

**Mike Meiré's
Cologne**
A spotlight on
the city's creative
star turns

STAR PROJECTS

MAGAZINES

RENOWNED FOR HIS DESIGN
OF *BRAND EINS*, *ECONY*,
ARCH+, *032C* AND *GARAGE*.

BRAND CURATION

HAS DIRECTED CULTURAL
PROJECTS FOR LUXURY
KITCHEN AND BATHROOM
BRAND DORNBRACHT
FOR NEARLY 20 YEARS.

CORPORATE ARCHITECTURE

DESIGNS TEMPORARY
STRUCTURES FOR TRADE FAIR
PRESENTATIONS, EXHIBITIONS
AND INSTALLATIONS. CLIENTS
INCLUDE MINI/BMW, ARTEK,
BULTHAUP, SIEDLE AND MOST
RECENTLY AGNONA.

Cologne stars

German art director Mike Meiré
takes us on a creative spin of his home city

PHOTOGRAPHY: ACHIM LIPPOTH WRITER: NICOLAI HARTVIG

Cologne was a cultural hub centuries before we decided that's what such artistic intersections should be called, but it doesn't really make much of a fuss about it. And that is one of its advantages. 'Cologne is the perfect refuge to concentrate on your work,' says art director Mike Meiré, who has long run his agency, Meiré und Meiré, out of an old factory building in the now up-and-coming Ehrenfeld neighbourhood. 'As it is my home town I feel grounded and always enjoy coming home after travelling around the world.'

That's not to say the city is inert. 'It is an ongoing process of change, you always feel the spirit of change that is essential to creativity,' Meiré says. In recent years, an artists' space has found a home at Ebertplatz-Passage, while pop-up fashion stores have joined the hip bars and boutiques in the Belgian Quarter. The non-profit Temporary Gallery blends art lectures and performances with exhibitions, and hot young curator Jan Kaps has chosen Cologne for his first space.

The creative community is soldered together by an unassuming, friendly 'Kölschness'. Galleries work together to coordinate openings, while craftsmen and designers commission each other. 'It's all about working together,' says Meiré. 'Cologne's interdisciplinary approach is quite unique, the city is a melting pot of different cultural disciplines. On the one hand, the community is tight-knit, on the other hand, everyone works on an international level with lots of global contacts and projects.'

That may be Cologne's main advantage over art powerhouse Berlin: location. Brussels is less than two hours by train, Amsterdam and Paris are also easily reachable. That's a two-way dynamic: visitors can easily journey in to attend annual fairs such as Art Cologne, Cologne Fine Art and IMM Cologne. And local art colleges such as Kunsthochschule für Medien Köln, Köln International School of Design and Germany's first school for sustainable design, Ecosign, are also international draws.

This year, Meiré und Meiré celebrates its 30th anniversary, with no signs of slowing down. Upcoming projects include the design of a Madison Avenue store for Zegna-owned fashion label Agnona (see page 075); the sixth issue of Dasha Zhukova's *Garage* magazine; the second volume of legendary French journal *Cahiers d'Art*, working with Cologne-based artist Rosemarie Trockel; and a redesign of *GQ Italia* for Condé Nast.

STAR PROJECTS

'DESK PAD', 2013

A WALL-MOUNTED BUREAU FEATURING A RETRACTABLE DESKTOP AND BUILT-IN COMPARTMENTS FOR PENS, PAPERS AND BOOKS.

'SAUCER' COAT HOOK, 2010

PRODUCED BY SCHÖNBUCH, A BENT WIRE ROD HOOK IS TOPPED BY A SAUCER-LIKE THIN METAL PLATE FOR STORING KEYS AND THE LIKE.

'IN/OUT' CHAIR, 2008

FOR INSIDE AND OUTDOOR USE, A BASIC, LIGHT POWDER-COATED STRUCTURE COMES WITH AN INSTANTLY CHANGEABLE PADDED COVER.



Eric Degenhardt

Designer of sleek, sharp-edged furniture

Eric Degenhardt is immersed in a personal project: building a concrete-and-glass live/work space while developing the neighbouring stables that once housed his great-grandfather's horses. He moved his family into the almost-finished living space of right angles and geometric forms in the Lindenthal neighbourhood last December. 'I think of architecture as the skin,' he says. 'It's just a square room, and only when you put pieces inside, the furniture, do you define its function.'

