SPOTLIGHT ON FASHION DESIGN EDUCATION

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'An almost suspicious number of well-known fashion designers say there are enough fashion designers. Some even say fashion is dead. And who wants to be a fashion designer anyway? Producing six to nine collections a year? Designers have become stylists. But, wait a minute, wasn’t fashion about beauty and style? About a vision on society? About traditional crafts and modern technology? Sensuality and boldness? A lot of people feel that the world could use more of that.'

(Osinga, 2016)
Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to identify and investigate the level of alignment between the needs of the fashion industry and the curricula of the Dutch fashion design education. Furthermore, this thesis demonstrates already taken strategies and initiatives at school, universities and institutes which provide an adequate education, and makes recommendations for implementation for the educational sector.

This thesis first examines the general zeitgeist of the fashion industry. Data for this research were collected by the help of literature reviews and interviews with four fashion industry professionals in the Netherlands, which reveals a collective spirit of the industry with the enhancement of collaboration and interaction with outside disciplines. Furthermore, additional skills for contemporary fashion designers are gaining ground, such as business or technological knowledge. Thus, the industry is changing and evolving. The next chapter uses literature reviews, brief case studies, as well as interviews to outline the characteristics and strategies of Dutch fashion education. These show that even though Dutch schools provide a high level of education, providing an interdisciplinary and practical experience with increasingly innovative tools and projects is important. The further analysis of this thesis investigates enrolled fashion design students and alumni. The empirical data was conducted by questionnaires as well as interviews, and highlights that Dutch fashion education is lacking qualities that would help students to succeed even better. Business skills, career support as well as practice are missing factors of Dutch fashion education. Based on previous research, the next chapter provides a juxtaposition of the industry and education and depicts an incomplete alignment by using the Fashion Industry Heptagon. The last chapter, supported by literature review and previous outcomes, investigates successful models of fashion education dealing with elements of the Fashion Industry Heptagon and suggests improvements for the Dutch Fashion Education. The outcomes show that business skills are missing above all and other elements, such as technology or collaboration, can be improved.

In conclusion, the thesis argues that Dutch fashion design education is aligned to a certain extent to the zeitgeist of the industry and has potential to develop further. Nevertheless, actions of implementations are already being noticed and indicate that schools are taking steps to construct future plans for further implementation.
1 Introduction
1.1 Rationale
1.2 Aim
1.3 Questions / Methodology
1.4 Structure
Fashion is in fashion. The global garment industry was estimated to reach a total value of $2.4 trillion in 2016, accounting to one of the most important industries worldwide (Berg and Amed, 2016). It is part of the creative industries and thus has, besides its artistic nature, an economic value. Creative industries, by definition, describe industries that merge creation, production, and commercialisation in an imaginative product or service (Global Alliance, 2006), being a balanced symbiosis of art, culture, business and technologies (Lauzikas and Mokseckiene, 2013).

Having said that, it must be clarified that fashion cannot be regarded as pure art, but is referred to design, because its end goal is to fulfill consumer need and generate profit (Abnett, 2015). As cited by Demna Gvasalia, the founder and head designer of the brand Vetements, ‘a garment is a product. It’s not made to be in a museum. It’s meant to be in somebody’s wardrobe’ (Amed, 2016a). Despite the commercial drive, creative industry’s most pivotal assets are creative employees (Mietzner and Kamprath, 2013), who are contributing to the economic market by providing creativity. Hence, the free act of creativity is still crucial.

Generally, the popularity of the industry has increased enormously over the last ten years, which can be reasoned by the excessive promotion of fashion in social media platforms and its grown appeal as a profession (Mellery-Pratt and Amed, 2015). Being a fashion creator is often associated with privilege and fame, as designers are regularly presented as icons to the masses (Rosso and Huiskens, 2016). Stardom is not the only allure. The perception of pleasure in work, earning money with creative self-expression by portraying individual taste and identity to the public is a very desirable thought (Bill, 2012). Accordingly, more and more people worldwide started pursuing a fashion education (Mellery-Pratt and Amed, 2015; Bill, 2012) in the hopes to achieve success with their own vision.

As fashion education is booming, some stances are claiming that while the industry is growing and changing, education is not. It is said that schools, academies, and universities are training young creatives to become catwalk designers and celebrities, embracing individuality in a time where society is more and more longing for altruism (Edelkoort, 2015). This suggests that the current education system is inadequate for the present zeitgeist. The Business of Fashion’s (BOF) first Global Fashion School Ranking shows similar outcomes. The survey showcases that a gap between the expectations of students and their actual expertise exists (Mellery-Pratt & Amed, 2015). Furthermore, students and alumni report that they feel unprepared for the professional world, lacking especially technical and business skills (Mellery-Pratt and Amed, 2015), creating uncertainty and concern for a lot of young graduates.

With regard to the rising significance and recognition of the fashion industry, there is an importance of identifying the changes of this sector globally as well as in regard to the Netherlands, and how they affect the modern day fashion designer’s way of working. It must be exhibited if the phenomenon of a disharmonized education system exists in the first place. If so, an analysis of the impact of this mismatch of education and reality for young creatives once they enter a professional career is to be established. Bearing in mind that students of today are the creators of the future, it is significant to remember that graduates need to receive professional and realistic perspectives in order to correspond to the developments of the industry.
1.2 Aim

With a focus on the Dutch industry and education system, the overall aim of this research is to explore how an adequate fashion education system with a link to the current zeitgeist is constructed, which enables fashion design graduates to successfully enter the professional industry without lacking skills and competencies. The thesis shall provide a basis for the Dutch fashion education sector and the fashion industry to engage in discussions about the future of fashion education and development.

The outcome of this paper intends to result in a critical analysis based on primary and secondary research, containing a study on the Dutch present day fashion education system, an investigation of the fashion career market, its needs and spirit, a review of nowadays’ obstacles of young fashion professionals, a conclusion whether the current education system is suitable and an evaluation of potential strategies and initiatives to improve the education system.

1.3 Questions / Methodology

To what extent is the Dutch fashion design education aligned with the current zeitgeist of the industry, and how can it be optimised in order to create coherent curricula?

This paper contains inductive research. A combination of qualitative and quantitative research was conducted, while the focus lies on qualitative methods. The following paragraphs present what methodologies were used for each sub-question.

1. What are the demands of the industry and how can its zeitgeist be described?

In order to analyse the zeitgeist of the industry, as for the first sub question in chapter 2, predominantly secondary data has been analysed and supported by primary data. The secondary data is based on literature reviews, journals, trend and industry reports as well as newspapers and books have been analysed in order to explore this topic. For this, Google Scholar, the online catalogue of HVA as well as other multidisciplinary databases such as Researchgate have been examined. In regard to primary research, in-depth interviews with professionals from the industry have been conducted. Jasper Renema from the Het Nieuwe Instituut, Rosi Schipper from Movers & Shakers, Francina van den Berg from Fashion Solution and Rens Tap from Modint have been contacted.

2. What are the characteristics of the current fashion design education at universities, academies and schools, and what are their core teaching strategies?

For chapter 3, the second sub-question is again a combination of secondary and primary research. Besides already mentioned secondary research, additional brief case studies of the Dutch fashion schools in regard to their vision and education system have been obtained. The outcomes are depicted in written and tabular presentation. Relating to primary research, previous interviews of the first sub-question were still taken into account. New in-depth interviews were additionally conducted. The head of the fashion design department at AMFI, Leslie Holden, has been interviewed. Furthermore, self-completion questionnaires with Dutch fashion schools were carried out.

3. What are the main challenges students and fashion design alumni are facing during and after their education in the professional environment?

As for the third sub-question, chapter 4 of the thesis is primary research based. In order to find out about the challenges and experiences, a self-completion questionnaire was sent out to graduates.
as well as enrolled students from all Dutch fashion design schools. Furthermore, three fashion design students were interviewed. The analysis of the most important outcomes can be found in this chapter.

4. How adequately does the education system prepare young fashion design professionals to the present disposition of the industry?

The fifth chapter functions as a sub-conclusion. The answer to the question whether the fashion education is adequately constructed in regard to the fashion market is based on the outcomes of the first three questions. In order to continue, this question is answered first.

5. What strategies and initiatives are already used to join education and industry reality?

The sixth chapter of this paper concludes the last sub-question of the research and reacts to the main research question. By conducting results from the previous sub-questions, and by looking at other successful models in and outside the fashion industry by using secondary research, strategies and initiatives are defined.

1.4 Structure

This thesis chronologically follows the order of the sub-questions. All sub-questions are answered per section, which leads to an overall conclusion to the main research question. After each section, the outcomes of the chapter are presented. Generally, the research can be split into three main parts, namely the industry (first sub-question), the education system (second and third sub-questions) and finally initiatives and strategies (fifth sub-question).
What are the demands of the industry and how can its zeitgeist be described?

2 The Industry
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  2.2 Two Types of Designers
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  2.5 Summary Chapter 2
2.1 Individualism vs. Collectivism

The current fashion industry is affected by economic, geopolitical, cultural, and technological indicators (Ruppert-Stroescu and Hawley, 2014), performing in a collaboration of business, creativity and digitalisation (Amed, 2016b). Thus, it is important to acknowledge that the standards of the industry have changed, and therefore also have the working habits of fashion designers. Comparing the designer’s environment of today with the 20th century’s one, presently, fashion creators are facing a higher level of overall completion, enhanced consumer behaviour and changing technology (Ruppert-Stroescu and Hawley, 2014).

As stated by Venturi, the principle of Florence’s fashion school Polimoda, big fashion companies are not demanding star designers anymore, but they rather need people who understand the economic side of creating a collection, e.g. the part of merchandising (Abnett, 2015). This enhances the notion that a designer’s vision cannot be the only quality that drives to success anymore. As Gvasalia puts it: ‘the reality is that there is so much stuff available from which you have to choose, that the biggest challenge is to make something that people choose’ (Amed, 2016a). Therefore, using creativity to create something unique and outstanding has shifted to using creativity in order to create a commercial product.

However, creativity is still the main force of fashion and the main attribute of fashion designers. Looking at the definition of creativity, it is described as an individual performance that is based on generating new ideas (Mills, 2012). Nevertheless, designers need to understand that creativity as an act in an organisation, which is the case for the majority of designers, cannot be endlessly free. In a company, restrictions like cost, style or the end consumer need to be taken into account. Hence, this is a paradox if creativity is perceived as a free artistic performance (Paris, 2008). Consequently, fashion design has to incorporate commercial thinking and organisational values.

The collective element of the fashion design industry is often omitted, as creativity, the vital part of design, is respected as a very personal and therefore individualistic process. Without the designer’s contribution, the industry could not function, but it must be conceded that the designer depends on the collaboration with other actors in order to achieve the creation of fashion (Kawamura, 2005). Edelkoort¹ (2015), a renowned trend forecaster, claims that the current spirit of time is characterised by interactions, an economy of exchange, an enhanced sense of extended family and cooperation. Thus, if fashion is seen as a cultural product, then it automatically includes social corporation, collective activities and groups (Kawamura, 2005). Hence, designers are needed for their individualistic vision, yet they cannot survive on their own. Despite the collective component, the final creations are mostly credited to one individual only (Paris, 2008).

Notwithstanding, the collaborative spirit is not only hidden behind the organisational structures but becomes more and more apparent to the outside world. One of the most obvious translations of this attitude is the vast amount of collaborations taking place in fashion. As Hines (2017) puts it, ‘in 2017, the collaboration has become as common as the collection’ When looking at the work of Gvasalia, collaboration is key. The Vetements Spring/Summer 2017 Collection consisted only of co-branded fashion items.

Collaboration is not only useful for the designer’s self or for PR reasons, but it also pushes innovation (Tap, 2017; Schipper, 2017). Tap (2017), the Business Development Manager at Modint, a research and consulting firm for the fashion industry, says that working together with other industries and learning each other’s skill is pushing the boundaries of fashion (Appendix 1). Yet Tap warns that collaboration which occurs within the fashion industry only is not advisable unless it showcases an evident win-win-situation. Therefore, collaboration needs to be regarded in a broader sense, not just in an obvious context like the Vetements’ collaborations. Tap’s idea of collaborations requires an interaction with other industries, so-called cross-over projects. Likewise, Renema (2017), who is working at the agency for architecture, design and digital culture at Het Nieuwe Instituut in Rotterdam,

¹- Lidewij Edelkoort is a famous and influential trend forecaster in the creative sector. She is well known for her contribution to View on Colour, InView or Bloom, which shape and inspire a lot of designers’ collections. In 2015, she published an Anti_Fashion manifesto. Her essay created a heated discourse in the fashion industry, as she concluded that fashion is obsolete. Among other things, she criticizes the fashion education system, claiming that schools and educators need to adjust to the modern world and change their strategies and way of thinking.
explains that the design industry is a closed discipline which is moving towards increasing interaction (Appendix 4). Renema adds that Het Nieuwe Instituut is also a result of this, being the only institute worldwide combining all creative disciplines.

Thus, the discourse of individualism and collectivism within fashion has to be examined. While individualistic vision and creativity are still often the drive of success, these traits, however, need to be reinterpreted, as times are changing. So while individualism will remain the core, designers need to seek collaboration and interaction with others. This way, creativity can develop further.
In the eyes of Loppa (2015), the former educator at the Royal Academy in Antwerp and the current director of Polimoda, the fashion industry needs two kinds of designers - on the one hand, the creative dreamer, and on the other hand the structured creative. Linking this idea to Ruppert-Stroescu’s and Hawley’s (2014) analysis of Robert Sternberg’s Propulsion Theory of Creative Contributions, we differentiate between adaptive creativity and leadership creativity. Sternberg, a professor of human development at Cornell University, attributes to leadership creativity a high level of individual expression, innovation, novelty and experimental approach, while adaptive creativity is defined by a more problem-solving approach with a focus on convergent thinking and analytical as well as scientific methods (Ruppert-Stroescu and Hawley, 2014).

Translating this example explicitly to the fashion system, leadership creative designers have a unique vision and taste, targeting the high-end market with customers who expect craftsmanship, quality and aesthetic distinction, as a brand like Thom Browne (Figure 2.2). Adaptive creative designers, on the contrary, intend to translate existing trends into their market, which concludes in mass-market lower-priced products, meaning that these designers’ main goal is to create an existing idea in a new context by using the limitations of their company and its consumers in regard to price, quality, and execution (Ruppert-Stroescu and Hawley, 2014), as brands like H&M (Figure 2.1). Connecting this model to Loppa’s statement, the creative dreamer can be regarded as the leadership creative designer, whereas the structured creative is ascribed to the adaptive creative designer. Also, Van den Berg (2017), the founder and commercial director of Fashion Solution, a Dutch fashion head-hunting agency, differentiates between stylists and designers (Appendix 3). As Ruppert-Stroescu and Hawley analyse, she explains that stylists work for big companies, mostly for fast fashion brands, while designers are hired by fashion houses in a higher end market (Van den Berg, 2017). Tap confirms this thesis as well. He, however, has a stronger stance. In regard to his definition, there are designers who produce artistic creations, the old-fashioned way so to speak, and on the other hand, there are designers who can be better described as stylists. One main difference to the other interpretations is that the artistic designers are not part of the fashion business, but are rather ascribed to the arts industry. Therefore, only stylists, who make up the majority of designers, are part of the actual fashion business. These are the professionals who are able to keep up with the fast and commercial fashion industry (Tap, 2017) (Appendix 1).

Considering the fact that the industry distinguishes between a stylist and a designer in the professional environment, indicates that the same education can lead to two different job descriptions, which require different sets of qualifications. Both these types are visible in the fashion industry. Therefore, the future vision of students, as well as the profile of their educational institution, might define their expertise as well as their professional specialisation.

2.3 The Needed Skill Set

2.3.1 Collaboration
Bearing in mind that the work culture of fashion designers has shifted to a multidisciplinary environment, new and wider skills are required in the modern day work world. Particularly related to the collaborative attitude, due to the present technology focused economy, the industry demands designers who can and are willing to work together with experts from alternative specialisations, setting up partnerships and collaborations (Van den Eijnde, 2015). Therefore, an open mind and a collective spirit are required. Collaboration is not only restricted to cross-over projects, but also entails building a network for the future. This is an important asset of a future professional (Van Zijverden, 2016).

2.3.2 Technology
New technology is especially often regarded as the main influence for the future (Tap, 2017; Schipper, 2017; Van den Berg, 2017), and must therefore be taken seriously into account when designing fashion. Fashion designers who have the technological skills are able to fight the pressure of heightened competition, can execute their work on a more inclusive level and will finally be capable of meeting the new standards of the modern day paradigms (Maciver and Malins, 2015). Examples of incorpo-
rating technology in fashion organisations are the use of smart textiles, body scanning technology or computer-aided design (CAD). These tools are gaining more relevance. One strong argument was added by Morand, the executive president of the Fédération française de la couture. He mentions that while trends like sustainability depend strongly on us, technology and digitalisation are progressing despite our power (Business of Fashion, 2017). Therefore, the industry, including designers, needs to embrace this advancement in practice.

