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Case Study
T: The New York Times Style Magazine 2●●4–2●1●

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Abstract

In this detailed and personal account, Stefano Tonchi recounts the thought process behind his legendary transformation of *T: The New York Times Style Magazine* in 2004. An award-winning editor and journalist specializing in the intersection of art, fashion, and contemporary culture, Tonchi was uniquely positioned to create a new, boundary-pushing, and very lucrative iteration of *T*, by combining all of legendary newspaper's seasonal style, design, and culture supplements into one weekly magazine. Tonchi served as Editor in Chief of *T* for 9 years, during which time the magazine, with a sophisticated new design; a fresh hybrid of subjects; and a new, oversized Gothic-T logo, attracted a new crop of talented photographers, featured A-list Hollywood celebrities, brought in a surplus of advertising pages; and garnered numerous industry awards. In his unique and honest voice, Tonchi takes the reader through his creative philosophy of "connecting the dots"; the vital importance of team-building; understanding a corporate culture and its values; and how and when to best spark change.

Keywords: Style; Fashion; Art; Design; T: The New York Times Style Magazine.

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Context is Everything

Throughout my many editorial experiences of 30 years in fashion, a constant focus of my work has been creating a context for fashion. Or — as I used to say in my analog days — *connecting the dots*. I have always looked at fashion as an integral component of contemporary culture: an expression of individual creativity as much as a reflection of every change in the social and political structure of a society. Every artistic form is born of this driving force.

But behind every artistic creation also lies hard work, years of research and study, and practice and errors. The creative genius is a myth, in art as in fashion every designer is an expression of the context in which they operate, and the forces — cultural but also economic — behind it.

Fashion as we know it today is a huge business, a complex industry employing millions of people on every continent, with a supply chain crossing the globe, and with an immense, ever-growing sense of responsibility toward limiting waste and increasing its own sustainability. The ethical aspects of fashion are a new context that have emerged into full view within the last decade.

The digital revolution and the fragmentation of content, the way we access information and look at fashion on our Instagram feeds, has made this contextualization much more difficult.

When I started *T: The New York Times Style Magazine* in 2004, it was relatively easy to create a context for fashion. Any good magazine expresses a context for itself and makes it possible to suggest a series of relationships, visual and narrative, between fashion and the many realities around it.

To be almost literal, a profile of a designer or a photography portfolio reporting on a fashion trend from the runways would follow a travel story or a contemporary art essay that had inspired the trend. Creating the lineup for an issue of *T* was like following a thought process, and many times the Table of Contents of the magazine would almost read as the summary of a book.

Magazines are historically understood to be the rightful place for the long narrative, in words or in images. *T* was originally started for this reason; it was the style extension of *The New York Times Magazine*, the supplement of the internationally renowned newspaper.

The photographic portfolio about fashion, design, and food, and in-depth profiles of celebrities and designers were the two fundamental building blocks of the magazine's content, and they both offered the opportunity to contextualize the subject, open windows in the mind of the reader and... connect the dots. The reader could become immersed in the context, follow the editorial process, and become part of an adventure of discovery, — letting the mind and the eye travel, to use Diana Vreeland's words. Instagram and digital platforms, by contrast, have a completely new and different approach to fashion, and offer other ways to create context — but this is a different story to tell.

Adam Moss and the CV box

In 2002 Adam Moss, the legendary editor of *The New York Times Magazine*, was promoted to the new position of "Cultural Czar," responsible for all the cultural content for *The Times*. I had met him a few times through *The Times'* Fashion Critic Amy Spindler, and it was a total surprise when he asked me to send him my CV and interview for the job of Style editor for the Sunday magazine. I always went from job to job by word of mouth and I never had created a resume, that very American document that in one page should summarize your whole life. I decided to give myself a little context, and I assembled a huge box with select copies of all the publications I had worked on, and some of my favorite accomplishments. Into my CV box I put the best copies of *WESTUFF*, an independent bilingual quarterly style magazine published in Florence in the mid-'80s; the issues of *L'Uomo Vogue* that better represented my idea of a fashion magazine; the many stories I wrote for *Italian Vogue* and *Casa Vogue*; the work I did as Creative Director for the American Condé Nast's *Self* Magazine; creative shoots for the popular catalogue and retailer *J.Crew*; and my favorite photo portfolios and service stories for *Esquire*. I also added the books and catalogues for the exhibitions that I had worked on and curated in Florence for Pitti Immagine.

These were exhibitions and publications such as *Uniform*, *Excess*, *Total Living*, *Human Game*, and they looked at fashion in an original way, giving it a context far beyond the clothes presented on mannequins or in pictures. They mixed contemporary art, industrial design, editorial projects, photography, and every aspect of contemporary culture.

