

– Where did the idea for the magazine come from?

In first there was the idea to realize a photography project with a few friends who all had red hair. After a few weeks I interviewed and photographed a few more people and got a few interesting points of view on this topic. Out of interest I looked into how much it would cost to print a few private copies of this collected work as a small magazine for the people who've been part of this project. It turned out that the print costs for 20 easy printed copies was very close to 500 copies in offset print, so I decided to start a crowdfunding campaign to see whether anyone else would be interested in reading something like this and there have been enough preorders to realize the idea.

– Tell me a bit about yourself. Age, hometown. Do you have red hair?

I'm 31 years old, resident in Hamburg, Germany and have red hair. I'm a student for lighting design and colorimetry and interested in photography and art.

– What is the meaning of MC1R?

The official name is "Melanocortin 1 Receptor". MC1R is one of the key proteins in regulating pigment production in human hair and skin. This comes in many variants and some of them lead to red hair. So this is why it's often called „the red hair gene“.

– How many magazines are printed? How many are sold? Is it a success (artistic/commercial)?

From the 5th issue on MC1R has a circulation of 4000 copies. Altogether we've passed the mark of 10.000 sold copies of all print issues together over 2 years!

– Why did you start publishing it in English?

As you see, I didn't list Germany in one of the countries where the people buy the magazine that much. The first issue was in German and the project is based in Germany but it wasn't that „big success“ to sell it over here. I got a lot of contact to people from other countries which asked when I'll translate the magazine in English or if there will be future issues in English. I had a chat with Malte Brenneisen and Kai Brach about international concepts and I tried this step into the other language. It turned out to be the best decision until now.

– What's so special about redheads?

I think as a redhead myself, it would be cooler to answer that nothing is special and redheads are normal like every black, white, asian and hispanic looking person too, but that would be too easy and is a wishful thinking. Redheads are one of the smallest minorities all over the world and they have this special look almost every people see or react on. It is natural and in different cultures the people react on way you look, so if you are white with freckles and bright red hair, you may polarize in first. I don't try to put a focus on discrimination or something like that, I think that was told enough with a lot of past projects people made. There are a lot of things redheads have in common, for example the special way how people use the hair in art and often redheads have this special kind of connection to this topic, so there is this special vibe I try to catch and reflect with this project

– When I told my colleagues there was a magazine about gingers, the reaction was... why? What do they talk about?

This is one of the reasons why there is room for a magazine concept about the culture around red hair. The people don't know what kind of art, events, photography, illustrations and interesting stories there are out there in the world. There is a big network with a lot of content. For example: the first issue of my magazine had 36 pages and everybody asked what content I can bring in the second issue, a few people said the concept could be over and finished with this one magazine. Then I realized the second issue with 100 pages and the people were excited about the content and liked it. Now the next issue, which will be released in October, has 160 pages planned and for myself, I love the stories, the art, the projects and events or interviews and everything else in it. The quality is the same or a bit higher and it's a big honour for me to work with all this great artists since the second issue.

– How do you seek out stories or subjects? What inspires you?

Since the second issue I have 3 different ways to seek out stories and subjects:

1. I contact the artist which I'd really love to feature especially for the magazine.
2. I receive a submission by the artist him/herself.
3. Someone recommend me stories, people or subjects they saw on blogs, news or Facebook and I try to feature/connect the artist.

– What have you learned or discovered about redhead culture and its diversity?

A lot! I discovered that a big network for, about and with redheads is coming up around the world and I am part of this movement now. The people connect more at festivals or with different kind of projects around the world and they share the experience they made with a lot of other people. It's a big positive hype right now and it's cool for almost every redhead to see most of it on the media and everywhere else. There are still a few redheads who don't like the hype I think, maybe because they get attention they don't want or never had before, but it's still a really good thing and I think: If you can create something positive, it's always good because if someone else in some place over the world has problems with the way he looks, maybe this will give him some foothold, help or strength. I know that people say, the artists or redheads themselves use paradox methods because they reduce a topic on the hair itself, but if people get identified with the way they look, and humans always naturally react on about how other people look, they can choose the way to control it themselves and create this good feeling for everyone who is a part of the culture.

– What kind of discrimination do redheads face?

I think it's the discrimination every minority has to handle. If you are in a cultural area where you may polarize by looking different, there could be every type of discrimination you can imagine. The problem is: there is no sensitivity that people with red hair could have problems with „looking different“, too.

– You've said that the digital version of MC1R's first issue will be its only one. Why are you doing away with digital?

I like the idea of getting away from digital media – sometimes I feel like it can take over your life. You can get totally lost in this digital world! I like the traditional feel of a print magazine; it's a wonderful piece of art that you can collect and absorb yourself in. And as a publisher, it's something you can grow with. You see the mistakes you make and learn how to improve with every issue. In the end, I want to create a high-end, professional magazine with fantastic stories and unique content.