

For Release 22 April 2014

G.F Smith unveils a new visual identity and the publication of ‘Portrait of a Company’, a specially commissioned book that celebrates the history, heritage and pioneering spirit of the brand.

A new identity and another milestone in G.F Smith's rich history

The unveiling of a new visual identity and design direction for G.F Smith marks another milestone in the history of the company. The scope of work, spanning print and digital communications, is intended to better reflect the legacy, stature and future ambitions of the company.

Along with a new typeface, the identity includes two new marks: a mark of custodianship, and a mark that acknowledges G.F Smith's current role as curators of its remarkable paper Collection, the craft that lies behind their services, and the people at the heart of the company.

Alongside the identity, and celebrating their heritage, pioneering spirit and passion for paper, we are proud to announce the publication of 'Portrait of a Company', the most detailed history of the company that has been published to date. It includes archive material, much of it seen here for the first time. From 1885 to the present day, 'Portrait of a Company' describes the story of an independent British company that has withstood significant challenges and come through them stronger. Printed on 18 of the papers found in G.F Smith's Collection, it is a demonstration not just of a pride in the company, but of a continued fascination with paper.

It serves as a timely reminder that in the midst of the digital revolution, the tangibility of paper is still a vital part in the designer's craft and the reader's perception of a brand's printed communications.

‘Portrait of a Company’ is divided into three chapters: Our Story, Our People and Our Work

‘Our Story’ presents a narrative history of the company and is illustrated by materials taken direct from the company archive with letters, ephemera and sample books from as far back as 1890 right up until the present day. Presenting the rich stories and background to the characters that built the company, it’s a comprehensive account of G.F Smith’s origins and continued growth.

‘Our People’ is dedicated to the people of the company today. Illustrated with a series of specially commissioned portraits, members of the team share personal anecdotes about their connection with the company.

Finally, ‘Our Work’ talks about the company in a more pragmatic way, outlining its values and ambitions and the way these connect from today right back to 1885. It also describes the services for which G.F Smith has become respected and admired in the creative industries.

Along with a history of the company, the new book ‘Portrait of a Company’ contains the following sections.

G . F SMITH

1885 ONWARDS

A Founding Legacy

George Frederick Smith founded the company after years as a commercial traveller, during which he developed his love for paper and a fierce entrepreneurial spirit. With his son Thomas Brooks Smith by his side (Thomas was to make a pioneering visit to America in search of paper – see Footnote 1) George set up offices in London and Hull.

George Frederick Smith mirrored the spirit of his age, and left an indelible imprint on the way that we act and behave as a company today, built on three key factors that we adhere to, to this day. G.F Smith is a company built on remarkable people, long lasting and loyal relationships and a desire to search out and bring the very best to the marketplace. These three factors define G.F Smith's success.

Footnote 1

A visit to Strathmore Paper Mill in 1899

Thomas Brooks Smith travels by boat to North America in an attempt to source papers from the Strathmore Paper Mill. Thomas finds it almost impossible to meet with the mill's founder, Horace Moses, and decides to visit him at home, unannounced, on a Saturday. The visit is not going well, that is until Mrs Moses arrives at the house in a state of panic. The organist due to play at church that day has been taken ill. Thomas, an accomplished pianist, steps in. The Moses family are so impressed with the impromptu recital that they have Thomas's luggage brought from the local hotel and insist he spends the rest of his stay as their house guest.

Quite apart from earning the respect of Moses, Thomas's offer of help is the catalyst to a lasting partnership between the two companies. In 1900, G.F Smith becomes the exclusive merchant for Strathmore throughout Britain and mainland Europe.

Footnote 2

A company built on remarkable people

In 1914, as the First World War rages, all of the Strathmore stocks held by G.F Smith's agents in mainland Europe are either impounded or destroyed. As a result, the company falls into debt with Strathmore, still the owner of all the paper that has been lost. Yet despite the impact of the war, Strathmore Paper Mill is confident enough in the ability of G.F Smith to recover that it takes ownership of the company and writes off the debt.

Mr Thomlinson – who joined the company as a young man in 1905 and who would later become a director serving a total of 53 years with the company is the one to travel to West Springfield, Massachusetts (via New York) to agree the deal.

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George Frederick Smith
1885

Footnote 3

A company built on relationships

In 1926, the company starts trading with Scottish paper mill Robert Craig & Son, specialists in the production of coloured and embossed papers and boards at their mill in Airdrie. They produce a series of ranges exclusively for G.F Smith, using reel and sheet fed embossing machines to enhance the product. The first of these exclusive ranges is launched under the name 'Caslon Covers' and includes ten colours in both paper and board weights, supplied in Antique, Linen and Ripple embossed textures. Craig's continue to be G.F Smith's principle supplier of cover paper and boards until the mill's closure in 1972.

In 1973, G.F Smith begins an important partnership with James Cropper Speciality Papers. Over several stages of development and under the close direction of G.F Smith, Croppers strives to meet the impeccable standards they have been set. As a result of their dedication to excellence in paper manufacture, Croppers becomes the mill responsible for the production of Colorplan. They remain one of the company's most valued partners.

