are balanced by a few complex neutrals.

DRAMATICAL is all about the grand gesture, the big reveal, and the mysterious power of light and shadow. It developed out of Chymestry, Cabinet of Curiosities, Loft, Extreme Connoisseurs, Über Premium, and Multiple Personalities. Seductive, moody darks are offset by sharp brights and a tinted cloudy grey.

JETSET NEXT provides a transition between classic and contemporary luxury, with looks both timeless and timely. Inspired by Vie Luxe, Extreme Connoisseurs, Über Premium, Brownstone, Loft, Hide-Tech Five-Star Living, Cabinet of Curiosities, and Multiple Personalities. A palette of sophisticated neutrals mixes with preppy-influenced mid-tone brights, creating a palette of surprising élan.

Stop by the TrendSpot, a show floor destination, at the International Window Coverings EXPO in Atlanta this month to see these trends for yourself. **WF**



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