2.3.3 Technical Knowledge

Fashion design, however, is not only based on the development and creation of ideas and garments. It must be understood that fashion in its historical context was appointed as a craft, which signifies technical skills and thus establishes the core and basis of fashion design. Ergo, fashion designers are at least required to have general technical knowledge of garment construction in order to assemble an orderly fashion item that meets the standards of the industry. Furthermore, if technical skills are at hand, designers can cooperate in the production process and direct others on the desired execution. The understanding of how the garment is created is just as important as its aesthetic, as functionality and wearability are crucial features of fashion (Reddy, 2014). Also, Schipper (2017), design recruiter at the Movers & Shakers agency in Amsterdam, confirms that companies wish for professionals with technical skills and often realise that these are missing in young designers (Appendix 2).

2.3.4 Business

Nonetheless, the biggest impact and change on the fashion designer’s line of work is the increasing relevance and awareness of the business side of the profession (Mietzner and Kamprath, 2013). As a designer in an interview has stated: ‘strategic planning and marketing account for 90% of the overall success of work, and only 10% depends on creativity’ (Lauzikas and Mokeckiene, 2013). Talent is vital, but in fact, it is only a small part that contributes to success, as nowadays designers need to bring more to the business (Schipper, 2017). This means, that while creativity is the main drive of the profession, understanding marketing and commercial thinking are indispensable. Accordingly, it can be concluded that for designers who have a comprehension of marketing strategies and the managerial part of fashion, it is not only easier to understand or communicate with co-workers, but it also allows them higher involvement in the decision-making process. In a time where everyone can call themselves a designer, and producing clothing is not a huge obstacle, the differentiation in strategy and consumer empathy is decisive (Lauzikas and Mokeckiene, 2013). As by Abnett (2015), a fashion designer’s main goal should be to sell and in order to sell you need to understand what the consumer needs.

2.3.5 Entrepreneurship

It must be noted that in a commercially driven company designers do not have the main authority, they rather provide a service to a business. Moreover, if a designer wants the prime control, which is the case when chairing an own business, it is accompanied by the responsibility of finance, production, distribution and marketing (Roso and Huiskens, 2006). An interesting fact therefore is, that regarding statistics, about 50% of fashion students would like to found their own brand after they finish their education (Corner, 2015). In consequence, both circumstances, the one of an organisational designer and other of a creative director designer, depend upon a sense of business and entrepreneurial skills. Not to mention, it is said that these skills will gain more importance in the future (Mietzner and Kamprath, 2013). On the other hand, there are also stances arguing that business skills are not crucial, as in the current days, due to industry developments, designers will probably not found as many own labels as in the past (Tap, 2017).

2.3.6 Sustainability

One of the biggest issues, which is not only affecting fashion but which has a global impact on society, is sustainability. As argued by Tap (2017), creativity has to be used in order to solve bigger problems, and sustainability is one of them. Even though it is not a hard skill, companies and generally the fashion industry request an understanding, as well as working methods that have a sustainable nature (Schipper, 2017). Circular design, alternative materials as well as the reduction of over-production will become more dominant in the future (Van Zijverden, 2016). This means that new processes and working methods need to be acquired and common ones have to be developed further.

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2 - Renema’s colleague wrote an essay about the new arising clusters in Amsterdam, street wear brands such as Patta (Figure 2.3), which were founded by do-it-yourself boys from the suburbs. She also used Edelkoort’s manifesto in regard to the stance that nowadays it is not required to be a perfect designer, as other skills are gaining ground. Being more entrepreneurial and more sustainable, for instance are needed skills.
2.4 The Dutch Fashion Industry

In the Netherlands, the creative industries are very successful. The country is one of the global leaders and the sector is the fastest growing in the Dutch economy, generating 2% of the country’s GDP (Netherlands Embassy and Consulates China, n.d.). Therefore, the financial worth should not be overlooked. In regard to fashion, about 90,000 people are employed in this sector and the fashion market value is estimated at €14.5 billion (Strijbos, n.d.). Dutch fashion is described as conceptual, innovative and process-oriented (Netherlands Enterprise Agency, 2017), operating successfully in the ready-to-wear industry in the middle to premium market (Teunissen, 2011) with both international brands and small design labels (Teunissen et al., 2013). Especially the commercial sector is a strong component of the Dutch fashion business (Van den Berg, 2017). Furthermore, the industry is especially famous due to its denim focus.

Withal, people from the industry still describe the Dutch fashion market as small and limited compared to its competition (Tap, 2017, Schipper 2017). Even though the Netherlands has a considerable trading history, the times are changing and the country needs to adjust to those developments. Optimistically, the Dutch fashion industry is portrayed as flexible and open to new influences (Tap, 2017). The Dutch’s mentality might have a positive effect on this description, as they are depicted as realistic with a drive to innovation and as having a good balance between work and life, making them more efficient (Schipper, 2017). As to Renema (2017), the Netherlands’ urge and success in innovative thinking and design are rooted in the lack of a foundation and tradition in fashion (Appendix 4).

Furthermore, regarding developments such as sustainability and technology, which are also vital for the future of the Dutch fashion business (Tap, 2017), the Dutch seem to do have awareness (Schipper, 2017; Van den Berg, 2017). As to Schipper (2017), even though the engagement in sustainability is still in a small part of the industry, the Netherlands are at the forefront and are creating a good example (Appendix 4). Despite the notion that the development is still going too slow (Schipper, 2017), others have a positive outlook on this topic, stating that Dutch fashion will become sustainable in every aspect of the process, as also Dutch laws are enforcing it (Van den Berg, 2017).
Regarding the fact that nowadays cross-over collaborations are the course of achieving innovation, Dutch designers like Iris van Herpen³ (Figure 2.4) or Pauline van Dongen⁴ (Figure 2.5) are currently setting a fine example. Rens Tap (2017) explains that these makers are using their creativity in the right way in order to nurture innovation (Appendix 1). They are not partisan designing the old-fashioned way, but are eager to think outside the box, experimenting with different production methods and engaging with other industries (Tap, 2017). Looking at these two examples, they seem to lead the way in the market. Jasper Renema (2017) adds that cross-over collaborations are celebrated in the Netherlands, as well due to the fact that the government is financing such cross-over projects which progress innovation and creative solutions for societal problems. Renema yet doubts if some of these programs are part of the economy, as for wearable technology, this novelty has not yet reached the mass market (Appendix 4). Some say that the relationship between the garment and the body is missing and that aesthetics and its message are still primal purchasing motives (Van Zijverden, 2016). Nevertheless, they can be regarded as entrepreneurial and are certainly enabling new possibilities in the market that can gain more importance in the future (Renema, 2017). Therefore, the Dutch have an enhanced sense for new developments and are keen in progressing further in this sector.

³ - Iris van Herpen, well known for her 3D printed fashion, is one of the most distinctive designers in the global fashion industry. For her last couture collection in January 2017, she showed mesmerizing garments that played with optical illusion. This collection is an extension of the collaborative work with the artist Philip Beesley (Morby, 2017), proving that overarching collaborations are the answer to successful innovation.

⁴ - Pauline van Dongen, specializing in wearable technology, is also working together with experts from the fields of science and technology. For the South by Southwest event in 2017, which is an annual grouping of film, interactive media, and music festivals and conferences, she has developed a touch-sensitive unisex denim jacket (Howarth, 2017), which is both combining her own design values with her home country’s famous blue heritage.
Figure 2.4 - Iris Van Herpen Spring 2017 (Team Peter Stigter, 2017)

Figure 2.5 - Pauline Van Dongen ISSHO (Dezeen, 2017)
What are the demands of the industry and how can its zeitgeist be described?

To conclude this chapter and answer the first sub-question, the demands of the industry are highly influenced by global mega and macro trends that shape the businesses and the consumers. The zeitgeist’s main features are the sense of cross-over collaborations and multidisciplinary working approaches that shape the industry and nurture innovation. Thus, individual designers are not as popular as before, but the quality of interaction has gained an increased value. Taking this zeitgeist as an overarching theme, the demands of the industry are closely linked to the idea of multidisciplinary practice and altruism. The Netherlands has a small but still lucrative fashion industry were two opposite types of designers are visible who use their creativity in different ways. On the one hand, there are commercial designers who create products for the masses, and on the other hand, artistic designers who develop innovative garments and collections. Conclusively, six main traits can be defined, namely collaboration, technology, technical knowledge, business, entrepreneurship, and sustainability. All these sections construct the needed skill set of a contemporary fashion designer in the professional environment. Yet, entrepreneurship is debatable, as it is required when founding an own brand, which first of all is not everyone’s goal and secondly might decrease regarding research.
What are the characteristics of the current fashion design education at universities, academies and schools, and what are their core teaching strategies?

3 The Education System
  3.1 The General State of Fashion Education
  3.2 European Education Capitals
    3.2.1 London
    3.2.2 Antwerp
    3.2.3 Florence
    3.2.4 Paris
  3.3 The Dutch Schools
    3.3.1 KABK
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  3.4 Summary Chapter 3
When the industry changes, education needs to change with it. Over the years, fashion education has diversified itself into numerous academic specialities with training from the field of science, commerce and naturally from art and fine arts (Reddy, 2014). With its elevated interdisciplinary nature (Kawamura, 2005), fashion training’s essence lays in the experimental and project-based learning approach. Students worldwide can now choose from a broader range of fashion educations, but in like manner fashion design education institutions have different foundations in their curricula (Mills, 2012).

One thing in education that has supposedly not changed and which is facing a lot of criticism is the fact that fashion institutions are still highly embracing the value of individualism, dismissing the fact that fashion has become more collaborative, in the means of creating new catwalk designers who are willing to seek fame (Edelkoort, 2015). Imran Amed (2016b), a fashion expert and founder and editor-in-chief of BOF, agrees: ‘students of fashion design are still creating in a bubble, far from the demands of their future roles as designers, in which interacting and collaborating with other functions (...) will be a key part of their day-to-day work’. As a consequence, the perception of fashion of young aspiring designers is linked to the concept of fame and glamour. But, as one reader of BOF has noticed, this phenomenon can be perceived as a disservice (Abnett, 2015), in a way that not everyone can become a creative director. So, fashion institutions cannot educate students in that regard only.

In general, an equilibrium between artistic vision and commercialism is expected in the industry. As Loppa (2015) explains, fashion education is constructed of two parts with the quality-based design on the one side and the business demands on the other side. If this is given to the students, a balanced education is provided. Still, regarding Amed (2016b) many students complain that links between education and the professional world are missing. For one, the practical relationship with the study course is often lacking, which contributes to a strong desire of practical training and real-life exposure by students, in order to understand the operating methods of the professional world (Amed, 2016b).

It seems like in order to acquire a connection between theoretical education and the professional industry, internships and work experience are the only solution. In that regard, especially hard skills, as technical expertise, are mostly not educated enough at fashion institutions. For example, Susan Backhouse, owner of Fashion Antidote, an independent fashion school in London, is astounded by a number of graduates who are deficient in technical skills, garment construction or pattern cutting, although they have attended a fashion education. In her eyes, without these skills, ‘you are designing in a vacuum’ (Mellery-Pratt and Amed, 2015). This is not the only case. Mpasi-Bila (2017), who is currently a design student at the Willem de Kooning Academy in Rotterdam, also tells that he obtained an internship at a manufacturer before his studies, where he gained the practical skill of dressmaking (Appendix 5). This paradox appears to be a global circumstance, which only slightly differs from one education institution to another. It can be concluded that fashion design courses focus most of their curricula highlighting idea development and artistic creation without linking these concepts to the executive part of the business. The practical skills need to be taught in real-life environments.

Still, it can be discussed to what extend technical skills are de facto needed. From company to company, as well from department to department, this may vary a lot. A student from the BOF’s Global Fashion School Ranking has remarked that there must be an emphasized attention on career consultation and advice at fashion education institutions (Mellery-Pratt and Amed, 2015). And so, schools play an essential role in bringing students closer to their options and preferences, as well as the industry is reliant on the schools to inform young professionals about the industry. But therefore, the need to inform students on their possibilities after their studies, which is not only to become a creative director, is vital. Once students understand their options, decisions and specialisations can be optimised regarding their ambitions.
The subsequent research will focus on Dutch fashion education only, however, as the European schools are very influential in the global fashion industry, an introduction of the main fashion education houses will follow. This deviation shall develop an understanding of the success of these educational institutes and analyse what makes them competitive. The main fashion education capitals in Europe are London, Antwerp, Florence and Paris, which are known for their globally distinctive fashion schools. Regarding BOF's Global Fashion School Ranking of 2016, this is also the order of importance and selection (Mellerry-Pratt and Amed, 2016).

3.2.1 London
In the UK, the fashion centre is London. With its eminent Central Saint Martins or London College of Fashion (LCF), the city attracts students from all over the world. These schools, with their relation to graphic design and fine arts, are well known for their conceptual development approach and highly visionary alumni like Marc Jacobs or John Galliano. Especially Central Saint Martins (Figure 3.1) is famous for its liberal ways (Mellerry-Pratt, 2016a). Furthermore, having a modern approach, UK education enhances new technologies such as advanced fabric developments or the usage of robotics (Abnett, 2016a). For instance, Central Saint Martins has established a Design & Living System Lab, which is a study laboratory researching new materials for a sustainable future (Designandlivingsystems.com, n.d.). Hence, it can be said that fashion education in London is specialised in a contemporary and fresh, yet still very artistic and creative fashion design education.

3.2.2 Antwerp
In Belgium, on the other hand, the leading fashion education is limited to one school only, the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp. Demna Gvasalia, Haider Ackermann or Martin Margiela are all designers who have been educated in Antwerp. Conversely, as stated by Van Beirendonck, the head of the Academy, Antwerp is also producing a lot of anonymous designers who are not as famous but defiantly influential in the industry (Abnett, 2016b), showing that Antwerp has a different approach to fame and prominence. One further significant difference to other schools is that fashion design is taught as an art, instructing from a highly creative and low commercial viewpoint. This entails, however, that business and marketing knowledge is completely negated (Abnett, 2016b).

3.2.3 Florence
Traditional Italy, dominated by private educational institutions, has its hub location in Florence. Polimoda (Figure 3.2), the main fashion education establishment consists of two departments, a design and a business division. Some courses have even an integrated approach (Mellerry-Pratt, 2016b). This shows that the school has an augmented attention at fusing fashion and business, trying to meet the demands of the industry. Furthermore, being located near long-established manufacturers, Polimoda has an easy access to craftsmanship that helps the students to get a higher influence on technical skills (Mellerry-Pratt, 2016b). To Polimoda's alumni belong less iconic designers, yet, the school supplies graduates who are successful in the industry, such as Massimiliano Giornetti, creative director for men's and women's fashion for Salvatore Ferragamo.

3.2.4 Paris
The last but not least important fashion education capital is Paris in France. The city has a huge reputation in the fashion industry in general, as Paris is often ascribed as the city of fashion, with all the important headquarters from Chanel to Hermès. Still, in regard to education, Paris is often regarded as a coterie. Nevertheless, ESMOD or the Institut Français de la Mode are two of the main fashion schools, with alumni like the creative director of Balmain Olivier Rousteing or creative director of Hermès Nadège Vanhee-Cybulski. Generally speaking, the French schools have a very sophisticated design approach, while the expertise of technical skills is not dismissed (Mellerry-Pratt, 2016c).
3.2 European Education Capitals

Figure 3.1 - Central Saint Martins (Hafton + Cow, 2011)

Figure 3.2 - Polimoda (The Business of Fashion, n.d.)
3.3 The Dutch Schools

The Dutch design education culture is strongly rooted in a practical, hands-on working approach. Practice rather than theory is prioritised, while theoretical information is only handed over in theory influenced subjects like art and culture history, lectures, and classes that help developing techniques. Speaking of all design education institutes in the Netherlands, the Bauhaus philosophy of teaching was very influential and is still noticeable today (Van den Eijnde, 2015). Akin to the Bauhaus model, the Dutch fashion design education is constructed around the workshop, so the fashion design atelier, creating the key location and attention of the studies. Even if this is not a realistic representation of the modern professional work environment anymore, as production is mostly outsourced, technical skills have to be learnt and especially at art academies the significance of crafts is highlighted (Van Zijverden, 2016).

The further analysis aims to analyse Dutch schools that offer fashion design courses only, so courses in the contexts of garment and collection creation. The research, therefore, will look at eight schools listed underneath. Hence, courses that are linked to fashion, but are not fashion design, will not be evaluated.

