

trueColors

THE MAGAZINE FROM GMG

WINTER 2020 / SPRING 2021

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Photo: Tim Meyer

Closed: The most famous point of the Furka Pass in the Swiss canton of Valais, aside from the Rhone Glacier, is the Hotel Belvédère. Incidentally, the hotel has been closed since 2015. It is located directly on the legendary road that featured Sean Connery as James Bond in Goldfinger.

close/closer

The last few months felt like navigating a mountain pass. Full concentration needed on the unpredictable terrain, again and again, courageous steering maneuvers required, then braking to a virtual standstill to make it round the hairpin bend. But all of a sudden, around the next corner, the view opens up, and the road seems easier to navigate. Some twists and turns still ahead, but we can accelerate with more confidence, our eyes firmly fixed on the next apex. The summit feels nearer. Close? Closer.

You may have noticed – at TrueColors, optimists are in the driving seat. And we discovered a lot on our latest journey: In this issue of TrueColors, we visit some exciting shopping destinations from around the world. Creative retail designers stir up the ‘bricks and mortar’ retail market with unconventional ideas – these new temples of commerce are more open than ever (p. 14). Packaging designers are even closer to the product. What’s important to them? You guessed it! Content. Stories and values are two essential ingredients. But there is much more to it (p. 26). The whole world now meets in the home office. The connection is good, but yet the spontaneous meetings at the coffee machine still feel a long way away. TrueColors switched on the webcam and listened carefully (p. 34).

The cover picture features the restored Le Corbusier house in Stuttgart. Created in 1926, the rediscovered color scheme of the famous architect is more relevant today than ever (p. 38).

“Packaging is a printed product with a future,” says Holger Fröbel. And Peter Reich of Constantia Flexibles agrees. Both have plenty of reasons to be optimistic because they know that the opportunities of digitization are tremendous for everyone in the packaging industry (p. 46).

Enjoy the new TrueColors!

Robert Weihing
Co-Founder GMG GmbH & Co. KG



Photo: Jörg Jäger





⊕ **TrueColors**

From above, it looks like a mechanical monster – but not a vicious one. No teeth to be seen, it seems pretty harmless with all its soft curves and shapes. In fact, this is the popular Venice Beach skate park. And all of a sudden, things are getting more extreme: for fear of social distancing rules not being adhered to, the city council took drastic measures. Bulldozers moved in and filled the entire skate park with sand.



TrueColors

A picture of air. So simple. Sadly, nothing is simple unless it comes easy – effortless. When will they return? The times when we are at ease, unburdened? Or is this feeling of uneasiness, a certain nervousness to stay? Does a balloon actually know how vulnerable it is? Probably not – although it would be nice to think it knows how much happiness it can bring to people.



TrueColors

Torreveija – the travel guide claims that huge salt lakes and mountains of salt are found along the road from Alicante. Perhaps this is just a cover, and behind this impressive colorful landscape hides a top-secret chewing gum factory. Fortunately, this isn't the case, instead people come here to swim. A somewhat amusing sight, but it is said that the water has health benefits. Side effect? Thirst. A beach bar wouldn't go amiss.



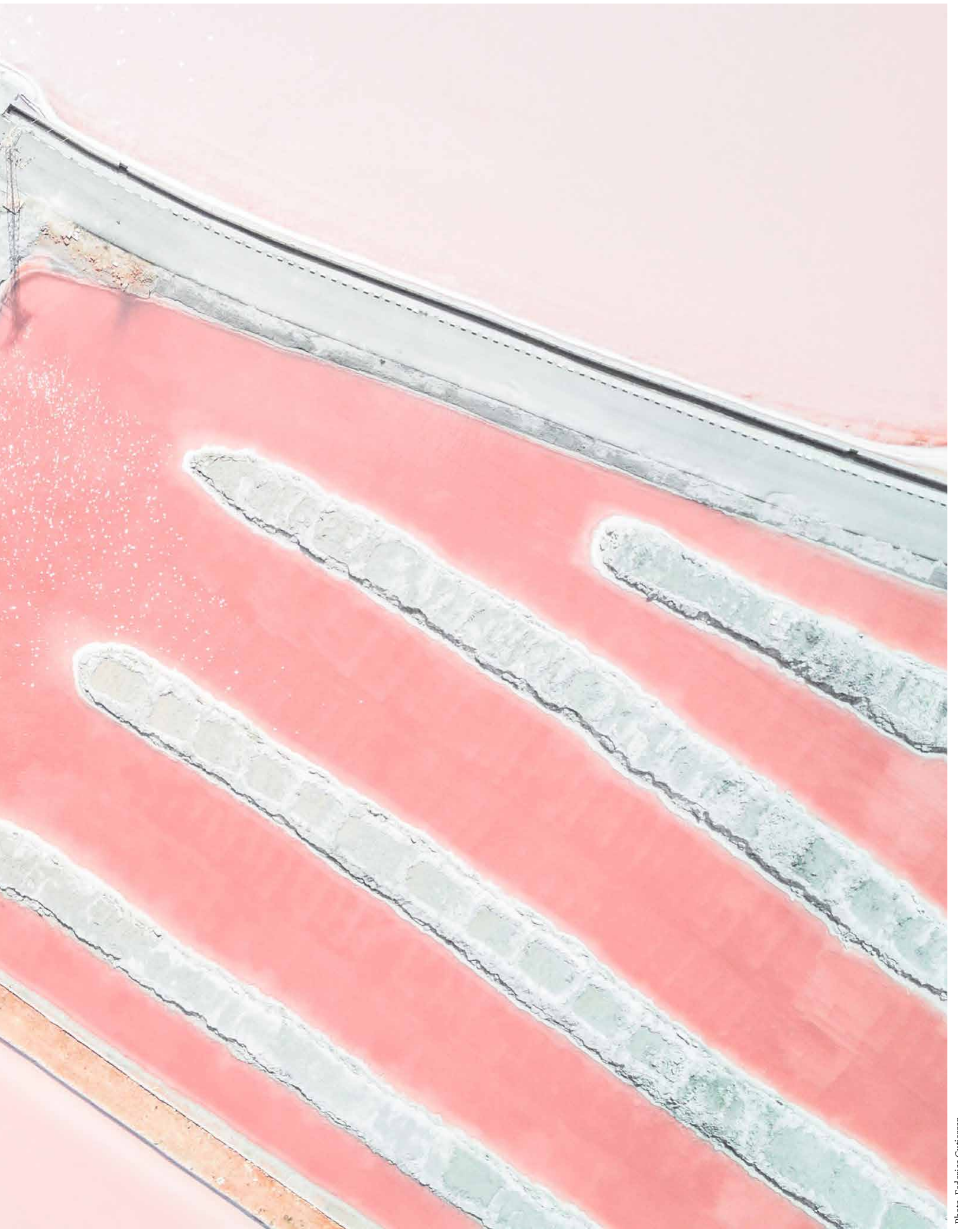


Photo: Federico Gutierrez



Closer at distance

At the beginning of this year, a virus sized just 125 nanometers got the better of us and eventually forced us into a complete lockdown. A series of social measures followed that could not have affected us more directly. Each and every one of us was – and still is – forced to redefine proximity and distance for themselves.

How should one interact with family, friends, and colleagues in the future? Most people understood that physical distance was a sensible necessity. At least in terms of physical health. But how would 'social distancing' affect our mental health? In particular, older people with no or limited access to the Internet suffered greatly from loneliness. Human contact is existential after all, and many of us have become more aware of this than ever before.

But could it be that, despite all restrictions, 'social distancing' brought those who were lucky enough to avoid hospitals and old people's homes even a little closer? Possibly. More frequent phone calls with family members, long walks for two, Skype sessions and Zoom parties with friends – distance became irrelevant and the need for interaction intensified. The Internet, which has become the norm for long-distance communication, offered an alternative to all social events. Of course, Instagram followers and Facebook friends are not really a replacement for a 'real' social network, but social media platforms made it possible to stay connected and maintain meaningful human interaction despite the lockdown.

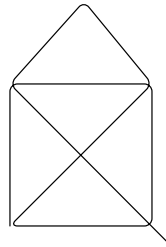
Video conferencing happened to come with unexpected side effects. For the first time, we stepped inside our work colleagues' homes, bringing an intimacy to light we haven't seen

before. A child rushes past in the background; a partner enters the screen and waves hello; the cat jumps on the window sill completely unaware it causes a light-hearted distraction to a serious conference call. All of a sudden, we get to see a completely different side of our work colleagues. Therefore, the appeal of the German writers' association PEN-Zentrum Deutschland to change the expression 'social distance' with, for example, 'physical distance' is not surprising. "Social distance sounds like a term from the dictionary of neoliberalism," said President Regula Venske. Arguably right now we need more social interaction than ever before. We also need to be much more socially aware of people around us and their well-being. It is only the physical aspect associated with socializing that we must avoid for the moment.

If ever proof was needed for the existence of a global society, it would have been produced now. The worldwide event 'coronavirus' confirms what the plague, the crusades, trade relations, and the Olympic Games have always shown: We all live on the same planet.

Moreover, the world has moved closer together. There hasn't been a phenomenon that has connected so many people globally. No matter where we're going, no matter who we're talking to now or in the future, the taxi driver in Mumbai, the designer in Scandinavia, the farmer in Brazil. From now on, we will all share a common experience through which we will feel connected.

We don't know how long this pandemic will continue to torment us, but we now know better than ever that we are all in the same boat. An insight that will hopefully help us tackle other global problems together.



Temples of contemplation and inspiration

How and where do we want to shop in the future? Only online, from the sofa? Without human interaction, surprise, and inspiration? Unlikely, because there is so much more to experience than the digital world can offer.



