

# Identifying Product Design Trends at Dutch Design Week

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Trends in design manifest in many ways, from fads in form or production to themes or topics explored. These trends are often generated within the design community, but also reflect local and global culture. To identify meta-trends in contemporary design culture, we worked with nine student researchers to gather data seen during an academic trip to Dutch Design Week in 2017. The results indicated growing interest in four central themes: identity, globalization, technology, and production. From these themes, nine trends were outlined; social engagement, production consciousness, design for agency, material innovation, humanist design, humanity and technology, re-interrogating history, speculative design, and questioning the role of design practice itself. We noted a shift from narrative-driven to experiential designed objects and a change from individual expression toward communal experience. We also observed a discipline in flux as designers struggle with these large themes, objecthood, and the role of the designer.

Keywords: Industrial Design, Trend Forecasting, Undergraduate Design Researchers, Design Field Study, Design Education

## Introduction

Trends in design manifest in many ways, from fads in form or production to themes or topics explored. These trends are often generated within the design community, but also demonstrate links to culture on a more widespread level, ranging from local issues to the global economy (Watson, 2012). These larger trends indicate the changing ways designers engage with the issues surrounding them, as well as what issues are connected to changes in the design community.

Oftentimes trends reflect ideological movements as they interplay with events of the world around them. This relationship shapes the way we understand historical eras and movements in design, such as the Arts and Crafts movement (born in opposition to the Industrial Revolution) or the birth of Modernist ideas in the wake of massive inequality and war (Fiell & Fiell, 2013). When broken down, these movements are composed of smaller repeated practices that can be recognized as trends. Such trends can manifest as aesthetic tendencies, common manufacturing processes, objects produced, challenges faced, and other articles of design that contribute to building a movement. We found interest in what we termed meta-trends: larger than popular styles or formal details, but smaller than era-defining movements. Thus, we turned our study towards these patterns in design work that provided us meaningful information about the ideologies and processes of their creators.

We sought to research these trends, their evolution, and their impact on young designers as we worked with a student team to collect data and analyse the trends seen at Dutch Design Week (DDW) in Eindhoven, Netherlands in October 2017. Understanding trends helps students place their own work into a historical and



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social context and develop understanding and critical perspective toward their responses to designs they encounter by others. This increased perspective also helps them create, frame, and discuss their own work. As we collaborated with students to learn more about contemporary trends, we asked ourselves how we might help them evaluate their own work and place it in cultural context.

As is documented in efforts to enhance student understanding of the cultural power of design through design history classes, contextual learning is important to helping students develop an informed perspective (Cardall & Howell, 2018). If students fail to develop the ability to synthesize trends in design, their ability to engage with and influence contemporary culture is limited. This lack of analytical skill places young designers in a position to be more easily swayed to create work in reflection of local style or what is perceived to be “cool” rather than intentionally placed in contemporary context. Our goal in our research was to study trends with a method in which student participation was instrumental in hope of helping students who may not be exposed to work on the level shown at international exhibitions like Dutch Design Week construct contextual understanding and definitions of contemporary design trends and their relationship to culture.

## Research Method

To identify meta-trends in contemporary design culture, we worked with a team of 9 undergraduates student researchers from Brigham Young University’s industrial design department to gather data during an academic trip to Dutch Design Week in October 2017. The students were asked to photograph projects they perceived to be unique, outstanding, or relevant to them using their personal judgment. These images were collected in a single Google drive folder upon return and analysed in multiple affinity mapping sessions by three course participants and the tutor. Affinity mapping/diagramming is an established method of finding connections between multiple variable elements and is outlined by IDEO in their method cards (2003).

Our instructions to the students while on site at DDW were left open-ended to allow them to exercise their own critical judgment. As this was an educational practice, this was in part to encourage development of their critical perspective, but also to engage their expertise as a layer to our collective curation. On the trip, students viewed much of the same material, often together, so these open instructions provided space for their individual viewpoints, as certain pieces were noted by multiple students and others by just one, although their peers had experienced the same display.

