



IN PRAISE OF LABOUR



art by ellen van loor

Labour has gained a new status.

Once discarded as a lower form of manual work, it is now regarded as an honourable profession amongst all others. The economic crisis and the immigrant question are both responsible for that change in perception. Suddenly mixing concrete, cutting trees, building houses, cleaning waste, welding steel and mending machines become enviable occupation; being master of your own time, crafting constructive elements for society. Therefore the aesthetics of working clothes are reaching out to fashion to be interpreted as a new style, able to give consumers a much-needed neglected and ravaged casual cool: a new trend called worn-wear. Poor, washed and crinkled fabrics designed for heavy work situations are making a come back in dirty colours that are rather neutral in aspect. The qualities can be noble such as cashmere, camelhair and merino wool yet the outlook is grungier and fits our fragmented society. Worn and fringed detailing will gain momentum to continue a dishevelled form of deconstructed clothing that will use oversized shapes and undersized details.



TREND
UNION

photo by marie taillefer

THE WORKER'S BLUES



photo by nicole franzen

When we think of workwear we think blue. The iconic colour of dedicated production clothes is indeed a scale of different blue colours ranging from deep navy to guaranteed-to-fade indigos, sturdy denims and lighter shades of washed sky blue. Workers' wear in blue has influenced fashions rather often, ranging from Mao's jacket to Osh Kosh dungarees, Levi's jeans and Upla carpenter pants. Blue is related to fishermen and matelots, to textile weavers and storage clerks, to humble grocers and garage engineers and will always appeal to consumers hunting for the best basics. Therefore this season, the idea of simple workwear will influence style again and distribute the colour blue on a larger scale. Woven in different constructions such as serge and whipcord, canvas and nylon, denim and chambray as well as brushed cottons and quilted qualities. Elaborate weaving is sampled from Asian inspiration, bringing indigo to the fore. Ultra simple colourwoven patterns are again relevant and help to create a discreet form of functional fantasy.



THE CARPENTER'S GUILD



What set the carpentry profession apart were the guilds that organized the labour and installed an intimate learning experience, something that seems to be an interesting organization for the future of fashion.

The guilds regulated the working conditions and the production processes but would also have a political and cultural voice.

They travelled together from town to town, from building to building, and would experience the beauty of creating architecture and furniture all at once and gathered as a group.

Much like a design studio that is labouring together to create a collection.

The masters, journeymen and apprentices would work as an extended family and be dependent on one another, just like research, textile, sketching and patternmaking are related in the fields of fashion.

The master would teach his disciples to gain knowledge, much like the design director stimulates the studio's creativity today.

Fashion takes stock of this skill-based design and sets out to construct simple shapes that are rendered in extreme qualities with exquisite detailing and perfect function.

Using a larger scale of brown colours that are studied from the different tones of wood.



THE SHEPHERD & FLOCK



art by stephen allwood

The roaming wool revival continues on its bucolic path to reach out to brand new brands and their demanding consumers. Rediscovered as a sustainable and remarkably practical fibre, wool and other animal yarns such as buffalo, camel and goat penetrate the activewear and sportswear markets, often finished with rubber and latex. The yarns are fire resistant and shield from the rain and snow, provided they are not washed and finished into oblivion. The qualities want to be resistant, tousled and felted. These coarser hands will perform well in this period of production clothes to come. The heavier twills and compacted tweeds can be cut in square volumes and roomier coats; perfect for capes and covers tailored from blankets and plaids. Thus imitating the wardrobe of shepherds while guarding their flocks, knitting their sweaters, shearing their beloved animals, playing their flute, singing their folk songs...
Loving this solitary profession.



TREND
UNION

THE MONASTIC CORE



photo by haydar koyupinar

Living like a monk is a recurrent cultural dream for overworked and overly worried individuals. Their pace of life is too strenuous and in general people yearn to find their own being. Therefore retreats and sanctuaries are becoming increasingly important, to help individuals make sense of their lives and create a more modest intimate personal space in which they can share with others.

Fashion is interested in this movement and imagines people involved and enthralled with their newfound inner selves, to be highlighted by severe and simple robes and habits, very much like a monk's wardrobe. Accessories such as belted ropes and sandals with heavier socks are keys to the monastic silhouette. These religious styles are square cut and simple, with hidden details and blind finishing; a way to give peace to the world of consumption and to rest ear, eye and mind.

