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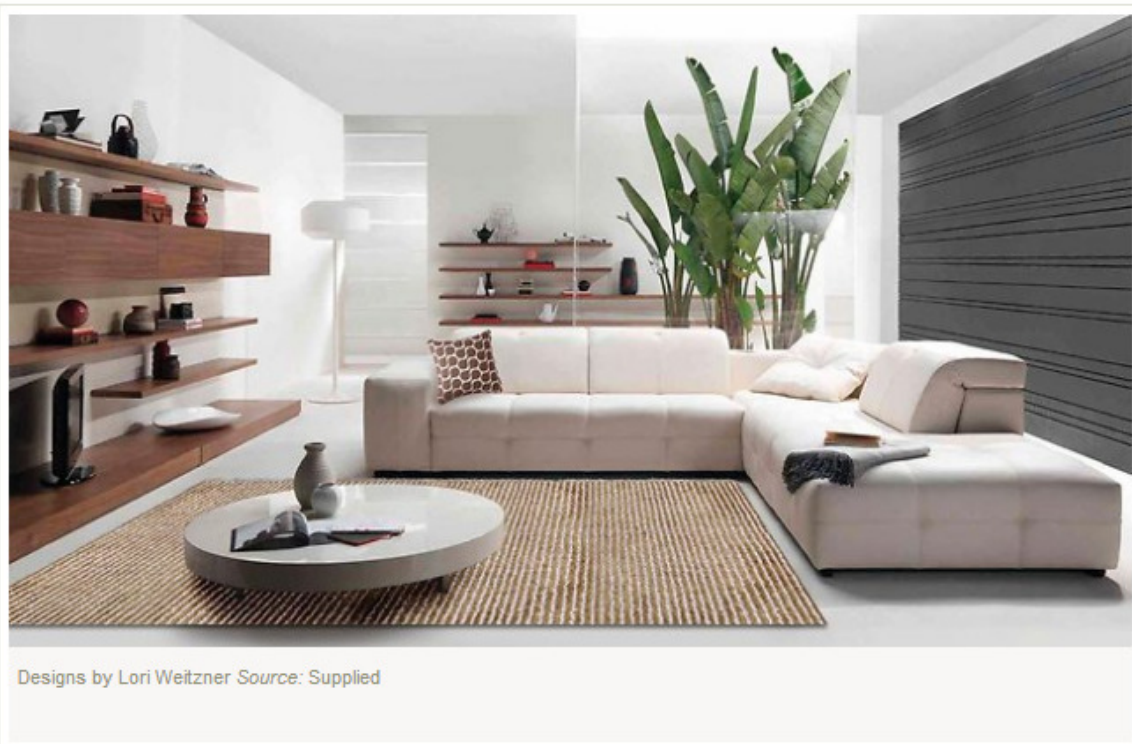
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Weitzner has the white stuff

STEPHEN BROOK [The Australian](#) July 13, 2013 12:00AM



LORI Weitzner is asked about colour a lot. What's the latest trend, I am eager to know. There isn't one, she says down the line from New York.

"It is not about pink or beige being the colours this year, or only grey and not charcoal," she explains. "The trend is to find the colour that is personal and use that in your space, and it is a very emotional thing."

The textile designer is about to arrive on these shores for a star turn as part of the giant Decoration + Design interiors exhibition, which runs alongside the Furnitex exhibition in Melbourne, starting on Thursday. She says colour, and how we feel about colour, is integral to her fabric work. "What kind of feelings do you want? A lot of people want more soothing colours in their bedroom because they want it to be a transitional space from activity to rest.



"I say this all the time: the best colours are the ones we cannot name. Is it blue or is it grey? The more you can't tell what they really are, the more beautiful they are, the better they are for you."

But Weitzner does have a particular message about the most timeless of all colours, which is not really a colour at all. "I find it interesting that people are not afraid of white any more," she says enthusiastically.

What on earth does she mean?

"I think getting dirty was the main fear. Now most fabric companies, including ours, offer protection."

Thanks to scientific advances, water-resistant and stain-resistant protection can be applied to all materials, and because of this, white is staging a real comeback, she says. But not just any white. White white. "I used to do one white, which was an off-white," Weitzner says of her New York textiles business. "I am finding that I am having to offer my products in three different types of white. A cooler white, a warmer white and a yellow white. I could do an entire textile company of white," she laughs, before admitting the sheer impracticality.

"I have a theory, I think this is because of all the technology and looking at the screens all day long. When we look up, we just need white."

Decoration + Design marks a return to Australia for Weitzner, who visited 25 years ago and entered a competition to do fabric for the Olympics. "I remember doing it all based on the sails of the Opera House," she recalls.

Originally, she was determined to study fine arts, but while in the art program at Syracuse University, a professor redirected her to textiles. "I never would have made it into a gallery," she says. After she graduated with a degree in textiles from Syracuse in 1983, travel in Europe led to freelancing in Milan, where she sold designs to Missoni and other soft-furnishing companies. On her return to New York, she worked on packaging and product design for Estee Lauder and Calvin Klein, before renowned textile designer Jack Lenor Larsen asked her to design collections for him.

In 2004 she launched Weitzner Limited, offering innovative wall coverings worldwide and working in partnerships with interior designers and architects. Her fabrics and artful wall coverings feature in homes of celebrities such as Julianne Moore and Will Ferrell, and graced the sets for films as varied as Shakespeare in Love and Mission: Impossible.

Weitzner Limited creates every conceivable fabric for the home, from wall coverings to sofas and chairs, drapery, bedding and upholstered headboards. "There's always an audience for bright colours, but we are not doing that so much any more."

Her preference is for clean colours. "Colour can have a dirty sort of muddied look where the saturation is deadened and taken away. It's common with neutral colours and the shades of beige and grey. It tends to look dirty because it is neutralised with brown or black, whereas too acidic yellow gives it a chalky look."