

# Inspiring Eve

## 靈感泉源

Designer Eve Mercier has her finger on the pulse of the design industry and shares what's on her radar with us.

設計師Eve Mercier暢談設計業的潮流脈搏。

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**E**ve Mercier is a busy woman. As an entrepreneur, she runs an interior design school in Chai Wan that emphasises on learning practically. As a designer, she offers students her experiences gleaned from a practical background working in journalism, art history, fashion and interior design, across Europe and Asia.

Interior design is a passion Mercier found later in life. Her journey began with a job at the French edition of *The Art Newspaper*, one of several career moves that she says helped her ultimately as a designer. "To be a journalist means you have to listen to people," she says, "to get under the skin of a story, and with an interior design client, that's what you have to do." She went on to develop a keen eye for beautiful things, a love for history and an understanding of cultural references working at Christie's auction house; skills that have helped give her design projects layers.

It wasn't until Mercier arrived in Hong Kong for the first time twenty years ago that she moved into fashion and started her own company

**E**ve Mercier生活忙碌，作為企業家，她在柴灣開設室內設計學院，強調以實際應用為教學方針；作為設計師，她與學生分享她過往於歐亞地區在新聞、藝術歷史、時裝和室內設計範疇的工作經驗。

Mercier對室內設計的喜愛直到後期才發現，她表示不同的工作有助成為設計師，而她的設計旅程是從法國版的《*The Art Newspaper*》工作開始：「作為記者，我需要聆聽別人的故事，探索新鮮事，包括與室內設計客戶深入交談。」她其後在佳士得拍賣行工作，逐漸培養審美眼光，了解歷史和文化對藝術的影響，這些經驗有助她掌握設計項目的不同層次。

Mercier首次到香港是在20年前，及後開了一家時裝公司，從那時起對布料、顏色和材質有更深入的認識，這些對室內設計都很有幫助。她受上海灘委託設計了一小系列產品，自此便跳進室內設計世界，投身知名的倫敦室內設計公司Candy and Candy，最終成立自己的設計公司。當她第二次到香港，發現室內設計市場有發展空間，啟發了她整合所學的技能，創辦了Insight School of Interior Design。







which in turn improved her knowledge of fabric, colour and material, she explains, all of which are important elements of interiors. It was after she designed a small tailor-made collection for Shanghai Tang that she made the leap into the world of interior design, working for the renowned London-based interior design firm Candy and Candy, and eventually going on to create a company of her own. When Mercier arrived in Hong Kong for the second time, she moulded her career again after discovering a gap in the market for interior designers. This inspired her to fuse all the skills she had learned and start Insight School of Interior Design.

Trend-wise in interiors she is seeing a distinct lean towards eco-friendly, sustainable materials and design. Property developers are wondering how they can set themselves apart she says, "how do you make your tower better than their tower basically". Beyond the look and feel of the space, people want to know what materials are being used, especially in China she explains, "they want to know if there is formaldehyde in your mattress!"

Mercier also says there's a move away from a 'total look', that people want their spaces to be a little more eclectic to reflect their personality. In fashion terms, she says, "no one wants to be head to toe in Coco Chanel," it follows then that she admires designers who think outside-of-the-box and whose designs tell a story. For Mercier, Hong Kong-based designer Joyce Wang is

one of those people. Others on her inspiration radar include work by Studio KO on the Yves Saint Laurent Museum in Morocco and the 'whale skeleton' interior of Hermes' third store in Paris inspired by the fact that it was built in an ex-swimming pool.

When it comes to teaching inspiration, Insight Design's students are put on a "magazine detox" for the first part of their course. For Mercier, keeping ideas fresh can be as simple as using your eyes and ears. Inspiration can be found in the obscure; supermarket packaging, new shoes or a leaf on the pavement and definitely from travel. She appreciates the strong sense of aesthetic in Japan and their tradition of 'wabi-sabi' (the art of imperfection), the beauty and colour in Italy and the balance between symmetry and savoir faire in France. She acknowledges that she was likely influenced, design-wise, unwittingly from the start, having spent her youth cycling through the 18th century town of Versailles. Seeds of influence also began at home with her father's enduring love of architecture, beauty and attention to detail. "Some people call me a perfectionist," she says through a knowing smile and she seems ok with that. Above all, she says the people who continue to influence her are not necessarily in her industry but those who are not afraid to take risks because "you can't be afraid to fail, you will fail and you will break things, otherwise you won't create anything new".

她傾向以環保、可持續的材質和設計為重心，每家發展商都想方設法在芸芸對手中脫穎而出，問題在於「如何令自己的建築較別的好。」除了外觀和感覺外，人們想知道用了甚麼建築材料，特別是在中國，Mercier表示：「他們甚至想知道床褥會不會釋出甲醛。」

Mercier認為越來越少人重視「Total Look效果」。大多數人都想居住空間帶一點不拘一格來反映個性，她善用時裝的術語說：「沒人想由頭到腳穿Coco Chanel。」她很欣賞一些天馬行空的設計師，能夠透過作品說故事，Mercier認為香港設計師Joyce Wang是其中一位，其他欣賞的作品有Studio KO建築事務所摩洛哥打馬的Yves Saint Laurent博物館，名店愛馬仕巴黎第三家店的「鯨魚骨」設計，因原址為泳池，所以才有這概念。

在教授尋找靈感的第一部分時，Insight Design的學生都要先解除雜誌對他們的影響，Mercier認為要有新靈感必須用眼睛去看，用耳朵去聽，靈感總會在意想不到的地方出現，如超級市場的包裝、新鞋子、路上的一片落葉，當然不少得旅遊體驗。她欣賞日本人對美的強烈觸覺以及其「侘寂」，即接受不完美的日式美學傳統；意大利的美態和色彩；法國高度於對稱和隨機變化之間的平衡。她表示年少時經常踏單車穿梭18世紀小鎮凡爾賽，不知不覺間對她的設計產生了影響。她對設計的熱情亦來自熱愛建築、美學和注重細節的父親，她笑言：「有些人說我是完美主義者。」她覺得沒有問題，影響她的人不一定來自設計界，更多的是那些不怕冒險的人：「不要怕失敗，失敗是難免的，只有當你打破舊有思維，才可以創造出新的東西來。」