If I can guess what got me the job in the early 2003, it was one of those books, for sure.

Corporate Culture and Team Building

Every publishing company where I have worked had a set of unique values, which added up to a very specific corporate culture. Adapting to each new environment and understanding how things worked at each company was essential to the success of a magazine, and in fact to one's personal survival as a newcomer. If you wanted to make changes at an established, even legendary magazine, the first crucial step was always to understand and penetrate the corporate culture and identify who could be of help. Within the staff of a magazine there are always people who are the gatekeepers, who know how to make things happen fast, or slowly.

The best way to spark change is actually by not making too many changes. Respect for one's predecessors and establishing continuity and job security is essential. Giving everybody on staff a chance to show what they can be and who they really are is important and takes some time, because in large organizations there are always hidden or underutilized talents. In the Spring of 2003, when I arrived at *The New York Times* — an American institution and the pinnacle of serious journalism — I was viewed with skepticism and perhaps some suspicion: I was a foreigner, an Italian fashion editor arriving from glossy, "un-serious" publications. I needed all the help I could find!

To begin, I immediately started involving the existing staff, step by step. I spent a lot of time re-organizing the Style section of *The New York Times Magazine* and getting to know the people working there: the incredibly talented Creative Director Janet Froelich, the best-ever American photo editor Kathy Ryan, the secret-weapon articles editor Andy Port, who for decades had run the Styles section of the magazine under many different editors, and who had overseen — if not had written or re-written! — every word, every headline, every dek ever published. Many of the staff were very frustrated, and they took the opportunity for change as a personal challenge. Others did not feel comfortable, and in time looked for other jobs within the company or outside; *The Times* was a very old-school company for which firing was not a real option, and people were used to staying for life. This was a very different corporate culture from my previous employer Condé Nast, where it was understood and perhaps even encouraged that new editors would terminate almost the whole staff in a week if they wanted to. That would have been a big mistake at *The Times*! I brought in some new editors and a new designer, but I always made the old guard part of the process. That was what made it possible to build a very strong team in a few weeks and to launch *T Magazine* — a totally new publication at *The Times* — only three months after I had arrived.

Inspiration, Admiration, Appropriation

In my first few months of 2003 at *The New York Times Magazine*, I learned a lot, in particular in areas where I was not very well prepared, like food and interior design. I also brought many of my personal interests, like contemporary art, music, celebrities and, clearly lots of fashion ideas and better photography. It was magic to be able to publish stories on any subject that I found interesting, to get any writer and any exclusive, and have every door open because... well, we were *The New York Times!* I remember how proud I felt when I got permission to photograph the residence of Yves Saint Laurent after he died, and I assigned three of the best living visual artists to create a unique portfolio in celebration of his legacy. Fashion and photography were not the areas where the Sunday magazine had an established reputation. And that was my challenge! I remember the memorable cover of the magazine with Miuccia Prada and her favorite artists, or Tyra Banks photographed by Ruven Afanador, and the many unexpected fashion collaborations with famous artists like Jeff Koons and Roger Ballen. (Fig.01)

Figure 1: (Left) *The New York Times Magazine* June 1, 2008. Tyra Banks photographed by Ruven Afanador (Right) *The New York Times Magazine* March 23, 2008. Miuccia Prada, John Baldassarri and Francesco Vezzoli photographed by Matthias Vriens

Inspirations and references were essential, not only as examples of what to do for myself but for the entire staff, so I was very transparent about the sources of my ideas. Visual references were the language I was fluent in.

I did not look back at *Vogue* or *Esquire*, where I had worked for years, but instead at the landscape of the newspaper supplements worldwide. I was an admirer of the British *How to Spend It* from the *Financial Times* for its successful commercial format, large size, and extended fashion photography portfolios. I loved *D* magazine from *La Repubblica*, exquisitely designed in its first version by Fabien Baron. I liked the elegance of *Madame Figaro* and the boldness of *Die Neue Südtiroler Tageszeitung*. These magazines were all the distant progeny of *The New York Times Magazine*, founded in 1896, one of the first-ever weekly newspaper supplements. Now, to create a new supplement of *The Times* focused on Style, I was inspired by its successors...

New ideas are never really new — unless there is a technology innovation. Ideas travel, and what goes around, comes around. We always build on what has come before; we evolve one idea into another, applying different degrees of imagination and creativity. To the extreme that, in today's culture of appropriation, we all learned — from art — that even an exact copy is not pure plagiarism if the context is changed.