The student researchers contributed two elements to our study: first, they aided us in collecting images and analysing and identifying potential trends, our primary research focus. Second (the main reason for student involvement), we hoped participation in this research would enrich their awareness of the relationship between culture and design in a way that would have meaning to their work as designers. This coordinated with other efforts in our program, specifically our design history course, to tie in thinking about society and design. By scrutinizing how work showcased on an international level engages with trends they see in local design culture, students can begin to understand and practice engaging with culture in their own work as they dictate their personal definition of what it means to be a designer

## Themes & Trends

The analysis indicated growing interest in four central themes: identity, globalization, technology, and production, with many of the trends observed questioning the role of design itself. From these four themes, we extracted what we believe to be nine unique trends that define modes of discourse within contemporary design. For each trend, we worked with the students to classify examples from the work documented and examine potential influences and societal factors that could contribute to the trend’s motivation. We used this evidence to write our own definitions of each trend.

We attempted to define the observed trends by motivation, not theme; many topics were reflected across categories. Our interest lay in the response’s designers formed that contributed to contemporary methods of designing, not the subjects currently in cultural vogue. By structuring our analysis using motivating concepts, we sought to dissect the ways designers process and react to culture through their work, and how these actions are emblematic of culture in themselves. Some of these trends reflect both concept and topic as they utilize disciplines like history and technology to navigate issues, but these pieces borrowed from these domains in a way unrelated to their topic in order to contribute to more topical conversation. In a sense, our trends analyse how designers design. For this reason, we are viewing these as meta-trends, each serving as conceptual categories for more specific aesthetic, formal, and structural trends within the larger contemporary

moment. The nine trends we identified are: Socially-Engaged Design, Production-Conscious Design, Design for Agency, Material Innovation, Humanist Design, Humanity + Technology, Reinterrogating History, Speculative Design, and Questioning Design Practice.

### *Socially-Engaged Design*

Design taking into consideration the social aspects of its creation, use, and aesthetic. While these projects can include environmental interrogations, they primarily deal in social, cultural, and ethical issues. This category questions, innovates on, and considers societal values through designed objects and experiences. Perhaps derivative of the much discussed socially-engaged art movement and often influenced by the design thinking movement led by Jane Fulton-Suri at IDEO, these pieces are rooted less in form and physicality than humanitarian results. As design thinking becomes increasingly prominent in corporate culture (Bjogvinsson, Ehn, & Hillgren, 2012), design that is explicitly human-centred to the point of emphasizing social aim over object detail is perhaps a natural evolution. Oftentimes, this includes departures into participatory projects, design for accessibility, and politically-engaged work that applies design skills, processes, and principles to another field's practices, or at the very least, uses these values to drive creation.

This category was perhaps the dominant trend seen at Dutch Design Week. Trend cycles are often understood in economic terms, flowing directionally from sources of power in the producers of objects or, when democratization is considered, flowing upward from producers of culture to those who create objects. When we examine design history, it becomes apparent that on a large level, trends are linked with societal changes. Maria Mackinney-Valentin argues trends stem not from specific points or events, but from the process of "becoming," and are therefore linked to multiple economic groups and directions coming together (2013). This concept suggests trends form as creators and consumers alike collectively attempt to change and respond to their surroundings. Under this understanding, the rise in socially-conscious consumable objects suggests a response to an increase in political upheaval in both the United States and Europe. It is unsurprising that during this time, designers began to create items that, while not necessarily political in nature, allow them to act as politicians in kind by creating projects and systems to enact social and communal good.

Projects students documented from this category spanned a wide range but shared common themes. One collection by a Design Academy Eindhoven graduate Alissa Rees (2017) created vests to allow patients greater mobility and humanization by allowing them to wear medication supplied via IV or cannula instead of pulling it on a trolley (Figure 1).



*Figure 1: IV Walk: graduate student Alissa Rees's intravenous delivery system that can be worn, giving hospital patients more freedom to move around. Dutch Design Week, Eindhoven 2017.*

Another Design Academy graduate linked large balloons to cellular devices to alter the experience of their use in social situations to make phone users more aware. Other projects were very production-oriented; design collective Social Label employed workers with disabilities to help create and design a collection of ceramic dishes with prints inspired by their production. Similarly, designer Ro Smit connected the local wool industry

with makers with disabilities to create woven blankets that unlocked their common skill, with the weave and pattern of the blanket designer to accommodate its makers specific skill set depending on their needs and interests, empowering them to have a specific and skilled role in the creation of the piece. These pieces vary from provocative to marketable but share a common interest in actionable social change.

### *Production-Conscious Design*

Design driven by its production methods, taking into consideration the economic, cultural, and ecological consequences of making and manufacturing to determine the final product. Many of these projects focused primarily on creating objects produced sustainably, though projects designed for sustainability were seen in a much wider conceptual range.

