Time is the new luxury.
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Katharina Mayerhofer, born 16.06.90 in Germany, Fashion Designer, based in Amsterdam, loves everything related to developing responsible and relevant garments, from research, to the design process and technical development of clothing, finishings and details, always shares a devotion for natural & fine textiles.

"Is time becoming the new luxury?"

This question led me through my creative process as fashion designer during my final semester at the Amsterdam Fashion Institute and served as a starting point for my graduation collection Duplex.

After closely examining fashion’s current state and analyzing its slow and fast fashion model, most consumers are confronted with. I discovered that I wanted to challenge the norms of this system and find another approach within my graduation collection, much closer to my own values as designer and to my personality. Eventually I translated my vision and perspective into a concept for my own brand, Katharina Mayerhofer. It provided me with guiding principles on how to tackle my graduation collection Duplex from a design perspective regarding a conscious choice of textiles and colors; a new approach towards pattern construction; and a new way of communication between the product and the end consumer.

This book aims to visualize Duplex, my creative process as fashion designer during my final semester at the Amsterdam Fashion Institute, and served as a starting point for my graduation collection, much closer to my own values as designer and to my personality. It provides guiding principles on how to tackle my graduation collection Duplex from a design perspective regarding a conscious choice of textiles and colors; a new approach towards pattern construction; and a new way of communication between the product and the end consumer.

Introduction
Responding to the fast-changing, trend-driven fashion landscape and overcomplicated life, the collection *Duplex* lays the foundation for a simplified and streamlined wardrobe. A minimalist approach to basics and wardrobe essentials which live beyond the seasons. A slow but continuous adaption to the current zeitgeist, rather than quick follow-ups to the latest fashion trends. Thoughtful garments with an appreciation towards quality and craftsmanship-right on the edge of getting too basic or too fashionable. Nevertheless the nature of people is the interest in the new. Therefore the collection in supported by a limited extension line of more fashion forward pieces, designed under seasonally changing concepts.

For this season the limited extension line will be largely inspired by the Dutch photographer Awoiska van der Molen and her photo series called *Sequester.*

The way she approaches nature and analog photography is underpinning my personal mindset and the way of approaching the design process. Penetrating deeply into out-of-the-way places where she isolates herself for several weeks exercises her attention towards the stubborn core of things. Making long exposures (up to half an hour) at dusk or early mornings give her the opportunity to evoke the beauty in the most monochrome landscapes which she developed then in the old fashioned way with a gelatin silver print process in the dark room. Translating this approach into my own design process means that I will start from a material point of view in which structures and textures have priority.
APPRECIATING
THE FEWER,
BETTER THINGS
WILL ULTIMATELY
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FULLER AND
BETTER LIFE.
FIGHT TODAY’S CONSUMERISM BY CREATING A COLLECTION WHERE DESIGN AND QUALITY LIVE BEYOND SEASONS.
The conscious urban modernist with its independent, confident and cultured mindset enjoys the simpler lifestyle with its offbeat attitude. Living in the cities nowadays, it is the appreciation of a day-to-day diversity that makes her reside the multicultural neighborhoods with its raw honesty towards tradition.

Modest studios or rear house apartments offer the freedom to combine both, private space and working environment. Her job assures financial stability and a self determined lifestyle. Moreover, her curious, interested, ambitious and open character tempt her to question things instead of being a blind follower.

She believes in quality and a considered design which lives beyond the seasons. Casual elegance. Simple designs with sophisticated detailing. The contrast in monochrome textures. The interest in the stubborn core of things.
Is time becoming the new luxury?

Graduation Research Paper
by Katharina Mayerhofer

Today, society is an advocate of speed; it is short on quality but big on quantity. Being fixated to the fast lane means being obsessed with quicker, better, more. As Carl Honoré (2004) author of ‘In Praise of Slowness’ explains: “Many of us are racing through their lives instead of living them, the virus of hurry has infected everything.” This equally applies to fashion. Brands are performing six to twelve times a year within blockbuster shows to satisfy the sensational world of fashion. They know that within a second, the designs will be copied by McFashion, which replaces exclusivity glamour, originality and luxury with massclusivity. A system which ensures that the continually evolving, temporary identities of today’s throw away society will be gratified. Should this race against the ever changing pace of trends not be considered an outdated model? Should we not start shifting towards a new materialism where there is less focus on monetary value and greater interest in the sentiment or back story; where quantity takes a moment of silence, broadening the consumers’ appreciation towards the fewer but better things?

