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are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect
the point of view of S' ELEVEN Magazine.

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COVERS



Naomi Janumala wears embellished tulle gown by VALENTINO.
 Photographed by Edwin S Freyer. Styled by Ashley Conor.
 MakeUp by Emma Miles. Hair by Massimo Di Stefano.
 Casting by Dean Goodman.



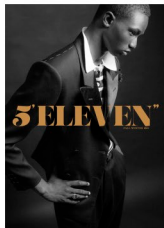
Eliza Cummings wears draped silk dress and thigh-high suede
 leather boots by LANVIN. Wool coat by BERNADETTE.
 Photographed by David Reis. Styled by Alton Hetariki.
 MakeUp by Barrie Griffith. Hair by Eamon Hughes.
 Nails by Edyta Becka. Casting by Dean Goodman.



Odette Pavlova wears couture sheer dress by AZZARO.
 Leather collar by ELEN HALVORSEN. Both hands rings by PRASI.
 Photographed by Petros Kouliouris. Styled by Whitney Whitaker.
 MakeUp by Anastasia Durasova. Hair by Clay Nielsen.
 Nails by Mami Onishi.



Wang Han wears necklace, earrings and ring set by CHOPARD.
 Faux fur coat by ALBERTA FERRETTI. Bra by AGENT PROVOCATEUR.
 Fishnet bodysuit by EMILIO CAVALLINI.
 Photographed by Edwin S Freyer. Styled by Alton Hetariki.
 MakeUp by Naomi Nakamura. Hair by Yoshi Miyazaki.
 Nails by Edyta Becka. Casting by Dean Goodman.



Mahamadou Dianoune wears double breasted wool dinner suit, striped wool polo
 shirt and silver signet ring, all by MAISON MARGIELA. Vintage flower pin.
 Photographed by Benoit Auguste. Styled by Nicholas Galletti.
 MakeUp by Magalie Markan. Hair by Gabriel de Fries.



Tessa Bruinsma wears open shoulder mermaid dress by RVDK.
 Photographed by Tim Verhallen. Styled by Julia Muller.
 MakeUp by Anita Jolles. Hair by Iham Mestour.
 Nails by Daniel Smedeman.

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*Delphi wears black sequined
calle jumpsuit and black merino wool
turtleneck by ALBERTA FERRETTI*

right page
Left, Sandeep at Shreeji News.
Right, Montse at Magma.

UNSUNG HEROES

At 5ELEVEN we are all about championing both the accoladed and the unsung heroes of the fashion industry. Not much is known about magazine shops and yet they are a hugely influential and integral place for the fashion industry. In this special project we lift the lid on the industry insiders and discuss the past, present and future of print.

words by CHARLIE NEWMAN

portraits by HONEY DAVIS-WILKINSON

SANDEEP at Shreeji Newsagents since 1982.

Firstly, what drew you to working in a store dedicated to magazines? I came at it from a very unexpected, not long-term view. I was just helping the people who owned it in my school holidays, that's how it started for me.

What trends or changes have you seen in the print world both pre- and post-pandemic? I think there were already changes in print pre-pandemic, in the sense that as digitalization took over and a lot of magazines went onto subscription models, it kind of drove a lot of people away from the stores. And then as online came in and more people started offering online shops, like WHSmith news, who are traditionally not people who go direct to retail, everyone jumped on board. So it did mean that for quite a while there was a vacuum for smaller and independent shops. It then became necessary to look at changing the offering and I think, within print, what started happening was that people decided they were not only going to look at it as a profit-making scheme. A lot of independent publishers went into produce really good, high-quality material. I suppose Monocle were the first ones to start the trend of a slightly different magazine that encompassed lots of different areas and interests. And then you have people like Cereal come in, Kinfolk, Apartamento, lots of these kind of titles who were again not trying to address what people assumed was the sort of content a magazine would bring to them. They're like 'mooks' in a way, something in between magazines and books.

Peering into something like a magazine or a book, you want to be able to get to a certain page, you want to smell the pages, or you want to physically hold it or turn it upside down, keep it on your pillow at night. Most of the people who buy these magazines are from a professional background where they're looking at screens all day so they would actually love a break. They're a magical totem into this other world. We have become so used to everything being thrown at us from so many different directions in terms of information and it's so easy because it's constantly in front of us in that format. It's like listening to music, you can equate it to that really well because you still want

to go to a concert and see that artist live and not just listen to them on the radio all the time.