Strict geometries: Bookshop Zhongshuge in Chongqing, China. The sharp design and architecture are further enhanced by reflective surface materials that multiply the symmetries.

Photo: Greenery



The founders of Greenery Unlimited in Brooklyn, New York, know how beneficial plants can be for us. Their positive effect on our mental well-being is undeniable. The team turn offices and residential homes into green oases.

Sensory experiences and concepts that reflect the zeitgeist, trigger feelings, inspire fresh ideas, and allow us to create new worlds. Precisely the task of retail designers. They keep injecting fresh ideas into brick and mortar retail; they have the ambition to lure an increasingly demanding clientele and the growing community of lazy online shoppers off the couch. We investigated the latest and greatest new retail concepts from around the world. Join us on this journey of discovery.

If one looks at the latest store concepts that enjoyed hype and attention in recent months, reflection and contemplation, sensitivity and closeness to nature, artistic or philosophical messages, and a strong focus on the essential appear to be important trends. In China, spectacularly furnished bookstores pop up everywhere; from Brooklyn to Barcelona, you can embrace nature in plant stores that make you feel like you're in a jungle. And, while people in Korea and Dubai increasingly rub shoulders with art, Manhattan's focus is on wellness and health. In Tokyo, similarly, the trend is physical well-being, but this time combined with expressive packaging.

It seemed obvious to anyone who observed the astonishing boom of online bookstores that the days of the high-street bookshop were numbered. And indeed, high-street book

sales are struggling in most countries. Astonishingly, however, in Asia – and in particular China – bookstores are currently experiencing a boom. Reinvented as reading temples, architecturally bold and with daring interior designs, they present oases of calm and contemplation.

Qinhuangdao in northern China recently opened its 450-square-meter large, minimalist Sanlian Public Library. Situated on the spectacular beachfront surrounded by nothing but sand and sea, the stark concrete building is nicknamed 'the world's loneliest library'. In China's southwestern metropolis Chongqing, a 1,300-square-meter book paradise opened its doors in the Zodi Plaza shopping center. Extending over the third and fourth floors, the Zhongshuge Bookshop is arguably a reasonable and seemingly profitable size given the 30 million residents of Greater Chongqing.

Shanghai-based design bureau X+living made a name for itself as a specialist for these excessively sophisticated and well-designed bookstores, in the Middle Kingdom. Founder Li Xiang furnished the rooms of the Zhongshuge library with floor-to-ceiling shelves in dark brown tones. A striking arrangement of stairs giving access to the vast walls of books reminds of the Penrose Stairs, also known as the 'impossible staircase' from the surrealist M.C. Escher.

Long corridors with meter-high shelves create a real pull.



Green, greener, Greenery Unlimited. In New York, people are keen to rediscover nature. And, of course, in the land of superlatives and unlimited possibilities: bigger is always better.

Visitors should imagine themselves in a private study when they pick up their books under the warm light oozing from the Chinese lampshades. Long corridors with meter-high shelves create a real pull that draws bibliophiles deep into the world of literature and knowledge.

The icing on the cake is a strict geometry enhanced by reflecting surfaces that multiply these symmetries.

Seoul, the capital of South Korea, also counts an impressive 9,000-square-meter bookstore filled with thousands of books as one of its shopping attractions. The talk of the town and around the world, however, is the South Korean eyewear label Gentle Monster with its unique 'art gallery meets eyewear store' concept. It blurs the boundaries between commerce and art. Eccentric and refreshingly unpretentious art installations take over the shop floor, attracting an astonishing number of curious visitors. Luckily the avant-garde glasses take up comparatively little space. What counts are understatement and nonchalance.

The young clientele appreciates the brand's exuberant creativity, and therefore the concept works for the target audience. Gentle Monster has been expanding into all parts of the world since 2011 and, to date, opened around fifty stores in total.



Somewhat out there, fantastic installations attract plentiful curious visitors with their unpretentious do-it-yourself look to the Gentle Monster stores. One of the latest additions recently opened in Dubai.

And the creators don't run out of ideas. The most recent opening in the Dubai Mall is a fertile green oasis ruled by a retro-futuristic fantasy robot – a kinetic installation that contains an artistic message: It is a symbol of hope for a future with an intact agrarian society in which man and nature exist in harmony.

In general, nature is an important source of inspiration for store concepts. Beautiful examples of nature-inspired shopping experiences can be found on both sides of the Atlantic. L'Hivernacle d'Horta in Barcelona is a family-run garden center in a building built by the Catalan modernist Josep Amargós i Samaranch for the 1888 World's Fair. Well worth a visit purely for its visual impact, the blending of the stark steel and glass architecture with the lush and opulent shapes and colors of the plants has made L'Hivernacle d'Horta a popular meeting place. Locals and tourists alike come here for a coffee and a chat, and it would be unusual not to walk away with at least a new idea for your garden, if not a plant.

The ambience at Greenery Unlimited in Brooklyn, New York, whose makers see themselves as ambassadors of botanical art, is also close to nature, although a little less rustic. In their jungle-like store, proof is given that plants can radically change the appearance of a place.



In numerous micro showrooms, shoppers at Showfields discover and experience brands from the wellness, health and household sectors.



Photos: Showfields

At Showfields it's not about presenting as many products as possible. What counts is the experience per square foot. Gallery-like rooms reinforce this vision.

Founder Rebecca Bullene explains her approach as follows: "In a world that is becoming more and more permeated by technology, I think it is essential to maintain the connection to Mother Earth. Nature teaches us mindfulness; it makes us pause, perceive the present – it is the best antidote for many people that feel stressed working in front of a computer screen all day." Greenery Unlimited is more than a shop. The team transforms other retail spaces, residential homes, and office buildings into green oases – what they do is literally in their nature.

A concept that ingeniously interlinks online and offline trading.

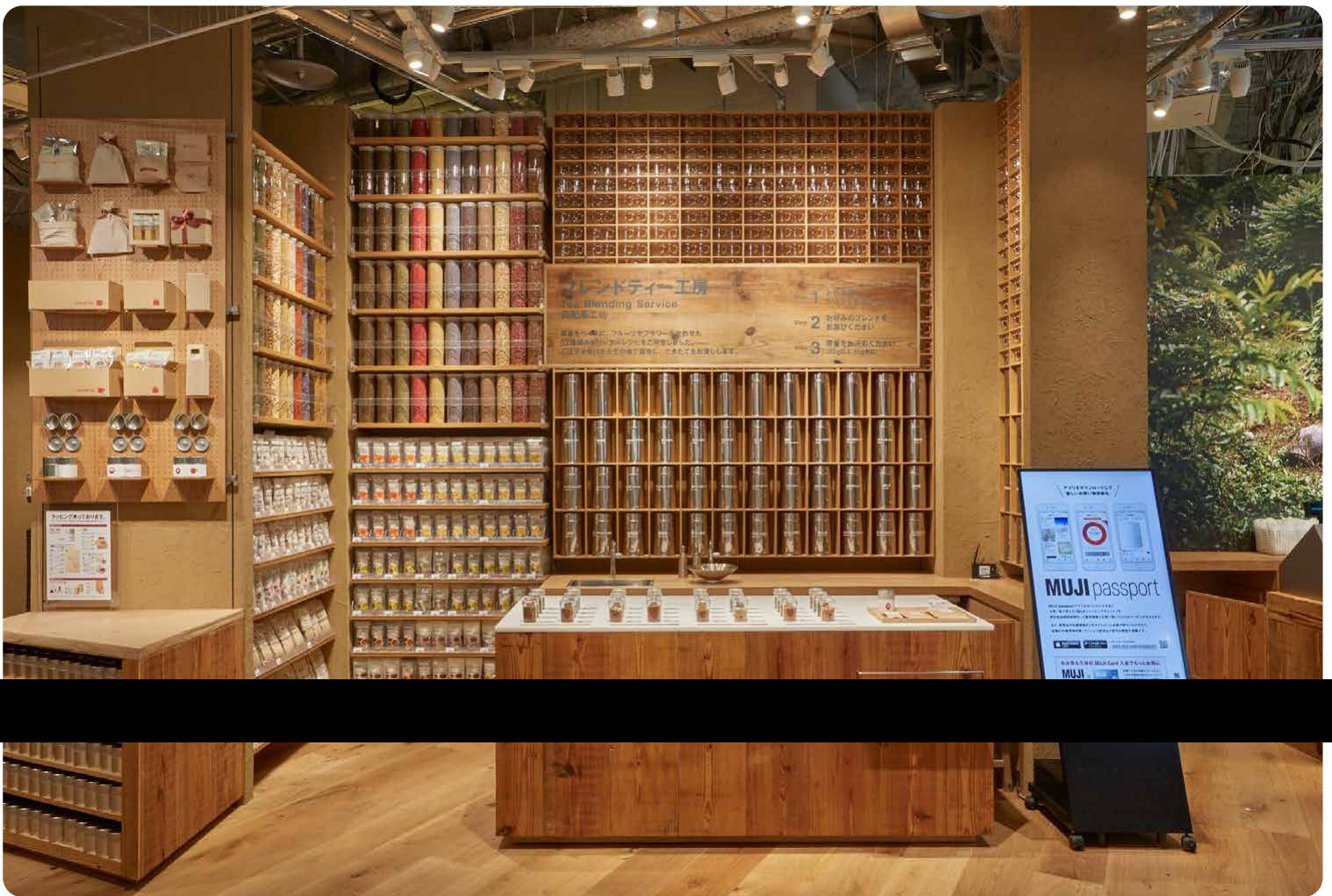
New York is also home to Showfields, which opened its doors last year in spectacular fashion. Showfields calls itself the 'most exciting store in the world' and presents a concept that ingeniously interlinks online and offline trading.

