GLORIOUS RELAPSE

“Inspired by Boom Festival 2014. The world that changed my world”

Abbie Stirrup
Student Number: 500636149
International Fashion and Design
Words: 3300
Graduation Specialisation, AMFI
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Supervisor: Femke de Vries
GLORIOUS RELAPSE

Suffocated by the dry chalky air I begin my journey into the unknown, blindfolded of the future and into the darkness of a mysterious wonderland. The sizzling sun shone down on my crispy white shoulders, feeling the air penetrating deep within my soul. I begin this journey taking with me, only the preconceptions of the tailored world we are surrounded by, and the structures we have been foiled to believe. The unknown place I prepare you for comes in the form of a psychedelic trance festival that truly changed my life forever.

Upon entering Boom festival it was instantly clear this was like no other place I had been before, it felt like a playground for the grown, no rules, and no boundaries. A place where you’re inner, subconscious dreams and fantasies became reality. At last it was acceptable to screech at the height of your voice, walk through the jungle like animals and imitate the movement and twists of nature. Parading around naked was the norm, enhancing the vibrations of the elements, sea, sand and water.

For the first time there was a connection to the people surrounding me, whom I had just encountered. The constant psychedelic trance beat keep everything alive, a continuous rhythmic loop, hours and days became blurred, the lost memory of life before, took over. I did not want to leave, this was not just a vacation, this was a movement. An experience that makes the individual battle with every emotion. From dread to worry, to euphoria into a complete rebirth of the self, taking complete control of the mind and the body. A powerful, mysterious land that once captivated, seems almost impossible to return to normality.

My ambition is to translate the source of inspiration into something tangible, three-dimensional working with the very nature of the human silhouette. With this as my base I will build the design principles for my graduation collection ‘Glorious Relapse’. I seek to share my personal vision on fashion, society and my signature as a designer. Delve into deeper spectrums of my mind, a part that only some will engage with and some that are none the wiser of its existence.

To build up the foundations of the collection there will be specific research into a number of relevant topics, for example: reality vs illusion, exploring the contrast between the two. Looking deeper into a higher dimension, what is meant by this and how this is achievable? In addition there is also research into the Psychedelic art movement, influenced and inspired by Boom festival. Furthermore there will be exploration into the mythological ability to metamorphose into animals, know by the term Therianthropy. Finally there will be a summary of my ideas and findings in relation to each topic. My aim is to interlink each sub
heading with society and the structures that are present in the 21st century. Questioning how can we break free and express ourselves to the fullest, becoming at one with a higher power, a power beyond any social or political system.

Boom festival, (2014), Embracing the wonders of being free.

REALITY VS ILLUSION

This experience exposes a contact between the psychedelic universe and the society that surrounds us. According to the New Yorker, a society is a group of people with common territory, interaction, and culture. This defines both worlds, as both share common values and believes. However it is important to point out the contrast, the different mind-sets and the extremity between them. Firstly it is of great importance to highlight that society is rapidly changing (Lourdes. R) therefore making it a complex issue to summarise.
There are several explanations and theories when researching today’s society, some of which give a positive and others negative look on the world we live in. According to David C. Korten we live in a world being pillaged by the institutions of global capitalism, which results in the ability to enrich a few at the expense of many others. Korten’s statement highlights the individualist society. Pointing out the importance of your own health, financials and personal happiness, questioning do we care for others and the world we live in?

In contrast the psychedelic Boom society is defined by the principles of oneness, peace, creativity, sustainability, transcendence, alternative culture, evolution and love. It is a space where people from around the world can connect to experience an alternative reality (Boom festival 2014). ‘We are one’ is the defining statement that gathers the free spirits from around the world. The Boom reality by some is considered the perfected principles of mankind, of how the world can and should exist. After a boom experience it is common to begin to question; what is this reality? Can a reality be so blissfully satisfying, peaceful and loving or is this world purely an illusion?