Footnote 4

A company built on searching out the very best

In 2010 a team from G.F Smith travelled to Japan with the ambition of making the curious and exceptional stocks they found available to the British and European market. We're proud to share George Frederick Smith's passion for paper and to be the custodians and keepers of his remarkable legacy. This responsibility, to build on our predecessor's achievements, gives us a clear sense of purpose. The legacy of George Frederick Smith continues to bind all of our efforts and ambitions.

People First

From apprenticeships, constant training and inter-office job shares to special dinners held each year to bring together retired employees, G.F Smith has put people at the heart of the company in the same way that George Frederick Smith did when he first gathered the original team.

Generations of families have worked at the company, and a sense of loyalty is probably best demonstrated by the fact that in 2014, 36 people currently working at G.F Smith have been at the company for 20 years or more. Their skill, knowledge and passion are hugely important to the company's growth.

Footnote 5

Mark Jessett, Paper Consultant

'When I started work in the paper trade, before joining G.F Smith, I was taught to sell in a very particular way. It involved talking about the sample paper or book that I had in my hands and holding onto it for as long as humanly possible. By the end of my well-rehearsed pitch, I felt less like someone who loved paper and more like a salesman, and the customer had all but lost interest. It was pretty frustrating.

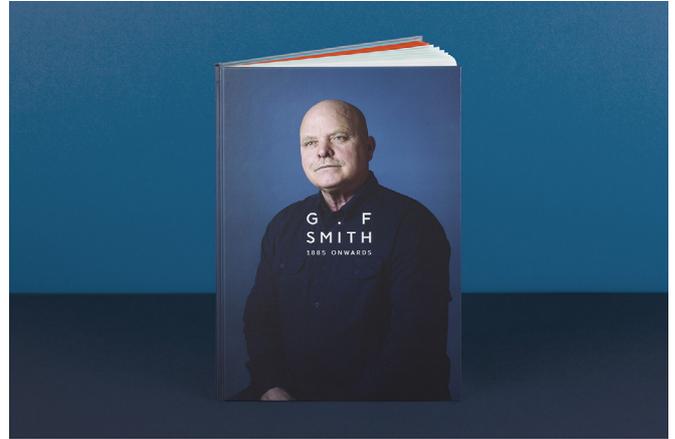
There are two big differences with how I work at G.F Smith. First, I don't sell. I have a conversation with the designers, printers and creative people that I meet. And second, I don't keep hold of things. For designers, it's a lot to do with texture so why would I deny them the opportunity to get their hands on the wonderful things we have in our Collection?

The reaction I most enjoy is when people see a new paper or new sample book, and smile, and reach across the table. That's what happens when you develop papers and communications to the standard that we produce'.

(Nine years with G . F Smith)

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Footnote 6

Portait of a Company

Part sample book, part history book, 'Portrait of a Company' chronicles the history of G.F Smith through a series of very human accounts drawn from both their archive and interviews with present team members.

A photoshoot was specially commissioned to capture the characters that make up the G.F Smith team today. From this shoot 12 were selected to feature on the case bound cover, representing the face of G.F Smith. The 96pp case bound book utilises 18 papers drawn from the Collection, including Plike, Colorplan, Zen, Phoenixmotion and Strathmore. Throughout the book, tip-in's demonstrate the array of specialist processes and services available from the company.

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Footnote 7

'For Service' Badge

These enamel badges were designed to denote and reward the length of service an individual has been with G.F. Smith. For up to five years; a silver nickel badge. For 5 to 10 years, a bronze nickel badge. For 10 to 20 years, a white enamel badge. For 20 to 30 years, a black enamel badge, and to reward 30 years of service, a 24k gold badge. Each badge is packaged in a hand-made Colorplan box.

In 2014, 36 people currently working at G.F. Smith have been at the company for 20 years or more.

Brand as Custodian

From 1885 onwards, we have always been a company that looks forward, responding to changing needs and markets. And so we also need to change the way we present ourselves. Our own history shows the diverse style and range of communications that we've generated that respond to different market needs.

Each new generation takes its role as custodians of G.F Smith very seriously. To reflect this, we are unveiling a new mark that represents an essential duality in the company: the pride it still has in its beginnings in 1885, and the continual drive to be a pioneering and ambitious enterprise that stops at nothing to find the best paper it can to supply to the creative, publishing and print industries.

Footnote 8

A landmark that prepares us for the future

The brand name is that of our founder – George Frederick Smith – the man who set us off on this path. Its austere simplicity imparts a sense of honesty, integrity and trust – values we still hold today. The new mark is also an acknowledgment of our role as a custodian. Far from being focused on the past, our own view is that this sense of duty to protect what we have today makes us best placed to be ready for what tomorrow might bring. We're certainly proud of our beginnings in 1885, and of the path that George Frederick Smith set out upon, and it is why this mark bears his name; every time it appears, it signifies our determination to live up to his standards.

