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Greenwood, Laura, Power, Jess and Harris, Joanne

The power of the forecaster: An exploration into the value of trend forecasting for the survival of SME's in the creative industry

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# Art Design Architecture Huddersfield

**Laura Greenwood**

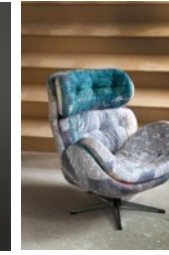
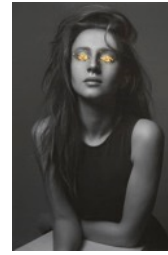
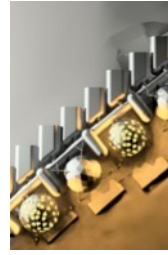
Power, J. & Harris, J.

Laura\_0912@hotmail.co.uk



The power of the forecaster: An exploration into the value of trend forecasting for the survival of SME's in the creative industry

# Background: trend forecasting



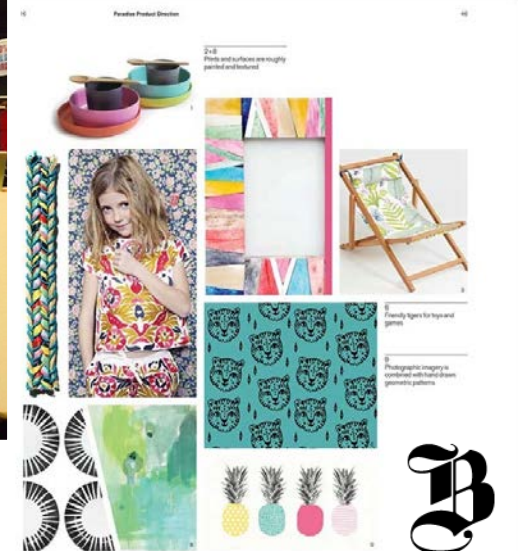
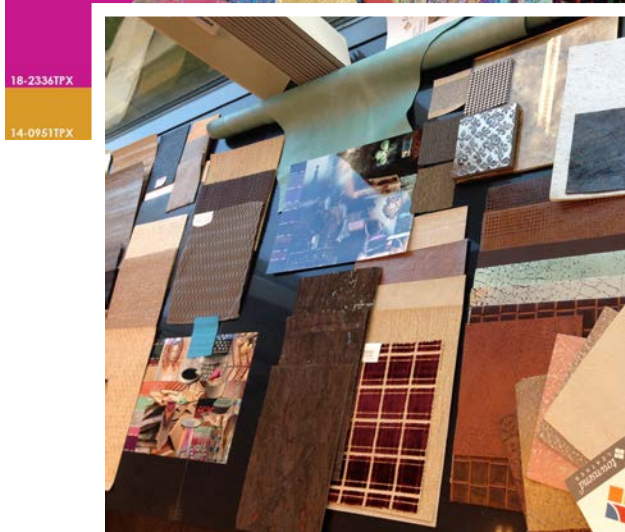
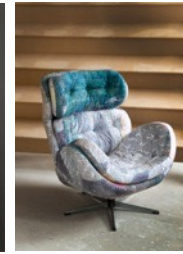
- **Growing resource**
- **Used in a diverse range of businesses (creative industries)**
- **Focus on interior sector (hard and soft materials)**
- **Understand the significance of trend research**
- **Recognise mechanisms for support**
- **SME are vital to the future of innovation & development**
- **“Design” is what links creativity and innovation**

## Aim

- **Explore mechanisms to support emerging innovation through trend forecasting with interior SME**  
(current practice, value, impact)



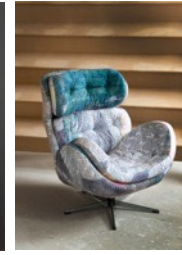
# Forecasting Process & Presentation



Scarlet OPUS  
TOMORROW TODAY



# Research Design



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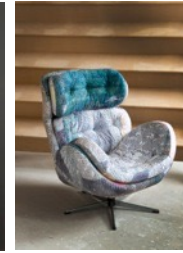
## Theoretical perspective

