

INTERVIEW

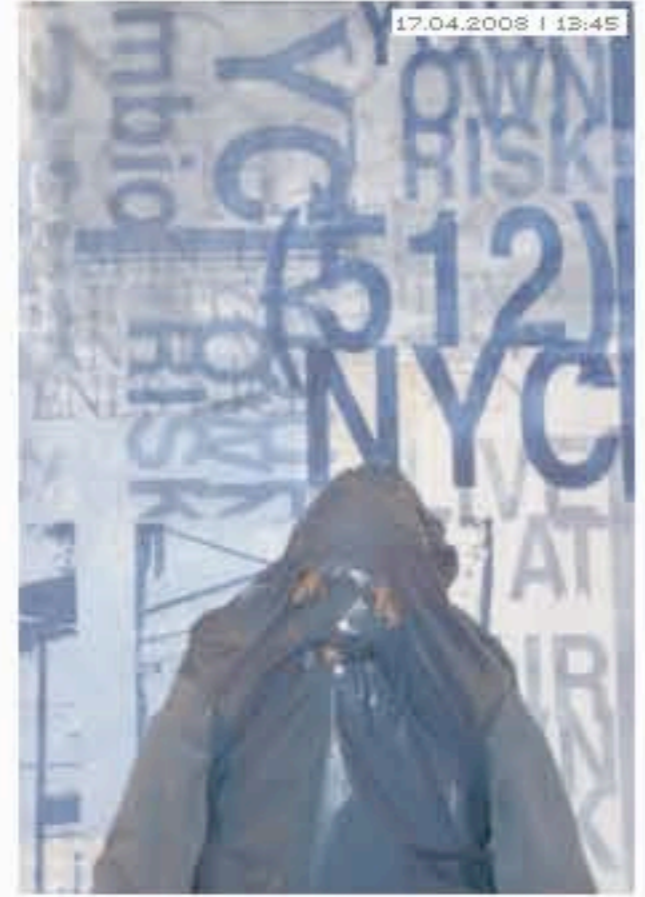


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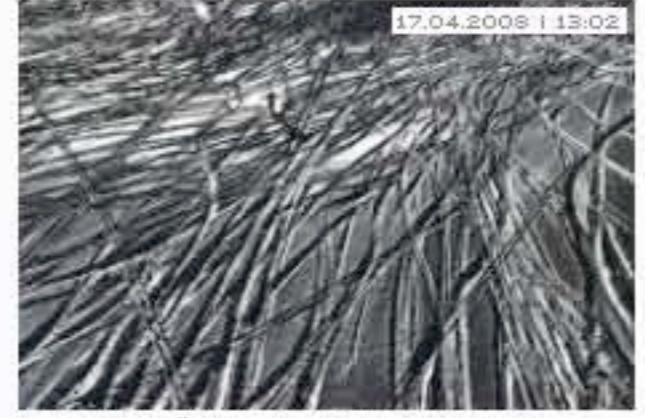
WOLFGANG FILSER, MÜNCHEN



JOERG SLAWIK, HAMBURG



CHRISTOF FLÜMACHER, WEST HOLLYWOOD



CHRISTOF FLÜMACHER, WEST HOLLYWOOD



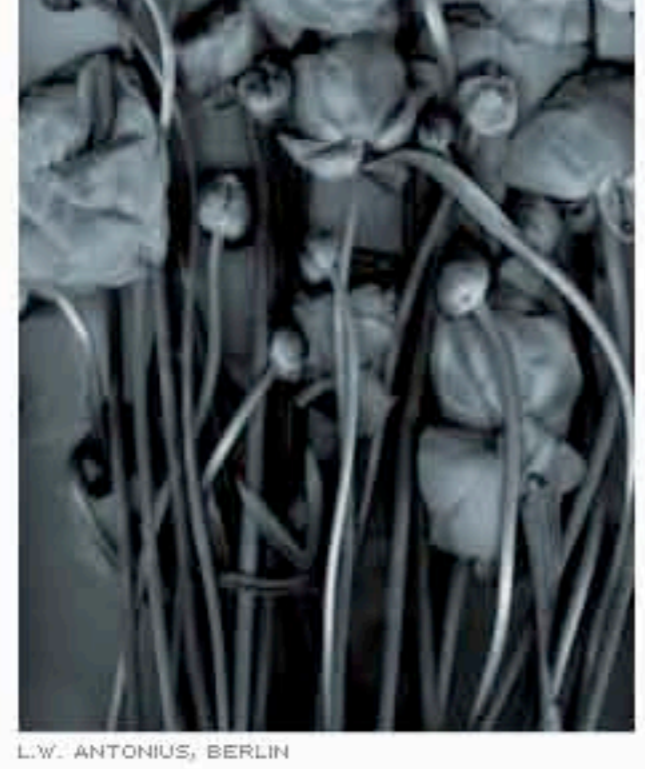
AHELIE BUNTE, NÜRNBERG, WEIMAR, BERLIN



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L.W. ANTONIUS, BERLIN



VOLKER JANSEN, TROISDORF



NAT KRIER, ...



