

# WHAT I'VE LEARNED

Twenty-eight  
creatives share  
career-defining  
insights

**PREVIEW**

FRAME



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# INTRODUCTION

‘What I’ve Learned’ is a successful section of *Frame* magazine that first appeared in May 2014. It’s here that readers find the thoughts and opinions of designers and architects in articles that cover the experiences that have marked their careers. This eponymous book is a compilation of the 26 articles featured thus far in the pages of *Frame*.

Asking creatives to reminisce about their professional achievements is not so difficult in most cases, but having them recall their blunders is a different story altogether. Prior to the launch of ‘What I’ve Learned’, *Frame* experimented with two forerunners: ‘Failures and Fortunes’ and ‘Éminence Grise’. These short-lived sections of the magazine appeared in four successive issues between September 2013 and March 2014. Practically speaking, ‘Failures and Fortunes’ focused far more on fortunes than on failures. After all, designers – like the rest of us – are not eager to point out their existential crises or their commercial flops. In ‘Éminence Grise’, the spotlight was on designers who greatly deserved the accolades bestowed upon them. Approaching the twilight of their careers, they turned out to be more open to self-examination and introspection than their younger colleagues, who had contributed to ‘Failures and Fortunes’. Older designers tended to speak quite plainly about weathering the ups and downs of their profession and to be unafraid of criticizing clients, for example.

It wasn't long before the editors at *Frame* decided to merge the two sections of the magazine. The result is 'What I've Learned'. A stroke of genius, the section has become a go-to source of information and inspiration. Paging through the first few issues that included 'What I've Learned', you'll find that the editors did indeed choose older designers. Among the earlier interviewees was industrial designer Ingo Maurer (born in 1932), furniture designer Toshiyuki Kita (1942) and architect Tadao Ando (1941). As established role models, they empowered a younger generation of guests to express themselves more freely.

This compilation of in-depth articles provides a good impression of the challenges facing today's designers. The struggle between autonomy and commercial pressures, the sometimes problematic dealings with clients, the occasional feeling that the world is already overburdened with too much stuff: it's all part of the picture. But so is the high that comes with the discovery of something new, the freedom enjoyed by thriving independent entrepreneurs when selecting collaborators or partners, and the intense satisfaction of a well-designed product that's still popular years after it was introduced. Together, the various facets of a creative's activities make for informative reading of interest to every designer – and to everyone else. For one thing is clear: important life lessons have a universal value.

**DAVID KEUNING**

His Latin designs  
in Germanic  
Switzerland made  
Buenos Aires-born  
**ALFREDO HÄBERLI**  
an outsider – and  
brought him great  
success

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