

# The Power of Colour

Before she arrives at Furnitex, Milou Ket, international trend forecaster talks trends and colour with *FURNISHING International Magazine*.

**C**olour - the property possessed by an object of producing different sensations on the eye as a result of the way it reflects or emits light ~ Oxford Dictionary.

Colour is a subjective element of design. It has the ability to communicate a desired message, invoke certain emotions and accentuate design forms. *FURNISHING International* were delighted to have the opportunity to interview renowned trend forecaster Milou Ket from Milou Ket Styling & Design, Netherlands for her expert view on colour and a sneak peek trend-forecast for seasons to come.

## So just who is Milou Ket?

As a child Milou already had a passion for art, design, aesthetics, architecture and industrial design-so it was clear for her to attend the Art Academy. She picked up trends quickly and was the first to adopt new products, far in advance from other people. After graduation from High School her international interest was fulfilled when she gained a scholarship with the American Field Service to spend a year in the United States.

After graduating from the Rietveld Academy in Amsterdam she was employed as a stylist by Hema, a chain of very successful department stores with 240 outlets where she travelled extensively within Europe and globally advising buyers on future collections.

In 1980 Milou started her own styling and design company. During this time she has worked for many different branches, putting together fabric and print collections, product developments for yarn manufacturers, accessories, sportswear and consultancy work for various retail and buying groups. Working freelance for the Dutch Fashion Institute for a few years, she informed colleagues about future trends.

In 1986 she began publishing trend reports, with the purpose of also reaching clients outside of Holland. She started with a childrenswear book, which was soon followed by a womens styling guide. In 1992 she decided to publish an Interior



Trend book. It became an immediate success and was sold globally.

After having advised Swarovski for six years as a consultant for their Architectural business unit, Milou was inspired to produce "INNOVATIONLAB." It is an inspiring vision for the future, directed towards the development of future products; showing materials, structures, designs, form and their potential application.

Every year since 2007 she has attended Australian furniture exhibitions and will return to Australia's Furnitex & Decoration + Design 2012 as a panelist favourite for the International Industry Seminar Series. She also contributes to *Furniture & Furnishings* in Singapore and to *Dutch Trade Magazine* for Colour and Style. Since 2010 she has been a trend advisor to the Ihlas Magazine Group in Istanbul for Home Textile Export and Contract Textiles International.

Milou's broad experience and commercial background mean her trend reports offer premium information and inspiration for future product development and collections, whilst always standing with her feet firmly on the ground.

## The Trend and Colour Interview

### How important is colour to trends?

For me colour is the starting point for my reports and trends and certain currents in consumer behaviour are linked to a preference for materials and colours.

### What is the average cycle of a colour trend?

Some colours are very persistent and can last a long time, sometimes between 5 to 7



years. Others have a very short, but violent life and only work as an accessory colour.

### Where do you gain inspiration and what are your influences?

Orientation in different international cities, shopping, and visits to fairs are important in my report process. I also read an abundance of consumer and trade magazines to follow the daily news and read the outcomes of sociological and consumer behaviour reports.

The outcome of scientific research may also influence me, or an art exhibition, music or the colours in the backdrop of a ballet. I make a difference between rational and subconscious input. I try to find proof with other companies for my subconscious ideas and when I observe certain things, I will try to make them conscious in order to be able to work with these ideas.

### What is the process of putting together a trend report?

I start by collecting materials on intuition, what is exciting to me and new. I do research and collect visual evidence of what slowly takes shape in my mind.

My starting point is generally the colour card that is closely linked to a style direction. By arguing with myself about what belongs or does not, this style direction becomes clearer in my mind. I write down words, understandings, insights and ideas to describe these directions and by viewing thousands of images, I define it more and more and make a selection of these images to illustrate my concept of these directions.



I shift regularly from intuition to conscious thinking. I make collages to put my thoughts together, based on colours, materials, treatments, print design, and colour combinations. When I have made a rational choice, I leave the final making of the collages to my intuition. I treat a collage as a large print design, giving information and inspiration, but also offering harmony and balance in its colours.

Finally I write the text, where I describe and combine the outcome of my previous thoughts. This comes quite naturally and quick because I have been discussing all these topics with myself while making the collages.

In terms of timing my interior report comes out annually, 1½ to 2 years in advance and can be applied for an entire year. My women's trend book comes out twice a year, 1½ years in advance. My INNOVATIONLAB book comes out irregularly and is very advanced distributed up to 4 to 5 years in advance. Agents in about 20 countries sell my reports globally.

**What are some colour and interior trends coming through in SS12/13 and AW13?**

Due to the current economic situation and uncertainty, our homes will be increasingly important. We are looking for homeliness, comfort and consolation. Textiles will take an important place for that matter and we will attach importance to family life and conviviality. Eco-awareness and recycling will gain importance whilst handicraft and innovation are combined. The old and re-used, and the new are now living side by side.

**Do you believe colour is linked to emotion and psychology?**

I am convinced that colour is linked to emotion and psychology. Colours can be strategically selected on their placement, location, time of the year etc. but I believe that designers and developers have learned to internalise these factors, so they should make the right choices by intuition and experience.

**What do you feel are the key challenges in the industry today?**

To develop relevant, beautiful and/or appealing products whilst taking sustainable factors into account.

**Do you personally have a signature style or a key influence with interiors?**

I have a preference for modern and futuristic products, in a clean and international style. I prefer a colour palette in black, white and neutral colours, especially because my professional life is filled with colour. I enjoy the play of natural light and I don't like to consciously apply trends in my own home. I am quite consistent in my own taste and as a professional I take a certain distance but I am open to new influences in my work - I can distinguish between the two.

**If you weren't doing Trend Reporting what would you be doing?**

It fits my personality very well where I work with my head and my heart. Otherwise I would be designing prints, knitting, designing clothes, working with colours or making jewellery. Making the collages combines all these preferences very well, and that is what I like most. 

