

“11211”

I went to school at School of Visual Arts (SVA) to be a designer and at the admissions office thought to place me in the fine art department. ”
I replied: "No thank you, I would like to make money when I graduate. lol.

Breuk Iversen is a Creative Director, an Ad man, Graphic Designer, writer and artist. In the last 18 years, he has taken an entirely innovative approach to design while serving thousands of NYC based companies in both print and new media based (internet) platforms without espousing a ‘house style’ synonymous with other NYC firms.

In 1995, he garnered an award-winning boutique design firm, Disciplined Beauty in his second semester at SVA. By 1999 and upon graduation, receiving his BA with honors at SVA, he had over 150 clients and a full-service design firm on 5th Avenue where he served as the Creative Director until 2001.

In 2000, he founded 11211 Magazine promoting over 3,000 businesses and the area called Williamsburg | Brooklyn (11211) from 2000-2006. Since 2006, his focus has been on Advertising, Branding, and Communications Design. His development of a system called ‘Neurochemical’ has been adopted by the 4A’s in New York City.

11211 Magazine

Iversen launched 11211 a four color glossy in Brooklyn and Manhattan intent on promoting the Zip Code. He also published: *Fortnight*, *The Box Map (2002)*, *Appetite*, and *10003* in the East Village in NYC. 11211 Magazine had attracted worldwide attention editorializing infamous artists: Terrance Lindall, Rene Iatba, Nick Zedd, Boaz Vaadia and Mike Diana in New York City.



Why did you start the 11211 magazine?

In July, 2000. It was conceived with a couple of friends, drunk on Sangria, at a bar/restaurant, one hot night. I asked everyone: "What's the Zip Code here?". No one knew—including me—despite the fact that we all lived there.

The owner had to go up to his office upstairs and get a letter that was mailed to him. <Imao> Then, we knew, 11211. The Sangria there was probably spiked with other substances.

Was there a specific reason?

Yes, there were a few specific reasons. Some of them were artistic, some idealistic, some financial, some for passion, some for research. My favorite was to help build up a neighborhood that was very depreciated was struggling with its own identity. It didn’t have one. Williamsburg is so close to Manhattan but, back in those days, it was pretty dangerous. Brooklyn was a dirty name and taboo for many Manhattanites to visit.

The bar/restaurant was on the corner of North 6th street and Berry which was Brooklyn's version of Chelsea's meat packing district. I lived in a loft on North 4th right across the street from *Vice Magazine*. It was the block where the prostitutes hooked and drugs were sold. I moved there because you could get 1,200 square feet, high ceilings for cents on the dollar. It was great, fun and very illegal living there.

How did your magazine’s design process work?

I spend a great deal of time designing things in 11211 that would be interesting from the beginning to the end. I wanted to do something very REAL with real people and real places and things. All the magazine sections started with the letter "A"; Appetite (restaurants), Audible (music), ARTfART (galleries), Arena (venues), Alcohol (bars), Archive (history), etc...

First, I purposely designed 11211 to end after 36 issues. Second, was to include every aspect of a neighborhood and do a 'general interest' magazine especially for long-time residents. I was born and raised on Brooklyn and it was important to me to do something that was all-inclusive. I was fortunate enough to be mentored by a man named Dick Raboy, who was close friend of Milton Glaser. Mr. Glaser was my teacher at SVA and back in the day,

Dick Raboy helped Glaser and Clay Felker start *New York Magazine*. Milton told me: “*You know, forget about Williamsburg and go to SoHo. At least the business owners there will appreciate your effort. There's no money in Williamsburg*”. It was true. Glazer was correct to an extent, however, I saw so much potential in Williamsburg whereas SoHo already had its day in the sun.

How many rounds of layout revisions did you have prior to getting the magazine ready for print?

None. Hahaha. I've been a designer since 1994 so I made sure that by the time we were ready to print, we were totally set up and ready to go. We printed the first 4 issues out in Oregon and it took 9 days for the truck to get across the country the first time. Then we found that is was cheaper to fly it in.. The weight of these issues was 4.5 tons (10K circulation, 100lb cover stock). We picked up the magazine from JFK by renting a truck.

How long did the prepress process take?

A day or two. We did it digitally, online. The internet was so slow back then. It took three hours to download.

Based on your experience as a Founder and Publisher of such a great magazine, what have you learned?

So much more than I ever expected to.

What I observed in others:

- 1) People think they know who you are.
- 2) Things they don't like, they blame you.
- 3) People become envious of your endeavor.
- 4) Many think publishing is easier than it is. They romanticize it.
- 5) They want to get on the bandwagon when the going is good. When it isn't, they don't want to know you.



Photography: Beth Klavir



What I observed in myself:

We needed 10 full page advertisers to pay for the print run. We ended up getting one the second year. It was a horror story. So far, Mr. Glaser was correct. Williamsburg was synonymous with 'no money'. I had already through \$52,000 of my own savings. In two months, I would go through \$20,000 more. I was pretty close to having a nervous break-down twice in those 6 years.

What are the pros and cons of owning a magazine?

Pros: You get a little prestige but, at what price? There was a time in the 3rd-5th years where I actually had a hard time paying for my own meals and drinks in Williamsburg because people wanted to have me around. It was a little taste of a celebrity status. It got me laid a lot and it upgraded my value and status socially. I have to admit, I don’t miss it.

Cons: When the going is good, it's good. When it's not going good, and you need a hand, then you can tell who your real friends are. Once someone gets what they want out of you, they are basically done. Many will do "whatever it takes" for recognition. I understand this now and don't miss those days at all.