Footnote 9

1885 Onwards

Alongside a proud history, we must be sure that what we are creating today is protected with equal care and a sense of history. So when we say that we are a business from '1885 Onwards' it is far from a need to be tied to the past, but an acknowledgment that as a forward looking company, G.F Smith is proud of its history because our people, our collection, our reputation and the knowledge embodied in all of this have all been formed from our experiences across the generations. Everything we do today acknowledges our great past and pioneering spirit, with a sense of progression and moving forward rather than looking back.

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Our Role as Curators

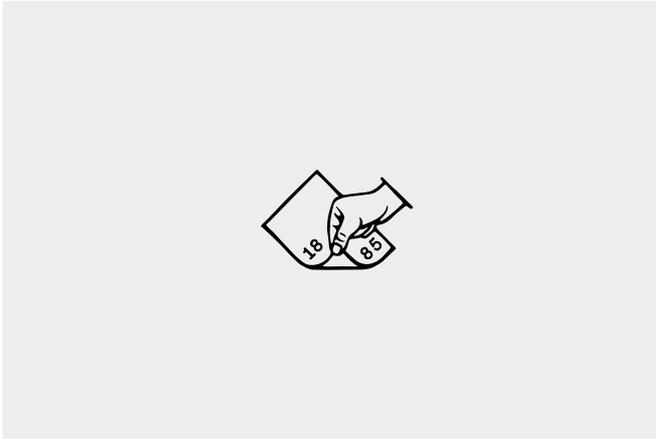
Alongside the new brand mark is a symbol to represent our role as curators.

Whether finding paper, making custom-sized envelopes, putting together bespoke book dummies or assembling orders from The Paper Smith, much of what G.F Smith does is still by hand.

And it is still the connection between head and heart, sparked by the sense of touch that makes great paper, today more than ever, such an important way to help communicate ideas and messages.

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Footnote 10

The Curator Mark

Whatever we do, whether it is making to order, or searching out new papers, it is all done with the utmost care, and very often by hand. Whatever the paper, or the service, and however beautiful the range of colours and surfaces we offer might be to the eye, our Collection is as much about the sensation of touch as it is about anything else. It is what defines paper as a medium, that special connection between head and heart, that makes it the precious material to which we are so attached. Our Curator Mark is as much recognition of this physical reality as it is symbolic of the personal stake each of us takes in the quality and beauty of everything we do.

A British Accent

G.F Smith takes great pride in being an independent and thriving British company that makes a contribution back into the creative industry. Continuing a theme of educating and inspiring paper users that began in the 1960s, in 2012, G.F Smith partnered with the British Council, Monotype London and It's Nice That to stage 'Beauty in the Making'. A free event held over five days, and the first work commissioned from branding and design consultancy Made Thought, the show was a celebration of the hidden skills and craftsmanship that lie behind the scenes of the creative industry and the manufacture and application of paper was central to the exhibition's subject matter.

In the same spirit of pride in our origins, we have incorporated a new typeface into the visual identity designed in a style that harks back to the mid-20th century. It is a combination of the machine age and a more calligraphic line. This humanist sans mirrors the nature of G.F Smith's work – the marriage of craft skill and efficient mechanisation.

Footnote 11

Creative Partnerships

G.F Smith has been a promoter of British creativity since it first appointed Bill Mackay as a design consultant in the mid-1960s. Mackay remained the primary design consultant for almost 40 years. Subsequently, SEA Design, Studio Makgill and Made Thought have been a creative partner to the company.

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But just as George began this journey through discovering new papers in new lands, so today we are exploring new papers, new ideas, new applications and new markets. The best, and the papers that ignite our ever-ready passion, we'll collect and present to the world tomorrow.

Footnote 12

A Typeface of Man and Machine

The early part of the 20th century saw the dawn of the machine age. Companies were born, industries were formed, and a new family of typefaces emerged to respond to this revolution in the means of production. Less austere than the sans serifs that originated in Germany, but clearly still unrelated to the predominant serif style of the day, these became known as humanist sans, where shapes and outlines were melded from the mechanised and the handcrafted. It is in the same spirit that we have created our own typeface, G . F Smith, a conscious balance of machine and calligraphy and a powerful acknowledgment of our roots.