Is time becoming the new Luxury?

These questions form the backbone for my graduation project, which is centered around the analysis of the slow and fast fashion model. Within a branding perspective I re-imagined the current system and developed my personal vision and mission for my brand Katharina Mayerhofer. Simultaneously they provided guiding principles on how to tackle my graduation collection Duplex from a design perspective regarding a conscious choice of textiles and colors; a new approach towards pattern construction; and a new way of communication between the product and the end-consumer.

How does time relate to fashion right now? Throughout a socio-cultural change, emerged by modernization and especially technological innovation, people got used to a faster pace of living and consumer lifestyle which consequently raised the demand for newness and frequent diversity. As novelty connotes consumption, it is noticeable that consumers are not buying for the sake of owning an outspoken product anymore rather than to satisfy their addiction to consumption which therefore became crude, aggressive and emotionless. Currently, fashion designers and forecasting agencies are no longer the only channel dictating future trends. Particularly with mass communication systems and mass media that create platforms where trends can be easily molded by anyone that are either influenced by high-, pop-, or subcultures. Now the consumer is in charge. Consequently trends are not predictable anymore but occur spontaneously and at anytime. A development where the industry inevitably had to respond with a flexible system which is called ‘fast fashion’. Main key components are: a quick response policy which is employed to match demand and supply; frequently changing product assortments; product design which fits the latest market needs; and extremely short product lifecycles. (Tsan-Ming Choi, Fast Fashion Systems, 2014) Summarized this means that time is the critical factor. Namely no time to care about employees, resources, the environment or the quality throughout production. Over the years this system has developed fashion into the world’s second largest polluter and one of the most exploitative industries when it comes to workforce ethics. These days it has reached an insurmountable level, where fashion business cannot be conducted in the same way. As it would appear, time is the key factor.
In order to improve the current system, it must be re-designed, with reduced pressure and a decreased level of demand. A shift in the consumer mindset needs to occur for a more thoughtful and deliberate consumption which values quality over quantity. An observation of the larger macro picture of garments true lifecycle and environmental impact (Jenny Ericsson & Natalie Karlsson, 2014). With an understanding of where and under which circumstances clothing is produced; what kind of materials are processed; how far it travels to markets; and how to properly care for garments for an extended lifetime. As Kate Fetcher states in “Clothing that connects;” (2008): “Fashion will see beauty and greatness in garments that value process, participation and social integration in pieces that advance relationships between designer and maker, maker and garment and eventually garment and user.” – a concept called slow fashion. Throughout the research into these two systems it became more clear that it is primarily the customers attitude that urgently needs to change. People need to switch their mindset from avarice to a more valued consumption where they take enough time to make the right choices. Consumers should consider more appropriate items that better fit their lifestyle and their actual needs rather than just a current trend. Looking at the flooded markets from today, one ought to think that having a lot of choice should create autonomy and individual freedom which results in happiness. Nevertheless, it is stated that an increasing number of choice beyond a handful can lead to an inverted effect. B. Schwartz writes in his book “The Paradox of Choice” (2005) that too much freedom of choice demotivates people. In particular, their satisfaction with the chosen product over the alternative decreases, leaving them with a feeling of dissatisfaction and regret. A similar effect is noticeable whilst facing today’s wardrobe, where people are overwhelmed by choice and in turn, utilize a smaller range of frequently worn garments. From a personal perspective, this garment range represents the internal ideals of the wearer, and usually hail from reliable quality, but mainly they are the most favorite ones from a design point of view. This example outlines how buying less, whilst being more conscientious with decision making will lead to an assortment of products that really matters. It is just about purchasing a garment in the same way as a washing machine, a phone or even a car. Having a strong affinity with items purchased through mindfulness, automatically leads to a more careful handling and an investment which lasts longer than just a season. As a result a vision and mission for the brand Katharina Mayerhofer can be stated: 

“Auditing the fewer, better things will ultimately lead to a fuller and better life.”

“Fight today’s consumerism by creating a collection where design and quality live beyond seasons.”

This mindset led to a brand concept and collection setup which can be regarded as a response towards the fast-changing, trend-driven fashion landscape as well as the hectic and overcomplicated life we are living in. Katharina Mayerhofer is a brand that cares about the rich story behind a product with a central mission of social change.