One day, passing through *The Times*' art department, I saw on the fax machine — yes, we still used fax machines back then — the fax cover letterhead with a beautiful T, in the Gothic-style typeface used in *The Times*' logo (for the record, the specific typeface is Engraver's Old English BT). I immediately took that piece of paper to Janet Froelich and asked her to work on that Gothic T as the logo for our new magazine. It was not intended to look like the elegant letter D in Helvetica Typeface used for *La Repubblica* — that D stands for *La Repubblica delle Donne*, which literally, in a very politically incorrect way, means the "part of the newspaper *La Repubblica* made for women." But I probably had an unconscious association with that D. A few years later, when *Le Monde* relaunched its weekly supplement, they called it *M*, and their logo is the *M* of *Monde* in a Gothic style typeface, very similar to my original T. Imitation, admiration, or appropriation? I discussed this subject with one of *Le Monde's* editors recently, and he

offered me a lifetime subscription. No big deal; in my opinion, *M* is the best weekly supplement in the world today, with incredible content, great images, and a fantastic art direction. Ironically, the first thing that my successors at T did was to change the typeface of the logo, from my Gothic-looking T to a streamlined Helvetica-like T!

The One Reason

Starting in the 1940's, the Sunday magazine traditionally would create seasonal fashion supplements under the name *Fashions of the Times* and later also *Men's Fashions of the Times*. These became the places where *The Times'* editors would visually present the new fashion trends of the season within photographic portfolios, and collected many highly profitable fashion advertising pages. Somewhere along the way the travel advertising market had become so strong as to demand its own seasonal travel supplement, which took the name of *The Sophisticated Traveler*; soon the demand for more space for advertising had become so constant that a new supplement was launched, with the title *Style and Entertainment*.

Concurrently, the Styles section of the paper was added on Thursday and Sundays, on top of the weekly Travel and Food sections, and many others. These were the years when *The Times* had so many sections and magazines that on the weekend, you needed muscles to carry the paper home from the newsstand!

My simple idea was to group all the seasonal supplements of the weekly Sunday magazine under one umbrella, and have one staff to work on them, to give them a consistent look and be less confusing for readers and more valuable to advertisers. I also wanted to publish them on a monthly schedule, to compete with mainstream monthly fashion, culture, and leisure-oriented periodicals. I really never accomplished that monthly schedule, and in the best years we ended up publishing as many as 14 issues of *T*, of which nine were in the last three months of the year to please the advertising market!

This thought gives me the opportunity to explain something about the corporate culture of *The Times* and, to a certain extent, its hypocrisy. The newsroom — the core of the hard investigative journalism that the newspaper was known for — always looked down at the Style sections as mere vehicles to collect advertising money: the corrupt, superficial arm of the company that had to be tolerated because it would pay the bills for the "real" journalism. A common sentiment that my team and I would hear at *The Times* was: "Thank you for your work that is financing our Baghdad office and the safety of our real journalists." We were all happy to provide that support, but we also were proud of creating content that readers seemed to like and value as much as they did the hard journalism. Also, I would have to explain that sometimes the world of fashion was rife with conflict and politics of its own, and that to get an exclusive story for *The Times* in the world of style was a much more challenging affair than to get an interview with, say, Gaddafi — because in the world of international news *The Times* was always the first choice, whereas in the fashion arena, we were not always seen as a competitive player.

I learned that every magazine needs a reason to be: For *The Times'* leadership , *T* was necessary to collect advertising dollars. For me and my staff, *T* was there to entertain and inspire, to relieve the pressure of the daily news, and to offer a visual escape from reality, while still staying true to the quality and the ethical rigor that the company was known for.

What is a Cover?

When I arrived at *The Times* in the early 2000s, covers were still responsible for most of the sales of magazines on newsstands. Mainstream fashion publications had transformed from showing models on their covers to featuring celebrities; they also would load up their covers with catchy, action-oriented coverlines meant to move still more copies at the newsstand. (By the way, fame meant something very different then than in today's celebrity market, where success is measured by numbers of Instagram followers.) A celebrity was a movie star, with at least an Oscar or a blockbuster on their resume. I had worked at magazines where every cover choice was scrutinized, and focus groups across the U.S. would

decide the color of the dress or the shape of the haircut of the model. Every single coverline had to go through countless revisions to end up exactly like the one that had sold copies the month before. Here at *The Times*, I did not have to worry about any of this: *T* would be distributed to subscribers and sold at the newsstand wrapped within the most prestigious paper in the world; nobody had to make the decision to buy *it* judging it from its cover: it came for free as a present with the Sunday weekend edition. What a *T* cover should be was the question my staff and I asked ourselves, over and over. I always believed that a cover's most important function is to fully express the branding identity of the magazine. I bought and admired magazines because of the meaning and the trust I had in the brand, independently from what was on its cover and what it promised with its coverlines. The most important magazines, at the pinnacle of their success, built their authority through the power of their logo and the look and feel of their covers; a big face of a model or of a celebrity at *Bazaar*, a reported image at *Newsweek*, an interior of a house at *AD*, and so on. For *T* I wanted to establish a photographic identity on top of the beautiful Gothic T logo that we had created. Our challenge was that we had different subjects every month: some issues were about fashion, others about travel or food — besides the logo, our issues had little in common with one another.