How did the pandemic affect your business? There are always two sides to everything. Because of Covid a lot of the locals became very close to the shops in their area that they may have never frequented because if you're going off to work in the morning, the local shops are closed by the time you get home. I think this has recentred the attention to local businesses a lot more. People were also on foot a lot more because they wanted to stay healthy, so I think that was the beneficial part of it. The other side of it was that there was a lot of people who could not go out and bought a lot of things online, which is why we updated our website as a shop, but still we would encourage people to come into the store. Our motto is very much, "Come and visit us". We saw a big surge when we opened last May after the first six-week lockdown, it was quite crazy. People were literally queuing outside because of the way our shops look, you can actually see everything from the outside. It was quite a nice thing to see.

What direction do you think print is going? I don't think it has to be upmarket but I do think that print has to have quality in terms of the production of it, whether that's the paper it's printed on or the font, and while the material inside definitely still has to be relevant, it doesn't have to be bound to anything. Many magazines, including 5ELEVEN, have proved, that it's not only about reporting what's happening at that time, it's about actually providing something that interests a person that gives them a sense of possibility and inspires them to do something themselves. I suppose that's like anything, if something gives you feeling that you want to do more with it, then you've done your work really well.

What are the worst parts of your job? The worst part is having to tell somebody "no" when they are looking for a particular publication, saying you don't have it or you can't get hold of it anymore. There have been lots of publications who have decided not to publish in the UK anymore.



What tips do you have for people who are setting up a magazine or who work in a similar realm to you? You need to have a passion for print. You need to have good communication skills and to be ready for unhappy people. It isn't easy, not everyone will come back smiling and not everyone who comes in will buy something. I guess like with pretty much any business as well, be prepared for some failures along the way, some mistakes, but primarily have a love for what you're doing.

Is print pre-empting the less is more approach? I think in certain circumstances that works. They do need to look at [the weight of the magazine] because if you produce something every six months then you do want it to be valued, if you're charging £30 for a title. You've got to look at your pricing and think, "Maybe it's better for me to produce every quarter?" Once print becomes stronger again, maybe the people who were biannual will go back to a quarterly format, and that way the size reduces, the price reduces. A lot of people come in and say, "I would love to buy two of these but it's too heavy", take something like Purple or Self Service, and you'll get a dislocated shoulder!

The pandemic has been so good in so many ways as it refocused people's attention on their lives and their family. We've met so many people since we've reopened who had never come into the store before who are more like friends and family now, rather than just clients. I was out yesterday with about five of them, we went because I had some sad news in my family and all they made it a point that we will go out and celebrate the good things. It's nice. Life happens to all us.

MONTSE at Magma since 2000.

What trends or changes have you seen in the print world both pre- and post-pandemic? In terms of pre-pandemic times, everything had been about lifestyle for a decade, and about food and drink for a few years already. This would be true of both books and magazines. As for post-pandemic trends, or rather, during the pandemic, it seems there is a big trend in magazines

about esotericism, female empowerment, gender and identity, inclusivity and the non-ordinary. We are also getting exposure to a lot of magazines exploring non-conventional aspects of sex, and even a few design-led sports magazines!

Who are your most loyal customers/consumer market? I would say we have lots of students who then become professionals and keep coming in. Rather touchingly, we also have a number of people that used to buy magazines from us many years ago and who pop in when they travel to London. We used to get quite a few foreign tourists that would make us part of their "to-do list" when in London, too. Sadly, we haven't had those in for a while now.

Is the distribution side of things effective/efficient? If you could sit down with the publishers/magazine teams, what would you say to them? It is highly inefficient, unfortunately. I feel we spend a good deal of time complaining about all the mistakes and problems that happen on a weekly basis and I don't think we have ever gone for even one week in which the magazine deliveries were non-problematic. I would say that unrequested samples should be free to shops and I would tell them to make sure that the UK price matches, to some extent, the printed price in foreign currency. I would also beg them to get real and increase the margins they can offer to shops so that the magazine section can subsist. I would point out that if a magazine format is too large, it will not get properly displayed in a shop. If the magazine is too expensive or fragile, you may want to offer a display copy or shops will hesitate to have viewing copies. I would advise them to not release their covers weeks before the magazine hits the shops. I would tell them to update their stockist lists. I would remind them that the cover is key: we do carry over 300 magazines and customers have limited browsing time, so you need to make your cover catchy, and to reflect what the magazine is about. I could keep going with a million things!

