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“I have always studied with printed books”

I know that the graphic arts industry is a male bastion. But I’ve never given this much thought and am confident that I’ll make my way into the working world as a printing technologist.

I have no connection to the graphic arts industry in my family. But I’ve always been more interested in technology than in housekeeping. This is probably due to my genes, as my father is a car mechanic. So in the first grade – unlike other girls – I didn’t have any flowers or cartoon characters on my school bag, but a [VW Beetle](#).

The vocational school teacher as guide

The fact that years later, after doing my secondary education diploma and a three-year apprenticeship as a media designer, I then also went on to university is thanks to my vocational school teacher. He motivated me to study printing and media technology – and I didn’t give a thought to any other field of study. And so, within a year I got my university entrance qualification and then enrolled at the Stuttgart [Media University](#).

During my studies, I dealt with the complete range of graphics – from pre-press to all conventional printing processes, digital printing, finishing and a wide range materials, as well as physics, chemistry, electrical engineering and mechatronics. It’s an extremely broad-based degree, which is very demanding, but I really enjoy it.

Actually, I should say “enjoyed.” Because I have actually taken all the necessary courses and successfully passed all the examinations. Now I “only” have to hand in my bachelor thesis to

call myself a Bachelor of Engineering in the future. At the moment, I'm in the final stages of writing my thesis, which I have to submit to my professor by March 2020.

A scholarship for special talent – and social commitment

Being able to focus even better on studying in the last two semesters is thanks to the [Germany Scholarship](#), that I received in the summer of 2018. This has been awarded since 2011 and is half financed by private sponsors, including companies, individuals or foundations, and half by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research. The scholarships are awarded to particularly talented and high-performing students, who also stand out because of their social and community involvement.

I was, of course, delighted about getting the scholarship, as it allowed me to reduce my part-time jobs and focus more on university. In order to finance my studies, I've worked at times delivering mail, as a media designer, in marketing and at an interior design company.

Always an end product in your hands

The fact that the graphics industry has seen better days, is no longer deemed to be a boom industry and is therefore not considered particularly attractive, especially by the younger generation, never interested me. I am simply fascinated – “touched” in the double sense of the word – by the fact that you can always hold an end product in your hands in this industry.

I also find it exciting to accompany the entire production process of a print product from an idea to its delivery. I can't imagine that one day books will no longer exist. And I myself only used printed editions and books for my studies during my entire time at the university.

Lost my heart to package printing

However, my bachelor's thesis is not about books, but about package printing – and specifically ink reduction in corrugated direct printing. In keeping with this topic, I did an internship in a packaging company with gravure printing machines for a semester. That's where I gained first experience in process optimization, project management and color management. Furthermore, I was involved in the commissioning of a gravure printing machine.

I also see my professional future in packaging printing, which is the only segment in the printing industry that is still growing and which fascinates me because of its various interesting facets (to exaggerate a little, you could say I'd lost my heart to gravure printing). Whether in the areas of process optimization, customer service or communication support between graphic designers and production, my clear goal is to occupy a management position in a production company one day.

I'm well aware that the graphics industry is a male domain and that there are only a few women in management positions. But that doesn't worry me. Because I consider myself to be very determined, have the necessary ambition, am highly motivated, love challenges and am therefore confident that I'll make my way in the professional world. I haven't yet put out my feelers for any specific positions, and I may have to look around until I find the right one, but I know that printing technologists are in demand.

The third drupa in sight

After 2012 and 2016, it's therefore well possible that I'll be attending my third drupa next June as a representative of a print company rather than as a trainee or student. I can still remember my visit with some fellow students four years ago to the [Muller Martini stand](#), which, in my opinion, was very clearly laid out.

With its versatile product range presented under the Finishing 4.0 motto, Muller Martini 2016

was heading in exactly the direction which print is moving in: customized, personalized print products that stand out in the market and address readers more directly while also making them more interesting for advertisers. That is exactly how I believe print should be: attractive and able to stand up to electronic media.

Three years later, Muller Martini went practically full circle for me. One of the machines on show in Düsseldorf in 2016, the Vareo perfect binder, was installed at the Stuttgart [Media University](#) last summer. This was a stroke of luck for me and my fellow students. As part of a semester project, we took a critical look at the issue of waste and produced a fully variable softcover book entitled “fræsh”, which was printed on an HP Indigo and produced on the Vareo. The pictures and associated slogans alternate on each page. This made each of the 400 books unique – variable data printing in its purest form.

Your

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