

A human-size shiny silver mannequin, with metallised plastics parts and anodised effects, naturally attracted considerable attention at the recent ADF-PCD exhibition in Paris, France. Its creator, DS Color, is a Belgian laboratory specialising in the formulation of decorative liquid paints and coatings, and the objective of its exhibit was to gain the attention of experts in the world of cosmetics.

The company's founder, Daniel Schoels, is a passionate innovator with 35 years of experience in developing decorative paints for the automotive, aeronautical, computer science and high-end cosmetics businesses.

"We have utilised our formulas on hundreds of packaging raw materials, including PVC, PS, PA, PP, glass, metal and aluminium, with the aim of applying high-quality paints in a single layer," said Schoels. "In addition, the possibilities of laser engraving on our paints has very quickly offered us many decorative opportunities."

To facilitate industrialisation, DS Color has three paint-manufacturing plants, two in Germany and one in Belgium.

Three paints are at the heart of the company's most recent innovation, which have packaging potential even if they have initially been picked up by other applications. The company's Holoptic paint, which won a Midest trophy (France's global show for industrial sub-contracting) in 2017, is benefitting from laser engraving. By stripping only some pigments from the single layer of paint, a highly-decorative visual effect is created with several colour shades. The lasers used for this decoration process are the simple YAG type, which are generally used for marking and which generate a very concentrated beam of light.

Thanks to a basic programme (available on a USB stick), the lasers can 'strip' or engrave the desired design. This process of 'painting' was a hit for Jean-Paul Gauthier's 200 range of limited edition glass perfume bottles, and Luxottica eyewear adopted the same technology for plastics items in its collection.

The second paint offers a metallic effect like chrome, and was illustrated at the show in the form of the small plastics parts of the mannequin. Three layers of this liquid paint (Icechrome or Black-Chrome) are sprayed in a conventional manner. This process is said to be much less polluting than the electrochemical treatments or vacuum metallisation used for traditional packaging.

To date, it is the automotive industry that is especially interested in this paint effect for the decoration of interiors, but it has a lot of scope. Fashion designer Paco Rabanne has even ordered decorative pieces, including plas-

Radical thinking

As exhibits go, one Belgian company's dazzling mannequin was definitely a showstopper at a recent Paris event, and its special-effect coatings and paints are bringing the Avant-garde to packaging. **Dominique Huret** reports



"We must remain avant-garde", says David Schoels

tics skulls, using this metallic chrome luxury effect for his Barcelona headquarters.

"At present, any packaging or object can acquire this brilliant and chromed effect, and it is very interesting for brand owners of cosmetics and luxury brands in search for a design effect at an affordable price," explained Valerie Villalon, the company's color manager for style & trend.

Another recent development (a 'world first', no less) is the Haloplast paint effect, which allows light to penetrate. Indeed, according to the major French cosmetics companies, the 'lighting packaging effect' will be the must-have of the 2020s. A small LED bulb is incorporated into the base of the container, which is activated by a simple rocking movement and will allow the bottle to achieve a coloured transparency effect for 18 months, generating "thousands of effects". The laser engraving on this paint also adds further decoration possibilities without requiring an additional layer of paint.

"Ecrin Luxe is our latest creation and contains all the technological innovations that we offer in decorative effect paints," said Villalon. "Samples can be assembled together according

to the inspiration of designers. Each piece is stamped "Dscolor" but invisible when two pieces are assembled. This allows each designer to compose his own Ecrin according to the sector that it represents; cosmetic, electro-household, automotive, and so on."

Thirteen years ago, Daniel Schoels created a subsidiary company called Color Consulting, which enables him to directly advise brand owners on the decoration of their packaging.

"Dior, Chanel, and Louis Vuitton have already trusted us but, and this is the essence of our business, we must remain avant-garde, and in secrecy," said Schoels. "In addition, we constantly work at the intersection of creativity and industrial constraints. Beyond 'chemistry', there is the industrial reality of constantly-evolving specifications and legislation for packaging, but also for resins and pigments.

"Finally, what drives us is to be able to create packaging that is truly seductive and in line with the values of a brand. We call ourselves artisans in Haute Couture industrial painting."

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