

FUSION FLOWERS



**SPANISH
NATIONAL
COMPETITIONS**

**THE DEBATE
- POP UP SHOPS**

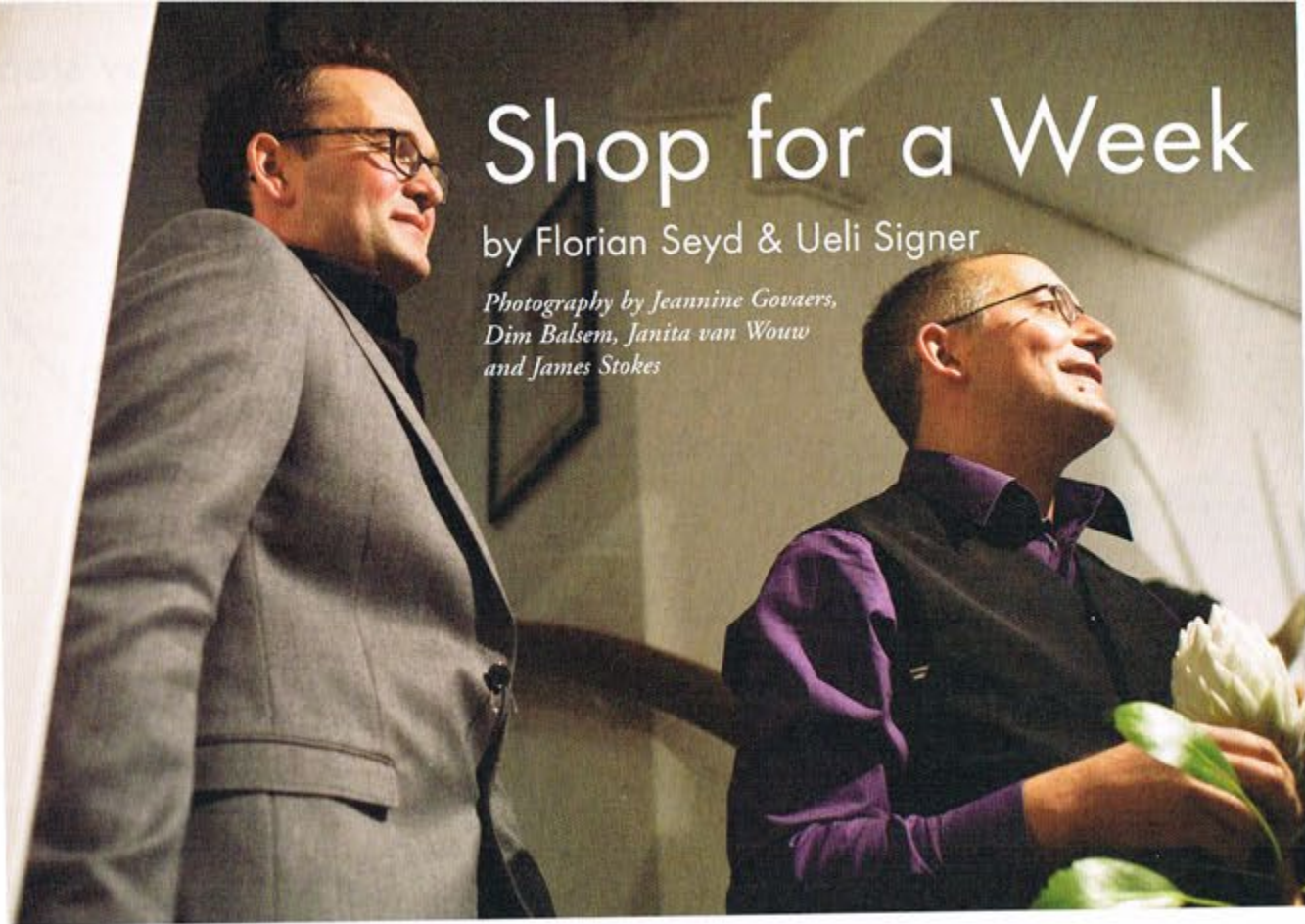
**FLORAL
CULTURE
MUSEUM**



Shop for a Week

by Florian Seyd & Ueli Signer

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In October 2008 we opened our Shop for a Week for the first time; a flower shop that runs for a short time (10 days) and celebrates especially the beauty of flowers and nature. The theme was 'Magical Forest' and our visitors entered a rented gallery with crab apple trees growing out of the floor and an abundance of autumn flowers, seed heads and berries as well as decorative items, flower vases and pots fitting that theme.

How and why did we do it?

Ueli Signer and I, Florian Seyd, had worked together as freelancers for a few years, mainly on demonstrations, presentations, showroom decorations, private functions and parties next to the ongoing floristry works. We decided not to open a flower shop as we travelled for work a lot and did not want to be stressed by the maintaining and running of a flower shop while going for bigger projects at the same time. But after a few years doing that, more and more customers asked us to open a shop. After one day's work with a customer, we had a glass of wine together and the same question came up! We said that we would not do that, but ... we *would* open a shop ... for a week!

