

RADICAL METAMORPHOSIS

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- A DECLARATION OF CHANGE -

RADICAL METAMORPHOSIS

Now that speed and greed have deflated and devaluated the significance of fashion and textiles, the world needs a complete overhaul of its educational systems in design. The current costs of overproduction and needless, senseless business as usual have to stop when climate crisis restrictions will become law and when young generations refuse to give in to conspicuous consumption. Opportunity needs to lead to greatness not to fastness. Even the venerated luxury houses will have to abide by the various new tides and adjust their practices, reining in their goals of systemic growth. Nobody needs as many things as currently being suggested and people start to scale down their possessions as ownership is no longer considered cool. Our goal is to have less and better design overhaul the current diktat of more and mediocre. No sentient being should suffer, and people should benefit from another, more equitable society.

A REVEALING HISTORY

Not many people know where we went wrong but not too long ago, fashion did things differently. The charm of a gingham, the sobriety of a glen check or the allure of a Prince de Galles would art direct garments from preppy to business to aristocratic. The directive selection process of fabrics included the weaving of new qualities and the design of unique jacquards. A pattern could become the iconic sign of its times, giving creed to Burberry for its check, Missoni for its zigzag and Marimekko for its flat flowers. It is important to note that all these houses are still with us, and survived decades of competition.

Nurturing textiles is a recipe for longevity.

Famously, Cristóbal Balenciaga fashioned gazar from the origins of organdie, forever elevating dresses to stand alone as sculptural pieces.

Futurist Paco Rabanne turned chainmail into couture and Yves Saint Laurent requested jerseys to be double, ready to be cookie cut, enabling his iconic shapes.

The elaboration of new constructions was part of the job of being a fashion designer. Memorably, Coco Chanel encountered the Scottish weaving house of Linton and fell in love with its masculine tweeds, rethinking them in pretty pastels, and the rest is history. Almost a century later the house of Chanel owns tweed. Couturiers would think textile before trend and chose their fabrics to lead fashion, aiming to innovate materials the way sneaker producers invent new making processes today.

A RUDE AWAKENING

Fashion design has become a commodity and couldn't care less about the fabrics used, as long as there is material volume to create monetary volume, resulting in a limited choice of denim, fleece, jersey and flannel, with the occasional flower, sequin or photo to make the same old look new. This is why fashion design is on its way out, suffering from overproduction and undercreativity, leading to a market saturated with opportunistic drops and collaborations, camouflaging the utter lack of integrity and initiative, where the sporadic use of a jacquard becomes an overnight TikTok sensation. We have reached the point where we can no longer speak of fashion and have to address merchandise simply as clothes.

Education has largely participated in the demise of fashion by closing textile design departments, neglecting fabric knowledge and promoting virtual sketching over draping and pattern making. Styling is still there to save the day but cannot make a difference without vintage goods to tell a story. This is why we need to reconstruct the system and introduce a radical new educational model. Based on the ancestry of textiles and its affinity with fashion. Understanding the kinship of creation.

A RADICAL OVERHAUL

We believe that in order to understand fashion design we need to teach the origin of clothes, which can be found at the farm and in the forest, in the ocean even. We know that regenerative farming and foresting are in the cards of a future where brands will be involved from the very start of the creation of their goods, responsible for alternative crops, humane animal treatment and measured cellulose and algae production.

Some houses are already embracing this responsibility.

Therefore, our first year master students will cultivate crops, groom animals and harvest knowledge at the birth of fashion.

Once the farm is integrated with fibre learning, yarn design and dye processes, they will move on to fabric design and learn how to conceive new woven patterns, explore knitting stitches and indulge in finger fabrics like crochet and laces, always incorporating their foundational wisdom. This is where we discover the radical benefit, training resolve and restraint as a skill.

A REWARDING EXPERIENCE

Second-year students will pursue their exploration of textiles, making them expressive and innovative, studying arts & crafts as well as hybrid systems bridging craft & tech, to imagine the material future. Fashion that cuddles and clothes that heal emotionally and physically will be in demand. Designing crypto couture will be mastered. Anthropology as well as archaeological studies will give further insight into the human psyche and tribal behaviour.

Thought processes will travel from the beginning of time into the future. Embellishment techniques such as embroideries, patchwork and beading will further define the master student's identity.

In the final semester the graduate students will write a manifesto about their vision, integrating farm and fabric and fashion knowledge, resulting in an idiosyncratic presentation of their findings. This is where the accumulation of experiences come to fruition and might change the course of fashion history.

A RITUAL CELEBRATION

But F+F+F is not just about the idea of a common circular culture. It is first and foremost about an awareness of life in its compelling essence, giving rights to materials, as much as to animals, plants and humans.

An animistic approach that will gradually transform people into collectors and collaborators versus consumers, that will consider goods as good, foods as festive, items as innate and craft as culture. Each expression, even as small as a spoon, will be considered and appreciated, cherished and coveted. Each shirt, as humble as a handkerchief, will be elevated and revered, introduced to people's cupboard of favourites.

Empathic design will be celebrated.

Therefore, we will invite our graduates to process the precious and the unique as they intuitively understand and practice their journey from farm to fabric to fashion. In an attempt to educate unfolding generations as the vanguard of social style and common culture.

Bringing back the joy of fashion.

Lidewij Edelkoort
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**FARM +
FABRIC =
FASHION #**

Textiles from Farm to Fabric to Fashion
a master programme at Polimoda
in Florence, the capital of fabrics,
starting Autumn 2022

under the art direction of Lidewij Edelkoort and Linda Loppa,
the general direction of Massimiliano Giornetti,
assisted by course mentor Philip Fimmano

POLIMODA

LIDEWIJ EDELKOORT