- Interpretivism
- Inductive approach – construct knowledge
- Ethnography strategies – culture within SME

## Mixed data collection techniques

- Literature review
- Workshops & exhibitions (interviews, observational diary)
- Mini case studies (lit review, interviews, observation)

# Triangulation



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## Objective 1a: Creative Industries

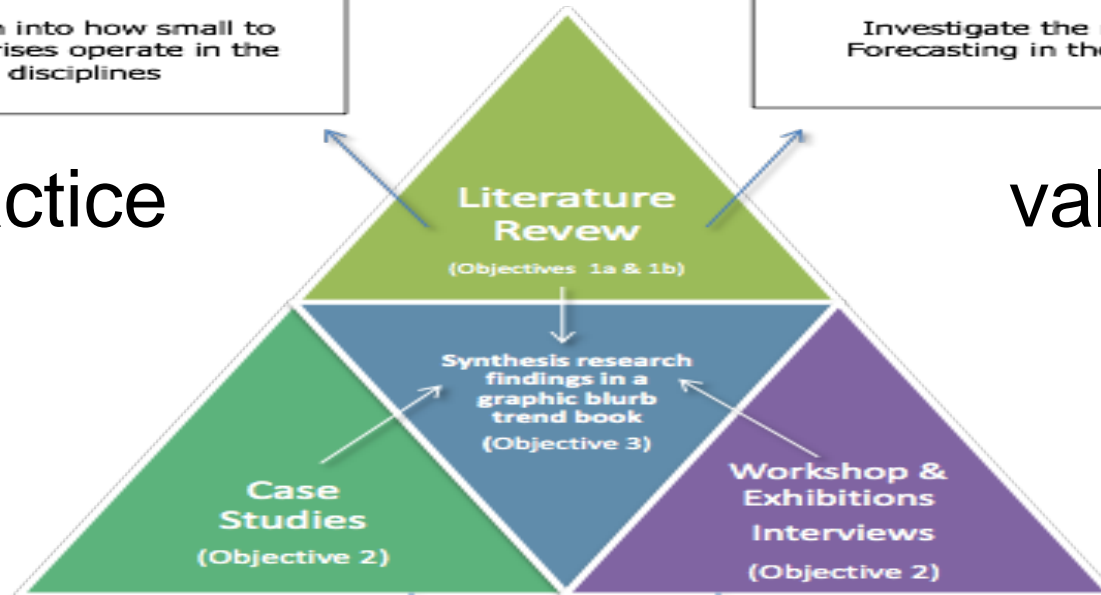
An investigation into how small to medium enterprises operate in the creative disciplines

## Objective 1b: Trend Forecasting

Investigate the role of Trend Forecasting in these disciplines

current practice

value



## Objective 2:

Analyse the impact of Trend Research within the Creative Industry.

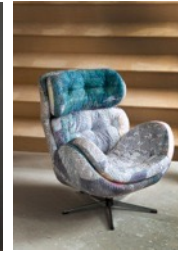
## Empirical Data:

- Observations
- Case Studies
- Interviews
- Exhibitions
- Workshops

Impact



# Workshops and exhibitions



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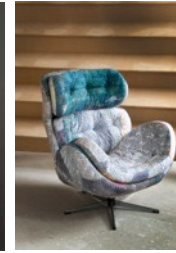
- UK flooring show
- The international surface event (USA)

## Key themes (observation, interviews, workshops)

- SME – presentation appeared dated
- Many had limited understanding of trend
- Limited understanding of value of trend researcher
- Companies with trend, got a lot more media attention
- Not all SME realised the value of forecasting – in terms of merchandising, motivation consumers, increased sales.

