

icon

A rebel Swedish mu
Cakes as industrial
Winy Maas inter
Joep van Lies

UGLY
in a
good
way



"It's being free," says Pot. "It's not being too held back by history. Ugly doesn't look like anything you've seen before. You don't have a reference for it. You can't describe something that doesn't look like anything as beautiful or ugly because you have to refer to something you do or don't like." Baas also recognises the creative potency of the zero position: "There is so much more to explore. In a way it is hard – because there isn't any reference, it is really jumping into the deep end."

Of course, tastes change, and over time what is considered ugly becomes beautiful, and establishes itself as the aesthetic norm. Die Stijl and Bauhaus were considered ugly in their time, before becoming the international modernism that Pesce and the ugly aesthetic are in revolt against. Sottsass' Memphis Group was the ugly aesthetic of the early 1980s, and broke through into mainstream design, provoking a minimalist backlash in the early 1990s. And the backlash had its own backlash, as Droog design rebelled against the resurgent minimalism with its own blend of high concept and warm surrealism. Droog and the rest of the Dutch second wave

formed the basis of design orthodoxy today.

In this respect, the ugly aesthetic is now, and always has been, part of a continual process of renewal in design. The rise of the ugly is in fact the emergence of a new idea of beauty. **The creative "zero position", free of aesthetic considerations, can never be reached – like beauty, it's an ideal to strive towards.** "Perfection is not human," says Pesce. "Perfection is for God, eventually, if he or she exists. Perfection is not our task. We have to express ourselves in our capacity, and our capacity is full of mistakes and incapacities. Let's express that. And transform that into the future beauty." †

Above: Bertjan Pot's Carpet with Duct-Tape, 2007
Below: Pepe Heijboer's Tape Pot, 2007