Cologne-born Degenhardt trained as an architect but, too impatient for ongoing, ten-year building projects, he turned to furniture design. His work includes sharp-edged tables and cabinets for Böwer, and sleek chairs and a mobile living unit for Richard

Lampert. And he is now working with Siedle on intercom designs, perhaps his most complex project yet. 'To most people, it sounds boring to do a grid on the wall into which you speak,' he says. 'But we have to think about habits, about people and how you can make lives easier, what you can improve.'

Lightness and openness are two leitmotifs of Degenhardt's work. He prefers a chaise longue to a lounge chair and used 3D knitting technology to create the remarkably thin 'Velas' chair for Wilkhahn. 'With furniture, I want people to use it their own way,' he says, twisting to sit sideways on a chair with no armrests. 'Furniture may tell you how to work with it – but I hate that.'



STAR PROJECTS

SCULPTURAL WORK

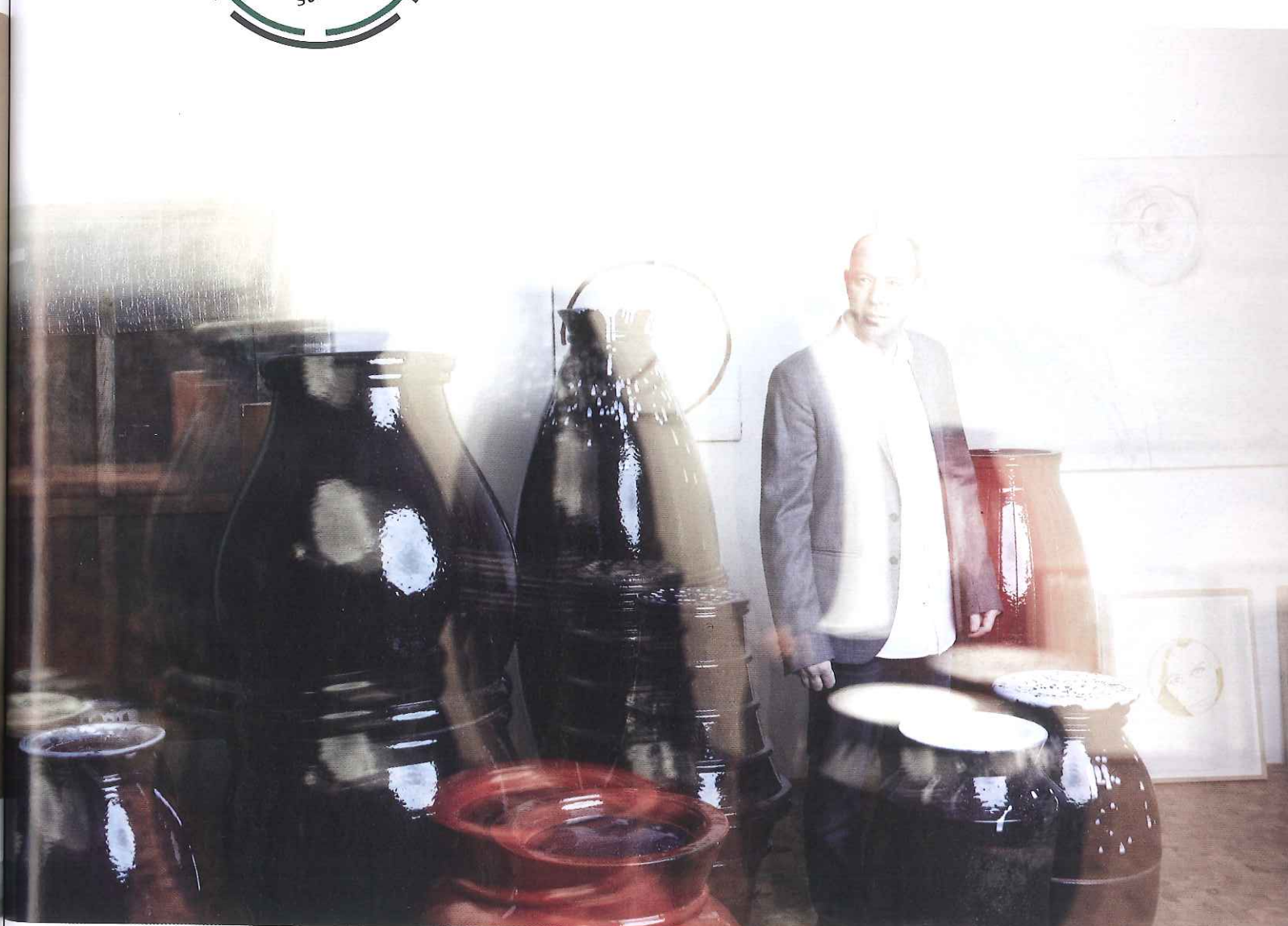
PRODUCED FOR ARTISTS THAT INCLUDE THOMAS SCHÜTTE, UWE KARLSEN, ROSEMARIE TROCKEL, RICHARD DEACON, CARSTEN HÖLLER, SIEGFRIED ANZINGER AND ISA GENZKEN.

JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTRE, 2011

FAÇADE FOR A MANUEL HERZ-DESIGNED SYNAGOGUE AND COMMUNITY CENTRE IN MAINZ, COVERED IN GLAZED, GREEN CERAMIC TILES.

ABOUT THE SIZE OF IT

HARDBACK BOOK OF BLACK-AND-WHITE PHOTOGRAPHS OF RICHARD DEACON'S MAQUETTES SHOT BY DIETRICH AND DEACON IN LONDON AND COLOGNE.



Niels Dietrich

Master ceramics producer for artists

In his vast ceramics workshop, spread across two floors of industrial workspace in Cologne's Ehrenfeld neighbourhood, Niels Dietrich has produced thousands of pieces for artists such as Richard Deacon, Rosemarie Trockel, Carsten Höller and Uwe Karlsen. He lives next door with his wife and daughters, having bought up the neighbour's house to expand both his living and work spaces. A series of custom-made kilns allow Dietrich to produce works in all shapes and sizes, and he runs the workshop with three associates and a handful of freelancers who help decipher the artists' often vaguely expressed requirements. 'Cameron Jamie uses words like "elegant", it should be "more elegant". What is "elegant" in art?' Dietrich wonders.

The artists often stop in to model works on-site; Jamie and Thomas Schütte are two frequent visitors. Dietrich's skills come into play at various stages, from shaping the clay houses that Karlsen then twists and demolishes, to developing original glazes, sometimes by mistake and surprise. One, a greyish tint that gains several hues in firing and has been named 'small pox', was a by-product of work for Schütte. 'For years we tried to write down what happened with the glazes we used and what kind of interactions happened in the kiln,' Dietrich explains. 'But as soon as you mix more than two glazes, it becomes completely unpredictable.' A cabinet of custom samples now serves as a guide.

STAR PROJECTS

KID'S WEAR MAGAZINE
CHILDREN'S FASHION
MAGAZINE ESTABLISHED BY
LIPPOTH IN 1995 AND ONCE
DESCRIBED BY BRUCE WEBER
AS 'THE MOST BEAUTIFUL
MAGAZINE IN THE WORLD'.

AD CAMPAIGNS

RECENT CLIENTS INCLUDE
IMPS & ELFS, IKEA, FISHER
PRICE, DIESEL, CALVIN KLEIN
AND MECCANO, WITH MUCH
OF THE IMAGERY FEATURING
CHILDREN'S PORTRAITURE.

EDITORIAL

LIPPOTH SHOOTS FOR
MAGAZINES SUCH AS
BLACKBOOK, *COLORS*,
DETAILS, *THE NEW YORK TIMES*
MAGAZINE, *VIEWPOINT* AND,
OF COURSE, US.



Achim Lippoth

High-living photographer who's down with the kids

Best known for his depictions of children and childhood, Achim Lippoth shot the portraits for this feature. Beyond the shrubbery of a lush, 160 sq m terrace, he enjoys panoramic vistas from his 41st floor penthouse flat atop the Uni-Center, one of Cologne's tallest buildings. He bought it in 1996 and knocked down walls to turn five rooms into one expansive haven. 'There are no pictures because I have no walls,' he says. 'It's only the sky, the landscape around you, and so much light. It's like a meditational thing, peaceful thinking. It gives me a kind of freedom.' A constant traveller, Lippoth has built a career that

bounces between advertising, fine art photography and editorial, publishing the biannual children's fashion title *Kid's Wear* and directing commercial videos. Recent clients include Nivea and the German Childhood Cancer Foundation, for which he produced a campaign highlighting the risks of passive smoking for children. He keeps his eight-person team in Cologne, where he also stages in-house shoots and handles post-production. 'It's different when you work with your own team,' he says. 'When people come to Cologne, they really appreciate how it's all organised and smooth. Everything is small and not so stressful.'

Michelle Elie Meiré

Anthropologic jewellery designer

Michelle Elie Meiré lives with husband Mike and their three children in a vast three-storey apartment filled with art and design. She runs jewellery and accessories line PRIM, and for her latest collection, which includes penis rings and gorilla bracelets, she drew on Claude Lévi-Strauss' anthropology and Leah Gordon's Kanaval photographs to rediscover her Haitian roots. Bespoke bags, unique to each buyer, featuring a large frog or rabbit ornament, are as much art as fashion – one even comes with its own kickstand for display. Her next collection, tentatively named 'Hikari' and planned for 2015, will see mountains of crystals exploding from bags and bracelets. There will be breasts and lips, and she's even pondering pieces for fingertips and knuckles.