It has a timeless ethos with a contemporary, casual elegance that lives beyond seasons. A collection with an appreciation towards quality instead of quantity, specified through a conscientious choice of textiles, high workmanship standards; an honest supply chain management; and an transparent way of communicating inside information to the outside world. It is about reducing the wardrobe to a minimum, without excluding variety through a reversible collection setup. A concept which offers two diverse ways of wearability in one garment. Depending on the mood or occasion the garments can change in color, silhouette or tactility, whereby they turn either into an elegant or sporty look. As a whole, the collection is divided into two lines as there is the timeless main line called Duplex (85%) and the limited extension line (15%) which is running under frequently changing concepts.

Within this collection set up and brand mentality it is not suitable to present within a normal fashion show venue. Instead, it is more relevant to have a well selected crowd in an intimate environment, for example the own concept store. Therefore, it is much easier to convey the right atmosphere surrounding the brand. It gives more time and creative freedom to display the collection in a way that is able to communicate it’s grounded elegance, quality and honesty. Moreover it gives the opportunity to present the limited extension line in direct contact with it’s latest collaboration. Taking a closer look at Duplex it has the ambition to lay the foundation for a simplified and streamlined wardrobe with a minimalist approach to basics and wardrobes which live beyond the seasons. Garments with a simple design approach and classic color palette rarely but continuously adapt to the current zeitgeist, rather than quick follow ups to the latest fashion trends. This means that the collection will not change as often or as radically as current fashion cycles. It is more about constantly evolving garments with slight changes in shape, details, colors or textiles. Taking a blouse as an example would mean that throughout the Spring/Summer season it would be available in lighter colored fabrics such as white, striped cotton or silks throughout the Autumn/Winter season or occasion the garments can change in color, silhouette or tactility, whereby they turn either into an elegant or sporty look. As a whole, the collection is divided into two lines as there is the timeless main line called Duplex (85%) and the limited extension line (15%) which is running under frequently changing concepts.

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The blouse is made from a GOTS certified cotton-silk mix in two different kinds of light blue pinstripes. It has an oversized fit with dropped shoulders and long, shaped sleeves that offer comfort and functionality at the same time. Thoughtful detailing like pockets, cuffs, and an exaggerated yoke provide this blouse style with different options and unique ways of wearing.
nature and analog photography is underpinning my personal mindset and the way of approaching the design process. Penetrating deeply into obsolete places where she isolates herself for several weeks, exercises her attention towards the stubborn core of things. Making long exposures, up to half an hour, at dusk or early mornings give her the opportunity to evoke the beauty in the most monochrome landscapes which she developed in the old fashioned way with a gelatin, silver print process. Most eye-catching, is the atmosphere and depth in her pictures which have a calming yet meditational effect. At the same time they immediately give so much textural input that it is inevitable to use them as inspiration for fabrics where structures and textures are in the focus.

