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The art of transformation

Dear Reader,

This is our first issue of 2019, a year of anniversaries – social ones, cultural ones and pedagogical ones. It makes me wonder whether it's just a coincidence that radical changes seem to occur together in very different spheres. Whether certain epochs have a special energy. Whether a single transformation can set off a domino effect of other transformations.

This issue celebrates 100 years of Waldorf schools. And it's certainly no coincidence that this anniversary falls just three years before our company's centenary. It means a great deal to me that, as our company's CEO, I have the privilege of leading us into this special anniversary. Looking back – which also means looking forward – involves examining the relationship between business and cultural, pedagogical institutions. Did you know, for example, that Waldorf schools were named after a cigarette factory? Sound like a paradox? In fact, it's quite the opposite.

But cooperation, community and collaboration – the “associative” – are not only important in the business world. In the section “Art & More”, we look at the interplay between art and technology, between innovation and development, and between skill and the quality of an artist's materials. The interplay of these phenomena has immense associative potential, as the accompanying illustrations demonstrate.

As we mark the “Waldorf 100” anniversary and look forward to our upcoming partners meeting, we return to the question of what our company stands for. What way of doing business best reflects our values? And how can we keep up with current developments? Because 100 years is just the beginning.

Best wishes,

Inke Kruse

Waldorf 100 – with each other, for each other

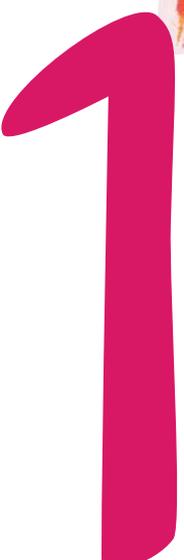
How business practices can have a social impact.

The year 1919 was marked by upheavals and new beginnings, especially in Germany: the German Revolution, the end of the Germany monarchy and the introduction of a parliamentary democracy. Unsurprisingly, the energy of this period was also a catalyst for social transformation. The establishment of the first Waldorf school in Stuttgart in 1919 was partly the next logical step in the development of the progressive pedagogical approaches that had emerged in the nineteenth century, approaches that sought to put the child's needs at the centre of education. However, this new school was equally revolutionary when it came to promoting social justice in education. Thus the first Waldorf school was for the children of employees of the Waldorf-Astoria cigarette factory.

This transformation, the establishment of this new school, was a reaction to the times, and to this day, the Waldorf movement is characterized by healthy pragmatism. In the 1960s – a decade in which many new schools as well as organisations such as GLS Treuhand and later GLS Bank were established – Wilhelm

INSiGHTS

Ernst Barkhoff articulated an apparent paradox: “The shortage of Waldorf teachers can only be tackled by establishing Waldorf schools.” This paradox perfectly captures the courage needed to achieve transformation. It also captures the courage to fail if necessary. As well as responding to the needs of their social environment, Waldorf schools have always looked to the future.



It is no coincidence that the Waldorf centenary falls shortly before the centenary of a company like Stockmar, as the highly committed teachers of the Waldorf movement demanded higher-quality learning materials. Hans Stockmar established his company in 1922 as a beekeeping equipment and beeswax candle manufacturer, but at the suggestion of art teachers, Stockmar soon started manufacturing modelling beeswax and later its classic wax crayons. The quality of the materials, their applications and their sensory appeal reflect the idea that the person or child should be at the centre of what we do.

and consumers enables us, as a manufacturer, to keep creating new and improved products. And here's where another paradox comes in: to stay true to our quality standards, we must keep progressing.

Our stable network of partners makes this continual development possible. Collaborating and sharing ideas help promote the threefold social order and ensure that our activities serve people and the future. This way of working together, also known as "associative economics", has proven to be extremely successful and enables our company to keep pace with the times.

PROSPeCTS

The process of asking "What do you need?" and "How can we as a company contribute?" guides our core business. As a company, we don't simply pursue profit and growth; our work serves a purpose. Constant dialogue with retailers



The art of transformation

“...this breathing from the depths up towards love.”

Paul Cézanne on the artistic process

It's not just the Waldorf school that celebrates its centenary this year. The Bauhaus, a dynamic school of ideas and experimentation that sought to reimagine the world, was also established in 1919. Though it lasted only fourteen years, the Bauhaus is widely seen as probably the most influential art and design school of the modern era. The Bauhaus aimed to bring together art and craftsmanship (and therefore techniques and technology) to create the perfect building for the future.

We too want to take a look at the interplay of art and technique, as the use and impact of an artist's materials play a crucial role in the creative process. Let's examine a specific example of our products' fields of application: the wax-crayon etching technique.

This process involves applying and removing layers of wax. Cold, warm or even molten wax can be applied in several multicoloured layers and then etched away with a pin, knife or scratcher. In contrast to intaglio printing, which involves a similar process, the result of the etching technique is always an original.

That covers the technique. But what kind of artistic challenges does this work present? Like wax modelling, etching involves seeing and creating something invisible and then bringing it to the surface: transformation through transparency. This is where the quality of the artist's materials is paramount. The etching technique has a highly experimental quality; indeed, you might even say it demands courage. The courage, notwithstanding the sophisticated technique and high-quality materials, to achieve a result that differs from what you intended. The courage to fail every now and then.



ART & MOre

We were privileged to have Miriam Vergien, an art student at Alanus University, provide the illustration for this issue. You may know Vergien, who has used the etching technique to convey our themes, through her involvement with our calendar project “Blue” and “Yellow”.

As well as continuing to partner with Alanus University, we are always on the lookout for long-term collaborations with illustrators. If you are interested, we would be delighted to receive some samples of your work.



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