



Reflections and Dialogues

Culture.fashion is an open, value-driven network that is moving towards a future proof fashion sector. To showcase a wider variety of voices, culture.fashion invites various contributors to reflect on certain events within the Dutch fashion industry.

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‘The New’ isn’t Chic, or is it?

We invited Lindy Boerman, student at the MA Fashion Strategy of ArtEZ University of the Arts Arnhem, to reflect on the Fashion for Good x Redress event.

REDRESS DESIGN AWARD

2020

DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO RETHINK FASHION?
重構時尚, 你可以嗎?

APPLY BY 18 MARCH 2020
2020年3月18日截止報名

ORGANISER 主辦機構: REDRESS
LEAD SPONSOR 主要贊助機構: CREATEHK

SILVER SPONSOR 銀質贊助: VF CORPORATION
LOGISTICS PARTNER 物流夥伴: ups
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The Fashion for Good x Redress event focuses on the question: 'how can we design fashion differently? This is an online panel discussion moderated by journalist Susie Lau. She speaks with Christina Dean (founder of Redress), Gönül Yiğit (Dutch fashion designer and Redress Design Award 2020 finalist) and Duran Lantink (Dutch fashion designer and upcycling virtuoso). Fashion for Good is an organization founded in 2017. Their mission is to make the fashion industry more sustainable. They do so by connecting brands, innovative companies and all different types of initiatives who actively create change. One of these initiatives is Redress, the most well-known sustainable fashion design competition. The Redress Design Award 2020 Exhibition is revealed at the Fashion for Good museum in Amsterdam during the online panel discussion, bringing these two parties together.

Lau opens the discussion by stating: 'it's a year where the pace of fashion has come to a standstill, but also physical fashion is paused, it's a timing issue.' This relates to the current Corona crisis and what impact it has on everyone and everything involved in the fashion industry. There is a demand for a different pace, with several brands announcing they quit pre-collections like **Michael Kors** or **Gucci**. This shows a focus on 'we need to do something, and we are going to do it.' This mind set is also discussed by Dean. She explains how she noticed an improvement in the awareness of participants since the beginning of the Redress contest, more than ten years ago. Initially, the focus laid on resourcing waste, whereas now the participants come up with full (circular) lifecycles for garments. The level of understanding amongst these candidates is widely improved and she calls them 'activists' instead. Their focus is not only on doing it, but also on arguing the importance: 'this is the only way to do it.'

Every participant in the Redress competition creates a garment with its own story and research. This gives more meaning to clothing, and this is exactly what Yiğit's focus is as well. In the panel she speaks of the responsibility of designers to put (more) meaning and purpose into the clothing they make and design. She also expressed how disappointed she was when she discovered how the fashion industry operated. It was really nice to hear her say those words, as I completely support this view. I also feel disappointed as a fashion student by the functioning of the industry, and I am sure we are not the only ones.



© Gönül Yiğit - Suitable

Another issue is the level of sale in the industry, which is at the core of Lantink's practice. He once scrolled through Farfetch and constantly saw the red sale sign. He questioned: 'how could it be possible that all designers and houses have this thing that is called sale?' And 'where is this sale thing going and what are people doing with it?' I find these questions relevant as my mailbox is exploding with e-mails shouting 'now more pieces 70% off', and the number of emails has only increased since the beginning of the crisis.



© Duran Lantink x JOYCE, photo Jan Hoek

@Duran Lantink, Post Black Friday
Installation at Centraal Museum



reflections #5

This relates to the following question Lau asks: 'How do we shift away from the idea that everything should be 100% new?' Lantink mentions that '100% new it not chic. Repurposing or renewing is the new chic, because of the knowledge about the dirtiness of new stuff.' The fashion industry has always been about 'the new'. **Trends are used to communicate that fashion is now 'up-to-date', and that we should dispose our old clothes because they are out of style.** This feeds an immense desire for consumption and can be indeed called dirty. But what about new ideas, new materials and new narratives? For example, Yiğit with her desire to create more meaning into garments with her collection Suitable? And Lantink by putting new life into old stock with his eclectic designs? They give another meaning and definition to the word 'new', one that I would like to see for the fashion industry. This 'new' is a problem solver, as opposed to the dirty, producing and – unfortunately – current 'new'.

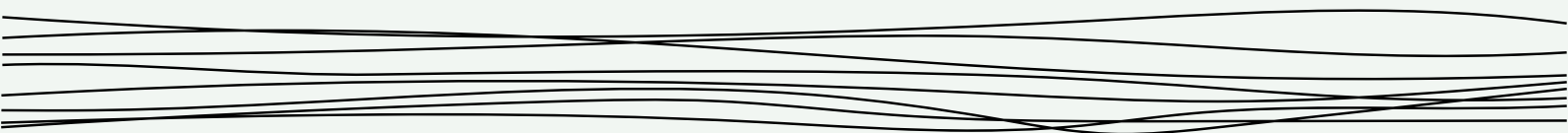
The fashion industry's focus on 'the new' is not chic. However, 'the new' created by Dean, Yiğit and Lantink is, each in its own way, chic. Isn't it?



dialogues #1



with Nannet van der Kleijn
and Annemieke Koster
by Marjolein Stormezand



A celebration of art – reflection in time, een project over verbintenis, ambacht, aandacht en tijd

Eens in de tien jaar, rond haar verjaardag, vindt Nannet van der Kleijn, ontwerper, design thinker en hoofd van de modeafdeling van de HKU, het tijd voor een groot project. Eens in de tien jaar is nu. Afgelopen januari zette Van der Kleijn de eerste schets voor wat a celebration of art -reflection in time is geworden; een project dat gaat over vrije interpretatie en persoonlijke rituelen. Maar ook oaver verbintenis, ambacht, aandacht en tijd. Van der Kleijn stuurde 504 personen - vrienden, kunstenaars en makers,- maar ook mensen waar ze ineens een klik mee had op het treinstation - een handgeschreven brief met daarin het verzoek om een linnen A4, gekocht bij Annemieke Koster, oprichter en eigenaar van Textielstad Enschede, 'tot leven te brengen in hun eigen 'taal'. De uitkomst van die briefwisseling, de werken, waren van van 26 november tot 29 november 2020 te zien in de tentoonstellingsruimte van Bradwolff Projects in Amsterdam.

© Rosa van Ederen



Nannet van der Kleijn: 'Mijn hele leven ben ik bezig met intuïtie en autonomie, maar echt vrij werk maken, kan ik maar eens in de zoveel tijd. Dit is zo'n ander gevoel dan toegepast werk

maken, zoals mode bijvoorbeeld. Wanneer ik hiermee ben begonnen? Het idee voor dit project ontstond tijdens de Biënnale van Venetië vorig jaar. Wanneer ik tussen de kunsten loop, gebeurt er iets, dan kan ik uit mijn vaste denken stappen.'

Annemieke Koster: 'Was het niet daarvoor? In de zomer van 2019 toen je in Insel Hombroich verbleef?'

Van der Kleijn en Koster werken niet alleen samen - een logische partnerschap tussen een ontwerper en leidinggevende van een modeafdeling en een eigenaar van een textiel fabriek, maar zijn ook vriendinnen, sparringpartners. Ze voelen elkaar goed aan, blijkt wanneer we plaatsnemen in de ruimte waar de restanten van de nog niet verkochte werken, de dozen en de brieven, opgesteld staan. Ze zijn yin en yang, in allerlei opzichten. Dat vertel ik ze niet. De opbrengst van het gehele project (de bezoeker betaalt voor een werk 150 euro) doneert Van der Kleijn aan Koster. Wat Koster later aan van der Kleijn laat weten is dat zij die donatie weer gebruikt om een fonds op te zetten dat studenten in staat stelt materialen te ontwikkelen in haar fabriek, wat Van der Kleijn ontroert.

Nannet van der Kleijn: 'Oh ja. Het was in de zomer dat ik een enorme behoefte had aan een retraite. Waar voel ik mij nou het gelukkigst, vroeg ik mezelf. Het antwoord is in Insel Hombroich, een moerasmuseum niet ver van Düsseldorf vandaan. In een klooster ben ik daar negen dagen in retraite gegaan.'

Jan Schoon, eigenaar van het gelijknamige communicatie en pr-bureau, loopt de ruimte binnen. Van der Kleijn vraagt hem in een woord

Insel Hombroich te omschrijven. 'Ademen', zegt hij. 'Natuur en kunst vullen elkaar daar heel mooi aan. Door het park lopen en de paviljoens in- en uitlopen is als inademen en uitademen. Constant ademen.'

Nannet van der Kleijn: 'Dus dat heb ik daar gedaan. Tussen de kunsten en het landschap voerde ik gesprekken met mezelf, kwam ik weer op een lijn. Dat was de voorbereiding. In januari dit jaar kwam pas het echte idee voor a celebration of art -reflection in time. Het moest gaan over doorgeven, over de migratie van verhalen. Direct ben ik naar naar Christine van den Bergh - curator van Bradwolff - gegaan. "Jij gaat hier iets doen", merkte ze meteen op. Die dag heb ik de randvoorwaarden voor het project genoteerd. Met de nauwkeurigheid van een architect ben ik de muren gaan meten. 4 meter en 10 centimeter hoog. Die muren niet, daar moest ruimte tussen blijven, daar moest het licht komen en zo kwam ik op 504 staande A4-tjes uit. Daarna belde ik Annemieke op met de vraag of ze 504 A4-tjes linnen voor me had. Ze stelde voor ze te stansen.'

Annemieke Koster: 'Ik heb alleen materiaal gebruikt wat ik nog had. Nannet had niet doorgegeven of ze de A4-tjes staand of liggend wilde ophangen. Om de ketting en de inslag in dezelfde richting te houden, heb ik ze er staand uitgehaald. Dat is zo maf, dat zijn dus toch van die conditioneringen.'

Als kader voor het project kregen 504 mensen een linnen A4. Waarom linnen? We staan in Nederland niet direct bekend om onze linnenproductie.

Nannet van der Kleijn: 'In eerste instantie omdat ik een connectie heb met Annemieke.'

Annemieke Koster: 'Het eerste textiel dat in de Twentse textiel fabrieken werd gemaakt was bombazijn; een mix van katoen en linnen. Alles viel op zijn plek.' Nannet van der Kleijn: 'Een linnen A4 is een vraag om leven. Als ik er over nadenk, zitten er zoveel lagen in het waarom een linnen A4. Met Orson & Bodil [Van der Kleijn was Bodil van het ontwerpersduo toen er nog het &-teken tussen stond red.] hebben



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we eens een linnen festival in Parijs gewonnen. Voor Orson & Bodil werkte ik voor Mexx. Dat was nog de tijd van de fax. Mijn ontwerpen kwamen zo plat terug. Ik heb daardoor een haat-liefde-verhouding met het formaat. Ik wilde leven toevoegen aan het formaat. Dat schreef ik ook de makers in de brief: "Het linnen krijgt leven door jouw toevoeging." Het is interessant om te zien hoe iedereen daar zijn eigen interpretatie aan geeft. Mensen zonder kunstachtergrond zagen het linnen niet als canvas, maar als een uitnodiging om erop te schrijven.'

Annemieke Koster: 'Je kunt een splitsing maken. Sommige mensen kiezen ervoor om een reflectie van zichzelf weer te geven; een portret, een foto op linnen. Je hebt ook mensen die juist de behoefte voelen het linnen te ontrafelen, om er afstand van te nemen. Die hebben het linnen letterlijk tot weefsel gemaakt.'

Jan Schoon druppelt weer binnen. 'Ik ga even afscheid nemen, dankjewel Nannet. Mag ik je morgen appen voor een quote of ben je dan aan het bijkomen?' Nannet antwoordt dat ze dat nog niet weet.

Wat heerlijk dat je zegt 'ik weet het niet'. We zijn zo geconditioneerd om te denken dat we alles moeten weten. Of om antwoord te geven wanneer ons iets wordt gevraagd.

Nannet van der Kleijn: 'Het grote niet weten... Ik weet het ook echt nog niet. Ik weet wel dat iemand om 10.00 uur iets komt ophalen. Ik denk dat ik dan wakker ben. Ik gun het anderen ook om zo te leven. Daarom is dit project er ook. Wanneer je werk maakt, haal je ruis uit het leven.'

De eerste woorden die in mij opkwamen na het zien van de werken waren verbinding en tijd. Als ik niet beter wist, zou ik denken dat dit project ook gaat over de coronaperiode, waarin contact minder aanwezig is, maar de behoefte eraan juist groter. Waarin het soms lijkt dat de tijd overweldigend is. Dat er zowel een gebrek als een teveel aan is.

