

RETRO
SPECT
TIVE

WORKS BY MAX CIRKA

INTRODUCTION

It began with an interview I had with the former head of the marketing department who was impressed that I was the only one who took written notes during our talk, followed by a conversation I had with the man himself, Vic Marks. He asked me at the time what my favorite font was and I told him Futura. When he asked me who designed it I admittedly told him that I didn't know. I would later learn that Futura was the font used for Paper-Oh, a sub-brand of H&M.

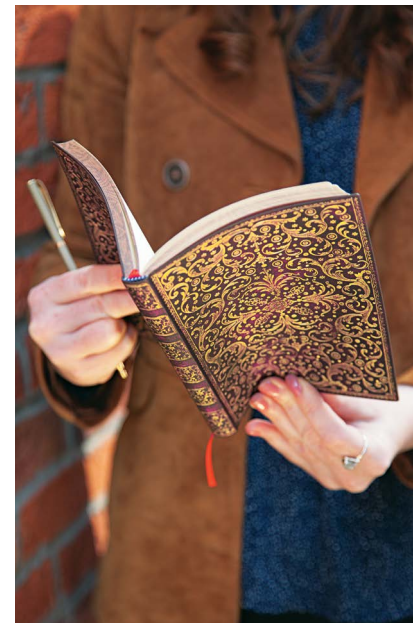
Over the last five years I have been lucky enough to wear so many hats and dip my toes in a lot of different pools of creativity at Hartley and Marks. The following retrospective outlines my abilities in a wide range of areas that include brand identity, colour theory, packaging, product development, lifestyle and product photography, display, poster and website design. Full disclosure, some of this work was a team effort so I've included **NOTES** that will better explain my involvement on each specific project.



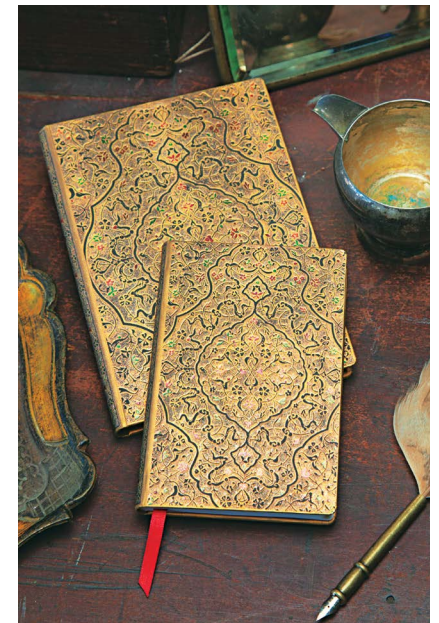
Front Cover: *Gold Inlay Collection*, 2016
Credit: Lifestyle Photography

NOTES:

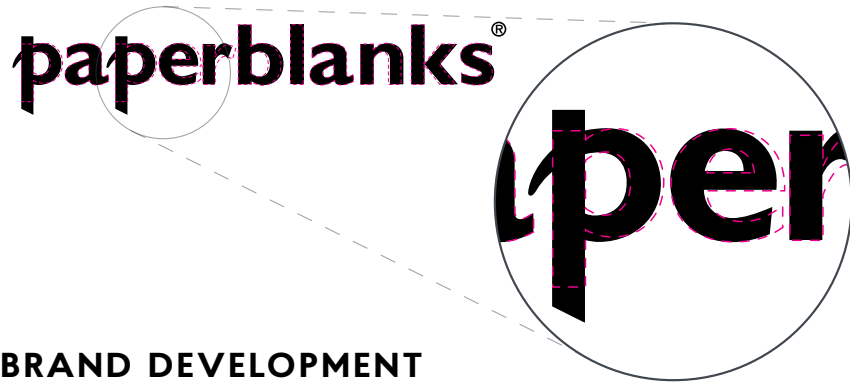
This photo was my first introduction into lifestyle photography and was featured in the annual catalogue along with a handful of other shots. It was taken on my back porch and features antiques my wife and I have collected, like the old Kodak 35mm camera, and personal items like my wedding ring. I think it's good practice to include a narrative when taking lifestyle shots and to always make the products look as natural as possible in the setting they are in.