Remez, Sasson 2001 explores reality vs illusion, it is said that the five senses play an important role to detect or believe in reality, (reality being the things that actually exist, rather than that may appear or might be imagine). This may seem to suggest that the world is dependent on the senses. “Without the five senses and the mind, the world does not exist” (Sasson, 2001, p.87), making it clear that engaging your senses in one particular action or activity makes you unaware of what is happening around you. Which leaves the question: is it actually happening? According to Sasson, our mind creates a world of illusions. By changing our thoughts, we change the illusion and experience a different reality. Therefore your thoughts control your reality, having the ability to direct them in whichever way the individual desires. As the scientist Buckminster Fuller once said “You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that’s makes the existing model obsolete”. (Buckminster Fuller 1978)

In relation to fashion this allows room for experimentation and evolution, the ability to change the existing product or garment, creating a new designing, making the existing model so called ‘out of fashion’. My passion lies with creating clothing that ooze’s explosiveness, pushing the standard silhouette and forms of tailored garments, merged with the experimental forms of design. My aim is to mix the two, giving you a new perspective and bringing you over to my reality. A reality inspired by Boom Festival.
HIGHER DIMENSION

It may seem that reality is indefinable. In 2009 the Book of Wisdom stated, “there is no way to say what it is, or what it is not. Reality is beginningless and endless”. The mind has a beginning and an end and cannot comprehend the eternal. “The mind exists in time; in fact the mind is time. It exists in the past and the future”. (The Book Of Wisdom, 2009, P.128) As The Book of Wisdom goes on to state “if you really want to understand, you will have to lose the mind. You will have to pay the price of losing the mind”. This means that the only way to understand reality is to break away from your own mind, which may seem an extremity, in order to fully understand reality.

On the other hand there are a number of different meditations believes or methods in what some believe are effective and powerful in achieve a higher dimension. One of which is said to be a great source of enlightenment and a higher connection is to be in tune with your seven chakras. The chakras are the basic energy centre of the body. The energy centre starts at the base of the spin to the top of the head. These are the doorways between your mental, emotional and your physical bodies (Soundings of the Planet 2014). The seven separate chakras each have a purpose, but they must work together to create balance within the body. (Shiva 2014) Therefore if you are connected to the intangible powers of the chakras, you will enter a higher dimension. This enables the ability to see beauty within the natural world and create connections with other individuals beyond superficial values, such as status, money and a flashy lifestyle.

The definition of chakra means wheel from the language of sanskrit. (Shiva 2014). This is a relation to the primordial spiral, an ancient spiral that is found throughout the natural world. For example these spirals can be noticed in snails, sea coral, romanescoc broccoli (see FIG 1), spider webs, fossils, shells, peacocks feathers (See FIG 2), flowers, and many other aspects of nature, all symbolising growth, expansion and cosmic energy. The concept of the Primordial spiral will be inspiration for the build up of each silhouette, becoming the base of each print and garment created in the collection ‘Glorious Relapse’. This is an attempted to enlighten and express the energy field based on the primordial spiral. Many spirals appearing in nature are visible as logarithmic spirals or growth spirals. This means as you move from the centre the spiral sections get larger. (Awaken The World Film, 2012) This fascination with the patterns and repetition of nature will be infused within the seams of the collection ‘Glorious Relapse’.

PSYCHEDELIC ART MOVEMENT

On the journey of my research into a higher dimension, there is particular referencing to the psychedelic movement, a movement that was bursting from every corner of Boom festival. Psychedelic by definition means “noting a mental state, characterized by a profound sense of intensified sensory perception, sometimes accompanied by severe perceptual distortion, hallucinations and by extreme feelings of either euphoria or despair”. (Dictionary.com 2015)

Humphry Osmond was a cutting edge psychiatric researcher who founded the psychedelic universe. Psychedelic art as stated above refers to art that has been influenced by hallucinogenic medicines, such as LSD. Giving a visual picture of kaleidoscopic swirling patterns. (See FIG 3) (Art History 2013)

