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The Power of the Forecaster: An Exploration into the Value of Trend Forecasting for the Survival of SME's in the Creative Industries

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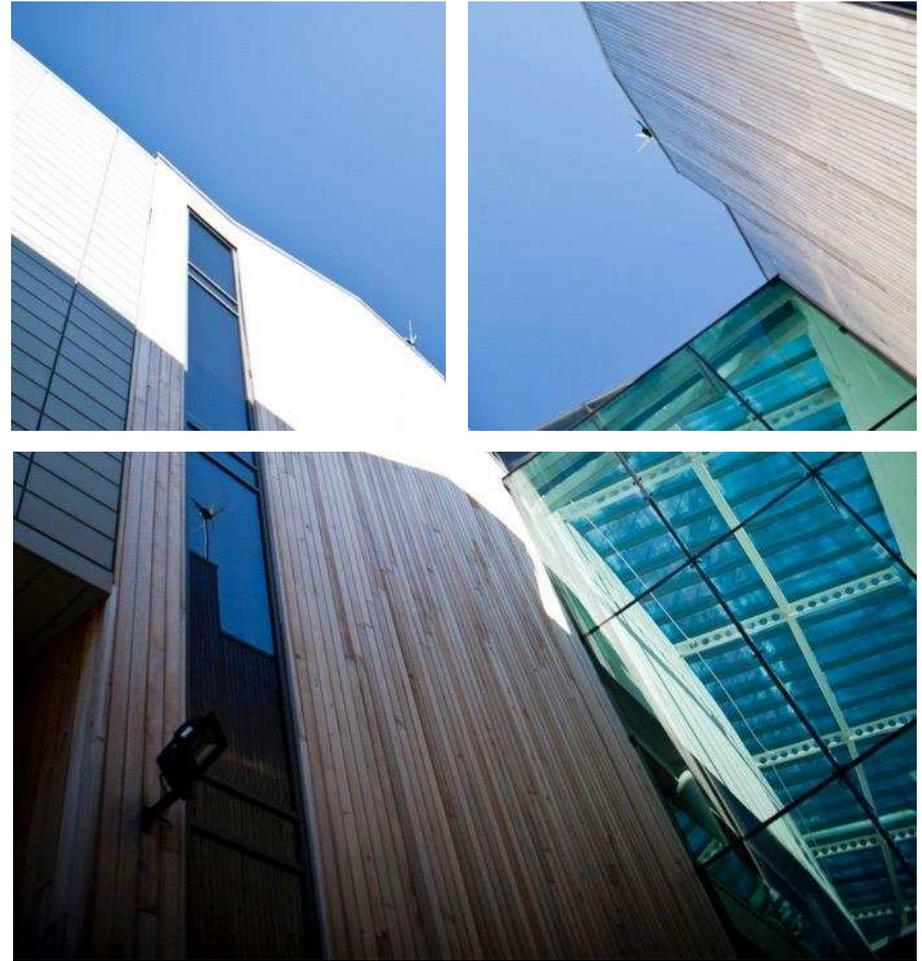
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# Art Design Architecture Huddersfield

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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



Art  
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- **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



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19-1761TPX 187C  
19-3952TPX 280C  
18-6024TPX 349C  
17-3323TPX 2583C  
19-3737TPX 269C  
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Product Division

2+3  
Pinks and oranges are roughly paired and textured

4  
Trendy types for tops and gowns

5  
Photographic imagery is combined with hand-drawn geometric patterns

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



Art  
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## Objective 1a: Creative Industries

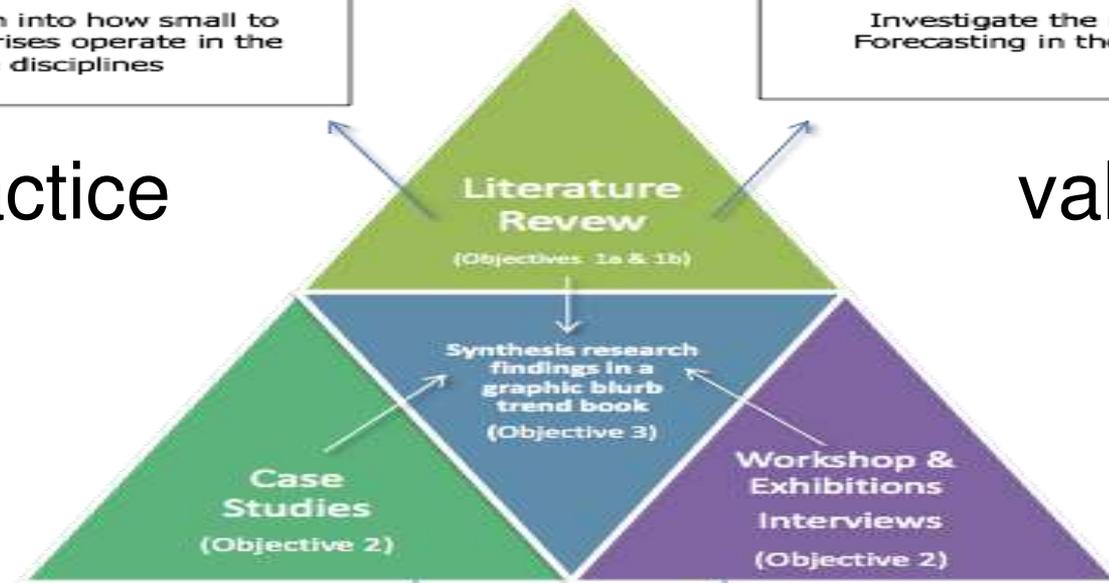
An investigation into how small to medium enterprises operate in the creative disciplines

## 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



Flooring Show 2014

## Adams Carpet



## Plantation Rug



# 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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Architecture  
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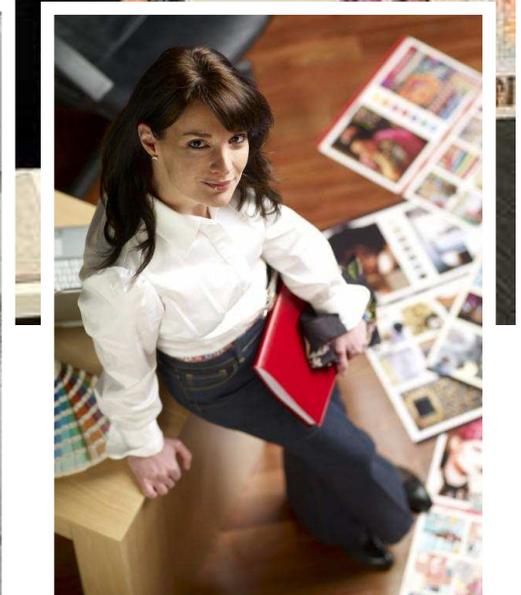
Surface Design Show



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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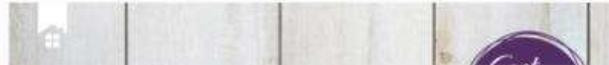
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# Findings



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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



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- 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.

