Jaromin Hecker

At 43 years of age, this interior design and storytelling professional has a long career that started as an outfitter and prop manager in the film and television industry. His agency Heckhaus, founded in 1992, now provides project planning and implementation for showrooms, exhibition stands and even entire shop fittings.
At the age of 23 the Munich native started his own company – Ausstattung Hecker – which later grew into a 30-strong team designing sets for film and television. In 2002, the father of two children renamed his company Heckhaus GmbH & Co.KG, moving away from the world of television to grow into an agency specialising in designing corporate architecture.

“When I was around 29 years old, we were visited by a Reebok employee. He wasn’t interested in working with yet another conventional trade fair stand constructor. Instead he wanted an artist who could design and implement a large, prominent booth for the international GDS shoe fair in Düsseldorf,” recalls the company founder. “This very successful project was followed by a host of other trade fair installations, 180 shop-in-shop designs and implementation projects in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. […] We gained a lot of experience in branding and product showcasing. This both attracted and strengthened many more customer relationships in the fields of sport, fashion and lifestyle.”

Jaromin Hecker stands as testament to the fact that craftsmanship and a well-founded understanding of design are the best teachers: “I started out in the world of television straight away without any studying or apprenticeships, and I grew quickly from there,” reveals Hecker. At the age of 20, he became head of the entertainment department at Pro7, acting as a creative artist and developing all of the decorations and sets for popular German comedian Michael Bully Herbig, among others.

So what attributes do set designs and retail spaces share? “The great thing is that in both sectors, it all comes down to setting the scene perfectly! Both audiences and customers need to be drawn into an engrossing world in which stories are told and brands are positioned. With the ever-increasing impact of online messaging, it is now more important than ever to create beautifully designed brand experiences that can be discovered and explored at first hand. Customer service and appealing to all the senses are crucial. To do so, we work with all media, such as sound, custom matched scents and materials selected for their haptic qualities, to create a harmonious overall experience,” he reveals – a level of attention to detail typical of a fan of elaborate cinema scenes. Among the projects in his portfolio, Hecker has no specific favourite, but the agency owner is always especially happy and proud whenever a Heckhaus idea hits the nail on the head.

When it comes to retail design, his expert eye still sees a lot of room for improvement. “The industry is changing. If you aren’t properly showcasing your brand or product, or aren’t doing anything more than just putting it on the shelf, then you are going to fall behind. Stories must be told in an authentic way, and you have to be able to feel it in the room!” And which film narratives would the set designer most love to adapt into a shop setting? “Charlie and the Chocolate Factory and Minions 2 – a department store for children and their parents, but where everything is completely tailored to the needs of the children. A fantasy world with surprises at every turn, where everything can be touched and tested. All of the sales staff are friendly, never get annoyed and are 100 percent responsive to the customers and children. There are many possibilities in something like that […] – because children and young people are tomorrow’s adults.”

Text: Petra Brödner