We knew we wanted something bold and graphic to tie them all together, so we agreed to find one photographer to help lend a unique and constant look to all our covers. *The New York Times* had a great authority for photography in any area of reportage and portraiture, but not in fashion and style. Raymond Meier was a well known still life photographer, and a real magician in the use of technology. He worked hard with us and a team of stylists and set designers, and issue by issue we created together a look: bold fashion portraits, intriguing design interiors, graphic travel images. His photographic style gave the covers a unity, with his saturated sense of color and his graphic compositions. The approach to every cover was highly conceptual; even if the end result might have seemed to be merely a simple picture, each cover had a rich backstory of research, deliberation, and inspiration.

The first cover of *T* in August of 2004 was of Kate Winslet (Fig.02). It was a difficult shoot because Raymond had much more experience taking pictures of objects than of people — in particular famous people, whose major quality was not just beauty but the ability to express emotions. Winslet had opinions about herself and the clothes she was comfortable wearing — a very different approach to being a cover subject than a model would take. In the end, we produced a romantic Junoesque portrait of Winslet, bathed in a beautiful Renaissance light.

T's Men's covers were also big faces of actors; for the Fall 2004 an intense close-up of Clive Owen and for the Spring of 2005 an old Hollywood-style black and white portrait of Gerard Butler in a big fedora (Fig.03). The First *T Design* cover for the Fall 2004, one of my all-time favorites, showed a charred 18th century green upholstered chair rolling down a modernist cement staircase, making you wonder what had just happened upstairs (Fig.04). The *T Living* Fall 2004 cover was a Caravaggio-style *natura morta*, with a loaf of country bread, two ripe figs, a pearled brooch, and a bejeweled Prada mule with feathers (Fig.06)!

The covers for the Travel issues were a long and expensive process, because after many false starts we decided to always shoot them on iconic locations, creating a dialectic conversation between the human figure always in the foreground and the magnitude of the landscape, from the snowy mountains of north Japan (Winter 2007) to the futuristic architecture of Brazil (Spring 2007). (Fig.05)

Gradually, because of this rigorous approach to the covers and their expressive tone, the recurring big faces of celebrities, and the provocative still-life image, *T* Magazine had become a brand in itself, and people came to know what it stood for. Today I think that everybody would agree that covers are a branding tool, a place to make statements and express what a publication stands for, even at the risk of not selling copies.

Figure 2: (Left) *T: The New York Times Style Magazine* Women's Fashion Fall 2004. Kate Winslet photographed by Raymond Mayer (Right) *T The New York Times Style Magazine* Women's Fashion Spring 2005. Ziyi Zhang photographed by Raymond Mayer.

Figure 3: (Left) *T The New York Times Style Magazine* Men's Fashion Fall 2004. Clive Owen photographed by Raymond Mayer (Right) *T The New York Times Style Magazine* Men's Fashion Spring 2005 Gerard Butler photographed by Raymond Mayer.

Figure 4: (Left) *T The New York Times Style Magazine* Design Spring 2005. Regio mirror by Paola Navone photographed by Raymond Mayer (Right) *T The New York Times Style Magazine* Design Fall 2004. Barok chair by Maarten Baas photographed by Raymond Mayer.

Figure 5: (Left) *T The New York Times Style Magazine* Travel Winter 2007 Lake Tazawa, Japan photographed by Raymond Mayer (Right) *T The New York Times Style Magazine* Travel Spring 2007 Sao Paulo, Brazil photographed by Raymond Mayer.