**“An enlightening experience, this is the first time I have heard of using trends in this way and the services available”**

# UK Flooring Show TISE East (USA)



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## Future Surfaces

Adams Carpet

Plantation Rug

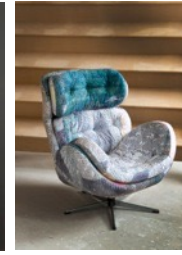


Flooring Show 2014

Trend Merchandising  
Workshop TISE East



# Interviews



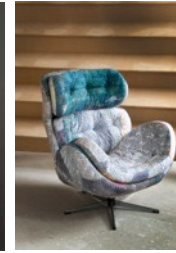
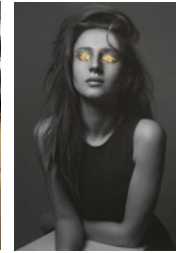
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- Surface designer
- Craft maker
- Trend forecaster

## Key themes

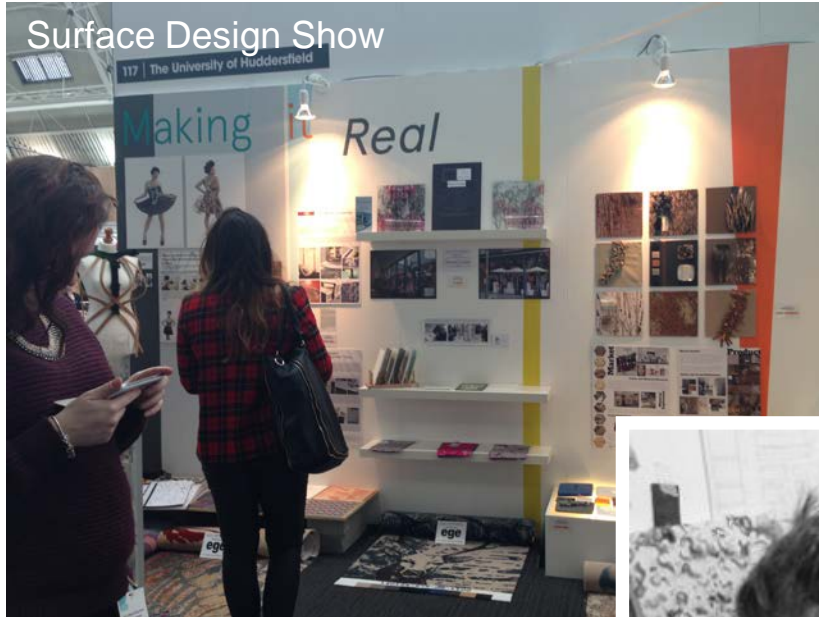
- Tended to use WGSN
- Did not always follow seasonal trends
- Needed a uniqueness to brand
- Stronger focus on materials and technology trends rather than colour and pattern
- Strong focus on lifestyle relevant to consumer habits
- SME – partnership and trust built up over time, important to differentiate brand from mainstream

# Interviews



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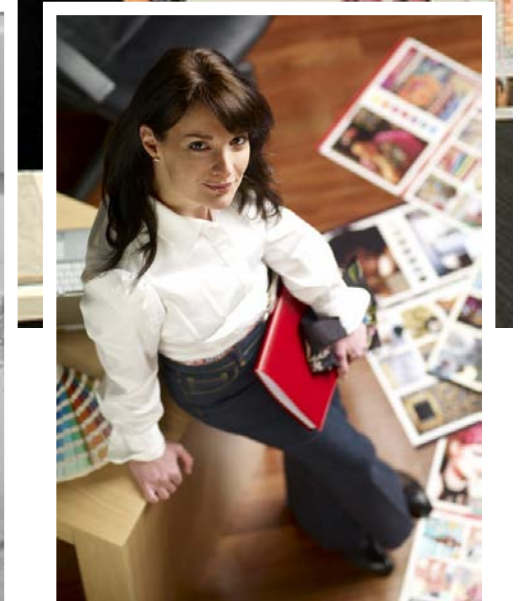
Surface Design Show