Dutch Fashion Schools offering Fashion Design Courses:

1. Royal Academy of Art, The Hague (KABK)
2. ArtEZ Institute of the Arts, Arnhem
3. Gerrit Rietveld Academy, Amsterdam
4. Willem de Kooning Academy, Rotterdam (WDKA)
5. Amsterdam Fashion Institute, Amsterdam (AMFI)
6. Amsterdam Fashion Academy, Amsterdam
7. University of the Arts Utrecht, Utrecht (HKU)
8. The Maastricht Academy of Fine Arts and Design, Maastricht (MAFAD)

3.3.1 KABK

First off, the KABK offers two full-time courses, Textile Design and Fashion Design. Even though this analysis is only considering fashion design courses, in regard to KABK, both courses need to be mentioned. Whilst they are separate specialisations they still are associated programs. This is linked to the idea that the school likes for their students to find an individual relationship between textiles and fashion (Kabk.nl, n.d.). Thus, as well due to the fact that these students share all facilities and resources (Van Zijverden, 2016), it creates an opportunity for interaction. The main goal of the school is to create independent and self-conscious designers with a developed personal style, who can produce innovative, accurate and relevant designs. Tradition, next to innovation and research is a fundamental theme at KABK where students are asked to study the history of old costumes and folklore. Not only does this show a strong relation to the historic past of the home country, but also an endeavour for technical skills. Quality, so the knowledge of craft, is generally of relevant attention (Kabk.nl, n.d.). However, the school also owns a 3D lab and provides new technologies as sublimation printers or laser cutters (Van Zijverden, 2016). In its four-year education, the first year serves as a foundation. This year has an experimental approach, challenging students to explore from 3D, materials, and techniques. The rest of the study concentrates on collection building and projects (Kabk.nl, n.d.).
3.3.2 ArtEZ
ArtEZ, an art school, has its fashion design department in Arnhem. The school describes itself as a challenging and highly creative environment which educates both 2D and 3D fashion design. This means that the same course can discipline students in collection design as well as in pattern or textile design. Generally speaking, the school pushes its student to develop a strong and individual language in fashion, which distinguishes itself from the masses. Furthermore, uniquely for a fashion school, ArtEZ offers multidisciplinary working methods that involve innovative and tech-advanced thinking, showing that cross-collaborations with other industries are relevant. During the four years, the first two years provide a foundation where basic skills in sketching, textiles, patterns, digital are acquired, but also theory knowledge is handed over. The last two years, on the contrary, are dedicated to evolving a designer’s vision and put the attained knowledge into practice, by obtaining an internship and finalising the studies with a professional collection (artez.nl, n.d.). Two of the famous alumni were already mentioned in this paper, Iris van Herpen and Pauline van Dongen. But also the founders of the fashion label Victor & Rolf, Viktor Horsting and Rolf Snoeren belong to the former students of this institution. Thus, this shows that ArtEZ has internationally highly representative graduates.

3.3.3 Gerrit Rietveld
Another artistically driven fashion school is the Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam, which claims to have a free and exploratory approach to fashion. The first year, the basic year involves all first year students and lets them experience all the fields of studies that the school offers. This way, the students are given a general creative education before continuing with their specialisation. From the second year on, the fashion students are getting familiar with the basics of fashion design including moulage, pattern drawing and technical drawing, with an enhanced viewpoint on the relationship of the garment and the body. The next years focus further on the development of conceptual and theoretical skills, as well as on technical practice. In the last year, the school facilitates an internship and is followed by the final graduation collection, accompanied by a thesis (rietveldacademie.nl, n.d.). Mainly, Gerrit Rietveld Academie presumes to have an experimental approach to fashion where students are guided to evolve their own style and handwriting. In that sense, the school strongly conveys an individualistic approach.

3.3.4 WDKA
WDKA, the international art academy in Rotterdam, regards fashion within its curriculum as a strong communication tool, aiming attention at presentation and message. Students learn to analyse trends, both in fashion and society and gain an understanding of how to apply them to their collections in order to meet the consumer’s needs (wdka.nl, n.d.). Thus, the school has a more commercial approach than other art academies in the Netherlands. Interesting to mention is the fact that the Academy had restricted their curriculum in 2013, in order to design it more adequately to the needs of the industry. So the school decided to give less individualistic classes and integrated a more collaborative and cross-disciplinary approach (Van der Molen, 2013). Within the study, students are not only educated in the areas of fashion as in drawing, pattern making or draping, but also styling and commercial skills such as photography and digital media are handed over (wdka.nl, n.d.). Besides the set curriculum, students have the possibility to choose additional elective minors in order to deepen their knowledge or to gain new skills independently, which helps them to specialise in an area of their choice (Mpasi-Bila, 2017) (Appendix 5). The electives are divided into three categories, namely autonomous practice (artistic), commercial practice (economic) and social practice (societal) (wdka.nl, n.d.). All in all, the study at WDKA can be described as interdisciplinary.

3.3.5 AMFI
AMFI, a fashion school incorporating three departments – Fashion and Design, Fashion and Branding and Fashion and Management – and thus being the biggest fashion institute in the Netherlands (Businessoffashion.com, n.d.), is said to have a highly commercial attitude to fashion. The institute developed a reality school method, where students gain a lot of practical knowledge and are faced with a realistic and professional way of working. The first semester, similar to other schools, is based on experimentation and the development of creative thinking where students work on three individual projects with all departments together. From the second semester on, students follow their specialisation. In the first two years, each semester has a different theme. For instance, one semester has a focus on street wear, while another one concentrates on craftsmanship. This way, students are able to experience the whole range of skills that are needed in the industry. Generally, classes like concepting, draping, textiles or pattern drawing are part of the curriculum (Amsterdamuas.
com, n.d.). The last two years include an internship, a minor, a specialisation and graduation. Students can choose from different electives and therefore specialise in an area of own choice. These electives include a textile minor, a denim minor or collection specialisation, to name a few. Holden (2017), the head of the design department at AMFI, explains that the school sets a focus on developing independent students with the ability to design their own path in fashion, while having a commercial and practical educational background (Appendix 9).

### 3.3.6 Amsterdam Fashion Academy

The Amsterdam Fashion Academy is a private institute that has a student-centred, and therefore highly individualistic educational approach (amsterdamfashionacademy.com, n.d.). The Academy calls itself a boutique-academy, meaning that students can expect small-scale classes with a sophisticated approach to fashion in an international environment, as the school only accepts 12 applicants per academic year. Mijnheer (2017), an educator at the school says that the school’s aim is to produce young fashion professionals who are individual designers while embracing fashion as creative and experimental (Appendix 8). One main characteristic of the curriculum, different from the other schools, is the fact that the school offers business classes where designers are taught fashion management knowledge including writing a business plan. So besides fashion history and culture classes, technical classes or collection classes, the school sets a focus on the business side of fashion (amsterdamfashionacademy.com, n.d.). Altogether, the Amsterdam Fashion Academy directs their students to be an individual designer with a prospect of founding an own brand.

### 3.3.7 HKU

Being one of the biggest arts and culture schools in Europe, the HKU offers a fashion design course that educates in the direction of fashion design, styling, and fashion design communication (Hku.nl, n.d.). This means, that the course is not solely targeted to create fashion designers. This approach seems similar to WDKA. From year two on, students have to specialise in a direction, choosing from fashion design and fashion communication. The first two years of the fashion design study are designed to explore and deepen creative qualities and skills, including classes on integral design, cultural studies or courses that evolve technical and digital skills. In the third year, students link developed design principles to a specific audience and medium to further position themselves, while the fourth year engages the activity as a designer, including interdisciplinary group projects with external parties and the final graduation project (Hku.nl, n.d.). Also, in this case, the interdisciplinary working method is a similar study approach as at WDKA.

### 3.3.8 MAFAD

At MAFAD, the fashion design education is part of the design study program (CROHO design), which consists of three design areas, namely body design (fashion), object design (product) and material design (textile). So before specialising at the end of the first year on a direction, students can experiment and develop skills in all three areas. Due to the fact that all designers are sharing facilities, an interaction on the campus is enhanced. The study program is split into two parts. The first two years are given in workshops, where the focus is on technical skills, and the last two years are project-based, meaning that students are working highly individually on their assignments while attending complementing lectures and coachings. In all, ZUYD is encouraging their students to experiment and to innovate with regard to developing an individual and unique language of their style. Own vision and direction are demanded (Zuyd.nl, n.d.).
3.3.9 Dutch Schools Comparison

The following tabular comparison (Table 3.1) shows a general overview of the fashion design courses of all schools mentioned before. The information on this page summarizes the main characteristics and compares the schools regarding vision and educational approach. For a visual comparison of all graduation collection of the year 2016 please refer to Appendix 12, which gives a representation of taste and commercial level.

In regard to the comparison below (Table 3.1), the main goal of all fashion education institutes is to create independent fashion designers with a strong unique language and style. Referring this outcome to the stance of Edelkort (2017), who claims that fashion education approaches an individualistic concept of fashion creation, this could be confirmed. The priority of education seems to be self-development of own skills and abilities as well of personal taste. Nevertheless, if looking closely on the unique selling point of the schools, and how independence is related to, some schools have developed a collaborative and interdisciplinary approach by providing interaction as well as fostering developments in fashion. Thus, Edelkort’s stance is not completely applicable in all Dutch schools, as while individuality is enhanced, collaboration is not left out. Especially schools as ArtEZ, WDKA or HKU set an example of updated curricula and educational strategies in regard to cross-over partnerships.

Table 3.1 - Comparison of Fashion Design Education in the Netherlands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bachelor</th>
<th>Master</th>
<th>Vision</th>
<th>Mission</th>
<th>Unique Selling Point</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KABK</td>
<td>ArtEZ</td>
<td>Gerrit Rietveld</td>
<td>WDKA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textile Design (4 yrs) Fashion Design (4 yrs)</td>
<td>Fashion Design (4 yrs)</td>
<td>Fashion (4 yrs)</td>
<td>Fashion Design (4 yrs)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fashion Design (2 yrs)</td>
<td>Challenging creative environment fostering individuality, authenticity and talent</td>
<td>Free artistic environment with room for experimentation regarding fashion as practice and visual culture</td>
<td>Fashion as a form of communication with focus on presentation and message</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textiles and Fashion are a visual language mirroring the zeitgeist combining tradition, innovation and research</td>
<td>Developing fashion creators who are independent and self-conscious with a personal style and approach</td>
<td>Developing fashion creators who are able to work individually to inspire the future of fashion creation</td>
<td>Developing fashion creators with collaborative approach combining artistry, economics and societal developments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing fashion creators who are independent and self-conscious with a personal style and approach</td>
<td>Developing fashion creators with a unique and convincing vision on fashion</td>
<td>Developing fashion creators who are able to work individually to inspire the future of fashion creation</td>
<td>Developing fashion creators with collaborative approach combining artistry, economics and societal developments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrated courses (Textile Design and Fashion Design) facilitating interaction between students</td>
<td>Multidisciplinary approach with a focus on innovative and technological tools</td>
<td>Enhanced relationship of garment and body</td>
<td>Self-development by supporting additional electives developing skills outside the course</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Kabk.nl, n.d.)</td>
<td>(artez.nl, n.d.)</td>
<td>(rietveldacademie.nl, n.d.)</td>
<td>(wdka.nl, n.d.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AMFI</th>
<th>Amsterdam Fashion Academy</th>
<th>HKU</th>
<th>MAFAD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>Fashion Design (4 yrs)</td>
<td>Fashion with Textile Design (3 yrs)</td>
<td>Fashion Design (4 yrs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master</td>
<td>Commercial and hands-on setting combining creativity, with social, economic and cultural education</td>
<td>Fashion as a creative and experimental, yet commercial industry</td>
<td>Fashion as communication telling a story about trends, zeitgeist and vision on beauty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision</td>
<td>Developing fashion creators who are independent learners and future thinkers</td>
<td>Developing individual fashion creators with a unique style and ability to meet the demands of the industry</td>
<td>Developing independent fashion creators who are able to show a unique and current expression of fashion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission</td>
<td>Reality school concept enabling a practical and realistic representation of the professional industry</td>
<td>Boutique academy with a private and personal approach in order to meet the needs of the students</td>
<td>Preparing for professional practice by collaborating with stakeholders from different fields of expertise</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.4 Summary Chapter 3
3.4 Summary Chapter 3

What are the characteristics of the current fashion design education at universities, academies and schools, and what are their core teaching strategies?

Answering the second sub-question, it can be said that in general, the level and content of fashion design education in the Netherlands seems to be high and updated. All in all, Dutch education is interdisciplinary and project based creating a good and professional basis for students. The approach differs from school to school, however, while other European education capitals focus either on artistry, technology and tradition, the Dutch schools mainly have a more innovative and independent approach to fashion, which might be rooted in the Bauhaus background. Even though all schools have an individualistic vision, some already enhance cross-over collaborations and technological experimentation. While a lot of skills are taught, business and management knowledge is widely lacking and dismissed in the Dutch fashion design education.
What are the main challenges students and fashion design alumni are facing during and after their education in the professional environment?

4 Reality Clash

4.1 Student Feedback
   4.1.1 Survey
   4.1.2 Interview

4.2 Alumni Feedback

4.3 Summary Chapter 4
In order to gain an understanding of the perspective of students and how they perceive their education, I conducted both a survey and interviews with enrolled fashion design students. For the survey, 16 students from four different educational institutions (ArtEZ, Gerrit Rietveld Academie, AMFI and KABK) answered questions on their motivation to study fashion design, how they experience their education and development so far, and what they plan for the future as a professional. For the interviews, I have talked to two AMFI students, Simone Schampers (Appendix 6) and Faralda Boerwinkel (Appendix 7), and one student from WDKA (Christiano Mpasi-Bila (Appendix 5). In our conversations, we discussed their thoughts on education, what they are missing and how they see the future of fashion in more depth.

In regard to the outcomes of the survey and interviews, there is a lot of accordance on some topics. For instance, when asked about the reason for enrolling for a fashion design course, almost all respondents said that it was their passion for a long time already. In some cases, some students had already previous experience or educational background in that field. This means, that most students know already for a long time that this profession is their calling and have experimented before attending the course. In regard to the students’ expectations of the study, the opinions are quite mixed, as some had no expectations at all while others’ were exceeded. Notable is however that a number of respondents mention their teachers while talking about their experience in the course, making them a vital decision factor of the courtesy of the course. When talking about acquired knowledge, most students agree that they have learned technical skills during their studies. As well, students mention that they have mastered design artistry. However, even though technical skills have been acquired, some students still say that they would like to deepen them. Interesting is the fact that students are missing business and commercial background knowledge, as design courses don’t offer them in the curriculum. But the expression of demand shows that students show interest in understanding the production cycle of their industry. All schools of the respondents offer internships. Many of the students who already obtained an internship say that it is where they have learnt the most. Besides experiencing a professional environment, students say that they were able to improve and gain new technical skills as well as developed organisational and teamwork competencies. In contrary to previous research, the eagerness among the respondents to found their own brand is very low. Most students plan to continue their education with a master or to start working for a company. Both outcomes of the survey and the interviews are explained further below.

### 3.4.1 Survey

Out of the 16 students filling in the survey (Appendix 10), 7 are attending AMFI, 4 ArtEZ, 3 KABK and 2 the Gerrit Rietveld Academie (Figure 4.1).

![Figure 4.1 - Representation of what schools respondents are attending.](image)

Figure 4.1 - Representation of what schools respondents are attending.

Additional outcomes that have not yet been mentioned are for one the fact that the personal aspect and relationship of the studies plays a big role. One student mentioned the level of subjective experience wasn’t expected to be so high. On the other hand, students who had the chance to visit a pre-course did know exactly what to await. Therefore, preparation influences how students perceive their studies later on. Half of the students answered that the study met their expectations, only one says no and the rest in content to some extent (Figure 4.2).

![Figure 4.2 - Answer if the respondents’ schools met their expectations.](image)

Figure 4.2 - Answer if the respondents’ schools met their expectations.
Another outcome indicates that even though students are still missing certain skills in their studies or feel that internships give them more experience than their courses, almost all students say that they were prepared enough for their practical environment. One student mentioned that the school prepared her well for the internship, but it was the experience that was missing. In this case, school and company seem to complement each other. Only AMFI and KABK students of the survey had obtained an internship. While almost all AMFI students say they were ready, both KABK students said the opposite, showing the difference in schools. Reasons for not being prepared were business skills or lacking experience. An additional note of one student was the lack of community and the high level of rivalry at the institution, meaning that a sense of collaborative spirit and fellowship is missing at some schools. Last but not least, students seem not to be always informed whether their schools offer guidance in finding a job after graduation. Besides the fact that more than a third answered that they don’t know (Figure 4.3), students of the same school (AMFI) answered all three options, showing that the communication on this topic is not clear enough.