CHRISTOF FLÜMACHER, WEST HOLLYWOOD



CHRISTOF FLÜMACHER, WEST HOLLYWOOD



STEPHANIE MARIA, BERLIN



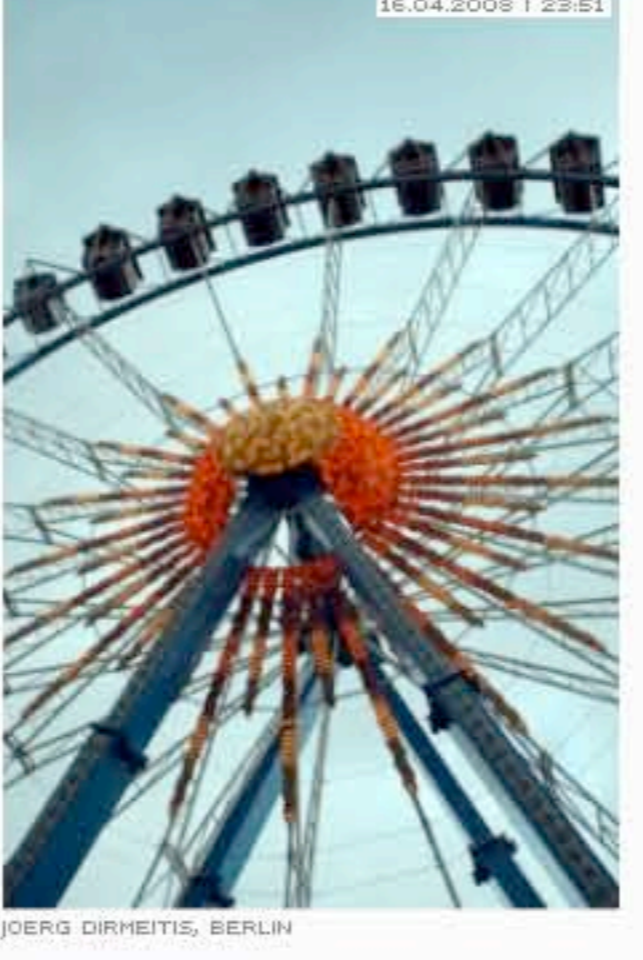
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RAHONA SCHRATT, BOCHUM



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Der Medienwissenschaftler Norbert Bolz legt mit einem Buch „bang design“ die Lunte zum 2. Urknall.
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## "What I do not like is design dictated by Shareholder Value"

Anke Bernotat was one of the founders of the design studio dmbh, but after 4 years of working under the name dmbh, she decided that her own name is a perfectly good thing to call her company! By the way the renaming also led to some content based changes as the focus is not only on the product, but also on the product's context, on how it should be presented and what it evokes.

### The first question, what does Bernotat&Co stand for?

Co obviously stands for "company", for the motivated team I am working with. In a whimsical sense, I like to stress the "Co" in words such as Coherent, Concepts, Colourful and Confidential Collaboration, words which we value. Co can be imbued with different meaning, playfully and creatively adapting to certain contexts – just like the way we work. Even the "&Co" part of our logo is filled with different colours to further emphasize the whole spectrum of possibilities to which we apply ourselves.

### What kind of business is Bernotat&Co working on?

Bernotat&Co's primary target is to develop meaningful and successful products for our clients. As product designers, we do everything about and around the product; not only product design, but analyses, studies, product branding and product presentation. Our personal challenge is to create products that enhance humanity's relationship with its environment. Remaining open and receptive to society's dreams and desires is the driving force that enables us to anticipate trends and translate them into surprisingly useful objects. Aspects of everyday life – whether they be story-telling, science and technology or nature – can be found in our work. These manifest themselves in products for our design categories "Living", "Working", "On The Move" and "Public Space". Bernotat&Co has a down-to-earth idealism that takes broad input and channels it with meaningful cooperation into product development. If our products look simple it is because we believe that simplicity generates quality.

### Which projects are you currently working on?

We do very different products, for example, consumer products for home and garden, office chairs and tables, furniture for the public space. We also do shop displays and even accessories like bags, ladies bags, travel bags.

We just finished "Bock", a trestle for BAEST. "Bock" is a horizontally stackable trestle for the table top of your choice. Inspired by the archetypal form of a milking stool, it has the same function: it is very sturdy yet flexible in the sense you can pick it up and put it down wherever you need it next. This characteristic is essential to a quality trestle.