Often these projects overlap with Socially-Engaged Design, such as the work by Ro Smit and Social Label discussed above that utilized their supply chains and manufacturing processes to accomplish their design goals. Others of these projects play with material innovation or historical practice, exploring readymade design as a form of sustainability (as seen famously in work by Piet Hein Eek, among others).

Another segment of work, like the ceramic light fixtures displayed in Figure 2, unites craftsmanship with narrative by using the method of creation to give form. In one such case Travel Agency (2017) used recycled plates to create ornamental lighting, giving a discarded item a new role. Viewers must then engage with the process of the object's production as they engage with the piece visually, and are therefore prompted to ask questions about time, labour, and value, making it a piece about production as much as it is a light fixture.



*Figure 2: Light fixtures created from discarded ceramic plates by design studio Travel Agency. Dutch Design Week, Eindhoven 2017*

### *Design for Agency*

Design that pushes against standardization in order to bestow greater power on the user to determine the role a product best fulfils. This category includes ambiguous, customizable, and sometimes participatory design. These objects represented an interesting wave of pushback to the Modernist dialogue of de-stratification via standardization still espoused by (and praised in) corporations like Ikea. These pieces were made to place the power with the individual user, not the designer who created them, or the manufacturer who controlled their cost. Sometimes these pieces overlapped with production-conscious design by being made possible through new technology like 3D printing, while other times these pieces created space for pluralistic readings of historical objects.

One notable piece in this category, entitled *Prinstrument*, was created by Design Academy Eindhoven graduate Kristaps Politis (2017) to allow children to learn about how sound is produced by creating their own instruments (Figure 3). Various modular forms could be 3D printed and connected and reconnected so their users could continually experiment with designing their own instruments and sounds. This project checks off the triumvirate of qualities central to pieces in this category: its forms are ambiguous enough to not connote a pre-defined limited-use object of a type; it is designed for complete individual customization; and it is participatory in nature, asking its users to help build the project as they use it to suit their functional aims.



Figure 3: printed instrument pieces shown by Kristaps Politis at Design Academy Eindhoven. Dutch Design Week, Eindhoven 2017

### *Material Innovation*

Design that relies on new development of tactile or non-technological materials to create a product in an innovative way. Similar to how production-conscious pieces place craft and manufacture at the centre of their product narrative, material innovation builds around a specific material, often repurposing a natural substance or by-product for an unexpected or secondary purpose. Cow stomachs, salt, and fungus were all repurposed into high-quality objects for everyday use, using their material as a base for objects that enhance their natural abilities. For instance, Design Academy graduate Billie van Katwijk's (2017) work finds the leather made from cow stomachs contains beautiful, unique textures that are showcased brilliantly on handbags, creating functional luxury items out of what was previous wasted in traditional meat or leather production (Figure 4). These projects play in a space between those objects that push boundaries of what design can be and those that ask questions about what design has been.



Figure 4: Cow stomach leather purses by Billie van Katwijk shown at Design Academy Eindhoven, Dutch Design Week, Eindhoven 2017.

### *Humanist Design*

Perhaps a derivative of socially-engaged design, but lacking the category's solution-oriented agenda, humanist design focuses on connection and humanity in ways intended to foster emotional and cultural poignancy. These pieces focused on elements that grounded a sense of being by finding beauty in community and heritage, exploring sensory narratives, and building connections between person and place. Their purpose was not action, but connection, with a more holistic and less political approach. A standout example was shown by Atelier NL (2017), whose designers collected sand from participants living around the world to create dozens

of unique types of glass, each “native” to their own location (Figure 5). These glasses were then explored and combined into a series of dishes and vessels that worked together symbolically.



Figure 5: To See a World in a Grain of Sand Exhibition by Atelier NL, Dutch Design Week, Eindhoven 2017, Photo Courtesy of Atelier NL.

### *Naturalized Technology*

More than now-mainstream user experience design asks how we interact with digital devices and interfaces, these projects ask how our humanity is enriched by (or attacked by) the technological innovations around us. What if selfie sticks were watching us? What if plants were electronic? This is a question posed by Studio Drift (2017) with their luminescent dandelions (Figure 6). By integrating the visceral and natural aspects of the human world with technology, a realm of alien products pushes the boundaries of the human relationship to technology in a surprisingly optimistic manner. These are not additions to the self-contained world of smartphones, but digital additions to the physical world.