Aurelia Flexi with Model, 2019
Credit: Lifestyle Photography



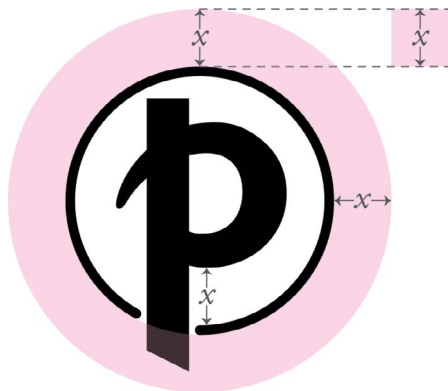
Arabic Artistry, 2019
Credit: Lifestyle Photography



BRAND DEVELOPMENT

Perhaps the most important work that I got to do at Hartley & Marks was the branding overhaul for Paperblanks. I had the privilege of working with such a closely-nit group of creative individuals and it gave me incredible insight into what goes into brand, from mission statement and buyer personas to logo design and colour palette. Every decision made was backed by research. At the end, we had a fully-formed brand with vision and purpose.

As a part of the branding project I was tasked with designing a new logo and icon. The change was simple, yet effective. For the logo, the descenders of both 'p's were extended down in the shapes of two ribbon markers to represent the way they hang down in the bottoms of our journals. For the icon, the single 'p' was then isolated and encircled with a line in which the descender is breaking out of at the bottom. This can be viewed symbolically as "thinking outside of the box," something that many individuals have to do (creative and otherwise) if they want to break out of the mundane or find creative solutions to today's problems.



COLOUR THEORY AND PACKAGING

As a part of the re-branding I was tasked with improving the design of our existing packaging. The labels in question had been previously treated with very bright colours that clashed with the beautiful journal designs they were applied to. It was my task to develop a packaging label that worked harmoniously with the product in all aspects.

During a visit to a showroom in Seattle I took note of the look and feel for various products - particularly a line of scented candles that used colour in their packaging to invoke a sensory response to a place in time and space. I returned to Vancouver with a renewed perspective on branding and decided to apply it to the new label designs. The result was a much more design-conscious colour selection; a mix of pastel tones, lavish purples and pinks, topped with the signature gold that mirrors the foil used in a wide variety of Paperblanks journals.

Below is a colour wheel that I developed showing the wide variety of journal designs and how the Gold and core neutral colours compliment them:



It was my responsibility to design to a new size of label that would provide enough information to the customer without taking up too much space on the journal. Our branded colour palette would be applied to specific products and loosely follow the brighter colours that had previously been applied to the packaging. This was a decision based on our customer's familiarity with our existing packaging in order to maintain some brand consistency.



Apricot Bliss
PANTONE 7591 CP
C=17 M=54 Y=68 K=0
R=192 G=125 B=89
HEX: C07D59

Frosted Sage
PANTONE 5625 CP
C=46 M=18 Y=44 K=37
R=112 G=133 B=115
HEX: 708573

Paperblanks Gold
PANTONE 4525 CP
C=9 M=12 Y=47 K=18
R=197 G=183 B=131
HEX: C5B783

Above, Left: Labels for Softcover, Address Books and Hardcover Journals
Above, Right: Colours and pantones for packaging
Credit: Package Design

NOTES:

It was important that the colour appear on both the front and spine of the journal so that the customer can differentiate the product type. The wonderful names of the colours are courtesy of the Marketing team's Copywriter.



paperblanks®

Canvas Bags

PAPERBLANKS.COM



Poster: *Canvas Bags*, 2020
Credit: Poster and Product Design

NOTES:

Original photograph is a stock photo, the bag has been modified to showcase the *Early Cartography* design that was chosen for the collection.

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

I had initially joined up with the Product Development team as more of a consultant role on design choices for upcoming products but that role naturally evolved into package design along with the design of the products themselves, in particular the canvas bags and bookmarks.



