

BLUPRINT: Design with Direction

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*B*luprint, a successful design consultancy based in Pretoria, is run by two dynamic young designers, Pieter Venter and Jacques Lange. Their slogan, 'Design with Direction', proclaims their commitment to the effective solution of their clients' design problems. Although Bluprint has only been in operation for two years, it has designed for an impressive list of blue chip companies.

Bluprint functions as a collaborative and enthusiastic two-man team that thrives in a working environment devoid of conventional corporate parameters.

Pieter Venter and Jacques Lange are adamant that the designer ought to be well-informed and up to date not only with design trends but also with events and developments across a broad front. Their studio abounds with books, magazines and other visual stimuli, but it is the word-play and wit constantly flowing between them that keeps tension at bay, and often forms a conceptual source for brain-storming. They both admit to many formative stylistic influences in their own work, but assert that one does not learn to copy the specific styles of the 'great design masters', but rather their way of thinking or arriving at solutions to conceptual problems.

The individual styles, philosophies and ideas of Bluprint's designers complement each other. Venter claims to be more intuitive, and Lange more academic, but it is above all respect for each others' talents that ensures that the client's needs are given priority. Speed, quality, efficiency and integrity are their watch-words. They are their own quality controllers and critics, and since only

two people are involved in all the stages of design, they believe that there is less margin for error.

Client: Image Advertising for Simera Aviation
Project: Product Brochures



Client: Image Advertising for Dept. of Foreign Affairs
Project: Employer Image



D E S I G N



An important factor which influences Blueprint's design philosophy is a serious commitment to education, reflected by the fact that Venter and Lange are part-time lecturers in Information Design at the Department of Fine Arts and Art History at the University of Pretoria. They both claim to be 'proud graduates' of this Department. Their obligation to sound and serious design education, based on theoretical academic courses as well as practical studio work, makes their involvement at the University of Pretoria stimulating both for themselves and the students.

Venter and Lange affirm that the teaching situation develops their own critical and self-evaluative faculties. They believe they can make a valid contribution to education, based on their own experience in the design profession. Once again their differing emphases, Venter more intuitive and Lange more academic, complement each other, and present the students with divergent perceptions of problem solving in design. Both, however, stress the importance of preliminary research as part of the design process.

According to the team, Blueprint is probably unique in South Africa in its extensive use of computer technology, which allows them to take on the work load of a much larger company. They are quick to counter the criticism that design by computer can always be identified by visual images that appear clinical and dehumanised. Both designers work hard at humanising the feel of their own



Client: Image Advertising for Transwerk
Project: Product Brochures

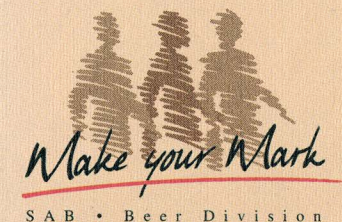
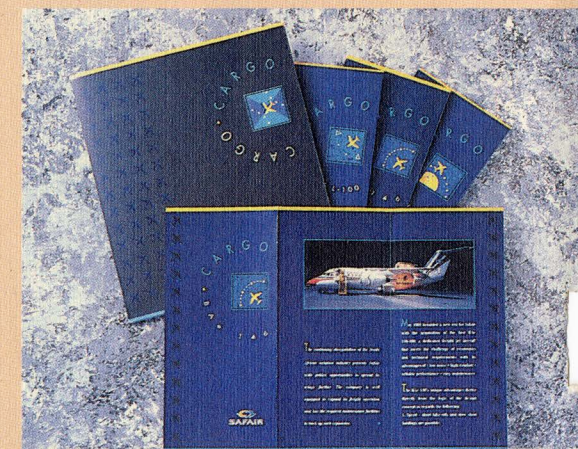


computer graphics. Traditional, more user-friendly design is achieved by concentrating on the creation of textures and graphic marks that do not appear computer generated. Freehand drawings, doodles and thumbnail sketches are scanned into the computer and form a readily accessible and valuable source bank and point of departure for the development of design solutions.

The computer is essentially time-efficient, allowing the designer to use the time traditionally wasted on the execution of presentations to be spent on the developing and refining of a stronger concept. It is above all its potential as a source of creative inspiration that is exciting and challenging to Venter and Lange. They stress that once the capabilities of the computer are understood, the creative possibilities are almost endless. They feel the computer allows them to visualise variations and to explore countless potential solutions, and in the process of experimentation they often achieve innovative results.



Cocktail Bar & Restaurant



Client: Image Advertising
for AMPROS
Project: Silver Lakes
Promotional Item

Their work bears testimony to an intelligent understanding and sensitive use of the medium, and demonstrates that designing on computer can be equally, if not more, creative than designing on paper.

Blueprint is primarily involved in all aspects of corporate communication, promotion and package design. The team prides itself on its versatility and flexibility, its sensitivity to the needs of clients and its consistent delivery of high quality design. As Venter serves as Creative Director to Image Advertising, Blueprint has been exclusively commissioned to undertake a wide spectrum of design for Image Advertising clients such as SAB BEER DIVISION, DE BEERS, CARLTON PAPER, SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE, SAFAIR and TRANSNET.

Venter and Lange believe that design has an important contribution to make to every company and point to the innovative work Blueprint and Image Advertising have undertaken on employer image campaigns. As opposed to traditional and well-established corporate identity drives, where the focus tends to be on external audiences, employer image is primarily directed towards employees with the objective of creating a cohesive culture within a company. They feel that design which supports and clarifies person-important philosophies, is particularly pertinent in the current South African economic and political climate.

Photography: Paul Christopher



Pretoria City Council



Client: Image Advertising for Sasol
Project: Employer Image



Client: Image Advertising
for Rand Water Board
Project: Quality Circles Employee Programme



Client: Image Advertising for AMPROS
Project: Silver Lakes Advertising Campaign



Portfolio Project:
Computer Generated Illustration

Although Blueprint may consider expansion, the intention is, at the moment, to remain small. Venter and Lange will continue to utilise the available computer technology to achieve the desired high quality end product, but insist that their focus will always remain on creativity.