STAR PROJECTS

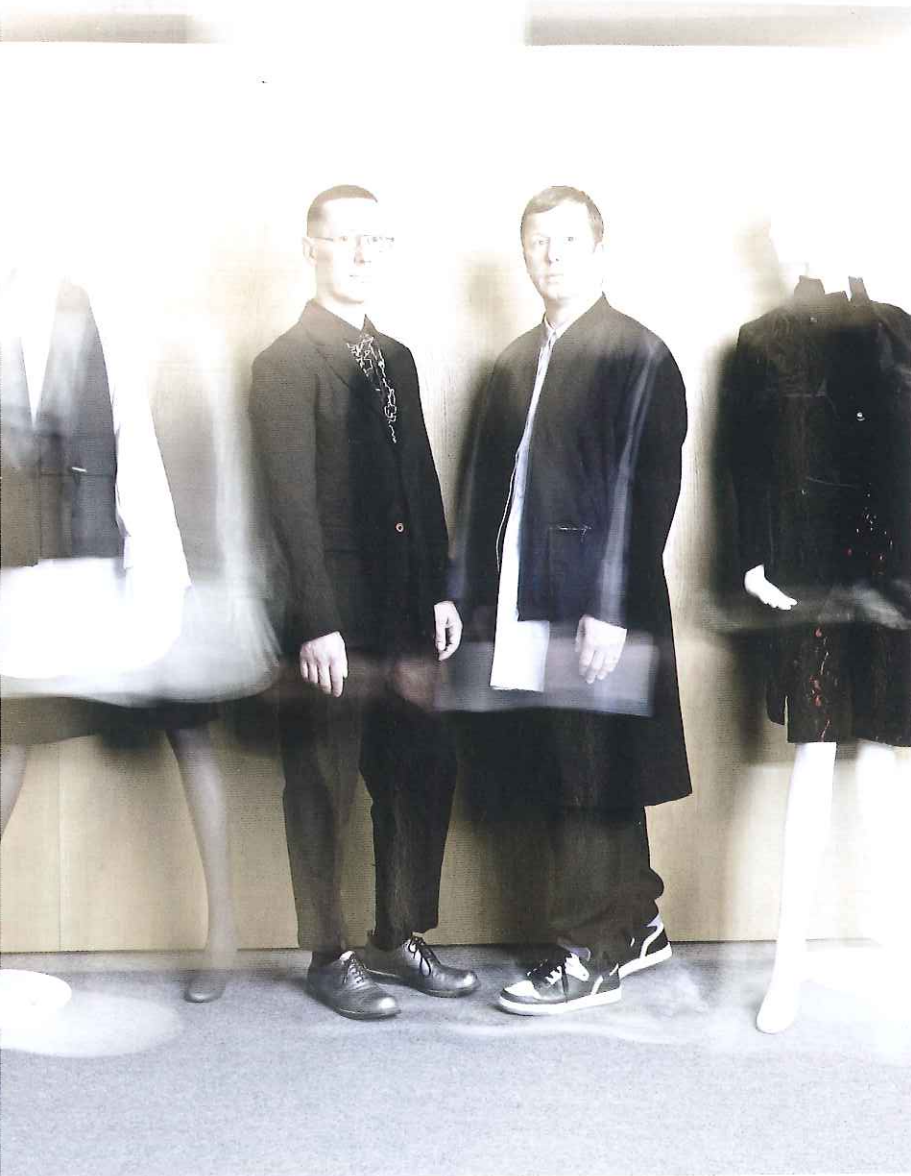
'OBJECT TROUVE'

THE FIRST PRIM COLLECTION
WAS BASED ON MEIRÉ'S
TRAVELS AND THE WORLD
OF LEGENDARY HOLLYWOOD
DESIGNER TONY DUQUETTE.

'MAKAK'

THE SECOND COLLECTION
WAS INSPIRED BY CLAUDE
LÉVI-STRAUSS' TRAVEL MEMOIR
TRISTES TROPIQUES AND
MEIRÉ'S OWN HAITIAN ROOTS.