However, it also refers to the art of the 1960s counterculture movement, referring to the anti-establishment cultural phenomenon. “This was a time when long held values and norms of behaviour seemed to break down, particularly amongst the younger generation”. (Cliff 2014) The psychedelic movement was not only visually captivating but gave a huge impact on the revolutionary political, social and spiritual attitude. (Art history 2013) As the 1960s progressed and the psychedelic movement spread, this was the beginning of social tension, and a number of developing issues that remain a substantial impact on today’s society. Examples of the tension causes by this powerful movement were witnessed in human
sexuality, more commonly known as the sexual revolution. A time when traditional codes of behaviour related to sexuality were challenged, resulting in acceptance of sex outside of heterosexual relationships, the birth of the contraception pill, public nudity, premarital sex, and the legalisation of abortion (Escoffier 2003). As the 1960s evolved there was an increase in experimentation with psychoactive drugs and the birth of dynamic subcultures bringing life to the hippie and other alternative lifestyles.

Boom festival is not the first of its kind, the landmark of counterculture events was the Woodstock festival held in New York in 1969, a universe similar to Boom, spreading the message of peace, music, and love. Psychedelic is a movement that is heavily influenced by art and visual experimentation. The visionary art museum is a space created by Boom to expose a collection of art, supporting live visuals and psytrance deco artists. (Boom Festival 2014) This gave a feel for the intensity and the similarity between the artwork and the experience, delving the individual deeper into the psychedelic universe. A common ingredient into the work of practicing psychedelic artist is the focus on the mind, the skull and the repetition of swirling patterns, often noticeable as logarithmic spirals as explained in the Higher Dimension chapter.
An artist that explores these two ingredients is Olga Kilmova. Kilmova is one of the artists that display her work at Boom festival, an artist that made my fascination for psytrance art evolve (See FIG 4). Olga Kilmova started creating art as a result of her deep and mystical experiences, followed by a practice of Vipassana meditation. “Olga’s work is a visual mastermind of her own memory, expressing the blissful state of being able to connect to a deeper level of consciousness. Creating a desire to share her experience with the world” (Olga Klimova 2014). The art piece named Manifestations is an exploration of fluorescent acrylic inks on canvas, giving an eclectic swirl into the sixth chakra known as the third eye. The third eye is the centre of command, relating to the mind and the individual self, giving insight beyond the five senses. (Judith 2004)
THERIANTHROPY

Therianthropy is the best terminology for describing the movement that was bursting from the seams at boom festival. This newfound freedom allowed individuals to be in touch with their primal instincts, looking and acting like creatures of the wilderness. According to shadows den 2013 Therianthropy is the mythological ability to metamorphose into animals or share a spiritual connection with the animal inside oneself. This is a concept that has always been a huge fascination of mine: falling in line with the trippy night time of the festival experience, an inspiration that will play an important role throughout the collection. It is commonly apparent that one does not choose their bonded animal, but rather is born within an individual and requires research into the self to identify its exact nature. (Russell 2012) Therianthropy comes inline with the very nature of “Glorious Relapse” infusing a darker, creepy twist in contrasts with the vibrant psychedelic colours. Below is an illustration of one of many art works, that can be found exposing a typical mythological transformation (see FIG 5).

In relation to the collection Glorious Relapse there will be particular interest in the formation of horns, related to a number of specific species in the wildness, for example a deer, antelope, sheep and goat all belonging to the family known for the intricate horns. The interest lies with the ability to merge the human skull and the horns, creating a mysterious silhouette that crosses the boundaries between human and animal. (See FIG 6)

[FIG 6] Abbie Stirrup, Outfit design, 'Glorious relapse', (2015), Horn inspiration headpiece
TRANSLATION OF RESEARCH

Each section of research plays a role in building up the universe I am inspired by and the translation from experience, to theoretical and eventually into 3D design. For me the journey of Boom is an exploration of going into the unknown, blinded of the future and allowing your senses to be open to what the darkness can awaken. As I entered this mysterious world I took only the preconceptions of the tailored world I have been surrounded by throughout my life. It is here that the story unfolds and the collection Glorious Relapse is born.

