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The Trend Forecaster



JILL SANDS, CMG

Alone Together

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Winston Churchill said, "We shape our buildings, then they shape us." We are shaped by our technological tools . . . while they are shaping and changing us. The following excerpts are from Sherry Turkle's "Alone Together . . . Why we expect more from Technology and less from each other. Sherry is a professor of the Social Studies of Science and Technology at MIT.

Computers are enabling people to lead parallel lives in virtual worlds, no longer limited to a handful of close friends and contacts. Many are finding their online life more satisfying than what some call their RL or Real Life. People are looking to technology for ways to be in relationships yet protecting themselves at the same time; fearing risks and disappointments of relationships with fellow humans. We expect more from technology and less from each other; we're giving human qualities to objects while we're treating each other as things.

Second Life is a virtual world which allows "residents" to interact with each other using avatars. Second Life's avatars offer the possibility of virtual youth and beauty, sexual encounters, and romantic companionship that's not always available in the physical world; wanting a richer, younger, thinner and better looking fantasy world. You never know who you'll meet, and when your interests change you can discard those "friends." Make friends, then move on with no commitment. An ad for Second Life, boasting a virtual world where you build an avatar, a house, a family, and a social life says, "Finally, a place to love your body, love your friends, and love your life." It's a place to feel secure in a world of emotional risks; a virtual world where you are in control. A thirty year old man says, "I'd rather talk to a robot. Friends can be exhausting. The robot will always be there for me. And whenever I'm done I can walk away."



Technology is seductive when it meets our human vulnerabilities. A network life allows one to create a new identity and hide from reality. An older woman says of her robot dog, "It's better than a real dog for it won't do dangerous things, and it won't die suddenly and abandon me making me very sad." So-cial robots give us relationships the way we want them, on our time-line.

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Trends

Trends Interact with One Another

Un-fussy, lived-in, creative, imperfect homes. The premise of cleverness over money, taste over expense, personality over hired expertise, and idiosyncrasy over polish, as described in the Wall Street Journal. There's a co-mingling of trends for they are interacting instead of running parallel with one another. Consumers pick and choose the trends which speak to them, then mash-up and remix them creating an undecorated panache that fits into their lifestyles...freedom of expression. The harmonizing, integrating thread will be non-traditional color combinations. Like an ever-changing modern city, old and new co-exist in exciting contrasts. Sensitivity to the past will



Loveuse Rivadavia

play hand-in-hand with dramatic modernity. We're going to see straightforward, uncomplicated designs with exciting colors and textures in un-fussy, lived-in, imperfect homes.

Our homes should function in harmony with who we are; lifting our spirits and calming our souls. So many people long for a place where they can simply be. That place could be a window-seat, the bath tub, a private spot in the yard. Someplace to empty your mind and see what might enter.

The British are Coming, and Coming, and Coming! – In Spring 2011 we were infatuated and smitten with the new royal couple, William and Kate. They captured the essence of style and seeming-simplicity in the wedding of the century. Next year, the 2012 Summer Olympics will be held in London. Again, we will be treated to a tour de force of British culture and design. Then, as things do occur in three's, 2013 will celebrate the 60th anniversary of Queen Elizabeth reign.

As with all design trends, nothing is coming around in its pure presentation; rather it's an adaptation for today's lifestyles. Traditions will be embraced, but the rules will be relaxed. We'll see compilations of Regency, Victorian, Cottage, Queen Anne, etc., all simplified to blend with existing décor. In fabrics we'll see re-scaled and re-colored cabbage roses, toiles, William Morris, and Jacobean prints along with déjà vu 1960's London Mod. Look for elements referencing England's colonial past . . . peacock feathers, monkeys and elephants. The emphasis will be on freshness and individuality.



Interiorsonline.com

Trends

Trends Interact with One Another



Tulip Chair by Kenneth Cobonpue USA

Flower Power – All things floral, but with a modern twist and unconventional colorways. We will see flowers in many presentations and on multiple products. Flowers are a year round reminder of our toiling in the garden, they are very British (see above), and their array of colors is a feast for the soul. Living in a city doesn't mean one has to lose contact with nature and the rhythm of the seasons. A single bloom as a painting is fresh and lively. A bouquet is soft and feminine. Simplified, colorful, over-sized, minis, botanicals, wall-paper, upholstery, plates, glasses, you name it! Trending up is a fresh crop of Fruits in colorful patterns enlivening home accessories. Look for bananas, oranges, lemons, apples, pomegranates, and watermelon.