What direction do you think print is going in? For the most part, book publishing in visual culture is going towards

conforming, politically correct, and polite content, exploring new topics from a rather safe perspective. You will not encounter many books coming out of a big publisher that you find, in the true sense of the words, exciting, relevant or timely. The book industry is a slow industry to react which is increasingly gripped by the fear of being slammed online.

I guess the alternative is in small publishing outfits, which tend to have a "labour of love" attitude. They are also more reactive and showcase fresher, more up-to-date content, and as they get less exposure, they are also less damaged by the online slaughter and hopefully can enjoy more publishing freedom.

What are the best parts about your job? Being exposed to lots of creative matter; the exchanges with our amazingly enthusiastic and truly lovely and clever customers; and the joy of seeing a project (game, print, anything you have put a ton of effort into) in the flesh and being appreciated. The nature of our jobs makes us keep our eyes peeled and our brains are ruminating constantly, and I guess that is rather good too! And of course, the fairs abroad to source material tend to be the highlight of the year for Rubén, the other half at Magma, and I. We do miss going to Asia like crazy right now!

What tips do you have for people who are setting up a magazine or who work in a similar realm to you? For people starting a magazine, I'd say to pick a niche subject, to look at the competition and their pricing, and to establish good connections with the people that actually sell your magazine. And to strive to do something different, to try and be better and not just "another fashion magazine", a comment we hear all the time. Don't settle for mediocrity.

For people starting a shop, I'd completely try to put them off. Don't do it. The odds are you will spend blood, sweat and tears and be shutting down in the near future. People perceive London to be a very creative city partly because the landscape changes constantly. Another way to analyze this would be to realize that most new business will not celebrate their third birthday, and that constant change tends to be perceived as constant rebirth, as opposed to constant defunction. All in all, I just wish people were more aware that it doesn't work if you say that you would like the streets populated by the shops you love, and then you buy everything from an online giant. You need to vote with your feet. Unless a big reset happens and landlords and councils stop squeezing shops dry, there is not much hope for central London. We often hear from customers, and particularly those coming from abroad, that it is no longer interesting coming to central London as all the indie are practically gone and everything has just turned into food and drinks establishments. So, my advice right now would definitely be: "don't open in central London!"

TAJ at Rococo News and magazines since 2009.

What drew you to setting up a store dedicated to magazines? I have been working in the news and magazine business for over 30 years now. I set up my first newsagent business during the recession in 1990. I had lost my job at the time and I had friends working in the sector who helped me set up the business. Over time, I partnered with a few friends to set up a small chain of specialist news and magazine stores. Rococo News in Notting Hill was our first shop in the chain. We have been running this shop for nearly 12 years now.

What direction do you think print is going in? Online media obviously has advantages in terms of speed and cost of distribution, and the ability to customize content for clients and interactivity. However, people usually read magazines as part of a leisure activity and flicking through a magazine with a cup of coffee is how most people prefer to read one. Screen images cannot beat high-quality printing on good quality paper. So online media will have information-led content but for high-quality artistic and journalistic content, print media will continue to be popular.

What tips do you have for people who are setting up a magazine or who work in a similar realm to you? Print media is suited to taking time out for in-depth reading of articles of interest. Online media is more suited to browsing or shallow reading of news/information-led content. For print media, providing deep and rich content is very important. Publishers have recognised the importance of magazine photography as a work of art and many publishers now produce multiple covers of the same issue. This allows customers a personal choice of the magazine cover and gets them to connect more deeply to the magazine. We stock hundreds of titles and publishers must ensure their cover stands out among all those magazines.

PERRY at Charlotte Street News since 1988.

What drew you to setting up a store dedicated to magazines? I had a similar business in the wrong area so when opportunity came to buy a business in central London I was just lucky to grab it, that was in June 1987 and managed to finalise it in January 1988, so I have been here since 1988.

Is the distribution side of things effective/efficient? If you could sit down with the publishers/magazine teams, what would you say to them? I think special or niche magazines should deal with direct stores like us rather than a middle man. It's better financially and also makes a more personal understanding. Working together makes a huge difference.

What are the best parts about your job? It's an all-round job. Buying, selling and completely running the whole store.



top left, Sandeep at Shreeji News . top right, Taj at Rococo News.
bottom left, Perry at Charlotte Street News, bottom right, Montse at Magma