Heimat <

Dressing Cologne's fashionistas

Curated by Andreas Hoyer and Andy Scherpereel, Heimat started out in 2002 stocking a younger generation of Belgian fashion designers like Veronique Branquinho and Bruno Pieters. Today, its line-up centres on Comme des Garçons, Christophe Lemaire, Walter Van Beirendonck and, from next season, Issey Miyake. On the side, Scherpereel draws trend books, and the duo occasionally work as art directors. Running a niche fashion boutique in Cologne is tough, they admit, but there is local interest, and a sense of mission about Heimat. 'Our ideal is not the woman who only dresses up for a cocktail reception,' says Hoyer. 'I like the idea of creating your own occasions. If you like to express yourself by wearing special pieces, you should do it.' The duo have also forged links with the local art scene and sometimes stage in-store exhibitions.

David Ostrowski v

Minimalist painter and Britney fan

David Ostrowski has an ambivalent relationship with his home town. 'Cologne is super-boring, it's provincial, it's ugly,' he says. 'But it's a great place to be. It's a great place to run away to. And it's a good place to leave.' He remains based there but gets away often, working on shows of his paintings sparsely coloured, minimalist compositions themed around gestures or outlines. His fans include writer-director Harmony Korine and fashion designer Adam Kimmel. Between creative spikes, days in his studios in the Poll area of the city are spent listening to music, with Garth Brooks, Taylor Swift and Britney Spears on the playlist. 'I just discovered that there are two taboos in the cultural world,' he says. 'One is having bad musical taste. And the other is that you shouldn't discuss beauty too much because it's not deep enough.'



STAR PROJECTS A

MODE DEPESCHE

LAUNCHED IN 2004, HEIMAT'S IN-HOUSE HIGH GLOSS FASHION MAGAZINE IS PUBLISHED BIANNUALLY TO COINCIDE WITH THE WINTER AND SUMMER SEASONS.

PRIM BY MICHELLE

ELIE MEIRÉ, 2010/2013 THE BOUTIQUE HOSTED LAUNCHES OF THE DESIGNER'S FIRST AND SECOND JEWELLERY COLLECTIONS.

'DO YOU WANT TO GO OUT WITH ME?', 2004

BERNHARD WILLHELM GIRL MEETS STEPHAN SCHNEIDER BOY IN THIS HEIMAT-CURATED PROJECT AT THE LUNGOMARE GALLERY, BOLZANO.

STAR PROJECTS >

'YES OR LET'S SAY NO', 2013/14 OSTROWSKI'S EXHIBITION AT SIMON LEE GALLERY, LONDON, CELEBRATES ERRORS AND IMPERFECTIONS AS OBJECTS OF BEAUTY.

'I'M OK'. MOMENTS LATER

HE WAS SHOT', 2013 EXHIBITION AT PERES PROJECTS GALLERY, BERLIN, INSPIRED LOOSELY BY AN EPISODE OF SEINFELD.

'A SHOW ABOUT PAINTING', 2013

JOINT EXHIBITION, WITH MICHAEL PIRGELIS, AT JAN KAPS GALLERY, COLOGNE, IN WHICH LARGE AREAS OF WHITE DOMINATE AND COLOUR IS EMPLOYED SPARINGLY.



Jan Kaps

Young curator who is reinvigorating Cologne's art scene

Up-and-coming curator Jan Kaps launched his first gallery, a 70 sq m space on Jülicher Strasse, in June last year, with a remit to help Cologne re-establish itself as a major player in the art world. 'It absolutely makes sense to start something fresh here,' he says. 'Cologne has good institutional structures, great collections and the mentality here is very friendly and open-minded. People are looking for something new.'

Shows at the space have included Tobias Hoffknecht's playful installations of paired sculptures and Keith Allan's interventions

using steel shelving from a Danish brewery. 'I'm really into rough and direct things,' says Kaps. 'But in the end, it's all about beauty.'

Kaps sharpened his curatorial eye while working for the Sprüth Magers gallery in Berlin. His new venture seeks to establish an international mix of young artists, and his gallery's own profile in the process. 'I'm presenting my generation and it's important that this very young gallery grows with its own generation.' This year kicked off with a show by Louis Eisner, of the emerging New York artist collective The Still House Group.

STAR PROJECTS

'A SHOW ABOUT PAINTING', 2013

EXHIBITION OF NEW WORKS BY GERMAN ARTISTS DAVID OSTROWSKI AND MICHAEL PIRGELIS.

'INTERNATIONAL BATHING', 2013

EXHIBITION BY NEW YORK-BASED ARTIST GRAYSON REVOIR. IT FEATURED WOODEN OBJECTS WITH OXIDISED SCREWS AND A RAIN SHOWER INSTALLATION.