

Thesis Tecno stan

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“Just a Curtain”... A new Design: search for Well-being through the Textile Medium

Introduction

The design work I have developed is concerned with the well being in the home interior and the creation of an innovative home furnishings collection through challenging already existing protective fabrics in order to re-evaluate and give them a new look.

My interest is in enhancing the quality of resting in the bedroom and to achieve a healthier and protected environment. The aesthetic of my collection is influenced by oriental concepts of peacefulness and naturalness.

Contemporary society > technological era

The new technologies arisen in our contemporary society changed our living spaces and habits. Today's overcharged techno-world is reflected in home interiors. We are overwhelmed by electrical devices, infernal objects, that from one side can speed up the work but from the other can invisibly affect in a negative way our health and body through emitting radiations.

It has been proved by scientific studies and medical research that electromagnetism can be the cause of serious diseases. Research shows that EMR (electromagnetic radiation) fields have a disruptive effect on the natural energy level of our body and can cause changes in the function of cells, tissues and organs. The reason for this is that all our cells are sensitive to EMR; therefore the result of the exposure to these fields is the malfunction of the body. (Ray Master–The No.1 Electromagnetic Protection Device-World Wide www.freeofradiation.com)

- Electrical Sensitivity is a form of environmental illness, provoked by the exposure to electromagnetic fields (Reeves, D. About Electro Sensitivity-The Swedish Association for the Electro Sensitive 28 Aug 1999). This disease affects up to 35% of the population, among these about 5% has become seriously affected to the extent that their lifestyle has to be modified sometimes quite dramatically. The symptoms are the reaction in a multitude of ways of skin and eyes, headaches, sleep disturbances, heart problems and tiredness (Electrical Hypersensitivity www.powerwatch.org.uk)
- Due to exposure of EMF, two recent research reports have identified elevated risks of breast cancer among women working in jobs with presumed higher than average exposure to electromagnetic fields. Moreover, cases of diseases such as breast cancer, melanoma and brain tumours are on the increase and the epidemiological studies reveal a clear relationship and link to environmental electromagnetic fields (Saunders, T 2002 The Boiled Frog Syndrome p 77)

We cannot avoid the use of the technological devices that we all benefit from nowadays, however we have to be conscious of the risks and protect ourselves.

My project “Just a Curtain” is addressed to the bedroom as it is here where, while asleep during night, our body is mostly exposed to the hazards. Consequences of the exposure to radiations can be insomnia, headaches, fatigue, and the interruption of the re-energizing process of our organism.
Simple pleasures > slow down

In the last few years many designers and decorators have been attracted to the East, focusing their attention to the natural harmony of oriental homes and the simplicity of their art and design (West Vs East). This is due to an increasing need of balance, peace and tranquillity in our lifestyles in contrast with today’s hyper fast world.

In an article from Martin Raymond, concerning the future and the sense of speediness that characterised our contemporary culture, he questions: “Many of us are asking if the future really is about making our world a faster, slicker, more transient place. Or should we be revisiting “ideals” of “slowness”... “Is speed the best and only way to go forward into the future?” (Viewpoint 11 Blurred Living -The Impact of Speed on Connected Culture p 27)

In my opinion and according to the market research and consumers attitudes, there is a general need of slowing down in favour of a better quality of life and relaxation, a need of being in contact with the restorative natural environment and of going back to simple pleasures (WGSN think tank – consumer attitudes) (Wabi – Sabi are two Japanese design principles. Sabi – beauty in age and patina – Wabi – solitary; less is better; the fresh and new. Wabi-sabi springs from nature; it is about the beauty of things imperfect, impermanent, and incomplete, the beauty of things modest and humble. It is the art of imperfection and it restores a measure of sanity to modern living).

Relative to Martin Raymond’s article is also the Italian “Slow City” movement, which has started as a trend and a social activity.

“Slow, the movement insists, isn’t about “backwardness”, but about creating spaces where time, food and living can all be appreciated. It is not anti-technology, but about using technology in a measured and life-enhancing way.” Their philosophy attracts people who are interested in promoting a better way of life – “against the freneticism that globalisation has tended to impose on us”.

The 21st century man’s rejection of high-speed society is manifested not just in the Slow Cities of Italy but in the rest of Europe too.

In Britain, especially in big cities like London, city-dwellers are turning to the countryside as a cure for the stresses of modern urban living. A survey by the Countryside Agency found that more than half of the population would prefer to live in the country (Viewpoint 11 Lara corner – Slow Slower p 124).

New Concepts of Interior Space

New living space > modern interiors

Relationship between the surrounding environment and us...how does it affect us?

“We are born indoors, live, love, bring up our families, worship, work, grow old, sicken and die indoors. Architecture mirrors every aspect of our lives – social, economical, spiritual” Eugene Raskin

Everything in a room can alter and affect our mood, such as colour, textiles – surfaces and patterns – smell, sounds, light, the positioning of furniture. We are emotionally and physically subjected by

the environment that surrounds us. Chromo therapy and aromatherapy have been adopted by interior designers and have been used in order to provide both a sense of well being and relaxation in the space that we inhabit.

Through our personality, we shape our environments and equally our lives are influenced every minute of the day by the spaces in which we live. Over the last two centuries, urbanization and industrialization have made nature a stranger and we are now becoming passive victims of our physical surroundings (T Saunders, 2002 The Boiled Frog Syndrome p 4).

In our high-tech environment, we speak to electronic voices, we communicate via computer rather than talking, we work under the glare of fluorescent lights and inhale air that is stale or recycled over and over again.