Nannet van der Kleijn: 'Het voelt en past bij het moment van nu. Dat gebeurt vaker wanneer ik werk maak, maar ik ben daar niet bewust mee bezig. Lidewij Edelkoort heeft een keer tegen me gezegd dat ik de trends leef. Ik vind het fascinerend dat dit zo is, en voor toegepast werk gebruik ik het ook. Dan vind ik dingen, woordjes bijvoorbeeld, waar weer andere dingen uit voortkomen. Ik forceer het niet, het idee moet organisch groeien.'

Toch lijkt er een grote behoefte te zijn om dit project naast organisch te laten groeien wel te ordenen. Je weet precies wie wat heeft teruggestuurd en aanwie je het werk weer verkocht hebt. De eerste keer bij Bradwolff begon je aan een bijna architectonische tekening. Nannet van der Kleijn: 'Ja, dat is het pragmatische, om het respect te geven.'

Annemieke Koster: 'Alles zit in het hoofd van Nannet, de doos die erbij kwam, de brief, of het ontbreken ervan. Ik heb dit project vanaf de zijlijn meegemaakt en het steeds groter zien worden. Omvangrijker, energieker. Het project heeft veel teweeggebracht, in Nannet maar ook in de omgeving.'

Nannet laat haar Moleskine zien waarin ze de aantallen teruggezonden brieven heeft bijgehouden. 'Het was de bedoeling dat alleen dit schriftje over zou blijven.' Of ze geen moeite heeft om afstand te doen van de werken, is mijn laatste vraag. 'Nee', zegt ze stellig. 'Ook dat hoort erbij, om het weer los te laten. Want uiteindelijk is dat de essentie: dat je iets geeft en iets terugkrijgt. En daarna laat je het gaan.'



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reflections #4

Oshin Siao Bhatt

Whataboutery 02
**India's Decolonial Approaches to land,
labour, and the fashion industry**

Oshin Siao Bhatt is a researcher and writer from New Delhi, India with a background in Sociology and Social Anthropology, currently pursuing a Master at the Critical Inquiry Lab at The Design Academy Eindhoven, reflecting on the second Whataboutery of 'This is an Intervention'.

The second edition of the Whataboutery sessions held by **State of Fashion** brought on board Dr. Vandana Shiva, Nishanth Chopra (Oshadi Collective), and Rupsi Garg (Kheti Virasat Mission), to discuss the impact of colonization on land and labour within the Indian subcontinent, moderated by Indian-American sustainable fashion leader Aditi Mayer. Mayer eloquently led the exchange, allowing the diverse perspectives brought in by the three panelists to illustrate the ways in which issues of land, labour, sustainability, and culture are intimately tied to the fashion industry that thrives on colonial practices and institutions. The panel brought to the fore the continual exploitation and extraction of natural as well as human resources with direct roots in processes of colonization which, far from being abstractions of the past, are very much extant in India today.

© Whataboutery 2 speakers



Of Protests and (Green) Revolutions

The discussion centering issues of land, labour, and farmer livelihoods seemed timely, also, in light of the farmer protests that have mobilised support across India, in opposition to the new 'Farm Laws' that were passed in parliament this September. Dr. Shiva has argued that the laws, which will not only determine the production and prices of food but also the livelihoods of farmers and the management of soils, biodiversity and natural resources, could dismantle India's biodiversity-based tradition of self-sufficiency. It may also destroy a regulatory system, in place for roughly 70 years, protecting small farmers and the food sovereignty of the country. The context of these protests moreover, in addition to specific questions of the three bills, cannot be divorced from the larger theme of colonization.

In the late 1960s the northern state of Punjab, now at the helm of the farmer protests, became the main beneficiary of the Green Revolution, which introduced high-yielding varieties of wheat and paddy across India. The agricultural marketing system that was put in place in the region, with an open-ended procurement scheme under which any amount of grain brought to the market would be purchased by the government at Minimum Support Price (MSP), ensured farmers a return on their investment. While these assurances will now be undermined under the new laws, the Green Revolution itself was a remnant of colonial systems and power struc-

tures. Colonialism and the annexation by the East India Company, not only subdued India's textile economy but also represented what Dr. Shiva has called 'a major land grab', turning the region into an exporter of raw materials rather than a producer of goods and food supplies. The legacy of colonial rule, moreover, was the rise of nation-states with a unified, western-centric notion of modernity and development.

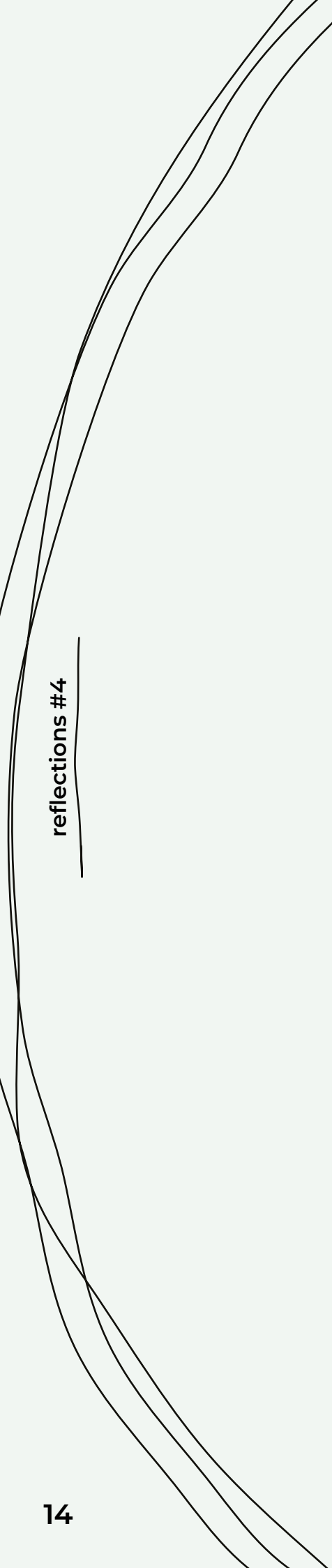
Post-independence India, in this regard, was no different. The history of Indian modernity is intertwined with colonial ideas, education, and thought. Partha Chatterji has argued that India's critique towards anticolonialism often reflects the norms and values of the colonizer; reproducing the systemic oppression rampant during the colonial period. The nation-building efforts of the independent Indian state, moreover, were also based upon western education and ideas; such that science and technology took primacy in the construction of not only industry, but also agriculture. The Green Revolution, then, became one such instance where the state sought to break away from 'traditional, primitive, and backward' farming practices and introduce technological advancements, which would nudge Indian agriculture on a path of "progress".

©Ashish Chandra



Oshin Siao Bhatt

While the narrative of innovation and progress ran rampant across developing nations, Dr. Vandana Shiva has pointed out the increase in poverty that accompanied the efforts towards rapid industrialization. The Green Revolution, she has argued, was directly responsible for the water crisis, rising prices, farmer suicides, and eventually the ethnic violence, which followed in Punjab in 1984. Furthermore, these events also point to forces of neo-colonization, which played out in the activities of chemical companies like Monsanto seeking to control not only the market for pesticides and chemical fertilizers, but also the seeds that were genetically modified and patented to prevent seed saving, under the WTO intellectual property rights agreement. In preventing farmers, once again, from being in control of their produce, this agreement was reminiscent of colonial practices, which constructed a rupture in the relationship between the land and labour. The farmer debts created by this system, was



only one side of the story. With the increase in BT crops and monoculture, regenerative and biodiversity-based farming practices also steadily declined.

Towards Sustenance, Dignity, and Postcolonial Realities

The notion of India being a predominantly agricultural country with a village-based economy has dominated anthropology for several decades. While the urban population, now, is steadily increasing under the influence of market driven aspirations and realities, the agricultural heritage is one that is deeply connected to the crafts, cultures, and livelihoods of the subcontinent. Rupsi Garg speaks about the program run by Kheti Virasat Mission under the umbrella of Trinjan, which facilitates the procurement, spinning, and weaving of organic cotton to promote the revival of organic farming and traditional forms of crafts associated with it. In doing so, she argues, the organisation seeks not only to provide employment but also to create a platform for the community to gather and preserve 'the warp and weft of society'. Inspired by Mohandas Gandhi's ideas of a 'Village Republic', Kheti Virasat Mission hopes to advance self-sufficiency through local production and local consumption.

In tackling the question of colonization, the glaring impact on local and subsistence economies cannot be overlooked. The loss of traditional farming methods, cultures of crafts, and even socio-cultural ties associated with these activities, can be traced back to the colonial rule as well as to the neo-colonial forces prevalent today in global markets, consumer culture, and fast fashion. Initiatives such as Kheti Virasat Mission, then, shine light upon the need to undertake decolonial approaches that take into account the larger ecosystems within which local economies and cultures can thrive. What this program also brings to the fore is the question of value, both economic and cultural, and labour, when considering issues of consumption. While sustainable consumption is steadily becoming a trend within the world of fashion, it is necessary to ensure that the conversation is driven by concerns around people, cultures, and communities as much as questions around the environment.

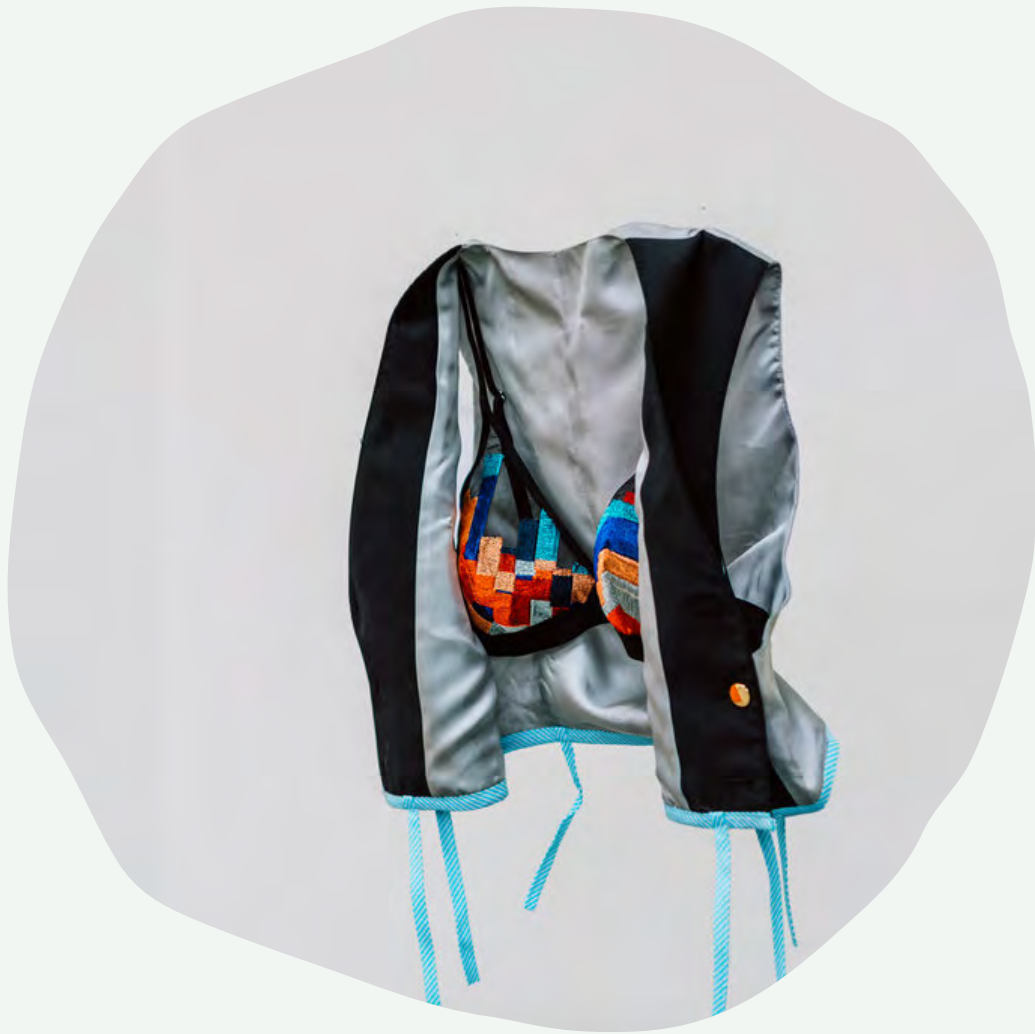
In this regard, then, it is also vital to take into account the complex socio-economic reasons that farmers and artisans alike might choose to cater to a commercial market, in addition to renewing traditional forms of exchanges. Given the postcolonial realities within which these communities exist, today, it is immanent that a decolonial approach centers the needs, aspirations, and realities of those who are at the forefront of cultural, economic, and social production. The Oshadi Collective, run by Nishant Chopra, becomes a telling example of such a relationship, wherein a regenerative approach to growing cotton, woven by local weavers, culminates in a fashion supply chain that ensures fair prices and sustainable processes for the workers. This notion of sustainability takes into account the livelihoods, cultures, and needs of the communities involved, such that they can be self-reliant both within their private and public lives. Decoloniality, in this regard, cannot be divorced from the ideas of dignity of labour and regard for personal and socio-economic aspirations.



