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NOOMI RAPAGE

"Fame is a dangerous drug"

THE

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PRINT IS DEAD.

Just like the resurgence of vinyl a couple of years ago, printed products are now experiencing a special revival. Perhaps it's a form of nostalgia associated with print magazines, but more and more people are focusing on magazines and books because they offer a different and far more satisfying experience than digital forms. The choice is 'virtual' vs 'reality', so perhaps 'real' was always going to win in the end.

Celebrities and brands are more interested than ever in producing their own magazines. Fantastic news for the print industry, condemned for a slow death just a couple of years ago, but now booming.

The digital era hasn't been as widely embraced as many would believe. In fact, there are some niches and audiences that are outright against adopting digital in their lives and are taking a stand against the fast-paced technology industry.

We asked four experts on their thoughts of print:

A few years ago it was said that 'print is dead'. How does the world think about that today?

Max Iannucci, Publisher of MAX Magazine: Well, I have to tell you that today's market has completely changed. People crave something new and exciting, something that they did not have yesterday, are missing today, but must get tomorrow. It is a big challenge for editors to give the reader what they want, but we try and this is part of the reason why hard print is experiencing a renaissance.

Ruth Jamieson, author of the book *Print is dead. Long live Print*: We know now that print isn't going anywhere, it's just evolving.

Julia & Benjamin Skardarasy, Publishers *La Loupe Magazine and Guide*: Exactly the opposite, print is more versatile and stronger than ever. When you go to a kiosk or bookstore, you notice that there is a separate trade magazine or book for every target group, no

matter how small. The world has turned, and print has turned with it. **Gerhard Steidl, Founder and owner of Steidl Verlag:**

There seems to be an overall renaissance of the analogue. Especially when it comes to complex texts that really need to be understood. People still reach for printed books, buy records again, do things themselves. Analogue enriches life, while digital at best makes life easier, said journalist David Sax, who writes for *The New Yorker*, and that sums it up. After all, we humans are analog being with senses and feelings; it's not all just about information.

Do you think there has been a change of direction, in terms of print magazines and books?

Iannucci: Today the Internet is considered to be the window to the world, with every kind of information available 24/7. But people still enjoy the feeling of a real magazine or book in their hands; they still collect printed items, still experience an emotional connection that one cannot feel online. Even though printing a magazine is a costly business, the demand for real, tactile media is very real.

Ruth Jamieson: On the one hand you've got your super-creative, niche print publications that are playing with the form – the kind of things print nerds get excited

about – on the other you've got those essential publications like *The Guardian*, *The New York Times* which are adapting their business model to go beyond print. What's a major concern at the moment is what happens to local newspapers, which are really struggling but really vital for their communities. How will they survive? That's the big question right now.

Skardarasy: Absolutely. It is all about real journalism again. People who read print have a completely different attention span and deal with a topic more intensively. Qualitative printing techniques and finishes or design have developed a lot. With our *La Loupe* alone we see that it all comes together, that the reader picks hard copy up more often and has a reading experience again.

Steidl: You cannot generalise that. There is an increased awareness of the importance of quality in print media. You have to use paper and water resources sparingly, not everything belongs between two book covers. You have to think carefully whether a text, whether pictures, are worth printing. →



“Print shows courage, because it cannot simply be deleted.”

Julia and Benjamin Skardarasy, La Loupe

LA LOUPE

La Loupe is more than an attractive magazine with a compact guide to wonderful destinations. *La Loupe* is a unique brand. A design world in which style-conscious trendsetters and connoisseurs with an eye for detail feel at home.

The bilingual magazine (German/English), is brimming with exciting stories and fascinating pictures, it delights people all over the world.



“If I want to go into depth, I read in print. But whether print or digital, the standards for good journalism must apply to both.”

Gerhard Steidl, Steidl Verlag

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Do you think there is a long-term future for print? How should print differ from digital?

Iannucci: Despite the intense competition from the digital world and the predictions of the imminent death of print, I absolutely say 'yes'! There are plenty of enthusiasts who love reading and collecting great magazines out there; they are excited to explore new magazines that appear on the market. Print should give the audience exclusive content, with high quality journalism, unique images and design – stories and pictures that deserve to be printed.

Jamieson: Absolutely. The role for print in our lives has changed. It's less about essential information sharing, more about an experience. Digital is much better than print at the fast dissemination of information. Print is great at giving a deeper experience, and being longer lasting, and for those reasons it can have more gravitas. Compare when you get a card from a friend and when you get a text. The card you probably keep on your mantel piece for a while, maybe you even put it in a box and keep it for ever. The text you read, absorb and then lose in the annals of digital history.

As with creating anything, you should have a clear idea of why you're creating it. What's the objective? What role do you want it to have in your readers' lives? Do you want to reach a lot of people quickly but be reasonably disposable? Then maybe you should focus on digital. Do you want to have more longevity, but focus on a smaller group? Then perhaps print is the way to go. I'm oversimplifying massively, but they are different media, so they can help you fulfil different objectives. I don't think it's about competing

with the digital world but complementing it. There's a role for both.

Skardarasy: The digital world is dominated by headlines, empty phrases and wannabe superstars. Everyone gives their opinion on their blog or social media and increases the digital garbage dump of junk articles and endless artless photos. A large amount of online text is neither well-researched nor checked for facts. One faces a constant struggle to avoid so-called Fakenews. The big personal digital challenge is to find out the right online media for yourself amid the flood of information.

Steidl: Yes, absolutely. As long as the know-how is preserved and passed on to future generations.

“Analogue is made to remember, digital is made to forget”, the famous photographer Robert Polidori once said. In the ideal case, print and digital complement each other perfectly. With digital I read everything I need to know quickly. If I want to go into depth, I read in print. But whether print or digital, the standards for good journalism must apply to both.