### 3.4.2 Interviews

In the course of the interviews, one main theme was evident in all talks. All students pointed out the importance of experimentation in their studies, in order to find out who they are as a designer (Mpasi-Bila, 2017; Schampers, 2017; Boerwinkel, 2017). Thus, it is evident that studies are regarded as a self-discovery time where trying out different things and ways of designing are key in order to find out one’s professional identity. It is also showing that all students want to find their signature before entering the professional world. For Mpasi-Bila (2017), this started with finding the right school that fits his vision on fashion and supports him to achieve his goals (Appendix 5). However, Mpasi-Bila also mentions that one cannot be too dependent on their education, as self-initiative and self-study is crucial to develop skills that one might miss in the course. Another similarity of all interviewees is the fact that all seem to have a down to earth and realistic vision for their future. They don’t believe to become the next Karl Lagerfeld (Mpasi-Bila, 2017) and believe that students think of fashion in a too artistic way (Schampers, 2017) (Appendix 6). Hence, it can be concluded that this generation of designers already has a more commercial mindset, which is needed in the contemporary world of this industry. Finally, in regard to missing skills, besides pointing out again business and managerial knowledge, Schampers (2017) identifies that digital skills are becoming more important in the industry and suggests that instead of restricting it to minors or specialisations, schools should incorporate technology in all classes throughout the education.

![Figure 4.3 - Answer if schools offer career support after graduation.](image-url)
4.2 Alumni Feedback

For this chapter, a survey of fashion design alumni in the Netherlands has been conducted (Appendix 11). 37 respondents from six fashion schools answered questions on their experience at school and after graduation. The alumni who finished their education between 2007 and 2016 graduated from ArtEZ, the Gerrit Rietveld Academie, WDKA, AMFI, KABK or HKU (Figure 4.4).

In regard to the reason of studying fashion and the met expectations of the study, the outcomes are very similar to the ones of currently enrolled students. While all possible answers were mentioned by ArtEZ students (‘Yes’, ‘No’ and ‘To some extent’), Gerrit Rietveld and WDKA students split their opinion between ‘Yes’ and ‘To some extent’ on the expectations (Figure 4.5). While most AMFI students’ expectations were met, KABK and HKU inclined to be disappointed (Figure 4.5). Positive reactions included that the study enabled self-development and realisation of own vision and identity. As well, hard work and the highly intense courses have prepared the graduates to work in the stressful environment in the professional world. On the other hand, negative reactions are linked to the fact that schools did not provide a realistic view of the professional job profile, neither did it show a commercial point of view, indicating that students design in a bubble without a link to the way of working of the industry. This, as already mentioned in chapter 3, is supported by Amed (2016b). Furthermore, lacking technical skills were also pointed out.

Most of the respondents are either working for wages, are self-employed or have freelance jobs. The outcome shows however that most alumni work independently. While some are employed as stylists or designers, others founded their own brand.

When asked for expectations, the outcome was more positive in contrast when asked if the study prepared the respondents enough for the professional world. Most alumni think that the education was not sufficient enough in regard to their professional experience after graduation (Figure 4.6). All Gerrit Rietveld Academy and WDKA students, as well as the majority of KABK and HKU students, said that they were not prepared enough, while the opinion among AMFI and ArtEZ students varies. Reasons for a deficient education are very often lacking business, production and commercial skills. Almost all respondents who had a negative answer to this question, mention they would have needed this knowledge. One alumnus says: ‘The industry requests knowledge about merchandising and product development, two aspects that the school doesn’t focus on.’ Other skills, less frequently mentioned, are technical and computer skills. Additionally, some respondents acknowledge the importance of experience, admitting that schools cannot provide it, but could give the students more time to obtain internships.
Apparent is, that the step from school into the first job seems difficult for most respondents. For the majority, it was a challenge to find a job and to get noticed by the professional world. Also, some mention that they had difficulties to present themselves and to create a professional convincing portfolio. One respondent suggests a solution: 'I think it would have been good to discuss more about existing companies during the study, to have a more realistic idea when you enter the world.' When asked what is needed in the professional world, most people mentioned social skills as collaboration, networking and communication, but also personal skills such as persistence and self-believe. As one example shows: 'Make sure you do not have the idea of being the next Raf Simons. There are so many people working in the shadows of the big fashion names. The fashion academies gave us the idea that with great talent and hard work you will succeed, but it depends on so much more! Mostly luck and also being able to communicate and have an impressive network.' This indicates that the start is difficult, but that in the end, it is not about hard skills, but soft skills. Therefore, alumni suggest besides the above-mentioned hard skills, incorporating more collaborative projects in the studies, which would help to develop these abilities.
4.3 Summary Chapter 4

What are the main challenges students and fashion design alumni are facing during and after their education in the professional environment?

Challenges and experience of students and alumni with their education show similar outcomes, but as the curricula, this differs from school to school. Yet, main points can be concluded. Comparing the schools’ strategies with the student and alumni feedback, it is vital to underline that due to the fact that schools foster individual development, the relationship to the course for students is very personal and thus teachers are an important factor. The atmosphere and community influence the outcome of the studies. Expectations of students and alumni were not always met, but this could be reasoned with unrealistic anticipations or inadequate representation of the schools and courses. Whereas business and managerial skills are missing and are also not included in the curricula, most students feel still prepared enough for the industry. On the contrary, these are skills that are missed among alumni, saying they are vital and required in the professional environment. Therefore, alumni state they could have been better prepared if this knowledge would have been provided. Still, in the end, soft skills as collaboration, networking or teamwork are determinative about the success in the professional world. Thus, education needs to not only provide sufficient career guidance in order to inform students about realistic goals and plans to enter their career, while setting a focus on exactly these soft skills.
How adequately does the education system prepare young fashion design professionals to the present disposition of the industry?

5 The Outcome

5.1 Juxtaposition
5.2 Sub-Conclusion
Looking at the outcomes of the second chapter, the present fashion practice of a fashion designer can be defined by six main components that are driving the industry, namely ‘business’, ‘creativity’, ‘technology’, ‘sustainability’, ‘technique’ and ‘collaboration’. All these elements influence the professional world of designers and are vital in order to succeed in the industry.

For her Master thesis ‘Recrafting Craft’, Van Zijverden (2016) also analysed the fashion design education in the Netherlands, however only restricted to art schools. Her paper, which she wrote for the Piet Zwart Institute, focuses on the one hand on traditional and digital crafts in the industry and on fashion design education on the other hand. Furthermore, she investigates how these crafts can be implemented in the workshops in order to prepare students for the changing environment. Within her research, she depicts the requirements for future fashion professionals, where she also covers the elements ‘technology’, ‘sustainability’, ‘collaboration’ and ‘business’. However, additionally, she mentions one more aspect that is not included in the previous research, specifically ‘presentations skills’. Based on her study, future fashion professionals are expected to communicate and present adequately own works, as well as inspirations and visions (Van Zijverden, 2016). The aspect of ‘presentation’ was also desire by alumni and students, as they feel it would help them to enter the professional world more easily. As well, Van den Berg acknowledged that these skills are missing among young students and are crucial, as they will be needed throughout the whole career (Van den Berg, 2017).

Therefore, a seventh element ‘presentations’ can be added to vital fashion professional skills, forming a heptagon (Figure 5.1). Not to mention, all elements cannot be looked at individually, as they are intertwined and shape each other.

Summing up, the industry requires designers who besides their talent have a commercial vision, which includes consumer behaviour understanding and merchandise skills. Furthermore, creativity is not only restricted to a unique concept and taste level but needs to be used in a contemporary context, such as in solving societal problems or developing new ways of designing. This again is linked to the next principle that is sustainability. The Dutch fashion industry is eager to adapt to alternative materials and processes that are environmentally and ethically revised. Yet, technology is probably the biggest force that changes the industry and must be therefore integrated into all levels of the working processes. When referring to innovation, sustainability and technology are of course part if it, however, it cannot be achieved without collaboration. A networking mindset and interaction with other industries are taking place more and more in the Dutch fashion industry and are demanded in order to nurture creativity and future developments. A crucial element of the profession of fashion designers is the technical skill, so technique. Even though it is one of the fundamental bases of fashion creation, its importance is still the same. Last but not least, are presentation skills, which help alumni to show their strengths and know-how to the professional world.
To further investigate whether the Dutch fashion design education is adequately constructed in regard to the needs of the industry, all seven elements of the heptagon need to be considered with reference to the outcomes of the third and fourth chapter. Based on the results of both surveys and of the analysis on the schools, it can be concluded that not all elements of the heptagon are implemented in the curricula at a sufficient level. For the further discussion, it must be acknowledged that the level of implementation varies from school to school. The following Table shows the level of implementation (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1 - Level of Implementation of Heptagon Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sufficient</th>
<th>Creativity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amendable</td>
<td>Technique, Sustainability, Technology, Collaboration, Presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient</td>
<td>Business</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in the table, only the level of ‘creativity’ can be qualified as sufficient. All schools cater self-development and realisation of artistic vision, which is also recognised by students and alumni. However, ‘technique’, ‘sustainability’, ‘technology’, ‘collaboration’ and ‘presentation’ are ranked as amendable elements. In regard to ‘technique’, by all means, every school provides classes and workshop that help students to develop technical skills. This is also reflected in the student survey. However, students and alumni, as well as professionals from the industry wish the level to be higher. Besides teaching traditional handcrafts, schools need to teach students the application of modern materials and techniques that are practised in a manufactured cloth (Hoang, 2016). A similar discussion can be lead vis a vis ‘technology’ and ‘collaboration’. Some schools, as KABK or ArtEZ have a higher level of implementation and are already embracing new tools and ways of working. Still, both digital and collective skills need to have a higher importance as they are becoming an indispensable part of the industry. Again, this is also demanded by students and alumni. For example, students have to learn to interact with new digital tools in their everyday work, instead of in selected areas only (Hoang, 2016). Likewise, ‘presentation’ is something that students learn in some way, but which needs to be improved in regard to what the professional environment expects and values. This aspect is crucial for a lot of fresh graduates, as it facilitates to get a job. In terms of ‘sustainability’, none of the schools mentions publicly their engagement and practice on this topic, neither do students or alumni have an opinion on it. Therefore, it is difficult to indicate the level of implementation. However, due to the fact that sustainability hasn’t been mention, it indicated that it needs more attention and can, therefore, be embraced more in education. The only element that is evidently insufficient is ‘business’. Besides Amsterdam Fashion Academy which provides some business knowledge, but rather entrepreneurial skills instead of managerial and marketing expertise, none of the schools give the students insight in this field. Some schools are more commercial than others, as AMFI for instance, but real courses are not given. However, a vast number of students and alumni desire to learn more about this field, in order to prevent creating in a bubble. Furthermore, a lot of alumni complain that the start in the professional world is challenging, which is also rooted in insufficient business understanding. Thus, this element requires most work.
5.2 Sub-Conclusion

How adequately does the education system prepare young fashion design professionals to the present disposition of the industry?

To what extent is the Dutch fashion design education aligned with the current zeitgeist of the industry, and how can it be optimised in order to create coherent curricula?

Summarising this chapter, the first part of the main research question can be answered. The Dutch fashion design education can be qualified as adequate in some measure. Looking at the level of implementation (Table 5.1), ‘creativity’ is certainly provided. On the opposite, ‘business’ is lacking in all institutions and should be reconsidered. This aspect needs the most work. Elements that are suggested for improvement are ‘technique’, ‘sustainability’, ‘technology’, ‘collaboration’ and ‘presentation’. When creating a curriculum for fashion design students, all aspects of the heptagon have to be included to provide an adequate education in regard to the current zeitgeist of the industry. Of course, the focus can vary, as one school might focus more on the creation of artistic innovative designers, while another school involves in educating commercial stylists. As stated in the previous research, both types are required in the Dutch market. For instance, ‘technology’ and ‘collaboration’ are elements that have a higher importance at innovation driven schools than at commercial schools. However, all aspects of the heptagon have to be educated to a basic extent and incorporated in a manner that is applicable to the chosen side of the business.

All in all, the Dutch fashion education landscape shows potential for renovation, as some institutes are already implementing new elements to their curricula. Still, in order to create the best experience for students, schools should act upon the elements of the heptagon in regard to their vision. Feasibility, however, is a debatable aspect. While schools nationwide need to cut costs and hours, implementation of new projects into the curricula can be seen as a challenge regarding time and money, as both elements are required in order to improve the educational system. Especially new technological and technical machines and devices stress the topic of budgets. Also, as business classes are until now missing, the implementation would mean a complete restructuring of the curricula. This shows that implementation will, first of all, take time and money. However, a step in the right direction would be a clear definition of the positioning of schools, in order to create an achievable plan for the future which would be appropriate to the profile of the school. Once schools define their scope of engagement, implementation can become more feasible. One example is WDKA, which took that step in 2013.

Further strategies and initiatives will be explained in chapter 6.
What strategies and initiatives are already used to join education and industry reality?

6 Strategies and Initiatives
   6.1 Global Precedents
   6.2 Local Actions
       6.2.1 Business
       6.2.2 Technique
       6.2.3 Presentation
       6.2.4 Sustainability
       6.2.5 Technology
       6.2.6 Collaboration
   6.3 Summary Chapter 6
As the industry is evolving, and the outcomes of the previous chapter have shown that the Dutch education system can be further aligned to the industry, fashion design curricula and education techniques have to be changed as well. Nevertheless, when looking at education concepts outside the Netherlands, there are inspirational initiatives and strategies at foreign institutions that already try to incorporate new methods into their curricula and schools.

Especially in regard to business knowledge, steps have been made. For instance, VIA University College in Denmark has a commercial approach to fashion design, teaching in regard to practical needs of fashion labels and brands. The Bachelor top-up merges fashion and business while allowing students to choose from specialisations of their choice (En.via.dk, n.d.). Furthermore, Parsons in New York has a similar approach, by providing obligatory business lessons with the prospect of obtaining additional optional classes (Newschool.edu, n.d.). Moreover, Polimoda tries to help their students with their future plans and set up platforms where students are supported with their entrepreneurial ideas (Abnett, 2015). These are only a few examples, however, these initiatives show that schools worldwide acknowledge the importance of managerial skills of designers and try to hand them over to their students.

Notably, London fashion schools seem to restructure and find new possibilities to counter the zeitgeist. For instance, LCF, besides its newly launched Fashion Business School (FBS) has a Centre for Sustainable Fashion (CSF), not only reacting to managerial skills, but also to sustainability knowledge. The FBS is a multidisciplinary faculty that also incorporates some of the fashion design studies (Arts.ac.uk, n.d.). In regard to the CSF, it can be seen as a research institute that pursues a sustainable future (sustainable-fashion.com, n.d.). This is giving students the option to engage in these two areas of business and sustainability. Graduates from these schools, therefore, have a broader understanding of these topics. Also, Central Saint Martins has an akin centre, namely the Design & Living System Lab. This project is a laboratory that also centres around the idea of a sustainable future, however, it has a more defined focus on biological sciences (Designandlivingsystems.com, n.d.). Generally, sustainability is an issue that is often incorporated in curricula worldwide. Some schools have even developed specific sustainable courses, as ESMOD in Berlin or Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) in New York, showing that a trend and movement is visible.

While business and sustainable initiatives are noticeable in the education landscape of fashion, outstanding technological actions are more difficult to define. Softwares as CAD programs or 3D printers are as such no new tools, as a lot of schools have and use them. But the Technology Centre at Polimoda which consists of 5 different computer labs is one good example of an advanced implementation of technology in fashion education. Besides the common softwares and machines, the lab provides different scanners, modeling softwares and devices (polimoda.com, n.d.). This way, students can experiment further.

Schools that provide courses in different areas of design have per se collaborative potential, as they provide an interdisciplinary environment and facilities. This is often an advantage which must be used. For example, Pratt Institute in New York accommodates all design students in one building, including, among others, the Fashion Design, Interior Design or Industrial Design departments. The Juliana Curran Terian Design Centre brings all disciplines together. Thus, interaction and experimentation are possible (pratt.edu, n.d.).

Presentation skills are difficult to examine, however, if looking at some of the schools’ websites, the prideful display of their graduates is remarkable. The University of Westminster, for instance, has a designated fashion department website, displaying all current graduation collections and shows on their front page, exposing their students and putting them in the foreground (westminsterfashion.com, n.d.). Furthermore, other schools, like Pratt Institute, created professional e-booklets showcasing the work and photographs of their graduates (pratt.edu, n.d.). These examples show interest in using their students as a showcase project as well as succeed to do this in a professional manner. Not to mention, events like the Graduate Fashion Week in London, which showed 1,500 graduate collections in 2017, are not only a great opportunity for students to interact with the industry, but also for schools to display their students and show engagement in career building (Doyle, 2017).
6.2 Local Actions

For the further analysis, only six out of seven elements of the Fashion Industry Heptagon (Figure 5.1) will be examined in the Dutch fashion education, as one element, ‘creativity’ was ranked at a sufficient level. All other elements will be explored.