Geometrics – A counter-point to Flower Power is Geometry... definitely more fun than high school geometry. Look for Angles, Lines, Curves, Symmetry, Grids, and Circles. Geometric patterns and shapes beautifully and effectively complement the soft lines of florals.

Global Village – International Eclecticism, for those with a passion for travel to exotic destinations and for those who enjoy the tour via their arm-chairs, 2012's designs will capture the excitement of touring the globe to elicit the spirit of discovery within us all. Designs will embody traditional components, simplified and scaled for today's living.

Hints of exotic destinations and elements of native cultures will be subtly incorporated along with striking color combinations of indigenous fabric patterns. Look for embossed leather, exotic animal skin, wicker, bamboo, aged metal, and a variety of wood finishes. Patterns and shapes are reminiscent of treasures in a Turkish bazaar, a Moroccan market, and intricate wood-cut patterns seen in a Nepalese square.

Maps – Cities and Subways – Scarves, Jewelry, Greeting Cards. Consumers are searching for a sense-of-place... be it a remembrance of home, a memento of a fabulous vacation, or inspiration for an escape that's still in its dream-stages. New York, Paris, London and continuing to smaller venues consumers are wearing and sending city and subway maps. Its a nod to vintage souvenir collection and also symbolizes urban pride, like Smirnoff's Absout Cities Vodka.

Seema Malik of Tastement, a line of Subway icon greeting cards, feels that "subway maps stem from the heightened role public transportation plays, a heightened role in our lives in the post recessionary environment, both at home and while traveling." "Iconic graphics and iPhone apps make subways hip, cool and more accessible than ever before." First arriving in New York, "the subway allowed me to explore the city on a very low budget. It was a perfect venue to study, understand and admire the people of the city. With complete technological invasion of our lives, the subway provides that much needed oasis of rest and introspection away from technology. A few brief minutes to pause, observe and reflect."



Callisto Home



Seema Malik of Tastement

Individualism to Control Combinations

Consumers today are more comfortable with timeless choices, but what was timeless in 2008 is quite different from what will be timeless in 2013. Until the economy really returns to the fast track, consumers will continue to use caution in color selection. Palette changes will not be radical; rather, new colors will integrate with existing colors extending the palette. This extension of the palette allows for an ever increasing number of potential color combinations.

For 2012 and beyond it's not just the colors, but the combinations of colors. Often, you can look at a color combination and immediately identify it with a past decade . . . avocado and gold from the 70's, mauve and Wedgwood blue from the 80's. Not so for 2012 and beyond. Individualism will control the combinations chosen. Consumers, no longer afraid of unusual combinations, will add new hues to their existing scheme giving it an unexpected, fresh new look. Neutrals combined with a bright accent add a playful pop to any décor. Color, so affordable, is a wonderful tool providing character and soul.

Reds are exhibiting more richness and depth in tone. Flag Red will prevail due to the growing pride in the preservation of our heritage, plus the flags of the France and England also share our red, white and blue. Cabbage Rose is a dusty mid-tone and Camellia is a bright vibrant pink.



CABBAGE ROSE



FLAG RED



CAMELLIA

Orange is nature aroused; from the fruits of our table; to the leaves of fall to the terrain itself. Clementine is a bright pastel. Melon is soft with a hint of brown while Déjà vu is mineral, earthy hue. Mother Earth was the inspiration for all three.



MELON

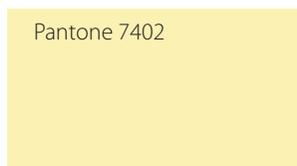


Déjà Vu



CLEMENTINE

Yellow cheers the soul and brightens dark corners by adding a ray of sunshine. Trending forward yellow travels in three directions; from bright citrus lemon to a softer, more subtle banana, to an ethnic spiced curry.



BANANA



LEMON



CURRY

Green ranges from yellow tinted Sicilian Citron to "you can't eat just one" Pistachio. Basil, a perennially favorite summer herb, finds this hue in its more pure form. All three will find many playmates.



PISTACHIO



CITRON



BASIL

Blue is in our everyday lexicon with Bluera y, Bluetooth and Bluetech (a psybient, ephemeral musician), hence blue will continue to hold a leading role in our color selection. Happy brings smiles, Dusty Blueberry is almost neutral and True is like an old friend.



HAPPY



TRUE



DUSTY BLUEBERRY

Purple blends with a spectrum of other colors indicating its neutral status. Iris and Petunia are more flamboyant while Wisteria Lane is a deeper, more romantic hue. Purple has also become gender neutral.