What stories do we need to tell in books and magazines to compete with the digital world?

Iannucci: It's very important for print magazines to have excellent photography that captures moments to remember. Today's technology allows the photographers to unleash their creativity; good photography looks more real in print.

The stories we tell in magazines should give the reader a reason to buy a magazine, the editors should tell various stories that give a feeling of connection to different cultures and places in the world. They should let the reader discover interesting new faces and find inspiration. Most of all print should fulfil peoples' dreams.

Jamieson: I don't think it's about competing with the digital world, but complementing it. There's a role for both.

Skardarasy: Books and magazines can score with high quality stories. Storytelling has to get away from the superficiality of online media and go deeper into the subject matter. Some magazines have already proven that it works. Where the online world ends, the print world must continue. The reader must feel that a magazine or a book gives him or her added value, more knowledge, more quality and more fun. Simply printing digital content on paper is not enough. Print shows courage, because it cannot simply be deleted.

Steidl: I'm not sure that the stories have to be that different in terms of content. I also want to read what is important and relevant digitally. But stories we read in books can be much more complex than what we read digitally. Neuroscience has shown that printed matter has a more lasting effect, filters better and remains in our memory longer than information read on screen. This is because touch and feel also play a role in the processing and deep understanding of what is read, i.e. the haptic aspect. And being able to understand complex facts is a key competence that is likely to become even more important in the future.



Ruth Jamieson

PRINT IS DEAD. LONG LIVE PRINT
published by Prestel, London

Ruth Jamieson lives in London UK and is the author of the book *Print is dead. Long live Print – an eye-opening look into the explosion of independent, creatively led magazines that are currently shaping the future of print journalism.* It showcases over 50 examples of innovative magazines from around the globe.

What can print achieve what digital cannot?

Iannucci: Digital does not let the reader to get involved with the story; they read only for several minutes and move on to another subject. Print gives the reader a real connection to a particular story, something that cannot be had through a screen. Diving into a book or magazine allows the reader to forget the hectic world and just enjoy the "here and now".

Jamieson: There is something magical about things you can hold. We're impermanent beings, so there's a fascination with things that feel as though they have permanence. Print can also have more gravitas, which on one hand means you can create deeper, more immersive, luxurious experiences, or you can play with the weightiness of print by being silly, using a serious format for irrelevance, which I quite like!

Skardarasy: Print excites all the senses. We at *La Loupe* stimulate the senses with our magazine. First of all, you have the visually striking design with illustrations and selected colours in book form, which stimulates you to position *La Loupe* as a design object within your own four walls. Secondly, by print finishing our cover and uncoated paper we create a haptic element so that you can feel the print. Third, we love the smell of a freshly printed magazine. Fourth, you can hear the rustling that comes from flipping through the pages ...

Remember, print gives you time to concentrate on one thing at a time. Try it yourself, turn off all digital media for an hour and pick up a magazine and get involved. Then you will feel what print does to you and what digital never does. Time for yourself, without constant distraction from alerts.

Steidl: A lot. I already mentioned understanding complex content.

But it's also about access to knowledge. Knowledge is for those who have it. To this day, a major issue is not only how to make knowledge accessible, but also how to prevent people from accessing knowledge. The borderless information machine called the Internet can be restricted, manipulated and completely shut down, by criminal attackers as well as by government order.

By contrast, a printed text can never be completely eliminated by prohibition as long as it is physically accessible somewhere. Books are persistent and deeply democratic.

Moreover, the printed book is an excellent, extremely durable storage medium. Information stored in it can be preserved for centuries. All the practical things in the digital world have a price, and that price can be dictated often enough.

The downside of general accessibility for everyone is that all this is dependent on companies, corporations and investors with their own profit motive. Electronic information access may also depend on states that are potentially or quite specifically in a position to approve or censor, unlock or disable content. Unfortunately, we have seen many examples of such practice in recent years.

Which magazine did you read last?

Iannucci: I really enjoy reading *Vanity Fair* and *Harper's Bazaar*. Now I am going to add *Max Magazine* to my reading list!

Jamieson: *Creative Review*, for work inspiration. And *Timeout London*, you still can't beat a good listings magazine!


Skardarasy: There's a lot of them. I read several magazines every week: *Brand One*, *The Fore-cast* by *Monocle* and *GQ*.

Steidl: *FOLIO*, the magazine of the NZZ.

Which book did you last read?

Iannucci: *Silence* by Shūsaku Endō. **Jamieson:** I'm reading Michael Rosen's *Book of Play*, which accompanies the Wellcome Collection's exhibition about the importance of play in our lives. I loved his poems as a kid, and I still love him today. He's compassionate, fun and inspiring in equal measure.

Skardarasy: *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho (Benjamin). *Five days in Paris* by Tatiana de Rosnay and *Untenrum Frei* by Margarete Stokowski – I often have two or three books on the go at the same time. (Julia)

Steidl: *Red Hunger* by Anne Applebaum, a book about Stalin's war on Ukraine. 

LONG LIVE PRINT!

STEIDL VERLAG

Gerhard Steidl (born 1950 in Göttingen) began working as a printer and designer in 1969. In addition to Joseph Beuys, Marcel Broodthaers and Nam June Paik, the customers of his screen printing workshop, where he made posters and prints, soon included other well-known artists. The first Steidl book was published in 1972 with "Questioning documents". This was followed by political non-fiction, literary titles and selected volumes of art and photography.

Each Steidl book is characterised by its individual design and features. The printer and publisher, known for his passion for paper, personally selects paper and linen and checks all production steps from layout to printing. Every Steidl book literally goes through Gerhard Steidl's hands.