

EVENT

Trend report

Li Edelkoort recently touched down in South Africa to share her positive vision of the future at a pair of trend seminars held in Johannesburg and Cape Town

For the past 20 years, Dutch trend researcher Li Edelkoort has pointed companies and consumers towards the future. Li explains that she "observes and interprets peoples' behaviour and moods, and notes down what I see", "...what I do is capture, document, interpret and pass along information".

Li was recently in South Africa to present her vision, in terms of design, fashion, food and lifestyle, for the coming season. Speaking at two exclusive presentations in Johannesburg and Cape Town, and at the world-renowned Design Indaba conference, Li presented her long-term view for 2010 to 2050 and beyond.

Li firmly believes that our reaction to the current global crisis will be a positive one. "We feel that the crisis is not our fault, it is the fault of the banks. We are therefore not trying to absolve our own guilt, which will affect our reaction." Instead, says Li, there is a sense of optimism, and a sense that we are coming to terms with the global period of fear that has characterised the last 20 years (think the 1990s' Gulf War, Y2K, 9/11, health crises including Ebola and bird flu, the rise of international terrorism, and several economic crises, including the current one).

In terms of food and lifestyle, all signs indicate that the emphasis will fall squarely on farming as the way forward, reports Li. "Ninety percent of what we need, what we depend on, will be produced by farms. This is not a romantic, escapist revival but an essential survival spirit running fast towards a brand-new future where the agricultural community will become the planet's new elite."

Li pointed out that farmers will clothe us, house us, feed us, fuel us and hopefully

even heal us. More unusually, they will go on to grow, design and engineer furniture in a symbiosis between technology and biology. We will see "sky" farms – vertical towers of growing space – in the inner cities and the return of small luxury farms in the countryside to handle the market for fresh niche products.

Concepts like seeding, cross-fertilisation and harvesting, amongst others, will inform all aspects of design and lifestyle. Building with wood will increase, especially in the form of barn-like structures. Interior spaces will be landscaped rather than decorated. Animal, cellular and plant-like structures and shapes will give form to designed objects. "Rural" will feature prominently in design. Expect the comeback of ceramics, rocking chairs and hand-made clothes, as well as recycled, repainted furniture, as seen in the "make-do" designs of English designer, Peter Marigold. Designers, such as Tord Boontje, who settle outside cities, will create jobs on a small scale in a new people-driven economy. More than just a fleeting trend, this will be a deep and profound tendency.

Li also believes we have come to the end of the era of globalisation: "Local products will undergo a renaissance, as will regional cuisines." Where "east meets west has failed", we will look to all things local and create a new world which fuses global elements into a local discourse.

To order Li Edelkoort's trend books or copies of *Bloom* magazine, which she publishes, e-mail hannerie@thepresident.co.za or call (021) 462-6092 or 082 782 6707.



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