If clothes make the monk, this story will become very well documented and followed, introducing yet another chapter of minimalism.



THE CHEF'S KITCHEN



design by toast

Never before has food been as important as a lifestyle ingredient and trend food; never before have cooks been as exposed to the public as they are today. The chef is the new rock star and inspires and guides all of us amateur foodies. Their rigorous approach to the ethos of their job is leading a revolution in slow food preparation and bio ingredients, a comeback of forgotten vegetables and the invention of innovative hybrid diets. Plating food has become an art form.

For all of these reasons, the clothes of the chefs become our focus and fashion will steal their pristine and calendared qualities. The double-breasted fitted jackets, the aprons and shirts as well as the handkerchief and headgear will all become inspirational.

These strict garments will be used as basic ingredients to cook up a storm of fantasy clothes that use vegetable dyeing, food printing and a romantic illustrative cookbook mentality.

Bon appétit!



THE MAID'S UNIFORM



Upstairs/Downstairs and Downton Abbey are iconic TV series that have singled out the beauty and sensuous attraction of the housemaids and their amazing sense of style. Often the upstairs gentlemen would prefer the downstairs maidens to their own puritan wives. Their wholesome blushing faces and young chubby frames must have had enormous appeal. A typical English style where the black dress will be complemented with removable collars and cuffs as well as endearing head ornaments and perky little shoes. They busy themselves with making beds, ironing clothes and setting tables and therefore inspire fashion with a focus on household linens, fine embroideries and laces. The act of ironing brings a focus on starched qualities and impeccable shirting as well as beautiful stitching and smocking. Mending and crochet are used to bring a lived-in memory to clothes that have Victorian allure with a flea market aesthetic. Transparencies and hemstitched detailing are accompanied by embroidered initials. Motifs include damask flowers, cut yarns and historical landscaped toile de Jouy.



TREND
UNION

THE FARMER'S HAND



photo by nicole bentley

The rural influences on our cities continue with the idea of the farmer's hand as a tool to design new and romantic merchandise. A symbolic presence that includes the sturdy and the tested as well as the feminine and the seductive. A blend of both worlds to create new silhouettes that are functional and frivolous all at the same time. The feminine farmer's smock is thus married to the worker's apron, the naive smock dress worn over worker's pants and the embroidered blouse with dungarees - opposites attract! Textiles are therefore a clever mix of the romantic and the robust and will explore newer alliances than we have ever experienced before, such as denim with cut-yarns or woollens with repetitive patterns. Design will use the cross-stitched and the chain-stitched to embellish wool as well as cotton flannels, able to warm up body and spirit. The bucolic beauty of these pioneer styles will bring back function as well as fashion.



TREND
UNION

photo by michael baumgarten

THE GARDENER'S FANTASY



photo by martin googlsberg

The gardener has always been a figure of fantasy. 1979's *Being There* movie in his honour describes the gardener's innate qualities of caring for plants like caring for the world at large; watering, trimming and planting as symbols for feeding, governing and developing society. Nature revisited as a metaphor for life.

A reliable and capable quality of life that translates into a reliable and functional style of rather invisible clothes.

Yet the fantasy can also be the gardener's own vision and creativity, the way he or she brings perspective to landscaping, the handling of colour in the garden design, the layering of different plant species. Now these two fantasies come together in yet another ode to florals, natural colours and exuberant living patterns on velvets, crêpes and as jacquards, combined with sturdy and functional gardeners' clothes in canvas and corduroy. The worker's smock worn by the painter Gustav Klimt is an example of the fantasy that lays ahead of us, at once masculine and feminine, functional and fanciful...



TREND
UNION

THE CLINICAL TRIALS



photo by gibson fox

A recent trip to the emergency ward of a local hospital after cutting my finger while cooking was instrumental in designing this story of clinical colours and calendared qualities in textiles. Contrary to the suggested speed of these emergency situations on TV shows, the pace is excruciatingly slow so it gives one time to contemplate and absorb the eerie beauty of the antiseptic environment. The faded green paint on the corridors, the pale blue blouses of the assistant nurse, the intense white of the lab coat, the yellow plastic bags and the orange red safety tape all impressed me; like an almost visionary universe, able to beam me up to another life. The doctor allowed me to take some samples home so I could formulate my colours after the experience...

