

# JAN ZANDER DESIGN

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designers

*You were born in Hamburg, how important was this city for your artistic and technical training?*

Hamburg is a cosmopolitan city with an extensive cultural offering. I visited museums and galleries early on, which then influenced me in my training as a jeweler and goldsmith. But in order to incorporate this even better into jewelry, I had to study jewelry design. To do that, I had to leave Hamburg and go to where I got the best training - Pforzheim. This city has one of the best schools for jewelry design in Europe because it has a long tradition in jewelry making.

*Tell us about your experience with WORKER'S - Atelier für Gestaltung?*

After my studies I went back to Hamburg to start my own business with my then girlfriend and now wife Heidi. We opened a design office "WORKER'S - Atelier für Gestaltung" with an interdisciplinary offer of graphic design and product design. At that time I was very much involved with lighting. I was totally fascinated by the pure design of the object and the resulting ambient atmosphere. But after only a short time, Montblanc came knocking on the door...

*From jewelry to fountain pens and more, tell us about your experience in Montblanc?*

It would be almost impossible to briefly describe Montblanc's 22 years of experience as an in-house designer here. But there are certainly a few important moments. When I started at Montblanc in Hamburg in 1995, I was the first in-house designer. That was one of the reasons I started the job, because it was the best way to bring in my design vision. I had a prototype workshop, where I translated my designs into 3D models. These prototypes were the basis of my presentation to the executive board. That changed when 3D software got better and became an additional tool for technical development besides the design presentation. With the diversification of the Montblanc brand, I got more and more the task to design products for the jewelry and leather

segment. Besides projects for writing instruments and editions, I was also responsible for men's jewelry. Another beautiful experience occurred when the Artisan Ateliers was set up following the request of the management to design very luxurious and elaborate editions. I came into contact with very interesting customers and collectors.

*Have you also worked for other brands of writing articles?*

During my time at Montblanc, I had the opportunity to design a series of writing instruments for Montegrappa. At that time, Montegrappa was part of the Richemont Group.

*Jewelry and fountain pens, what are the points in common and what are the differences in conceiving these two luxury objects?*

The biggest difference is probably in the function of writing. In the design of writing instruments, of course, the technical conditions must be taken into account, such as the feeling of the transitions, the grip and the balance. In jewelry design, you have perhaps the greatest creative freedom. Otherwise, the design process is the same: you follow a theme, the target audience, the design codes of the company, the use of new materials and techniques, etc. I've always enjoyed looking at outstanding characters to transform them into a writing instrument design.

*Do you also have experience in the wrist-watch sector?*

Not yet, but I would like to

*What will the fountain pen of the future be like?*

That depends on the future technologies that will be available to us. But considering that the advent of digitalization has had little impact on design - see the Apple pencil - I believe that fountain pen design will continue to be shaped by aesthetic reflections of cultural contexts. The individualization of the user will play a major role.



## *designers*

### *Upcoming projects?*

My company is divided into two areas. As a designer, I'm currently working for a company that has started up to enter the writing instruments market. We are pursuing a new concept that will soon get a lot of attention. But that's all I can say about it. For my own collections, I'll be adding a rollerball to the COCOON series. Then I will finally launch my limited edition "inspired by..." with David Bowie. And if I still have time, another new writing instrument will come out. But I always have time for my customers who come to me with special requests for a writing instrument. That is the most important thing for me.





How important are new technologies in your work as a designer and in the products you make?

The use of new technologies is a key to a successful product. Today, it is already a matter of course to add CAD data and rapid prototyping to the design draft. New technologies offer great creative freedom for design and production. As a designer, you must always be on the cutting edge of technology to offer the best solution to your customers. But as much as we pay attention to the use of new technologies, we also have to consider traditional craftsmanship, because there is so much dedication

in it.

In the near future, will we still write by hand or will the fountain pen be just a memory?

That is certainly a question of the period you understand by the near future. In 50 years, we will certainly still be writing with a fountain pen. We all know that a writing instrument supports our cognitive abilities, that writing by hand is functional and also fun. In the future, we may have a different means of communication. But it will be an object, because people want to have haptic control and own something beautiful.

