

Jan Teunen :

Recycled values

**”I saw ... dirt raining down,
inflicting man and cattle with
insidious festers and ulcers.”**
Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179)

Sitting at my desk as I write this, I see Bingen on the other side of the Rhein through one window, and through another the vineyards of Eibingen on this side of the river. These are the two places where Hildegard founded convents and where everything was revealed to her. Musing on the environment in such surroundings brings home to us the need to find new security in old meanings. We are off-balance, having lost our link with nature – with our own nature too – and with the transcendental. That is what has led us to separate freedom and responsibility, with devastating consequences. Thank God we have finally arrived at a point where that separation causes physical and mental pain. Thank God, I say, because we all know that we mortals are not prepared to rethink the situation and react accordingly until things hurt. The current situation offers tremendous opportunities. Hopefully we will be honest and communicate our real desires and needs, the basic condition for an involution that can lead us back to a responsible, harmonious relationship with nature.

At this turning point, then, no motivation prompted by frustration, such as the greed for status we have brought to bear on design in the past. If we are truly serious, let us not begin by recycling material – from a universal point of view – a rare substance which we of course may only change with the greatest respect. We should begin with the rediscovery, the reanimation of the immaterial, with the eternal values that we have forgotten. They dwell in the writings of Hildegard of Bingen, of Shri Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi. The latter actually gave us a blueprint: „We ourselves must be the change we want to see in the world.“ I wish everyone seriously involved in this endeavour the best of luck, combined with the hope that recycling will not make them run around in never-ending circles.

Jan Teunen (Netherlands) founded the Vertriebsgesellschaft für Design (Design Marketing Company) in 1981 with his wife, Mieke Teunen. Since 1991 his Teunen Konzepte GmbH has been advising institutions and companies which seek to vitalise their activities. His efforts on behalf of his clients always focus on a meaningful social contribution and the optimisation of quality and yield. The basis of Teunen's work is formed by old concepts, which he recycles until surprising new combinations result. He has lectured and published extensively since 1981, and has lived and worked in Schloß Johannisberg/germany, since 1977.