

...sketch

By Julie Lasky

The Line in Winter *A baker's dozen of creative stars chronicled a week of their lives in a new Moleskine product.*

What are you doing right now? While Twitter users must answer that question in 140 characters or less, Moleskine users can go on and on, especially now that the Milan-based company, maker of iconic little notebooks and planners, has just released its Folio Collection: books with generously sized blank or ruled pages ready to soak up inspiration in ink, paint, or glue.

To show off the collection's versatility, I.D. distributed Folios to 13 designers, architects, and writers last winter and asked them to document a week in their lives. What were they doing? Let's see. *Fast Company* editor Linda Tischler was consorting with celebrities like Marcel Wanders and A-Rod at the Design Miami fair (she was deeply unimpressed, she says, with Marilyn Manson and his "beanpole girlfriend"). Fuseproject's Yves Béhar was speaking at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, before jetting to Long Beach, California, to unveil his design for an electric motorcycle at the TED conference. The industrial designer Ayse Birsel was celebrating her daughter Alev's birthday in Dakar, Senegal. Copenhagen-based furniture designer Louise Campbell was zipping from her winter retreat in the Danish woods to

meetings in Amsterdam and Venice. Industrial designer Alfredo Häberli was vacationing in the eastern Swiss Alps "in a very, very small village with the beautiful name Ftan."

No less quaint than the hamlet's name were Häberli's illustrations of Ftan—fairytale-exquisite paintings of mountains and chalets, culminating in a deep blue, starry night. Lured by the blank pages, all of the project's contributors matched distinctive visions to their narrative voices: Tischler dished about Miami glam in a collage of publicity photos and blog posts. Béhar conveyed the life of a peripatetic design star in hectic scrawls of silver ink. Birsel united family and friends through portraits drawn with a fluid, elongated line. Campbell sliced up photos of Venice and recombined them with fluorescent tape to visualize how memories of places quickly turn fragmentary.

Taking a more literal approach, principals of the Stockholm design firm Claesson Koivisto Rune revealed ideas for product development in ballpoint thumbnails (they also produced a charming sketch of the three men at a table sketching). James Biber, an architect with Pentagram's New York office, pasted photos of influential buildings and details, including Jozé Plečnik monuments in Ljubljana and Biber's own Harley-Davidson museum in Milwaukee.

The Folios, which offer two thicknesses of paper in A3 or A4 sizes, were equal to any medium. Architect Michael Graves rendered scenes of his beloved Tuscany in pencil and paint. Fashion designer Han Feng documented her costume designs for *The Bonesetter's Daughter*, an opera based on Amy Tan's novel that had its world premiere in San Francisco last fall; stitching together the renderings are lines of brushed-ink

Mandarin lettering. Graphic designer Marian Bantjes, no slouch herself as a calligrapher, created a book that, when its pages are collected in a single block, reveals the week's events in a mandala-like form. And Jessica Helfand, who recently published a history of scrapbooks, tucked bits of dead insect, chicken meat, angel hair pasta, a Prednisone prescription, and a clementine peel into glassine envelopes for a scrapbook commemorating the December ritual of cleaning her graphic design studio.

Like Helfand, Seth Godin, the author of best-selling books about marketing, found room for a third dimension on the page: He placed a little bald, plastic figure of himself in the center of a collage. And Giuseppe Amato, an artist and furniture maker, simply loaded his Folio onto a hand-operated wooden printing press and presented it as sculpture—"no computer skills required," he boasted in an attached note.

Marco Beghin, president of Moleskine America, professed pure delight—and not an ounce of surprise—with these approaches. "The idea behind the Folio Collection is space to grow ideas and inspiration and creativity," he pointed out.

The Week in Your Life books are scheduled for exhibitions in Milan (April 18–27) and New York, after which they will be donated to the archive of Lettera27, a foundation promoting international literacy and learning. Turn the page for a peek at the books' contents. For a more complete slideshow of images, visit www.moleskine.com

Julie Lasky is the editor of *Change Observer*, a web magazine about design for social impact that's launching this summer as an affiliate of *Design Observer* (www.designobserver.com).

GIUSEPPE AMATO

The artist and designer presented his Moleskine Folio as a sculpture—"no computer skills required," he boasted.



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LOUISE CAMPBELL



ALFREDO HÄBERLI



MARIAN BANTJES



AYSE BIRSEL



CLAESSON KOIVISTO RUNE



SETH GODIN



HAN FENG



JESSICA HELFAND



LINDA TISCHLER



MICHAEL GRAVES



JAMES BIBER



YVES BÉHAR

MARK WEISS