Basically, we would print ANYTHING in 11211. Some of the articles were the raciest stuff available in the US. I suspect we were testing content and see how far we could go with the "Freedom of the Press" idea. Vice Magazine was doing similar but, bolder content.

What advice can you offer new magazine founders hoping to publish their first magazine?

Don't. hahaha. No, really, DON’T. Everything has gone digital and mobile. This new trend has taken over.

Here's some facts:
It took Radio 38 years to reach an audience of 50M users, TV; 13 years, the Internet; 4 years and Facebook; 2 years. If you want to publish something, start a Blog that is useful. Something Useful never goes out of being en vogue. Do something useful for people. Remember: It's not about you, it should be about them.

Did you provide comments when rejecting a submission?

Yes and No. At some point we had so much content, it was overwhelming to keep up. We decided to do an extended online version for each issue. "Advertorials" are articles that were paid for by the businesses. We did a lot of those, however, the writer's could write what they wanted and that was that. We were protected under the First Amendment Constitutional Rights.

Taking care of our advertisers was always priority and first on our agenda. The people, places and things that supported us were next and finally, whatever else we had room to print would go last.

What was your marketing budget and how did you get noticed by the advertisers with ad spends?

Hahaha. We didn't. Everything was work. No one comes to you with ad dollars and when they do it is very brief, a test, and generally not a long-term thing in many cases. They have the same problem at all major Publications. All magazines and newspapers have large sales departments. Without them, they would all cease to exist. We got noticed by local businesses because we distributed issues at their locations. If we waited for them to call us, we would have never survived for those 6 years.

What is the classic marketing mistake in this business?

That advertisers will somehow magically come to you at some point. They hardly ever come. You have to find them.



Which are the recommended word counts prior to writing an editorial page?

Back then: 500-750 words. Today: 150-300. Pictures. You want to have great pictures.



Can you give us any printing tips for new publishers?

Yes. Don't print anything until you have 10 more advertisers than you need to break even. Make a list of your costs and do it for the love of it. There is no real money to be made in publishing in the beginning. If I was were not a designer and getting tons of other business through design project, 11211 would have never survived past the first year.

10003

How many magazines do you read a month and which one is your favorite?

None. I dislike magazines in general. I'm happy to share the reasons why. A good magazine is a type of tribal thing. It is designed for a specific audience and group and it is meant to do a certain thing like sell your advertisers products and services to that particular tribe.

A magazine is considered a luxury item in a culture. You really don't need it to survive and you can't even use it for wrapping up glasses and delicate valuables when you pack to move your home.

The type of voice that speaks to your readership tribe gives them a sense of "belonging" and helps readers define their own identity. This is exactly how it is in America. This is what makes magazines useful to people. It’s personally not useful to me.

I haven't watched or owned a TV is 19 years. The media in American is absolutely dreadful. It's propagated information designed to influence consumerist spending. After WWII Germans gave the name "Propaganda" a bad name. Today in the US, these same techniques are known and used under a disguised term "Public Relations". These two techniques are executed exactly the same way. A subversive mission of 11211 magazine was to expose this idea to influential artists and writers in Williamsburg. I know worked as I planned in the time I was there from 2000-2006. Whoopee! I was am quite passionate and vocal about.

What’s your favorite format for reading magazines (print, tablet/iPad, PDF/ digital flipbook) and why?

I like Facebook on mobile or computer. Facebook is real and goes into the deeper meaning of what it means to be human. I can see people's information, who and what they like and are thinking and this makes me a better Advertising, Branding, Communications expert and Designer. I've been on Facebook since 2007. It used to be much more amazing back then. I was amazed that it worked. I’ve been using this as a dating site for years.

If you were to do it all over again, what would you change?

I bounce back and forth with this quite often. For some years, I truly regretted it. Like I mentioned earlier, Williamsburg was a tough part of Brooklyn.

It was the dregs and a living cesspool in Brooklyn. Greenpoint and Williamsburg are still some of the most toxic areas in the entire US.

Because of 11211, there were street closings, bomb scares outside of Peter Luger's and HSBC bank, Church gatherings to protest and shut down the magazine, organizations were formed, Community Board #1 wanted us gone. I was held at gunpoint a couple of times, choked, punched, sued in court, beaten, stabbed once and had people breaking into the magazine headquarters a couple of times. I downplay this and just say: "It was challenging". :)

In 2012, six years after I closed 11211 Magazine, I spent a solid month researching hundreds of websites to see if 11211 had an impact on the development of Williamsburg. It did.

I can honestly say, beyond any shadow of a doubt, that I did more for developing Williamsburg than anyone else alive. It’s my bragging rights now. It would be nice to find someone to challenge me on this. Anyone? lol...

I may dare say that the reason Brooklyn went from 3.5 million tourist in 2000 to 15 million tourist in 2010 is because I helped develop a “Cool” Brooklyn entry point: Williamsburg)but, let me not get so grand with you. :D

What is one question regarding owning a magazine do you wish I'd asked that I didn't? And how would you answer it?

Haha... Nice! A few come to mind. Here’s 2:

1- What's with this editing policy?
11211 had a no editing policy. We printed first drafts with typos and everything. I told artists (photo and illustrators): “*Do whatever you want to do. I will print it.*” I knew this 'freedom' would allow them to do their best work. I also told writers the word count and this: “*Write whatever you want to write. I ask is if you are going to complain about a person place or thing YOU SHOULD provide a solution by saying what you think could've been done better.*”

2- What is this Neurochemical thing?
Go to the website: <http://BinkNyc.com>
Have a wonderful Day. Thank you!

