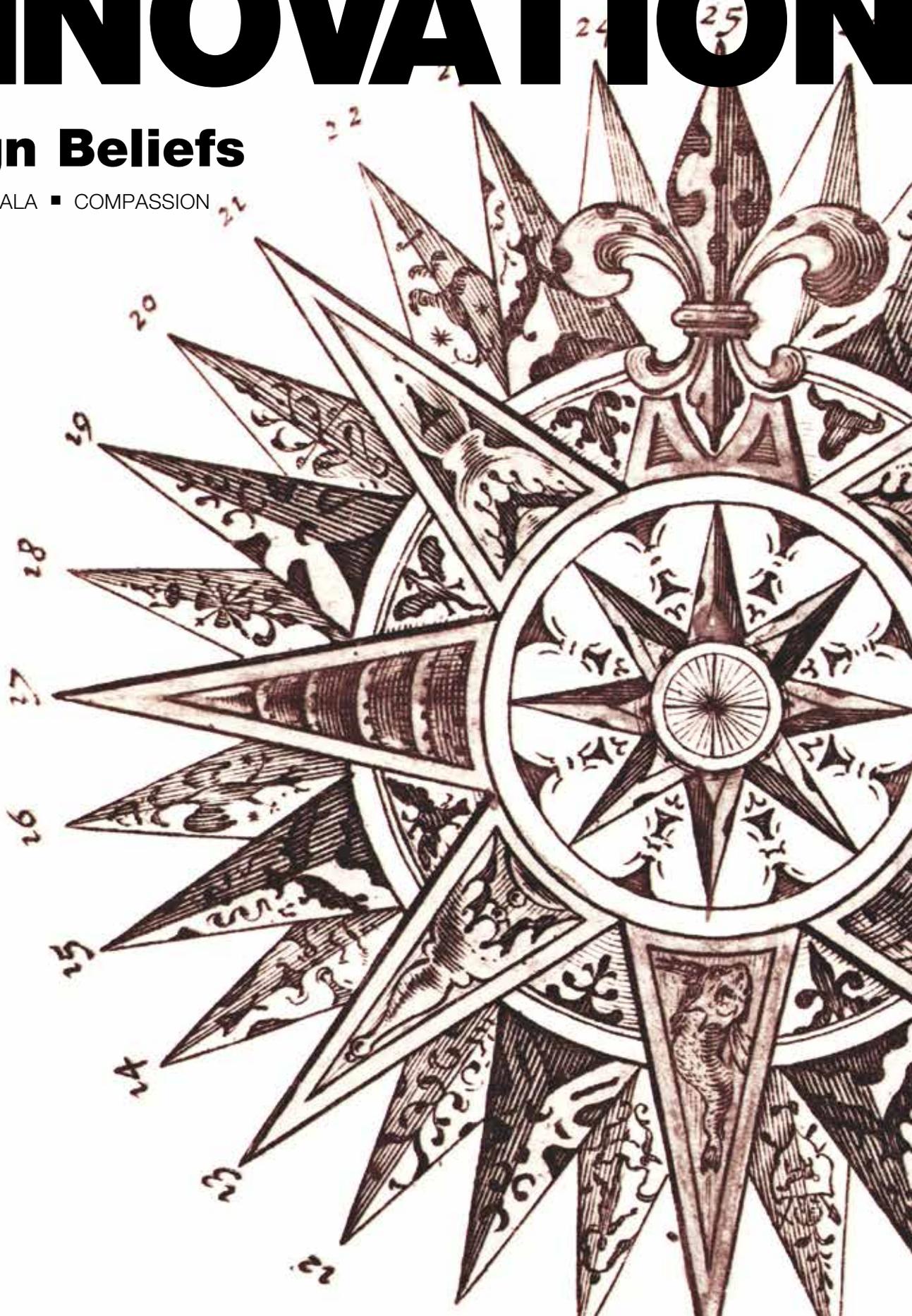


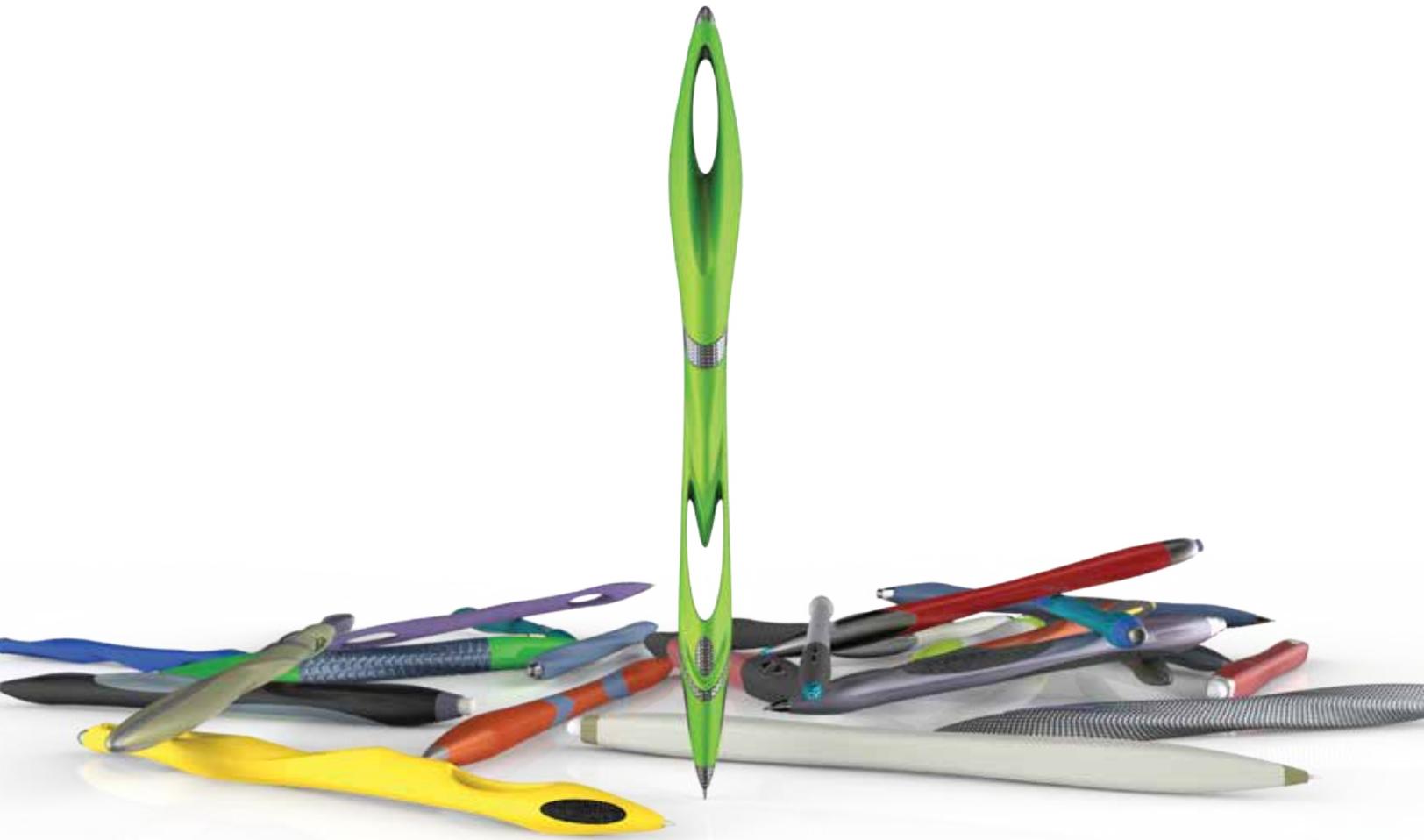
# INNOVATION

## Design Beliefs

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Left: This is one of Steve Frykholm's favorite photos from the Herman Miller archive. In 1962 Charles and Ray Eames won the competition to design the seating for Chicago's new O'Hare Airport. As well as pictures of the product in use, they also took this spontaneous and whimsical photo. See p. 46.



Cover photo: 17th-Century Drawing of a Compass Rose by Blau/Corbis Images

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By Yves Béhar, IDSA

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Yves Béhar, founder of fuseproject in San Francisco and designer of the SAYL chair for Herman Miller, has shaped the world of design with his thoughtful creations, concern for the environment and social issues, and approach to craft and new materials.

# 7 BEAUTIFUL & USEFUL

**T**o my team at fuseproject I often say, We are not designing things, we are designing ideas. More specifically, what I am trying to say is, We are giving life to new ideas. The choices we as designers make early in a project are to express the most compelling 21st-century ideas.

Every designer, every maker starts with the notion of giving the world something new, something useful, something beautiful. The atoms (products and things) need to be more relevant in the 21st century: durable, sustainable, affordable and customizable. The bits (software, apps and experiences) need to deliver experience, beauty and function and anticipate individual needs. Both atoms and bits are the building blocks of the businesses and brands being created right now.