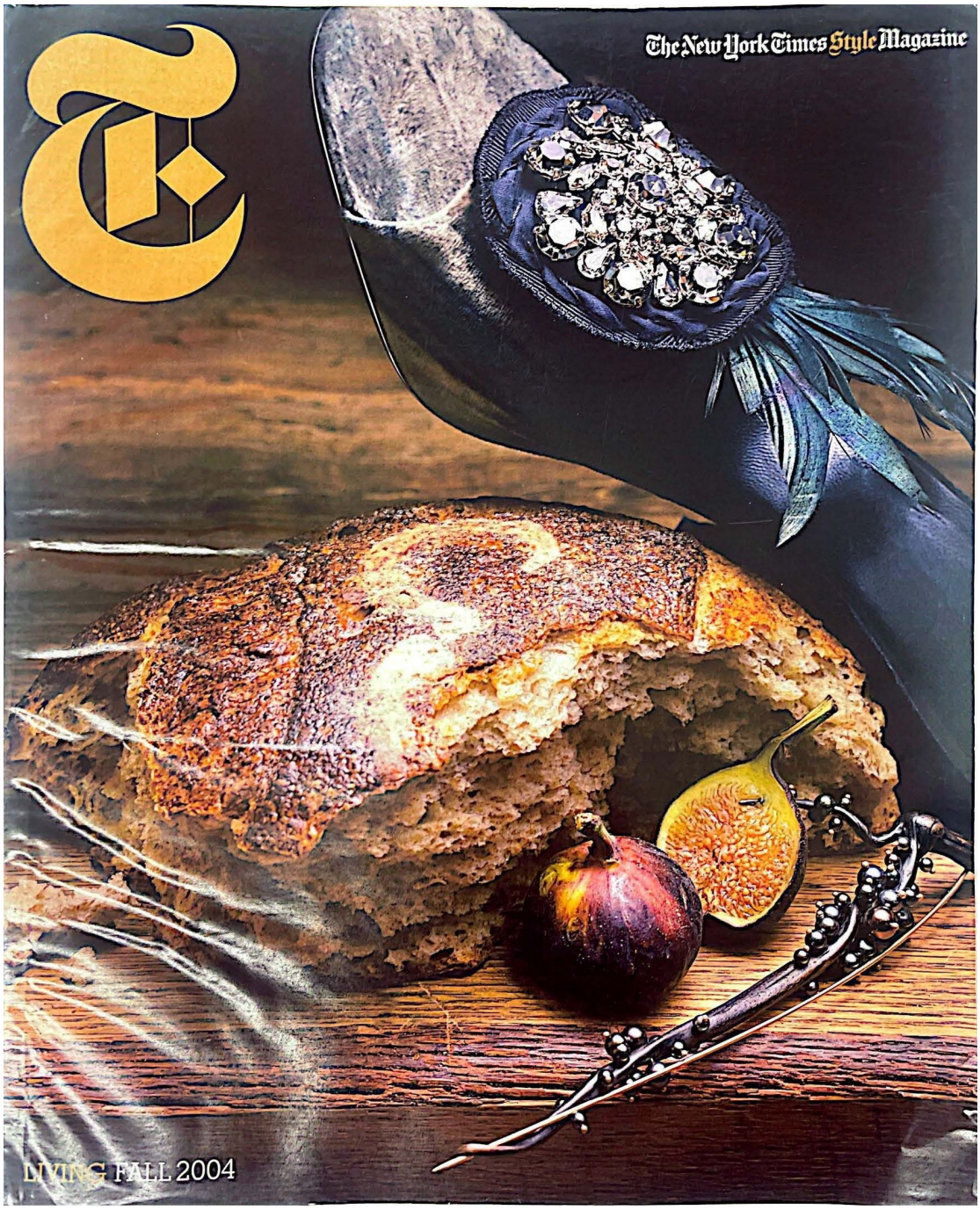

Figure 6: *T The New York Times Style Magazine* Living Fall 2004. Bread by Balthazar Bakery, velvet mules by Prada , pearl broach by Ted Muehling photographed by Raymond Mayer.

The Look and the Feel

Because I came from a visual background, looking day and night at fashion images and layouts, I felt that I had to listen very carefully to the writers and editors, because what looks great also has to "read great." *T* was conceived as a visual companion to the Sunday *Times* magazine and the daily paper, and image had to be king. But I also wanted to communicate, engage the readers, inform, and entertain. Before the dominance of digital media in delivering breaking information, all news and short service content was grouped together in the Front of the Book. In magazine language, the "Front of the Book" refers to that group of pages, usually single pages next to ads, before the beginning of the Well—again, a magazine language term for the editorial core, the precious sanctum sanctorum where the best journalism and the best image-making is displayed in long-form stories and portfolios. I find the "FoB" the most challenging part of an issue; it's where you find the real artistry of making magazines. It is a hell of a job selecting so many short stories, finding ways to illustrate each one of them, create a variation in subjects, types of images, display, and overall tone.

