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FEEL AT HOME – EVERYWHERE!

Trend researcher Milou Ket is confident of the trend: We are cocooning and want our surroundings to have a homey feel whether we're in the office, in a meeting room, at a hotel or in the spa.

This Dutch lady has 42 years of experience as a professional trend researcher and designer. Since 1980 the world has been her office while working for clients as diverse as Swedish Ikea, UK Body Shop and Honda Motors in the US.

DOMESTIC AND FLEXIBLE

Milou Ket maintains that interior designers and architects have turned their backs on minimalism. Now we want it homey and cosy with warm colours, plush fabrics and soft cushions. This also applies to conference and meeting rooms, albeit in a moderated version. Flexibility is the keyword. A meeting/conference room must fulfil many requirements, depending on the purpose of the meeting. Furniture is often equipped with wheels, and the tables are suitable for active use of laptops.

THE EFFECT OF THE ROOM

In meeting and conference rooms there are many factors that affect and influence us: colours, lighting, furniture, textiles. Everything reflects the personality of the business. One can have different intentions. Certain businesses want to impress, others want to appear neutral. In all cases the room will affect the participants of the meeting. Most people are influenced by the room and the surroundings they find themselves in. Atmosphere and temperature are important. If the room is warm and friendly, we feel welcome. Cold, sterile rooms create distance and tend to make us more formal. "In line with the prevailing trend, I know of an insurance company that has decorated its conference rooms almost as a living room. It's meant to be cosy and intimate," says Milou Ket. Several advertising agencies actively use colours to influence participants in meetings.

Red has proven to be good for brainstorming sessions. It stimulates new ideas. Green is soothing. That is why it is often used in hospitals.

LIGHT IS IMPORTANT

"What should one consider when decorating offices right now?" "I would say that the most important thing is continually to be true to the personality of the business – not to follow changing trends. However one thing that is gaining momentum now, and which is always important, is lighting. Light is important because it affects the brain. Too little light can make us depressed and reserved. It is a proven fact that natural light affects people's health. That's why new technology is constantly under development, such as light sources that automatically measure the amount of light in a room and adjust

themselves so that it is always the same, regardless of the amount of daylight outside. Fibre optics is another example of technology that may completely transform the character of a room," says Milou Ket.

HARMONY AND TOTALITY

Sounds and smells are also factors that affect us, even though these two are seldom used in meeting rooms. Shops, on the other hand, use this intentionally in order to influence us and make us feel good. "Too many colours, too many smells and too much light are not good. There must be harmony and totality," emphasises Milou Ket. Personally she favours peace and quiet. But that's privately. Professionally speaking she is a workaholic who travels all the world while lecturing, advising on trends and publishing books. She has also been a regular columnist in the Danish periodical "Interior" since 2005.



BIOGRAPHY

Milou Ket

- Based in Amsterdam, the Netherlands
- Designer and stylist education from the Netherlands and U.S.
- Runs her own business within trend research and design, established in 1980
- Started out designing clothes, but is currently a professional trend consultant in all fields of design
- Has published several trend books with advice and tips concerning trends in interior decorating and fashion
- Publisher of the book "Innovationlab 2004 and beyond"
- Regular columnist in several magazines within the field of future thinking
- Assignments as trend consultant for famous brands such as Swarovski, House of Fraser, Duni, Revlon, Electrolux/Zanussi, Ericsson mobile phones, Procter & Gamble, Mithercare



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