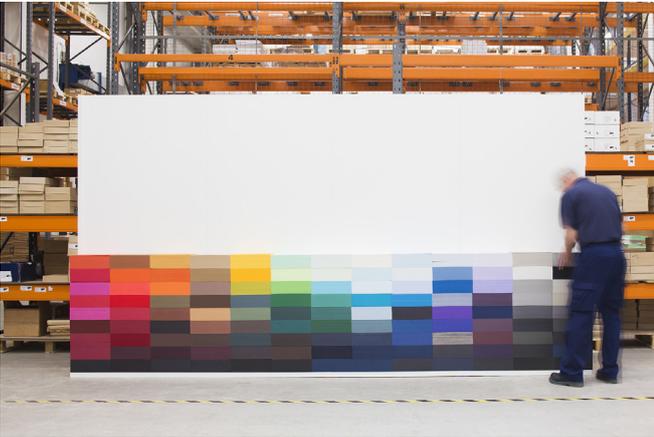
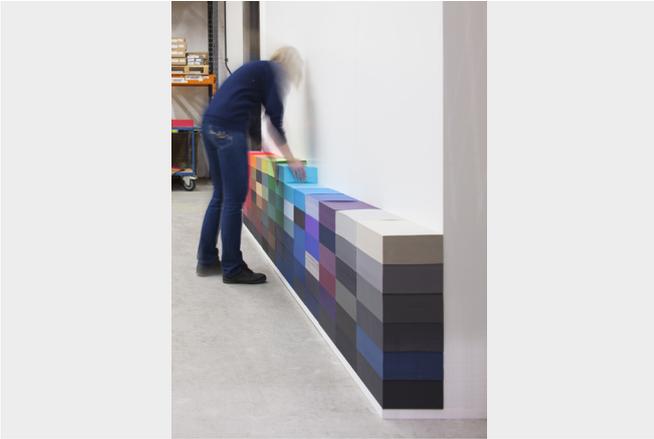
The Collection from G.F Smith

The 38 papers currently held in the G.F Smith Collection are divided across six distinct categories: Colorplan, Fine Coated, Fine Uncoated, Textured, Specialist and Digital Papers. Each paper is, as they've been since 1885, chosen for very specific reasons. They must perform to the highest standards of printing, in both litho and digital processes and be practical and malleable. Most importantly, they must be beautiful. And, with an eye on the future, the Collection also includes some of the world's most innovative substrates.

As part of the introduction of the new visual identity, there has been a complete overhaul of G.F Smith's digital communications, bringing the digital and physical world far