For weeks, with Andy Port at the words and Janet Froelich at the design, I worked at the definition of T's Front of the Book, and created three distinct areas of the FoB. We called the first section *The Remix*, applying the music technique of sampling (true story: my very first job was as a DJ in a club!), mixing news from every corner of the cultural spectrum (Fig.07). Then we had *The Get* section (Fig.08), where we presented in full-page images a very edited selection of the most beautiful products in the market; exceptional jewels, monumental shoes and gigantic bags, unusual fashion accessories,and for the different thematic issues, furniture, home objects, food. Finally the third section, *The Talk* (Fig.09), was all about words, starting with a provocative dictionary of the words of the moment, some of them neologisms like *stay-cation* that had become common language, followed by short essays and personal columns and opinions. I wanted to create a space for news that could expand or shrink depending on the advertising pages needed; the design style was fluid with the use of different writing styles and typefaces. We had quotes in large type, still-lifes of products, interviews and Q&As, portraits, and archival images. I always thought that the FoB had to be fun and entertaining, a sampling of the contemporary culture at that moment, mixing disciplines and content that other publications had traditionally kept rigorously separated — the beauty pages, the news pages, the art pages, the home design pages. My intention was for the reader to immediately understand that *T* Magazine was about everything fashionable — fashion, broadly defined, in the context of contemporary culture.

Figure 7: (Left) *T The New York Times Style Magazine* Men's Fashion Fall 2004 and (Right) *T The New York Times Style Magazine* Design Fall 2004. The Remix section opening pages.

Figure 8: (Left) *T The New York Times Style Magazine* Design Fall 2004 *The Talk* section (Right) *T The New York Times Style Magazine* Men's Fashion Spring 2005 *The Get* section.

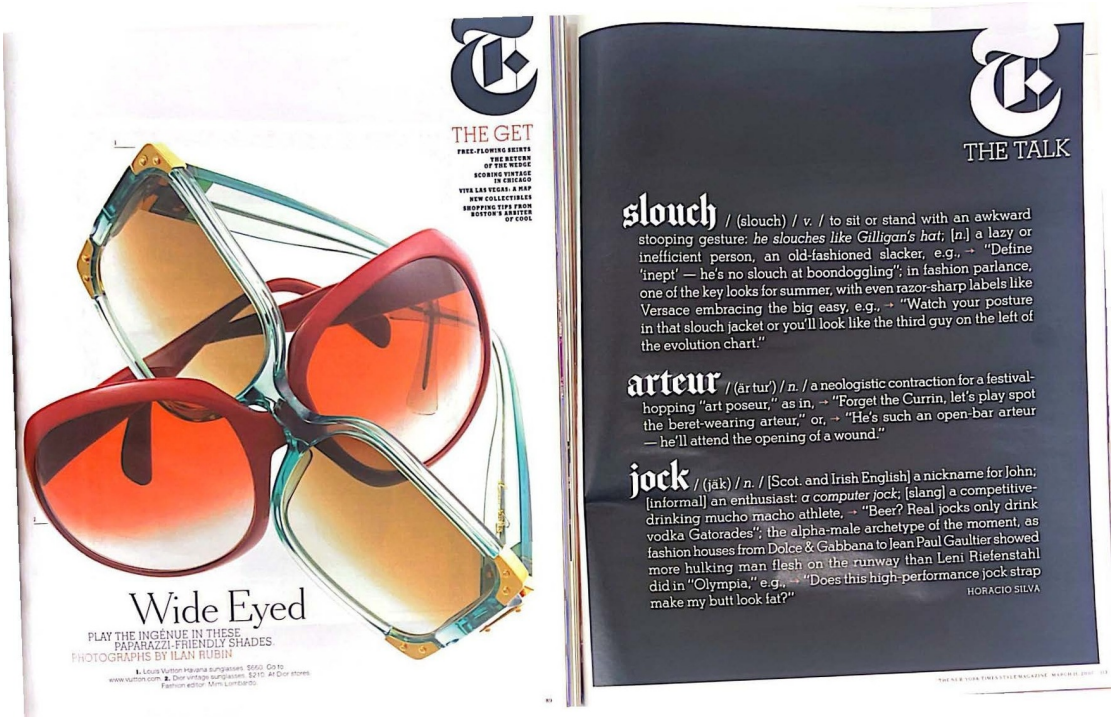

Figure 9: (Left) *T The New York Times Style Magazine* Women's Fashion Spring 2005 *The Get* Section (Right) *T The New York Times Style Magazine* Men's Fashion Spring 2005 *The Talk* section.

Then we had to find a way to stop the rhythm and make a statement, to signal the beginning of the Well. Some editors use this as a manifesto for what will be the focus of the issue or for making some form of declaration of intent. We came up with something totally visual and totally ours: Every issue's Well began with an interpretation by an artist of our logo, our legendary *T*. Through the years we had some great ones, too many to list. It became such a statement and a branding tool that for the 5th anniversary of *T*, we did 5 separate covers, each one with a beautiful rendition of the *T* logo by the likes of Frank Gehry and Francesco Vezzoli (Fig.10 and Fig.11).