Olly Mason - Craft

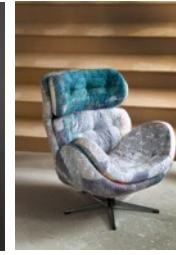


Stephanie Tudor - Designer



Victoria Redshaw -  
Trend Forecaster

# Case studies



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## 6 SME - Carpet / ceramic / homeware

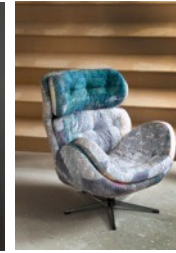
- 4 companies did use trend forecasters

### Key themes

- Lakeland worked with trend forecasters £50m to £200m (colour forecasting)
- Daedalian glass – working with trend last 2 years (lifestyle and social media and pinterest – lead industry)
- British ceramic tiles – own trend team – core business (Lookbook on internet)
- Le Creuset – working with trend last 2 years (preferred working with Scarlet Opus than WGSN seasonal reports – product)
- Westex carpets (100 shades of cream range – no link to fashion forecasters)
- Rotherhams – interesting to explore trend to assist with marketing their product globally.



# Case studies - Example Trend Reports



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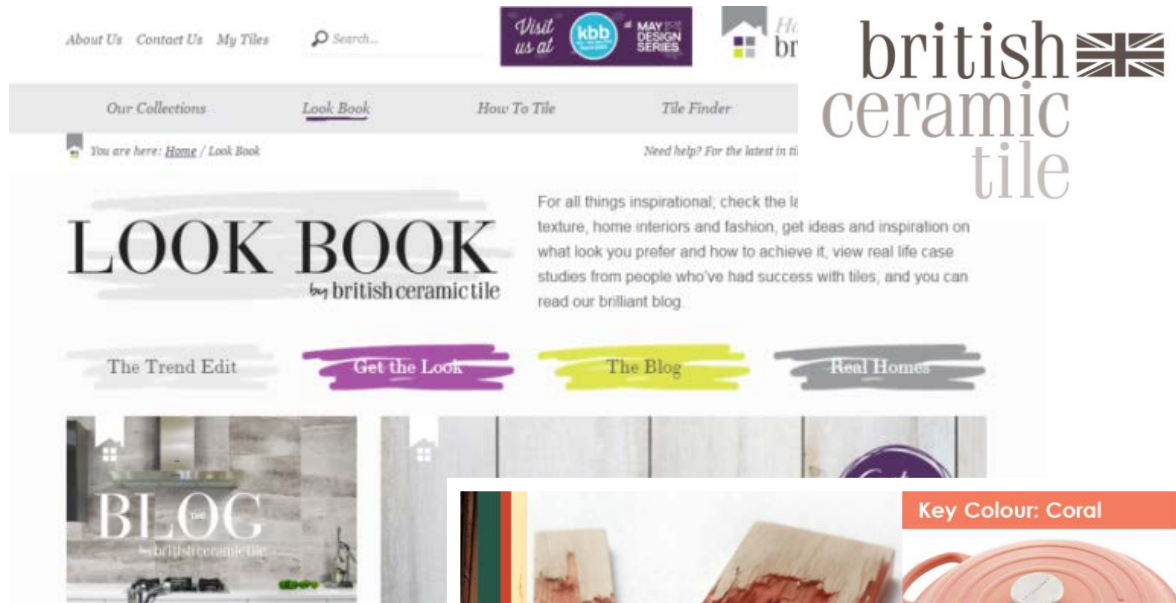
LAKELAND



The Look



Pattern



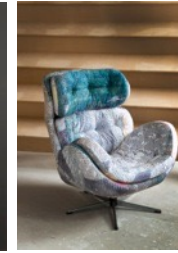
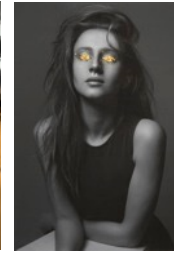
LE CREUSET®