A new range of Gispen Chairs will soon be launched. We originally designed the Triennale chair with Gispen for the Jahrhunderthalle in Bochum. This is a venue for experimental theatre and music set in an enormous industrial hangar. The room required a stackable chair that provided the comfort of a real theatre chair. I then began to ponder what comfort meant, and thought that it had more to do with a personal welcoming gesture than a thickly padded luxurious seat. Which then led me to the idea of a chair with a kind of small cushion as a backrest where it seemed as if the cushion was being specially offered to each person. Everyone is familiar with cushions from the couch at home, and so they associate these cushions with their personal comfort. Only afterwards did we realize the chair's potential. Since the upholstered part comprises two parts, there are infinite combinations of fabric and colour we can apply. You can choose your own for home, a company can choose the corporate colours and architects can make grand compositions in congress centres and theatres. They can view each upholstered section as a pixel and make enormous photographic images! The chair can therefore be used for every situation: home, public halls, or company offices.

### Are there current tendencies in design in general that you especially like or dislike?

What I do not like is design dictated by "Shareholder Value". The level of product design rapidly loses its quality, since manufacturers lack the courage to take risks. Successfully designed objects are reproduced in slightly varying forms; decisions are made by marketing surveys.

Real innovation has become extremely rare. Apple is an exception; Steve Jobs has shown he is willing to undergo a risk if there is a good idea. Manufacturers nowadays should anticipate. Product designers are there to help them achieve this. Designers are trained to be aware of culture, technology, ergonomics and economics and think practically and critically and integrate all aspects while developing relevant products and services.

It's all about finding the right balance between culture, technology, economy, and then it's the designer's job to put people at the centre. Culture is important for the acceptance of products. We need to be aware of our cultural roots and qualities and actively address them.

### What does the term "sustainability" mean for you?

As product designers and developers we need to think about the efficient use of primary products, reasonably structured production processes, improving durability and increasing the acceptance of sustainable products.

In general, we must always examine "intelligent technology and materials" and aspects of "sustainability" for possibilities that could lead to improvements. Behaving in accordance with "sustainability" should also be approached more positively, with a more open mind. People should not see it as "don't drive a car because it's not good for the planet", but "look how many more beautifully strange things and situations you see when you take the time to ride your bicycle past the traffic jams".

As you have two departments in two different European countries, how far has it come with the European Union (Are there still many borders? Is it already one Europe?) How do you evaluate the current development?

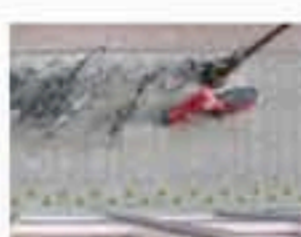
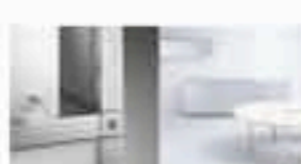
Luckily, cultural diversity remains. We like to have different perspectives and want to create a situation that allows us to look out of the box. Different cultures can lead to misunderstandings but we get inspired and sensible about differences. Learn to deal with them and use them positively. That's a knowledge from which our clients can benefit.

### VITA

Anke Bernotat started her career as an apprentice joiner or "Schreiner". In Germany this is a highly esteemed traditional vocation that teaches pupils craftsmanship, attention to materials, tools and detail. She followed with a curriculum of "Produktgestaltung". She lived and worked in Barcelona and London and taught at the Design Academy in Eindhoven. She worked for Foster and Partners and Jasper Morrison in London, n/p/k in the Netherlands and was one of the founders of dmbh. She currently divides her time between a professorship in product design at Folkwang Universität in Essen and her own Bernotat&Co Design Studio. Her designs have achieved many distinctions including the Red Dot Award, Innovation Award for Architecture and Office and the IF Design Award in Hannover.

### The interviewer

Björn Welzel hat gerade sein Praxissemester in der Designstrategie der Audi group absolviert, wo er bald seine Diplomarbeit "Die Wiederentdeckung der Mittelschicht" anschließen wird. Darüber hinaus ist er für einige weitere deutsche Unternehmen im Bereich Design- und Markeninnovationsstrategie tätig. Der gelernte Metallgestalter ist derzeit noch Student für Industrial Design an der Universität Duisburg-Essen bzw. Folkwanghochschule für Design Essen und erregte erstmals internationales Aufsehen durch das Projekt "Quo vadis Braun – Identitätsfindung im deutschen Design des 21. Jahrhunderts" – in Zusammenarbeit mit Dieter Rams und Florian Seiffert, welches mehrfach auch international ausgezeichnet wurde.



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# bang design

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