4,500 square meters spread over four floors of a historic hundred-year-old brick building on the corner of Bond and Lafayette Street in the NoHo district, it is no longer the turnover, but rather the experience per square meter that counts. In numerous micro showrooms, shoppers at Showfields discover and experience brands from the wellness, health and household sectors.

The Australian cosmetics line Frank Body, for example – whose coffee-based products are brand new to the American market – offers on-site skin peeling, while the dental care specialist Quip gives curious customers the opportunity to test its products in a pretty, fully equipped bathroom. Just like at home.

Aesthetics clearly matter and the standards are incredibly high. Something that's not just reflected in the shop design, but also the packaging of the carefully curated products. A visit to Showfields is literally a museum-like experience; especially as the showroom areas are broken up with small galleries, coworking spaces, and common areas.

The so-called 'showrooming' is a new concept: Customers come to the store to be inspired, look for advice, and experience the product. Then, they buy online. Where many retailers would despair of this shopping behavior, at Showfields, this is exactly the intention. All over the shop, retail brands are fitted with a touch screen kiosk where shoppers conveniently place their orders online. The result: no inventory, more space. Therefore, it's not only the ambience and interior design that make Showfields so attractive but also the vast choice that founder and CEO Tal Zvi Nathanel carefully curated. A bold concept with a big vision: a rollout of more than 100 branches is in the planning.



In the food department of Muji Ginza's ground floor, the shelves are several meters high, but because of the groceries' reduced packaging design, the store looks spacious and serene. Nuts, spices, biscuits, teas – all wrapped in beautifully designed packaging.

Space is also a topic at Muji in Tokyo, and people think big – that is simply a given in this city. Muji is known for a rather simplistic presentation of their stock and affordability of its products. This 'Japanese lifestyle' has been on sale at Muji for 40 years now. From clothing, shoes, stationery, kitchen utensils to home accessories, the flagship store that opened in Ginza in 2019 is a general store of the highest quality – of course, entirely on-brand with a clean, minimalist and linear design, in line with all Muji branches across the world.

courses, reading corners and the restaurant in the basement are important to the concept, but the gallery, bar and hotel on the top two of the seven floors complete the experience. One can easily spend a whole day – and subsequent night – at Muji.

Because of the groceries' reduced packaging design, the store looks and feels spacious and serene.

In the food department of Muji Ginza's ground floor, the packed shelves are several meters high, but because of the groceries' reduced packaging design, it looks and feels spacious and serene.

Nuts, spices, biscuits, teas, but also fresh fruit and vegetables can be found on the shelves. The smell of fresh croissants straight from the in-house oven of the integrated bakery onto the counter is simply divine.

All snacks are packed in simple, Muji style, white or transparent bags that despite – or should I say because – of their simple but carefully crafted packaging, make the perfect desirable little gift. Kenya Hara, one of Japan's most renowned designers, is the originator of this minimalist design concept. A children's playground, crochet

GMG's color management and proofing system enable packaging to be produced both digitally in small numbers and conventionally on a global scale with identical color results. This flexibility allows innovative stores to start small and test new products before committing to large print runs.

WHO SAID IT?



**I have the
simplest tastes.
I am always
satisfied with
the best.**

OSCAR WILDE

01



Living

Here comes the “crème de la crème”: What a color! It’s a seniors’ favorite, labeled boring, lacking in expression. Or, is it the perfect stage for a self-confident appearance? Anyone who surrounds themselves with beige, cream, or nude can always spice things up with personality. Not just at the stove.



04

02



03



color



05



06

01 Reading glasses, Izipizi Reading #D, 30 Euro, www.izipizi.com

02 Cantilever chair, S 32 V, design: Marcel Breuer 1928, 815.15 Euro, www.thonet.de

03 Ski helmet, Cosmos Evolight NXT, photochromic visor, 299.99 Euro, www.cairn-sport.com

04 Table tennis table, Woolsey Ping Pong Table, maple, size according to ITTF specifications, centerline made of dark walnut wood, 8,400 Euro, www.seanwoolsey.com

05 Men's between-seasons jacket, Trekker jacket, waterproof outer material: 4,000 mm, breathable, 160 Euro, www.rains.com

06 Stand-alone cooker, Victoria, three ovens, induction, from 4,600 Euro, via www.lax-online.de

Hey, What Are You Up To?

Creative minds explain



HAMBURG: **Birte Jürgensen & Timo Wietzke** (Zweigrad Industrial Design)

In our Hamburg design studio zweigrad, our team of 10 people design technical devices and their operating systems. We are driven to constantly provide new impulses for ideas, not to react, but create the future today. Constantly curious, we live our lives always keeping an open mind. Besides functionality and shape, color and materials naturally also play an important role in what we do. As designers and engineers we love challenging and complex projects. On the one hand, we have to deep dive into the technology aspect of our products, and on the other hand, our creativity and our style require freedom and some risk-taking. The friction between the two areas creates real innovation. For us, a design is successful if clients and users are equally enthusiastic because both feel understood. The combination of well thought-through usability and consistent aesthetics is just as important as communicating the company's values through design to our customers.



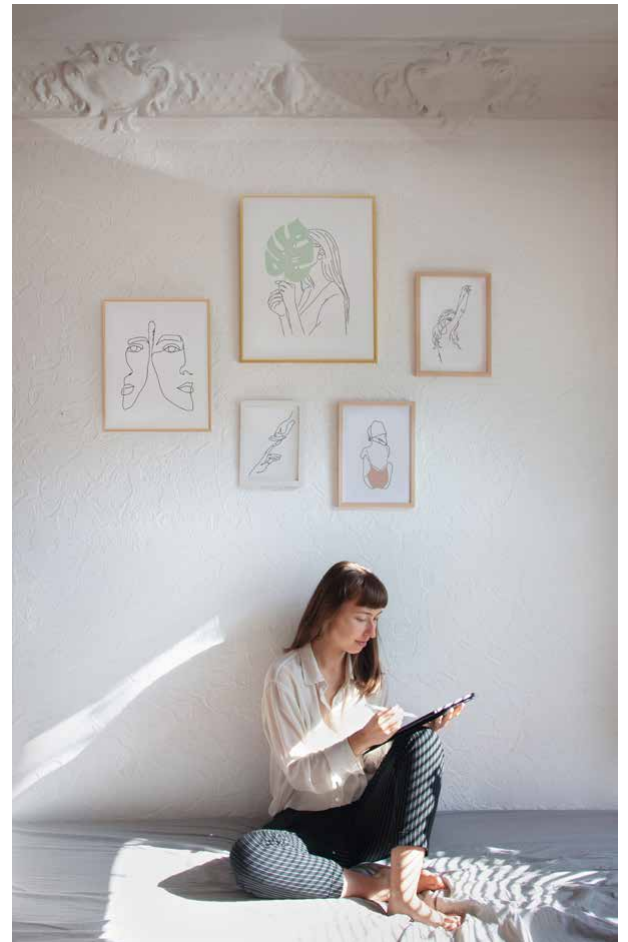
FRANKFURT/MAIN: **Christof Jakob**

Men at work. I am interested in people, specifically people in their professional environment. Perhaps, it's because I have experienced different sides of the world of work myself. People at work are fascinating to me, especially if they are passionate about what they do. I have been working as a freelance photographer in Frankfurt/Main for seven years. Photography is not just my professional focus but also a medium that allows me to engage with people. Traveling to foreign countries and experiencing foreign cultures gives me new perspectives and strongly influences my work. Color, saturation and contrast, as well as a clear image composition are recurring elements in my work.



STUTTGART: **Dijana Hammans**

My name is Dijana Hammans and I'm a freelance artist from Stuttgart. Since I was able to hold a pen, I loved letters and typography. I passionately superscribe everything and give words, names, thoughts, and ideas energy and form. There are no limits to my creativity. Another superpower: with open eyes, I discover something special in everyday life. I capture these discoveries with my camera and process them into brightly colored collages that enchant with humor.



BERLIN: **Mira Lou Kellner**

My illustrations focus on sustainability, the topic of connections and minimalism. I like to reduce to achieve maximum expression. My style mainly consists of simple lines, sometimes just a single line. This is called 'one-line' and it enables me to visualize connections between people, ourselves or our surroundings and environment. Often, my lines are just black on white. I like to use color for special accents or details. I find it exciting how a single color can have a major impact on the mood of an illustration. For me, the minimalist philosophy behind my art has a lot to do with sustainability: using only the resources that are really necessary. Less is more.

CLOSE/CLOSER



Close to the product – pack requires interesting content

Purposeful gradients: The packaging concept “Ikigai”, designed by the French-Australian design studio Blackthorns, includes design variants for different types of beer. The colorful and lively design with its purposeful gradients refers to the Japanese term “Ikigai” (reason for being).

aging design

Packaging design is continuously pushing the boundaries. This applies particularly to consumer goods brands where we see multiple trends, all designed to differentiate but also express brands more strongly. Where does the courage to do something different come from? Why is the design of packaging becoming more and more diverse? And how does all of this fit with consumers who live and shop increasingly in a digital world?

A beer can in the shape of a champagne flute? Made of brushed aluminum and refined with delicate engraving, the look of the limited edition “Le Beck’s” is more than unusual. The campaign aimed to make canned beer a desirable choice at formal events, such as classical concerts or exhibition openings for example, Beck’s tastes divine, so the message. The concept, which the beer brand owes to the advertising agency group Serviceplan, demonstrates a new trend in packaging design – the courage to break the mold.

The fact that design diversity is increasing on the supermarket shelves can be attributed to consumers: well informed, aesthetically educated and media savvy, they expect an attractive appearance, entertainment, and variety as well as credible, transparent information about the product and brand from product packaging. The constant availability of all kinds of products via online shops means that the demands of consumers – and thus the competitive pressure of consumer goods brands – continue to rise.

