



Anja Koschemann presents
several of her Garden Eden products

“There is hardly
anything we can't do.”

Handmade dildos from Dresden

If you order a dildo from Anja Koschemann, you can be sure to get a unique product. All the toys her company SelfDelve create, are designed, moulded, and painted by hand. The "Garden Eden" collection has become something of a trademark of the Dresden-based company: dildos shaped after fruit and vegetables. But there are lots of other artfully shaped products in the SelfDelve range, and the team also creates toys to customer specifications. In our EAN interview, Anja Koschemann tells us why she couldn't imagine having any other job, and why her customers set such great store by product quality.

exclusive

You own a dildo manufacture in Dresden. When did you start SelfDelve, and how did you get the idea to create dildos by hand?

Anja Koschemann: This project has developed slowly, over the course of time. At the beginning, I just wanted to realise my personal wish for perfectly safe products. Several months after I had moulded the first dildos, I started thinking about going into business for myself. And then, one day, all the preparations had been made, all the requirements were met, and I jumped in at the deep end in 2006. Turns out it worked – until today, I have the greatest job anyone could imagine!

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Please tell us more about your work routine. How is your type of production different from the mass production?

Anja Koschemann: The individual steps are probably rather similar. You get moulds and fill them with viscous, coloured silicone so it cools into a more or less solid base body. After



“Each individual dildo is painted a little differently.”

de-moulding and de-burring the toy, it is subjected to several refining processes, and once it's finished, you package and ship it. However, in the case of SelfDelve, all of that takes place on a much smaller, personal scale. Also, things take more time because I don't speed up the procedure with extremely high temperatures, giant filling units, hundreds of moulds, and automated sequences.

Since you are producing your toys by hand, does that mean that each item is unique?

Anja Koschemann: Yes! Each individual dildo is painted a little differently, and there are also a few unique optical effects in each one of them. The base body and the adornments contain pigments that change in colour once the product has warmed up to body temperature.

That is also the reason why I decided to have a little chameleon as the company logo.

Apart from the design, do your products also differ from factory-made dildos in other ways?

Anja Koschemann: If you look at industrial production, people don't take as much time as we do to add little details such as adornments made of silicone of a different colour, or adding another layer of see-through silicone to give the toy a smooth, extra-shiny look. What's more, I also offer many toys in two different levels of hardness. Finally, each one of my little pieces of art is placed in a tinplate box and wrapped in black silk paper or put in a pretty silk pouch. I enjoy that aspect of my work a lot, and it is very important to me that dedication and passion shine through in every step of production.



The first step to a new toy is moulding and casting

One of your most popular collections is the Garden Eden line, consisting of fruit- and vegetable-shaped dildos. Where did the idea for that come from?

Anja Koschemann: Nature offers various shapes that would make a perfect dildo. Alas, the hard ends of a banana are too scratchy, maize is too rigid, and cucumber peel is full of pesticides. So you can't simply put these stimulating shapes to use in the bedroom – and if you did, it wouldn't be as pleasurable as you had hoped. Therefore, I take the best nature has to offer and combine it with the best materials I can offer. And there you go.

Can you also cater to specific customer wishes?

Anja Koschemann: For one, we can mould the base body of the toy in the customer's favourite colour. Also, I can paint names, initials, symbols, animals, etc. on the toy. There is hardly anything we can't do as far as that is concerned. Depending on how much additional work these embellishments necessitate, this may drive up the price a little, and of course, it will take a few days longer – but then you get the product you wanted, a unique toy to

use yourself or present to your lover. Personally, I think these adorned products make for wonderful gifts.

Can you also create completely new toys with unique shapes, based on customer wishes? If so, could you give us an example of such one-of-a-kind toys?

Anja Koschemann: We can definitely do that. Now and then, I even get templates a customer has modelled him- or herself, so I make a mould of those and create an individual silicone copy. And of course, the customers can choose from a great range of options. Before production begins, it's usually a back and forth of e-mails to make sure everything is exactly the way the customer wants it to be. Once everything is agreed on, we set to work. We have already worked on turned dildos, an egg-in-an-eggcup design, or a collection of YONI models for someone who offers sensual body massage courses. These models were designed to match the anatomical characteristics, but certain elements were emphasised so the course participants could clearly see and feel them when practising genital massages. This way, they could learn new, more pleasurable ways to caress the yoni of the beloved.

Do you also offer vibrators or the option to add vibration to your toys?

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Anja Koschemann: My own collections never contain motors. However, the shapes of the toys allow for the insertion of a placeholder during the moulding procedure, so a vibration unit could be added later on. I have already done that a few times, and it works perfectly. The customers only need to buy a vibration unit, and once they have placed it in the prefabricated recess, they can use the toy as a dildo and as a vibrator.