Way Forward: Accountability in Decoloniality

While the global market economy and practices rooted in colonial institutions and ideas are deeply embedded within the Indian subcontinent, efforts such as the ones discussed in this panel are steadily furthering the conversation around ensuring equitable and dignified working conditions for those involved in production processes. The diversity of approaches and paradigms towards this issue, however, is also a clear reminder of the diversity of the nation itself. Conversations around decolonisation within the Indian subcontinent, then, must be cognizant of the stark inequalities, differences and stratifications that exist within India - be it in terms of caste, class, region, or religion. The role played by the colonial rule in invigorating these divides cannot be denied. However, any effort to move away from colonial practices must not singularly rely on harking back to the past. Drawing on Homi Bhabha's notion of 'Third Space', it becomes clear that the very idea of a unified, originary past is derived from the colonial notion of a homogenous, serialized time. It is necessary, therefore, to be wary of oversimplifications and generic trends when seeking to move away from colonial practices.

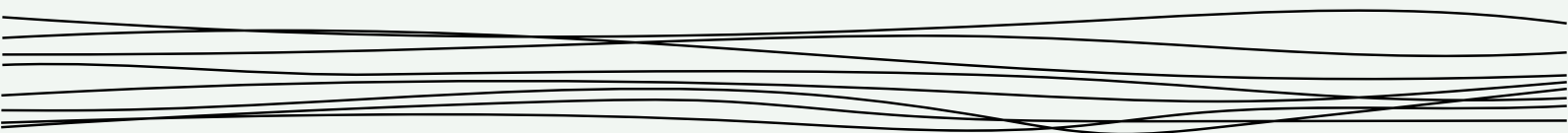
The question of tradition vs. modernity is another pertinent issue that begs addressing, when undertaking decolonial approaches. It is useful, in this regard, to bring forth postcolonial scholar Sudipta Kaviraj's argument wherein he interprets 'post-colonial' to imply the existence of several characteristics possessed by India today, which would not have existed in the absence of a colonial regime. While this argument in no way lauds the history and presence of colonialism in the country, it recognises the need to take into account the changes that have occurred in the two centuries since its presence. Keeping this in mind, it is worth arguing for a decolonial stance that does not romanticize the past but draws, instead, upon the lessons embedded in traditional knowledge and oral narratives, which colonial and global markets seek to erase. While India still has a long way to go in dismantling the colonial legacy and the power imbalances that come with it, the efforts of grassroots organisations in taking the lead in this endeavour is definitely commendable.



dialogues #3



**with Taskforce Fashion:
Branko Popovic, Iris Ruisch
and Esther Muñoz Grootveld
by Jeroen Junte**



De missie van 'lobbygroep' Taskforce Fashion: maatschappelijke verandering dankzij mode

“In de Nederlandse mode-industrie is nog een gebrek aan samenwerking en uitwisseling van kennis en ervaring”, zegt Esther Muñoz Grootveld, hoofd programma van platform en modebiënnale State of Fashion. “In andere disciplines in de creatieve industrie is samenwerking vanzelfsprekender. In mode wordt vaak nog op eilandjes gewerkt. Dat willen wij doorbreken.”

Met “wij” doelt Muñoz Grootveld op **Taskforce Fashion**, een samenwerking tussen **State of Fashion** en de presentatie- en ontwikkelplatforms **FASHIONCLASH** en stichting **M-ODE**. “Wij zijn hét voorbeeld dat het kan, een gelijkwaardige samenwerking tussen drie mode-organisaties, elk met eigen visie en zelfstandige activiteiten maar ook een overstijgend gezamenlijk belang”, zegt Iris Ruisch van **M-ODE**.

Naast **Taskforce Fashion** is inmiddels ook **Culture.Fashion** ontstaan, een netwerk met diverse stakeholders, waaronder onderwijsinstellingen als **ArtEZ** en **AMFI**, een onderzoeksinstituut als **Waag**, maar ook ontwerpers, modejournalisten en de drie platforms achter **Taskforce Fashion**. Het initiatief voor **Culture.Fashion** is genomen door Minister Engelshoven van OCW. “Dit is nadrukkelijk geen formele organisatie maar meer een open netwerk, waarbij elke deelnemer zijn eigen expertise en netwerk inbrengt”, verduidelijkt Ruisch.

“Wij willen onderzoeken wat de rol van ontwerpers of labels kan zijn in maatschappelijke vraagstukken als diversiteit, welvaartsongelijkheid of klimaatcrisis.” – **Esther Muñoz Grootveld, State Of Fashion**

Agrarische sector

Taskforce Fashion kiest voor een specifieke invalshoek: een betere aansluiting van modeontwerpers op maatschappelijke vraagstukken. “Nederlandse mode kenmerkte zich de afgelopen decennia vooral door haar artistieke en conceptuele kracht. Wij willen onderzoeken wat de rol van ontwerpers en makers kan zijn in maatschappelijke vraagstukken als diversiteit, welvaartsongelijkheid of de klimaatcrisis”, zegt Muñoz Grootveld. Een ontwikkeling die overigens al is ingezet, “De jonge generatie ontwerpers werkt hybride en zoekt samenwerking met bijvoorbeeld activisten, wetenschappers of zelfs de agrarische sector.”



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Met Residency for Responsible Fashion neemt Taskforce Fashion het voortouw in de verbreding van het werkveld van modeontwerpers.

Taskforce Fashion startte eind vorig jaar het onderzoek **Residency for Responsible Fashion**. Popovic: "Hiervoor is een gemêleerde groep van vijftien jonge en ervaren ontwerpers geselecteerd, met maatschappelijke betrokkenheid als vanzelfsprekend criterium. Eén van de selectievragen was: waar voel jij je verantwoordelijk voor als modeontwerper?", zegt Popovic van **FASHIONCLASH**.

Culture.Fashion is door Minister Engelshoven van OCW geïnitieerd als een open netwerk bestaande uit onderwijsinstellingen als ArtEZ, AMFI een onderzoeksinstituut als **Waag** maar

ook ontwerpers, modejournalisten en de drie platforms achter **Taskforce Fashion**.

De vijftien deelnemers zijn verdeeld over residency's in drie steden. In Maastricht buigen de vijf ontwerpers zich onder leiding van **FASHIONCLASH** over Positive Health. "Zuid-Limburg is een regio die kampt met grote gezondheidsproblemen. Hoe kan mode bijdragen aan bijvoorbeeld het vergroten van de weerbaarheid en het welzijn?" In Tilburg, een stad waar ruim 40 procent van de jongeren laagopgeleid is en één op de vijf huishoudens een minimuminkomen heeft, onderzoekt **M-ODE** met de deelnemers jeugdcriminaliteit. Het Rotterdamse team neemt samen met **State of Fashion** mode in relatie tot sociale cohesie onder de loep in Het Oude Noorden, een wijk die in een rap tempo gentrificeert.

"Beleidsmakers en overheidsinstellingen nodigen steeds vaker creatieven uit voor een brainstormsessie; dat zijn dan architecten, social designers of zelfs kunstenaars maar zelden een modeontwerper. Dat moet veranderen."

Branko Popovic



Maatschappelijke discussies

De achterliggende motivatie voor deze **Residency for Responsible Fashion** is dan ook alternatieven bieden voor de vastgeroeste opvattingen over hoe jonge ontwerpers een loopbaan opbouwen. “Wij laten zien je ook met sociale projecten of door samenwerking met mensen uit heel andere disciplines een waardevolle praktijk kunt bouwen”, aldus **Ruisch**. “Daarvoor moet je als ontwerper kunnen reflecteren op de tijdgeest en wereld om je heen. Het vertrekpunt is weliswaar mode maar het eindresultaat kan ook een grafisch ontwerp zijn of emancipatieproject voor een achtergestelde bevolkingsgroep. De kracht van mode is dat het een ever-evolving proces is met de nodige ups & downs als essentiële leermomenten.”

“Duurzaamheid, innovatie en maatschappelijk engagement gaat in mode niet langer over het eindproduct. De kracht van mode is dat het een ever-evolving proces is met de nodige ups & downs als essentiële leermomenten.”

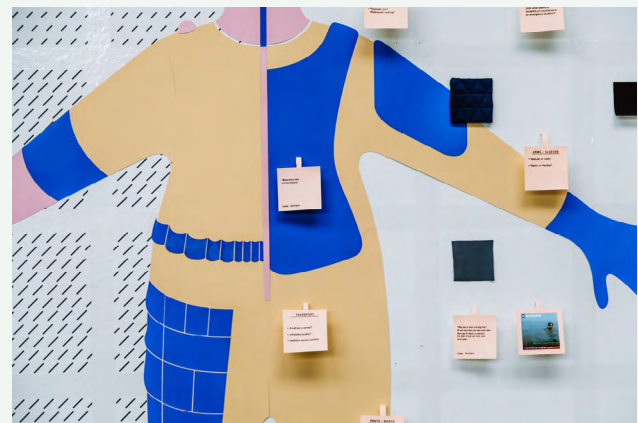
Iris Ruisch, M-ODE

Muñoz Grootveld vult aan: “Wat zijn dan die specifieke kwaliteiten van een modeontwerper, is een van de achterliggende vragen. Dan kun je denken aan kennis van gedrag en identiteit en de manier waarop mensen communiceren. Die kennis is ook waardevol voor projecten die niet specifiek zijn gericht op mode.”

Met deze drie praktijkprojecten neemt **Taskforce Fashion** het voortouw in de verbreding van het werkveld van modeontwerpers. “Tegelijkertijd willen wij ook de buitenwacht overtuigen dat mode kan bijdragen aan maatschappelijke discussies. Beleidsmakers en overheidsinstellingen nodigen steeds vaker creatieven uit voor brainstormsessies over maatschappelijke vraagstukken. Dat zijn dan vaak architecten, social designers of zelfs kunstenaars, maar zelden een modeontwerper. Door samen te werken met deze drie gemeenten willen wij dat veranderen. Het opent deuren als je kunt zeggen: wij willen ook een positieve bijdrage leveren aan jullie stad. Feitelijk zijn wij ook lobbyvoerders.”

Verdienmodel en waardecreatie

Taskforce Fashion is in 2019 in het leven geroepen in opdracht van het **Stimuleringsfonds voor de Creatieve Industrie**. “Wij kenden elkaar toen nauwelijks en zijn ook zeer verschillende organisaties. Maar daarin schuilt juist de kracht”, zegt **Ruisch**. Zo prijst zij **FASHIONCLASH** om de unieke en onafhankelijke koers. “Door mode te presenteren bijna als een artistieke performance hebben ze, nota bene vanuit Maastricht, een landelijke bijdrage geleverd aan de verbreding van mode.” Volgens **Muñoz Grootveld** brengt **Ruisch** met haar lange beroepservaring veel persoonlijke relaties in met zowel ontwerpers als de industrie. “Zij kent echt iederéén.” **Popovic** op zijn beurt ziet **State of Fashion** als hét inhoudelijke kennisinstituut, en **Muñoz Grootveld** als iemand die ook kennis meebrengt vanuit het design en architectuurveld.



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De **Residency for Responsible Fashion** is het tweede onderzoeksproject van **Taskforce Fashion**. In 2019 werden al vijftien ontwerpers uitgenodigd voor het project **Fashion After Flood**. “Daar was het uitgangspunt veel specifiek: laat je als modeontwerper beïnvloeden door de stijgende zeewaterspiegel”, zegt **Ruisch**. Alle kennis uit dit onderzoek is gedeeld op de Taskforce-website. Daarnaast werd **Fashion After Flood** afgesloten met een onorthodoxe presentatie op de Jan van Eyck Academie, geleid door een theatermaker en begeleid door een cellist. “Met de huidige residency’s willen we nog sterker benadrukken dat het proces waarmee mode wordt gerealiseerd net zo waardevol is als het eindresultaat.”

Hoe de Residency for Responsible Fashion dit voorjaar wordt afgesloten is vooralsnog open. **Muñoz Grootveld:** “Het gaat juist om het ontwikkelen van nieuwe presentatie-vormen en waardecreatie in mode. En vooral ook om het delen van ontwikkelde kennis.”

