

After a few years in New York, where he managed North-American distribution for Taschen, Ralf Daab founded his own publishing house in 2003. Instead of New York, London, or Berlin, he chose Cologne for his headquarters, like Benedikt Taschen before him. His company is named for its founder, too: "daab". About 200 titles bearing this name have made their way around the world so far - books about art, fashion, design, and architecture in 5 languages. Titles include the "Kostas Murkudis" and "Piero Lissoni" monographs, and, more recently, "Shoe Design" and the extraordinary photo book "Room 23" by Diana Jenkins and Deborah Anderson. With his online project "e-daab", the 44 year old entrepreneur is building an international online marketplace for creatives. He also initiated the event series "Cologne Catwalk", showing a level of engagement that's rare for a publisher these days: Ralf Daab nurtures young talent and produces original content.

*interview* **PATRICK KRAUSE**  
*photos* **USER OF EDAAB.COM**

*QVEST: How did edaab come about?*

*RALF DAAB:* edaab evolved out of plans for our event series "Cologne Catwalk", which by now takes place biannually in Cologne, the birthplace of the fashion expo "Bread and Butter". To ensure that the line-up for these shows would be on an international level, we conceived of a blog that works like "Xing for creatives."

*What are the reasons behind the platform's international success?*

Our books are sold throughout the world, books by creatives for creatives. Accordingly, we enjoy high awareness among this target group, and of course we know to leverage that status. We also used edaab to solicit submissions for the catwalk shows. Applicants can create a profile and upload their collections through galleries. The number and quality of applications significantly exceeded our expectations. Designers from Scandinavia, Belgium, Holland, England, and Germany signed up for edaab immediately. We selected ten of them to present their collections as a part of Cologne Catwalk.

*Actually, it's a fairly simple idea. Has there really never been anything like it?*

There probably are hundreds if not thousands in the world. We certainly profit from a certain degree of credibility that is rooted in our record as international publishers.

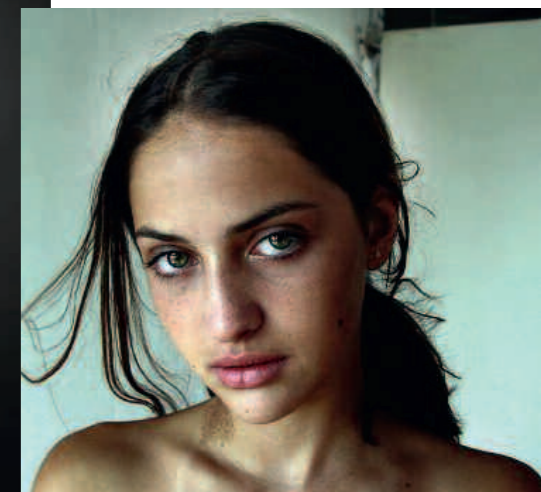
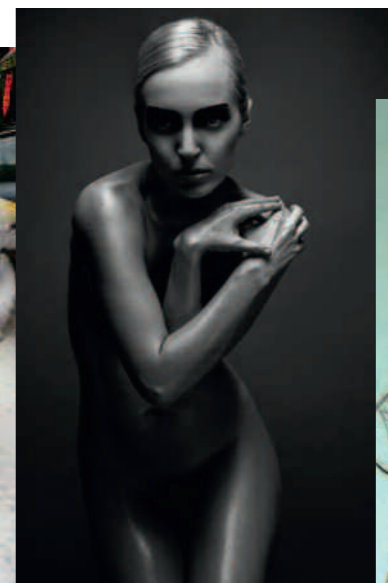
*How is edaab different from other well-known creative platforms where people put themselves on display?*

Edaab is not a showcase for the ego, but a professional web 2.0 community for creatives, and it's quite different from Facebook or Myspace. It's not a social community but a platform where creative minds can present and discuss their work.

*How is edaab structured?*

edaab's design is very clear-cut. Profiles and galleries provide a well laid-out framework that doesn't distract from the content. First and foremost, there's no advertising on edaab. At the moment, edaab has more than 1,200 members, and more join every day. The snowball keeps on growing, and word is getting out in the scene. Well-known designers like

from edaab.com »photographie galleries«



**ELECTRONIC***Ralf*  
<http://www.edaab.com>

*photo* **DAVID ARNOLD**

Karim Rashid, Matali Crasset, Jean-Marie Massaud, and Kostas Murkudis are already edaab members. We're launching an edaab online magazine soon that profiles successful members. The interview series 10Q2, with prominent edaab members, offers a taste of what's to come.

*Why is there a "Cologne Catwalk" - aren't there enough fashion shows?*

VieThese days, many publishers mainly concern themselves with selecting external content that is offered to them and reviewing it for sales potential. This is a process we engage in also - but not exclusively. We seek out close personal contact with our themes and with our readers. Catwalk is an event that perfectly combines the two. We want to give something back to the market, and we don't want to forget how to create our own content. Of course, we are planning a book project in conjunction with the "Cologne Catwalk" event series.

*Why does this project not take place in a city famous for its fashion?*

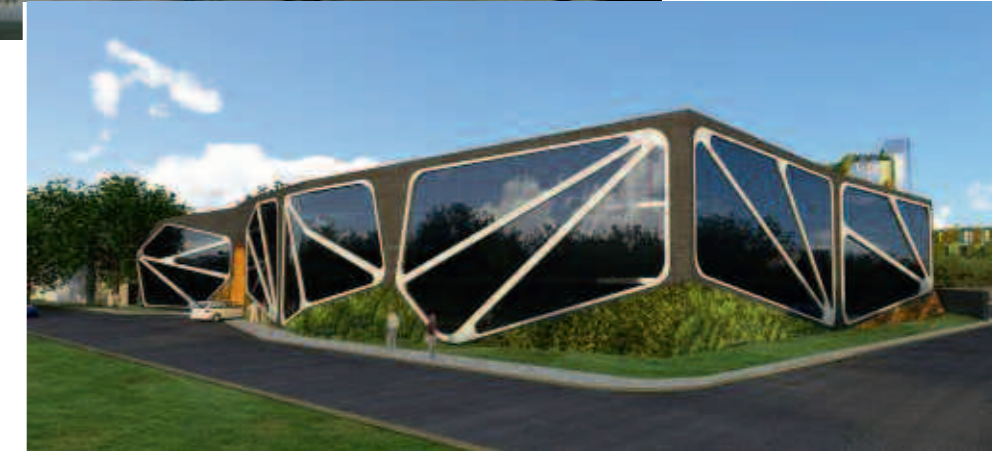
Our publishing house is located in Cologne, a city with a pleasantly unpretentious and highly efficient creative scene that is extremely well connected internationally.

*You switch back and forth between book publishing, fashion events, and digital innovation - what did you study?*

After training as a merchant, I was a business major and worked in a lot of jobs, so I got around quite a bit.

*You don't come from the world of publishing?*

I was on vacation in New York with a friend who worked for Taschen. He told me they were looking for a distributor. A little while later, I moved to New York and opened an office there. Selling books led me to their content.



»We want to give something back to the market, and we don't want to forget how to create our own content.«

from edaab.com »architecture galleries«

from »Cologne Catwalk«



from edaab.com »advertising galleries«

»edaab is not a showcase for the ego, but a professional web 2.0 community for creatives.«

**RALF DAAB**