6.2.1 Business
As stated in the previous research, business knowledge is completely omitted in Dutch fashion design education, but students and alumni wish to learn it. Only Amsterdam Fashion Academy provides some business knowledge in its education, however, this is solely restricted to entrepreneurship. Education should start to integrate general managerial and business knowledge related to the fashion industry and production cycle. Production, merchandising or marketing classes could give design students basic knowledge on these topics, which they will face in the professional world. Fashion schools should not become business schools, however, they need to rethink extending their curriculum. For instance, AMFI, already having a Fashion and Management course, could link more classes and projects together, as the knowledge is already in house. Moreover, other schools might consider working together with business schools or courses, in order to provide this knowledge. The implementation might not be easy to execute, however, the demand and importance are increasing.

6.2.2 Technique
Technical knowledge is the basis of fashion creation and thus exists in all fashion design courses. However, technical skills decline and students feel they could use more classes and deepen those skills. Of course, more obligatory technical classes can not always be given. But looking at the concept of WDKA of additional electives, students have the possibility to experiment and increase their skills outside their given curriculum. If workshops of these kinds are available for students, knowledge can be increase and practised. Also, these electives are not restricted to a level of education, so all students of all years could participate and share their experience. This also increased the willingness to learn independently.

6.2.3 Presentation
Presentation skills, as mentioned by Van den Berg (2017), are not evolved enough among students (Appendix 3). General classes of CV or portfolio building are common, however, they do not develop presentation skills to its fullest potential. Presenting must be practised, so schools need to enable their students to frequently present and expose their work in a professional manner, if in a form of exposition or show.

6.2.4 Sustainability
There is no publicly exposed involvement in sustainability among Dutch fashion schools, even though this issue is prevalent in the Netherlands. In the interview with Holden (2017), he mentions sustainability being an overarching subject in all given classes (Appendix 9), which is also supported by Boerwinkel (2017) (Appendix 7), however, explicit commitment can not be noticed. This is also the reality at the other schools. Despite having a general implementation of sustainability, schools should help their students to engage more in sustainable projects, learn from other industries and studies and try to be more involved in this topic. Study assignments are the basis, but institutions can establish new projects and paradigms, as seen at schools in London for instance.

6.2.5 Technology
While technology is evidently taken into account when creating curricula at schools like KABK with their 3D lab, other schools show a deficit in this area. CAD softwares or 3D prototyping might be still newer tools to the industry, but they only create the basis for technology in fashion. While students are at schools, they should be given the possibility to experiment with new tools and reinvent their application. KABK’s lab is a start for such an opportunity. If more schools can provide this knowledge, it would change the landscape of fashion design education.

6.2.6 Collaboration
Cross-over collaboration is significantly increasing in the education system and is comparatively strong in the Netherlands. Schools like ArtEZ, for example, embrace interdisciplinary projects and assignments with other industries, in order to provide networking opportunities, but foremost to challenge their students and develop multi-faceted problem-solving. As new devices, if sewing machines or digital softwares, are mostly not easily affordable for schools, collaboration might be the solution for this as well. Creative Labs, which are seen globally at other schools, do not only arrange space for interaction but provide students with highly advanced facilities. In-school labs, however, are expensive and difficult
to implement. Nevertheless, schools can engage with already established Creative Labs, as the Waag Society⁶ in Amsterdam with its labs, workshops or lectures that are accessible for the public (waag.org, n.d.). This way, schools can engage with professionals from other industries and teach their students vital and innovative knowledge, without providing it on their own campuses.

Figure 6.1 - Waag Society FabLab (Hartmann, 2012)

6 - Waag Society (Figure 6.1) is an institute located in Amsterdam that is engaged in art, science and technology. The institute provides a platform for research, experimentation, as well as a ground for discourse in the field of social and cultural developments. Waag Society has several labs specialising in different areas, which are led by designers, programmers and researchers (waag.org, n.d.)
What strategies and initiatives are already used to join education and industry reality?

All initiatives and strategies mentioned in this chapter show that fashion education is changing and evolving with time, also in the design sector. International fashion design education is broadening its focus in order to stay competitive by establishing inspiring paradigms for fashion education. While international schools are leaders in incorporating new technologies or developing programs dealing with sustainability, as they have a bigger budget, the Dutch schools need to find a compromise that will meet the expectations of the industry and will not cost too much money. Certain steps have already been taken, as a complete restructuring at WDKA, founding a 3D lab at KABK or cross-over collaboration at ArtEZ. Nevertheless, there is certainly room for improvement. As collaboration is fundamentally important, as well as it can help to solve deficits in technical, business and technological knowledge, this element, in particular, should be further explored and implemented in Dutch fashion education.
7 Results

7.1 Conclusion
7.2 Limitations
7.3 Future Work
To what extent is the Dutch fashion design education aligned with the current zeitgeist of the industry, and how can it be optimised in order to create coherent curricula?

By using the conclusions of each chapter, a general answer to the question ‘To what extent is the Dutch fashion design education aligned with the current zeitgeist of the industry, and how can it be optimised in order to create coherent curricula?’ can be formulated.

The current zeitgeist is defined by enhanced interaction and cross-over collaborations that nurture multidisciplinary projects. Thus, fashion is nowadays creating outside its bubble and is opening up to other disciplines. This incident is not only taking place in the artistic innovative sector, but also in the commercial side of the business. Furthermore, the future professional’s working practice is influenced by seven factors that all together can be summarised into a Fashion Industry Heptagon. The model incorporates skills that are needed in order to act as a successful fashion designer in the contemporary professional environment. The elements ‘creativity’, ‘sustainability’, ‘presentation’, ‘technique’, ‘collaboration’, ‘technology’ and ‘business’ form all together the heptagon.

Interaction, as well as all elements of the heptagon, are desired in fashion design education. Generally, the Dutch fashion design education is at a good level and engages in meeting the demands of the industry. Students and alumni are widely prepared for the work environment. Nevertheless, while the element of ‘creativity’ of the heptagon is sufficient, ‘sustainability’, ‘presentation’, ‘technique’, ‘collaboration’ and ‘technology’ must be classified as amendable, while ‘business’ is insufficient. The level of implementation of the amendable elements depends on the school, however, they have potential to be improved. In regard to ‘business’, the Netherlands is lacking this element in its fashion educational system.

Concluding the degree of alignment of industry demands and fashion design education in the Netherlands, it can be said that the level is still high, despite the fact that one element is missing and five other have room for improvement. Schools need to define their focus, evaluate their strategies and mirror them in their curricula and facilities in order to provide the best possible education. It is noticeable, that the Dutch schools, in general, have a good sense of the needs of the industry and can define what is required in the professional world. Hence, the future holds potential for more changes and alignment in the education landscape.

Regarding the feasibility of implementation, costs, time and planning are often factors that might prevent a restructuring in the curricula. Therefore, taken actions as the reorganisation of the curriculum at WDKA or the creation of a 3D lab at KABK, are steps that have overcome these obstacles and succeeded.

Especially, collaboration can be the answer to facilitate improvements. Through cooperation with other schools, organisations and companies, knowledge can be shared, targeting the elements of ‘sustainability’, ‘technique’, ‘collaboration’, ‘technology’ and ‘business’ of the heptagon, while providing real life experience and the possibility of networking. Looking at precedents outside and inside the Netherlands, examples for the future of design education are established. Considering the fact that current students are the future of the fashion business, education should enable a basis for future thinkers and influencers.
7.2 Limitations

The subject of research deals with a broad analysis of the industry, as well as an analysis of the national fashion design education, which is constructed of several schools with different focuses and educational levels. Due to the limits of time, and restrictions of language, the case studies of the schools, universities and academies could only be executed in a distant manner, by extracting predominantly the schools’ website information, which can be biased and polished. Not to mention, surveys and interviews could not be conducted with all institutions or students and alumni from all institutions. Likewise, the outcomes of the performed primary research have a subjective nature and can therefore not be generalised. Furthermore, this thesis is focusing on the Dutch education system and primary research was conducted in the Netherlands, while the majority of secondary research relates to international conditions and findings.

7.3 Future Work

As this paper sets a focus on missing skills and underdeveloped strategies and initiatives in the Dutch fashion design education, a future analysis could contribute by researching superfluous skills and components in the education curricula. Furthermore, once established what skills are missing and which are redundant, a strategic plan of implementation of an improved and aligned curriculum of a fashion design course could be developed.
Literature:


**Imagery:**


Team Peter Stigter (2016e). Fashionclash Festival 2016. [image] Available at: https://www.teampeterstigter.com/people/fashionclash-festival-2016-this-was-day-1/ [Accessed 16 May 2017].


1. **First of all, how would you describe the current zeitgeist of the fashion industry?**

The time of creativity is over. As a young designer you can still dream and imagine about an own brand, but the time of own brands has passed. That is a thing of the past now. The current fashion industry is evolved around new developments. Today, big data, wearable technology, new materials or sustainability have become a bigger focus of fashion. And exactly these developments are shaping the industry.

2. **Furthermore, how will the zeitgeist develop in the future?**

Young creatives should consider how to use their creativity. They should not focus on the old ways of designing, considering only colours, textures and trends. They have to use their talent in solving bigger problems, such as sustainability, or how technology can be integrated in fashion. These are things for the future. Generally, they need to have a view of the bigger picture or problems of society, considering not only the environment but also the wishes of the consumers.

(Recommendation of the book “Strategic design – eight essential practices every strategic designer must master” by Giulia Calabretta and Gerda Gemser (TU Delft))

3. **In regard to the Dutch fashion industry, what are its main characteristics?**

First of all, the Dutch fashion industry is quite small. It does have a big international trading history, so global trading is of high relevance for the Netherlands, but unfortunately that is not enough anymore. This is due to increasing competition. The country forgot about thinking of the whole production circle, so also

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Appendix 1 Interview Rens Tap

Rens Tap - MODINT Business Development
Telephone interview 10.04.17

**About Modint:**
Modint is a research and consulting firm for the whole fashion industry which offers both corporate as well as individual service. Its goal is to make the industry stronger, branching a network of manufacturers, importers, agents and wholesalers in clothing, fashion accessories, carpets and (interior) textiles. Approximately 600 companies are already connected. Common topics are export, supply chain collaboration, innovation, CSR, purchasing power and training.

“Modint is the face of fashion, interior, carpet and textile industry and stands for sustainability, innovation and expertise with the visor and abroad. We provide individual and collective services, projects and activities in different areas of knowledge. This service is developed based on the needs of members and network within the industry.”

**About Rens Tap:**
Rens Tap works for Modint as a Business Developer. To his responsibilities belong economic analysis of the Dutch clothing and textile industries and consultancy in the field of innovation, marketing, distribution and export of fashion, workwear, sportswear, shoes and interior textiles. He has 30 years of experience in market research, industry projects and innovation in clothing and textiles.

**Interview:**
On the 10th April I had a telephone interview with Rens Tap who allowed me to ask question regarding my research. In consideration to his expertise I was hoping to get some more insight about the Dutch fashion industry, and his vision on its advancements in the future. As I was making notes of while we had this talk, the following answers are no citations, but already a summary of his main points, put in my own words.

1. First of all, how would you describe the current zeitgeist of the fashion industry?

2. Furthermore, how will the zeitgeist develop in the future?

3. In regard to the Dutch fashion industry, what are its main characteristics?
considering technical skills. Technical knowledge however is decreasing. There seems to be an interest
by young people, but the actual skill is lacking. Therefore, the Netherlands needs to reinvent, and the core
solution is creativity.

4. **What are the strengths of the Dutch fashion industry?**
Mainly, the Dutch industry thinks in the category of fashion design, not art. The industry can be described
as flexible, which is open to new and different influences from outside. That is what makes the country
unique in this perspective.

5. **Looking at the people involved in this industry, what qualifications are required in order to
be successful?**
Today, designers have to work very commercially and fast. This can be an obstacle, as they are people
who love art. But nowadays, we have to differentiate between designers who create very artistic pieces,
which is great and they should, but then they are not part of the fashion business. They are rather
ascribed to the art industry. The demand in the fashion business is for stylists, which are the majority of
designers. They think in a more commercial way.

6. **In your opinion, what are tools or qualities are often overlooked?**
Designers who really can think differently, out of the box. Designers, who are not being so partisan in
designing, but who are really doing their own things. Examples are designers like Iris van Herpen or
Pauline van Dongen. They both experiment with different production methods, they design for different
industries and they are very open-minded and innovative. This is what is needed.

7. **Does this need to be more enhanced in education?**
Yes, defiantly. Young designers can not be the next Yamamotos, That must be made clear by the
institutes. Furthermore, teaching business skills is also not necessarily the solution, as the new designers
will mostly not have their own brands. Schools need to rather acknowledge issues such sustainability or
technology.

8. **Modint's environment is described as being collaborative, being involved in co-creation. Fashion
however is often educated to young designers as very individualistic, teaching students to follow
their own vision and working always on their own. How do you see this paradox, and how
important is collaboration in fashion after all?**
In my opinion collaboration is not a solution. I would advise to not collaborate, unless there is an evident
win-win situation. When you are small and independent it is easy to collaborate, but the more you have
and the more you grow, it becomes harder. When talking about collaboration, then trying to get into
new fields of design, that is advisable. So for example, working with other, outside fashion, industries and
learning from each other, learning their techniques. This way of collaboration is needed and is the future,
but not collaboration between two fashion brands.
About Movers & Shakers:
Movers & Shakers is a considerably new recruitment agency in the Netherlands, which focuses on jobs in the international fashion industry. Areas of recruitment are Sales, Buying & Product Development, Design, Merchandise & Planning, (online) Marketing & Communications, E-commerce, PR, Retail and Visual Merchandising. Generally, the agency works with people who have already some years of experience and would like to work in the Fashion, Retail and Luxury business.

About Rosi Schipper:
Rosi Schipper has studied design at ArtEZ and has after that gained experience as a designer in various fashion companies. Now working for Movers & Shakers, she is responsible for the Design department. Using her experience and knowledge about the fashion design industry, she connects companies with designers.

Interview:
On the 10th April I met up with Rosi Schipper and had a one-hour interview with her. Rather than just focusing on my questions, we had a general conversation. Besides her knowledge about the industry, I was furthermore interested in the job market of young designers, and what is expected from them. The interview was recorded, and the following interview represents the conversation.

• How would you describe the current Zeitgeist of the industry?
Getting more positive. Yes, I think it is not easy, yet, but we come from a more difficult period. I see a lot of movement, so that is on the commercial side. I think people are getting more positive, more companies which are doing well, so I think that's a good thing. And you also have on the other side, new jobs being created for the future. And with all the companies who know they need to be more sustainable, or at least busy with it, it is going to be an industry on its own as well, because there is not so much knowledge yet. This will maybe create new jobs as well. Because every designer I speak, wants to work for a sustainable company, and I worked with quite some companies which are thinking about it, but know how difficult it sometimes is. It's a general thing that it is moving slowly towards it. There is a lot of newness, with technology in fashion. I sometimes think there will be jobs out there that we don't know about yet. That is interesting, also scary for some people. If you have been really successful in the last ten or twenty years, the rules are changing, the consumers are changing, they are being informed in a different way, everyone is trying really hard to grasp groups of consumers, how do you work with them, and some companies are really successful, and some keep on sticking to their old ways, they find it quite hard.

• How do you think will it develop further? So will it be more about sustainability, technology and all of that?
Yes, that's right. That is what I believe.

• And in regard to the Dutch fashion industry, what do you think are the main characteristics?
I think the denim side of the business, of course with all the developments here, with the Denim School, the Kingpins and interesting denim brands, with G-star at the forefront. I think that's a good Dutch thing. As well, what you see, because a lot of companies are falling down, they left, that is maybe because it's supposed to be like this. Because if you don't move or change… I think now in the market you see a lot of interesting start-ups, also on the sustainability side, brand like People’s Avenue, pretty small brands trying
to do that in a different way. I think there is a lot of that going on in the market.

• And what do you think mentality-wise of the industry in the Netherlands?
What I always hear, Dutch people are always sort of realistic. There is a lot of innovation. If you look a bit broader than fashion, the Design Academy in Eindhoven and ArtEZ, a lot of new things are happening. So I think innovation, but mixed with a sober and realistic view on how to do things. And what I also hear, I mean I speak to a lot of international candidates, the balance which we have here between life and work seems to be working well. Something that the Dutch do okay. I don’t believe in working everyday from 9 until 11, that’s not efficient. People have to have a better balance, because then they will be more efficient. That is something that could be a pro-Dutch thing.

• Looking at the people involved in the industry, what are the qualifications that are required in order to be successful?
Well, talent of course. But that’s actually a small part. I think perseverance, working together, being open-minded, being able to think outside the box, being able to take critics and work with it. If you look at a profile of someone and you look at who is successful; yes of course you need talent. But if you are really talented and you can’t work with other people or you are not open for critics or you can not move from left to right in a certain way, then your talent is wasted. Then you are sitting on a couch with all of your talent. So you have to have much more than just your talent.

