

# WIX

## 40

**Global Color Research**  
Colour, Design, Trends  
and Materials



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**SS 2017 Part One**  
Colour Trends

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**New Trend X-ray**  
Pure & Clean

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**Colour Now**  
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**Materials**  
Raw Wood

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# A Softer Side

Reflecting trends revealed in our colour trend X-ray, wearable tech isn't just about wristbands. Through a new wave of textile experiments, designers are investigating opportunities to weave health benefits into the fabric of our everyday lives. Harriet Cox reports.



01 Photo: Joe Hammond



Whether through clothes, upholstery or soft furnishings, interacting with textiles is a hugely sensory experience. Often sitting close to the skin, the first point of contact is through sight and touch; but now new functions carried in textiles are working harder to tackle issues as diverse as allergies and balancing moods.

American designer Mia Cinelli explores feelings of grief and anxiety in her project *The Weight*. After experiencing the loss of a loved one, Cinelli was inspired by the use of weighted blankets used in occupational therapy to alleviate distress. Typically associated with ADD/ADHD, Autism Spectrum Disorders, and Sensory Processing Disorder, Cinelli says "I wondered if a similar weighted product could quell the feelings brought on by grief; it did. It creates a warm hug, some semblance of presence of another person." Using a soft hand-quilted fleece filled with poly-pellets, *The Weight* creates a comforting pressure on the neck and shoulders. Speaking about the benefits of sensory stimulation textiles can provide, Cinelli explains "Textiles as a medium, especially for objects designed to evoke comfort or calm are especially salient, as they can alter emotions. Something rough can cause surprise or discomfort, while something soft and warm can create a feeling of safety or ease."

Using sensory experiences as a way to influence our emotional state, textiles can



01



02



03



04 Photo: Matthew Nyquist

offer a huge raft of beneficial properties. Embracing this holistic approach, German designer Alexandra Stück explains "We are often too anxious about the future, we have busy lives, appointments and things we have to do. For me, giving additional health benefits to textiles is a way to bring us back to ourselves and lets us reconnect to our senses." Stück's project, Herbal Kneipp, is a collection of hand-woven linens infused with restorative scents. Activated by body movement, touch or body warmth, each piece delivers a different fragrance that will last for up to six months, influencing mood and boosting wellbeing.

Whether it's technical fabrics with interwoven technology or relatively low-tech materials that speak to the senses, textiles also present enormous potential for treating physical illness in a non-invasive way. Central St Martins graduate Sarah Da Costa has created a bra for treating young women at risk of developing breast cancer. The project produced in close collaboration with Dr. Ipsita Roy, a UK Reader of Microbial Biotechnology at the University of Westminster, uses embedded bio-polymers in the garment to deliver the anti-oestrogen drug Tamoxifen through skin contact. A preventative method of treatment, the design removes the need for traditional oral medication, which is not tolerated by up to half of patients at risk. Creating a new type of wearable, Da Costa challenges ideas surrounding the best practice for delivering

drugs, aiming to present fashion and textiles as something that can also be supportive to health.

Dutch design studio Siem & Pabon focus on the effect that our domestic surroundings can have on our health. Often textiles and soft furnishings are where allergy-causing dust mites live, potentially triggering attacks and allergic reactions. The studio's Fervent carpet is a rug designed to make textiles safer for people who suffer from allergies. Made from textile coated rubber tubing, the rug can be connected to a radiator and heated to a temperature of 60 °C (140 °F) every two months in order to kill off allergy causing mites that might be living within the textile.

Finally, Smart Textile Designer Martijn Ten Bhomer also sees the possibilities of using textiles as an aid for medical treatment. "The intrinsic properties of textiles such as flexibility, comfort, softness, wearability and familiarity offer tremendous opportunities for Smart Textile applications on and close to the body," he says. Developed at Eindhoven University of Technology, Ten Bhomer has worked in collaboration with fashion designer Pauline van Dongen to create Vigour; a knitted cardigan with integrated stretch sensors made of conductive yarn. These stretch sensors monitor movement in the upper body enabling physiotherapists to gain more insight into a patient's exercise and their rehabilitation progress. ■

#### Opposite page from top left

- 01 Vigour by Martijn ten Bhomer and Pauline van Dongen
- 02 Herbal Kneipp by Alexandra Stück
- 03 Material pharmacy by Sarah Da Costa

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- 01 Fervent Carpet by Studio Siem & Pabon
- 02 Herbal Kneipp by Alexandra Stück
- 03 Vigour by Martijn ten Bhomer and Pauline van Dongen
- 04 The Weight by Mia Cinielli

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