**LAUFEN virtual space – a new form to tackle space and product. Where digital meets physical. Featuring products from the colorful Kartell•LAUFEN collection.**

**The LAUFEN virtual space is an immersive digital experience, showcasing the company’s bathroom collections in a new and exciting way. While memorable virtual reality applications are far from being realized – and are very far away from bringing a real live experience online – Laufen started this project with the aim of creating a communication which goes beyond the traditional boundaries. With personal contacts and communication reduced to virtual encounters, LAUFEN virtual spaces want to create a platform which enables the company to connect in the real world with people who, out of different reasons, cannot be present physically at a certain space and a certain time. In the end Laufen aims at connecting human beings on different levels of interaction.**

While the sanitary, design or event art industry business models of fairs and gigantic booth build-ups had remained unquestioned for half a century, digital turn revolutionized new business models. The Internet has disrupted the way we produce, display, exhibit and document products, information and experiences.

Due to limitations and new behaviors and needs caused by the pandemic, the virtual starts to increasingly replace the physical. In midst of the pandemic, online virtual rooms provide a context to products, guided by a meaningful message. Senses such as touch, smell and personal relations are getting dangerously neglected with disastrous consequences on mental as well as physical health.

This forces us to reinvent the ecosystem of communication and relationships through the creation of formats that blur the lines between digital and physical.

LAUFEN virtual space is about exploring a dream-like landscape through four different Kartell•LAUFEN sets and nature-infused stories that let one wander and wonder.

Starting in the urban area, driving to the desert, exploring the forest by night and escaping to an artist room in which Laufen presents a limited special edition of screen-printed collages by Swiss artist Monique Baumann. It is a digital solution with the goal of transporting emotions to the user - not an easy task considering that we are all online a substantial part of our lives today.

The space wants to provide an experience of digitally animated, semi-interactive collages. Surreal spaces with a wink and the purposely very tactile feel while being fully immersed in the digital. A journey of process and progress telling a story and carefully taking the products by the hand. Almost like strolling through a Laufen booth at a fair designed by architects Gabrielle Hächler and Andreas Fuhrimann.

What presents itself as a rather raw and compact digital surface or outer shell, unfolds an explorative journey of colorful deep-dive collages on the inside. A choreography that sparks nostalgia, curiosity and raises questions about life or qualitative routines filled with luxury.

The concept was initiated by Swiss architects Gabrielle Hächler and Andreas Fuhrimann for whom storytelling through architectural spaces has always been the main driver and who developed Laufen booth at various fairs such as the Salone del Mobile 2018 and ISH Frankfurt 2019. For the LAUFEN virtual space Fuhrimann Hächler have collaborated with Swiss born and New York based experiential interior designer Annabelle Schneider, who further executed and realized the visuals and narratives.

**Four stacked spaces to be explored**

Every location embeds a selection of products from the new Kartell•LAUFEN collection. Natural shapes and left-overs from consumption age form the architectural setting. Animals and human beings suddenly appearing and disappearing; weather, daytime, lights and a very layered soundscape direct the journey through the space. Quick quotes deriving from surrealism provoke humoristic comments on current times.

**INTRO/URBAN**

Spaces designed for humans, conquered and shaped by the elements of nature. A platform of hope and reflection. Wired emotions; survival mode; disruption in midst of crisis. Traces of life within the urban area. Moving the elementary, abandon spaces that were meant to live and work. Smoke and light fill the air. Water reflects the moment. A standstill to examine progress – a pause to reflect.

**DESERT**

An escape from abandoned city life to the desert. Fire and wiggling paths through the sand define the journey. Precious life is found in the oasis – where water pours.

**FOREST**

Wandering and wondering through the woods. Detecting life in sunken places. Discovering and flying with the magical and indulging within the built environment surrounded by the depths of the forest.

**ARTIST**

Swiss based artist Monique Baumann is well-known for her analog collages often playing with elements from fashion and lifestyle. In collaboration with LAUFEN she developed three different pieces of art using three Kartell•LAUFEN products which will be available in special channels for a limited time only.

Putting Monique Baumann’s very tactile art into the digital realm is bewildering and yet free of hierarchy and expectation. In her space, the artist brings in the nature of making, deconstruction and new assembly with a positive outlook to the new, based on the recycled already existing.

LAUFEN virtual space is a production created for LAUFEN with special credits to:

Idea & Concept:

Gabrielle Hächler / Andreas Fuhrimann Architects

Concept, Content Design and Visualization:

Annabelle Schneider

Sound Design:

Carlo Peters

Website concept, design and development:

Henkelhiedl

Complete press kit of the Milano Design Week 2021 available here:

[LAUFEN\_MDW2021](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/kvbs85bnkv5616q/AABcIHh2zqmp-qDPBVQ9nZZOa?dl=0)

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