

# The next big thing in design is YOU

 By [Louise Marsland](#)

23 Feb 2006

Design revolutionary, Li Edelkoort, dissected the human body to open up designers to future trends affixed to a colour palette that was more organic in nature, in a presentation entitled 'Future Lifestyles' at the 9th annual Design Indaba in Cape Town yesterday, Thursday, 23 February 2006.

Edelkoort is one of the world's most renowned trend forecasters and founder of the Edelkoort Group. Her work has pioneered trend forecasting and lifestyle analysis as a profession.

Last year Edelkoort spoke on 'Food, you are what you eat' and about the romance returning to food and clothing, how the colour palates in fashion would emulate those in sweet, sugary treats. She demonstrated how her predictions had manifested in fashion and design today...

And that project also turned Edelkoort into restaurateur whose concept restaurant, Laurier recently opened in Les Galeries Lafayette in Paris.

She explains: "In many cases in my life, everything I've been doing has been a very natural and organic movement. This results from the fervour with which we do things... have resolve, listen to your intuition... collaborate... everything is attached to everything... I direct fashion from food and then food becomes my business!"

## Future lifestyles

In her heavily-accented accent, the Dutch-born Edelkoort, whipped through a cornucopia of abundant slides on fashion, design, food, texture, colour, materials and new lifestyle trends that had the rapt audience hanging onto her every word. Here are the highlights in Edelkoort's staccato style...

### *Current trends...*

1. PLAYING HOUSE: Explains Edelkoort: "I found out that something very new is coming, in Europe we've been focusing on three areas of the house: bathroom, kitchen, bedroom. We have given space to these rooms we live in. However, now we have other nondescript little spaces... It is now becoming the thing to make these little spaces functional, i.e., a hobby room, smoking room, wash room/ironing room, a library - as reading makes a strong comeback, a boudoir... in the future we will all be more creative and creators of things."

The bathroom is still the focus and focus of creative urges, but especially for women, the boudoir is making a comeback "to

be with yourself", says Edelkoort. "There is more of a need for privacy and secrecy and for couples to entertain each other on their own turf... it's the boudoir vs the library...!"

2. COLOURS AND LIFESTYLES: Natural history designs inspired by children as they are natural collectors and this is where we will discover washed and sun bleached materials, i.e., maritime matter translated into new scope and scale, driftwood furniture - it's about looking at natural matter and translating it to design, including organic shapes as designed first by nature.

Colours are light and washed and bleached and derived from stone and bone. Very South African in design, says Edelkoort. "What it really means is that people will create Museum houses."

3. REPEATING FUNCTION: Function wants to show itself. Insides are showing up. Construction and order is key. "Kids don't want to organize... empty boxes are irresistible to kids and cats... so think inside the box as well as outside the box - rectangulars are in!"

We are living in simplistic, neat, spacious, honest, low cost, transparent structures of 2D to 3D. Says Edelkoort: use the construction as an asset in what you do. Modular housing, temporary housing, desks in a box. There is a real creative trend of portable housing and working emerging.

4. DESIGNING ORDER: "We can translate this to fashion, to natural, clear colour. A love of paper and elastic from designers, office stationary, archiving is very important, small, compact offices. The whole boxing is instrumental in making old houses new... (it) can make an old part of town look new."

5. PLAYING: She says it's more about the idea of toying with design, like a kid will play with his toys. Colours are not primary, but a mix of primary and the memory of the past, abstract patterns." Form and colour get together, as do sculptural forms of play dough, and layers of colour, like creating a form of alphabet."

6. WRITING DESIGN: As other speakers at Design Indaba have pointed out over the past two days: it is the period of collaboration and sketching, and from Edelkoort: a laying out of things in a pragmatic and colourful way, making old things look new through the use of colour. The mood is young and adults embracing this young mood now call themselves 'Kidults', doing one's work on mood and personality, like spreading material like a kid.

7. MOLDING MATTER: Hooray! says Edelkoort, it's the comeback of molding material, strangely coloured this time and in concentrated form, utilizing interesting and edible matter in some cases.

8. CHARACTER: Character is very important as designers need to create items with character.

9. DECORATING: A dull trend that prevails, says Edelkoort. "It's dolling up the house, sugary colours, shiny materials, metals, sexy, very geisha, intimate interiors, intricate use of stenciling, very lighthearted here and there, very frivolous in styling, not overwhelming, done precisely like in a theatrical setting. Hedonistic as a lifestyle, but we can make it cool and calm and abstract, she points out.

10. IMAGINGING: Life as a sculpture, precisely designed, simply colored, intensely lived, live in things as in a colour card, create form for the sheer pleasure of form, indulgent... create a family, friends of a product.

## **New trends...**

1. MAGNIFYING: As an empire of aesthetics. Explains Edelkoort: "The time has come to go to this empherical trend. We are going into a strong economy that wants to show its strengths. Over scaling is very important, but so is under scaling. Bronze is very important, as is all other metal. Inlay, beautifying of material. Making new skins that are rusted, hammered, cut out, weathered, using metal in interiors, beautiful detailing, almost narrative... Faceting, things to break the light. Not too posh, try to control yourself. Colours are sophisticated and ladylike - fashion is going there, we can see it in the

embellishments and tunics. Design is very expressive. There is secrecy in some items, and there is more space around things - we are going to change our focus to display.

2. NEW COLOUR: Grey and several tones of it and the hammering and sophisticating of metal

3. IMMACULATING: About yourself. We are going back into our own bodies for inspiration and the use of matter will be like skin and bone and light. Edelkoort says the natural history focus which we then transpose into today's areas and artifacts is a called rapid prototyping - the first form made by man is that that he creates organically.

4. THE FUTURE IS US! A warming and welcoming thought, Edelkoort exclaims! "The whole skeleton is on our mind, i.e., car designers are studying our own systems, like our digestive and nervous systems. Rapid prototyping is giving us form that is like skin, like a lung, chubby, an organic of form and colour. Much is inspired by the human body."

5. COLLABORATION: "I see the future suddenly very clearly and we are working with other universities to develop new matter for the future. Today, technology institutions are doing fantastic research and finding super stuff, but they don't know how to give it form. We know how to give it form and embellish it. But so far we haven't got together properly to develop things together."

## ABOUT LOUISE MARSLAND

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