Slotmanifestatie Fashion After Flood

Het is een uitdagende tijd voor mode. Het is niet mogelijk om nieuwe creaties te tonen en er is nauwelijks plek voor uitwisseling van ideeën. Tegelijkertijd is er de noodzaak van innovatie en verduurzaming. Daarom is er juist nu behoefte aan een open netwerk van modeprofessionals waarin urgente thema's worden geagendeerd. In het samenwerkingsverband **Taskforce Fashion** en het netwerk **Culture.Fashion** maken diverse mode-partijen in Nederland zich hier hard voor.



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reflections #2

Lindy Boerman

In Fashion the 'We' is Key

We invited Lindy Boerman, student at the MA Fashion Strategy of ArtEZ University of the Arts Arnhem. In this article, she reflects on a conversation between dr. Aurélie Van de Peer and dr. Daniëlle Bruggeman at the Fashion Fair Fest in Ghent.

See Through Fashion was the theme of **The Fair Fashion Fest 2020** in Ghent. This event, from November 26-29, revolved around fair fashion. The urgency of transparency is discussed as a first step to a more sustainable and ethical fashion system. As part of this event, dr. Aurélie Van de Peer, a fashion scholar, writer and lecturer, interviews dr. Daniëlle Bruggeman about the topic of emotional durability during the Fair Fashion Talks. Bruggeman leads the Fashion Professorship at ArtEZ, an interdisciplinary research community to collectively explore the changing values and meaning of fashion. Her publication *Dissolving the Ego of Fashion. Engaging with Human Matters* (2018) is used to structure this interview.

©Performance 'A Seamstress Constructs a Garment'



Within this publication and the interview, Bruggeman states that the fashion system operates as a big ego and constantly feeds itself. It is a system of overconsumption, overproduction, inhumane working conditions, and has a throw-away mentality. This ego of fashion is something that needs to be resolved, and she therefore states: 'We need to go from ego to eco.'

Emotional durability is central in this interview, and here Van de Peer and Bruggeman mention the empirical research of Jonathan Chapman. He notes that emotionally durable design is focused on creating a deep, meaningful and sustainable relationship between human beings and material objects. In relation to fashion, this is about the wearer having a relationship with the garment. Building a bond between those two is essential. Bruggeman highlights an example of this in relation to fashion: Carpet of Life, an initiative who develops old garments into new carpets. This way the clothes get a new life, but at the same time keep the emotional value of the owner.

Not only between the garment and its wearer collaboration is key but also within the making process of the garment. Bruggeman and Van de Peer discuss a shift in focus from designing to making. More and more designers now focus on the design process rather than on a beautiful end product. This requires a different way of thinking and working than before.

This relates to the following questions Van de Peer asks: 'Can emotional durability exist in the current fashion system?' Bruggeman mentions that there is a need for another speed and different dynamics. She believes it is important to show the consumer how much time is spent on making a garment, because the consumers have no idea how much time this actually takes. She mentions a designer who is already doing this: Kasia Górnjak. She showed the attendants of the Fashion Colloquium: Searching for the New Luxury (2018) the activity of manufacturing a garment on stage. This example shows how important it is to create a connection between designers and consumers.

In the last part of the interview Bruggeman and Van de Peer discuss the importance of education. As a critical fashion student, I find this the most interesting part. The value of working together between student and teacher becomes clear as they highlight the importance of fashion schools facilitating the process of critical reflection on the system, and of students receiving tools for this critical reflection. It is important that the system is not only questioned, but that we also search for alternative approaches in an activist and/or activating manner.

The time of solely critiquing fashion's ego is over. We need to come up with alternative systems and approaches, to move towards fashion's eco. The 'we' is key, so let's do it together.



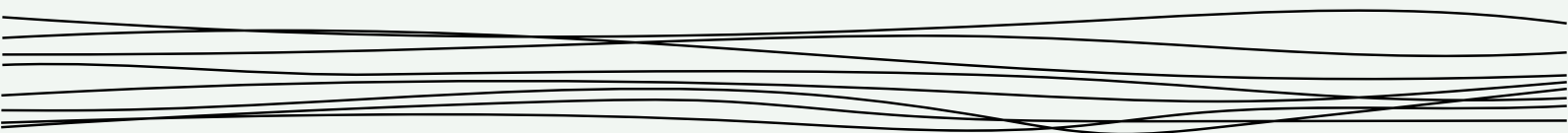
© Carpet of Life by Sarah Van Looy



dialogues #2



**with Outsiderwear
by Mehtap Gungormez**



Buiten de Lijntjes met Outsiderwear

Er zijn van die samenwerkingen waarbij je je afvraagt waarom die niet op continue basis plaatsvinden. Zo ook bij Outsiderwear, een project dat outsiders - oftewel kunstenaars met een verstandelijke beperking, psychische kwetsbaarheid of daklozenachtergrond - koppelt aan succesvolle modeontwerpers, -labels of kunstenaars.

Het doel van dit project, een initiatief van kunstenaar Jan Hoek en Stichting Captain Hoek in samenwerking met Stichting **M-ODE** en Outsider Art Galerie, is om van outsiders iets meer insiders te maken. Tegelijkertijd zijn veel mode-insiders diep van binnen ook een beetje outsider. De mode-insiders en outsider-kunstenaars van dit project hebben dan ook meer gemeen dan je in eerste instantie zou denken: allemaal zijn ze stuk voor stuk extreem creatief en getalenteerd; het zijn persoonlijkheden die niet bepaald binnen de lijntjes kleuren.

Een van die participanten is Bonne Reijn van Bonne Suits – bekend geworden door zijn 'poor man's suits'. Hij werkt samen met kunstenaar Norbert de Jong, die normaliter doeken beschildert maar voor de gelegenheid de jasjes en broeken van Bonne Suits als zijn canvas gebruikt. "Eigenlijk wist ik van tevoren niet wat ik wilde schilderen," vertelt Norbert. "Ik werk altijd op gevoel en kijk steeds welke kleuren mooi bij elkaar passen." Zo ging hij ook bij dit project te werk; zonder duidelijk afgebakend plan, beschilderde Norbert de Bonne Suits-pakken. Dit heeft geleid tot een serie exclusieve pakken voorzien van kleurrijke en abstracte fantasiefiguren - ongetwijfeld ware collectors items omdat er van elk pak maar één exemplaar bestaat. "Ik vond het wel moeilijker werken dan op een canvas. Maar ik ben wel heel blij met het resultaat."



©Jan Hoek X Bruin Parry



Een tweede duo bestaat uit beeldend kunstenaar Regillio Benjamin en Guillaume Schmidt, oprichter van het succesvolle streetwearlabel Patta. Benjamin is behalve kunstenaar ook voormalig wereldkampioen hardlopen op 100 meter. “Helaas ben ik momenteel geblesseerd waardoor ik niet kan hardlopen,” vertelt Regillio. “Maar gelukkig kan ik schilderen en laat ik me voor mijn schilderijen inspireren door de atletiekbaan.” Benjamin maakte kleurrijke schilderijen, die op het eerste oog doen denken felgekleurde regenbogen en vlakken maar bij navraag abstracte representaties van de atletiekbaan blijken. De schilderijen van Benjamin worden verwerkt in T-shirts die binnenkort in de winkel van Patta te koop zullen zijn. “Ik wist niet dat ik het in me had”, zegt Regillio.

Bijzonder is ook de samenwerking tussen Jessica van Halteren, Georgy Dendoe van SUMIBU, Tirino Yspol van SMIB aan de ene kant en outsider-kunstenaar Joey Bocciardo aan de andere kant. Zij hebben elkaar leren kennen bij dagbestedingsatelier De Witte Olifant in Almere. Joey en Georgy, beiden groot Manga-fan, hebben samen New

Straccia Town ontwikkeld: een serie karakters met daaromheen een verhaal. “Eigenlijk klikte het meteen tussen ons,” vertelt Joey, die ook een liefde voor fantasy en games heeft. “Ik heb er niet alleen drie collega’s, maar ook drie vrienden bijgekregen.” Het is de bedoeling dat niet alleen de outfits van de fictieve New Straccia Town-figuren te koop zijn straks, maar ook T-shirts, hoodies, sokken en petjes met daarop prints van de geïllustreerde figuren. “Voor mij is dat een droom die uitkomt,” aldus Joey. “Dat er straks mensen rondlopen met T-shirts met daarop onze tekeningen.”

Tot slot spreken we met kunstenaar en schrijver Jan Hoek, tevens een van de initiatiefnemers van dit project. Hij werkt samen met Bruin Parry aan een serie onderbroeken, die worden beschilderd met allerlei illustraties – van paarden tot fantasiefiguren. Wanneer we Jan en Bruin spreken, wordt meteen duidelijk dat de twee elkaar al lang kennen – Jan was ooit Bruin zijn oppas – en ze goed op elkaar ingespeeld zijn. Er is tussen de mannen een bijzondere synergie die is gebaseerd op heel veel (onderbroeken) lol. In een goede bui beschilderen ze samen wel tien onderbroeken op één dag, vertelt Bruin. Naast de onderbroekenlijn liggen er ook allerlei andere plannen zoals een vloerkleed en tatoeages.

“Ik ben heel trots op onze kunstenaars,” vertelt Josien Vogelaar van de Outsider Art Galerie. “Om eerlijk te zijn vonden wij dit van tevoren best spannend. Zeker omdat we in coronatijd minder fysiek contact kunnen hebben en dat juist erg belangrijk is voor onze kunstenaars. Maar ik ben prettig verrast door alle mooie samenwerkingen en de resultaten. Dit komt ook mede door de ontwerpers, die zich zo open hebben opgesteld. Erg mooi om te zien.”

Behalve de bovengenoemde teams zijn ook modeontwerpers als Duran Lantink, Sophie Hardeman, Bas Kusters bij het project betrokken. Alle werken die voortkomen uit de samenwerkingen zijn volgend jaar tijdens het Outsiderwear Festival in Amsterdam te zien én te koop. Dat festival vindt plaats zodra de situatie het toelaat, naar verwachting ergens tussen april en juni. We kunnen niet wachten.



Reframing Fashion Education in Europe through Sustainability, Entrepreneurship, and Heritage

What should the future of fashion industry education look like?
We invited Dyana Wing So to reflect on the virtual conference
RE-FRAME FASHION: Innovation in Fashion Education.



RE-FRAME FASHION: Innovation in Fashion Education was a virtual conference livestreamed on the 4th of December 2020 from **Erasmus University Rotterdam** (EUR), sharing the culmination of a two-year project surveying network opportunities with non-academic fashion partners, and piloting new courses with industry stakeholders as collaborators. Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership Grant of the European Union, the project was led by EUR (one of the founding partners of the Culture.Fashion initiative) and run together with Université Paris Dauphine - PSL, Gdańsk University of Technology (GUT), and fashion stakeholders.

Since September 2018, the three universities interviewed more than sixty industry stakeholders across the Netherlands, France, and Poland to inform their course designs, focusing on new teaching methodologies. The following year, three new courses were piloted, each exploring the themes, fashion and sustainability, entrepreneurship, and heritage, respectively. Although the Covid-19 pandemic interrupted these three pilot courses midway, they all managed to complete their curricula online, yielding generally positive reviews from the students and partners involved. Each project partner shared their course outcomes at RE-FRAME FASHION Conference to more than 200 registered attendees, who were encouraged to provide feedback and raise questions online.

Prof. Dr. Denis Darpy co-designed the course, Sustainability and Fashion Behind the Scenes, for students of Dauphine's MSc in Marketing & Strategy. Their course introduced students to the local realities of what 'Made in France' meant relative to the global fashion value chain and engaged students in critical production challenges faced by the industry, including a sustainability communications challenge presented by Le Coq Sportif, a company who also hosted a class fieldtrip.

Dr. Magdalena Popowska of GUT partnered with Joanna Staniszewska, CEO of the marketing agency You'll, to design the Entrepreneurship & Creativity in Fashion course for forty students studying for their MSc in International Marketing Management. Their course centred on a business challenged presented by Warsaw-based fashion brand, BOHOBOCO, and student teams were tasked to use mind maps to propose viable business model solutions and engagement solutions towards identified consumers.

Finally, Prof. Dr. Ben Wubs and Dr. Mariangela Lavanga of EUR introduced their course Heritage and Fashion, which focused on understanding and discussing fashion heritage from the perspectives of business history and cultural economics. Masters students Erasmus Mundus Master GLOCAL and the Master in Cultural economics and Entrepreneurship had guest lectures and workshops by museum partners like the Victoria & Albert Museum, Centraal Museum Utrecht, Crafts Council Netherlands, and the European Fashion Heritage Association. The latter challenged student teams to propose solutions to a diversity of issues faced by digital fashion archives, through case-based learning. Students were trained and guided to write teaching case and teaching note in collaboration with Carla Gatt, a Senior Case Writer for the Rotterdam School of Management Case Development Centre. Two of the students' cases were published as result.