Packaging design benefits from this: not only young start-ups, but also the large corporations have understood that the design of packaging can break the mold and stretch standards in order to differentiate brands and attract the attention of their target audience.



Natural pastel colors: Noble & Lore is a Swiss brand for naturally and ethically produced CBD wellness products. This is exactly what the elegant, pastel, natural-looking packaging design by A Project By, a design duo based in Athens and Berlin, represents.

Packaging design focuses on codes

A language of visual codes, designed to influence the customer's response to a product positively, is integral to packaging design. These codes appeal to the deepest human psyche in an attempt to make one product more appealing over another. Designers consider every aspect from size and shape to materials, color, fonts, illustrations and photo styles and, of course, the actual product and brand messaging.

Simply put, geometrical shapes are perceived as masculine and round shapes as feminine. A slim bottle shape tends to be perceived as a higher quality product compared to a round bottle.

Therefore, the job of a packaging designer is not only to protect the product but more importantly, to communicate. Similar to verbal communication, the interpretation of these codes largely depends on the context, the cultural background and social trends. Transparent packaging, for example, allows the consumer to see the product and is therefore popular for brands who want to gain consumer's trust. But these transparent foils come at a cost to the environment, which is why Barilla – the Italian pasta brand – aims to eliminate their foil window in favor of more sustainable paper packaging by the end of 2020. This clearly signals the priorities of a brand and, in itself, carries an important message.



Myths & legends: Design studio Moruba from Logroño, Spain, designed the label for a wine from Somontano. The horse represents the untamed, rich nature of the wine region.

The meaning of color can also change. For a long time, the color black stood for exclusivity and luxury – that is, until tech companies like Apple embraced the color white and elevated it to premium status. Similarly, brands that want to convey sustainability no longer rely solely on green, but increasingly also on shades of blue – a development that originates from the field of sustainable electric mobility. Trends from fashion and art also influence packaging design: muted pastel colors are currently big on the catwalks as well as on supermarket shelves. But what does that mean for confectionery brands since science suggests that strong primary colors are associated with a sweet taste?

Codes in packaging design can be used to specifically appeal to the target groups' expectations. Deliberately breaking out of familiar standards is another tried and tested method at a designer's disposal. It's attracting attention through targeted irritation. Something Beck's cleverly explored when they introduced the flute-shaped beer can. The shape of the can implies that the content is of the highest quality, simply because of the association of the flute with champagne.

Design meets science

The demands on packaging design are high because consumers make a product choice in a matter of seconds. 70% of purchasing decisions are made in-store in front of the shelf



Irritation, friction, breaking the mold: The “Le Beck’s” beer can, in the shape of a champagne flute, challenges perception. The special edition can was designed by Serviceplan from Munich.



Christine Lischka, Managing Partner of Serviceplan Design in Hamburg, has years of experience as a packaging designer.

and decisions are primarily driven by emotions. This is why neuromarketing plays an important role in packaging design: It uses brain research and psychology findings to advertise more efficiently.

Studies show that emotional triggers and needs of consumers differ greatly according to gender, age and personality. Therefore, this deep customer insight can be used in packaging design to connect with the target audience on a deep emotional level – and encourage them to buy.

Christine Lischka, packaging designer and managing partner at Serviceplan Design in Hamburg, has developed packaging for incontinence pads – a taboo subject. Studies show that incontinence in France is perceived almost as embarrassing a topic as adultery; in Germany, the topic is even more shameful than unemployment.

“Our aim was to use our design to give affected women the feeling that incontinence does not question their femininity and dignity,” explains Christine Lischka. Empathy is an essential pre-requisite for good packaging design, but it’s no substitute for creativity.

Once the requirements of the target groups have been identified, the designers begin to translate the product messages into suitable codes. Christine Lischka works with semiotics, the study of signs: “The ability to understand,

use and design signs is one of the core competencies of a designer.” The trick is to use visual codes that are easy to understand, relevant and attractive for the target group.

Lischka replaced the unpleasant light yellow of the old incontinence pad packaging with a confident pink. In addition, she introduced photos of women wearing attractive underwear reminiscent of lingerie adverts. Featuring people was a novelty in this product category, which immediately boosted sales of sanitary towels.

Stories and attitudes

People love stories – that’s why storytelling in packaging design is ideal for differentiating brands. The function of the marketing tool here is to coherently interlink product features with the brand image. Compelling stories can be about ecological production processes, regional ingredients, interesting company history, or a comment on current events – like the Wolfskraft campaign, for example.

In the early days of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Bavarian craft beer brand, together with the design and branding agency Peter Schmidt Group, created a small run of special edition labels on which their logo, a wolf’s face, was wearing a face mask. Employees of the Bavarian craft beer brand distributed this ‘after-work beer’ free of charge to doctors, supermarket employees, postmen and women



“All packaging should be smart and sustainable”

Olaf Barski, founder of Barski Design, Frankfurt/Main

Mr Barski, you are not a brand strategist or advertiser, but a product designer. What makes your packaging design approach different from that of other agencies?

We offer structural packaging design. This means that we take a holistic look at the requirements of packaging design: concept, construction and sustainable production, as well as transport, storage and presentation of packaging, plus naturally the question how the user experiences packaging. For example: What should a smart box for insulin pens look like, while making sure it can be comfortably stowed away in a fridge, pulled out and closed again without damaging it? We focus on communication and branding at a later point in time. That's why our contacts on customer side are usually not marketing managers, but packaging engineers and, of course, the users.

What makes for good packaging design?

The choice of ecological materials, the manufacturing processes and disposal are more important than ever today. All packaging should be smart and sustainable. As a general rule: less is more.

An example?

We worked on a project for WMF, the famous kitchen- and table-ware brand. We were tasked to develop a cutlery set for young adults on the move. The result: a compact set, perfect for a picnic in the park, lunch in the office or for traveling. We developed a 'case', made from Ocean Plastic, which feels similar to felt and protects the rolled-up cutlery perfectly. Our concept envisaged that the case is not only part of the product, but also serves as packaging on the department store shelves.

The call for ecological, sustainable packaging is increasingly being heard in politics and business. Is this reflected in the nature of your projects, too?

Definitely. Avoiding waste has always been important in packaging design; driven by the ecological crisis, packaging design gains even more importance. It's therefore not surprising that we see an increase in research projects to identify sustainable materials and production processes and matching these with consumers' demands and trends of the future.



Less is more – sustainability: the Frankfurt design studio Barski Design has created to-go cutlery for WMF that doesn't require any packaging. The roll-up case, made from Ocean Plastics, looks high-quality, embodies the brand values, and protects the product.

and other key workers. The campaign was so well received that Wolfscraft made the label available on Instagram and Facebook for customers to print out and stick on beer bottles themselves.

Storytelling creates moments of identification

“Vegan, exotic or organically grown: Today, people define themselves by what they eat,” explains Ulrich Aldinger, Creative Director at the Peter Schmidt Group in Munich. Good storytelling makes it easy for consumers to identify with a brand and its products. If it is easy for people to understand what a brand is really about, like-minded people are much more likely to engage across the wide range of channels available these days. In particular, younger generations are sensitive to the fact that the brands they surround themselves with, not only share their environmental concerns, but also act responsibly too and aspire to create a world and society to be proud of for generations to come.

Simpler, clearer, louder: packaging becomes instagrammable

Our everyday life is increasingly taking place virtually – on social media, when shopping online or in video conferences. This also affects packaging design. “We have to take the digital representation of packaging design into account,” says Ulrich Aldinger. The design must be scalable to work on mobile devices, in different digital channels and at



Clear and simple: The Peter Schmidt Group from Munich has designed a clean packaging design for Eilles' tea range, that convinces with its clear and simple design, making it also easy to read in an online shop.



Characterful hand lettering: Designed by the Peter Schmidt Group, the packaging from el origen's organic crisps is based on artisanal design, suggesting a careful, natural production methods.

different sizes. The message on the packaging must be recognizable even in the smallest Instagram pictures. This requires clear and simple packaging design: simplistic designs, clearly structured layouts, concise messaging and strong ideas. It's becoming more and more important to stand out on crowded shelves and noisy social media and shopping platforms.

As a result, packaging design relies on ever stronger visual stimuli.

Common sense(s)

The digital world primarily stimulates our sense of vision. As a result, our appreciation for the physical, multisensory experience seems to have increased. This is also noticeable in packaging design, reports Christine Lischka: Recent market research for baby care products showed that the importance of the physical experience of unpacking has increased. The test audience perceived ornate embossing, textures and fine smells of packaging much more consciously than before. And, what does that mean? Brands are increasingly open to engaging all senses of the audience to gain an advantage.



Colorfully elegant: Designed by Zoo Studio in Barcelona, this chocolate packaging by Melissa Coppel looks elegant despite its bright color palette – helped by the use of gradients and delicate gold dots.

GMG's innovative color management solutions help ensure that the leading packaging designers' creative concepts can be reliably produced across all processes – with the exact color result customers have approved.

CATHERINE ARD,
ILLUSTRATED BY
CARLA MCRAE

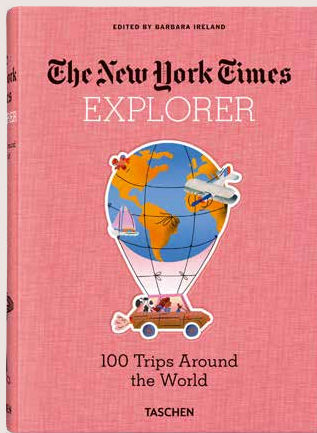
Let's Play Outdoors!