Inspired by mother nature:
the Garden Eden Collection

Looking at your product range, do you have any favourites, or are there products that are particularly popular among the customers?

Anja Koschemann: As for the Garden Eden collection, the undisputed top-seller is the corn cob. The knobby surface creates never-before-felt sensations. Most toys have a smooth surface, which makes the corn cob very special. It is definitely one of our customers' favourites. We also have a Sculptures collection, and here, "The Lovers" are particularly popular. In combination with the neat black/white design, the size, the varied surface irregularities, and the soft edges, this is a truly aesthetic and exciting sex toy.

You are offering your products on your own website. But can the consumers also buy them in retail stores? Where should trade members turn to if they want to sell your dildos?

Anja Koschemann: From the very beginning, my toys have also been available at upscale online shops and in erotic boutiques in many German cities where quality materials and craftsmanship are appreciated and where consumers get all the advice and information they need. This network of shops and boutiques continues to grow every month. Trade members can register as resellers on my homepage or simply write an e-mail. I will get back to them as soon as possible to clarify the details and answer any questions that may arise before we start our collaboration.

German hand-made sex toys ... that is pretty much the polar opposite of a low-price mass-produced Chinese toy. Do you think that there is a shift towards high-quality - and thus also more expensive - toys in the erotic industry?

Anja Koschemann: Sex toys are part of our lifestyle today, and you will find them in most households in the Western hemisphere. Once you have used them and have grown to like them, you will naturally want a top-quality product that will give you pleasure for a long time, without any negative side effects. What's more, many people are tired of soulless, mass-produced products and pay more attention to individualism, diversity, style, and not least of all ecological aspects.

Everybody knows that you can't have everything for 0.99EUR – and people are willing and ready to pay a fair price and foster this development.

Apart from the design, safety is also a big criterion for sex toys. Do you believe this factor could convince many first-time toy buyers to pick your products, in spite of the price tag?

Anja Koschemann: Like other responsible-minded producers, I set great store by top-quality materials; I only use perfectly safe silicone and non-toxic colours. People see that, and they appreciate it. Another important criterion for many customers are the shapes of the products themselves. Most of the

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Apart from fruit- and vegetable-inspired dildos, SelfDelve also offers lots of abstract shapes

buyers really like the relaxed design choices because the dildos are not so in-your-face or explicit that you could tell their purpose at first glance. They appreciate my playful approach and the unambiguously-ambiguous, colourful look and feel.

Whenever people ask me to, I help them find the product that is right for them. Some of them are private buyers, other are retailers looking for a neat new product. I love talking to them, and I think that communication is very important. That's also why I invest a lot of time in e-mails, Facebook, Xing, and my blog, talking about my work on all of these channels.

Do you want to add new products to your collection in the near future? How do you go about designing a new toy?

Anja Koschemann: With the Garden Eden toys, the first step is always looking for the right shape in gardens, at markets, and in the vegetable section of the local supermarket. Usually, I already have a certain size and surface character in mind when I start searching for a template, but finding it can take months. But sometimes, the perfect fruit or vegetable falls into my lap by mere chance when I go shopping, or when friends of mine find something they think I'd like. Next, I need a perfect mould of the fruit. Depending on what you are working with, that can

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require various techniques, and sometimes, it doesn't work out. But once there is a perfect mould, I can start making the first proto castings. Now, I need to find out if the shape truly has erotic potential, and so I let people test it. Only if enough testers are taken with the toy do I move on to the next step. This is the step where I have to decide which type of silicone would be best for this product, what I should do in terms of colours, adornments, etc. Once that is done, the prototype can be followed up with a low-volume production run. If everything works out the way I want it to, we start doing the maths and taking pictures – and a new toy is added to the product range.

With other products, I take a different approach and start by making sketches. Usually, I do that for geometrical dildos that are heavy on shape. Many discussions later, we start modelling, changing, smoothing, changing some more, starting again from scratch, and improving until I see something that holds the potential of being a seductive dildo. The next steps are the same with every toy I make: making a mould, casting, testing, analysing, optimising until we finally arrive at the finished product. And then all that's left for me to do is hope that the customers like it.

Usually, I am always working on at least two potential new products. As a result, there are times when I focus more on a certain project, and there are phases when it's on the back burner. I wish I had more time for playing around with ideas and experimenting. Don't get me wrong, I am very happy that the routine production is keeping me so busy, but I feel that I am neglecting that process a little bit right now. Fortunately, I am going to add more people to my team shortly, so that's about to change. I am definitely looking forward to a colourful, exciting future with SelfDelve!