Do people want to own what we make? Yes. When successful, design makes money. Steve Jobs and Apple have decidedly given designers credibility in business. But every great designer or maker I know begins at the intersection of two seemingly opposite instincts: making something people want and searching for something that has not been done before. Designers want to please *and* disrupt the status quo at the same time.

And so almost by default, good design accelerates the adoption of new ideas. This new century is about disrupting all the old industries. Designers, coders and entrepreneurs are challenging notions that sustainability is expensive, that technology is hard to use, that quality is exclusive, that mass production means unified goods and experiences.

Utility and beauty cannot be separated anymore. I have no doubt that beauty enhances a product's function, while experience and user interface, at their best, create long-term relationships with a product. As to functionality, we now find clever mechanisms and good ergonomics quite attractive. Charles Eames' "good goods" notion is definitely upon us.

But the new energy of technology, materials, sensors and the cloud are challenging the notion of one size fits all. Function and beauty are being sliced and diced to individuals' needs. The perfect storm is upon us: the melding of technology and new behaviors. Just-in-time consumption and have-it-my-way consumer expectation brought to us by the Internet are changing product- and experience-making. And there is no going back. Products are starting to adapt, learn and evolve by being cognizant of our behavior through cloud connections, providing small and large companies with the data to make further improvements. Customized experiences and personal data serving an ever-refined world of choice will be a de-facto expectation as personal fit and finish is incorporated in production processes and efficient local manufacturing is being developed everywhere.

The result? People will feel more connected to the things they own. The generosity consumers experience in products and interfaces will produce more personal engagement with companies that are good at developing systems that breed ongoing relationships and trust. This is good news for large people-focused enterprises. It's also good news for makers and entrepreneurs who self-finance or crowdfund through sites like Kickstarter.

Design's generous instinct will be returned in great multiples. Advertising and marketing will take cues from design and will become more culturally centered and generous themselves. It's a cycle: Good design attracts better design. And we will all be better for it. ■

“One or the other isn't so difficult. Either or is the easy way out. But to achieve both at the same time, well that's really something!”

—Herman Miller Inc.

## Do People Want It?

**A**t first glance, beauty and usefulness seem like timeless qualities. They are actually moving targets, and achieving them requires both an unfettered imagination and a deep understanding of the end user's ever-changing needs and desires. These are core skills for an industrial designer.

The question of how beauty and usefulness will impact my future is really a question of how to stay relevant in the face of changing tastes and expectations. As a designer, part of my job is to bring together new and unique markets with products that are revolutionary in what they do, how they look and how they're used. This can certainly be tricky.

When you look back on memorable designs, they are a commentary on their time. They may stretch the limits of technology, they might take advantage of new production methods, or they may push the boundaries or define new materials. These innovations enable a visual and functional harmony to be achieved.

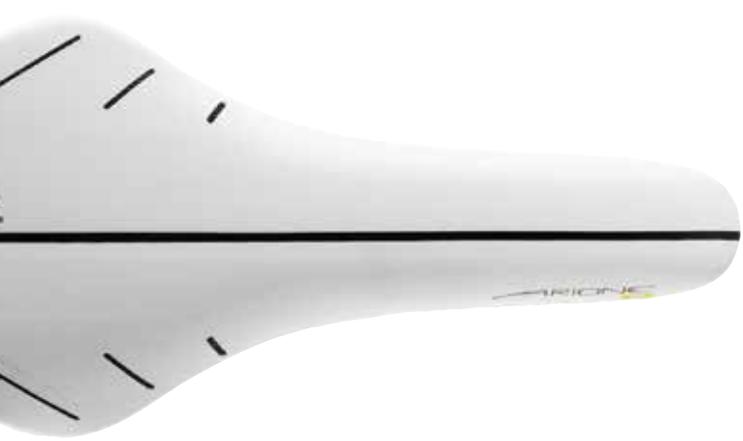
I believe that creating products that are both useful and beautiful requires designers to constantly hone their talents, to become experts in those new technologies and materials, and to work with people in as many other professions as possible. In other words, we must all remain students.

With the knowledge that consumer expectations change and satisfaction has a short wick, we have to stay cognizant of the past while keeping our eyes toward the future. There certainly is no lack of talent, so never stop learning and always stay humble.