closer. In doing so, the 'We Recommend' filter at gfsmith.com becomes a key tool on the site. It enables the visitor to curate and select from the Collection quickly and efficiently utilising an intelligent filter function to narrow down choice and present options. This allows anyone looking for recommendations on suitable paper to quickly roam, explore, search out and find a paper suited to their specific criteria.

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FILM



The Collection Wall
[GFSmith Collection Wall LR.mov] 22.6mb

Footnote 13

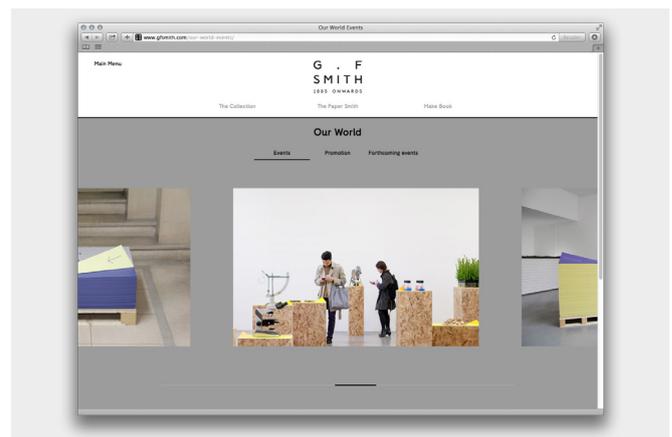
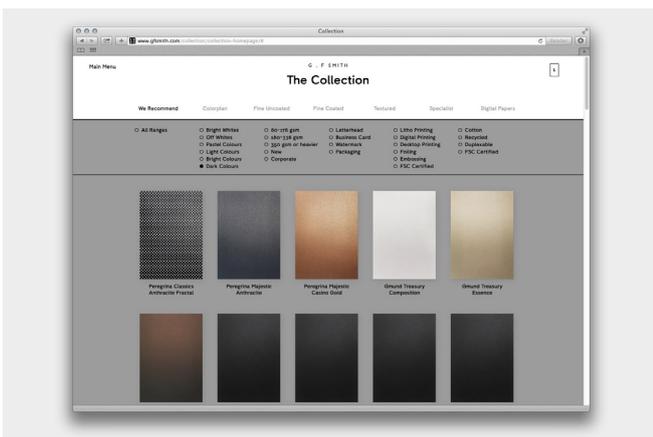
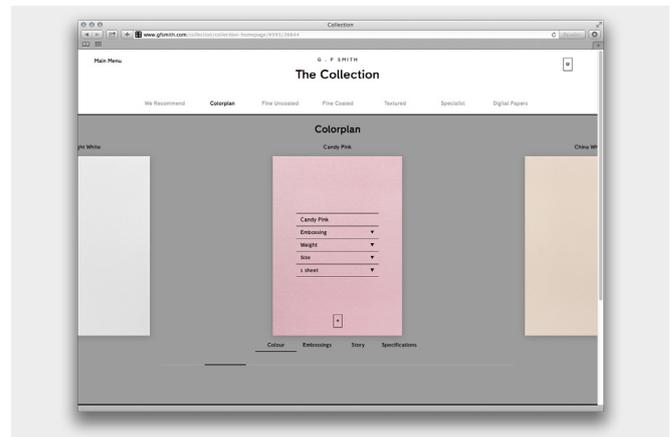
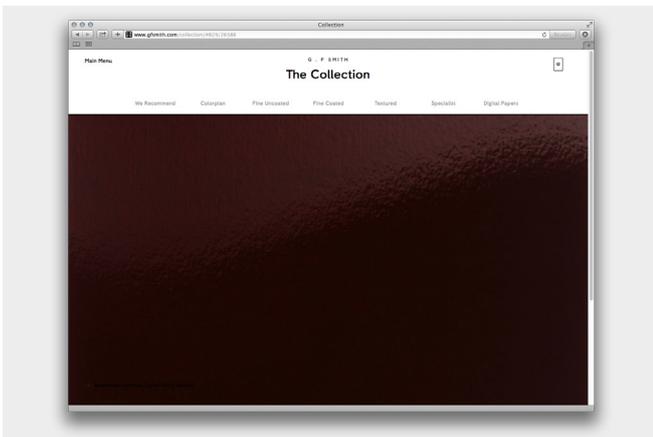
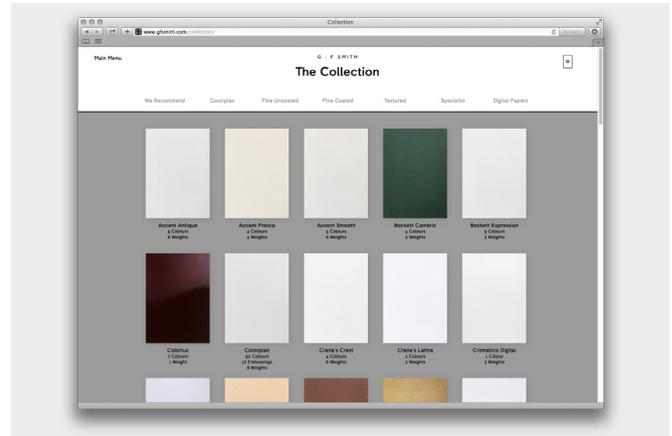
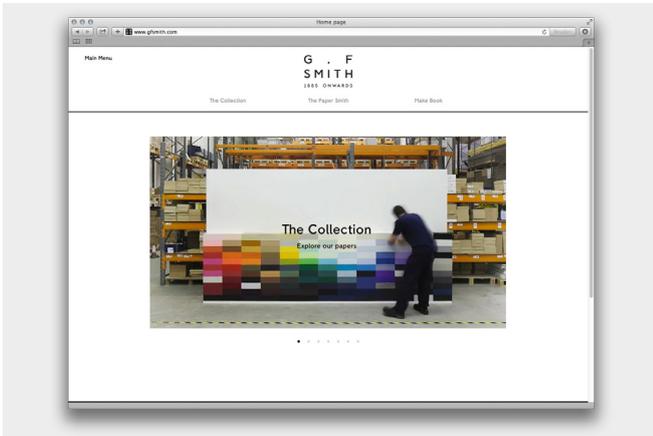
The Collection Wall