Leave the house and roam outdoors: It is a fascinating place, waiting to be conquered by children with curious minds. *Let's Play Outdoors!* encourages little nature detectives – not just to see, but also to listen, to touch, and to smell our surroundings. Climbing trees, watching clouds, tracing animals' footprints, playing games outdoors ...

This book is packed with simple activities and experiences to inspire the environmentally-conscious children of today. The suggested activities inspire independent learning about animals, plants, and the weather, as well as how to look after the world. **Gestalten**



Reviews



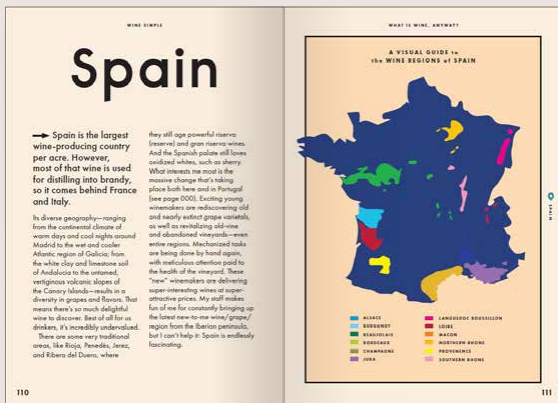
BARBARA IRELAND

The New York Times Explorer – 100 Trips Around the World

Whether it's a culinary adventure in vibrant Mexico City, a historic and meditative train ride through Siberia, or a solo trip to Paris, get your bucket lists ready and share in the discoveries of *Explorer*, a collection of 100 dream destinations – four volumes' worth of adventures in one – from the Travel pages of *The New York Times*.

NYT *Explorer* – 100 Trips Around the World takes travel beyond the obvious with adventures in exotic places and new perspectives in familiar ones, all based on the distinguished

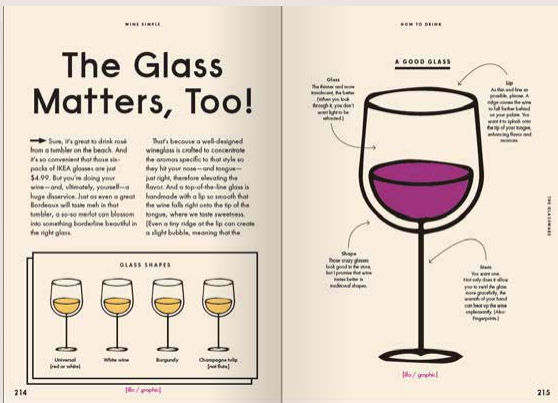
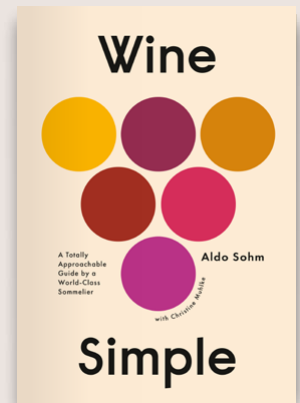
ravel journalism of *The New York Times*. Each journey features a first-person narrative and postcard-perfect photography, capturing the unique personality of the destination – as well as practical information to help get you on your way. Edited by Barbara Ireland, whose 36 Hours travel series has been a TASCHEN best seller, *Explorer* features color-coded tabs and a ribbon to bookmark your favorite stops in each region. Even in times when physical travel is not possible, you can just flip through the pages of this book, marvel at the beauty and wonder in our world, and dream. **TASCHEN**



ALDO SOHM, CHRISTINE MUHLKE Wine Simple

Aldo Sohm is one of the most respected and widely lauded sommeliers in the world. He's worked with celebrated chef Eric Ripert as wine director of three-Michelin-starred Le Bernardin for over a decade, yet his philosophy and approach to wine is much more casual. Aldo's debut book, *Wine Simple*, is full of confidence-building infographics and illustrations, an unbeatable depth of knowledge, effusive encouragement, and, most important, strong opinions on wine so you can learn to form your own. Imbued with Aldo's insatiable passion and eagerness to teach others, *Wine Simple* is accessible, deeply educational, lively and fun, both in voice and visuals.

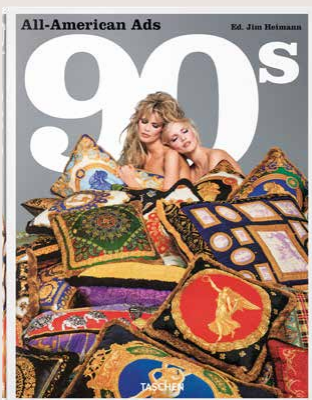
This visual, user-friendly approach will inspire readers to have the confidence, curiosity, and enthusiasm to taste smarter, drink boldly, and dive headfirst fearlessly into the exciting world of wine. **Random House**



STEVEN HELLER, JIM HEIMANN All-American Ads of the 90s

From the Los Angeles riots to the Columbine High School massacre, Americans witnessed events and purchased items that reflected the best and worst of the decade. Bill Clinton's presidency was in jeopardy, the digital age had erupted, and Silicon Valley was affecting everyone on the planet. Meanwhile, nudity and sex ruled the pages of magazines, selling everything from haute couture to fragrances and microwave ovens. Nirvana entertained Generation X while the "Greatest Generation" considered purchasing a Probe and something called a Hummer.

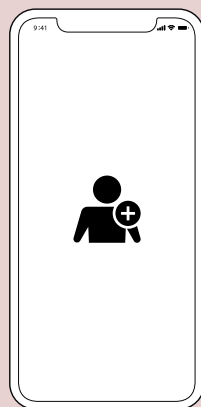
Featuring six chapters that cover a range of advertising, from food and fashion to entertainment and cars, a Desert Storm's worth of advertising highlights makes *All-American Ads of the '90s* a must-have compendium for every Beanie Babies-collecting, Simpsons-watching, pog-hoarding, and Harry Potter-loving citizen of 1990s consumerism. **TASCHEN**



Far away

and yet connected

Recently, a friend was talking about a colleague who set up his home office in his daughter's nursery because that's where he had the best WiFi reception. It's an amusing picture seeing the Polly Pocket poster pop up in the background, while daddy talks about the latest company figures on a video conference. With the beginning of the corona pandemic, resourceful and often unconventional solutions had to be found to navigate the difficult circumstances.



For many, working from home also brings a newfound freedom. The proximity of the open-plan office and the spontaneous chat at the coffee machine has transferred to the living rooms. Instead of face-to-face meetings, there are now video chats. Whether daily or just once a week: we share a more private side of us, sometimes unintentionally. This isn't necessarily a bad thing, if a few points are considered.

The work environment has changed for the vast majority of us as a result of the pandemic. Working from home was forced on us at unimaginable speed and it is fair to assume this will have long-lasting effects. Whether you're an advocate or skeptic, we all had to come to terms with it. The makeshift solutions quickly turned into the accepted new normal, convincing even the most stubborn doubters that the future of the workplace will inevitably look different. Quite frankly, many don't want to go back to the old office routine.

The kids' room may not be the ideal workplace, but it is not unusual these days. An unimaginable number of kitchen tables and corner sofas have been converted into a makeshift office space. But what effect does this have on workplace dynamics when often for the first time we get a glimpse into colleague's homes?

"The last few months have granted us a lot of insight into people's kitchens, bedrooms, living rooms and studies. Here you might find yourself associating the carefully labeled spice rack with the personality of the resident," says Thomas Rigotti from the Leibniz Institute for resilience research in Mainz. When it comes to interior design taste, we're naturally looking to confirm our preconceived ideas and expectations of our colleagues' preferences. But according to the professor for work, organizational and business psychology, this doesn't need to be negative. "It is also the chance to create a more intimate and casual interaction, something more difficult to achieve in the sterile conference room back at corporate HQ," he says.

What effect does the virtual intrusion into colleague's homes have?

Managers, in particular, are challenged with creating an efficient working atmosphere. You have to make sure that no employee is being overlooked – literally avoiding 'out of sight, out of mind'.

"In my department, I have introduced a daily meeting, for example. This daily meeting is not only used to report, but also just to chat," says Denise Kaufmann, Head of Marketing and Sales at the Winkels group in Sachsenheim. She quickly realized how important this was. "I told everyone to take time to talk about non work-related stuff with each other as well to maintain good relationships and keep the team spirit up".

For Denise Kaufmann herself, the work-load has not changed significantly. "I sat in meetings a lot before and that's still the case now." Just on the screen from her newly set up home office. "I only had a wooden chair at home. And after two weeks of working from home, I couldn't sit in this chair for another day," she tells me via Skype and laughs. The first thing she did when the local furniture store opened its doors again after the lockdown: she drove over there and bought her new office chair there and then.

"You will soon notice if your working conditions aren't ergonomically optimized. And something should be done to improve the situation reasonably quickly." A laptop stand, second keyboard and headset were added soon. On the positive, a lot of stress has disappeared, acknowledges the Marketing Manager. By eliminating her long commute, she is no longer stuck in traffic jams and can now relax her morning routine a little more.

Future research will show whether employees pay enough attention to an ergonomically optimized working environment at home. Realistically employers aren't able to influence the home office set up too much, other than pointing out the importance of it.



Justine Sanborn

Lecturer for Communication Design, City University New York

Head of Marketing Denise Kaufmann is happy for her team to schedule their days more flexibly and occasionally run some errands, as long as the jobs get done in time. Thomas Rigotti agrees with her, it's important for employers to trust employees with such newfound freedoms and encourage regular exchange with colleagues.

Research confirms that teams who regularly talk and exchange are generally more effective and happier.

