

ANTI_FASHION

a manifesto for the next decade
by Lidewij Edelkoort

TEN REASONS WHY THE FASHION SYSTEM IS OBSOLETE:

EDUCATION

Fashion institutes, academies and universities all over the world keep training their students to become catwalk designers, highly individual stars and divas, to be discovered by luxury brands. These institutions seem to be oblivious to the new world we live in, a world created for and from interaction, dealing with an economy of exchange and a strong sense of extended family, where working and playing together has become more important than individual gain. As a result the fashion world is still working in 20th century mode, celebrating the individual, elevating it-people, developing the exception...in a society hungry for consensus and altruism. A world where individualism is long over. This places fashion outside of society and by de facto makes it old-fashioned. While all other disciplines such as dance, art and design have acknowledged the need in their students to cooperate and form groups, teams and couples, it seems that only fashion is left behind. Furthermore fashion schools are responding to the current need and greed of the luxury market by forcing their students to design not just clothes but also accessories, jewellery, underwear and a logo. They are trained to become little Karl's and must realize a film or make photos, layout a catalogue and create the music for their runway show. Since time is short the design process is compressed and therefore the young creative elite make clothes and no longer fashion, they no longer have time to consider a conceptual approach which might transform the silhouette, nor the time to transcend dominant trends. Students are groomed to be up and running within the luxury industry without further due. The brands need star designers like football needs star players. Star designers that no longer know how to create what was once called fashion.

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ALL ABOUT MEN

This manifesto which searches to redefine the future of the ready-to-wear industries has no impact so far on fashions for men, which are in top form, representing an ever-increasing turnover on all levels of retail. Men are increasingly interested in fashion and accessories as well as cosmetics and fragrances.

The restrained possibilities of eccentric and avant-gardist designs in the male wardrobe make small variations revolutionary, therefore the taste for fashion is increasing, taking men step by step into other worlds and other behaviour patterns. And they do seem to enjoy this new position immensely.

Turning tables, the word fashion is now related to men.

EPILOGUE

This exodus of fashion will change the landscape of what is the culture of clothes. My hunch is that we will see the comeback of couture as a major benefit. After all it is in the atelier of couture that we will find the laboratory of this labour of love. Suddenly the profession of the couturier will become coveted and the exclusive way of crafting couture will inspire all others.

Ultimately leading to the selling of patterns to retailers and department stores, just as before the arrival of prêt-à-porter.

Making history turn round.

Paris, November 2014,

Lidewij Edelkoort

ENGAGE !

AFTERTHOUGHT

Recently fashion exhibitions have drawn massive amounts of visitors, nostalgic for the heydays of creation and couture. The sensational Alexander McQueen exhibition has drawn record numbers of visitors. Costume exhibitions at the Metropolitan attract more press than any other opening at the institution and the annual ball organized by Anna Wintour has eclipsed all other events in Manhattan. This growing interest in curating the culture of clothes is felt like a burden by the fashion houses; in their opinion too much time is spent in the promotion of things past. Therefore they make the making of fashion exhibits gradually impossible, refusing cooperation, suggesting intervention in the curating processes, meddling in the selections of other brands. In many cases never answering

requests. Sometimes the garments are from a former star designer so the current designer expresses a veto on lending. Sometimes the brand doesn't want to be remembered by the scandalous episode of a burnt-out couturier. Often these brands create their own archives and foundations and host their own showcases that are generally just another blatant form of product placement. As we know the world of art has become involved and gladly lends its talent to create a bag. It is therefore obvious that the end of fashion curating is near, becoming almost impossible, therefore museums turn to clothes to satisfy the public interest, organizing shows around denim, activewear and streetwear, obliged to turn from fashion to clothes.

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