As soon as clothing should be able to live beyond seasons it needs its main key components to be on point. It is all about the right combination of qualitative textiles with a firm workmanship and a timeless design. Talking about the production of a garment, it is necessary to put enough time and development into the workmanship which automatically leads to a higher quality standard and longevity. Thus, it is important to consider the construction of a garment and its possible weak spots. By supporting those through extra fabric and stitching or by pre-shaping e.g. the elbow or knee prevents from breaking and therefore creates an extended lifetime. These are thoughtful garments with an appreciation towards quality and craftsmanship. Another aspect that concerns the pattern construction just as the design aesthetics is the Duplex concept of reversibility. A functional feature which concerns not only the aspect of reinforcing the garment’s construction but also influences the amount of consumed clothing which will be halved. From a design perspective it is an interesting starting point to take both sides of a garment into consideration and to find solutions how to blend the line between the right and the left side. As a result of the experimental phase, three methods can be regarded as successful. First is the study into textiles that naturally offers two different looks. The terry-clth knit for example has a very fluffy feel on one side, with voluminous loops and a more dense and smooth appearance on the converse. Another example includes the use of hemp denim with its dark blue and more elegant appearance on the one side and a rougher, uneven look in white on the other side. Second is the experimentation into creating different silhouettes where it is mostly about combining voluminous with linear shapes. What makes it interesting, is that the linear shape is taking control over the voluminous one which especially becomes visible whilst playing with different lengths in layers. Last is the experimentation with the actual lining of a garment and to turn that into an attractive exterior. From a textile point of view the collection Duplex exclusively consists of natural materials such as cotton, silk, linen, hemp, wool, merino or alpaca. These fibers naturally provide positive features including a skin friendly touch, rich appearance, breathability and a non-static feel. Depending on the climate, they are either warming or cooling or moisture absorbing or repellent. Moreover, when it comes to the structure and texture of textiles it is all about creating striking contrasts which are primarily made within outfits rather than in items themselves. While looking at single garments it is noticeable that they have quite a monochrome appearance which makes them timeless and easy to combine. As soon as they are put together in outfits the different structures are highlighting each other and create an interesting...
relief for the eye. Combinations such as a smooth, translucent silk with a hairy and densely knitted terry cloth, or a rough and sturdy hemp denim that goes together with a soft and drapey cotton, create variety and add depth to the outfit. Another important requirement during the fabric sourcing is the certification with the Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS). It is the world’s leading processing standard for textiles made from organic fibers. It defines high-level environmental criteria along the entire organic textiles supply chain and requires compliance with social criteria as well (global-standard.org, 2012). This guarantees the organic status of textiles which covers the processing, from cultivation to harvest, as well as an environmentally and socially responsible manufacturing, packaging, labelling, trading and distribution. With this transparent and honest way, suppliers are exposing their personal production and manufacturing details. It is an essential development which enables the transfer of information on to the unaware end consumer. Further education is therefore required in order to improve environmental and social awareness for clothing production. How can they find out about the true costs of fairly produced garments? Through offering a system which gathers individually composed sets of data per product, it offers the buyer the opportunity to take a look behind the scenes. They will be informed about every component the garment is comprised of; the amount of effort it takes during the production process; an average mark-up which is added in order to guarantee the brand’s survival; and the care instructions. To make sure that the information will permanently stay on the clothing there will be a QR-code badge which can be scanned. It provides the before mentioned insights anytime and simultaneously eradicates the need of all the inside-labels. This is a system which offers the consumer the possibility to buy a product with complete awareness.

The idea of luxury is an ever changing concept which is subjective and a matter of taste that boils down to personal preference. This also applies to time as a new luxury, especially in relation to fashion. Therefore, the aim for Katharina Mayerhofer is to create a six-outfit collection which represents the vision and mission of the brand. It is all about the concept of reversible garments produced with certified textiles which are able to communicate through their QR-code. This not only makes way for the industry to be more environmentally accountable but also physically reduces the amount of items required by people, without limiting their desire for newness.

As Marc Jacobs, a well known, international fashion designer from the US, said: “I think there is something about luxury- it is not something people need, but it is what they want. It really pulls at the heart.”

(WGSN, lifestyle futures, 2015)

Sources

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The dress has a casual and straight fit with a sporty rib collar and sleeves, ending on elbow height. The bodice is embroidered with velvet letters that state "make time your new luxury". The reversed side has an elegant, straight fitted upper bodice resembling a classic blouse style with a button closure, the same rib collar and oversized breast pocket. The skirt is pleated and creates a voluminous, floaty contrast. The dress is made from 100% GOTS certified silk.
The coat is made from 100% GOTS certified wool. It has an oversized fit with dropped shoulders, long sleeves and two different types of collars. The black, heavy duffle coat provides a more sophisticated look, which is supported by classic detailing such as patched breast pockets, slanted flap pockets, a yoke in the back panel and a belt on hip. When wearing the other side, completely covered in new, fluffy sheep wool, the coat conveys a more casual and relaxed look that is supported by its sheared division lines and leather detailing.
The skirt's design is playing with two different layers. Its more elegant side shows a knitted tube skirt underneath a wrap skirt that only allows the rib waistband and part of the hem to show. The wrap skirt has a straight cut and a oversized pocket placed on the left front panel. Turning the skirt inside out would reveal the more casual option, which is the high waisted, ribbed tube skirt on its own. The skirt is made from a GOTS certified cotton-linen mix, as well as wool-alpaca yarn.
ALL YOU NEED IS LESS
BECAUSE THERE IS NO PLANET B
Depending on the worn side of the denim looks, the outfit can either become a deep dark blue style with an elegant twist and patterned pockets, as well as classic collar and seamings details or it turns into a more rugged style caused by the uneven weaving structure on the light side, so-called 'wrong' side of the denim.

