



About Kate

Kate's career in the greetings card industry started during her Masters at Heriot-Watt School of Textiles & Design when she approached a card manufacturer, who went on to print a range of her bright and vibrant designs. This kick-started her career as a freelance designer, who soon found her niche specialising in contemporary and energetic artwork. Working with companies such as Paper Rose and Hallmark, her designs have appeared in a range of retail outlets including IKEA, John Lewis, Clintons and Next. Kate is currently working closely with Gibson Hanson Graphics developing a new exclusive range.

FASHION FLASH

With our regular Fashion Flash columnist, Sandie Gardiner, currently experiencing the joys of new motherhood - for which GT sends our hearty congratulations - another wonderful young designer, Kate Knight, offers her own insights into which trends are shaping the greetings card and stationery markets.

I have always loved and been inspired by the beauty and colour of flowers. While stoic determination to constantly paint and draw them made my high school art teacher despair, I am sure in the end he would agree that my resolute commitment has, perhaps surprisingly, paid off. So what is it with flowers and me? Well, lots of things - the colours, the vibrancy, the sheer variety. Most of all it is the positive way they make you feel, which in the greeting card industry, is really the point.

One of the main reasons I find flowers such an inspiration is the limitless ways you can portray them. As trends come and go, flowers are one of the few subjects that remain at the forefront of design. From intricate detail to plain silhouette, flowers are one of the most versatile subjects.

We have never been more aware of nature's precariousness and I think we will see a growing trend that celebrates the beauty of nature and commands us to protect it. Claire Witheringham's bright and dramatic florals for Art Angels are a great example, effortlessly contrasting lush greens with vibrant and bold flowers. The exotic colours of the rainforest will be a key inspiration - verdant ferns and tones of green set against oversized vivid flowers, reminiscent of the floral paintings by artist Georgia O'Keefe.

Another strong trend coming through is a more synthetic and stylised movement, heavily influenced by the 60s and 80s. This trend is high energy and animated, fusing the retro with modern urban culture. As fashion once again visits new rave neon and electro sport deluxe, the greeting card industry is following suit, embracing bright primary colours

and geometric shapes. Nineteen Seventy Three's 'technique' range is a perfect example, combining simplistic bold colours and shapes.

Flowers are once again a strong motif of this trend, featuring in bold prints inspired by sixties fabric and wallpaper. The Strawberry Card Company's bright and bold floral designs are a great example, using a bright retro colour palette and geometric shapes.

Another designer picking up on this retro-urban style is Caroline Gardner, whose new 'be' range for Creative Britain, is a big departure from her previous designs. Here Caroline combines stylised line flowers with images of 80s nostalgia, modern life and urban graffiti.

One of my favourite styles coming through is the reinterpretation of gothic. Shimmering whites and greys are set against a glossy black background, creating a dramatic and sophisticated elegance. This is a trend for grown-ups: rich textures and silhouetted patterns emulate Victorian glamour. Stephanie Rose's new collection for Cardmix presents layered pyrographic flowers and delicate lace-like images lit by shots of colour.

There is a mystical and evocative feeling to this trend, which can be seen in the work of designers such as Jane Crowther. Her 'Jewel' collection showcases ornamental butterflies and bejewelled birds against detailed line drawn plants and flowers on muted dark backgrounds.

Flowers have and will always be a constant source of inspiration to designers. No matter the trend, they never go out of style.

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The Strawberry Card Company