Although hindered by pain, my senses became alert to this new and ice cold world of plastic, metal and nylon that somehow translates as a futuristic fashion story about nurses' dresses, operating aprons and sensible orthopaedic shoes. Announcing a cure for creative inspirations. a



TREND
UNION

THE SHAMAN'S REALM



art by maria fernanda cardoso

Some people are gifted with otherworldly forces and an intense talent for reading and healing others. They are connected to a universal flow of knowledge that enables them to direct humans towards physical health and the well-being of the soul. They use their powers to dance and sing in order to exorcise the bad omens in society and are often seen as the spiritual leaders of their settlements.

In order to profess their talents they are dressed in fetishist clothes that use animal skins and bones, felts and feathers as well as charms and amulets to harness their powers. Their clothes are covering and hermetic, made to impress the outside world and to protect their inner core. Often the lining will tell stories in patterned silks and ikats. Materials will be coated with a rustic appeal, using animal and plant fibres such as yukka and hemp twined together with buffalo and yak. Colours are dyed with earth matters, plant pigments and blood. Weaves are intricate and might include good luck tokens.



THE TEXTILE DESIGNER



The influence of craft on spinning and weaving continues to inspire new creations that are out to seduce the most hardened consumers.

The beauty of the weaving industry is flourishing and creating contemporary garments that have longevity built into the process of making. Carefully chosen fibres are twisted into amazingly creative yarn constructions that contribute to the aesthetics of this movement.

Beauty is demanded and becomes a standard requirement, singlehandedly bringing back textile from the edge of decline.

Natural fibres are blended together between animal and plant products and possess perfect inter-seasonal properties.

Using colour as a proven tool to realize carpet-like patterns and kilim-type stripes, design will see new multi-coloured landscapes of texture and tactility. Landscapes that in turn formulate dresses and coats, full skirts and tunics as well as accessories.

THE ARTIST IN RESIDENCE



TREND
UNION



photo by nicolas delaroche

The recent influence of art on fashion is finally coming of age. Instead of simply brushing patterns on canvas and printing citations of famous artworks, we now see that fashion design is entering the era of abstraction, looking at sculpture and installation art as well as drawing and collage.

Abstraction will come to the fore in the world of art and design and announces a period of growth and sublimation. A more minimal and grown-up attitude that is using cut, colour and layering to obtain unusual form and force. A mature way of designing contemporary pieces that stand out as creations more than fashions. The colours are strange and provocative, the textiles dense and compacted, the motifs linear and employing colour-blocking. A way forward to design clothes that matter and can stand the test of time, making this a sustainable design proposal.