Thomas Riebel has always had a stressful job. As a Key Account Manager at Epson, he is constantly on the road to see customers. With the beginning of the pandemic, he also experienced a slowdown. "I was faced with spending ten weeks in one place," something he hasn't done in 20 years he says. As a passionate runner, this meant that he could train six times a week instead of the usual three and not sitting behind the steering wheel for hundreds of miles every day was a welcome change too.

Among other things, his days consist of looking after the concerns and interests of important customers. He regularly communicates with them by means of video conferencing, something he finds easier with established customers as there is a trust relationship. "Even if technology fails, it's not really an issue".

With new clients or prospects, it's a different scenario. If the browser goes on strike during the first video call, the firewall is blocking access, or the customer first has to download and install the application, it all turns into an embarrassing experience.

Business can be done through virtual meetings.

Thomas Rigotti

Professor of work, organizational and business psychology at the Leibniz Institute in Mainz



"The atmosphere is frosty and customers simply won't open up", explains the sales professional. It is very tough to cultivate a relationship with a new customer without ever meeting face to face. Virtual meetings just aren't as natural, he admits. But Thomas Riebel takes a pragmatic view. "It is what it is."

Justine Sanborn teaches Communication Design at City University New York (CUNY). The transfer to a digital learning environment was not a problem for her. She had given online courses before. "The balance of teaching three days in the classroom and two days from home was quite pleasant. Now that all teaching is done online, it feels like I'm at work nonstop," she says while taking a deep breath.

The effects of COVID in New York may have been more extreme than in other cities. And so, the 30-year-old shows a lot of understanding for her students. She doesn't ask anyone to activate the video function or microphone during her lessons. Enforcing this would be really inappropriate for online teaching. Students may have siblings who also have to learn and they may be uncomfortable showing their living conditions. As a teacher it is important to be respectful and understanding. Using the chat function or asking for feedback via email works very well. "There may be students who have difficulty hearing. Therefore, it's even more important to type up the tasks," she explains.

The lecturer emphasizes that we should draw our own boundaries in order to consciously make time for ourselves.



Denise Kaufmann

Board member of the Winkels group from Sachsenheim, Head of Marketing and Sales



Thomas Riebel

Key-Account-Manager
Epson

Not to be available 24/7 and not to answer every e-mail immediately is important. Daily routines help, too. For Justine Sanborn and Denise Kaufmann, it's the regular morning walk with their dogs before starting their working day.

"Of course, I wouldn't wear my pajamas, but I'm dressing more casually with hardly any make-up. I find it quite pleasant, not to spend so much time and effort," says Denise Merchant. She also heard from acquaintances that they have kept their normal morning routine – even if they settle for a day of work on the living room sofa afterward.

Research also acknowledges how important this distinction between private life and work is. Routines can help: changing in and out of work clothes, taking breaks or getting fresh air and exercise. "These are important methods for coping with extreme situations, promote well-being, contribute to long-term health and thus maintain performance," says Thomas Rigotti. He emphasizes that one should avoid listening to news and stay off social media when planning a relaxing evening.

At the end of the day, it's down to personal preferences. However, these tips can help maintain a good balance between work, commitment to an employer, the bond with colleagues and one's personal space. Daily video chats and e-mails are no replacement for face to face interaction.

The consequences of the corona pandemic will undoubtedly be felt for a long time and impact the way we work

forever. So, it is important to come to terms with this new reality. Many companies have already announced that they will embrace working from home. However, spontaneous conversations and birthday cakes are hard to replace in a virtual environment according to Thomas Rigotti.

Birthday cakes are hard to replace in a virtual environment

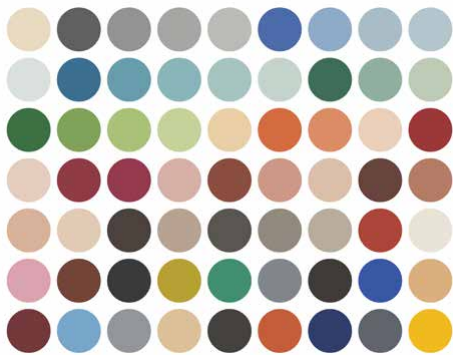
A new concept of flexible, interchange between working from home and at the office seems a logical solution. When we meet again at the office, the antique bookshelf, the designer lampshade or the Polly Pocket poster will make for excellent conversation.

For GMG, video conferencing from the home office has long been a daily reality. Thanks to our employees' technical affinity, new communication tools were quickly embraced around the world.



Le Corbusier – the freedom of a closed system

In 1931 and 1959, Le Corbusier developed a color system with a total of 63 nuanced and concise tones. Long forgotten, the colors are more relevant today than ever – once meant for wallpaper, these colors now adorn furniture, walls, radiators and watches.



Classic modernist architecture is inseparably linked with one name: Le Corbusier. Even more than five decades after his death, the Swiss-born is an architectural demigod. He left behind icons such as the Villa Savoye in Paris, a recently restored family home on the Weissenhof in Stuttgart or – his late work – the Notre-Dame-du-Haut chapel in Ronchamp. These and 14 further buildings spread across seven countries were added to the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2016 – that's more than any architect could ever hope for.



This example of a lounge shows how well intense and contrasting color combinations can work for an interior without appearing too shrill.

Star architect and iconic brand

Le Corbusier not only set standards in terms of architecture (despite the failure of his urban planning visions), he also recognized the power of branding early on. Charles-Édouard Jeanneret-Gris, born in 1887, quickly realized that his extremely complex name (even for Francophone standards) would be an obstacle to his future success, particularly internationally. So, in 1920 he renamed himself Le Corbusier, founded an office with his cousin Pierre Jeanneret in Paris in 1922, and started wearing his recognizable, thick-rimmed, round glasses. The brand was born, the glasses became a bestseller among architects. Today, one would certainly call Le Corbusier a star architect. In August 1965, he drowned on the Côte d'Azur after having suffered a heart attack. Five years earlier, he founded the 'Fondation Le Corbusier', a foundation that protects and preserves his own artistic work. A brand strategy that has been consistently thought through to the end. And so, the foundation continues to watch meticulously over the architectural legacy, but also over less well-known facets. For example, his colors.

Polychrome legacy

For a long time, Le Corbusier was associated with white cubes – simple, pure and straightforward. But anyone who visits the twin house in Stuttgart today is immersed in an intense cosmos of color. Indeed, Le Corbusier planned polychrome outside, and even more prominently inside. The color concept was both an aesthetic experience and a clarification of the architectural intentions. This aspect of Le Corbusier's work was recognized by the 1990s not least, thanks to Arthur Rüegg from Zurich, Switzerland, who has been researching Le Corbusier since the 1970s – and rediscovered the "Polychromie architecturale", so to speak. The professor, who taught at the ETH Zurich until 2007, retrieved Le Corbusier's color schemes from the archives and re-issued them together with Birkhäuser Verlag (see book tip). The charts comprise of two collections, one from 1931 with 43 shades and one from 1959 with 20 shades, both created for the Basel wallpaper manufacturer Salubra.



Photo: Leicht Küchen

Le Corbusier is also present in the kitchen, thanks to the collection from kitchen manufacturer Leicht.

The total of 63 tones are not only characterized by timeless topicality and elegance, they also result – more importantly – in harmonious combinations of natural and powerful luminous nuances. Color experts say that the chart can be used to create both calm and lively, stimulating compositions. However, it's impossible to achieve shrill or flat and boring results. The colors have names like: 'bleu outremer', 'Rouge vermillon' or 'le jaune vif', even the most conservative builders find it difficult to hide their fascination entirely.

As enlightening as the 63 colors are, they do not follow the inner logic of a color system that wants to take into account the entire color space. Le Corbusier's color chart remains a subjective collection of colors that leaves out more colors than it includes. But it is precisely this reduction that makes the colors so affable; the grand master's selection and brand transform what is basically a mix of pigments, binders, fillers and additives into a commodity that transports culture.

Complex approach

The next chapter in the history of the 63 colors begins around the late 1990s. Together with Arthur Rüegg, the small Swiss paint manufacturer kt.color analyzes the 63 colors in order to recreate them and make them fit for modern architecture again. So, the colors became trendy again, for indoor and outdoor applications, always based on minerals and natural pigments – just like the originals.

Back in 2008, the interest in the Corbusier colors grew when Zurich-based Les Couleurs Suisse AG took over the global marketing of the colors from Fondation Le Corbusier and started issuing licenses to companies that wanted to enhance their products using these prestigious colors. The manufacturer of electrical switches Jung is one of the current 20 licensees, but also chair manufacturer Dietiker, radiator specialist Runtal, Anker with floor coverings, Heroal with external doors and Dauphin with the furniture system Bosse Modul Space.



Jung has been producing its LS 990 switch series in Le Corbusier's colors since 2014. The paint is applied manually in a special process, creating a matt, slightly rough surface.

Color under license

In 2014, Jung started with ten shades, in the meantime, the LS990 switch series is now available in all 63 tones. This leads to the conclusion that Le Corbusier's colors not only serve as a marketing story but actually impact and create a market effect. After all, it is anything but trivial to create accurate color recipes for plastic products. The licensing stipulates an exact match with the original colors, which are available to the companies as master samples for the complex shading process. The fact that Le Corbusier mixed adhesive-based dyes back then proves to be an additional challenge today, because plastic batches, Perlon fibers, powder coatings, lacquers or ceramic glazes always follow their own material-specific principles. Due to the complex and time-consuming development process, companies are usually involved for the long term. Office furniture manufacturer Dauphin for example, has been selling the puristic Bosse Modul Space portable furniture system in twelve licensed finishes, from 'blanc ivoire' to 'gris' since 2017. Striking color accents, continuing attention and continuously growing brand awareness among

interior designers, and indeed customers, are Dauphin's reason for the commitment.

