

## 2 new print design magazines defy digital age

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**What are they thinking?** Two design magazines, Monocle, a monthly which is now more than a year old, and Design Mind, Frog Design's brand-new three-time-yearly magazine launched last month, have each staked their ground amid cries that print is dead.

### IMAGES


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Monocle, the brainchild of **Tyler Brûlé**, who gave us Wallpaper magazine (eye candy for people interested in design), is a serious publication with 16 issues behind it. Brûlé, speaking to us from London, said Monocle is the magazine he always wanted to do. "I am a serious journalist," said Brûlé, a former war correspondent. And serious consumers of journalism

want print.

You can dip into Monocle to explore design thinking around the world, but it delves into politics, business and culture as well. In one issue, Monocle dared to suggest that in the age of digital photography, film is not dead. A recent report on the world's most livable cities that goes beyond empty statistics and list-making includes Copenhagen and Munich at the top of a list of 25; Minneapolis and Portland in the United States languish in the bottom half. San Francisco didn't make the list.

Design Mind, published by Frog Design, a Bay Area industrial design firm about to mark its 40th anniversary, is the company's printed answer to blogs and online chatter about design, business and technology, according to Frog spokeswoman **Sara Munday**. Frog has consolidated its Palo Alto and San Francisco offices in Wired magazine's former digs at 660 Third St. in San Francisco, and Design Mind is the new voice of its designers.

"It's thought leadership," Frog President **Doreen Lorenzo** said during a recent California College of the Arts gathering. A few international talents are also invited into Design Mind's pages, but the articles do not stray far from Frog studios in San Francisco; San Jose; New York; Austin, Texas; Seattle; Stuttgart, Germany; Milan, Italy; Amsterdam and Shanghai.

The first issue of Design Mind, which costs \$13, focuses on the theme of "numbers," using it as a jumping-off point to discuss aging, collectors, slot machines or mobile phones in China. The next issue will focus on motion.

For just \$10 an issue, Monocle gives you a younger, broader, more fashionable and entertaining perspective on design as well as serious journalism in words and pictures. You do the math.

**Green space:** During the 11th International Architecture Exhibition, inaugurated in conjunction with the Venice Biennale in Italy, the Danish contingent focused on how to build sustainable cities. At the other end of the green spectrum, in the Padiglione Italia experimental architecture section, one series called "Out There: Architecture Beyond Building" advocated invisible architecture.

One example in the latter series, "AirXY: From Immaterial to Rematerial," is a multimedia experiment incorporating digital, architectural, light and sound effects to form ephemeral spaces and architecture that disappears as quickly as it is formed. This ghostly concept, by the Bay Area's **Erik Adigard**, a consulting art director at Wired magazine, and artist **Chris Salter** was directed by former San Francisco Museum of Modern Art design and architecture curator **Aaron Betsky**.

**A beehive of activity:** The set for the Berkeley Repertory Theatre's newest production, "Yellowjackets," by **Itamar Moses**, is as simple as the play is tangled. The play is a fictionalized account of Moses' experiences at Berkeley High School in the mid-'90s, when issues of race, gender, sex and freedom of speech were loudly debated. The theater's main-stage floor - devoid of furniture in the opening scene - serves as a playground; it's transformed into classrooms or locker rooms with blackboards, desks or lockers dragged to center stage during the play. But a vast graffiti mural with images of Martin Luther King Jr. and Cesar Chavez (representing freedom of speech), as wide as the stage but cordoned off - just beyond the students' reach - by a two story-high chain-link fence with a padlocked gate is set designer **Annie Smart's** most eloquent metaphor.

**Mostly prose, little poetry:** September is Architecture Month in San Francisco, but building tours organized by the American Institute of Architects didn't include the recently completed Congregation Beth Sholom synagogue by **Stanley Saitowitz** and Natoma Architects.

It should have. The building continues to stir its Richmond District neighbors on 14th Avenue to protest.

Its half-round concrete form with a flat roof, balanced over a zinc-clad rectangular plinth and bordered on the right by a gated courtyard and two-story library, has been called many things, including a "half wheel of cheese." Its footprint - the width of four city lots - in a neighborhood of small Victorian-style houses is clearly too big for the corner and, just a few feet shy of a window to the south, the cheese wheel seems aggressively close to its neighbor. Did the architect consider flipping the scheme so the library section could be on the south side instead?

Perhaps someday the synagogue will acquire the neighbor's lot and extend the Zen garden on its south side into that space to give the synagogue breathing space.

But in general, why the fuss over its size? Temples, churches and mosques are expected to be big and tall. Although originally synagogues were meant to be meeting rooms and places for small congregations, as Saitowitz explained during a recent walk-through attended by AIA-San Francisco director **Margie O'Driscoll**, they evolved into large Christian church-style proscenium spaces over time.

Ancient synagogues were tiny but big enough so at least 10 men could congregate to read and discuss the Torah, seated around their rabbi.

Saitowitz created a small reading room on the first floor, below the library, that echoes the scale of archetypal synagogues. It is decorated with stained-glass panels saved from the more churchlike 1920s building that stood on the same site. From small to large chambers, Saitowitz's design represents the architectural progression of the synagogue. The reading room hints at what visitors, who climb up a wide flight of stairs from the entry court, can expect in the main chamber up top, Saitowitz said. The stairs are wide for "a better sense of procession" - they turn left and lead to a second-floor terrace and the door to the wheel-like main chamber.

In the main chamber, the rounded sides of the wheel are stepped for seating on each side of the central aisle where the Torah is displayed during services. Beams of light stream in through skylights and illuminate the chamber on sunny days, like lit candles on a menorah.

Saitowitz thought of this poetic idea in an airport and, since he is the son of a salesman, he later sold it easily to Beth Sholom. But, despite Saitowitz's poetry, the main chamber is all purple prose: It has a deep purple ceiling, mundane purple theater seats and gilded paraphernalia, all selected by several committees linked to the synagogue. What should have been a clean, white-walled container for pure light is a cacophony of color and texture.

And the elderly members of the congregation have to take elevators if they need to reach the highest pews. Few of them will ever experience the sense of procession Saitowitz described so eloquently.

**Comeback story:** The MacArthur Park restaurant in Palo Alto has reopened under a new partnership between founding chef **Faz Poursohi** and **Chuck Frank**, a Spectrum Foods founder. That's all good, but the thing to note is that it will be inside a landmark 1918 structure designed by Hearst Castle architect **Julia Morgan**.

**Just out:** On Sept. 24, Autodesk will unveil a 16,500-square-foot gallery on the second floor at One Market Street to showcase designs by Ford Motor Co., Lego, Herman Miller, Renzo Piano Building Workshop, First Robotics, 42 Surfboards, Yves Behar/Fuseproject, Parsons Brinckerhoff and Skidmore Owings & Merrill.

What do they have in common? Autodesk software. What's not to like? Although the hands-on exhibits in San Francisco include a Ford Mustang and a giant Lego dinosaur, models of the new Bay Bridge and the Academy of Sciences, the by-appointment gallery is open only to professionals who work with Autodesk software.

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