• And when talk about working together, do you also mean collaborating with others or do you mean just the spirit of being able to work with others?
I think both. But I really enjoy seeing cross-overs, as technology people working together with designers or really creative buyers working with designers. It’s sort of mixing the strengths and different skills, and I think that will bring innovation.

• But also from other industries?
Yes, specifically from other industries. Then you can create innovation.

• Is there something you think is missing in young creative, qualification or tools that are still not there?
Depending on the university or school they are attending. I think AMFI is doing pretty well, but still, I have been to ArtEZ in Arnhem. I finished school and then in the end I thought the commercial business was very nice, but that was just because of my character. I enjoyed it and was afraid to tell my teachers that I really liked that commercial side of the business, because that was sort of a dirty word, but that’s like 25 years ago. Starting this business, what I am doing now, recruiting people, talking to a lot of people, I was expecting that to be changed. Well, that’s not the case. Not in all instances, sometimes it is good to nature, to let your talent grow, but if you have no clue of what is going to happen when you are outside, something is going really wrong. I find that sometimes frustrating.

• I see that, maybe AMFI not that much, because they portray themselves as being a more commercial school, but Rietveld for example is seeing fashion as art, pushing your own vision. And that’s good. Really, that’s really good. But, if you go out there and then suddenly you need different skills than only being your talented artistic self, you need much more, then sometimes they fail. It’s such a pity. They should have been helped in an earlier stage. So it is not perfect yet.

• So what do you think has to be enhanced more in education in these kinds of schools?
They [designers] have no clue - and I am not speaking generally - what sort of jobs are out there. And
these are just old-fashioned jobs. They have no clue in what skills they would need to be successful, because they don’t know that they need more. So I was just surprised, I didn’t expect it now. I thought by now students will be prepared for what’s coming, but if you have no idea… Of course it is really nice to be creative, but in the end, if you want to have a house, you need to eat, and you need sort of a balance in your life. And what I also find kind of scary is when they go on and they are around forty and the market becomes more difficult. Because you get sort of old. Then they have to change in time in order to move in a different direction. Maybe if you are twenty, you don’t want to hear this, but on the other hand, it is good to let people know what beautiful possibilities there are but also about the difficulties you can expect.

- **Fashion has this kind of celebrity and fame to it. That is why people want to be in this industry. They see how it can be, but they don’t get the whole picture. So I think sometimes the schools tell you to be the next Yamamoto, but that is not how the industry works anymore.**

No, and honestly not everybody is the new Yamamoto. In our business now, we have this really simple assessment when we talk to people, and after this assessment – and I would do that assessment when they are 15 or 16 – sometimes you see this one doesn’t need to be the new Yamamoto because he is really good at this and this. The business is so broad, so many different things to do which are really interesting, but people don’t know about. Sometimes there is such a pressure of starting your own brand, and I really believe and love that people are busy with shape and silhouettes or colours, but still, I want them to be able to live. I think in the beginning it’s not so bad, but if they are start over their 30s, then it’s not so funny anymore.

- **You have a lot to do with young creative people in the industry; do you think the job market is difficult?**

It is not easy. If you just come out of school, you need to get a chance. For instance, I am working for this recruitment agency, we usually only see people when they have like four to five years work experience. That’s nonsense actually. It is really difficult if you have no expertise what so ever yet, it is really difficult that they get a chance. But on the other hand, if you have nice internships, if you speak to a lot of people, that creates the opportunity to get that chance. You just need to start.

- **And what are the main opportunities for designers in the Netherlands?**

If someone starts in the beginning, so he is not expensive, you have a lot of start-up companies which are doing really interesting things, where you can learn a lot. In a small company you can see and learn how it goes. The only thing is, if you move to a bigger company, you get to see the processes, the organisation, but I do think starting up in a smaller company is hopefully growing in a positive momentum, that’s a good place. And I think you have quite some of those. Or go abroad, don’t stay here. Just invest a couple of years outside. This [Holland] is really a small and tiny country, and the business is really small, so I would say go. Because in other countries you sometimes have better opportunities. It’s sometimes difficult to get those Dutchies out of the country.

- **Are they very attached to their home country?**

Yes, they like it here. Which I understand, but it’s sometimes very difficult.

- **What are companies asking for, what kind of person do they want to hire?**

They always have this ideal person in their head, which I get. Of course, creative, but with a commercial eye, teamplayer - it sounds a bit corny – and eagerness to learn. Some students they start and they think they know everything. They are bit arrogant-ish, but they actually don’t know a lot. But they think so. Let that go. Be a bit modest, and then learn and then be better than your manager. I don’t understand how it can be difficult to find someone, but companies really have difficulties. You have to fit in a team, that’s the
most important thing.

- That’s especially a point where I see a problem. Everyone is saying you have to be a team player, you have to be able to communicate, but I see as well how AMFI even educates the designers, they never work in groups, they always work in their own bubble.

But that is really bad.

- So I think in my course, in management, we work in groups from the second semester on. In the beginning it’s difficult, but once you kind of get into that, it’s fine. But designers don’t even like to choose a course where they know they have to work in a group. Which I think is funny, because in real life, you will have to.

It’s true. If you get out there, you will notice that making compromises… you have to. You are in situations where it seems like the one who shouts the most, and that is usually the manager or the owner, gets what he wants. We are not doing mathematics. It’s all quite emotional. You really have to be able to communicate and make people enthusiastic about your ideas, so you can bring them in and grow together. I think that is really important.

- Now we also already talked about that they need more commercial skills, but do you also think they need more business skills? Or should that still be a different part of the industry?

I think it would be good. It would be great if they could see through the processes. Because sometimes, when you start and you are in a small company which is growing organically, and then it grows and it grows, it becomes bigger and it needs structure and organisation, it would be good if you would have knowledge about those things. But I don’t know if everybody is open to it.

- There is also a lot of discourse about technical skills, that they get less and less. Do companies want to have someone with good technical skills or is that also getting less?

No, I think it’s really important, also. Maybe it depends on that sort of part of the direction you choose, because you can’t learn everything. But I do think there is a lack of real knowledge – I sound so negative, but that’s not what I mean – but that’s what you hear from companies. For instance I have companies where a lot of young people work. They are not expensive. But then they notice that there is also an immense lack of knowledge and technical knowledge as well. But there is such a broad spectrum that that sort of specialism should be more there when you choose your focus. If that is something that you love, you have to make sure that you know the technical aspects. So yes, it’s lacking. It feels almost like they have to after they graduate specialise in a certain direction.

- It seems always like they learn the skills at internships, during a practical time, not at school. I do understand that schools can’t teach everything you need, but there should be a balance.

But then, if the students feel like this as well, and they tell it to the school, what does the school reply? Can they not look at the balance?

- Yes, I mean in the end, fashion creation comes from a craft. It is a funny paradox.

I think also with sustainability becoming such a strong important part of our future, there is technology to learn. A friend who studies at the Waag, Fablab, they did this really nice course with dying with natural ingredients, but also with minerals. It is really specific, but it gives you in-depth knowledge, how to be in that part of the business. Would be interesting as an educational system how you can help them better that they don’t have to take a gap year and take it somewhere else.
Do you think the Netherlands is doing a good job when it comes to sustainability?
It is still on a very small scale, so I think there are a lot of little things happening in a lot of small areas, and also big companies like G-start are looking... so yes, I think they are in the forefront, but it still is going too slow. I think in Holland we are really aware of it. If you look at food, it's such a big thing, as we are eating biologically, eating local and I think this is spreading into creating sustainable buildings, fashion... so yes, we are making a good start.

I don't know how far it is in design, but in the management course we are always pushed to think in a sustainable point of view. Designers don't seem to have that kind of understanding. That's funny, as every designer I speak to, and they have some years experience, they are all telling they want to work in a company which is working with sustainability. So maybe it comes a bit later.

I'm still at the start of my professional career, I'm very curious how it will evolve in the future. I do think you are in an interesting phase, the world is changing and I think that is also scary for a lot of people. How will people buy things? How will retail move? How will online move? How will it work on the actual product? It's such an interesting momentum

I guess flexibility will also become more important. Yes. But people are restricted because they are scared. I was a design manager for a very long time, so I hired my own people, now I'm helping others. People are scared of thinking outside the box, they want this formula for positive results. But you need to try and see and let it grow. People want to cover their asses and be as secure as possible. But if you stick to that, you will loose. But that is for some companies very difficult. This business is very hard. People work a lot, get burned out. The amount of burned out people I talked to is unbelievable. That pressure is really high. I can imagine at a certain time you might think you hate that business, nasty business. You have to find a positive way into the business. But I do think the world is changing, in a positive way. If I see the younger generation, what is see I think is very positive. Your are better. You are better informed, you better know your way.
Francina van den Berg – Fashion Solution Commercial Director and founder
Interview 13.04.17

About Fashion Solution:
Fashion Solution is a Dutch head-hunting agency focusing on the Dutch market. Fashion Solution is positioning itself as a recruitment agency that can offer the total package in a personal way in the fashion and lifestyle industry. Besides offering various employment contracts (fixed, broadcasting, freelance, temporary and internship) Fashion Solution offers jobs from styling to procurement, retail to visual merchandising and for startups to Board level.

About Francina van den Berg:
Francina is engaged in the daily management of Fashion Solution, coordinating teams of recruiters and working together with the Marketing & Communications team doing everything around social media. She also gives workshops in personal and business coaching, portfolio and interview training. She also gives several lectures and training on various fashion schools (MBO + HBO) to prepare students for the period after obtaining their diploma.

Interview:
On the 13th April I met up with Francina van den Berg at her office and had an interview with her. As her agency is especially working on the Dutch market, it interested me what the conditions are on the job market in the Netherlands in particular. The interview was recorded, and the following interview represents the conversation. Unfortunately, her focus often shifted to AMFI and not to the general atmosphere of Dutch fashion education and job market.

• How would you describe the current zeitgeist of the industry?
So, there is change and change and change. A lot of change. I think this is the most important thing. A lot of things will go by the computer or automatic, I think that is a big change. But design and creativity is the most important thing in the world, I think that will not change. We don’t have to be afraid for that, but it will be in another way. Designers can use the computer and the automatization better or in another way.

• So technology is basically the main force that is changing and driving the industry?
Yes, exactly.

• And this will also be something that will be developed further?
Yes, I think so. We just begin.

• Your company is focused on the Dutch fashion industry. What are the main characteristics of the Dutch fashion industry?
I think that Dutch fashion is very casual; it’s wearable, a lot of jeans and denim and must be worn very easy. That is the most important thing for Dutch brands. But we see a lot of foreign brands here in the Netherlands as well. But if it’s about the Dutch then it is also about fun.

• So the Netherlands is a more commercial country when it comes to fashion?
Yes. It is very “nuchter” (level-headed, pedestrian). It’s always very commercial.

• Working for different industries, the mentality plays an important role. So how would you describe the Dutch mentality?
The same. We are very commercial. A lot of Dutch people are working in foreign countries, because we are very flexible in what we can do. We can adapt to the environment very easily, we speak reasonable English, a lot of young people fluently, I think that is very important. We like to try. We have still this 17th century mentality, we like to bargain and like to buy.

- But are there also weaknesses that you think the Netherlands still has to improve?
  Maybe, we are very straightforward. It is a strength but also a weakness. So if you are a buyer or a designer, a lot of people can be straightforward. But in some countries and different cultures it might not be so nice to be so straightforward. This is the most important thing. That is typical Dutch.

- In your eyes, what qualifications as a fashion designer are required in order to be successful?
  I think you have to be very good on the computer. But you also have to be very good by hand as well. Because I think the creativity by hand is very authentic, but if you put it into the computer and make some other things with it. I think the authentic thing is very important, everybody was authentic, then they did it on the computer and everything was very nice, and now it is a mix. That is very important to have as a designer. I think it is very important to have your own vision, your own mission and go for passion. I think for everybody that is very important, but for creative people, for designers it is more important than ever. You have to have your own vision, your own words, your own line and your own thinking. I think you will be working in a very very big company and then the rules are there and the handwriting of the collection is there, so you have to do what they do, then we call you a stylist. If you are working with a brand, there will be very small brands, there will be very small companies with 7 or 8 or 10 people, that is the max, and then you have to be very authentic. Then we call you a designer.

- Does this mean that you have to specialize in what direction you want to go?
  I don’t think you have to specialise. I think it is in your blood. When I did the Montaigne, the old AMFI, I was very very very commercial and then we were told to be designers. But I was a stylist. I am very good in styling and not very good in designing, because I am not authentic. I know what the people want for some brands and then I made the collection for the people, and then I did the concept for the people. I am not very authentic as a designer, because for me it doesn’t matter if there are two pockets or three pockets, I want that the collection will be sold. It is a different kind of thinking.

- So you have to know what the consumer wants and you need to know your market more than these authentic designers as a stylist?
  I think here (stylists) they spend more money and the collection will be a lot of times very cheap. Like H&M, Primark, and all kinds of brands that are there. If we go to the smaller brands and the more authentic brands, this will be much more sustainable or special taste of the collection or specialised in prints or denim. So it is more specialised. It was in my blood that I was very commercial, so I very good in this and I didn’t want to be a designer, so this is already in your DNA.

- If we talk about having knowledge about the market, do you think this is missing in young designers?
  They totally don’t have the knowledge from school. But when I came from school in 1995, I didn’t have this knowledge as well. So there is no difference to 20 years ago. When you go work, then you finally get your experience. You don’t get your experience at school, at school you experiment with the collections, so I think that is very good. So if you want to have more experience from school, you have this Masterclass as AMFI now, I think it is very good at the AMFI that you are not too serious with your collection and that you are experimenting with your tools. You have to learn how to be creative and how to make a collection. So it is very important that you can do everything, instead of being too commercial.
• So you think that schools don’t have to necessarily enhance more marketing or consumer behaviour classes?
There is your internship for. The school has to be experimental.

• But is there still something that you think needs to be improved in education?
I think for the AMFI, it needs to be more done with online business. There must be an improvement with the e-commerce. If you have a look specially for design, I find it very difficult to specify because if you are this very authentic designer then you have to be your authentic designer, you make our own clothes for your taste and you will get fans around you, but it can be a very small group or it can be a bigger group. But that is your choice. So that is not very interesting for the e-commerce, so it is very good for the designer to learn to work more with people from web shops or to know how your collection is shown on the website, that you know something about that. But it is also important that the designer knows how you can buy that collection. If they have more knowledge of buying and production, I think it is also very important. So you are not only a designer. You have to be broader and know everything. You don’t have to be the specialist, but you have to have the knowledge about all those small things.

• Do you think this also has to do with collaboration, in the sense that you have to be able to work with people?
Totally. I think one plus one is a hundred, and not two.

• How I see it at AMFI for example, designers are working very individually; they are never really paired up in groups, so I think they are very much enhancing themselves. But if they come to the industry that changes.
You have to collaborate with everybody. So if that is missing at the AMFI, then this is very important. You can not make a collection on your own, you have to make a collection with a group of people. And also in the business.

• When talking about sustainability, do you think that this is something that will become bigger? Or is its, as you said before, more for the authentic brands?
No, that will go to 100%. Everything, and in every textile and in every design in every finish. Everything will be sustainable.

• How would you describe the process of today in the Netherlands, when it comes to sustainability?
I think we are sustainable for 5%, not that much. People are becoming more aware of it, this is also a trend. It was very small a few years ago and then it became fashionable to be sustainable. Now, we are a bigger group of people that is more normal to be sustainable, to eat sustainable or to do something sustainable, so it will grow and grow. Because the awareness of the people will grow. So it will be normal.

• So it also means that the industry has to change their way of working.
Yes, but they are busy with it. In 5 years, we will be on 80 or 90 or 100%, because also the law is pushing it to the limits. For a lot of people, they do it for the money, but already the laws for sustainability are providing nicer and cleaner clothes. I think we will be making big steps.

• Talking about the Dutch job market, how is the situation for young designers once they have graduated? Is it easy?
Sometimes it’s easy, sometimes it is not that easy. It depends on the designer itself. If you have a very good internship, then you can find a job within 2 or 3 months. If you are not having a good internship and you didn’t do a lot of experience, then it will take longer.
So it is basically up to the individual what they are doing during their studies in order to prepare for the professional world? But also how your presentations look like. What do you tell the company about yourself? Who are you? What can you do? I told your colleague yesterday already, that you are not very good prepared in doing your interviews and also not very good prepared in doing your presentations. So you need to learn there.

In regard to my research I found stances saying that the UK is dealing with an oversupply of undereducated design graduates. Do we have this situation in the Netherlands? No, not yet.

So the job market is not difficult for the designers because there are jobs? So it depends on the individual. It sometimes is difficult, because they are not pro-active at presentations. And when you are not pro-active in your presentations, and in your interviews, and in your motivation letters for job interviews, then you will have a problem. I think a lot of young people are a little bit lazy in doing things they have to do to get a job. That makes the problem. When you have a good internship and you pro-actively do your motivation and CV and your presentation skills are trained, then I think you will have no problem. That is the thing I want to tell the students, ‘go and train your presentation skills’. Because if it is about yourself, it is sometimes frightening to tell what your skills are, you are afraid to tell who you are.