Figure 6: Dandelion fibers mix with LED lights in this piece by Studio Drift, Dutch Design Week, Eindhoven 2017.

### *Re-interrogating History*

Design that reinterprets and questions previous trends and eras to draw from design history in a way that is more inclusive and less problematic, while still learning from the past. These projects seem particularly linked to today’s era as they contrasted older norms with contemporary views: what role do product designers have

in pollution? How have designed objects and systems contributed to discrimination? The projects seen that fit into these trends took current issues, like climate change and civil rights, and placed them directly within the heritage of design as a profession. Consequently, these pieces played into a highly referential discourse made possible by the largely design literate audience present at Dutch Design Week. In this way, these pieces are some of the most closely linked to the narrative-driven design art pieces of the last ten years.

One example of this was a chest designed by Design Academy graduate Kostas Lambridis (2017). Lambridis' piece was a patchwork of different historical styles of production and ornamentation in various states of completion and decay (Figure 7). By piecing together a disparate collection of chests into one chest, he creates a form both unfinished and old, familiar and not, rich in artistry but intentionally lacking an aesthetic thesis in order to create a conceptual statement. The chest combines a variety of chests to create a meta-chest, more about the idea of what a chest might be, and how style, culture, and ornamentation plays into that, than about operating as a chest.



*Figure 7: This chest by Kostas Lambridis combines various historical styles and states of decay, Dutch Design Week, Eindhoven 2017.*

### *Speculative Design*

Design driven not by function, but by desire to make a statement about an issue. This design poses questions about the future and experiments with breaking boundaries and eliciting a desired reaction, requiring a different kind of design goal, often asking a 'what if' question. Like the work discussed in the "reinterrogating history" meta-trend category, these pieces share a relation to design art through their non-commercial nature and willingness to prioritize statement over all else. Consequently, these designers ask important questions about the possibilities of objects in a way that feels both imminent and out of reach.

One such piece, "Domesticat" by Veerle Kluijfhout (2017), created clothing from cat hair in place of wool (Figure 8). Why do we use some animals' fibers to produce our clothing, while others we keep as pets? Another piece, the Gene Machine, designed by Design Academy graduate Mies Loogman dove farther into the realm of science fiction to ask questions about products already prevalent in society — in this case genetically modified food. The machine gamified the selection of genes to allow participants to thoroughly engage with the concept of a "genetic lottery" and look at how that could not unreasonably be executed for future foods. Through its fantastical presentation, the Gene Machine allowed viewers to sustain an idea that would otherwise feel far-fetched or controversial.



Figure 8: Sweater knit from cat hair by Veerle Kluijfhout, Dutch Design Week, Eindhoven 2017.

### Questioning Design Practice

Designs that question the constructs we use to define 'design.' These designs use the act of designing and the resulting objects (or lack thereof) to question the way we view and create objects. Consequently, these pieces often have highly non-traditional forms as they explore the boundaries of what can be designed. This can experiment with new media and disciplines, interactions with senses, the forms we expect our products to take, and reasons why we create items.

One such example was a set of morgue refrigeration boxes in which the viewers could enter to experience narratives told by scent and sound. By immersing the participant in darkness, their sense of sight, often the most dominant sense when analysing design, was disabled, and participants were able to engage with their other senses more fully. Such a project was highly speculative in nature, but its role as a designed experience was didactic, as it highlighted to its audience a new way to design and process objects in a critical sense.



Figure 9: Students participating in a sensory narrative experience from inside a morgue refrigerator, Dutch Design Week, Eindhoven 2017.

## Comparison to Previous Years

Work seen suggested design is in a period of evolution as evidenced through comparisons to research of the recent past. One project referencing work shown in Paris demonstrating a very different design ecosystem focused on playful conceptual work, specifically interpretations of figures of speech (Howell, 2008). Another evaluation from a similar time frame found an emphasis on pushing boundaries of design using organic “blob” forms, a craft perfected in their own unique ways by such diverse and notable talents as Karim Rashid, Ross Lovegrove, and Zaha Hadid (Holt & Skov, 2005). Of particular importance in Dutch design in the recent past was the emergence and dissemination of conceptual design powered by Droog, a movement that contained the playfulness of the figurative designs seen in Paris and the open allusions of the blobjects as well. These three together depict an era much more object-oriented than our current one, but very open to experimentation within that construct. Often referred to as “design art” (Taylor, 2010), work of this nature developed a basis for a new kind of design: these designs, progressed farther than their postmodern predecessors away from formal and functional emphasis and toward narrative emphasis, often with a playfulness and joviality that in retrospect seems definitive of the era.

