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June 09, 2011

Virtual Shoe Museum

Netherlands-based Liza Snook created the [Virtual Shoe Museum](#) in 2004 out of her passion for shoes. As I learned from talking with her recently, the museum is a way for her to connect designers, shoe lovers and curators online -- and, most important of all, provide inspiration for shoe designers around the world.

The architectural shoe below, made by [United Nude](#), is Liza's favorite at this moment. Does it look more like a sculpture than a shoe? It's representative of some of the unusual shoes that you'll find in the museum. And a key reason why I like the museum so much.



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In this short interview with Liza, I've featured shoes from three of her favorite designers from the museum who make shoes by hand -- Kobi Levi (Israel), Rosanne Bergsma (The Netherlands), and Tetsuya Uenobe (Japan) -- as well as a favorite of my own.

How did your interest in shoes begin?

I was born with a passion for shoes and I have been collecting shoes now for more than 25 years. My collection consists of a library of shoe books, "shoevenirs," shoes from many different cultures and hundreds of Barbie shoes. My own collection is as diverse as the collection of the Virtual Shoe Museum.

[Kobi Levi](#)



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How did you come up with the idea for the Virtual Shoe Museum?

For 25 years, I showed my collection of shoes, shoe images, advertisements, photos etc. at home to whoever was interested, telling the same stories over and over again.... And of course I always visited shoe museums when abroad. Most of the time, however, this proved to be a rather disappointing experience: there was never enough exhibition space to present a substantial part of the collection (roughly 5 percent).

These experiences inspired me to create a virtual shoe museum. [I was intrigued by] the range of possibilities a digital environment might open up. We could include shoes in all sorts of sections, without having to compromise or duplicate. We could create multiple perspectives on any shoe...every time creating a new environment in which the shoe would be presented.

[Kobi Levi](#)



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What are the criteria for shoe designers to be included in the Museum? Is it just you who decides on who gets in?

The core of our virtual collection focuses on designs that question the very essence of the shoe: 'Is this a shoe?' 'Is this wearable?' 'Does it matter?' 'Is it tickling your imagination?' Designs that balance between these values and still present a shoe that can be worn or looks as if it could be worn are what I'm after -- [something with] a twist, a sense of humor.

[Rosanne Bergsma](#)



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Who are some of the most creative designers in the Museum that make handmade shoes?

Difficult choice, there are so many creative designers in the collection. My choice this moment: Kobi Levi (Israel), Tetsuya Uenobe (Japan) and Rosanne Bergsma (The Netherlands).

[Rosanne Bergsma](#)



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What kind of trends do you see with handmade shoes?

Innovative materials and influences from architecture. And a lot of extreme high heels.

[Tetsuya Uenobe](#)



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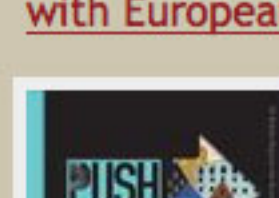
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