

Mark Porter



Mark Porter's relationship with the *Guardian* began a long time ago when he was still a boy. He recalls the daily crossword puzzle he and his father would complete together. His father was an avid reader, and the newspaper, still published in Manchester at that time, was a staple in their home.

Porter, born in Aberdeen in 1960, grew up to become the person responsible for the groundbreaking 2005 redesign of the *Guardian*. The redesign shook the world of journalistic design, earning him many awards and much recognition. In January 2018, the *Guardian* dropped its Berliner format to move to tabloid. The inner pages were also redesigned, this time under the creative direction of Alex Breuer. Inevitably, comparisons were soon made to Porter's 2005 redesign, with many people asking him to weigh in on the new design—though he left the paper in 2010, Porter will forever be associated with his work at the *Guardian*.

The *Guardian* has been repeatedly named the best-designed newspaper in the world by the Society for News Design. The Society of Publication Designers has also awarded it a gold medal, and it has won a Black Pencil at the prestigious D&AD Awards. Porter recognizes very clearly that it made his reputation. Some consider his project to be the greatest redesign of a print newspaper that has ever been done.

While among the most influential newspaper designers in the world, he was entirely self-taught. "I never imagined I could do it as a career," he reveals. "That came about through luck, and a series of happy accidents." At Oxford's Trinity College he studied modern languages, not design. But he always loved magazines and recalls his enthusiasm for the innovative album covers created by the design group Hipgnosis for bands such as Pink Floyd, Genesis, Led Zeppelin, and Black Sabbath in the 1970s and the early 1980s. He also recalls the marvelous supplements of the British press

"Each medium has its own challenges. The digital world changes so fast that it's a full-time education just keeping up with the latest developments."

and the impact of Neville Brody at *The Face* magazine. "That," he admits, "was what made me want to get involved in editorial design."

At that time, the young Porter was a member of the commercial department of a small magazine called *Decanter*, which he went on to redesign. In 1994 he got a call from *Colors* magazine, which was edited by the legendary Tibor Kalman. He did not hesitate for a moment to make the move to Rome. After this, he became director of *ES Magazine*, a weekly arts publication distributed by the afternoon paper the *London Evening Standard*, and he was also

involved in the first issues of the British edition of *Wired*. Finally, in 1995, he joined the *Guardian* as art director for *Weekend* magazine, which he also redesigned several times, assisted by Richard Turley. "Getting into newspapers was a shock because, in those days, there was still not much of a design culture. Editors were very much in control and not very respectful of design. This has since changed," he says.

His career at the *Guardian* culminated in 2004 with an assignment from then editor Alan Rusbridger that became the project of a lifetime: a long, rewarding, but exhausting process. Porter designed for every medium during those five frenetic years: print, web, mobile, and tablet; he was integral in the design direction for the website during this time, perhaps making one of the most successful transitions from print to digital design as well.

Finally, the time came to search for new challenges beyond the paper. Following his resignation as creative director of the *Guardian*, he launched his own studio. His subsequent redesigns all carry his unmistakable touch: *Público* (Lisbon), *NZZ am Sonntag* (Zurich), and *Berlingske* (Copenhagen). He has also returned to magazine projects, working with the likes of French weekly *L'Express* and the Italian *Internazionale*. Through his participation in the integrated branding project for RTL Nieuws in Holland, he also entered into the television landscape. →

Berlingske



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An example of the front page of B, a section of *Berlingske* which appears daily and is a primary section of the newspaper, after News and Business. Occasionally,

a strong image will occupy the entire page and the teasers and other stories that are normally present in the lower parts of the page will be removed.