

PICTURE THIS: GREEN EDGE

PRODUCT DESIGN: EVELLA JONGERIUS

MY SPACE: STUDIO AMITA VIKRANT

HOME REVIEW

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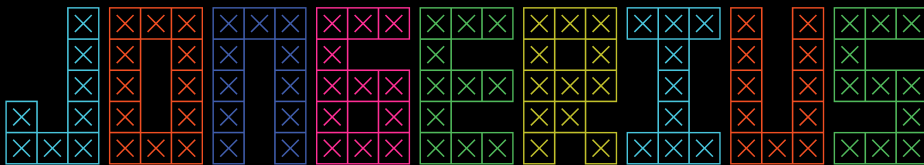
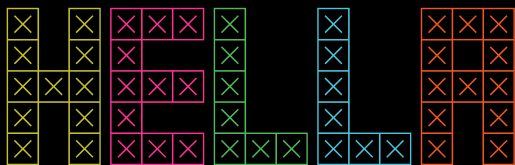
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Hella Jongerius and her team bring in unexpected dashes of colour, texture and context to everyday pieces, making them stand out in a crowd of product designs.

Text By Chryselles D'Silva Dias
Photographs Courtesy The Designer

At first glance, Berlin-based designer Hella Jongerius' website itself is a reflection of the products from her studio. The look is mostly traditional but there's a twist. The website has a topsy-turvy menu just like her products that have an unexpected, unfinished edge.

Born in 1963 in The Netherlands, Hella founded the Jongeriuslab Studio in 1993 where products are created for the studio's banner and also for major clients such as the United Nations, the airline KLM and design house Vitra among others.

Hella's earliest designs are full of gorgeous porcelain pieces, a result of her collaboration with Royal Tichelaar Makkum. The Big White Pot and the Red White Vase (1997) stands out in Toyota Red; the choice of colour was also a statement about the toxicity of the earlier existing paint, now replaced by industrial spray paint. The Seven Pots series (1997), the clay-textured Extended Jugs (1997) and the B-set series (1997), an "imperfect" set of tableware, all follow similar lines and principles.

Items in the B-set series are fired at a high temperature which causes each element to be slightly deformed. This series was the first porcelain to be produced by Royal Tichelaar Makkum, who until then worked with only earthenware and stoneware.

Hella continued with the industrial theme with Repeat (2002), "an upholstery textile with an unusually long cycle of repetition, introducing random order and the opportunity to create one-offs within a family of furniture items. The pattern refers to silk ties in the archives of the Swiss weaving mill where the fabric is produced." She has created several designs for textiles, especially rugs, since then.

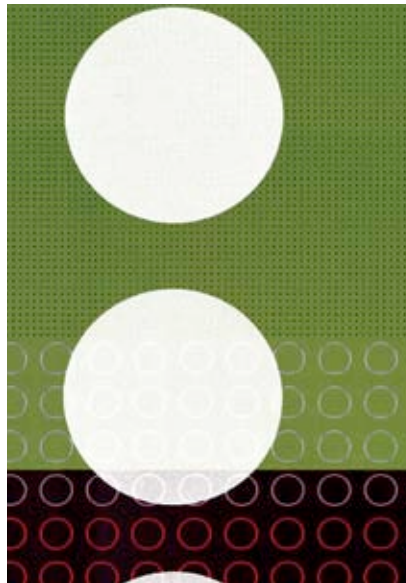
The studio has diversified into many products including furniture. One of her earlier designs is also one of her popular ones. The Polder Sofa (2005) for Vitra is inspired by the typical Dutch 'polder' landscape which includes land reclaimed by means of using long horizontal dykes and intersecting canals.



B-set series



Red White Vase



Repeat



Polder Sofa



Polder Compact

The long sofa has unusual proportions but looks extremely comfortable and is perhaps wide enough to double up as a bed. Ten years after the Polder Sofa was created, Vitra has introduced the Polder Compact (2015) which brings new colour, shape and materials to the older version. Textiles for the upholstery were designed and created by Jongeriuslab.

Also taking inspiration from nature is the Frog Table (2009) which explores the relationship between the user and their products. The table has a prominent 3D frog figure which can be viewed as playful (if you like the amphibian). Either way, this is not a piece of furniture that can be ignored or overlooked.

In 2009, Jongeriuslab was commissioned to remodel the North Delegates Lounge at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. Hella designed two new furniture designs for the lounge - the UN Lounge Chair and the Sphere Table. With legs of dark brown wood and steel and "UN blue" fabric with leather patches on the armrests, the UN Lounge Chair was made for informal discussions where furniture could be moved and reassembled without trouble.

The Sphere Table has a large half-sphere of acrylic glass (also called the "Bubble"). The sphere can be adjusted on either side of the table this making it a versatile design. The Bubble gives the user a semblance of privacy in an otherwise open design.

The UN Lounge also featured a Knots and Beads Curtain featuring traditional Dutch fishing knots and handmade beads with all their imperfections thus bringing a slice of the Netherlands to New York. In 2014, the studio designed the East River chair for the UN Lounge "to facilitate conversations in a casual atmosphere".



Frog Table



North Delegates Lounge



Sphere Table

The East River chair is a cheerful looking, sturdy armchair with practical colours and upholstery. The strap handle on the rear of the backrest also makes it easy to move around.

More recently, the colourful Tile Table (2017) has garnered attention. The wooden table has a hand-glazed ceramic top in fresh and cheery colours. This attention to colour is the result of an extensive colour research in ceramics and it shows up in her other work as well. In 2006, Hella experimented with colours for the B-Set resulting in the 'Coloured B-Set'.

In 2010, she made 300 vases for her 'Coloured Vases' series. Each series had a range of colours, "an investigation into the perception of colours that optically merge". All colours were based on old mineral recipes and the intensity of the hues is reminiscent of old paintings.

From vases to rugs to interiors, Jongeriuslab has created beautiful, useful designs for everyday living. The unexpected touches like colour, shape or texture only serve to enhance the user's experience - much like the upside-down menu of her website which will bring a quick smile to your face before you click and turn things the right way again.

✉ www.jongeriuslab.com



Tile Table



Coloured Vases