The collection begins in the dark, a representation of how I felt upon enter this world. Revealing a mysterious and intangible creep that in our twisted minds comes alive in the night. Releasing your inner animal, (Therianthropy). A dark colour palette of deep tonal purple and inky black takes over the canvas. Each colour is a continuation of the next silhouette, enhancing the fluid transition that connects each outfit to one another.

The tailoring remains throughout the collection being a visual representation of the existing world, while garments begin to lose control and the colour intensifies, much like the emotions of euphoria. Exposing the experience of a life changing festival that views the world as the opposition. Permitting the natural impulses of energy to swirl through our bodies. Lapels and sleeves bubble around the body mingling with graphic, structured lines and psychedelic organic prints. (See FIG 7) The boundaries between tailoring and explosive shapes are dissolved into each other, becoming one.

Materials will engage your senses and experimentation with spray paint will inflict the loss of control over the glorious masterpieces, allowing tenacious unpredictability as the ink runs down, and penetrates into the cloth. (see FIG 8) By using a combination of techniques such as: digital printing, silk-screening and spray cans I will display the contrast between my two worlds, (festival and reality), and portray a message of eclectic explosiveness.

![Abbie Stirrup, Spray paint experiments and photography (2015)](image)

As my festival experience continues and the trip enters its peak, the intensity implodes; a feeling of being reborn and cleansed breaks out. Seeing the world in a new light, a refreshing clarity takes over. Bursting with chalky whites the silhouettes shine, bringing peace and stillness to an open mind. Reborn and cleansed, you are free to make your own conclusion. A blank canvas. (See FIG 9)
Abbie Stirrup, Outfit design ‘Glorious relapse’ Blank Canvas Twisted Tailoring, white graphic body paint (2015)
The collection is designed and crafted for an audience who does not follow, for an individual who is outspoken and owns the confidence to wear a piece or whole look from the collection, with power and conviction. As a designer there is a visionary approach, taking a personal experience and translating this into a wearable collection. The catwalk will exhibit the extravagant pieces that express the experimental and psychedelic concept, display the complete look. Giving an explosive representation of the Boom experience mixed with a tailored construction.

CONCLUSION

The collection Glorious Relapse is an in depth analytical approach to a recent life changing experience at Boom festival. This new world was the spark of questioning more than ever before, a burst of curiosity and research into a number of topics that build up the world of Boom. The collection is exposing a contrast, the contrast between reality and illusions, a contrast between tailoring and explosive, experimental design. During my research it became clear that reality is defined by thoughts and feelings, and by changing the illusions we experience a different reality. This gives a newfound freedom and room for experimentation within clothing and fashion.

Inspiration from the psychedelic art movement has transformed my design process and given me the ability to delve into a higher dimension whilst creating clothing. New inspirations from the psychedelic swirling, kaleidoscopic visuals have given a depth and understanding to the logarithmic patterns seen within nature.

My interests lie with fashion crossing over into different worlds, something found in Therianthropy. Giving a new twist to the standard silhouette of the human form, provoking the audience and leaving room for their own interpretation. As I continue to break free from the norms of society my ambition is to share a message that is also spread through the Boom experience: Loving, sharing, experimenting and being free. Translating these ideas into a visual language, something tangible and connected to the body. Using fashion, clothing and the body as a tool to spread a message that will help to make the world a better place. Creating a place where individuals have the freedom to create art or fashion outside of the commercialised bracket, allowing room for experimentation.

Much like the natural world the collection will take you on a flowing journey, witnessed within the colour palette, mood and silhouettes of each outfit. Going from a creepy twisted darkness, into an explosive psychedelic universe and finally into a cleansing rebirthed, fresh
and alive climax. Infusing the audience with energy and the freedom to make their own analysis and assumptions on the collection glorious relapse. My ambition is to spark the interests of others with experimental design, to think outside of the box with clothing, to be the spark of change and together begin a revolution in fashion and society.
"You may say that I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one. I hope someday you'll join us. And the world will live as one." – John Lennon
REFERENCE LIST

INTERNET


ONLINE JOURNAL


BOOK


ONLINE VIDEOS


IMAGE REFERENCES


FIG 8: Abbie Stirrup (2015) Personal spray paint experiments and photography. Own Image