IRIS



WISTERIA LANE



PETUNIA

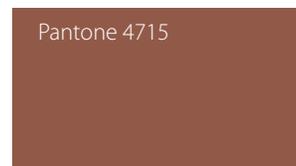
Brown is a color with staying power. Over time it has changed its values but it has remained a classic. Brown plays especially well with greens, oranges, purples and blues. Roussillon is a spectacular hue of ochre which can stand alone or join in a group. Library is a rich mid-tone brown and Fawn is a deeper flesh tone.



ROUSSILLON



FAWN



LIBRARY

Neutrals as a category will incorporate gray, but they are assuming other under and over-tones creating pale refined glamour. We'll also see chalky whites. They will play a wonderful supporting cast to the brighter stars.



MISTY MORN



PUMICE



OVERCAST

Marketing and Demographic Trends

Trends are more like currents in a stream than a tsunami. They ebb and flow. They can be raging white water or serene and flat. Some move quickly through the system while others moderately drift with variations picked-up as they meander along.

“Reach Out and Touch Someone.” A craving for the human touch ensures that a surprise gift is one of the most effective ways for consumers to connect with one another and for retailers to connect with potential customers. Companies such as Interflora monitor Twitter and Facebook looking for users they believe need cheering up. Once identified, they send a Tweet announcing that a bouquet of flowers will be delivered.



Urbanites – According to Intuit, half of the world’s population (3 billion people) live in urban areas. Close to 180,000 people move into cities daily, adding 60 million new urban dwellers annually. And, 100 cities account for 30% of the world’s economy (New York, Paris, London, Hong Kong, etc.).

As urban space is shrinking, the Netflix-model is expanding . . . become a member and you’ll never again have to buy a DVD or whatever. Owning things is expensive, space-consuming, and unsustainable; while leasing offers continual upgrades to the latest innovations. Zipcar, the first car-sharing company, offers memberships and hourly rentals allowing one to book on a Smart-Phone wherever and whenever needed. Witnessing their success, Hertz has unveiled its own car-sharing service. Governments are also exploring this model. Paris,

who initiated bike sharing (Velib), is introducing Autolib, an electric car-sharing plan. With 2,000 cars it would reduce carbon dioxide by 22,000 tons a year while improving traffic congestion as fewer Parisians would need to own cars. New York City’s DOT is partnering with Zipcar to reduce its fleet of cars.

The Netflix-model, or fractional-ownership, allows access to luxury cars, fashion, handbags, jewelry, etc. P2P (Peer-to-Peer) facilitates renting and sharing between consumers: homes, fashion, cars, and even parking spaces. Other than consumables, our purchasing models are changing.

Social Media

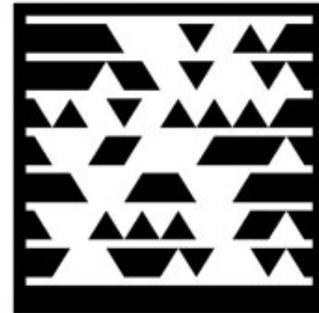
On Social Media by Mizz Information – “We truly have become a nation of free laborers... providing data that Facebook in turn sells in one way or another, boosting Facebook’s worth to an estimated \$100 BILLION. We tweet away, thinking nothing of it; meanwhile, Twitter is making up to \$120,000 PER DAY per promoted trend. ...What you’re actually doing is taking time out of YOUR life and putting money into someone else’s pocket.”

Instant Gratification – This lust is fueled by quicker, more accessible real-time products and services. And, there’s a larger cultural and social trend towards greater spontaneity. Consumers are signing up for services that allow endless and effortless mingling with friends, family, and strangers. (Jeff Jonas of IBM says that mobile devices in the US are creating 600 billion geo-spatially tagged “transactions” a day. That includes every call and text.) For consumers to know where they are and who’s around them is a whole lot easier with geo-location apps provided by Facebook, Twitter, and Google. You can’t hide with your smart phone; Big Brother...or Facebook, Twitter, Google...knows where you are!



Technology Trends

QR Codes – “This strange-looking shape-filled square may not look like much, but it’s very likely the next big thing in marketing and branding for U.S. businesses. With a simple snap of a Smart-Phone, that unique graphic instantly sends valuable information to potential customers, which for some businesses could mean the difference between a sale and a walk-away,” according to Susan Wagner, Editor of Country Business magazine.