The Collection Wall is a physical embodiment of the diverse and selective range of papers available from G.F Smith.

Collated into A4 stacks measuring 100mm high, the Collection Wall was assembled by many hands over the course of a single day in the warehouse in Hull.

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Footnote 14
A new digital offer
gfsmith.com

Searching out papers and ordering samples has never been easier, or more accessible. The new Collection website brings to the fore G.F. Smith's exemplary next day delivery sampling service by enabling access, day or night, for designers.

Colorplan from G.F Smith

Colorplan's current collection, developed and refined since the launch of the range in the 1960s, is the result of careful curation, based on an understanding of the needs of our customers.

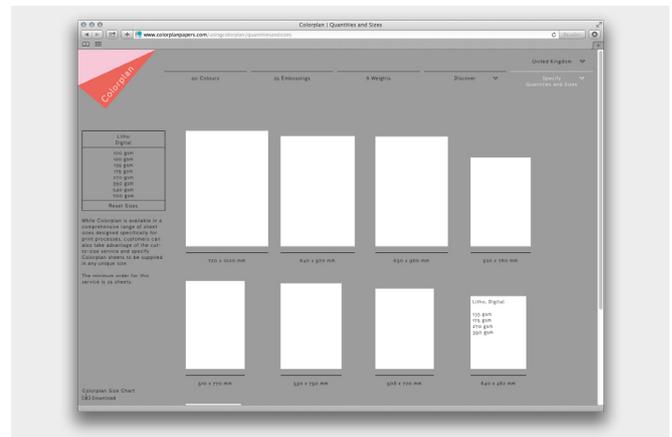
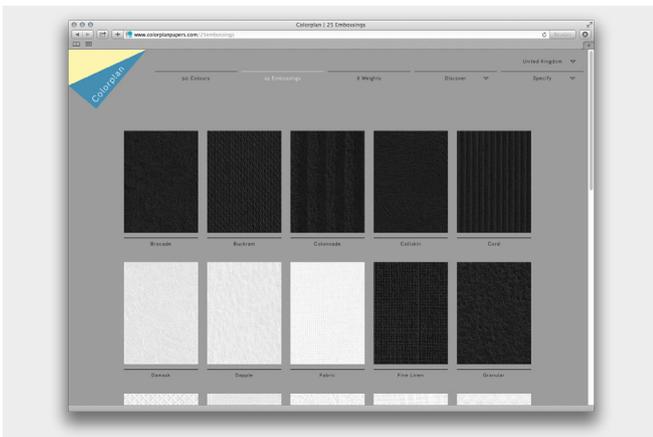
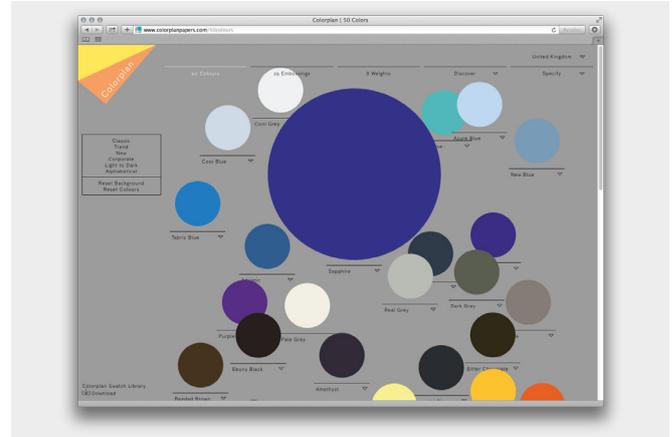
As the signature paper at the heart of G.F Smith's collection, it had fascinating beginnings, not entirely unrelated to the situation in the living rooms of the great British public. Up until the late 1960s, Britain's television sets still flickered black and white. Then, in the summer of 1967, the pioneers at BBC2 changed everything when they started to broadcast in colour. Popular entertainment was transformed, as were the worlds of fashion, advertising and magazine publishing.

Inspired by the explosion of colour in popular culture, G.F Smith took a pioneering step of its own and began to assemble a paper collection of a scope, scale and vibrancy of colour that was – up to that point – simply unheard of. Over the next five years this remarkable range, named Colorplan, was carefully, skilfully and methodically assembled.

Born into a fast changing world, Colorplan remains an iconic and indispensable element of the designer's craft. In 1972, the revolutionary Colorplan had no predecessor. Today, it remains without equal.

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Footnote 15

About Colorplan colorplanpapers.com

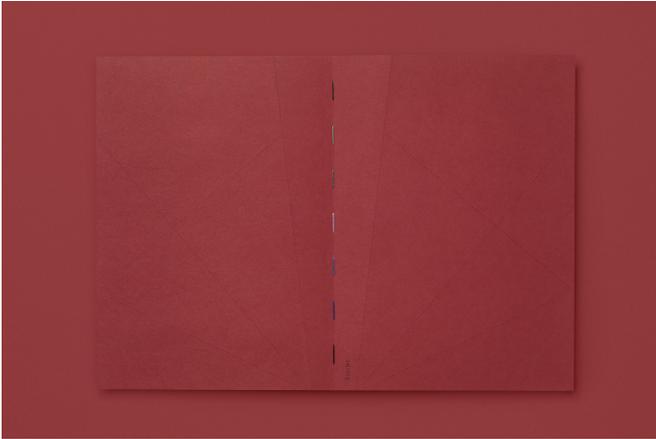
Colorplan's current collection is the result of careful curation, based on an understanding of the needs of our customers. It is designed for print and packaging to the very highest standards, and is comprised of 50 colours, 25 embossing textures and 8 weights (from 100gsm to 700gsm). It is also guaranteed for digital printing, is FSC accredited and fade resistant. It can be made to a bespoke weight and cut to a bespoke size all above orders of 1 tonne and in a bespoke colour above orders of 2 tonnes. Available as hand-made envelopes from business card to A3 and at every possible measurement inbetween, Colorplan can be duplexed six sheets deep to a weight of 2,100gsm.

Colorplan's online platform was developed with the ambition of providing designers with an ever-evolving range of tools that deliver a level of expertise, insight, and support for using Colorplan.

As the global demand for Colorplan increases we are committed to investing and establishing relationships in new markets. In 2013 we launched our service in Germany and the US with local merchants and the Colorplan website now available in their native languages. Moving into 2014 we have also confirmed launch dates for suppliers in Hong Kong, Australia (may 2014) and China. Whilst we look forward to extending our global partnerships, Colorplan will always be available anywhere in the world, supplied and shipped through G . F Smith.

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Footnote 16

Colorplan 'Tear' Note Book from G.F Smith

A 200 page notebook that allows the user to play and 'sculpt' their own book as it is used, revealing new colour combinations and juxtapositions. Comprising all 50 Colorplan colours, the perforated pages can be torn out for notes, colour samples or simply to leave with clients or printers as a reference. The book showcases five print techniques including lithography, digital printing, foil blocking, embossing and thermography.

The Paper Smith from G.F Smith

The Paper Smith is a new way of discovering and ordering from our selection of papers, cards and envelopes. It allows you to buy smaller quantities of paper, making the very finest paper more accessible to the individual user.

