

Rangements, containers Brosse EDRA

# SEMPRE SEMPE

ALWAYS A BASTION OF WITTY INNOVATION, THE CELEBRATED FRENCH PRODUCT DESIGNER INGE SEMPE GETS IT RIGHT EVERY TIME.

**Design Indaba has had the privilege of meeting Inge on more than one occasion - in Stockholm, Milan, at her studio on Boulevard St Denis in Paris... We love her self-deprecating humour and her charming, highly idiosyncratic design offerings.**

Although she runs a relatively small company of two, she increasingly has a global reach. Which is why we've asked her to share her quirky concepts - like the oxymoronicly titled analog digital clock - with the Design Indaba fraternity.

Although she's due to speak at the 9th International Design Indaba in February 2006, Design Indaba Magazine decided to engage in a conversation, of sorts, with her now. We got Cape Town's Suzy Bell to pose a few questions. Here follows their short, potted (don't forget to look out for Inge's Long Pot design overleaf!) exchange...

**Which of your designs is your mother most excited about and why?**

My mother is not a practical person, so if I can do a lamp that provides some light, she thinks I am a genius inventor. But I was told that she doesn't really appreciate the containers "Brosse": "So many hairs!" she said.

**As a child what inventive creative toys do you remember had an influence on your designs or one particular product or one-off design artwork today?**

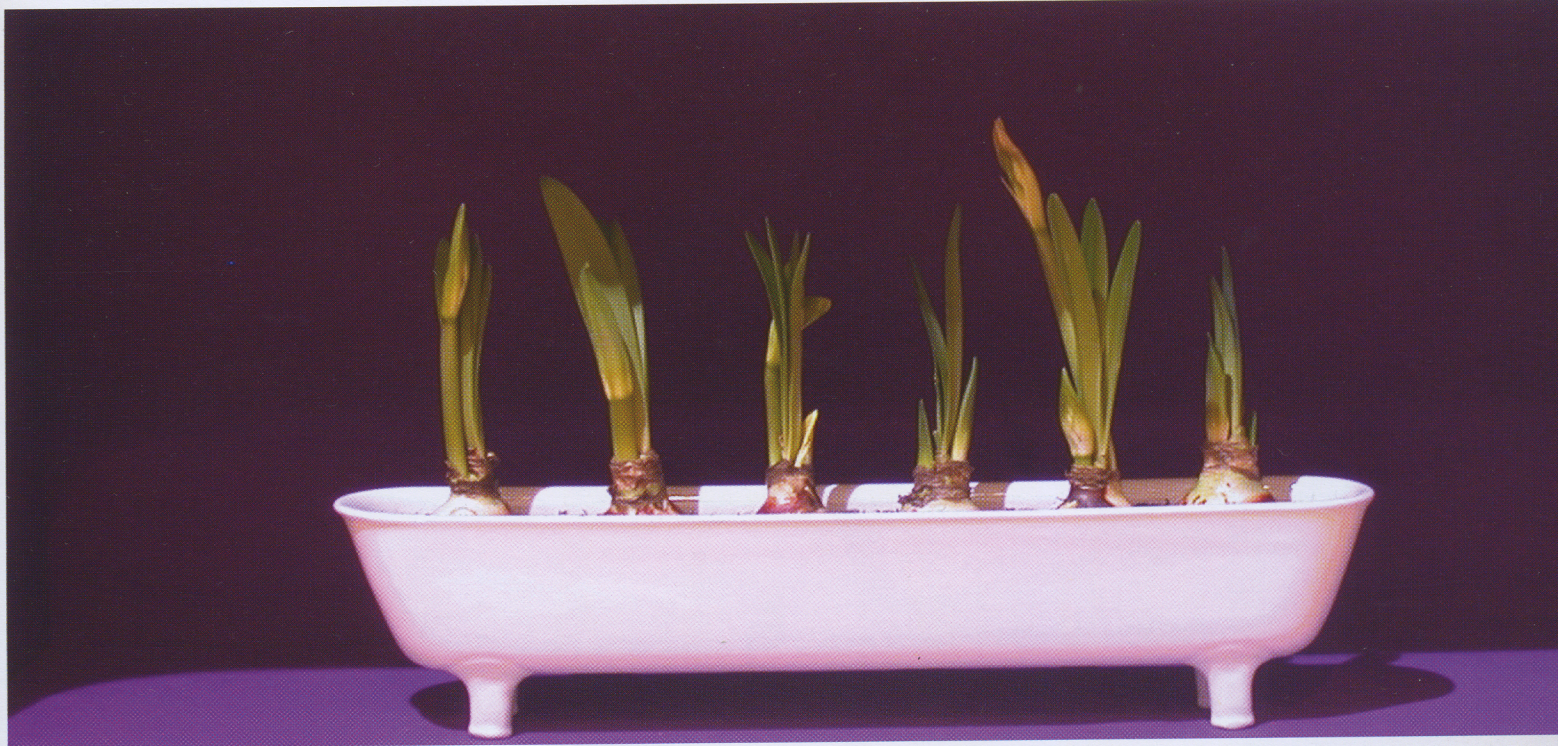
I was bad at Lego, good at making fake objects on my own. But I remember when I was eight and wanted to build a clock in rough paper. My first try at building the cylinder was a big mistake.

