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Futurism and Fashion:

- 1. This is a little bit technical question, actually. Who decides the new fashion trends, futurists or trendsetters? Or do they work together? How phenomenons become a trend?**

It's a very good questions and it's not really technical. There just isn't a short answer– but here it comes: Fashion is big business and therefore it's not a coincidence that decides what colours and styles are hot each season – it's the fascinating science of colour forecasting that starts it all.

I worked in the fashion industry before specialising in trends and colours. I am a member of the BTCCG (British Textile Colour Group) an exclusive club with only 20 members. BTCCG are one of a handful of organisations globally who influence the 'fashion food chain' who feeds into Intercolour – the organisation that influence the colour palette at Premiere Vision in Paris. PV is the bi-annual material show that the whole world of fashion is influenced by.

Twice a year, a group of UK key influential designers gather at the BTCCG to forecast and talk about trends and the tastes of people - two years ahead of consumers actually deciding for themselves. Yearly choices are always within the framework of 'colour cycles,' which only change every few years. The cycles last between two and seven years for fashion, but between seven and 15 years for interiors.

At the BTCCG gathering we all share our colour trends and insights and finally we create a colour consensus, coming up with clear-cut groups and palettes that we believe in. The inspiration comes from everything from art exhibitions, architecture, films or a TV programme, music, gardening, global happenings from food to the Tibetan crises, travelling, political climate etc. just to mention some of the things that serve as inspiration for fashion story telling.

The colours eventually found the base for seasonal colour cards that many of the designers produce for their clients. We have just finalised Autumn 2010/2011. To prevent great financial risk the manufactures and the clothing industry often subscribe to colour predictions to stay ahead. "What experts have predicted it must be right" and that way the risk becomes feels more manageable". An additional benefit is that the predictions create a sort of

consensus, which benefits the entire food chain within the industry: The necessary fabric will be abundantly provided by the informed manufacturers, so designers have the “right colour palette” for their collection.

Within 18-24 months, these colours will appear everywhere. Key is what fabric will be produced and made available in what colours. Mostly manufactures weave bulks of material in safe shades and then add 2-4 trendy shades. This way fashion designers can build their new collections around the new colours and buyers will then scout for those new colours and decide what to stock for the next six months.

Colour and trend predictions have long reduced financial costs and confusion for the garment trade. While couture has the budget to select surprising shades and patterns for their collections, high street chains who produce for the average consumer are expected to be creative within extremely tight budgets – hence you often see a copies from the designer catwalk in the Fast-Forward Fashion scene.

Colour forecasting helps the fashion industry operate with business-like efficiency. Based on the often ‘safe’ consensus colour palette, clothes are produced and eagerly stocked by shops. Consumers - who read about fashion trends or look at fashion-shows become influenced on what to buy for the new season. Waste is low, and profits secured. Prediction helps to guide the consumer to shop safer – just the way designers wanted it in the first place. However fashion will always have it's rebels and trend setters – people who want to break free from the masses and follow their won style.

2. As a futurist, how do you see the next 10-15 years in terms of fashion, design and life style?

I have already predicted the death of fashion trends a long time ago. We already see the rise of a much more lifestyle oriented way of creating ‘well designed clothing’. I think we will see the rise of good old brands with a story to tell. Recently I bought the 1949 Adidas Tennis Range reproduced – that was not about fashion but more about a culture – Classic Sportive Clothing at a good price. I think that many companies will have to dig a bit deeper to find their soul and I think that fashion will be so much more about Emotional Consumption on all levels. Good design, good quality material from ethical sources, colours that suits you (rather fashion fads) and not just: “how does this look” but also: “how does this feel.”

3. How do you think this global economical crisis will affect our life style and the future of the fashion industry?

Good quality for less will always win out – hence the success of Zara. So it's business as usual. Maybe a few of the big design houses will go too as many of them has become far to alike. I guess it's clean-up time and we will see that

the only the fashion brands with a strong direction will survive and new will emerge.

4. **You know what they say, "You can predict a crisis' coming by looking at the fashion". (Red lips, long skirts and short hair cuts increases at crisis!) Do you agree with that?**

I think it might just be an urban myth to say you can predicting a crisis from fashion. I still have to see the scientific proof – I think we are looking at a story invented afterwards. I recently saw a television programme on how check and tartan was really big last we had a recession. Maybe that's an English thing? That check is about tradition and we seek back to tradition when we feel out of our comfort zone? The "Red lips, long skirts and short hair cuts" was back in the 1920's I think? I am not so sure about this. Personally I feel that fashion can be anything you want it to be – it's up to you crises or not. I don't dress differently because of a recession – do you? In fact I always choose things I will wear for more than one season – in fact I live in my favourite clothes. As a Scandinavian I love navy blue – it always look great on me. My favourite clothes are from the French Navy and Swedish army Surplus – Coat, trousers and some woolly sweaters I bought over 20 years ago. I have times I wear them more – but they are classics in very high quality durable materials 'to last a war time'.

5. **For the next decade what will be at the forefront in fashion design? Aesthetic, functionality or something else?**

I think this was answered above in number 2+7.