QR stands for Quick Response. Its geometric shapes can be read horizontally and vertically employing complex actions e.g., sending a text, downloading a video or opening a web page. It provides instant information, captures data, and engages consumers utilizing a Smart-Phone app.

Consumers want access to real-time information at moments of buying decisions or, they may decide to walk. Peter Johnson of the Mobile Marketing Association (MMA) says that US consumers regard their Smart-Phones as their go-to device for shopping.

According to Wagner, though QR codes were developed in Japan in 1994 and in Asia appear on everything from beer cans to buses, they are only now hitting Mainstream USA. According to the comScore report Smart-Phone penetration is highest among 25-34 year olds and second highest among 35-44 year olds.

How are QR Codes being used? QR Codes printed on sides of NYC garbage trucks show a video on recycling. QR Codes on real estate For Sale signs reveal a home’s interior. QR Codes on headstones allow loved ones to see a video and biography of the deceased. QR Codes placed on store window displays let passersby glean more information.

Environment

Rubber from Dandelions???



Russian Dandelion

Yes! Ford Motor Co. and Ohio State University have joined forces to find new uses for an alternative rubber source. Ford is interested in substituting synthetic rubber for cup-holders, floor-mats, and interior trim using natural, domestically grown rubber from *Taraxacum kok-saghyz*, commonly known as Russian Dandelion which is native to Uzbekistan. Scientists and engineers at Ohio State have developed a commercially viable crop and have effectively extracted rubber from the plant’s fleshy roots, which can contain 15% or more of sticky latex. From greenhouses and a 2-acre test field, plans are now underway for developing larger plantations and a pilot-scale processing facility to test for strength, softness, impact resistance, durability, aging resistance, elasticity and memory. Ford is also looking at using guayule, a southwestern U.S. shrub, as a source of natural rubber. (from David Kuack of *Greenhouse Management*)

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Guayule

Alone Together *Continued from page 1*

Research portrays Americans as increasingly insecure, isolated and lonely. The dream is to never be alone and always in control. This can't happen in RL but it can be accomplished with a robot. Online selves develop distinct personalities, sometimes seen as "better selves." You create yourself as the person you want to be, imagine others as you wish them to be, and construct them for your purposes.

Cell phones and smart phones have eroded the boundaries between work and leisure. As technology promises to free us up it is instead tying us up. It has become our leash; we are tied up like a dog.

People take comfort in being in touch with a lot of people whom they also keep at bay. All of this communication creates its own insecurities. We network yet wonder if we are among friends. We are connected, but not sure if we have communicated. Online communication misses the opportunity to see how others feel through eye-contact, body language, and tone of voice.

We turn to technology to help us find time, but technology makes us busier than ever and ever more in search of retreat. Always online, we deprive ourselves the rewards of solitude. We look for ways to spend more time with family, but each is tethered to their own technologies and we hardly give each other any attention at all.

Ongoing connection denies us time to think and dream. We've become a machine of communicating, but have no voice left for ourselves. We've become a communications culture that has decreased the time available to sit and think uninterrupted. We don't allow sufficient space to consider complicated problems. Technology has been liberating, but in the end it's put us on a treadmill which isn't the same as being productive. "I don't have enough time alone with my mind. I have to struggle to make time to think."

Americans face too many choices, but they are not real choices. They provide the illusion of choice – enough to give a sense of overload but not enough for a purposeful life. It's the siren of the web – people are not as strong as the pull of technology. For many, the metaphor of addiction is the only way to describe it.

China:



Pacific Vortex

- Wedding industry has grown to \$57 billion. Ten million weddings annually (5 times greater than the US)
- China plans political reforms for a new economic direction that empowers consumers and narrows the wealth-gap. It would shift money from companies to households, narrowing the gap between the rich elite and the fledgling middle class. The government will cut subsidies to industries to create self-sustaining growth of domestic consumption to reduce China's reliance on exports and investments. The strategy is to transform the world's 2nd largest economy from low-cost factory into a major consumer market.
- One-third of China's internet users (140 million people) shop online raising 2010 sales 60% to \$331 billion. (This includes B2B, B2C, and C2C.)
 - Chinese non-profit, Project Kaisei, is fighting plastic pollution with grass-roots marketing raising awareness to Pacific Ocean's massive patch of swirling garbage called the Pacific Vortex.
- China had its own versions of group-buying (from cars to clothes) before Groupon existed.

STUFF

- TO DO
- TO POSTPONE
- TO AVOID ENTIRELY

NOTES:

Knock Knock