Similar with Keimfarben: Le Corbusier is often the door opener for architects or interior designers looking for external or interior paint solutions. As Les Couleurs Suisse puts it: "The value of such a license is beyond question. Not only does it create up- and cross-selling opportunities, it also allows us to form an emotional bond with our customer". Incidentally, the license fees are based on factors such as product segment, geographical scope and, of course, duration.

Ceramic and colorful

While many of the licensees tend to operate in the B2B market, the youngest member addresses the end customer directly: Rado. The watch specialist presents the True Thinline wristwatch in nine matt colors from the Le Corbusier color system. Both the case and the bracelet are made of solid-colored, injection-molded ceramic – a difficult process, and not just in terms of color



Offered by Rado, the True Thinline wristwatch is available as limited edition in nine matt colors.

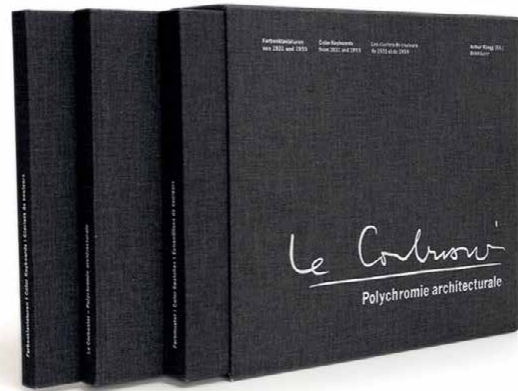
accuracy. The watch, which is limited to 999 copies of each color, also presents the complete color system arranged in a circle on the back of the watch casing – as a counterpart to the dial, so to speak. Le Corbusier would surely have enjoyed the elegant timepiece himself.

BOOK TIP

The 'Polychromie architecturale' with the color system from 1931 and 1951 comes complete with historical references. The three-volumes in a smart slipcase are available for 349 Euro. The work by Arthur Rüegg is now in its third edition published by Birkhäuser.



Office furniture manufacturer Dauphin sells its Bosse Modul Space system in twelve licensed paint finishes, from "blanc ivoire" to "gris".



With color management solutions from GMG, colors can be reproduced accurately in print. The 63 colors of the Le Corbusier's color system, as described here, are no exception.

PORTRAIT

“I slipped into it, it simply suited me.” Even at Uni Suganthy developed an interest for HR.

Suganthy Ariaratnam
HR Manager



“I find working with people very rewarding”

The human resources manager Suganthy Ariaratnam is responsible for recruiting talent at GMG and for further increasing GMG's profile as an attractive employer. With her positive attitude and ambition, she is continuously raising the bar in both.

Human resources – this subject is for many people a closed book with seven seals. Suganthy Ariaratnam (32) knows this too well. The human resources manager has to explain quite often what she actually does; but that's no hardship for the woman who is always in a good mood. After all, communication is an important aspect of her job.

"Surprisingly, there are a lot of people who are not familiar with what I do," she says. As HR manager, she is entrusted with personnel issues. However, she has to explain in more detail what that actually involves. Her focus is on personnel development, recruiting, but also on HR marketing – in other words, making GMG visible as an attractive employer. If her colleagues want to know more, her door is always open. Trust and transparency are important to her. How should people know that she's writing to 50 candidates, looking for the right talent? "Active sourcing is time-consuming," she says.

Recruiting has changed considerably over the past couple of decades. "Of course, we have very high standards and expectations at GMG, but it is apparent that we have a shortage of talent in our industry," she explains. Fact is, specialists in the IT sector can choose their jobs. "We, as an employer, have to make ourselves attractive to the talent we want to hire. I have to think about how people will take notice of us." Advertising jobs on our homepage and job portals is no longer enough these days. Suganthy uses relevant portals such as Xing or LinkedIn to find suitable candidates. "Often the right candidates for an opening aren't actively looking for a job," which is one of the challenges she explains. "We have to be there when they do, or maybe, a job opening is so interesting to them that they start considering changing jobs. In any case, it is crucial that we, as a company, are clear who we are looking for, which is why the recruitment process always starts with a careful analysis of the department's requirements."

And what's important for the recruiter in an applicant? She reveals one tip: "I have to admit, if a candidate in a first-round interview asks questions that have nothing to do with the job

directly, it does leave a bit of an aftertaste." The detail is indeed important, however the time to take a lunch break and whether a company car is on offer are probably not the first things to ask. Instances like these would certainly make me question a candidate's motivation. In this job, it certainly helps if one has a good understanding of people.

Suganthy herself is the perfect example of how modern recruiting works. She didn't actively apply for the HR position four years ago. Her previous job in Stuttgart involved looking after GMG as a customer. "One day the managing director mentioned that he was looking for someone to head up GMG's HR requirements," she recalls. He was in luck: at the time, I had started to put my feelers out for a new challenge. "Things just fell into place from that moment on as I was already familiar with the company and the people I would directly report into" she says.

Making decisions doesn't seem to be an issue for Suganthy. When she traveled to England for a language course after graduating from high school, she immediately liked it so much that she stayed. "I enrolled at a university there and did my bachelor's degree in business management". Even during her studies, she focused on HR processes. "I slipped into it. It simply suited me." She figured that by choosing a subject she seemed to be naturally good at, it would require less effort. "I enjoyed every minute of it," she laughs.

Still no regrets, she appreciates the variety in her job because she doesn't just sit behind her computer screen. "I learn a lot and get to understand all areas of the business," she says. One day she is profiling a position with the head of department, then she has a trial-period review with a new team member. The reward is in knowing that her work is directly contributing to the company's success.

Besides her job, her little daughter keeps her busy, making up for the lack of exercise. Although Suganthy admits: "I am the world's worst for planning to start exercising but never actually doing it. My friends just laugh. I once joined a gym, but never actually went," she smiles. Socializing is more important to her. "We have a big family that I love spending time with." Whether at home or at work, people seem to be the central focus. "I guess if I didn't feel like this, I'd be in the wrong job."



Eclectic ambience instead of modern architecture - the conversation in the coworking space Würzburg starts with a look into the past. However, Peter Reich and Holger Fröbel (from left) prefer to talk about the current challenges in the packaging industry.

“Packaging is a printed product with a future”

Peter Reich from Constantia Flexibles knows all the packaging trends – he has worked for what feels like an eternity for a company that is undoubtedly one of the leaders in the industry. He accepted TrueColors’ invitation and met Holger Fröbel – a packaging expert himself – on this sunny afternoon in the Würzburg coworking space. His company, Fröbel Medientechnik, supports packaging service providers with know-how and intelligent solutions to optimize their processes – especially in the area of color management.

TrueColors: Mr. Reich, how does that actually fit together – you actively experienced the beginnings of digitization. And today, many years later, the subject is more topical than ever. Is the digital future a thing of the past?

Peter Reich: In any case, the digital future and my vita are a great match! I started my career as an information electronics engineer. With my know-how, I was pretty far ahead when digitization was still in its infancy.

Holger Fröbel: That’s a funny coincidence! I studied information technology in Chemnitz. Immediately after graduation, I incidentally ended up in the graphic arts industry.

Two old hands meet in Würzburg ...

Holger Fröbel: Digitization has a lot to do with information processing. That’s my background. Even though we started selling DTP systems in 1995.

A lot has happened since then, right?

Holger Fröbel: Massively! In fact, our business has changed completely since then. Today we would be better described as engineers who develop and implement customized solutions. We are very specific about the hardware and software we sell. In addition, about 15 years ago, we made the radical decision to concentrate fully on the packaging market. Many printed things can be converted into digital media very easily. Packaging is different. For me, packaging is a printed product with a future.

Constantia presumably has the same opinion.

Peter Reich: Sure. That’s why everything for us revolves around packaging – with a specific focus on pharmaceuticals and consumer packaging. Around 60 percent of our business is consumer products. Roughly 80 percent of all yogurt lids in Europe are produced by us.

Where our market share for chocolate Easter bunnies and Santa Clauses, is circa 80 percent globally.

Sounds like most of the leading brands practically hold the door open for each other at Constantia.

Peter Reich: Yes, that’s fair to say. Of course, we are proud of that and we take this role very seriously, for example with regard to confidentiality in connection with new products. There really isn’t anything confidential lying around.

Mr. Fröbel, in your role as a solutions provider, you liaise with both large and small companies. 80 percent market share in any industry is exceptional. Can you say to what extent the challenges of smaller market players differ from those in the Constantia League?

Holger Fröbel: The range is, of course, huge – from small companies with two or three employees to large internationally-operating companies with multiple sites. All the same, companies large or small have very similar or even identical challenges. All of them have to serve their customers as best as possible and deliver highest print quality. Of course, the large, global players do have many unique challenges.

What are you thinking of?

Holger Fröbel: I notice the increasing concentration of providers in many market segments. Company acquisitions lead to ever larger organizations with new challenges, such as the flexible fulfillment of orders across different locations with varying production conditions. This requires unique solutions, not least in the area of color management.

Consistent results across multiple locations and varying production processes require sophisticated color management solutions.



Holger Fröbel: On the whole, I'd say that packaging print is of very high quality.

How can small packaging printers sustain their position?

Holger Fröbel: Small firms can score points with more individuality in service and products. In terms of quality, however, the bar is just as high for the small providers as it is for the big companies. On the whole, it can be said that packaging printing is of very high quality. After all, the quality of the packaging is a direct reflection on the quality of the goods inside, and correct color reproduction is one of the most important criteria.

Mr. Fröbel, based on your experience with large and small companies in the packaging industry: can you describe an overarching trend?

Holger Fröbel: Low volume productions. Clearly. Short run packaging projects are on the rise!

Peter Reich: Absolutely correct. This is a huge topic for the packaging industry.

What are the reasons for smaller volumes?

