

# The state of Flux

How an art experiment turned into a creative resource for business

Art center? Happening factory? Brand incubator? The concept behind Flux Lab is as fluid as its name implies. "The idea is to bring the world of business together with the world of art and the world of philanthropy in a cultural place," says **Flux founder and Artistic Director, Cynthia Odier**. "How can we best create this link and make it most effective?"

From the shell of a 19<sup>th</sup> century match-factory in Geneva's picturesque Carouge neighborhood, Cynthia Odier has created an open-ended space that has become a source of inspiration for a number of global brands based in Geneva. Flux serves business in three principal ways. First, it is a good place to launch new projects or products. "Journalists like to come here," says Ms. Odier. "We might plan an event around a company's brand, for example a dance performance linked to a product or the flavours of a dinner connected to a new perfume." Second, Flux offers a creative environment outside the corporate structure for brainstorming or preparation. Third, Flux offers a relaxed, artistic setting for receiving special guests for a meeting and dinner. Contemporary art is the unifying factor between all the rooms.

To fulfil its clients' needs, Flux employs a wide network of local artists and artisans: dancers, cooks, sound and light technicians, builders, photographers, costume-designers, filmmakers...

## 'Business knows it needs the art world'

A former ballet dancer, Cynthia Odier is an artist with a keen understanding of business needs and the real payoffs of communication. "Business knows it needs the art world," she says. "Art is communication. It offers the ideal solution for getting a message across." ■

# Get ahead of the change

LIFT Lab taps the diversity of LIFT'S unique community

"The Internet offers so many incredible possibilities, it would be a shame to limit it to communication alone," says **Nicolas Nova, co-founder of LIFT and the LIFT Lab**. "Co-creation through the Internet offers an incredible new resource for innovation."

Since its beginnings, five years ago in Geneva, as a conference about new technology, LIFT has made its name exploring the effect new technology is having on business and society, adding conferences in Seoul, Marseilles and Lyon along the way. Nicolas Nova, a specialist in user experience and interaction design, is in charge of creating each conference's program. "The LIFT community has become a network of over 7000 experts and early adopters for discussing the social implications of digital technologies," he explains.

To put these insights to best use LIFT created LIFT Lab, "to research the integration of digital technology, how it is changing products and the way companies communicate with their clients and consumers," Mr Nova explains.

One specialty is game mechanics, looking at, for example, how the external awards and incentives of the gaming world could apply to education. "It's amazing the knowledge kids build in gaming - like learning all the names and characteristics of Pokemon characters. Companies are interested in same process, of course," says Nicolas Nova.

Although LIFT began in Geneva simply because the founders Nicolas Nova and Laurent Haug were based here, the company has discovered that the Lake Geneva Region is a natural microcosm for exploring how a product or method will play globally. "Geneva is so international that we can pull together a test panel of people from anywhere in the world," says Mr Nova. ■



# In Geneva

## The Hallmark of Geneva celebrates 125 years

### Setting the standard in fine watches

The world of fine watches has a philosophy - and the Hallmark of Geneva, the Canton's own coat of arms, is its insignia. For 125 years, only those watches made in Geneva (i.e., mechanical movement, assembly and regulation in the Canton of Geneva) and meeting 12 stringent criteria, have received the stamp that shows they are among the best timepieces in the world.

"It was Geneva law that established the Hallmark in 1886," explains **Daniel Favre, President of the Foundation Council of the Geneva Laboratory of Horology and Microengineering and Director of the CFPT (Centre for Technical Professional Training)**. "It is a symbol of quality and authenticity."

In 2009, the Geneva government reinforced the Hallmark's authority by creating TIMELAB, the Geneva Laboratory of Horology and Microengineering. TIMELAB brings together the Hallmark of Geneva and the local certification activities of COSC, the Swiss Official Chronometer Testing Institute that awards the title of chronometer, based on the ISO 3159 standard. TIMELAB also provides an essential link between the watch industry and the professional training centres, colleges, higher specialized schools and universities that are training and maintaining local expertise in fine watch-making.

TIMELAB's Research and Development center, which provides, first, advice, testing and development and, second, a metrological service, reflects the growing role of microengineering in fine watch-making today. For change is part of the Hallmark's long tradition.

"Over the 125 years of its existence, the Hallmark has constantly evolved in tune with new materials and methods," explains **Patrick Jaton, Director of TIMELAB**. ■