THE CALLIGRAPHER'S GESTURE



photo by patrick demarchelier

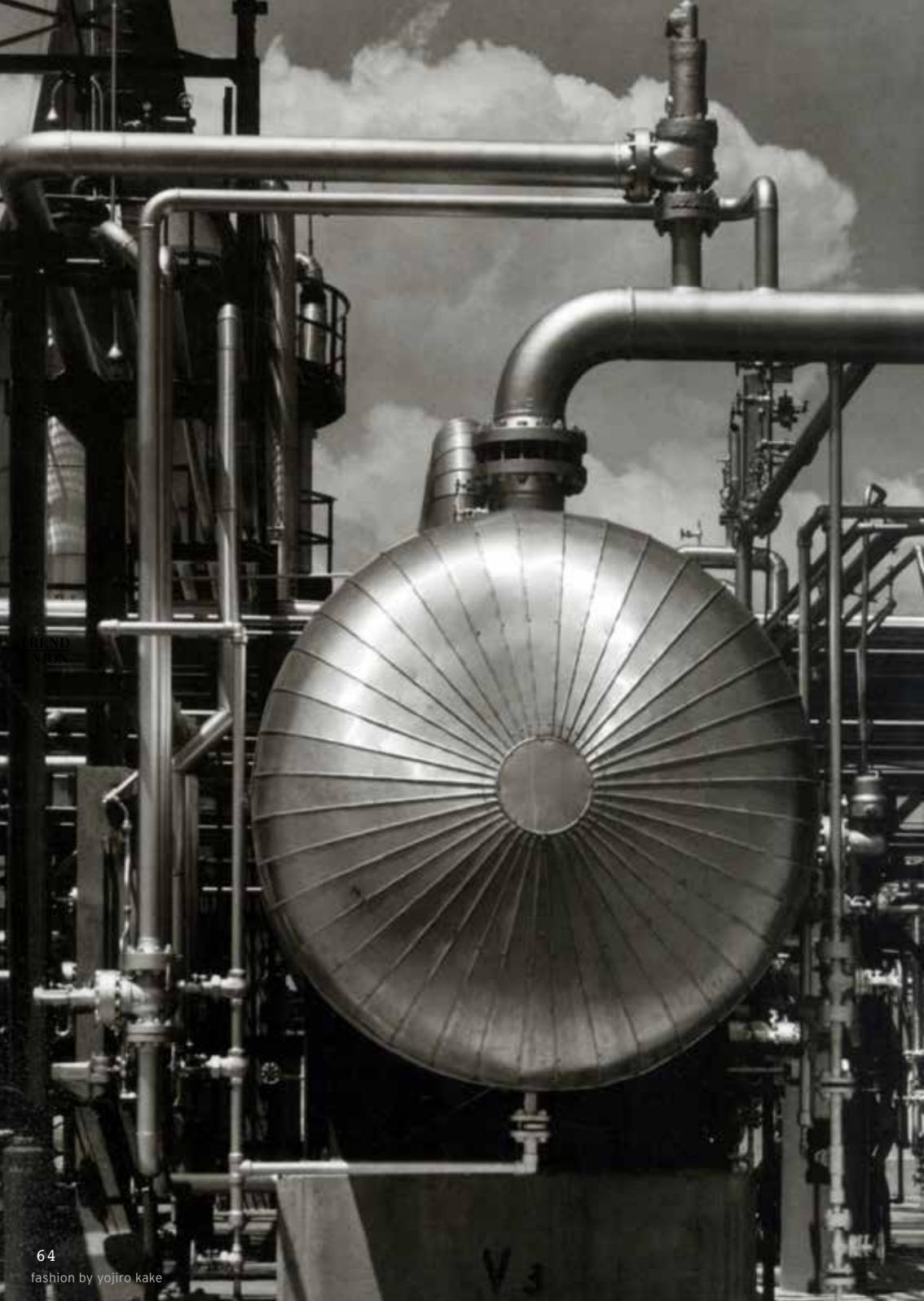
The act of writing with ink on beautiful handcrafted Japanese paper is a creative act. Calligraphy formulates not only words but gives content to letters and contextualises poetry. The gesture is part of a precise yet loose process and develops the handwriting of the master. The power of words and even the strength of single letters is emphasised and becomes a new trend in logo design and book covers. Soon we will see more and more graphic work which is written and in movement.

This tendency is used by textile design and patternmaking in new and innovative ways, such as double weaves, obi-inspired jacquards, landscaped patterns and the overflow of one handwriting into another in the same fabric. Together with these intricate and balanced textiles we will design and produce Asian clothes that are sober and functional, just like the workwear of calligraphers themselves. Simple shirt jackets, kimono shapes, happy coats and loose pantaloons with white socks and slippers.

The gesture needs room to flow!



photo by jean-marc palisse



THE MECHANICS OF DESIGN



fashion by yojiro kake

Mechanical production and industrial tools are at the core of this new tendency that explores an almost mad relationship between man and machine. The presumed foolishness of production processes is explored to the fullest with laser cuttings, welding details and original chainmail materials. This crazy machine of metals is spitting out creative matter by the minute and is at risk of getting overheated and out of hand. A bit punk and a bit princess, this story narrates sturdy and reflective textiles that are embellished with hardware and rhinestones, creating a hybrid workwear fashion. Leathers, jacquards and coatings all labour to imitate rusted and oxidized metals. Especially jewellery will get a jolt of creativity using erratic form and erogenous function, bringing along a strong sense of self-expression. The repetitive and the rational are compensated with the erratic and the eccentric, making this one of the most avant-garde statements of the period to come.