Prof. Dr. Luciano Segreto, member of the Project Board from GUT, provided a reflection on the methodologies and development of this academic partnership, reiterating the challenge each university faced in designing a course that struck a balance between content depth and meaningful student engagement in novel ways. He praised the universities for leveraging the fashion industry as a platform to teach new skills and topics for students who had no prior exposure or experience in fashion, citing an example of one student in GUT's course pursuing a thesis topic inspired from her learning experience.

The diverse student presentations that followed the virtual intermezzo by guest DJ Blue Flamingo, further encapsulated the value students bring in producing meaningful perspective into some of the fashion industry's pressing challenges in sustainability, entrepreneurship, and heritage. Recent Dauphine masters graduate, Bianca Demkin, presented her award-winning final project, Denimistry, which showcased the process, production challenges, and applications of her recycled denim textiles through prototyped fashion designs. Daphne Geveke, recent EUR pre-masters graduate, found that increasing the current, 10% of female leadership in the global fashion industry, would positively raise the fashion brands' transparency before consumers. Maria Afanasieva, a recent EUR masters graduate, researched how heritage was utilised in luxury branding strategies, and vice versa.

Through its culminating roundtable discussion, RE-FRAME FASHION exemplified how academia can provide the space for a diversity of fashion industry stakeholders (from commercial brands to museums) to come together and continue the conversation of where their shared future was heading. From forecasting the impact of Covid-19 on the fashion industry and the importance of young talent driving new innovations, to reminding stakeholders to look beyond the lens of the commercial world alone and stakeholders suggesting academia explore decolonialisation further, the roundtable made clear that the future of fashion industry needs more collaboration between education and industry. For the RE_FRAME FASHION consortium at least, such discussions will continue productively through their forthcoming, joint-degree International Masters in Fashion Industry where new partners are invited to join.

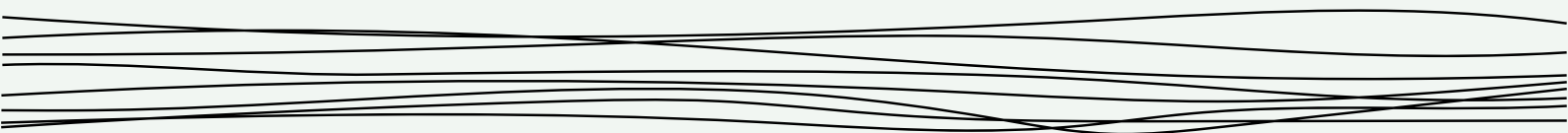
The video of the conference will be soon available on the **RE-FRAME FASHION** website. The final report of the entire project "RE-FRAME FASHION; Innovation in Fashion education" is available for **download here**.



Dialogues #6



with the class of 2020
by Rolien Zonneveld



The Class of 2020

Interviews by Rolien Zonneveld Collages by Sankrit Kulmanochawong



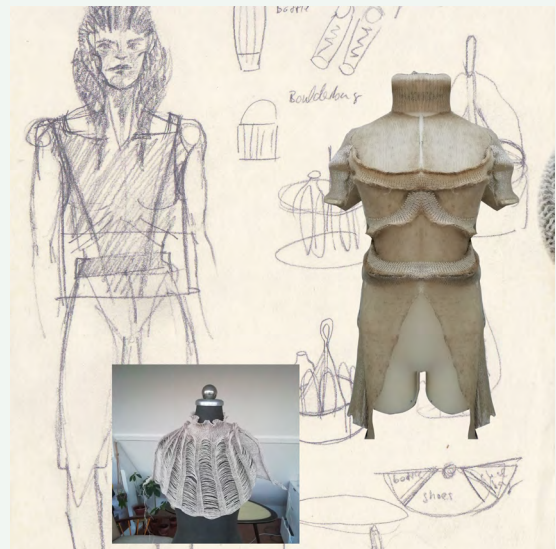
Showing remarkable resilience and creativity, #Classof2020 has adapted quickly to a rapidly changing industry and is showing what they wish the future of fashion should look like. And based on conversations we held with this selection of recently graduated students, the future looks bright. What struck us while looking through the work of the MBO and HBO academies – nine of whom you will meet below – was not only the students' talent, but their desire to change the world for the better.



Topics explored by these young designers include our consumption practices, our relationship to heritage and gender representation, among others. Preservation of craft is another preoccupation, and there is a sense of resourcefulness evident in many of the portfolios we saw. Curated under the theme 'Rethink', this selection features projects that challenge the status quo, critique the construct of the fashion industry and propose new solutions.

Anna Jos Wetzel
ArtEZ Master Fashion Design,
Practice Held in Common
Country of origin: Germany

“I dedicated two entire years to the material linen after I joined an initiative called The Linen Project. I investigated the entire process from “seed to shirt”. That included farming flax – the plant from which linen is made – in my family’s backyard, my own balcony, and the fields of the project. I strongly believe that a local linen production can benefit the environment, farmers, designers, and consumers if the value chain is set up in new ways. Together with the Linen Project I am still figuring out what these new ways look like, in respect to technical solutions and regarding awareness around creation and labour.”



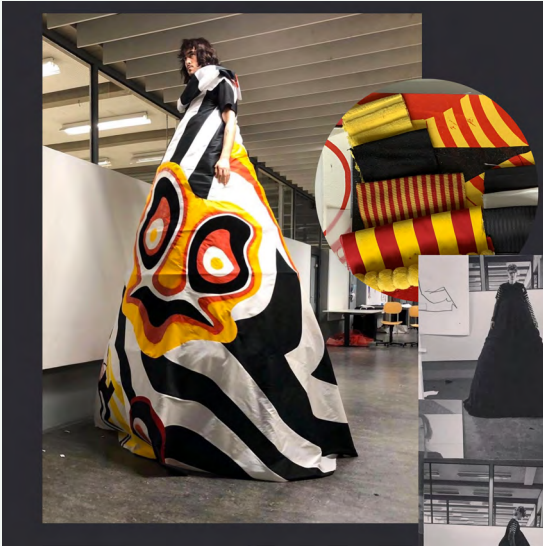
Jobert Tremus
Willem de Kooning Academy
Country of origin: The Netherlands

“Social matters and personal traumas are always leading every design I make. I call myself an ‘artist’, which means that I tell a story through my art and fashion in order to make people aware and to stimulate activism. This year I decided to enroll in a degree to become a teacher in the arts. There’s a lack of diversity in the teacher departments of fashion schools and I want to be that change for future generations.”

Darwin Winklaar
Gerrit Rietveld Academie
Country of origin: Aruba

“My graduation collection is an homage to my mother and Aruban culture. As a kid I would witness my mother practice her cathartic rituals while cleaning the house every Sunday. For my graduation presentation I built an installation, I call it an altar, in which I repeated the rituals that she used to empower herself. With the altar I want to highlight how I found refuge and peace within these beliefs provided by the women who raised me. My work is an honest account of how I battled mental health issues and the healing and reclaiming of my own identity, culture and sense of spirituality from a postcolonial perspective.”





Nemo Cheminée
ArtEZ University of the Arts Arnhem
Country of origin: The Netherlands

“Me and my classmate Benji Nijenhuis decided to slowly start building up something together; a fashion house we like to call The Nightmare Disorder. Using styling, photography and design we want to focus on the storytelling aspect of fashion. We want to reinvent the fashion house. We want to still place ourselves in the high fashion industry, but in a way that is sustainable and aware. We don’t necessarily want to make four collections a year, we want to hop from project to project and be free in the choices we make.”



Riemke Ipema
Zuyd - Maastricht Institute of Arts
Country of origin: The Netherlands

“With my collection BROEKRIEMKE I explored how deconstructed secondhand jeans can be used to open up a discussion about binary thinking, gender and sexuality. The clothing I design should not be solely esthetically pleasing – I want them to tell a story or convey an opinion. With my designs I hope to spark conversations, because I think talking about these subjects lies at the start of a better world.”



Annika van Amerongen
ROC Amsterdam
Country of origin: The Netherlands

“My collection is related closely to farming life and Dutch traditional dressing, which reminded me of my upbringing and surroundings as a child. The pandemic reinforced my perceptions of the industry as it were, and it seems to have alerted more people about it as well. Personally, I believe fashion has been redundant for a long time, considering that most collections are reinventions of the house codes and rehashing time periods from not even twenty years ago. Also, the fashion industry is a big contributor to the climate crisis, which made me choose for a more sustainable path – tailoring and custom design.”

Ekaterina Ravina
AMFI – Amsterdam Fashion Institute
Country of origin: Russia

“I am concerned about deskillingization and how massively people rely on technologies, so for my graduation I decided to set up a one-man experiment and travel back in time in Russia. To the period when young girls needed to prepare their own dowry, which would prepare them mentally and practically for the future. I viewed my graduation as a ritual of initiation and the final collection as my dowry, which I made with the use of analog machines and reinvented crafts. No artificial intelligence, no exploitation, only good-old manpower and self-sufficiency.”

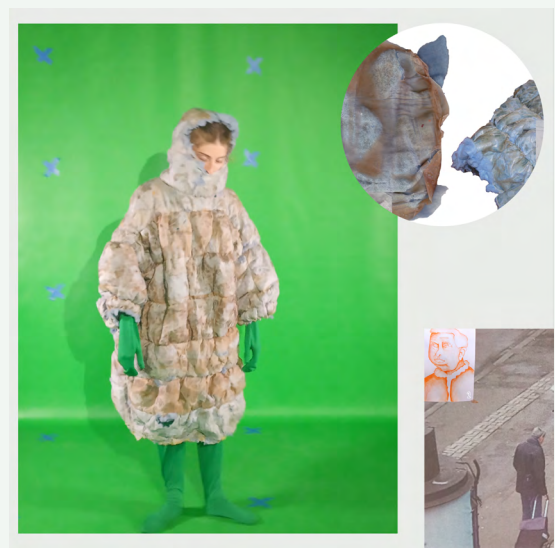


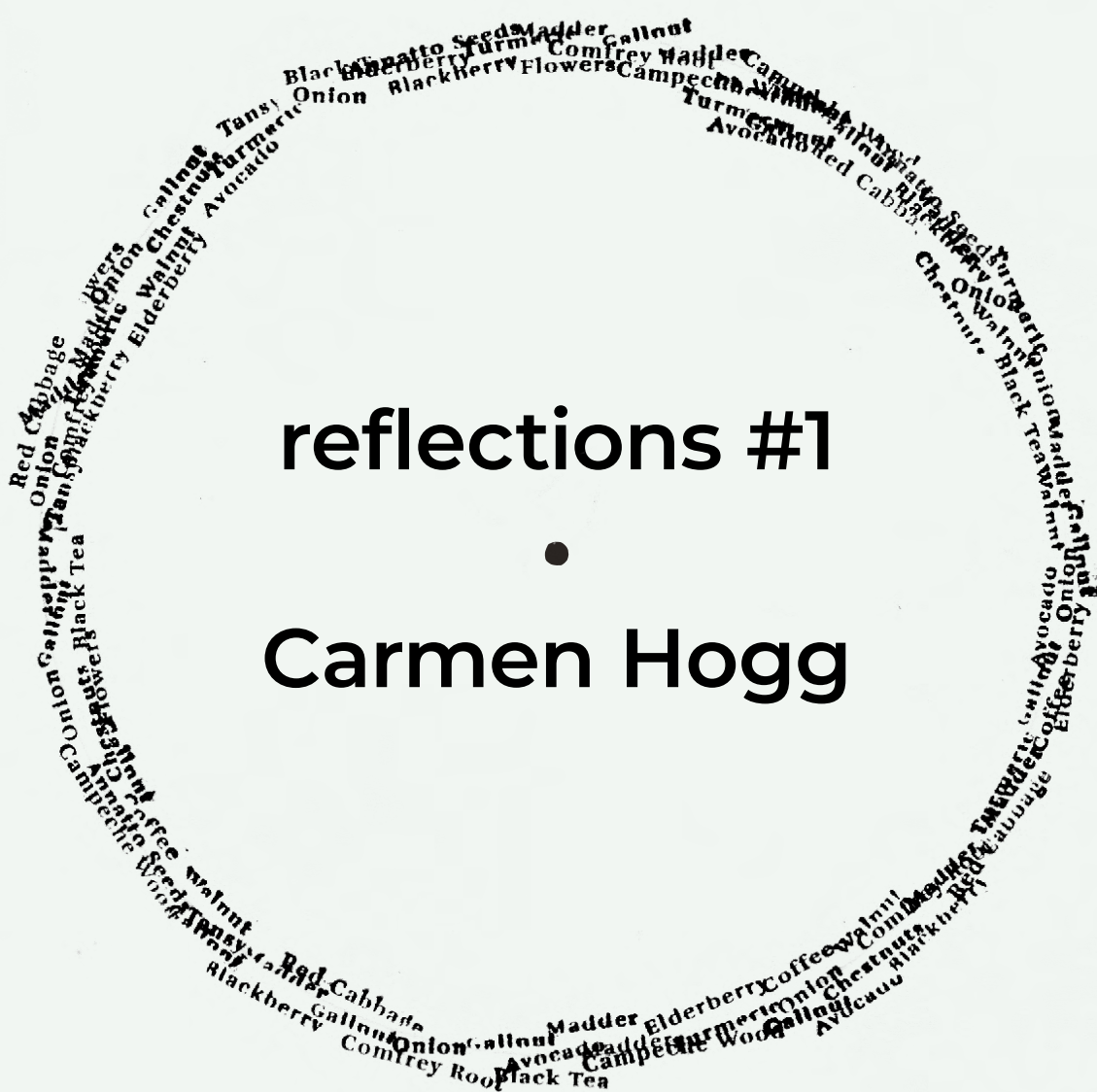
Jeanne Hermans
Master Tailor Institute
Country of origin: The Netherlands

“My graduation project was a replica of a Dior couture gown from 1947. It took me 430 hours to complete. As a tailor, I want people to start paying a fair price. It takes time to deliver quality, which is ‘costly’. I hope people will realize that in return they get a piece that will last a long time, and is fairly made.”