It is easy to draw the pathway, however, of the contemporary experience-driven work as a natural evolution of these narrative-driven trends. The Dutch emphasis on readymade manufacturing by Droog and its contemporaries shows beginnings of decoupling from the object as the canvas for design, and it also shows interesting ties to recent work that interrogates the history and production of designed objects and processes. Similarly, the processes used in designing around figurative language exhibits a storytelling similar to that seen in contemporary projects that placed human stories as their central compelling argument. The organic objects, motivated by desires to reframe what stereotyped items must look like and discover new and scientific approaches toward design and manufacturing show a similar trajectory of thinking to some of the speculative projects, particularly those exploring how humans might interact with technology in a way that looks very different from how we expect it to now.

## Analysis

By understanding meta-trends at play, we can try to understand the societal themes that compose them. Using these themes, the interactions and relationships between trends can be examined to help identify future trends, micro-trends, and other innovations that might provide solutions to consumer needs and satisfy the zeitgeist. When looking at the big picture, these trends can be separated into larger groups based on the questions they try to answer. This shows how design is responding to the current cultural climate, as well as showcasing where it can go in the future. While some seek to establish the role of the designer, others seek to respond to technological innovation or current events. It is of particular importance for students to begin to understand the relationships between design trends and society as they develop their voice as designers and begin to produce work in the world.

Our era in design is in some ways dominated by the functionalist rationale of design thinking. While design thinking was not the foremost design method employed at the event, its voice was definitely heard, and its participatory, value-driven ethos was reflected in many of the trends observed. Design thinking’s influence has seemed to represent a swing towards the moral and pragmatic motivations over purely artistic in design. Whether this is seen as a lasting change or a temporary shift on the design marketplace and whether that will be of positive or negative effect on the discipline remains to be seen. Julka Almquist and Julia Lupton suggest this migration towards design that is universally problem-solving endangers users to oversimplification as it breeds globalization, creating a mass consumer culture easily packaged and sold (2010). That design leans this way echoes populist sentiments seen worldwide. Socially-engaged art has been criticized for being self-complimentary and ineffective, and Claire Bishop argues its evaluation is so commonly simplified to “good” or “bad” based on ethical aim that the work has come to function as a political tool more than an artistic piece (2012).

However, this somewhat cynical reading discounts many meaningful aspects of this era. While many trends sought to solve large-scale problems, in and of itself a noble aim, others dealt in specificity, often seeking to work from a specific place or moment in time. This is interesting in a time when movements for and against nationalism are on the rise. Socially-engaged art and design thinking both have become major movements in their fields, drawing both praise and criticism for their reorientation of success for creative work away from the physical object and toward the collective social experience. Bjögvinsson et al. argue there has been a quest for participatory design to reinvent objects, and, more deeply, human interaction with objects, for much

longer than our current rendition has been trending, linking this pursuit to negotiations around the democratization of the workplace in Scandinavia in the 1970s (2012). This origin story reflects both the political motives and speculative quality seen in much of the work researched for this piece. It also provides a source for the “big tent” view of design’s migration away from the physical object, something demonstrated by the number of sensory and experiential pieces observed.

Our student researchers in particular noted a shift from narrative-driven to experiential designed objects. While trends of the past ten years, demonstrated by Droog in the Netherlands and others in Paris (Howell, 2008), played with language, convention, and storytelling, the emerging trends showed a much more externally-focused perspective. The former group created expressive work of a nature often highly personal to the designer, but the latter placed the focus on those who view, use, and engage with the design. These works often centred around the experience of the object in some way designed to enhance a life process. Our students speculated as to the cause of this change: has the internet connected the world, but also isolated it, causing designers to seek community? Or is our contemporary interest in well-being, which permeates social politics, healthcare, consumption, technology, and culture manifested through this desire to improve experience in any way possible? As students in our program’s design history class pointed out, the rise in design work around ephemeral concepts like food, biology, and the sharing economy is emerging from the object-oriented, highly artistic work very prevalent in the recent past. This presents a shift away from individual expression toward communal experience as the primary value in design.