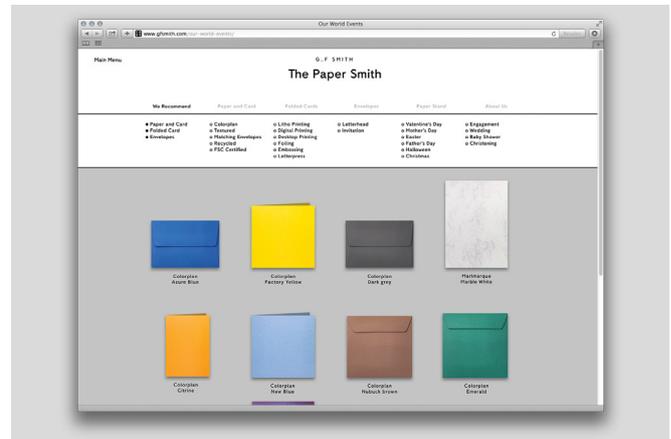
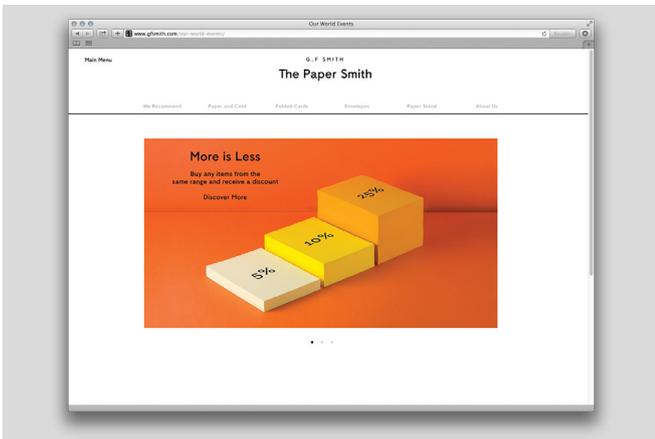
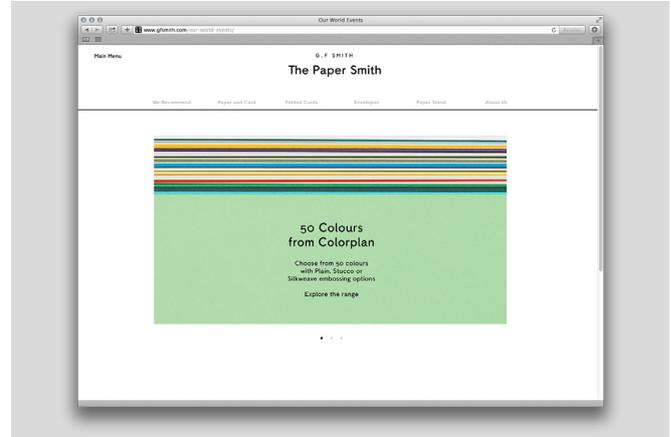
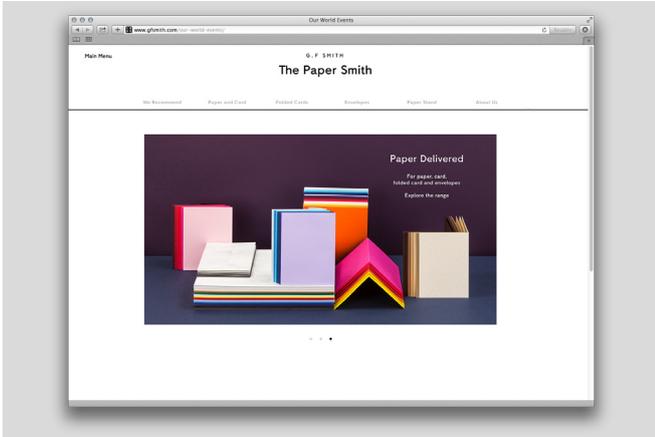
With exclusive variations and themes across the seasons,
The Paper Smith is a showcase for new ideas, incredible substrates and highly specialised finishes.

Also available from the Paper Smith is an array of printed ephemera from the G.F Smith promotion archive. This includes the Colorplan 'Tear' Notebook, the Colorplan Play Book, Notes on G . F Smith notelet set, and the Strathmore promotion booklet.