So it could also be pushed more by the schools then. Can be. I gave training at the AMFI for making your CV and motivation letter and also presentation skills. Three recruitment agencies were invited to give those classes. And I went to all my invitations. I had three appointments. You are with 200 people that graduate or something like that, and there came two on my presentations. So when out of 200, two come to my presentation, you can imagine that this is not that much. So why should anybody from school take action, because you are not coming to the classes? Maybe students are still too spoilt. A little bit. I think AMFI people are spoilt. Sorry. I just hired a girl here, she just finished school six months ago. So you see she is a starter as well. She had very good internships and she already tried several things and she is from the TMO, she is from another school, but there after 3 months 97% have a job after leaving school. That is a lot, that is almost 100%. I think from AMFI it will be after 3 months 30%. So that is a difference. But they have to do a lot for their presentations, writing motivation letters, writing their CVs. They are more aware that presentation is a thing.

When it comes to design, you have a couple of schools in the Netherlands, which one do you think is the best? AMFI. But there are also a few good people from The Hague. A few good people always from Arnhem. But for commercial designers AMFI is the best.

Do you think the commercial designer, the stylist, is in a majority? Are the more stylists than authentic designers? Absolutely. I think the AMFI has too many of the authentic designers. You have to be more commercial. So that is what the AMFI could do, to push more to the commercial side than to the authentic side. Because you are not earning any money with the authentic side. Too less. There are always some special people there.
Jasper Renema – Het Nieuwe Instituut Coordinator Internationalization Creative Industry
Interview 20.04.17

About Het Nieuwe Instituut:
The New Institute was founded on January 1, 2013 by merging the Dutch Architecture Institute, Premsela, Dutch Institute of Design and Fashion and Virtual Platform and the e-culture knowledge institute. The New Institute approaches the different design domains from an integral perspective. Design and innovation are core concepts in all activities; concepts associated with a changing value system. Two multiannual programs - Landscape and Interior and the Things and Materials - in relation to an annual changing research theme form the core content. Around these subjects, the New Institute organizes exhibitions, studies, lectures, fellowships and publications

About Jasper Renema:
The Agency for Architecture, Design and Digital Culture is responsible for stimulating and facilitating international exchange, talent development and cross-overs within the New Institute. Jasper Renema is the man with whom entrepreneurs can do business across the border, but also associates international professionals, organizations, policy makers and market parties with the right parties in the Netherlands.

Interview:
On the 20th April I met up with Jasper Renema and his colleague Simone who is researching the zeitgeist of the creative industries. Instead of an interview we had a talk about my research and shared our outcomes. Therefore I will present a summary below, with relevant quotes to my topic. Jasper Renema mentioned that he is not specialised in the fashion design sector, therefore we had a focus on the general state of mind of the Dutch creative industries. The whole conversation was recorded.

Fashion and the Museum
2015-2016 there was a temporary fashion museum at Het Nieuwe Instituut that focused on the industry, including the whole supply chain and not only on the product or the fashion history in the Netherlands. It was more about the industry behind it, which seems to be not in the school curriculums yet.

The zeitgeist
Simone wrote an essay for her school, the Erasmus University, about the new arising clusters in Amsterdam, like street wear, do-it-yourself street boys from the suburbs who create brands like Patta. She also used Edelkoort’s manifesto, because she was mentioning that it is not important to be a perfect designer anymore, but other skills are gaining grounds. You need to be more entrepreneurial, more into sustainability. It is more important to have more skills than before.

Jasper Renema:
“Within the industry, we really approach the design discipline as a closed discipline. It is really about the interaction with other disciplines like architecture and digital culture, but also fashion. So it is really, if you talk about the zeitgeist of these disciplines, it is really the trend of course, that there is a lot of interaction” Examples are tech fashion and wearables.

Jasper Renema:
“The French think that they are too old-fashioned, focused on their past. When they see what the Dutch academies are working on, in Eindhoven at Design Week, they really are amazed by all the new ways of approaching fashion”
The foreign industries seem to like the way of how the Dutch approach design. This is including new ways of production and combining disciplines. Het Nieuwe Instituut is also a result of this, being the only institute in the world combining all these disciplines, fashion being part of it.

The future
It’s now more about being able to combine multiple disciplines and skills. It’s not only about one thing anymore, but that might change again. So maybe we will have people who will claim that you need to be more specialised in the future.

The future of the industry might be a clustered creative industry within itself. In the Netherlands, all disciplines take part in it at the moment; it is also music and culture. It is really broad. It is difficult to discuss it and see it as one whole. So in the future, you might have different creative industries.

It is really difficult to be organised and to speak in one voice, because the reality changes so fast. It is difficult to focus and stick to it.

Strengths and weaknesses
The strengths of the industry are the fact that the Netherlands is being entrepreneurial and innovative. These are the opinions of people from abroad. A weakness might be the lack of tradition. The Dutch don’t have a foundation. This is not the case for each discipline, as for example architecture does have a successful history in the Netherlands, but fashion doesn’t have it, like in France. It is a 20th century discipline in the Netherlands, and the Dutch also don’t celebrate it. But the lack of history is the reason why the Dutch fashion industry is so innovative.

The clustering of disciplines, like the technology and design in Eindhoven, these are things that are a unique selling point of the Netherlands. Solar systems are used into clothes for example. But still, it is difficult to say if it is art or a part of economy. But for sure, it is entrepreneurial. With these things, it is not about selling it yet. It opens up new markets. The Netherlands celebrates these collaborations.

The government
Simone talks at the moment with a lot of entrepreneurs, and they also always point out innovation. The Dutch seem to be respected for that. Also the Dutch government puts a lot of effort and money into businesses that push innovation and creative solutions that deal with societal problems. The Dutch government believes in such products and is being very supportive. Compared with other countries, it is a good system with good funding. The government calls the cooperation of different industries ‘cross-over projects’. This has added value of awareness, sustainability etc.
Christiano Mpasi-Bila- Willem de Kooning Academy Fashion Design Student (2nd year)
Telephone interview 10.05.17

Interview:
On the 10th May I had a telephone interview with Christiano. As he has some more experience within fashion and the education system, attending two fashion schools in the Netherlands, I was interested in his viewpoint. As I was making notes while we had this talk, the following answers are no citations, but already a summary of his main points, put in my own words.

Why did you want to study fashion?
For Christiano, it started when he was little. Never having a male figure in his life as he was raised by his sisters, for him gender never played a role. He always wore his sisters clothes. Therefore, he thinks that his background made him very open minded. It makes it easier for him to try things out. He used to sing and as well to dance, but in the end he decided for fashion, as this was something he had been most busy with and he likes to express himself with it.

Why Willem de Kooning Academy?
On the HBO level he also did fashion. He first actually attended AMFI. He thinks it is a good education, but it wasn’t for him. The school felt too commercial for him and he had the impression that the teachers are forcing him too much to follow their ideas and what they wanted to see, instead of what he wanted to make. He felt the urge to express himself more, as he is more artistic, so he decided to go to the Willem de Kooning Academy.

Are you satisfied with you studies?
He just came back to school after taking a semester of, but he enjoys the school. He feels that the feedback that he receives is also helpful. It depends on the teachers, as some try to challenge you while others are more vague, which they do on purpose in order to make the students think for themselves. He thinks it is a good education and he is satisfied.

What are the most important things that you have learnt at your school?
Since he is attending Willem de Kooning, he was taught different ways of designing. It challenges him to learn all these different methods and is helping him to develop his own signature. As well, he learnt to work with others from the industry. The school allows him to work with different creatives, also outside fashion.

Is there anything you are missing in your education?
In his opinion, just because one goes to a fashion school, it doesn’t mean that this is all you need. He did a broad research before he went to school, in order to get the best education for his needs. As well, he says that students shouldn’t depend too much on the schools, meaning that sometimes you need to take certain things in your own hands. Christiano for example, tries to educate himself further independently. In regard to Willem de Kooning, the school offers workshops that students can attend freely. If he is lacking skills for instance, he signs up for another month and get practice. It is also about self-study and self-discipline.

Anything you would like to / still need to learn?
For Christiano, most important is planning now. But as well, he needs to find out who he wants to be as a
designer, and he feels that the education system is sometimes forgetting about this aspect.

What is most challenging about the course?
He feels that everything evolves around money at the moment. He is missing the ambition in fashion. For him, time doesn’t exist in art, so it is challenging because fashion is very much under time pressure. And for Christiano, creativity is difficult to plan and to express the way he wishes to.

Did you do your internship already? If yes, can you tell me about it?
Christiano has already quite a lot of experience. Before his studies, he interned at a manufacturer in Arnhem where he worked with seamstresses and was taught pattern making and sewing skills. He also learnt how to make technical drawings. All in all, he thinks that he has an advantage over other students in his study in this field; however, he admits that because of this knowledge he is not daring to experiment that much, as he feels restricted with his skills. Besides a technical internship, he also interned at fashion designers, including Iris van Herpen, as well as worked as a visual merchandiser in-between his studies. Generally, he feels that he has learnt the most at his internships and not at his studies.

What are your plans after graduation?
Christiano is planning to go travelling after graduation, to see something from the world and to get inspired. He believes that creatives, so as well fashion designers, have the responsibility to show the world something different and to get out of the comfort zone. He therefore wants to meet new cultures and people. When he comes back, his professional aspirations are not set yet. But he dreams about having a boutique with both vintage and new menswear. Something that is based on the idea of reconstruction, recycling, exclusivity and customization. But he is not believing that he will be the next Karl Lagerfeld.
Simone Schampers - AMFI Fashion Design Student (4th year)
Interview 10.05.17

Interview:
On the 10th May I met up with Simone and conducted an interview. Simone is already in her last year of her education and about to graduate, therefore she experienced the whole scope of her education. As I was making notes while we had this talk, the following answers are no citations, but already a summary of his main points, put in my own words.

Why did you want to study fashion?
Simone felt that she needs to express herself. She already studies fashion and design at HBO for two years and then applied to Rietveld. They told her that she was too young and that she needs to see more from the world. Then she travelled and after working in retail where she also did visual merchandising, she realised that she wants to go to a more commercial school, in order to know how the business works, and thus chose AMFI. She continued to study fashion management at AMFI because she thought a smart choice in regard to the plans of having an own brand. However, she realised that it is not the right decision, also all teachers always told her in the assessments. Thus she switched to fashion design. Now she is happy and it feels like a natural evolution. She enjoys showing her own vision and to create something new and exciting.

Are you satisfied with your studies?
Simone thinks that AMFI was a good school to study fashion design. She learnt concepting, designing, and pattern drawing. But she would like to have a chance to get more specialised in one direction, but she admits that this could be something for a master’s degree. Even though she misses more skills in illustrations and drawing, she thinks that due to the fact that one semester was more creative and focusing on craftsmanship while the other was focusing more on street wear, it gave her a diverse insight in the industry. Therefore she could experiment and find out what she liked. Also, Simone is still happy that she did management in the beginning. She believes that it is good to have this knowledge and to get a different perspective regarding production for instance.

What is most challenging about the course?
For Simone, patterns and sewing are most challenging. As well, to make something from an own vision with the commercial skill, simply to make wearable clothes. She thinks that a lot of young designers have still the perception of being artists.

Did you do your internship already? If yes, can you tell me about it?
Simone interned at Martin Margiela in the haute couture department last year. She experience how the profession works in the real world. She always thought that everything is very structured and professional in the big companies, but she also saw fabrics coming in too late or being busy sewing the night before the show. She didn’t learn necessarily technical skills, as that was not her responsibility, but she gained an overall experience of the real fashion world. And foremost working together with other departments.

What are your plans after graduation?
Simone I would like to do an internship at an embroidery manufacturer, as she enjoys this specialisation and would like to gain more skills and improve her technique. Later on, she would like to work at a fashion house to be in this creative environment. She find it important to find a brand that is fitting her taste and values.
How do you see the future of fashion design?
In Simone’s opinion, nowadays someone needs to be interested in your style in order to be successful. She furthermore mentions that the industry will be more digital and hopes that the awareness of sustainability will increase, even if fast fashion is still so visible. But on the other side with digitalisation it will be faster again. She hopes there will be more couture and diversity on the streets. In regard to digitalisation, she says that it is not taught enough. It should become a basic thing not only a specialisation. And the schools could do it, as they have the skills.
Faralda Boerwinkel - AMFI Fashion Design Student (4th year)
Interview 15.05.17

**Interview:**
On the 15th May I met up with Faralda and conducted an interview. Faralda is in her last year of AMFI, however, she will be graduating next semester. As Simone she was able to experience the whole scope of her education. As I was making notes while we had this talk, the following answers are no citations, but already a summary of his main points, put in my own words.

Why did you want to study fashion?
Faralda was always busy with fashion and designing from a young age. She went to sewing classes at a young age and was always interested in clothing. She says, that it was her main hobby. In high school she didn’t like the theoretical classes and despite the fact that everyone started to study more academic courses, she decided to study fashion.

What were your expectations?
Faralda didn’t have any expectations really. She says that she was quite naïve when she came to school. She knew that she would learn more techniques and thought she would be made into an amazing fashion designer.

Are you satisfied with your studies?
Faralda says its okay. She doesn’t believe that AMFI is the best school, but she doesn’t hate it. She noticed that the reality school concept is sufficient and that her knowledge was tested at her internship. For her internship she went to Rejina Pyo in London. It was an all-around small design studio. Therefore, she also experienced more management tasks. She was responsible for technical drawings, style sheets, pattern drawing or fabric searching.

Are you missing something in your education?
The first thing Faralda can think of are draping classes. She says, that they had a couple, but that was not enough. For her, draping is very important in design. She also experienced this lack of training at her internship, where she felt a bit limited as other interns from other schools (LCF and Paris) were much better and experienced in this field. And she adds, that this was visible in the design outcomes. She also misses more experimental pattern designing. She feels that everything is very basic and she would like to explore herself more.

Faralda also adds that the school is not pushing enough to experiment in the sense that teachers are not completely familiar with your talents and abilities. She could use more motivation and guidance.

Furthermore, she feels that in regard to sustainability, AMFI pushing it very much, but is killing it at the same time, as students are forced so much to integrate it into their designs, so it is not fun anymore. They are only given a few ‘sustainable’ options, but she wishes that students could also explore for themselves what sustainability means. But on the other hand, before AMFI, Faralda didn’t know anything about sustainability and she knows that after her study she wants to work for a sustainable brand.

Faralda also adds that it would be good to get more business classes. There are only TBBs in the first year, but they don’t really add anything. And as everybody dreams about an own brand, it could be an advantage to have this knowledge.

What are your plans for after graduation?
Faralda is not sure yet, and she doesn’t even know if she wants to become a designer after all. But she...
wants to gain experience and work in a company instead of starting something on her own.

What is your advise for fresh fashion students? Faralda says not to limit yourself. It is important that you are free and go crazy, not to think that you cannot do something. And also, not to look to much at others.
Ingrid Mijnheer – Amsterdam Fashion Academy
E-Mail Interview 19.05.17

Dear Laura,

We are more than happy to support you with your thesis. Please find below our feedback:

1) What is the vision on fashion design at the Amsterdam Fashion Academy?

We believe that fashion, textiles design and business is creative, experimental, but should also meet the needs of the consumer, therefore enabling the students recognise how creative design can be translated to commercial innovative design solutions. We also recognise that each individual fashion student that walks through our doors has a very different style of working and learning. Our vision is to enable each student to become an individual designer through their own unique selling point, to be creative and possess the skills ready for industry, once they have graduated. This is achieved through a personal learning approach and most importantly one to one advise and support by our specialist tutors, to get the best out of each of our students.

2) What is the mission of the fashion design education at the Amsterdam Fashion Academy?

We are a friendly, intimate, family oriented and individual learner focused ‘boutique’ academy. As a small boutique academy we are able to have a personal approach to each learner and tailor learning to their particular needs, which allows students to develop creative, forward thinking fashion design, business and textiles creations, that meet the needs of the consumers. This encourages and develops each student to become unique within their own style of design and ensures that once graduated they will stand out from the crowd in a professional environment.

3) What is the unique selling point of the Amsterdam Fashion Academy?

We are a small boutique academy that caters for each individual, which creates a friendly and family oriented environment making learning an enjoyable and creative experience for both the students and tutors. We believe that every individual student counts and because of this we only except 12 students per academic year within our degree programmes to ensure that each individual student gains one to one tutor support from a mixture of professionals within the industry and experienced tutors who have work in industry and want to share their wisdom and knowledge with the students, throughout the teaching week.

4) How do you perceive the current fashion industry in the Netherlands?

