

Love At First Sight
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Light years seem to have passed since Georges Perec in the 1966 novel, *The Things*, reconstructs the life of a young advertising couple through their fetishistic relationships with objects, symbols of a hoped-for social ascent. Forty years later the attitude has changed - whether it be for the overdose of products, or the quest for a surplus value that isn't self-ostentation but love at first sight. Because "human beings are moved by emotions, not by reason" says Kevin Roberts, advertising guru and CEO of Saatchi & Saatchi, The Ideas Company, head of an international team of over 7000 creatives in 82 countries, in his latest book, *Lovemarks, the Future Beyond Brands*, edited in Italian by Mondadori.

Two hundred and twenty-four ardent pages, marked by reflections that read like slogan / warnings, bound with a heart-red cover - the color of emotions - with passion in pole position. As with true love, objects / brands with fatal attraction have attributes that elude rationality, elicit Mystery, Sensuality, Intimacy.

Even household appliances - as testified by the Electrolux-solicited research on a sampling of 65,000 consumers - with quality considered a given, are results of emotional impulse. By now selected as personal objects, they've spurred the world's greatest producer to have prototypes of refrigerators and vacuum cleaners designer-dressed with patterns stolen from fashions presented at last September's Ready-to-wear show in Paris.

We mention a few emblematic selections joined on the www.lovemarks.com website: from Ikea ("The place where fantasy becomes reality"); to iPod ("It has the face of Love"); to the Statue of Liberty ("The hope of a living spirit"); to Tonga ("The best-kept secret of the South Pacific"); to the Concorde ("A spectacular symbol of technological progress"); to arrive at Italian trademarks such as Snaidero, with the kitchen as the place ("where you transform food into Love and Affection"); or Ermenegildo Zegna ("Simply a dream. The perfect suit for the perfect man.").

Choices linked to Sensuality, an emotional universe involving the five senses. Even architecture has to have a fragrance/ a perfume - as Herzog and de Meuron suggest in their recent personal show at London's Tate Modern - and express in their dwelling project. "My New York apartment is a refuge for the senses," says Roberts, "I wanted a house that was warm, safe and relaxing - a tenet of faith. Behind the door I wanted to find something that wasn't complex; I wanted the sensation of an embrace." A "beautiful and sensual space" made of Portuguese stone and wood, "silent and concrete."

But the true driving force is passion, theme at the last Biennial of young European and Mediterranean artists (Naples, Castel Sant'Elmo, September 2005), rediscovered by a world that's already touched the surface of Mars, because "with passion even the most difficult objective can be reached." Nothing's impossible. All you need is love.