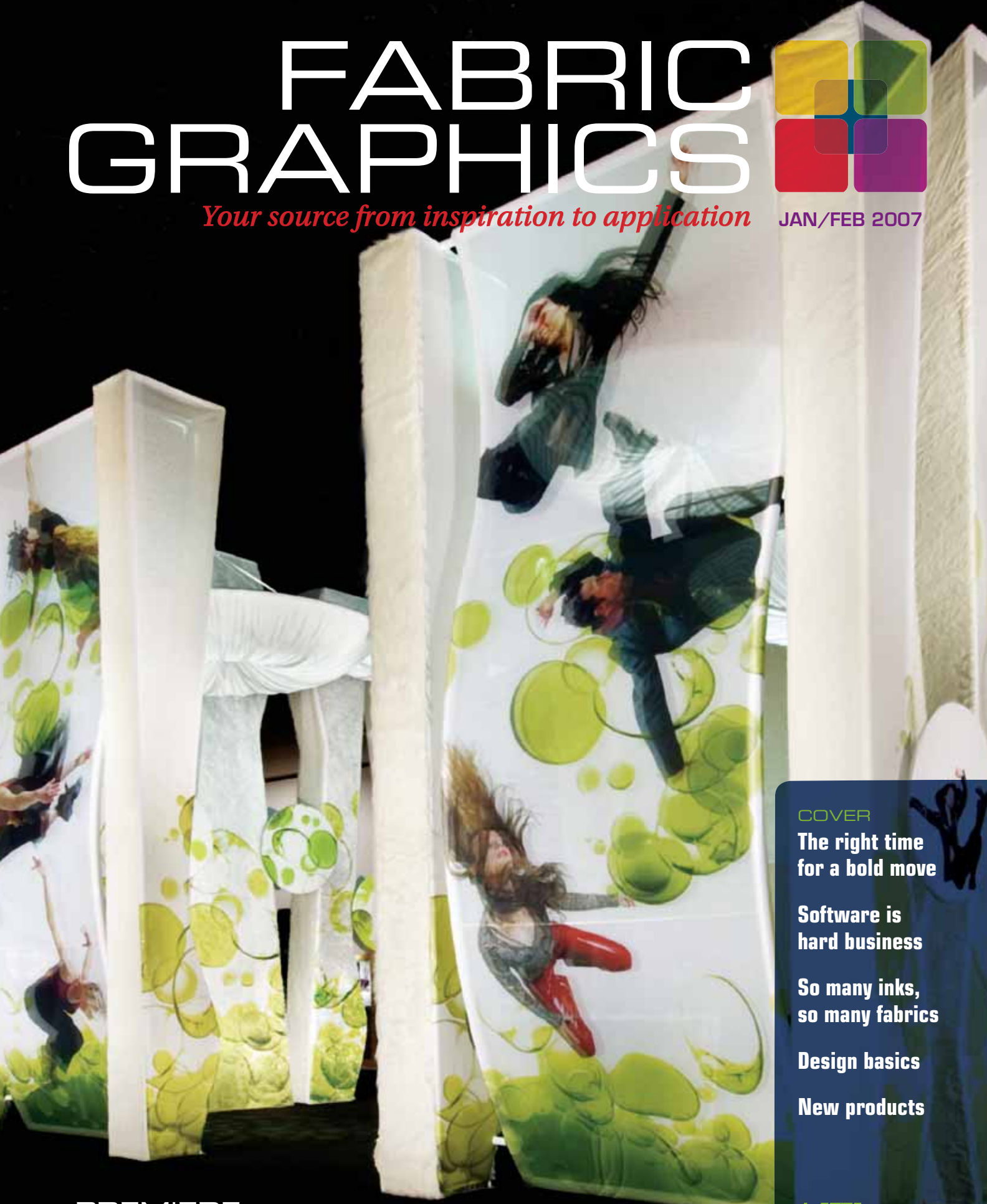


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by Lou Dzierzak

Adaptive Textiles

Jeanelle Dech was just eight years old when she started selling quilts and doll clothes to neighborhood boutiques. A childhood hobby soon became her professional career. Years later, frustrated by the existing interior design business model, Dech and her husband Larry saw an opportunity in digital printing and fabrics. In late 2004, they purchased a Dupont Artistri™ 2020 and launched Adaptive Textiles. “I saw a need for this in my interior design business. We had a desire to create unique home interiors, Dech explains.

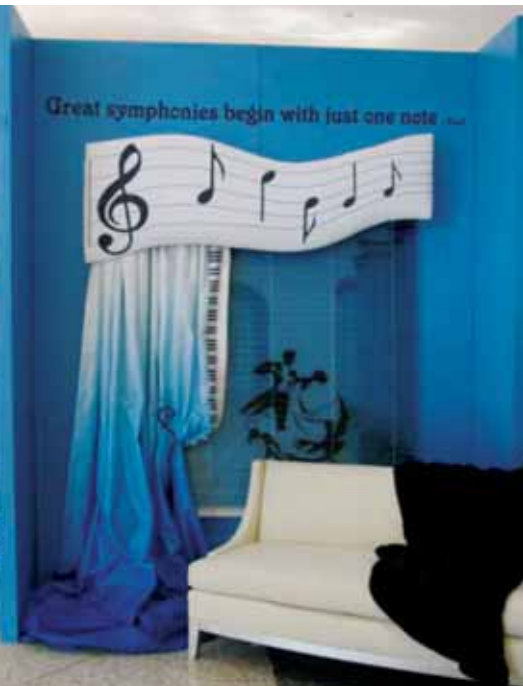
At first, Adaptive Textiles targeted interior designers, drapery workrooms, and residential decorators. Every start-up business learns quickly that assumptions about potential customers may need to be revised. Dech describes her experience, “Interior designers are not textile designers. Our desire was to be a service for interior designers to create something unique for their customer. But there was a missing link there between the interior designer and the actual printed design. We needed to step in and provide that expertise to design a print or connect them with individuals who did.”

Today, interior designers represent one third of the company’s sales. Dech notes that providing digital printing services for retailers’ point of sale elements is another significant market.

Consulting with artists and product designers represent the third major market segment. “We recognized an opportunity for artists and product designers to test a market and then go to larger inventory manufacturing. Another option is to design the product, promote it and print it when it sells,” she said.

Adaptive Textiles uses a zero inventory model to manage its operations. Dech explains the approach. “In a nutshell the zero inventory model allows people to create products without huge investments in manufacturing and holding inventory. In the interior design world it means artists can create fabrics without the backing of a large company. Instead of printing thousands of yards of fabric that sit in a warehouse waiting to be distributed it’s simply idea of printing what you need, when you need it.”

Initially, Adaptive Textiles offered just five ground cloth options. With more than 30 choices today, Dech is looking for more. “It’s a constant struggle to find suitable substrates that don’t look like trade show banner printing. We want substrates that look like traditional screen-printed textiles but have the characteristics to print with our ink system,” she says. ■■



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