Our daily time is determined by the speediness of today's society, we spend most of the time in closed environments – home, office, car – where we are constantly bombarded by radiations that can alter our physical and emotional state.

Concentrating in the home interior, I would like to improve the space we live in through the textile medium, creating a secure and pleasant atmosphere that evokes calm, balance and relaxation.

Peaceful Atmosphere and Zen Interiors

What is Zen?

In the philosophical sense, a Zen teacher would probably say there is no answer to the question. It is an approach to life, a way of being, rather than a philosophy or set doctrine. It is more a personal journey of discovery, which aims to free the mind, so that a greater level of awareness – both of the world around us and ourselves – can be achieved (Tidbury, J 1999 Zen Style balance and simplicity for your home p 7).

The Japanese house literally proclaimed nature; sliding interior partitions have scenes or motifs representing nature painted on them.

In our overstressed and polluted environment, there is a remarkably need to bring into our houses a sense of naturalness and breathable open spaces.

My idea of well-being is strongly influenced by Zen concepts and aesthetic; the furnishings collection I have produced for the bedroom space, evokes through colours, patterns and texture both a sense of peacefulness and naturalness.

Moreover, through the use of protective fabric containing the Stan technology I created bed curtains that can avoid the interference of indoor electro pollution.

Consumers Attitudes

The following section of my dissertation is dedicated to the analysis of consumer attitudes and the description of the work of designers that conceptually inspired the development of my design work.

Consumer Attitudes > Peace of Life

The following key words describe a new attitude of approaching life:

Slow down – Time Out – Quality of Life – Relaxation – Ambient

Moreover, key-points have been highlighted to describe the trend for future scenarios:

- As an antidote to our accelerated lifestyles, the modern consumer seeks to reconnect with

nature and the natural world. The future for many consumers will be based on a holistic lifestyle approach, where the focus will be time, space and well-being

- A revival of the Gaian theory (where the earth is perceived as a living organism, a self-sustaining system) and the Japanese tradition of Wabi-sabi (aesthetic appreciation of the imperfect in nature)- are challenging the way we think in the 21st century
- The impersonal nature of technology, will lead to people reconnecting to each other, to nature and to simple pleasures. Traditional crafts, gardening, wellbeing and ecologically themed holidays will continue to be popular. We will seek stress relieving products and services to balance our lives

(Wgsn / thinktank / influences / eden www.wgsn-edu.com)

“Peace of life is only moving in one direction, faster, with all of us driven by technology and progress towards an accelerated way of life. However there are signs that some consumers – and perhaps more than we might think – are stepping aside from the rush and slowing down”

(Wgsn / thinktank / consumer attitudes www.wgsn-edu.com)

Inspirational designers

Anthony Dunne and Fiona Raby > Placebo Project

The Placebo Project consists in the creation of several furniture prototypes that interact, in proximity of electromagnetic waves, with the consumer in the home interior. Like a placebo, the objects want to provide psychological comfort and a new perception of the surrounding environment.

1. Nipple chair

“The Nipple chair furniture piece has an electric field sensor and antenna mounted beneath the seat. When the chair is placed in an electromagnetic field, two nipples set into the back start to vibrate, and the sitter is made aware of the radio waves penetrating their torso. It is up to them whether they stay and enjoy the gentle buzz, or move to a “quieter” spot. As fields can also flow up through the sitter’s body from electric wiring running underneath the floor, the chair has footrests so that you can isolate your feet from the ground (Dunne, A Design Noir p 75).

My interest in the Placebo Project is in the different approach of the two designers towards the problem of electromagnetism. Their attempt is not to solve the problem, rather to find a way of making people aware of the presence of invisible electromagnetic waves and bring them psychological comfort.

Concept of Well being in my collection

What is well being? What am I trying to achieve?

What: The collection ‘just a curtain’ is concerned with creating furnishing textiles to protect from electro pollution Why: to enhance well being in the home environment How: using metal content fabrics endowed with shielding properties to create curtains for the sleeping space.

The aim of my project is to improve the home well being through the creation of an innovative home furnishing collection.

Due to today’s overcharged techno world electrical devices that can invisibly affect our health through the emission of dangerous radiations overwhelm our home interiors.

My response to this problem is the development of bed-curtains for the sleeping space aimed to protect us from the interference of electromagnetism. My attention is in the bedroom, as it is in this room where we mostly need protection while asleep.

Visiting Techtexil fair in Frankfurt (April 2003) I got the chance to contact the Italian company, Ageostan, which produces metal-content fabrics with shielding properties against electromagnetism.

For the realization of my design work I decided to use two different fabrics endowed with the Stan Technology: a polyester organza and cotton. Both fabrics contain 4% of silver; the metallic thread is almost invisible and imperceptible at touch.

Through my experimentation I developed a furnishings collection characterised by the exploration of floral patterns and different layered screen-printed techniques that evoke a sense of naturalness. A different aspect I have been looking at is also the development of a new aesthetic in interior textiles by the incorporation of fashion references. Through the use of the metal-content fabric I have explored the idea of a wearable curtain. Due to my fashion background, I would like to further challenge the boundaries between fashion and furnishings, playing with transformable and bi-functional items.

The development of the project has been both stimulating and challenging as it gave me the possibility of expanding my knowledge of textiles approaching them in a completely new field, the home furnishings. The development of a furnishings collection has been a challenge and a great opportunity of discovering the multi-facets aspect of fabrics' application.

In the development of my work, the aesthetical qualities and the functionality play an important role in the realization of a "human friendly" design. I would like in the future to further experiment the textile medium in relation to the concept of well being, in order to achieve a better quality of life.