FRONT

BACK

Canvas Bags, *Verne, Around the World*, 2019
Credit: Product and Packaging Design

NOTES:

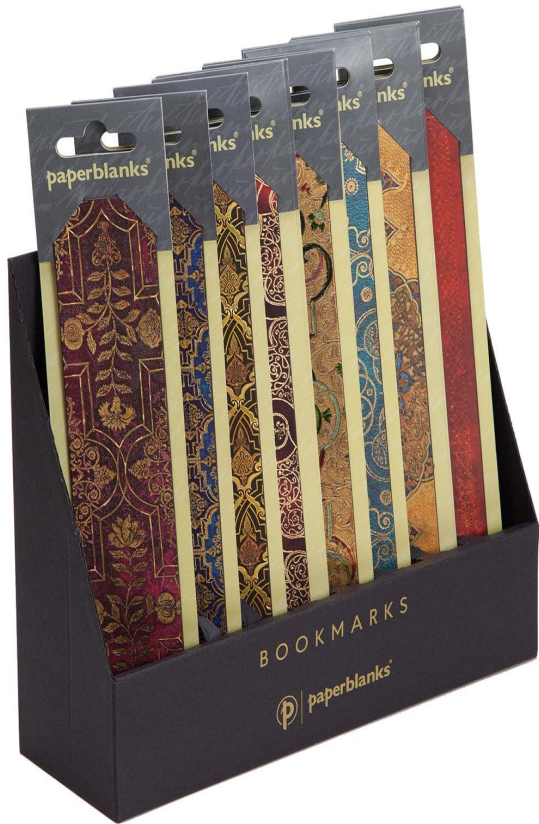
The canvas bags mark a pivotal moment for Paperblanks as they brought the brand into the world of fashion. The journals themselves are seen as functional art and with the advent of the canvas bags, Paperblanks designs can now become wearable works of art.

For certain designs like those of the *Embellished Manuscripts Collection*, I made the conscious decision to isolate the handwritten draft on the back of the bag vs. the journal version that has the script integrated into the design. I was also involved with the design on fabric pocket that hangs of the inside and the packaging tag that hangs off the handle.

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

On the right and are examples of the front and back of the packaging that I designed for the first line of Paperblanks bookmarks. The packaging is a simple, yet effective design; a piece of semi-gloss material that is folded over at the top to provide extra support for the hanger.

Below is the box for shipping that doubles as an in-store display for the ease of the retailer, it can fit a total of 24 bookmarks.



NOTES:

We worked closely with our supplier to achieve a display that could effectively show an entire collection in a way where all bookmarks could be visible, face-out.



Above are examples of the packaging that I designed for our first line of Magnetic Pen Loops. The front of the package features an image of a pen to give context to the product, and a sketch I did of what the pen loop looks like when placed in a journal.

NOTES:

The combination of Dark Grey and Gold gave an elegant touch to the Stationery Accessory line. When possible I always try to push for the Gold Metallic foil for displays and other point of sale items. We were fortunate enough to be able to include in on the Magnetic Pen Loop Display seen below:



Paperblanks Gold Metallic
PANTONE 16-0836 TPG

Paperblanks Gold
PANTONE 4525 CP
C=9 M=12 Y=47 K=18
R=197 G=183 B=131
HEX: C5B783

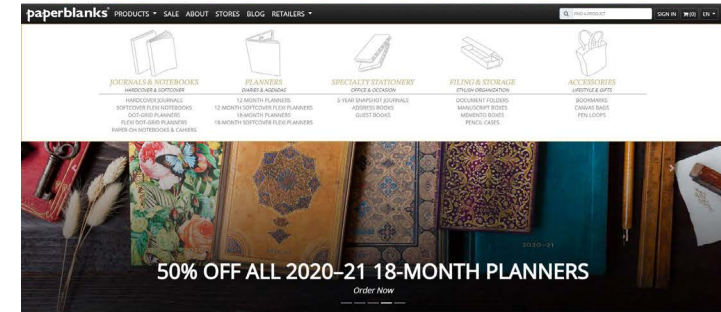
Dark Grey
PANTONE 7540 CP
C=41 M=28 Y=22 K=70
R=75 G=79 B=84
HEX: 4B4F54

WEB DESIGN: PAPERBLANKS WEBSITE

One of the first projects I was brought into when I started at H&M back in 2015 was the development of a new website. I worked closely with a site architect to help dress the site up with beautiful lifestyle photos and interactive graphics. It was also important that the website function as an on-line store and I worked closely with the web developers to ensure that we provide a good experience to the customer from a UX perspective.