Inge Vaandering
Royal Academy of Art The Hague
Country of origin: The Netherlands

“In my work I am interested in shifting the focus from sight to a more bodily perception. I like it to be a little bit off or unusual. Fabrics like cotton velvet are dyed and manipulated. Pieces of wool are treated with latex rubber, and crafted in a poncho. Thin paper is glued to cheesecloth and shaped as a parka, making a pleasant noise when you wear it. I try to find the tension between garments, objects, and people to provide a more imaginative and conscious perception of our feelings and surroundings.”





reflections #1



Carmen Hogg

On Decolonizing Fashion

Style anthropologist, creative producer and writer Carmen Hogg reflects on the first Whataboutery organized by State of Fashion.

Whataboutery #1: There can be no Other

For this very first online edition of its Whataboutery, **State of Fashion**, a platform originated to re-think the fashion system, joined forces with **FASHIONCLASH**, **OSCAM** and **M-ODE**. Within the framework of Culture.Fashion – a value driven network where connections are made between different Dutch fashion organisations – they invited three Dutch creatives (Giorgio Toppin, Amber Jae Slooten and Princess Isatu Hassan Bangura) to take a seat at the digital front row for a conversation on the latest work of anthropologist **Sandra Niessen: 'Regenerative Fashion: There can be no Other'**. In this text, she explores what is needed for fashion to become truly sustainable. In the digital meet up Sandra shared her research findings and opened the floor for others to join the discussion.

An imported Dashiki in Ghana

Hearing Sandra Niessen speak about her research on weavers and the disappearing crafts in Indonesia made me recall a situation in Ghana. A few years ago, a friend came with me to its capital Accra. We were sitting in a taxi together when she saw a nice Dashiki (shirt) displayed on a dressing doll at a road shop. We stopped because she wanted to try on the shirt. To her, the shirt was a visual marker of her Ghanaian roots - it's worn a lot by Ghanaians and often these shirts are made by local tailors. The shop owner gave her a tight and shiny package with the Dashiki in it. I had never seen this packaging before, so I asked the shop owner where the shirt was made. She said they imported it from Asia – hence the packaging. I was in shock! The Dashiki shirt is a classic in Ghanaian culture, one that many tailors in Ghana have been making for years and years. It's so common that any ordinary tailor can probably sew one with eyes closed. What does this mean? Why did the shop owner import the shirt? Why are people in Asia making Ghanaian Dashiki's? Are cultural practices like tailoring vanishing from Ghana?

The West versus the Rest

Sandra Niessen shared situations she came across in her research in Indonesia – a country where a lot of Western fashion is being produced. Young girls leave villages to work in factories because they have to support their family financially. In public debates we often say “Well, at least the young girls have a job and make money. But what are the impacts of their work to their community and culture? Why do they have to leave the village to make money? Can't they make money with the local weaving practices (anymore)? Poverty destroys culture, Sandra argues. In debates on sustainability in fashion we often leave out the impact fashion has on culture whilst the industrial fashion system is destroying cultural diversity. Because who is still around to take on cultural practices from older women in the villages if young girls have left to work in factories? I wonder what will happen to the tailors if more shops will start importing their Dashiki's. What will the cultural meaning and value of a Dashiki be if they are being mass produced and imported? Would my friend still wear it as a cultural identifier?

Decolonize fashion

Our fashion system shows us how much the colonial wound is still alive, **Rolando Vázquez** says. Sandra's research also demonstrates

this. Colonization is the policy or practice of acquiring full or partial political control over another country, occupying it with settlers and exploiting it economically. Though Europe doesn't practically have control anymore over countries, Eurocentric fashion systems do. Because how is the young girl in the village going to survive if the only place where money can be made is the fashion factory in the city or in a neighbouring country? To decolonize fashion, we have to take the economic aspect away from being at the centre of the industry and focus on other aspects like race and gender, Rolando argues. We have to step away from the Eurocentric canon. Our fashion system has to be plural instead - with plural realities **Clare Farrell** adds.

Your culture is not my commodity

Clare argues that we see culture as a commodity, something we can buy and own. I have to agree; cultural appropriation is integrated in many Western cultures and fashion systems. Think of the runway show of Victoria Secret where Native American dress was worn by women in underwear - to sell underwear. Completely taken out of context, worn as costume with loss of meaning by models that look like me - everything but Native American. Or think of the collection of high-priced Stella McCartney dresses with so-called 'African print' that looked a lot like dresses West African women wear indoors, made by tailors. Young factory workers are putting their cultural embellishment on materials for Western fashion brands that will sell them outside their cultural context, without cultural meaning, for commercial purposes. Our Eurocentric fashion system turns cultural artifacts or practices into items that fit in our fast-paced fashion system that is driven by consumption and renewal. **Monica Boța Moisin** therefore claims that ownership of knowledge and techniques is needed within cultures. She came up with the 3C rule: consent, credit and compensation. To make sure we don't take other people's culture and make it our commodity, we have to ask permission and engage the people whose cultures we're inspired by in the conversation. Culture needs cultural intellectual property.

The future is now

We have a long way to go, but hope is already here in the form of the new fashion designers and creators with diverse values, ideals and cultural backgrounds. The Dutch fashion industry is blessed with designers like Giorgio Toppin of **XHOSA**, who is diving into his own Surinamese culture to design modern menswear from local Surinamese fabrics, Amber Jae Slooten, co-founder of the first digital fashion house **The Fabricant** and Princess Isatu Hassan Bangura a graduate at Theatre Academy Maastricht who is creating performances that represent people that look like her - something she has been missing growing up in the Netherlands. There is also hope in Lagos and Accra, where I do research. Brands like **IAMISIGO** or **Maxivive** produce and design in Nigeria, even with the challenging power cuts and massive traffic jams that make it hard to meet deadlines. Or Accra-based collectives such as **Free The Youth** that is making streetwear items with local interpretations. Or designer **Larry Jay** who is using cultural weaving techniques for his materials. If you find culture important and if you like to support designers that are culture-driven; these are the brands you can spend your money on.



About Carmen Hogg

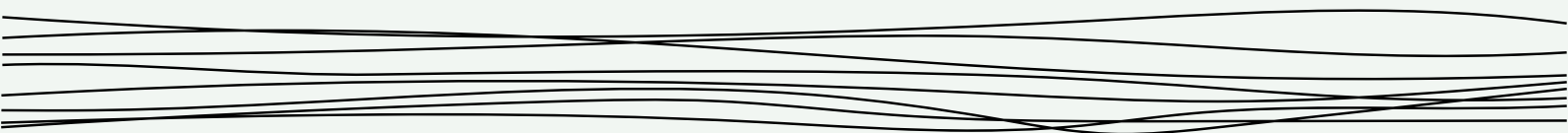
Carmen Hogg is a style anthropologist, creative producer and writer. She researches style in relation to identity and (sub) culture and publishes (ongoing) research into short reads, photo series, video's and write ups of interviews. She's specialized in contemporary fashion in Lagos (Nigeria) and Accra (Ghana) and Afrobeats. To her, your style is the visual expression of your identity and a way to tell stories.



dialogues #5



with Reflow Project
by Zuza Nazaruk



How the Reflow project turns Amsterdam into Europe's testing ground for textile circularity

"Lompenboer!" is a shout that any Dutch person who grew up in the 1960s recognizes very well. It announced a ragman arriving at a neighbourhood square. His job was to collect old textiles and carry them on his bakfiets (carrier bike) to a sorting point, where they would be turned into, for example, isolation materials, cleaning cloths, or even new garments with a special label. This system ensured that there was no textile spillage, that many job opportunities around recycling textiles existed, and, above all, that youngsters who brought the textile to the ragman could buy themselves firecrackers. "At least that's what I did", Ger Brinks, CEO of BMA Techne, business technology management firm, smiles.

The Reflow project aims to revive the spirit of the ragman. Financed by the EU as part of the Horizon2020 initiative, **Reflow** brings together BMA Techne, the Amsterdam Municipality, technological think tank **Waag**, and cultural organization **Pakhuis de Zwijger**. The partners test and develop techniques for the circular use of textiles so that Amsterdam decreases the number of virgin fibres it uses.



A methodology for circularity

Reflow is a three-year project engaging 26 partners in six different European cities. Through their pilot programs, the cities explore the circular economy in four "challenge dimensions": material streams and flows, governance, people and businesses, and technology. The aim is to see how those cities can reach the circular economy and to combine the findings into an open-source methodology. The project's scope is diverse: Paris experiments with tackling event waste; Cluj-Napoca in Romania practices urban energy monitoring; Milan deals with sustainability of food marketplaces; Berlin aims to put waste heat back into use; Vejle in Denmark designs solutions to plastic waste; and, finally, Amsterdam focuses on improving textile circularity. The pilot cities hold monthly talks where partners exchange experiences and knowledge. "We work at different speeds, but we help each other with tips, exchanging how we can do things differently," Cecilia Raspanti, **Waag's** fashion designer and co-founder of TextileLab Amsterdam, adds.

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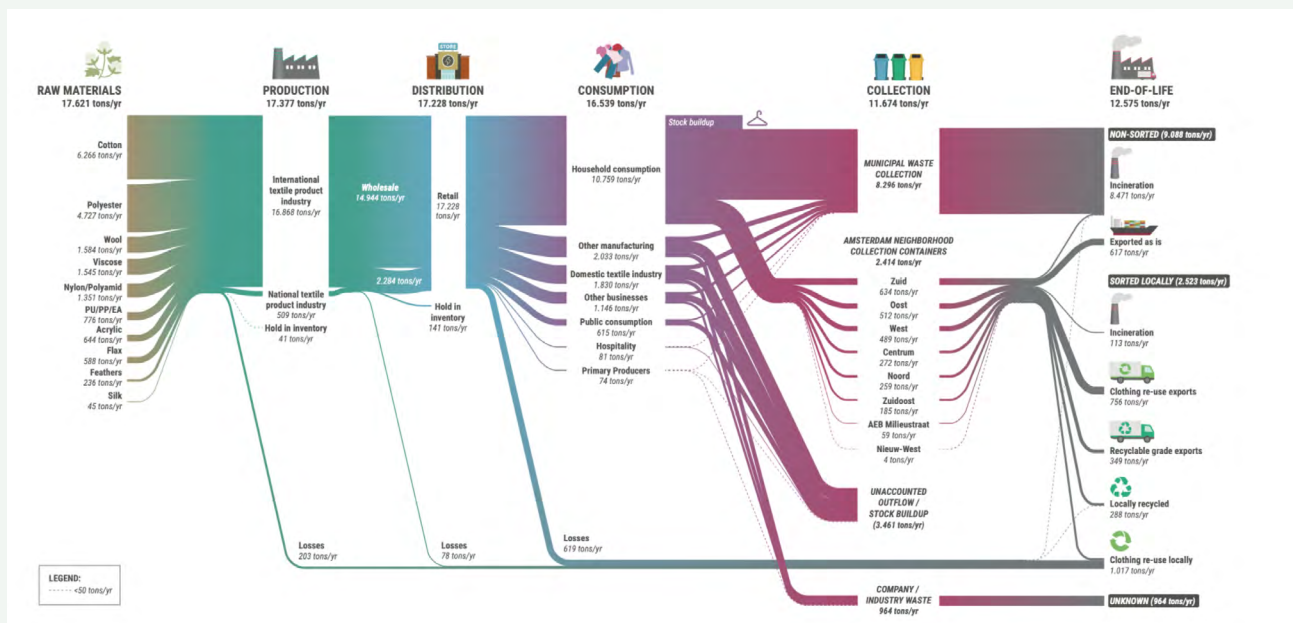
The Amsterdam pilot was lucky to tap into the wealth of already existing initiatives that tackle textile circularity. The city regards itself as an important textile designer and a jeans capital of Europe. “**Reflow** is a connector of everything that’s already happening in the city”, Ista Boszhard, a fashion designer at **Waag** and co-founder of TextileLab Amsterdam, points out. Subsequently, the pilot’s goal is to strengthen the circular model by developing tangible, open-source tools. To do so efficiently, **Reflow** partners needed to understand Amsterdam’s existing textile landscape.