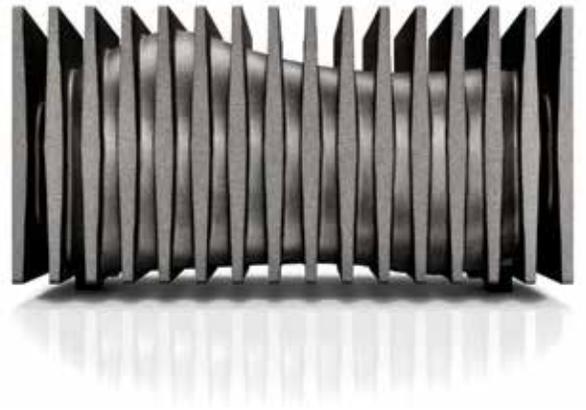
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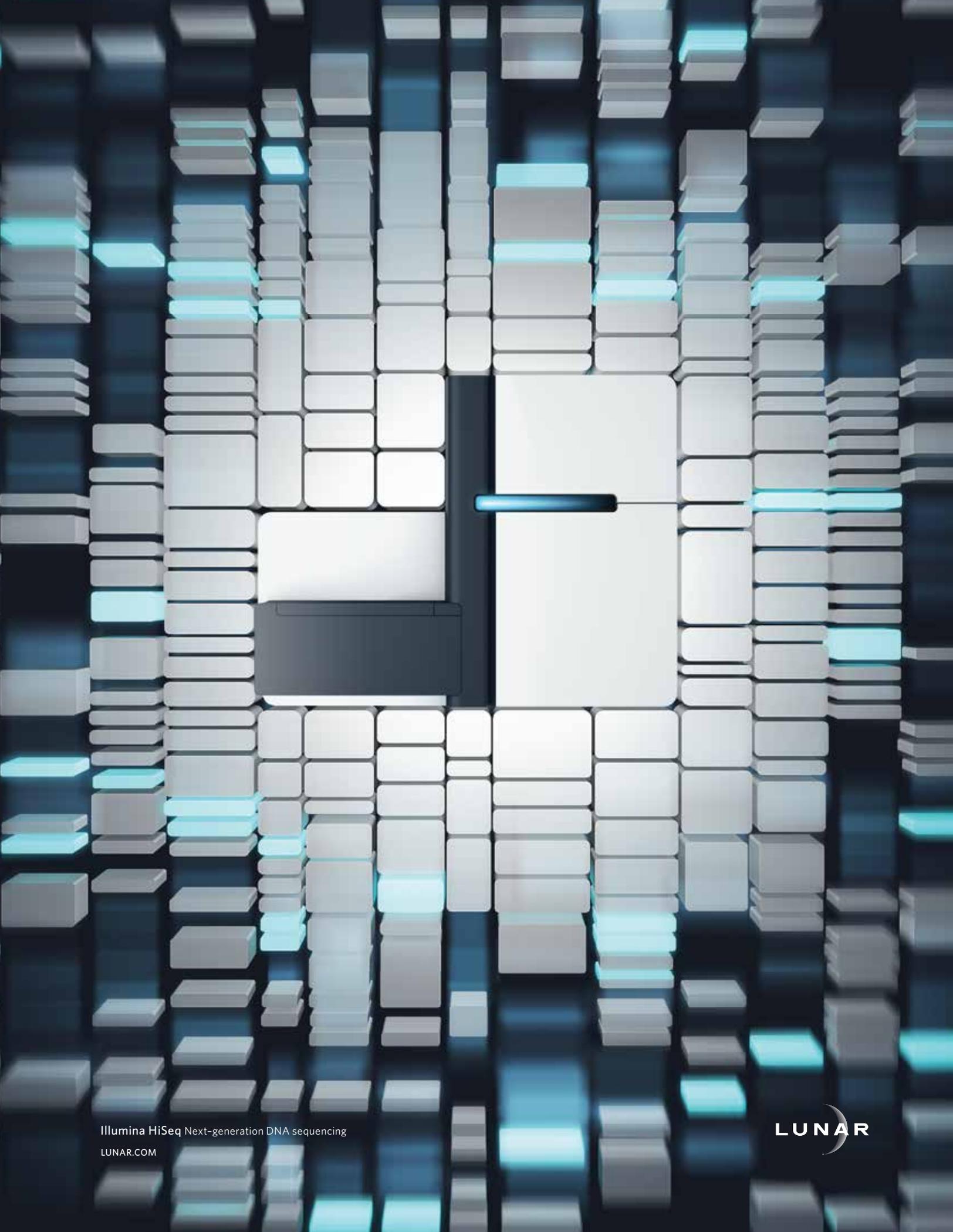


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