The line-up of Well stories that followed that opening page had a few rules. We always wanted to lead with great images and whatever was the specific theme of the issue — pure fashion, design, food, or travel — the photographic portfolios had to be rich, inspiring, and laid-out simply on multiple pages without interruption. In every issue, we always tried to have one long in-depth profile of a designer or an artist, one nostalgic essay, one trending story, and one photo reportage essay. We called the last page *Timeless*, to celebrate — after so many trends and news items — the beauty of staying power.

We were very lucky because we always had an audience, no matter what. We could edit the magazine first for ourselves, following our interests and our pleasure. We really had fun putting together issue after issue; it showed, and people started to appreciate it and give us their attention. There's an old saying among magazine types: Good editors edit first for themselves and create the magazine that they want to read. I couldn't agree more.

Figure 10: *T The New York Times Style Magazine* 5th Anniversary issue Fall 2009 (Left) Artwork by Frank Gehry (Right) Artwork by Francesco Vezzoli.

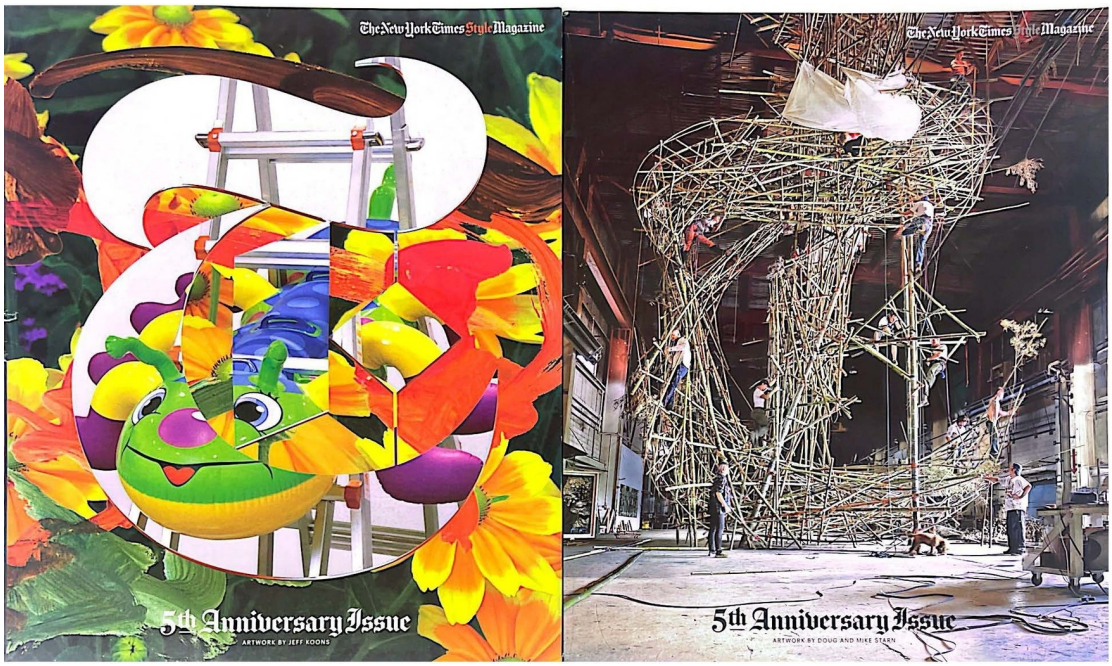

Figure 11: *T The New York Times Style Magazine* 5th Anniversary issue Fall 2009 (Left) Artwork by Jeff Koons (Right) Artwork by Mike and Doug Starn.

Tradition and Transgression

Readers like to know what to expect from a publication. For each of us there is something reassuring in finding the feature that we like where we expect to find it, always knowing what part of the magazine we are in, anticipating the content and looking forward to it. It is the safety of the known: *repetita juvant*, as we learned in school. I wanted to keep the same structure for all issues, independently by subject. Each issue of *T* had the same Remix pages, the recurring The Original portraits series, the *T* Well-opening page. For many years, I resisted pressure to change the cover format, to abandon the big celebrity face we were known for, to try a new photographer and a different styling team. I think the idea of continuous innovation, experimentation, exclusivity and the need to be first is overrated — unless you work in a very niche magazine and that is your mission. For *T* and for most of the magazines that I admire, the holy grail is to be "on time," in sync with the cultural moment and your audience, to feature ideas and people not too early and not too late. I always told my staff that it was more important to have the definitive, memorable interview with a celebrity or a designer than to rush to publish an exclusive story that is too superficial or of poor quality. Similarly, in fashion, we always wanted to show the creativity of new designers and the upcoming trends, but also to serve our readers by showing what was available right now in a shop in their hometown, by more established designers. The mission of *T* magazine was to stimulate curiosity but also to deliver substance.