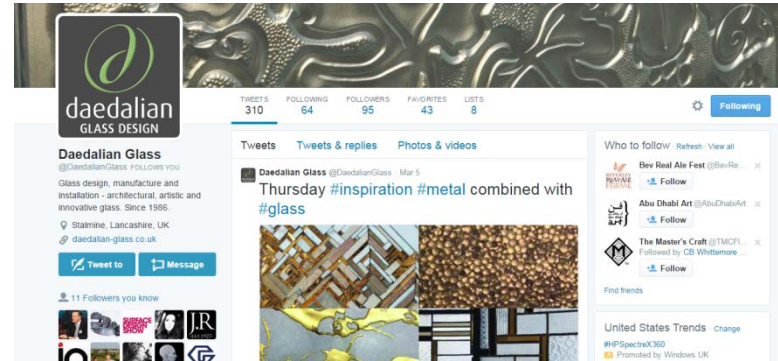
COLOUR & STYLING



# Case studies - Trend Brochure/Social Media



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J. ROTHERHAM  
— EST. 1927 —



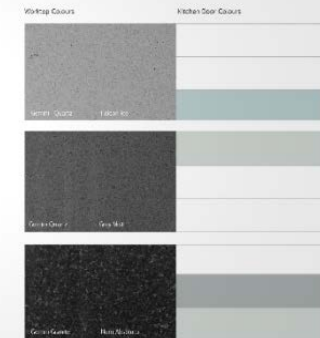
## MATERIALS, TEXTURES & EFFECTS

The key to successfully achieving this trend's look lies in strong contrasts between smooth, beautifully engineered materials and raw industrial textures.

Materials are masterfully solid, heavy and opaque, boasting obvious signs of their architectural inspiration via both simple basic geometric shapes and sleek, ergonomic, curved forms.

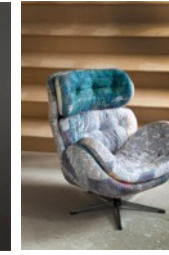
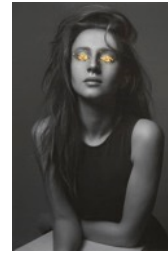
White marble and Corian, shiplap panels of grey granite, and gritty concrete dominate this trend, giving it its strength and sturdiness. These qualities are played off against fuzzy colour-tinted and dusty semi-transparent glass and resin which will gleamingly shine into sunlit surfaces.

The bold and confident riding of these materials across room schemes creates a balanced harmony of solidity and transparency, robustness and delicacy, sweetness and astuteness.





# Findings



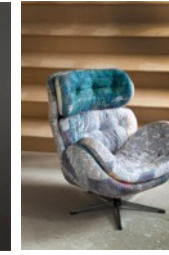
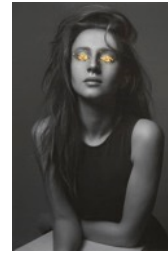
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(current practice, value, impact)

- Less flooring companies engage with trend forecasters and other sectors.
- If they do use trend research this is not demonstrated to their customer
- SME flooring sector tend to be profit driven
- Cultural resistance to pay for external trend information
- Difference between trend reporting and forecasting
- Lots of information online (general reports differentiate)
- Role of trend forecaster – specific to business needs
- Lot more interest in materials and technology
- Marketing information and social media



# Conclusion



- The research facilitated new ways to tailor trend to specific needs of company – social media (Pinterest)
- Strong relationship was required (SME) – change culture
- Trend forecasting package – (aesthetic design) brand awareness, market orientation, merchandising, exhibition design, social media.
- Workshops made biggest impact for SME, customers liked blog approach and links with social media.

Any  
Questions  
?

**Laura Greenwood**  
Laura\_0912@hotmail.co.uk