6. **Which approaches do you think are going to effect design world most for the next decade? (Personal characteristics, sexual or age differences... etc?)**

*The key Social and Scientific trends are: **Convergence Technology**, empowering both our personal and working lives. A key to create more personal meaning is **Co-creation** – enabling social networks foster personal interaction and give people 'a stake' in the future.*

*Emerging **New Power Economies** influence the global economic agenda. However, the more globalised society becomes, the more importance we place on cultural capital and local values making **Glocalisation** is an increasingly powerful driver.*

*The Emotional and Spiritual dimension reflects the mindsets and value universe of tomorrow's people. In a 24/7 society of **Convenience Culture**, instant gratification and indulgence is in high demand. But running in tangent is the premium we place on **New Luxury & Authenticity** – memory-filled and life enhancing experiences.*

*Sustainability is our new religion in the west and it's filtering through every level of society. **Global Sustainers** have already adopted a caring attitude. An ethical foundation is crucial for all brands in the future. As stress and lifestyle diseases reach epidemic levels **Health & Wellness** is on everybody's lips. Personal empowerment and wellbeing must be factored into a future vision and business strategy.*

- 7. Today, we see some kind of "trendy prototypes" (like Kate Moss, Agyness Deyn) while a trend come on the scene. Do you think are we still continuing to see these "trendy styles" in the future or everybody became their own trendsetter?**

Kate Moss has been around for ages simply because she has her own style and is very bold. She still represents the young rebellious teenager girl despite her age – she is a real KIDULT (adult acting as a kid). The same goes for Agyness Deyn she has her own style and is a new YOUNG ICON on the block. The fashion industry will always be looking for style icons or someone to copy - we will never stop to look for the next big thing. In the 80'ties it was Madonna and Blondie, in the 90'ties it was the super models like Linda Evangelista, Naomi Campbell and Christy Turlington – all eternalised by George Michael in Freedom. There are so few trend setters – but the internet already has a very strong influence on the youth. However we also a new Female Empowerment wave - the independent strong woman who is in touch with herself, honest and at the same time feminine. Oprah Winfrey, Zaha Hadid, Angelina Jolie to just mention some of these new great women out there. We will also see more women getting a Nobel price – we will clearly see new women ideals in years to come.

- 8. Also, JC Report's "Death of Trends" report announced that disappear of the fashion trends. Today, we can see lots of trend but any definite one. Do you think this is because of the economical reasons we're living in?**

*Everywhere we look people are expressing individuality through their choices and attitude. It is crucial to understand people and their lifestyles in order to satisfy real needs and provide the right products and services. For far to long we have just produced more and more without connecting to people. This unsustainable growth has come to an end and we have to wake up to an even more demanding audience who want's: **Empowerment** – Be an empowerment brand: inspire, inform and educate your audience. Be **Interactive** – exchange ideas and enable personal interaction to cement relationships with your customers. Practise Sustainability by doing, be transparent and have sound **Ethics** and last but not least: Create **Meaning** and emotional experiences to connect with people.*

- 9. I think "fast fashion" is related with the "death of trends" too. Also it is one of the main stream of the fashion industry, today. Trendsetters and futurists are discussing either fast fashion is enough or not. So, what do you think the future of fast fashion?**

High Street fashion is still booming and has done so for a long time. Topshop are the absolute UK Eldorado whether you are 10 or 70 – rich or poor. It's the place to always check out – you would hate to miss a bargain. It has celebrity following and Kate Moss is doing a range for them. Spanish Zara is another great example of Fast Forward Fashion – and it almost looks like the real thing. It's all about getting the best value for the budget available. People are already customising High Street Clothing to make them more personal and 'one-off'. There will always be a place for Fast Fashion at a discount the rich love it and people on a budget need it.

- 10. How luxury consumption will be shaped in the future? Will it end or does it find itself a new way of living?**

I guess that the future of real luxury is limited edition and less will be more – not minimalism but authenticity. The established western elite is already feed up with so-called 'catalogue luxury'. They want the real thing – limited editions or one-offs: products, services and experiences that can't be copied. The Nimb hotel in Copenhagen is a great example of this. I think that we will see a return to simple understated luxury. People will invest in fewer but better things - an experience of a life-time. I call them the Lifestyle Curators – they simply design or curate their own lifestyle to create a unique story around themselves - perhaps with a little help from creatives who know how to get the look. There is already a big trend in limited edition internet shopping. Check it out at www.20ltd.com/pws/Home.ice "A pair of handmade Champagne white buffalo horn 'Alexander' spectacles in macassar ebony & walnut root case by Onono in a limited editions of 10 at £2,900.00." Most things are sold out immediately as they only come in editions of 20 or less.

However, the reality is that new emerging economies with a rapidly growing middleclass is already having a profound impact on our economies, our markets and our vision of the future. Luxury has gone mainstream and I personally I think we really have to ask "what is real luxury?" More of the same? Increasingly people want to own designer brands to show off their status: "We can afford it" the labels scream at you. It's nothing new – but I wonder where it's all taking us? Luxury used to be for the few chosen – now it's for everyone.

Because of the aspiration of this new middleclass we see a big trend in luxury goods flocked at a discount on the internet. But the good old saying that good taste is bad – because when too many people own the same thing it's no longer desirable.

Fashion Design and Technology:

1. How do you comment on the relationship between technology and design in the future?

If we speak about web 2.0 it's safe to say that it already has a huge impact on design. There is no doubt – it's a revolution. In a network society we connect across conventional borders and it's speeds up the fashion cycle. It empowers people to co-create products, services & environments - we want influence & clear value definition. Understanding how the consumer is evolving within given trend parameters is essential when you want to create spot on design.

2. Today, it seems nano technologies and genetics will be on the forefront in the future? Do you think especially nano technologies will change the whole fashion industry?

I think it's very early days in nanotechnologies – everybody talks about it but not much is happening. I have worked with companies in the shoe industry who using use of nano dust. Also new materials that combat stains, bugs, even sweat are very much talked about – but I will leave this for the experts to answer. I like the idea of self repairable car paint – and if we then had rust combat as well our car could last forever ;)

3. What kind of changes on design and fashion do we start to see in 2009-2010?

I think you have the answer in number 8.