Listening to the city

The first stage of the pilot involved discovering what’s already happening and, subsequently, engaging stakeholders to deepen their participation in every step of textiles’ life-cycle. Complex systems are easier understood when mapped out, so **Reflow** Amsterdam partnered with Metabolic, a sustainability consultancy distinguished by its systems thinking approach. The consultancy created a graph of Amsterdam’s textile waste streams. The municipality supported the mapping process with its research. Already at this stage, some crucial findings emerged. For example, textiles in Amsterdam are often not discarded properly. “They end up in a normal bin while they could feed back into the circular model,” Boszhard points out. To deepen their

understanding of what industry insiders need, **Reflow** also engaged in more bottom-up research. During “Monday laundry days”, organized by Amsterdam Economy Board and **Reflow** in September, various textile actors came together and spoke about the obstacles on their journey towards circularity. The meetings sparked an investigation into an innovation lab, where **Reflow** and partners will test what they can do with discarded textiles – this counts for clothes, but also “everything else used in homes, hotels, and hospitals”, Brinks highlights. “To achieve significant improvements in textile recycling, we need spinning capacity,” he adds. Currently, the recycling focus lies in mono-streams but **Reflow** wants to explore the possibilities of recycling textile blends.

The Metropole Region of Amsterdam, which consists of 32 regional municipalities, is bringing together the needs, existing systems, and networks together in a soon-to-be-published collaborative roadmap and vision. The roadmap connects the whole supply chain, from textile collectors to makers that use recycled fabrics. Bringing networks together will “create enough momentum to break with the old habits,” Raspanti hopes. “If it comes from all sides, we can get there. This way, it’s much more long-term and sustainable, because it’s not carried by a few but by many.” Its holistic approach makes **Reflow** stand out among sustainability projects, which



©Reflow

usually have a singular focus. “The circular economy is only happening when we do it together – citizens, businesses, no matter what your job is, you’re connected to the city and involved in this supply chain,” Raspanti points out.

Engaging every stakeholder

Reflow’s holistic approach is visible not only in its research but also in the action plan. Its activities stretch from political, industrial, to citizen-level interventions. Subsequently, **Reflow**’s scope is simultaneously systemic and tangible. “Government organizations play a dominant role in lowering barriers for the introduction of material recycling”, Brinks points out. Therefore, Roosmarie Ruigrok, founder of Clean & Unique and a project coordinator from the Amsterdam Municipality, lobbies in different Amsterdam areas as part of **Reflow**. Since each part has its budget, some are more dedicated to the circular economy than others. Ruigrok tries to level the playing field by pushing initiatives from one area to another. “Municipality regards it as important to be part of **Reflow** as now we can find out what’s working and what’s not,” she explains.

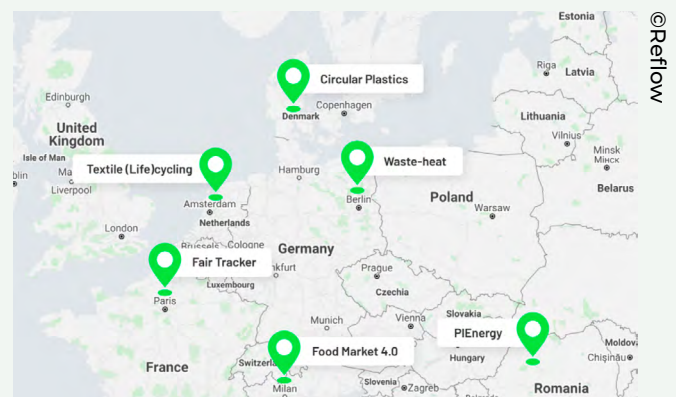
Fresh solutions are greatly needed, especially with the collapse of the second-hand market. In the past, tender-winning companies would sort out the city’s textile waste, re-sell wearables, and burn non-wearables. Such an arrangement was only workable when wearables made enough profit to justify the destruction of other products. Today, however, “there’s too much, and the quality is too low”, Ruigrok states. Subsequently, the market needs another value proposition. Such a transformation supports the city’s plans to halve its use of primary raw materials by 2030 and become fully circular by 2050.

Industry insiders welcome **Reflow**’s plans, as they support them in developing circular business models and the day-to-day processes. **Reflow** is particularly interested in the way in which technology can play a part in the circular transition. For the Amsterdam pilot, the goal is to bring supply and demand closer together. The partners are working on creating an exchange system platform that would connect circular textile makers to various parts of the supply chain. “We expect to see software deve-

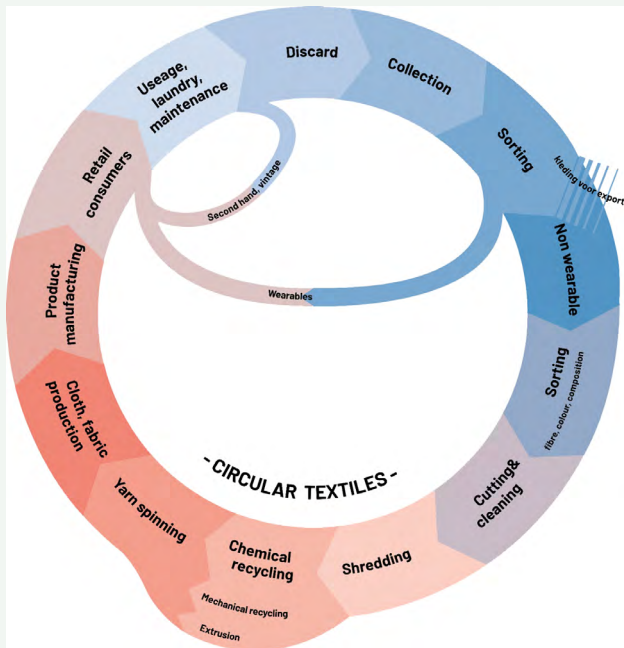
lopment within the next 1.5 years,” Raspanti explains. “Then, we can start seeing the first outputs and speculate on how we can use them.” The three-year length of the program leaves room for experimentation and adjustments.

Sharing and creating best practices

The technological focus also allows for merging digital solutions with the good old concept of a ragman in a spin-off project called, DLT4U. The partners plan to create an application that facilitates textile collection. Upon delivery, citizens receive points that they can exchange in various spots across the city. “DLT4U can tackle many different problems, from creating a marketplace that works for the citizens to allowing us to track how resources move around the city,” Raspanti states. The app, however, can only be rolled out once the COVID-19 pandemic calms down. Meanwhile, **Reflow** is working on an open-source booklet that explains textile circularity in 16 steps, corresponding to the Amsterdam Circular Textile Wheel. The publication will offer concrete actions to deal with each step and be useful for designers, fashion insiders, and educators alike. The weekly, chapter-by-chapter release started on February 16th on **Reflow** and **Waag**’s websites.



Amsterdammers can also expect to see an awareness campaign in the months to come. “We want to inform consumers about the zero-waste motto. Reduce, rethink, repair, repurpose. Recycle is only the last stage,” Ruigrok explains. “We don’t want people to trash, but if they do, they should at least do it properly,” Boszhard adds. The campaign will aim at improving our consumer habits in ways that are sometimes very small and surprising. “One thing people need to understand as soon as possible,”



Raspanti states laughingly, “Is that they need to tie their shoes together when they put them in a clothing container.” Her request appears very reasonable once it’s clear that the value of a pair of shoes increases 40-fold as compared to a loose shoe.

Turning a crisis into an opportunity

For a reason, all too painfully obvious, many planned activities, including workshops, had to move online. Yet Amsterdam partners feel that overall, the COVID-19 pandemic didn’t disturb **Reflow** too significantly. It did, on the contrary, highlight how misplaced the predominant fashion business models are, showing the relevance of **Reflow**’s work.

Although visits to other cities need to be postponed, the collaboration continues on a European scale as well. “We’re extremely proud to see how the cities approached COVID and the flexibility of the local teams,” Raspanti states, evoking online workshops organized with the support of an online software Miro. “It’s impressive how pilots’ local teams took the challenge head-on and managed fine until now.” The partners from around Europe worked together to align how to best benefit from the changed circumstances. “For example, we had a whole discussion on where to put information about textile recycling,” Raspanti recalls. “We came up

with spots like a trash bin, a pharmacy, and a supermarket. Because that’s all where people go now, and we have to work with it”. COVID also inspired the Amsterdam pilot to explore creating a reusable isolation coat. The sub-project aims to investigate whether a reusable coat is doable, how to wash it, and what kind of laundry machine they would need, in collaboration with the healthcare sector.

Powering networks

Reflow has so far enjoyed a widespread interest from the Dutch textile world. Industry insiders from all over the Netherlands joined their events, both online and the scarce offline ones. “We’re a nucleus that helps the development of textile recycling in other parts of the country,” Ruigrok tells. The partners welcome the growing interest in networked interactions. “The start-ups or innovators would usually come to the municipality to request some funding, but now it’s more common to see them ask about networks in their field. They want to see who’s there and grow together, and that’s a marvellous development,” Ruigrok lauds. For the 2 years until the project’s completion, **Reflow** will continue to connect stakeholders in a well-thought-out and all-encompassing effort to make circular textiles a reality.



reflections #7



**Zinzi
de Brouwer**

Local for Local

On 15 January 2021 the Culture.Fashion network organised the livestream event RENEW THE SYSTEM in collaboration with fashion label Hul le Kes. Fashion Designer Sjaak Hullekes visited organizations that are changing the fashion system and society. How do they think of the current developments in our society? How can we contribute together to a new fashion industry? The event included conversations with Pascale Gatzen, Annemieke Koster and Jolanda Buts about their vision on a new system. The conversations can be seen [here](#).

We invited Zinzi de Brouwer, founder of the artisanal collective Studio Palha and head of Society & Context AMFI, to reflect on the event.

In these unprecedented times the world is travelling considerably less, and we are encouraged to search within our immediate locality for solace and solutions. We look to our inner circles for support; our (grand) parents, our neighbours and local shops. Fashion too, is in this pursuit. The fashion industry as we know it today has certainly succumbed to the detriment of its actions towards people and planet. As we are looking to new, alternative solutions and systems, there is a need to learn from nature and living systems to inspire a new way of doing, making and being.

Whereas the current fashion system is based on endless growth and hyper-consumption, local for local allows us to partake in a much needed paradigm shift. There is much to be said about circular societies and how individual responsibility and community action enables this. As seen in the Linen Project¹, the connection fashion has to agriculture, as well as how the material is connected to the soil it is born from, plays an imperative role in the human dimension fashion seems to be struggling with. As told by Pascale Gatzen², the impact fashion can have on biodiversity and on agriculture is where everything begins. If we start treating fashion as an interconnected field, we enunciate the connection it has to the farmland, and those who cultivate it. This holistic approach to fashion encourages the industry to look at how the practice of the community (or practice



of commoning) fosters agency and ethical engagement. Much like Annemieke Koster does with Enschede Textielstad³, in which local production empowers designers to act local offering a flexibility of weaving 1 to 10.000 meters of fabric. This translates into having a positive effect on the local economy by re-invigorating local weaving techniques stemmed from the traditions of Twente in which weavers place their love and immense knowledge into fostering small-scale production. By working closely with fashion designers, Annemieke connects producer with designer, and closes the fashion loop by producing only what is in fact needed. This translates into a cooperative embodiment of making clothing, in which a horizontal

and heterarchy-type (as opposed to hierarchy) of relationship is created with all stakeholders involved in this chain. She also includes students in this process, much like Studio RYN does in connecting makers with designers and students from the MBO and HBO education sector of the Netherlands. Focusing on small-scale production, Studio RYN looks at the entire value chain of fashion and how education can play a role in fortifying sustainable practices. In the book *Life of Lines*⁴, Ingold mentions the importance of education related to what he refers to as ex-duction: '(drawing out) of the learner into the world itself, as it is given to experience'. We see how this rings true when we involve students in production practices, pla-



cing them in an embedded reality school learning environment, building on non-hierarchical forms of fashion practices. This immediately results in an experiential practice, giving agency to future generations who will carry the importance of social interactions within the fashion industry. According to Fletcher⁵, the shift in material culture towards social culture is paramount to driving a sustainable fashion practice. She states that 'the point of departure becomes people', and herein lies the importance of not looking at the material as centre, but looking at the social relations that drive the material. Referring back to Ingold, in which he enunciates that 'to human is a verb', we can draw inspiration that fashion starts with people, and materials do not contain social lives, but the other way around (Fletcher 2012). Ingold regards human relations as the foundation of which materials stem from:

We really need a new word, something like 'anthropo-ontogenetic', to describe how form, rather than being applied to the material, is emergent within the field of human relations...

