



introducing

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Sensory

Interview

Juli Gudehus

Berlin-based Juli Gudehus, a true hunter and gatherer when it comes to weird and wonderful materials, considers herself a multi-disciplinary joker or the "cartilage between the joints - you might be able to do without it, but badly so".

With clients ranging from the German Bundestag to weekly newspaper "Die Zeit", Gudehus "advises, coordinates, designs, researches, gets upset, gets excited, writes, collects, connects, learns, teaches and, ultimately, tackles boundaries".

What is your general take on self-promotion?

I do not like the word *per se* - it reminds me of a peacock showing off its plumage. Essentially, the people and institutions I work with want me for exactly what I am, for my unique thoughts and reactions. Of course, I have some "classic" means of self-representation - the stationery and measures I use when I cannot be present in person. Yet the way I see it, I do not use them to represent or promote myself, they ARE part of myself. It's as simple and difficult as that.

Generally speaking, I think that in order to be successful, any method needs to be clear and individual without being pretentious - the actual means by which you achieve this are unimportant.

Could you tell us a little bit about the idea behind your range of calling cards and stationery?

It all started more or less unintentionally when water damage spoiled my great-grandmother's postcard collection. As I did not have the heart to throw them all away, I simply decided to reuse them.

My obvious strength lies in the combination of sensuality, playfulness, systematics and my ability to react to ever-new situations - and all this is reflected in the design of my letters and business cards.

In the beginning, it was stamped postcards and their more chunky successors (sometimes up to half an inch thick - doormat, car tire, styrofoam), later I designed some split versions consisting of one half found object and one half laser-printed information on cardboard. My move to Berlin triggered the current sticker idea.

How many different variations did you come up with?

Although some might look similar, none are identical because I know how great it feels to receive a letter made just for you. Not personalised, but personal. In this way, my overall philosophy is reflected in each and every communication.

I have many favourites, some of whom I find it very hard to part with, yet they keep changing all the time. Take the wallpaper of legendary Cologne café Hallmackerreuther, for example - every card smelt of smoke for years. And people went crazy for them. Right now, I love this quaint, chequered cupboard paper. In addition, I use sand paper, model railway astroturf, Lisa (light-collecting foil that glows at the edges), felt, tar board and lots and lots of fantastic found objects: typing exercises, children's drawings, foreign wrappers, old book covers...

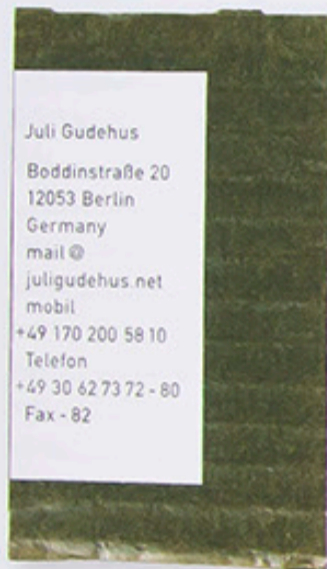
So, how do you decide who gets which version?

With the stationery, I always take my time to select the right sheet. I ask myself - who would appreciate this design most? Reused homework from 1972, flower wrapping or Czech paper bags... and who is likely to be put off? Does the stationery reflect what I am trying to convey?

For the business cards, there is a different system. As the proud owner of more than forty handbags, I soon got tired of repacking the contents and went about filling each bag with the same essentials: small mirror, lip care, aspirin, pen, paper... and business cards. These are designed to match each respective bag in colour, style, pattern or material.

What kind of reactions do you get?

Most people adore them, some have even started a collection. Furthermore, they seem to serve as a great reminder - whenever I speak to someone after a few years, they always seem to remember who I am.



1-4 Juli Gudehus, different papers, sticker, silk-screen printing, 2002



1-4 Juli Gudehus, wallpaper, sticker, silk-screen printing, 2002