Our customer laughed and said we would never do so. To prove him wrong we started immediately brainstorming in the car on the way home. Looking for a place we could rent for a month, we found a nice little gallery; Ueli started planning furniture and I met with some graphic designers to plan an invitation. We started to spread the word and found in the Dutch Flower Council a partner who liked the idea and wanted to give a press meeting in our temporary shop to talk about flower trends. A day before the opening we had to breakdown a trade fair stand in Amsterdam and moved a big basket in front of our shop. We had used the basket

for the presentation of a tomato grower, but while breaking down the stand, a neighbouring stand with Ecuadorian roses gave us all of their open flowers and we made the biggest rose basket in the city!

We opened on a Thursday and had the biggest showstopper in front of our shop. People stopped to take pictures. We met a lot of new people and welcomed many existing customers for the first time to our own four walls. I would not say that we sold like crazy; but at least we had a big enough turnover to cover our costs (not our own work time spend). But most of all, we *really enjoyed* being there and welcoming people into our shop. We had both worked in many shops before and it was nice to do it again. Many people would not believe our temporary nature, but we closed after our second weekend and moved on with our normal work. We had really enjoyed doing it, had not lost money and the time and effort invested had paid us back in customer compliments, fun and enjoyment, so we decided to do it again in spring 2009.

With lessons learned from the first time, we were a bit better with PR, had more addresses from the first shop to invite and started planning immediately! The working title was 'Fishes' and we looked on all fairs and travels for marine inspired decorations and vases. When we opened the second shop in May, we had a big fish made of roses (here again the rose grower/importer gave us his old stock which worked wonderfully for us ... big thanks to him) on the street to direct attention to us! Again many people found us, quite a few recognised us by the roses and we heard some fun stories. One woman thought she had gone crazy; she'd rushed past one week on her bike, made a mental note to come by the

next week ... but the shop was not there anymore! Another woman thought we'd gone bankrupt after being open for just one week – she was glad to hear that that was not the case.



Anyway, the 'fishes-shop' was great. Again, more people, more attention and more reactions. After closing 'Fishes', our minds were already working to think about the next one.

The first two were held in galleries, number three was an empty shop located close to the antique street in Amsterdam, the Spiegelgracht. Here, in October 2009, we opened with a huge window and a very nice collection of museum-like objects. Ueli had designed some nice pieces of furniture and we planned 'a dinner between flowers'. To celebrate the beauty of this temporary shop, people could book a dinner night with us. We had a cook, live music and a beautifully laid table. We sold three nights, our guests were delighted and it gave a strong bond between our good customers and us. We learnt things too; because of the closeness of the antique quarter of town and our huge window, we attracted more new customers than before, sales went up and we became a little bit the 'talk of town'. Again many people thought it was a shame that we would close so quickly, but we still believed in our idea of temporary shops.





Since then we've had many more shops. What are our advantages? We have a short period where we have shop hours and loads of fresh stock, but for the rest of the year we work without that risk. We can concentrate on ongoing projects without the pressure and the time-consuming upkeep of a flower shop. We do not have to wait for customers, pay high shop rent for a good location, do not have to carry stock with the risk of not selling it. When we have the Shop for a Week, it is a time of enjoyment also for us and our team. It is like preparing a show! It starts with us thinking of a theme, making folders, invitation cards and posters. We look for goods to sell, design furniture and installations to surprise our customers again. Due to all the shops and the publicity, we have a big address file so we can see our visiting numbers grow each time. We met a lady in one shop who solicited to do PR for us; her ideas sounded interesting and good, so she took care of press releases, invitations, guest lists for opening evenings. Professionalising the PR has meant our idea is even better known. She's also managed the building of a web shop for us so that our customers can shop online all year for our special products.



The whole process to the shop; the developing of theme, ideas, products and presentation are, for Ueli, our team and myself, a highly creative and fun process. It is very time consuming and also getting more and more expensive as shop locations became bigger and therefore more product is needed, but after doing it for nine times we *still* enjoy it a lot. We still see an up-going line in it, more visitors, even more people from other places, coming to see and experience it.

Through these shops we have gained some great customer contacts and have been asked to help decorate restaurants, a nightclub, have rented out furniture designed by Ueli for special product presentations and trade fair stands. Because of our shops we are able to show what we like, what we do and what we are able to create. I have to be honest; if Ueli and I counted all the time we have put into the shops, I guess our own hourly rate would be very little, but because we start feeling the very positive influence

and shop reaction all year through, we definitely think it is worth it.

If you are curious, feel free to browse our website www.thewunderkammer.eu under Shop-for-a-Week to see what we do. If you really are interested to see and experience it, you're welcome in our 10th shop 'Celebration', starting on the 23rd of May until the 9th of June. When you count days, you'll see we've started to change a bit already - because of feedback from our customers and for our own fun, we've extended into a Shop for Two Weeks...wish we knew where it was leading us!

For more information

Shop for a Week

May 23 – June 9

Amsterdam

www.thewunderkammer.eu

www.shop-for-a-week.com