The jacket and the pants are both made from 100% GOTS certified hemp fibre.
The vest is made from a classic cotton-linen mix and quilted viscose. It has an oversized fit with deep armholes, a big lapel collar and a slit in the center back. When wearing the shiny, quilted side up, the style conveys a sporty vibe due to its five topstitching lines at both armholes, the hem and the pocket mouth. Once reversed, the more elegant version in a classic cotton-linen mix carries hidden pockets in the side seam and is led by its very clean appearance.
The knitted terry cloth sweater is made from a biological wool and alpaca mix. It has an oversized fit with dropped shoulders and rib finishings at its hem, sleeves and the deep V-neck. Whilst reversing it, the sweater reveals an abstract flock print which is inspired by Awoiska van der Molen's photographs. The flared pants are made from a GOTS certified cotton-linen and cotton-silk mix. It can be either worn as a simple black version with classic finishings or a more sporty look with a pinstripe lining that becomes an attractive exterior.
Duplex exclusively consists of natural materials such as cotton, silk, linen, hemp, wool, merino or alpaca. These fibers naturally provide positive features including a skin friendly touch, rich appearance, breathability and a non-static feel. Depending on the climate, they are either warming or cooling or moisture absorbing or repellent. Moreover, when it comes to the structure and texture of textiles it is all about creating striking contrasts which are primarily made within outfits rather than in items themselves. While looking at single garments it is noticeable that they have quite a monochrome appearance which makes them timeless and easy to combine. As soon as they are put together in outfits the different structures are highlighting each other and create an interesting relief for the eye. Combinations such as a smooth, translucent silk with a hairy and densely knitted terry cloth, or a rough and sturdy hemp denim that goes together with a soft and drapery cotton, create variety and add depth to the outfit.

Another important requirement during the fabric sourcing is the certification with the Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS). It is the world’s leading processing standard for textiles made from organic fibers. It defines high-level environmental criteria along the entire organic textiles supply chain and requires compliance with social criteria as well. This guarantees the organic status of textiles which covers the processing, from cultivation to harvest, as well as an environmentally and socially responsible manufacturing, packaging, labeling, trading and distribution.

This information is composed individually for each garment and can be scanned. It offers the customer the opportunity to take a look behind the scenes in order to buy a product with complete awareness.
LESS STUFF +
LESS WORK +
LESS EXPENSES
EQUALS
MORE MONEY +
MORE TIME +
MORE JOY
As the brand’s timeless main line Duplex is right on the edge of becoming too basic or too fashionable, people have a propensity to crave newness. Therefore the collection is supported by a limited extension line, designed under frequently changing concepts. Compared to Duplex the products can be much more elaborate and handcrafted as the number of units is limited or even custom made. This means that either the pattern making is much more extravagant or the textiles are developed in an experimental and handcrafted way. Therefore the concept inspiration can be very diverse. Either it is coming from relevant topics from society or politics to nature which is providing us with a variety of textures and structures or collaborations with other artists, designers or inspiring figures. It simply gives the opportunity to reflect on current happenings, interests and findings which keeps the brand’s fashion vision contemporary.

This season’s collection is supported by an accessory line, which was developed in collaboration with Flybird, an Amsterdam based premium leather goods and accessories brand. Appealing, as collaboration was their similar mindset towards fashion, which states: “The intimate bond between maker and craft is what makes the product complete. Superb craftsmanship demands a lifelong devotion to perfecting one’s skills and an unwavering commitment to excellence.” The combination of Katharina Mayerhofer’s design aesthetic and the raw craftsmanship of Flybird resulted in a leather bag line which can be entirely reversed.

Collaborations

With the leather being sourced from Dutch cows, and the design and production being based in Amsterdam, this accessory line can be regarded as 100% local and responsible project.
EVOLUTION WORKS ON THE PRINCIPLE OF SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST, NOT THE FASTEST. SLOW IT DOWN.
HEELS HIGH.
SHIRTS SLOW.
Credits

Design Katharina Mayerhofer
Photography Imke Panhuijzen
Hair & Makeup Pascale Hoogstraate
Models Chené (Linda Models), Lara Roeven
Art Direction Stephen Piel
Leather Bags in collaboration with Flybirds
Special thanks Amsterdam Fashion Institute, Makers Lab HvA