

A Week in Paris Yields Timeless Inspirations

I find myself fortunate to be on the board of directors of Luxflora, a woman-led non-profit organization focused on building a network for women in the floriculture industry to connect, interact and ultimately inspire one another towards promoting the prevalence of flowers in everyday life.

One of the founding events tied to our organization is the international trip, offering an opportunity to women in the industry to travel together to a destination abroad. They can see first-hand what others are doing to promote plants in addition to exploring and learning about peripheral industries that interact and influence ours, such as art, interior design and fashion. The ability to weave flowers into these arenas creates a unique opportunity to differentiate, inspire and — if we are lucky — cause a shift in perspective that will open doors to new opportunities for our industry.

Each trip is crafted with this intention in mind and this year we led our first Paris-based Luxflora trip in early September.

Paris evokes an inherent association with the arts that, in name alone, almost assures credibility to the trends, fashion and design found there. I would venture to say that this city has rightfully earned that credibility and its position of being a mecca of creative pursuits. It truly is a place that cultivates individuals wishing to challenge what is to what could be in all forms of artistic expression in this “City of Light.”

Our itinerary was comprehensive and the Luxflora team will be working on aggregating many of the takeaways into our Trend Report due out early next year. We spent two full days at Maison and Objet, an indispensable show for all professionals working in fashion, decoration and the home. Maison and Objet offered the opportunity to gain insight from global designers on the future in decoration, design, furniture, accessories, textiles, fragrances, children and tableware.

Here are some preliminary insights.

Plants are prevalent:

As interior design components.

- Containers and stands designed specifically for plants are seeing a rebirth in options and designs across the income spectrum and are being shown as an essential piece to compliment interior décor.

See: Umbra Wall Planters or Nesta Planter

In terrariums.

- The ultimate solution for someone who travels a lot — or just simply forgets to water
See: **Pikaplant Jar**: “The plant recycles the water and air it has, adapting to stay healthy and grow. It waters itself so you don’t need to!”

In healthy lifestyles:

- Some great initiatives in the EU focused on quantifying the exact amount of clean air different plants generate.

See: www.oreen.eu

Care for me and I will help you enjoy a vital life.

Next, we traveled through Paris to get a glimpse of the expanse that is Paris Design Week, a showcase of over 300 participants throughout the city that brings together the talents of retailers, galleries, showrooms, hotels and restaurants for eight days to share their experience in design and creation with the public. Some preliminary highlights:

Designers are branching out, exploring new substrates and media to inspire and widen the reach of their craft:

- Mosaic artisans are expanding into textiles, furniture and nano-mosaic jewelry

See: www.sicis.com.

- Crystal designers are adding function to their flawlessly formed products and collaborating with artists like Damien Hurst to create one-of-a-kind works of art

See: www.lalique.com

- Cosmetics companies, like Yves Rocher, founded by a botanist, are focusing on naturally sourced, organic ingredients for “Botanical Beauty” products — “Give back to nature what it offers us, day after day for each woman’s beauty”

See: www.yvesrocher.com

Interspersed with these days, we visited Parisian retail garden centers and floral design shops like Jardinerie Truffaut and Au Nom de la Rose (In The Name of the Rose).

Last, but not least, the trip was closed with visits to two of the most inspired gardens known around the world: one of which placed the gardens with such high importance that they were the centerpiece and reflection in the famous Hall of Mirrors at Versailles and the second inspired one of the most world-renowned impressionist painters, Claude Monet — his gardens at Giverny.

Traveling abroad always seems to inspire purpose and renewed energy for me. I return home with new ideas to share with my colleagues that are then integrated with others’ ideas to create concepts and solutions for the market. As a global team, we value these insights, anticipate their influence and leverage their impact on our products and the industry.

Time and again, we see the future is often realized by those who are looking and listening, who identify the shifts, and decide how they want to direct them. For me, the future belongs to those who want to set the trends, not be defined by them.

Because, as we all know, the best way to predict the future is to create it. [gpn](http://gpn.com)



Kate Santos is operations director with Dümme Orange and member of GPN’s 40 Under 40 Class of 2012.