



OG-107 – Serge Steuer used to be a doctor. After spending his youth between Siberia, hippie camps and experimental drug use, he studied medicine in his native Ukraine and practiced in conflict-torn Albania. Steuer’s medical formation serves as the unlikely backstory for the small army clothes business he started in Berlin in 2003. The store, a mere 40 square meters inconspicuously located on the border between the Mitte and Pankow districts, encapsulates its owner’s unusual resume as well as the peculiar obsessions this life has formed. OG-107, as it is named after a shade of olive green, is a military mini-museum, stylists’ trove and cabinet of curios – all in one.

Stepping inside isn’t for those afraid of cramped rooms: walls are lined with hundreds of military jackets and coats, mostly from Russia, while from the ceiling hangs a forest of belts, bags and the occasional gun. Hats and combat boots fill up the tight remaining space. There are priceless items among all this, like the lining of submarine jacket that looks like it could be a Fendi Astrakan coat. Steuer’s personal history may provide a novel’s worth of narrative capital for his retail enterprise, but he insists that it is merely a means to support his primary cause and driving obsession: the shop’s windows. Documenting a lifelong critical fascination with war and its symbols, the windows contain a display of books, photographs, dolls and other paraphernalia that seems haphazard, but is in fact carefully curated to reflect Steuer’s ideological and moral concerns. In its totality, the store thus functions as an idiosyncratic, organically-grown and self-sufficient contradiction: an army outlet with an anti-militarist agenda, an economic operation whose sole *raison d’être* is to subsidize the political views of one man, whose biography is the stuff films scripts are made of. And without knowing it, Steuer’s little empire offers a business school case study at a time when companies spend millions to create artificially “dense” environments for consumption and to spin equally unconvincing tales of “inherited” authenticity – with a story as richly layered as its cluttered interior, OG-107 exemplifies real, unmanufactured density.