Even if we did not have the glossy paper of the European publications or appear at the newsstand with a regular frequency, photographers began to appreciate the quality of *T.* They also loved the opportunity to create smart stories for a mature audience, presented within a larger context of art and culture.

After establishing a tradition, we could then start to experiment and take more risks with writers and photographers, pushing the limits of a *New York Times* publication. My staff grew and changed. New ideas were flooding into the new Renzo Piano-designed offices of *The New York Times*, where we had all moved from the decaying 42nd Street building that still had the printing press in the basement. For the Fall 2009 Fashion issue we created multiple covers featuring the actress Carey Mulligan, each one inspired and styled by a different designer (Fig.12). For the Holidays a full issue was dedicated to The Originals portraits series; in collaboration with the Sunday magazine, we started *The Best Performances* issue, with a star-studded party in Los Angeles during the Golden Globes. It was a lot of innovation for an old gray lady, as *The Times* was called!

When I was asked to establish a digital identity for *T*, I felt the need to make the print experience even more unique, more valuable, almost collectable. This is something that I think, today more than ever, is a key factor to the survival of print magazines.

Figure 12: *T The New York Times Style Magazine* Women's Fashion Fall 2009 Carey Mulligan (Left) by Stefano Pilati for YSL and (Right) for Miuccia Prada photographed by Raymond Mayer

Evolution or Departure

The financial and editorial success of *T* Magazine soon became its enemy, in my opinion. While it was finally celebrated in the industry as a real magazine and even won highly competitive ASME (American Society of Magazine Editors) and SPD (Society of Publication Designers) awards year after year, it also became more and more isolated from *The Times* and its core interests. *T* was viewed inside the company as a good business, a cash cow, where the laws of Profit and Loss were applied with no regard to a publishing calendar or an editorial commitment. When *The New York Times Magazine* decided to change its format and eliminate the Style pages, it was like cutting the umbilical cord between the two publications. *T* became almost the competition to the Style pages and other sections of the paper, and the spirit of collaboration that had created it disappeared. When I started *T*, I always envisioned it as an extension of the Sunday magazine. Now *T* was much larger in size and content, much thicker and more successful, than its mothership. This pushed the two farther apart; the magazine became more serious and word-heavy, while *T* was even more image-driven and provocative.

I came to a conclusion, and I went to the leadership of *The Time*s with a radical proposal: to invest in the idea of a weekly magazine in which politics, education, and culture would mingle with fashion and art and design, collapsing *T* and the Sunday magazine into one beautiful, large-format, weekly publication. The market was completely open, and there was no weekly magazine in the world that could compete with a *T* magazine combined with the Sunday magazine, with a guaranteed distribution tied to the most powerful weekend paper. The idea did not fly, and I was disappointed by *The Times*' inability to foresee what could have been a big success. When I look at *M*, the successful weekly from *Le Monde*, I always think of what *T* could have evolved into, instead of setting into a superficially intellectual style supplement that today has also lost its visual identity. I am not sure if now, in the golden age of digital publishing, such an idea would still be viable. But ten years ago, it was a real missed opportunity.

Magazines are living creatures. They need to keep moving, change and evolve, or they dry up and shrivel, like fruits on a tree. If they stay still, the world will move on around them. Many of the best *T* editors were taking new jobs, and I was proud that I could count four of my senior staffers leading national

magazines. But I had lost my belief in the mission of the magazine, so I too started looking for other challenges. When in 2010 Condé Nast offered me the Editor in Chief role at *W* Magazine, I did not doubt a minute going down the alphabet, from *T* to *W*. (I clearly had no clue of what was waiting for me, or perhaps I would have thought twice. But that is a story for another case study.) A new chapter in publishing history was opening up in front of me, and I embraced the change.

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He is an award-winning editor, author, curator, and public speaker specializing in contemporary culture and the future of fashion.
Tonchi was Editor in Chief of W; creator and Editor in Chief of *T: The New York Times Style Magazine*; Fashion Creative Director for *Esquire* and *L'Uomo Vogue*; and Contributing Global Chief Creative Officer for *L'OFFICIEL*. He is currently Editorial Director for the Palm Springs-based media brand PALMER.
Tonchi has co-curated many exhibitions, including *Italiana: Italy Through the Lens of Fashion, 1971–2001* and *Bellissima: Italy and High Fashion 1945–1968*. His books include *Uniform: Order and Disorder*; *Excess: Fashion and the Underground in the '80s*; *W: The First 40 Years*; and *L'Officiel 100: One Hundred People and Ideas from a Century of Fashion*.
Tonchi has served as guest lecturer at Parsons and Columbia University. He sits on the Board of the International Center of Photography.