



Previous page: photo: Peter Ginter/Edition Lammerhuber

This Page: LHCb Experiment, courtesy of CERN



### JIL SANDER

The secret star of Raf Simons' grand coda at JIL SANDER, the strappy heel on the very last look nicely encapsulated the designer's seven-year stint at the house: a manifesto to revolutionize continental femininity with material innovation and an electronic aesthetic. A fuchsia squiggle runs up the side of the open-toed beauty (shown here also in a closed point-toe version with fluorescent yellow), improbably recasting the ultra-feminine shoe as a distant cousin of the neon-swooshed Air Max.

### LARGE HADRON COLLIDER

“A human being is part of a whole, called by us the Universe, a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings, as something separated from the rest – a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison.” This sage nugget, opening up entire dimensions on some of 032c’s core concepts – freedom, power, perception and truth – was pronounced by a wild-haired, Ulm-born physicist named Albert Einstein. Printed in large letters over a double spread of LHC, a big, glossy new tome from Edition Lammerhuber, the quote also encapsulates the ultra-technical yet sublimely philosophical appeal of the book and its subject. Residing in a 27-kilometer ring-shaped tunnel buried underneath the Franco-Swiss border, the Large Hadron Collider is a particle accelerator developed and run by the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) to solve some of the remaining mysteries of physics, and by extension, of life. It is also one of the largest, most complex scientific instruments that man has ever built, unimaginably precise and, in parts, colder than outer space. The list of superlatives is long, quickly approaching meaninglessness. Way more enticing is the endeavor’s reason to exist. By bringing protons to collision at velocities that are incomprehensible to the average person, the 10,000 scientists from over a hundred countries working on the LHC recreate the conditions that existed during the picosecond (that’s one millionth of a millionth of a second) after the Big Bang, when an immense concentration of energy was converted to matter and our macrocosm was officially born. Ostensibly, the aim of it all was to prove the existence of the Higgs boson, the missing subatomic puzzle piece needed to confirm existing theories and maybe one day understand the dark matter which accounts for 95% of the Universe. With the recent announcement that the elusive particle has most probably been found by CERN’s researchers, the mega-project’s mission would seem accomplished. Far from it – this year’s discovery marks only a milestone in the long quest to find science’s real holy grail, namely answers to some of humanity’s most enduring questions: Where do we come from? How did everything begin? Is there a grand design to Life? What, exactly, is Nothing? This makes the LHC nothing less than a metaphysicist’s wet dream, the mother of all machines, equal parts Dan Brown and Ian Fleming. Easy to forget among all this geeky and existential magnificence is the thing’s equally awesome aesthetic value. The conceptual beauty of science, with its naturally occurring symmetries and tendency towards simplicity, goes without saying. The machine itself, however, with its disorienting sense of scale and multi-colored cables, pipes, and tubes, is arousing in its own right, like a more real, pumped-up subterranean Centre Pompidou, a thrill captured by Peter Ginter’s hi-res photo plates in the new book. The evocative accompanying text compares the experience of visiting the research facility to that of entering Egyptian burial chambers and Medieval cathedrals, while the experiment’s findings – vast amounts of data gathered from the collisions – are made visible in color-coded, snowflake- and firework-shaped diagrams that wouldn’t look out of place on a gallery wall. Despite the undeniable visual pleasure one gets from all this, what’s most impressive about the LHC, now splendidly documented on high-grade stock, is that it exists for no other reason than the acquisition of knowledge, a beast-like creation built out of sheer curiosity, adventure, and ambition – human ingenuity bordering on folly.