Holger Fröbel: More diversification, shorter launch cycles and more frequent offers. Legal requirements are changing more often. Warehousing is a thing of the past as more and more manufacturers strive for on-demand production. Instead of 20,000 folding boxes, the client now orders just 680 pieces.

Peter Reich: We see this trend too. Although not quite to that extent. We definitely wouldn't print 680 pieces. At least not analogue – in digital printing we produce even a one-off. This is certainly not possible in flexo- or gravure-printing.

Does Constantia then look more to digital printing?

Peter Reich: Our sales team are estimating how often we will deliver these 680 pieces. Could we possibly print



No sight of convenience – Peter Reich (left) and Holger Fröbel (right) know that the packaging industry has to keep moving.

4,000 pouches analogue, store them and deliver them on demand in batches?

Logistics make it possible.

Peter Reich: In theory, yes. We are very well placed in that respect. We have a large warehouse for the storage of finished goods.

Holger Fröbel: Print jobs move between the different printing processes depending on where they can be most efficiently produced. For instance, we are seeing a shift from gravure to flexo and from flexo to digital, but we equally experience projects moving in the opposite direction. Whichever the printing process, as a manufacturer, I have to be able to achieve comparable color results across all processes.

Efficiency and quality must be seen as equal and with reliable color management, print approvals should merely be a formality. Mr. Reich, are your customers still planning overnight stays when they come to approve a job on press?

Peter Reich: I have the impression that the number of overnight stays is decreasing (laughs). After all, a lot has happened in recent years, including a change in our mindset. In the past, a digital proof was only used as a guide but today, with the support of GMG, we have reached a level in color management where our proofs, including special colors, are accepted by all parties as a binding reference.

And what about the hotel stay?

Peter Reich: It's not a case of starting to get the machine ready when the customer arrives. No, the first sheet is ready and waiting on the light box. And this sheet is very, very close to the proof. The tweaks we make now are really about design nuances. I guess, that's unfortunately bad news for our hoteliers.



Photo: Johannes Kiefer

Peter Reich: Whatever is approved here, we can guarantee to reproduce exactly that.

With digital printing there isn't anything to adjust – does prepress therefore have more responsibility?

Peter Reich: Definitely yes. My vision is to pull the print approval further forward. To the screen and the proof. Whatever is approved here, we can guarantee to reproduce exactly. We can easily do this at distance via a remote proof. Something we already do across sites internally and with various customers with great success. This is of course a hot topic when dealing with a global pandemic.

The solution has long been there. GMG ColorProof GO, GMG ColorServer, GMG OpenColor, and the plugin – are we only talking about perceptual barriers?

Peter Reich: It's our job to establish trust. The first three have to bravely cross the glass bridge before everyone else follows.

Holger Fröbel: Correct! Technology is great, but acceptance is key, even within the company. In principle, we should bring all stakeholders around the table and dispel any possible reservations. Due to the complex value chain, this often remains a hopeful wish.

Innovation is part of the graphic arts industry like color is part of printing

Holger Fröbel: Nobody will argue that. However, it takes time for new ideas to become established.

Take multicolor print for example. We've been working with that for a while but it has only recently been fully embraced by brands and manufacturers alike. One reason for this; the growing acceptance of digital printing, which is multicolor by default. Another reason is the time and cost pressures that the packaging industry constantly has to deal with.

Peter Reich: Multicolor is coming. But now machine manufacturers have to step up to the plate too. In gravure printing for example, 'fit' is one of the biggest issues. Color isn't an issue, as with GMG we are in full control. At our site in Mexico, we produce bags of chips with multicolor in flexo printing for instance. No issues at all.

Constantia Flexibles is embracing new technologies, especially in prepress. How do you do that?

Peter Reich: We try to get everyone involved and motivated. Younger operators are also much more open-minded. That generation grew up with automation and standards. The whole company benefits from this. The standardized work – for example with GMG ColorPlugin – also takes pressure off. Jobs can now be shared within a team or even across different sites and the results are always identical.

Holger Fröbel: Definitely. The tasks in prepress are changing. We are talking more and more about controlling and optimizing processes instead of working with a paintbrush. It is the prepress that ensures efficiency in the pressroom. One thing is certain: The opportunities of digitization are huge for everyone in the packaging industry.

Mr. Reich, Mr. Froebel, thank you very much for this interesting exchange.

SELECTIVE FACTS



Sold!

90 seconds – that is the maximum time it takes for buyers to decide whether they like a product or not. And over 90% of that decision is based on visual elements alone. Sometimes the strongest influence is – how could it be different – color. Buyer behaviour is also controlled by color: Spontaneous purchases are triggered by red, orange, black and royal blue, while buyers on a budget are most likely to be attracted by pink, teal or light blue. (medium.com)

Not so neutral after all?

Referees in sport should be impartial. But as a study from the US has shown, the color of the jersey can certainly influence the supposedly impartial person. According to psychologists Mark Frank and Thomas Gilovich, teams with a black shirt in the American football and ice hockey leagues were found to foul exceptionally often. The conclusion of the researchers: Black stands for aggressiveness, which triggers a subconscious thought pattern – if the referee observes a critical situation, he automatically accuses the wearer of the black jersey of an intentional offence and imposes a penalty. At the same time, red seems to be the color of the winners: A British study found that athletes wearing red jerseys seem to have an advantage, at least over opponents dressed in blue. (alltagsforschung.de & bestlifeonline.com)

What humans have in common with the mosquito

Blue is the most popular color among people. In Germany alone, 32% of respondents in a study cited blue as their favorite color, and the figures in the US and Great Britain are similar. But the affinity to blue can be problematic. As it turns out, mosquitoes are attracted to dark colors, especially blue. In general, light-colored clothing is recommended in regions with an increased mosquito population. Dark clothes make it much easier for the small insects to distinguish people from their surroundings and to allow themselves a little snack.

(yougov.de & nomadsworld.com)



ALTERNATIVE QUESTIONS

Daniel Comeau

Inside Sales Representative



Photo: Jörg Jäger

What is your favorite color? Red.

What would you do if you won the lottery? Buy a beachfront property on a Caribbean or Mediterranean island.

Do you have an idol? When I grew up, I idolized Michael Jordan. I admired him for his dedication and hard work, winning one championship after another.

Something most colleagues don't know about you: I was an All-State track and field athlete; I ran both the 100M, 400M and competed in long jump.

What color describes you best? And why? Baby Blue – I think it's an energetic yet calming color.

Are you more of an optimist or pessimist? I'm very optimistic.

How do you spend your time when you are not at GMG? I love to cook and I enjoy going to the movies. When I'm outdoors, I enjoy the beach, basketball and road trips from Boston to New York.

If you could have dinner with anyone, dead or alive, who would it be? Will Smith.

What was your first job? My first job was at a pizza restaurant. However, coming home from work smelling like pizza dough and fried food every day wasn't very pleasant, so I decided that the hospitality industry wasn't for me.

Your favorite song is: Family Business by Kanye West. The song is not well known but its soulful rhythm brings me back to a nostalgic place.

Reading or Netflix? Netflix – My uncle owned a video rental store when I grew up so I was always into movies since a young age.

In what area of your life are colors most important? The food I eat. When I grew up, I was a very picky eater, unfortunately, and food presentation played a massive role. The brighter and more colorful the food on the plate was, the more likely I was to eat it regardless of the taste.

GMG UPDATE



GMG ColorProof 5.12.1

Binding and comprehensive quality control of digital color proofs on the basis of defined standards

- A new dimension of remote proofing is available with GMG ColorProof GO – jobs can be managed conveniently from home, for example via smartphone.
- GMG ColorProof offers full support of the new measuring device from X-Rite. The X-Rite i1Pro 3 as well as the i1iO Generation 3 Table are now available for printer calibration and to create custom proof profiles.
- For the Epson SureColor SC-Px500 both the support of DotProof and the new proof standards have been implemented, for example PSR V2 profiles for the measuring conditions M1 and M0.
- GMG calibration sets for the Epson SureColor SC-S80600 can be installed in the same manner as for other printers. Manual imports from the GMG team are no longer necessary.

GMG OpenColor 2.4

Patented spectral data profiler for color-accurate prediction of the interaction between colors and the substrate

Simple creation of precise proof and separation profiles

- In addition to conventional printing systems, GMG OpenColor now supports the digital printing technologies, both toner- and inkjet-based. Digital printers can use GMG OpenColor to calculate proof profiles and separation profiles.
- Thanks to GMG OpenColor RemoteClient, customers can easily access projects via a browser. Regardless of the browser selected, target values can be exported, preliminary checks of separation values for spot colors can be performed and profile calculations can be monitored.
- Prototype Proofing by GMG: To bridge the gap between conventional proofing and prototype production, the Epson SureColor SC-S80600 navigated – by GMG ColorProof and GMG OpenColor – is used to produce color-accurate prints on substrates that are very close to the production material.
- Furthermore, the latest version of GMG OpenColor now supports the HKS spot color libraries, all current proofing conditions for Epson and HP printers and the modified PSR standard for the M1 measurement condition.

GMG ColorServer 5.2

The solution for automated color conversion ensures optimum color results and stable printing processes – now also for multicolor

- New GMG ColorServer solutions: Instead of the GMG ColorServer standard product with multiple additional options, the offering now includes three full packages. With GMG ColorServer Conventional, GMG ColorServer Digital and GMG ColorServer Multicolor, users can choose solutions for which no additional licenses are required.
- Synchronizing spot color libraries with GMG OpenColor is now child's play. The current version of GMG ColorServer enables adjustments to spot colors in GMG OpenColor with just one click.
- The new process standard PSR V2 for M1 measuring condition is fully supported. The same applies to all recent updates of the PSR standard.

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