This movement toward experience is mirrored by the emerging disciplines (Howell, 2016) stemming off industrial design away from the world of hard products. Experience design, service design, systems design, interaction design and more see designers today as thinkers to problem solve for experiences and facilitate interaction in a way that was not always required of designers of physical goods and spaces. These trends showed a group of still object-oriented designers grappling with this change as they brought a layer of experiential awareness to products, garments, spaces, and more. We also saw a shift away from the object itself, as with many products the object served as an example or derivative secondary in nature to the theoretical or conceptual work being done. Many projects instead displayed articles like projections, prototypes, books, samples, or art objects that were not “designed” in the traditional sense. Some pieces disconnected themselves from objects entirely, their artefacts of a less corporeal, more sensory and experiential format. With this shift, we see movement not just toward new disciplines, but away from a disciplinary understanding of design entirely towards what Craig Bremmer and Paul Rodgers understand as “metadisciplinary,” “alterdisciplinary,” and “undisciplinary” as they find designers’ processes anchored more in issues and research than discipline-centric skill sets (2013).

David Puttnam proposed the changes afoot in design stem from the dominance of digital technology in our era. The digital world, he argues, is not performed like our physical world, but is created entirely by designers (1996). Perhaps the mentality developed by designers thinking in the ways required to build an online universe from scratch has seeped outside the world of digital design and back into the physical one, causing a blurring of disciplines and migration toward problem-and solution-oriented thinking. Similarly, the push towards connection with society, history, and fellow humans resembles a physical search for the global closeness that can be experienced (or, one could argue, simulated) on the internet. The internet’s role in the deobjectification of design and the role young designers native to the internet play in this poses questions for future study.

## **Conclusion**

Our research documented a discipline in flux as designers took on massive themes like humanity, technology, sustainability, and globalization and adjusted their results to match them. While the trends we analysed represented nine unique ways of questioning to produce work around those themes, we found they together grappled with objecthood and the role of the designer, something that was duly noted by our student team from an industrial design background. While, when compared to objects of the recent past, the work observed for this research seemed more sociopolitical in nature, it is important to acknowledge that designed products are always products of culture. History is possibly the clearest place we see this, as we remember eras by their household objects, fashions in garment and decor, and general aesthetic inclinations. Though designed objects of the current moment may feel more overtly political, seemingly apolitical objects are not created in a vacuum, and are perhaps political in their own way, just not the one in vogue at the contemporary time.

Also noteworthy in our research was the specific role Dutch culture played in the event, despite its international nature. Less projects were seen that focused on certain topics. For instance, our North American students anticipated seeing more work around feminism and gender studies, some of the most discussed and politicized topics in the United States at the time of research, but found the issues held less prescience in contemporary Dutch politics. Similarly, Eindhoven's strong craft tradition and focus of programs at the Design Academy led to significant amounts of work on materiality and history from current students and alumni. These local factors were considered, but not discounted when analysing trends, considering the strong international community present in the overall Dutch design sphere and at the event itself, as well as the fact that all documented trends were observed both at projects affiliated with the Design Academy and not.

A primary function of our project was our attempts to conduct research in a way that might be impactful to the student team. We worked with students to discuss how design for trends might be implemented, and how meta-trends and larger culture could influence their work. This coordinated with other efforts in our program, specifically our design history course, to tie in thinking about culture in design. By scrutinizing how work showcased on an international level engages with trends they see in local design culture, students can begin to understand and practice engaging with culture in their own work as they dictate their personal definition of what it means to be a designer.

Many of the student researchers were fourth year students working on their own self-guided theses at the time of this undertaking. As the students worked on completing their projects, more than half reported in a survey that the work studied had a significant impact on the direction of their work (Larsen & Howell, 2018). Interestingly, nearly all these senior students exhibited theses that fit cleanly into one of the outlined meta-trends. Many of their peers worked on theses that also fit into these trending categories, although the non-research group had a higher number of projects outside the delineated trend map.

Since much of the work at Dutch Design Week was shown by young designers not significantly more experienced than our student team, we found it particularly interesting to see what work resonated with them initially, and then stayed with them as they progressed through their studies and continued to realize their voices. In a sense, this project itself took on a participatory level as the students we worked with aided in trend research, and we learned about their educational experience from the work they conducted. Our goal to improve their social understanding of design through trendspotting research in order to approve their ability to interface with contemporary culture through design was successful in the early engagement and conversations seen. As students can often be quick to cycle through trends, rapidly adopting and migrating as they seek to establish their own ideologies, the long-term effects of this project on them remain to be seen. However, their participation in meta-trends on some level seems likely given their demographic and the relationship drawn between many of the trends we observed and internet culture.

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