Visit the shop at gfsmith.com/thepapersmith

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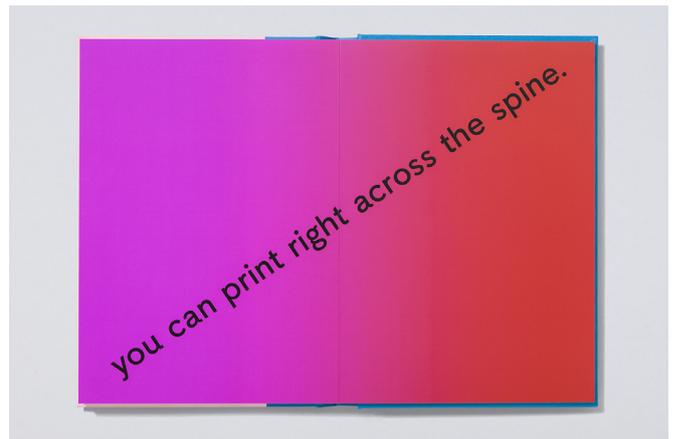
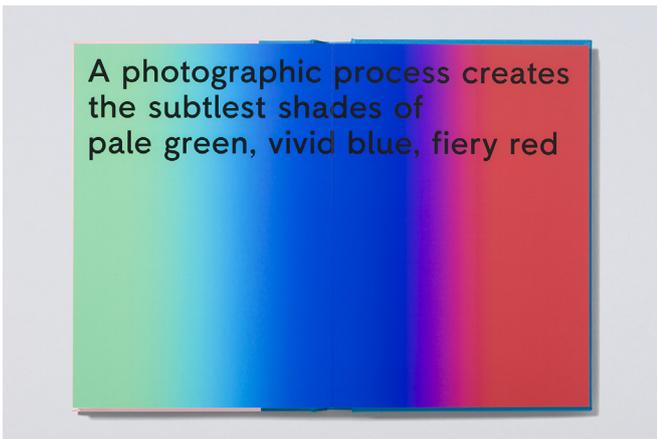
Make Book from G.F Smith

Make Book is a way to create one-off books, to your design, finished to an incredibly high standard of production. Hand assembled in Hull, each book is printed using a photographic process and silver halide technology onto professional archive quality paper. You can choose from 50 Colorplan colours as a cover or endpaper, and can have a foil blocked or debossed cover. Make Book is available in three sizes (B5, A4 and A3) and can run from as few as 20 pages to a maximum of 100 and thanks to the lay flat binding, your design can run right across the spine, from corner to corner.

View the options at gfsmith.com/makebook

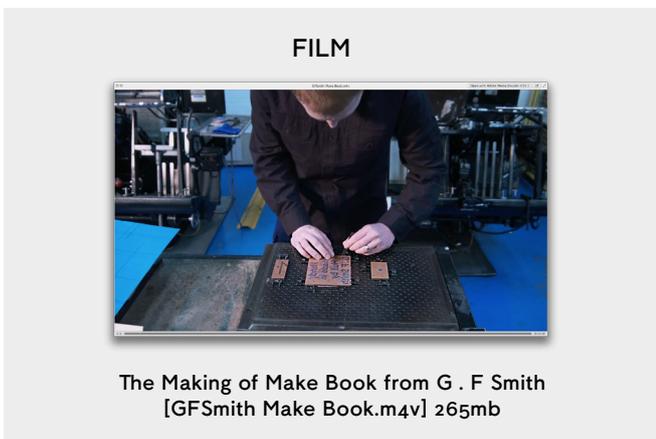
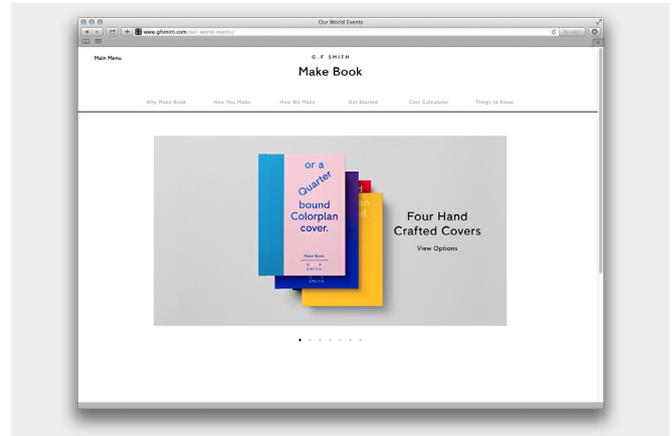
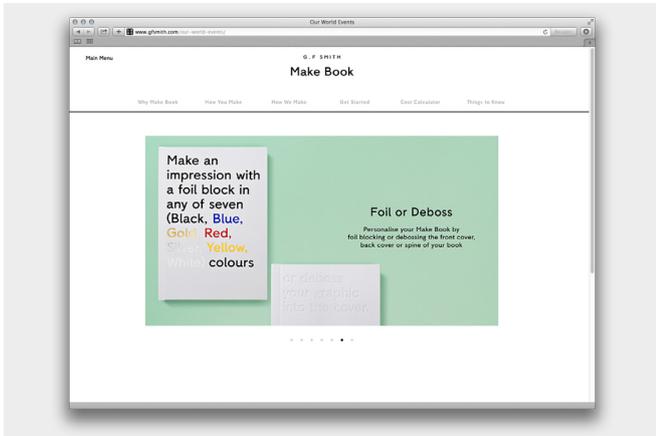
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For Further Information

For further information about this press release, additional copies of 'Portrait of a Company' brand book, hi-res imagery or interviews, please contact our publicist Sabine Zetteler at hello@sabinezetteler.com or call Sabine directly on +44 (0)7791 568 890

Note to Journalists

G . F Smith should always be written with a space before and after the full point. Thank you.