On the right is an example of the home page which features navigation and icons that I designed and lifestyle photography which I took. Below is an example of the Product Page that features product photography which I have been involved with. I was professionally trained by a great product photographer who showed me how to take product photos like the ones featured below.

Please take the time to visit paperblanks.com to get a full appreciation for my work and enjoy some of the beautiful products that Paperblanks has to offer.



HARDCOVER JOURNALS



BUTTERFLY GARDEN

Item no. 9781439754498
Nature Montages
\$20.95

Tiptoe through the tulips with us as we discover Gary Grayson's vibrantly detailed world in this cover design. Grayson's distinctive style is an eclectic mix of vintage vector, impressionism and pop art - all combined in rich layers. May his boundless creativity so inspire your own imagination.

PRODUCT SPECIFICATIONS

Choose your favourite features:

Midi - Lined - Elastic Band - 144p - 120GSM

Quantity:

Available Stock: 50+

1

Add to Cart

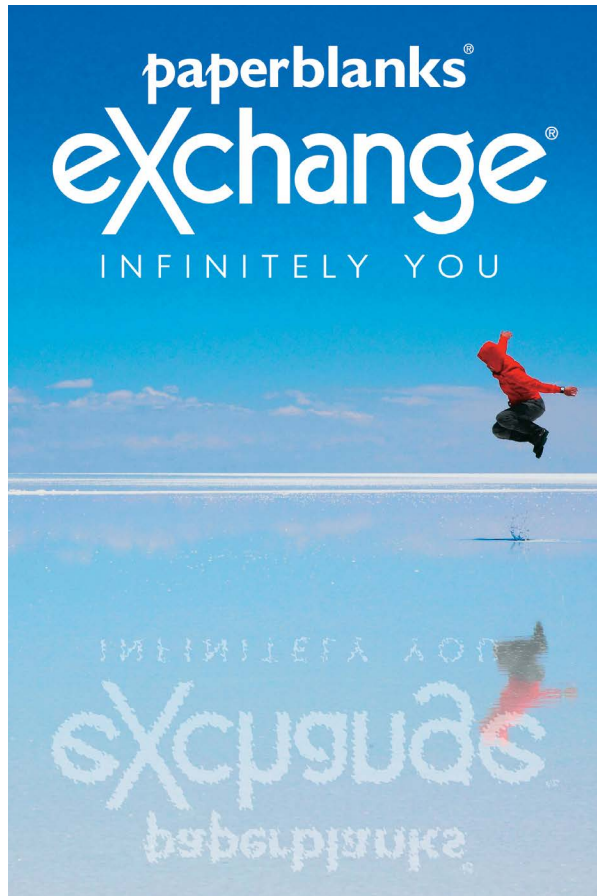


Example Only

MORE BRANDS:

EXCHANGE + AND PAPER-OH

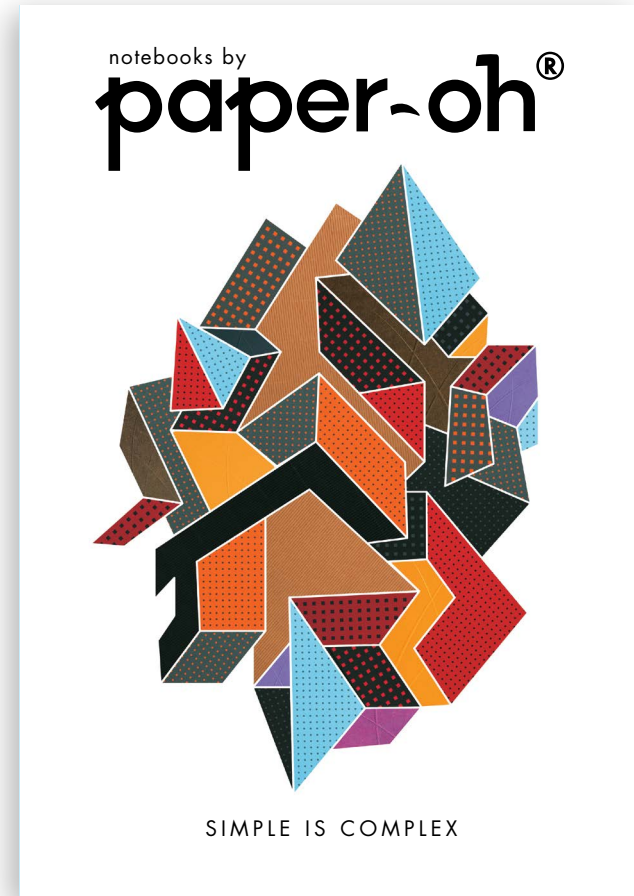
eXchange and Paper-Oh are sub-brands of Paperblanks, under the umbrella of Hartley & Marks. The following pages are a brief look at my involvement with the two brands.