...Anthropogenesis [abbreviated from anthropo-ontogenetic] is neither making nor growing, but a kind of making-in-growing. To knit an item of clothing could be regarded as anthropogenic in this sense. The shape of the clothing might map onto the bodily form of the wearer, yet this shape arises from countless micro-gestures of threading and looping that turn a continuous strand of yarn into a surface. But is it any different with the body? 'For you created my inmost being', as it is written in the Book of Psalms, 'you knit me together in my mother's womb.' We have already seen how lines that are knit in the same womb may subsequently go their separate ways in the formation of relations of kinship and affinity...

...Human craftsmanship as an anthropogenic making-in-growing, wherein forms arise from the careful nurturing of materials within a field of correspondence, rather than from their having been imposed from without upon a material base.

From raw material, to textile and clothing, and back again, local for local allows for building a human network, engaging with people and with the clothing we wear in a deeper and more meaningful way. That is not to say that we mustn't take caution when regarding circular fashion practices. Mainly due to lack of scientific research available that regards the social integration of circularity, and how often in its methods, the disregard for the equity-based practices is still an urgency we deal with in contemporary fashion practices. This reminds me of Bruggeman's writings in her book *Dissolving the Ego of Fashion* (2018), in which she highlights the importance of taking 'fashion back into our own hands and make it a catalyst for social change'. We are in need of re-telling the stories of clothing from seed to wearer, and back to the earth. And how ultimately, we are in need of one another.

¹ Initiated by Crafts Council Nederland and ArtEZ Master Practice Held in Common.

² Head of Master Practice Held in Common at ArtEZ University of the Arts.

³ Enschede Textielstad works with recycled materials and natural fibres grown in Europe.

⁴ Tim Ingold. 2015. *Life of Lines*.

⁵ Kate Fletcher. 2012. *Durability, Fashion, Sustainability: The Processes and Practices of Use*. View here: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/272144844>

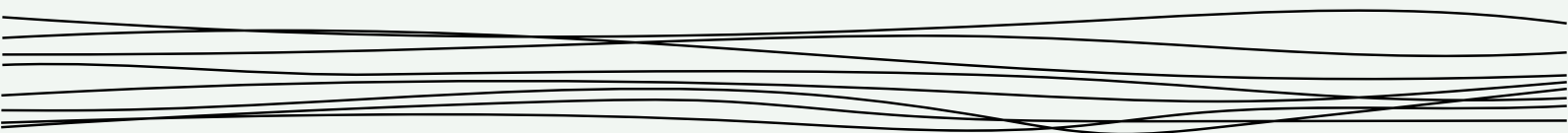




dialogues #4



with **New Order of Fashion**
by **Zuza Nazaruk**



“From Scratch” by New Order of Fashion – a step forward in fashion’s transformation towards circularity

“End is near, time for new beginnings.” The title of New Order of Fashion’s (NOoF) 2019 exhibition reveals the foundation’s drive to transform fashion. “We wanted to stop with all the convictions about fashion and start listening to our talents”, Harm Rensink, NOoF’s Creative Director explains. “It’s all about new materials, new aesthetics, new ways of producing.”

New Order of Fashion is a platform gathering fashion talents from around the world to create a network of game-changers, culminating in an annual innovative fashion exhibition at Dutch Design Week (DDW). “We search for exceptional people, unique in their voice,” Rensink states. “NOoF takes a more active, rebellious approach in rethinking the fashion industry”.

Entrance into fashion’s future

The idea for this year’s DDW exhibition came about before the pandemic, but COVID-19 made it only more relevant. NOoF designers first envisioned “From Scratch” as an active exhibition, a walk-in clothing repair store. Public response to the preparation phase appeared overwhelmingly positive – NOoF collected 1,500 kg of clothes in

just two days. Subsequently, a month before DDW, NOoF decided to open a “fashion store of the future” in Eindhoven’s Heuvel Gallery. Partners Wolkat, a post-consumer textile recycler, and Bart Hess, a fashion designer, joined NOoF talents Alicia Minaard and Marie Sloth Rousing in creating a holistic experience that extended beyond the DDW. Looking at the city as a source of fashion, the partners carried out a series of projects that blend fashion and education. Through fashion collections and various public interventions, NOoF highlighted that garments we don’t wear anymore aren’t waste but a useful resource for creative explorations instead. Upon collection, the clothes were sorted by colour. This was the starting point for Hess’s visual representation of Eindhoven’s “colour barcode”. By putting the colours in a line, Hess set to discover the city’s look. It turned out that Eindhoven’s most popular colour is black, followed by various shades of grey. Bright colours remained at the end of the spectrum.

Most of the sorted apparel ended up at Wolkat’s facilities, where they were turned back into the fabric and spun into a yarn. Sloth Rousing and Hess then organized designing sessions



©NOoF – From Scratch



©NOoF – From Scratch



©NOoF – From Scratch

to see how one's pattern can benefit the other's design. The result is a couture collection for purchase at the store in Heuvel Gallery. "I love to see that people collaborate more and more," Rensink asserts. "We invite designers to show their ways of upgrading or designing. It's nice to see this emerging community, people wanting to collaborate rather than see each other as competition."

Outsourcing problems, obscuring solutions

Collaboration is crucial in light of the challenges that sustainable, circular fashion needs to overcome. On a systemic level, the industry around second-hand clothing overshadows investments and interest in recycling structures. "Recycling clothes often requires more money than it makes," **Minaard** reveals. The current multinational agreements enforce that second-hand garments are sorted and re-located around the world rather than reused. Such an arrangement slows down any development in the recycling market. It also has very real consequences for livelihoods, although far away from our sight and, often, awareness.

Minaard shared her observations from a two-month field trip to Accra, Ghana, home to one of the world's largest second-hand markets, Kantamanto. The market receives between

960.000 kg to 2.700.000 kg of second-hand clothes weekly. Most of the garments are what the 'West' considers category C, the lowest, quality. The process of collecting, sorting, and re-selling the shipments proves exploitative of its labourers, particularly, the Kayayei women. They come from Northern Ghana to the capital in search of improved income and find themselves trapped in abusive financial structures. Unable to save anything for their families, the Kayayei women eventually end up sleeping on the streets. Additionally, the dawn of fast fashion in the past 15 to 20 years drastically lowered the clothing's quality. Today, many resellers can't make a profit on second-hand apparel anymore. "First, we took their resources, now we're colonizing with waste", **Branko Popovic**, co-director of **FASHIONCLASH** and Activities Referent at Culture.Fashion, sums up **Minaard's** story. Resellers throw much of the clothing on the streets, where it lies for weeks before it ends up in Kpone landfill. The business model that took over assumes buying new, cheap clothes from Chinese sellers. "We can't really say anything about this, we've made this mistake too", **Minaard** notices. "There's a heavy post-colonial system around this market." A real-impact solution that **NOoF** promotes is to move from a linear to a circular way of producing garments, as well as to prolong the lifespan of those we already own.

Change, one garment at a time

NOoF aims to contribute to the growing public awareness of reusing, repurposing, and recycling clothes. “We want to show people that there are many options and that re-doing your whole wardrobe to be sustainable is not the way,” **Minaard** explains. Her social design research for “From Scratch” focused on reading labels as, in her words, “The label is the only place where brands can be transparent.” During her investigation, **Minaard** could see the relationships between production, design, and consumption, and identify tangible, accessible-to-all steps towards more sustainable clothing practices. A label reading workshop is a good starting point. In **Minaard**’s sample, 20% of the labels were cut out, which makes it close-to-impossible to take good care of clothes. The remaining labels rarely listed all countries or makers involved in the production due to the supply chain’s complexity.

Today, it is often cheaper to buy new than to put time and effort into fixing one’s garments. Subsequently, knowledge around repairing is fading away. “From Scratch” aims at reviving that knowledge and showing that repairing is a worthy activity. “If people are more aware and keep their clothes longer,” **Minaard** explains, “they can spare so much energy and waste.” Prolonging the lifespan also allows for developing recycling techniques. **NOoF** has a first-hand experience with how difficult it currently is. The recycled yarn is short and easily breakable, so not good for the sewing machine. Besides, many microfibers can still get washed out. “Many things need to be re-thought to make recycled yarn a good product,” **Minaard** points out. The effort is worthwhile as, according to Annabelle Lampe from Wolkat, the collected 1,500 kg of clothes correspond to 6 kilometres of fabric.

Trending: circularity

Dealing with fashion waste puts a chain reaction in motion, as it triggers fundamental questions about production and consumption patterns. With the knowledge gathered in the process, **NOoF** plans to do more interventions with the shop’s visitors. Although in-store repairs and selling repair kits are impossible during the extended lockdown, **NOoF** managed to organize a “repair party”, as Rensink laughingly describes



©NOoF – From Scratch

it. One of their 2020 talents, Matthew Needham, led a workshop on repairing garments with pre-delivered repair kits. **NOoF** plans more open workshops and interventions based on **Minaard**’s research and various knowledge-sharing collaborations. On the fashion side of things, **NOoF** will develop two new circular materials in collaboration with the Textile Museum in Tilburg. Stina Randestad, **NOoF**’s 2018 talent, will prepare sculptural knits from recycled fabrics, and Needham will create non-woven fashion materials. All to participate in knowledge exchange, joining the transition towards responsible fashion practices that has been gaining momentum across the Netherlands. Community-building is a cornerstone and an important element of the success around “From Scratch”. With its network of rebellious innovators, **NOoF** will continue to play its part in transforming the fashion industry from linear production and consumption into respect for the clothes, the workers, and the planet.



reflections #6



**Philippe
Pourhashemi**

**Building New Bridges
& Looking Forward**

We invited coach and fashion journalist Philippe Pourhashemi to reflect on the digital festival edition of the interdisciplinary showcase and development platform FASHIONCLASH.

Spread over a three-day period, from Friday, February 26th to Sunday, February 28th, FASHIONCLASH Festival invited a new wave of designers, artists, musicians and performers to showcase their world to like-minded creatives, using the immersive and interactive tools offered by digital technologies.

© Pasarella photography, Laura Knipsaer



Openness, generosity and intimacy are some of the keywords defining this unique and innovative edition, placed under the sign of craft, as well as personal expression and boundless ideas. Designers are now willing to reveal the essence of their work, while sharing freely the intricacy of their technique, something Branko Popović, co-founder and co-director of the Festival, sees as a significant step towards a new path: "I was impressed by the resilience of the designers involved, despite the challenges brought by COVID-19. This young generation is looking for ways to present and promote itself efficiently, but it's also very open and willing to share its know-how and processes with others. 5 or 6 years ago, designers would have been much more secretive about their ideas, marking a key shift within creative spheres."

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Not only did this 12th edition offered exhibitions - which can be toured digitally- as well as original films, personal statements and performances, it also featured interactive events, such as the live announcement of the winner of the Fashion Makes Sense Award on the 26th, and a Community Talk broadcast on the 28th, giving participants and organizers the chance to gather online and exchange ideas while discussing their experience of the Festival itself.

Unlike previous editions, which may have been more militant in spirit and vocal about certain societal and political issues, this Digital Edition underlines a need for closeness, togetherness and understanding, using the digital as an entry into subjective - and highly private - landscapes. More than ever, designers are willing to assert their own strengths and singularity, as well as the complexity of their craft, inspiring us with their poetic and forward-thinking vision.

If you have missed the live-streams, all the video content will be available on the **FASHIONCLASH YouTube channel**.

12th edition FASHIONCLASH Festival

The 12th edition of the international and interdisciplinary **FASHIONCLASH** Festival took place from 26 – 28 February 2021. During this three-day event, a new generation of designers and (performing) artists from home and abroad were given the opportunity to show their work digitally to a broad international audience. During the festival, the fourth edition of Fashion Makes Sense award was presented. Mathilde Rougier has won the jury prize and MARKO FEHER has won the public prize.

Colophon

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