**Tell us about your analog digital clock. Are you particularly proud of it because it is a once-off artwork and is so crushingly modern, practical and cool?**

My analog digital clock is not a once-off artwork, it is a new kind of time display that has been once made into a prototype. And I am proud about the fact that this system is patented.



Upholstered Metal Chair, structure and upholstery



Long Pot, ceramic, Ghaâdé, 2004



Horloge 16H35, Analog Digital Clock

**You once mentioned in a story, being influenced by a petticoat maker in Strasbourg!**

No, I was looking for a maker, in France, who would be able to do particular pleat designs. The only one, was a petticoat maker, and then they transferred their production to China. Anyway, pleats when they are long and more complicated than the ones used for college girl skirts, are not made in France anymore. There was a long know-how in that field, that has now disappeared.

**Are you influenced by fashion designers like Issay Miyake, as I see you too have a fetish for pleats? So, whom, and why?**  
I don't feel like being influenced by fashion designers.

**Your Brosse/2003 by EDRA look like 1930s flapper dance fringe dresses. Was this your creative or aesthetic intention? If not, what look and feel were you hoping to achieve?**

My first aim was not aesthetic, I just wanted to create a piece of furniture that would be always open and always closed at the same time. I wanted a technique or a material that would not look like handicraft, but rather more technical. So I got interested in the industrial brushstrip technique, which I used for the walls of those containers.

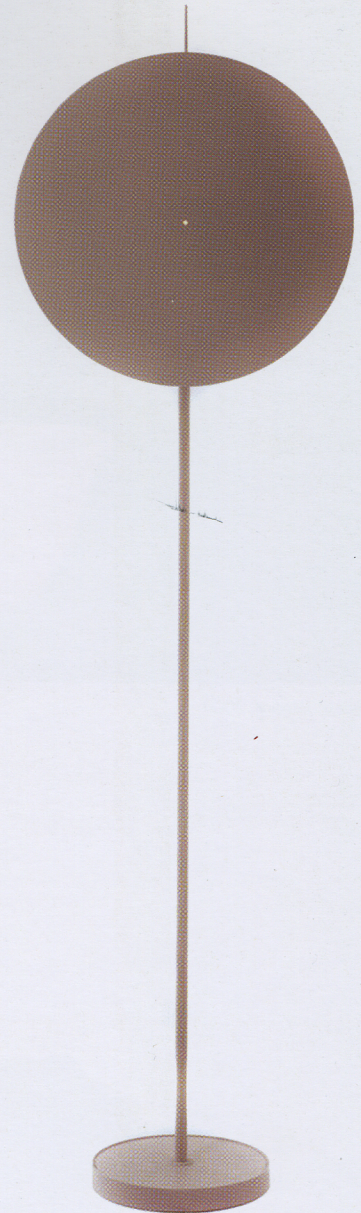
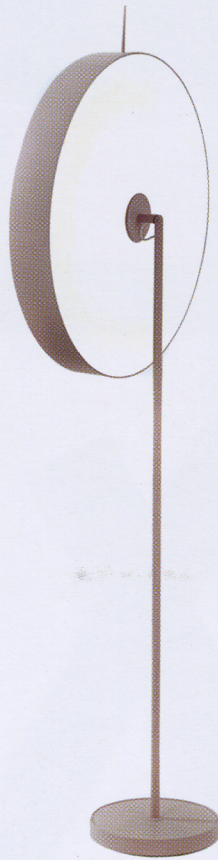
**Other than the umbrella, what else would you have loved to have invented?**  
Wine bottle-openers with "arms", going up and down and hanging lamps with the porcelain weight of the 19th century... I love articulated objects.

**What design project are you currently working on?**

I am working on furniture and lighting for French Ligne Roset, lighting for Italian company Cappellini, and also lighting for Italian company, Pallucco, luggage and a trestle, and some other objects with Italian company, Magis...



Lampe P/O 203, Cappellinia



**Name three designers you highly respect in your field and why?**

Vico Magistretti, Konstantin Grcic, Enzo Mari - because they create clever and new shapes, uses and objects, which are simultaneously, simple!

**Have you ever dreamt of an innovative design and when waking, drawn a sketch of it and then actualised the design dream? If so, what? If not, when do you come up with most of your creative design brainstorming - late at night, crack of dawn, mostly in the bath, sometimes at 35 000 feet in an aeroplane, in your studio, on deadline? Or all of the above and more?**

My dreams are not productive at all. I am not a late worker, because I feel

anxious if I have to find an idea at night, I am better in the morning and in my studio on deadline.

**If there was a fire in your apartment, which five design objects would you save and why?**

My computer because it is the most expensive thing inside my apartment and it contains all my work. Some drawings of my parents and of my man, some pictures - but no objects because the ones I own are not extraordinary, and I live on the 5th floor - without an elevator!



Grande Lamp Plissée, P/O 202, Cappellini 2003