Paperblanks eXchange Infinitely You, 2018
Credit: Brand Development, Logo Design, Digital Manipulation

NOTES:

The base of this image is the stock photo of the guy jumping in the air, my boss fell in love with this image and we ended up using it for the *Visual Representation* spread in the Brand Manual and it is featured on the **home page of the eXchange website**.



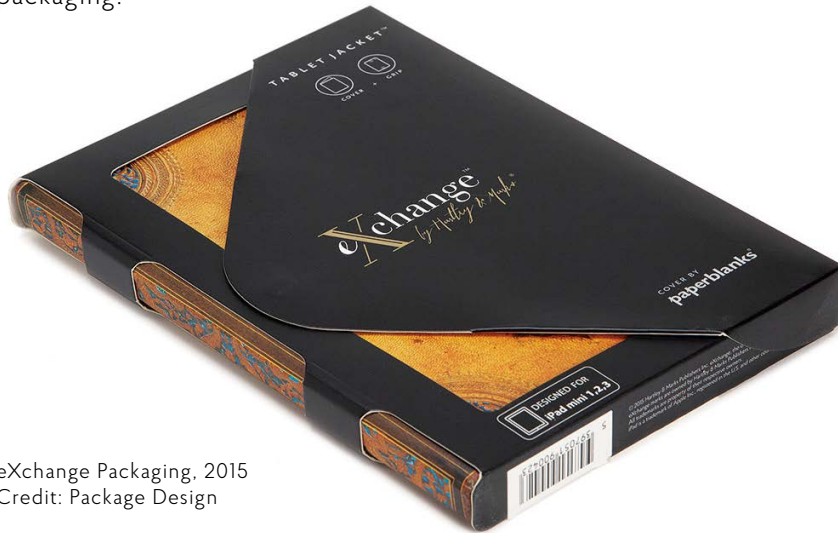
Double Sided Brochure: *Simple is Complex*, 2015
Credit: Brochure Point of Sale Design and Artwork

NOTES:

I had been playing around with these impossible shapes for a while and began doodling them during meetings. I decided to utilize one in a sort of collage that mimicked the paradoxical phrase "Simple is Complex", a popular slogan that was being thrown around at the time.

EXCHANGE TABLET CASES

The eXchange Tablet Case was a product with the goal of bringing the beautiful designs of our journals to the tech world in the form of a tablet case, exclusively for Apple iPads. It was my first foray into the world of package design and it was definitely a crash-course in die-line creation, branding and the mass-production of products and packaging.



eXchange Packaging, 2015
Credit: Package Design

NOTES:

Like our journals, it was important that a good amount of the product be exposed to the customer so that they could not only see but feel the texture.



Protective Icons, eXchange Packaging 2015
Credit: Icon Design

NOTES:

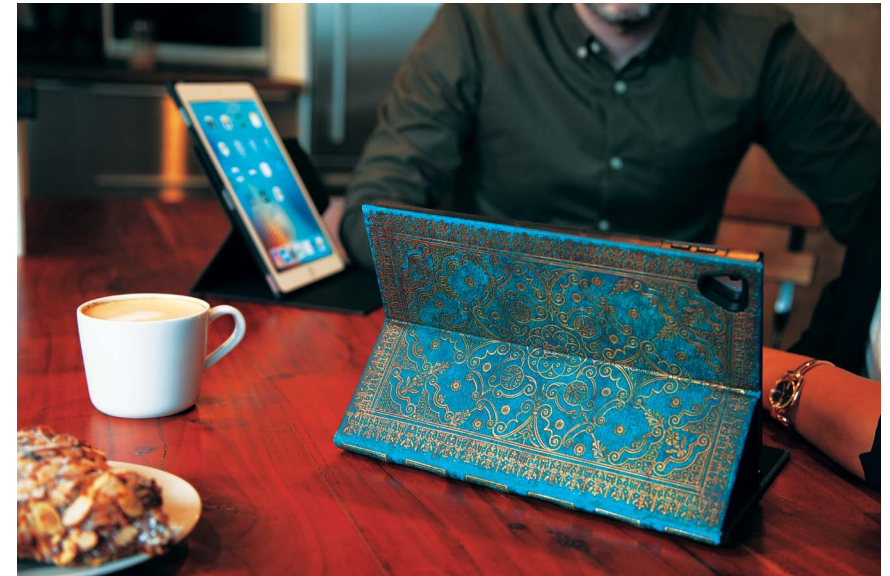
Three icons were developed to better illustrate the way in which the eXchange Tablet Case could protect your iPad. They are also featured in the *Protect Your Tech in Style* section of the website: exchangebyhm.com/pages/about-what-makes-us-different



Paperblanks eXchange Logo with Slogan, 2019 Brand Manual
Credit: Logo Design

NOTES:

The Paperblanks eXchange logo redesign ran parallel to the Paperblanks branding project. The goal was to make the eXchange brand appeal to a younger, more tech-savvy audience. The new logo is a much more simplified version compared to the older two-tone serif version, using a modern Virginia Neo font and a single tone of dark grey. If you get the chance, please visit exchangebyhm.com to see the logo in action.



eXchange Azure iPad Pro, 2018
Credit: Lifestyle Photography

NOTES:

During a visit from our Dublin team, we made the decision to host a lifestyle shoot in a rented room in Vancouver. I don't get to do a whole lot of shooting with models but this experience was enjoyable and definitely loosened me up to the idea of doing more. I was being formally trained, so it was great being able to apply my knowledge of f-stops and aperture to find the right depth of field and lighting.

PAPER-OH NOTEBOOKS

One of the main reasons I was hired at Hartley and Marks was my ability to create an effective poster design. After years of designing posters for local bands and events, it was my privilege to generate several posters for the Paper-Oh brand. As I mentioned in the introduction, Futura was my favorite font so the designs came naturally to me.



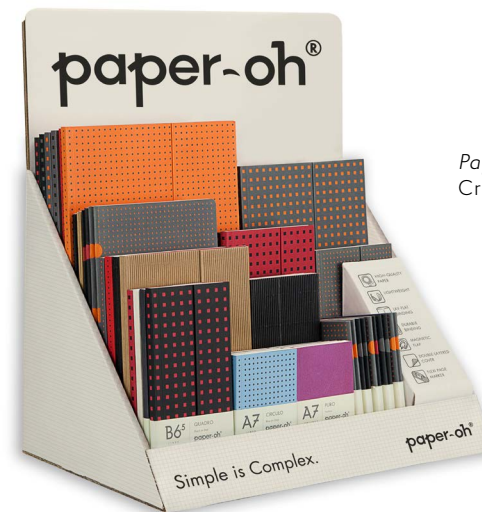
Paper-Oh Poster, 2015
Credit: Poster Design



Paper-Oh Features and Benefits Icons, 2015
Credit: Icon Illustration and Design

NOTES:

It was a genuine pleasure to design these icons. Something about reducing the features of the Paper-Oh notebook to a simple image that can be easily digested is a great exercise as a designer. These icons are featured on the Corrugated Display (below) and on the Paper-Oh website, paper-oh.com.



Paper-Oh Corrugated Display, 2016
Credit: Display and Icon Design



Thank you for taking the time to view my retrospective. If you care to see more of my branding, poster and art work please visit my **website**.



CONTACT INFO:

Max Cirka

PHONE: 604 780 3640

EMAIL: maxcirka@gmail.com

WEBSITE: cirkadesign.com