The Netherlands is clearly an environment that thrives on individual approaches, particularly within the fashion industry. There is a vast amount of opportunities for both current professionals and those who are about to enter the environment. It embraces creative, forward thinking approaches to design and business, which supports both large and small brands. We have also notice that there are many networks for current and new designers to gain experience and support when required, which is a very different approach compared to other European environments.

Hope this information will be useful. May I ask you to send me a copy of your final thesis?
I wish you all the success.

Best regards,
Ingrid Mijnheer
Amsterdam Fashion Academy
Leslie Holden – Head of BA Fashion&Design and MA Fashion Enterprise Creation at AMFI
Interview 24.05.17

About Leslie Holden:
Leslie Holden is the head of design at AMFI as well as the main initiator for the MA Fashion Enterprise Creation course. He has years of experience in this field and is already for more than 10 years a part of AMFI.

Interview:
On the 15th May I met up with Leslie Holden and had a 30-minutes interview with him. We started of with talking about AMFI and then the education system in general. I was interested to find out about his view on the education system and development of the industry. The interview was recorded, and the following interview represents the conversation.

• What is your vision on fashion design education at AMFI?
It’s such a big question. AMFI has a vision, a mission which I’m sure is on the website. That is one mission for the whole of AMFI. For design itself, we don’t have a written mission or vision, because it’s part of AMFI of course. I can tell you about my philosophy of education in design. We think it is really important that students are independent learners, that they develop the learning for themselves. It is important that our teachers are guides on the side and not stages on the stage. What we are developing is more an education which is about independent learning and less about teaching in an old fashioned way. I have a huge international network of deans and heads over the world and one thing that shocks me is that most university still teach fashion design in the same business model that I was taught 30 years ago. They haven’t changed, but the industry has changed enormously, even in the last 5 years. So it’s our main purpose to educate our students in a way where they are prepared for the industry. But not only prepared for the industry today or tomorrow, but also in 10 years time, so we are ahead of the direction that the industry is taking. We do that in two ways. By teaching them independent learning it makes them more responsible for the learning, it makes them decide what they want to achieve and reflect on how they want to get there, rather than telling them. Because if you tell someone, they listen and then they forget it. So it’s important that they think and then act and they take it as their own responsibility to learn. That’s the methodology. The practicality is that we have classes and modules which train the students in the real way that the industry is working. One of the best examples would be the module 3D Hypercraft which is really a pillar of educational design. Hypercraft brings together high fashion aesthetic and the cutting-edge technology. The design students learn how to design and cut patterns using this technology, this 3D virtual prototyping with an avatar. We are the 4 most experts in the world of teaching this kind of software to design students. I know that because every year I go to a conference which is organised by the software manufacturer Lectra and I am meeting with universities that are using the same software and they are approaching it in a completely different way. They are using it as a technical tool and not as a creative tool. The industry is still struggling with understanding how to use 3D virtual prototyping. More and more they are, but they are still struggling with it. So our students are coming out and they’ve got the skill and they know how to do it. So that is a good example how we are training them for the future. Another example would be the iINDIVIDUALS, the reality school. We are teaching them how it is in reality to work on your own design brand. So not just the internship itself, which is also unique, a six month internship where you work for a company and you learn to work for a company, but also at iINDIVIDUALS they have the opportunity to be the designer or the manager or the brander, rather than being the junior to the junior assistant, whatever. And then they make their own collection. That’s an example of the reality school. We
have developed our new MA, which has started this year. It is unique in the world. There is no other MA in fashion entrepreneurism where the students register their business during their MA. You register your business in the first semester and the second semester wraps around the business and supports them through the first two years of their business. In a way it’s similar to iNDiViDUALS, the concept or real. So that is really important that students register their business so they are entrepreneurs right from the beginning. It is not hypothetical, it is real. So I would say that within the vision of the design department at AMFI, which is linked to the vision of AMFI as a whole, it is important that we educate our students to be independent learners, it is important that we educate them in the reality of the industry and it’s important that we educate them to be future thinkers, so not just understanding how it is now, but understanding how it is going to be. And through all that, there is the thread of sustainability joining everything together. It cannot be avoided today, so that is underneath everything that we are doing.

- **The business side is obviously incorporated in the MA, but in the BA the students don’t really have many business classes.**

Yes, but unlike any other school that you can study design at, they have a linking working relationship with the managers and the branders. At certain points in their career here, like in first year or with Triptiek and in the minors, they are working directly with students from other departments, so then they are understanding what is happening in the other areas and they are understanding the language between creating and commerce and they are working directly with a manager. That is unusual, most design schools don’t have that opportunity to link across the disciplines.

- **In my opinion, I think it would be nice if this fusion would happen a bit earlier.**

It happens in Triptiek, it happens in the first semester in the first year, but you are also young and you don’t know anything. But Triptiek, I have my questions about it because students usually really enjoy it, the learning outcome from it is questionable. But in every minor, apart from specialisms, in every minor you are usually with people from other departments. For managers you have a kind of broader learning, with designers they need to learn so many practical skills, so they have to know how to use the machines, they have to know how to pattern cut, they have to know how to visualise, they have to know how to use the computer. They have so many things that they have to do, so really hand on practical skills, not just knowledge in theory. All these hand on practical skills take practice. It is not only about sitting in a class and learning from Wilna how to sew a short sleeve and that you’re done. You have to do it and you have to sew it and you have to do it again and again and again. It is a different form of learning. So I could not take design students out of that learning environment and give them the opportunity to go to management, because they have to really learn how to be a designer. But if you could choose, it is up to them, they have their own personal development plan so they can decide what they want to do. But if you think, actually you have a line there, that you are with people from another department, you have your graduation project and you can choose what you want to do, in design, they can do whatever they want to do. They can team up with someone from management if they want to. In their internship they are working for a company and they normally working with people from other disciplines. The specialism is about their own department. Actually, there are quite a lot of opportunities within the 4 years where you can link with other departments.

ArtEZ is very good, but the students have no idea what happens in the business. Our students also have better personal skills and better presentation skills, they are more aware of how it works in the commercial sense, it’s a bloody good education.

- **How do you perceive the current fashion industry in the Netherlands?**

It’s tiny. Unfortunately there is not really an industry left anymore. There is only famous people. That’s a
killer. There are no factories left there are not hardly anything. I think that the Netherlands is very good for marketing and promotion and has a good brand identity in the world for design. People recognise that Dutch design aesthetics are on a really high level and that we produce really good designers, so the education is on a high level. AMFI is one of the best design schools in the world and I have that respect from my colleagues from other universities. But the industry itself is almost not existing. Its more cyberspace. Amsterdam Fashion Week is purely a club for key influencers in the industry who gather for a drink and watch fashion shows. There is really nothing important. Nobody is waiting for the industry in the Netherlands. But it is a good place to train. Because of the openness and because of the liberal approach, because of the high design aesthetic.
Appendix 10: Survey of Fashion Design Students

**What is your gender?**
16 responses

- Female: 83.5%
- Male: 16.5%
- Prefer not to say
- Other

**What is your age?**
16 responses

- 16-20: 25%
- 21-25: 75%
- 26-30
- Older than 30

**Which fashion school are you attending?**
16 responses

- ArtEZ: 43.8%
- Gerrit Rietveld Academie
- Willem de Kooning Academie
- Amsterdam Fashion Institute
- Amsterdam Fashion Academy
- Royal Academy of Art, The Hague
- HKU University of the Arts, Utrecht
- The Maastricht Academy of Fine Arts and Design
- 12.5%
- 18.8%
- 25%
In what year are you in?

16 responses

Why did you decide to study fashion design?

16 responses

I was studying textile design, and I wanted to be able to make a garment out of the fabrics I was making.

It was quite a logical choice for me because for as long as I can remember I have been designing and been interested in the fashion industry.

International + reality school concept + commercial side.

Skills & Interests

It is my passion

to study art that relates to the body.

I was always interested in fashion and started making clothes at 11 years old. Last year I did a pre course at ArtEZ. The pre course really made me want to study fashion design, because I really like the subjects.

I was interested in textiles and designing around the body so it seemed like a logical choice.

I wanted to work with textiles and apparently working on the body felt good.

Just rolled into it

it has been my dream since I can remember. I loved the idea of creating something people can wear and appreciate.

Intriguing

Because I wanted to be in a creative study programme and fashion appealed more to me than interior or art etc.

Omdat ik mode het meest interessante vind dat er bestaat, en ik word er warm en gelukkig van als ik het zelf creëer.

Always liked to participate in fashion and I think the psychology behind it is really interesting to me. Besides that I always enjoyed creating my own stuff.

It just my favourite ever.
**Did the study program meet your expectations?**

16 responses

- **43.8%** Yes
- **50%** No
- **To some extent**

**Why?**

16 responses

- I learned a lot but the programme could be more creative, it is a lot focused on business and sustainability.
- I must say that I am not sure anymore what exactly my expectations were but I am satisfied with the program to a certain extent.
- I feel very prepared for the real industry.
- Good program.
- I do not have the feeling I learnt a lot.
- We were able to learn the techniques before creating.
- I did the pre course, so I already knew what I could expect.
- I choose this school because of the research based way of working and that has been the case.
- I actually didn’t really know what to expect, but I’m glad I didn’t because it’s probably really different from what people think it is.
- Good critical and friendly relation with the teacher! They take the time to explain everything well to every student and help with developing in every aspect of fashion.
- It’s much more subjective and personal than I ever thought.
- The teachers
  - Because I had no experience whatsoever and I feel like I’m ready for the industry now.
  - It was way more than I could expect.
  - I feel like the teachers sometimes act a bit biased especial when considering grates but in most areas i am happy with my study.
  - I can make a my own world not only for fashion can make everything by my self during the programmes.
What important skills of the profession have you learned so far?

16 responses

A lot of technical skills like sewing/ pattern making... and design skills

many, pattern drawing, sewing techniques, concepting etc etc

Sewing, concepting, designing, technical stuff, communication

Many technical sewing skills, connecting, indesign

make a patern from scratch, patern design, moulage, sawing techniques and thinking wider than just making one garment/piece

All the basic skills (pattern making, sewing, designing, etc)

Technical design, fashion design, textile design

Learning to know what i want and defend my own ideas. Next to that all different techniques and also parts from different disciplines like photography or graphic design.

Patterns, prints, technical drawings, drawing, designing of course.

sewing, pattern drawing, concept making, digital work (photoshop, indesign, illustrator, etc.) print making, embroidery

Stress importance of coffee

Design, fabric knowledge, print development in several manners, pattern cutting, photoshop, indesign, illustrator, lecra, reflection and sel evaluation, being the boss of your own process.

Making, fit, concept, meerdere soorten aanpak van design (echtsen)

Designing techniques, illustrations, comouter skills, pattern drawing Basis and sewing Basic skills, art history knowledge, a bit photography

Creativity

What skills are you still missing?

16 responses

Being organized

More in depth pattern drawing

Textile knowledge

Drawing

business skills and in-depth design strategies - design thinking

more of everything i guess, that will come with practice

The next years I hope to develop my skills and personal taste. This year we're going to help organizing the graduation show, so we will learn how it works backstage at a fashion show.
Entrepreneurship and commercial design
None really.
Business side
Pricing, marketing
Sewing techniques
Illustrating, graphic design
Snelheid, soort algemene kennis van wat een design, beeld of concept nou echt heel goed maakt. Technische ontwikkeling, dit moet je echt zelf uitvoelen. (denk aan kleding die beweging analyseert)
More technical skills in pattern drawing and cuts
Pattern making and sawing

Is your school enabling internships during the program?
16 responses

[Pie chart showing 100% Yes]

Have you already obtained an internship?
16 responses

[Pie chart showing 50% Yes, 50% No]
If yes, what main three skills/things have you learned?

- Technical skills for production, how to run a small label
- Patterns, Sewing and hand sewing skills were improved
- Multi tasking, communication, fast paced working
- Adhering to deadlines, improving teamwork, working under severe pressure
- Product development, business knowledge, working in teams/company
- How the commercial side of fashion works and also how you can deal with the life after the education (2 internships in gap year)
- Embroidery, communication between departments, hand work
- Understanding a garment
- Pattern cutting, organisation, communication

If yes, do you think your school prepared you enough for the professional environment? Why?

- Yes, it all went very well
- Yes, the do prepare us well for the indistry by making it a reality school programme
- Yes
- Not enough, you need work experience to be ready for the professional environment
- No
- Not enough. I think we should learn more about starting a business etc and how to calculate a price or something like that.
- It did prepare me a lot, but I need more experience
- Yes, because all you need to learn when you step in an atelier is how things go around there, but you have the main skills already
What plans do you have after you graduate?
16 responses

- Maybe do a master, or look for a job/ internship
- Getting a real job i guess?
- Post graduate design program
- Work
- master
- mastering in another shool either in fashion design or in management
- I probably want to study Fashion Design Master, because I'm still quite young
- I would like to gain some work experience within a commercial company
- Maybe freelance work, don't know yet.
- Not sure, but might be a master
- look for an internship/job as a print designer in a brand
- No idea
- Not clear yet. Hoping to work in the design team of a high end fashion label such as MSGM or Delpozo.
- Working for a fashion company that works with sustainability
- To start working for another label
- Running my own company

Does your school offer support to find a job after graduation?
16 responses

- Yes
- No
- I don’t know
Please feel free to add additional thoughts:

4 responses

In comparison to other schools of which I have heard stories, I know that Amfi isn't the best and for me is a bit to 'basic' and not pushing its students to their fullest talents (?) I feel like they could motivate us more

The department does not restrict you to fashion, it's more about art around the body.

The traditional system of fashion is not necessary anymore. Things have to change as it is one of the biggest influential platforms.

Main issue with Amfi are the lack of space and the fact that competition within a class is triggered by not showing work to each other and having a hierarchy due to the honors program from the second year on. If you're not an excellent student life at Amfi can be quite lonely and hard at times.
Appendix 11 Survey Fashion Design Alumni

**What is your gender?**
40 responses

- Male: 62.5%
- Female: 35%
- Prefer not to say: 12.5%
- Other: 10%

**What is your age?**
40 responses

- 20-25: 47.5%
- 26-30: 35%
- 30-35: 17.5%
- 36-40: 12.5%
- Older than 40: 10%

**Which fashion school were you attending?**
40 responses

- ArtEZ: 20%
- Gerrit Rietveld Academie: 17.5%
- Willem de Kooning Academie: 15%
- Amsterdam Fashion Institute: 12.5%
- Amsterdam Fashion Academy: 10%
- Royal Academy of Art The Hague: 10%
- HKU University of the Arts Utrecht: 10%
- The Maastricht Academy of Fine Arts and Design: 10%
- Other: 25%
In what year did you graduate?

Why did you decide to study fashion design?

- I have always been interested in this field and wanted to get a deep insight
- It runs in the family
- It runs in the family
- It's in my blood
- It's in my blood
- Interest in the industry and making clothes.
- Coincidence
- For material research and concept thinking
- Loved working with my hands. Deep interest for techniques. Could not do anything else!
- Because I love fashion and it was everything that I wanted to do
- To explore my creativity.
- Drawing and to become more developed as a designer
- Because I think it's a very interesting Applied Art
- From a little child I knew it.
- Interesting field to work in
- I already did a fashion study before. I already knew very soon that I wanted to study fashion.
- 
- It happened naturally after the basic year
- Passion
- I already wanted to become a fashion designer when I was a child
I already followed a secondary school of Fashion in the homeland Slovakia, my passion.
creativity & my interest in fashion
It is/always was my biggest passion
I wanted to make my work from my hobby
For me it was the thing I liked the best, instead of going to university
I wanted to do a creative study
I wanted to learn more about using and making textiles and about body related work.

passionate decision
Dit was het plan al vanaf de basisschool
I wanted to changed the fashion industry and system
I think I didn’t choose, I just knew I wanted it since I was very young.

Desire to work within the arts, I found textile a attractive medium
I wanted to learn how to conceptually design
I love making clothes, its my passion
I studied textile because of my interest in the medium
At a young age (like 12)
I always knew that I wanted to go to an Art school. During the preparation course at Artez, I discovered my passion for fashion.

Cause I really loved Thierry Mugler and Alexander McQueen and wanted to be as big as them.
because I always wanted to do something creative, although I didn’t knew if it should be fashion design right away,
because I was interested in various creative aspects such as drawing, ceramics, painting, etc.

Did the study program meet your expectations?
40 responses

50%
47.5%
Yes
No
To some extent
### Why?

**40 responses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It got me to learn my personal design vocabulary</td>
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<tr>
<td>It got me to learn my personal design vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thy don't give us a realistic view on the fashion scene outside the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thy don't give us a realistic view on the fashion scene outside the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I found my soul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I found my soul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There were some harsh realities to studying such an intensive creative study. You learn to build a backbone quickly to receive critique. Feedback can sometimes be quite personal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When you go to Rietveld you never know what's gonna come out of it. So everything was a pleasant surprise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too many limitations and lack of (emotional) support, not letting develop stronger skills but moving to some other direction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>While there was not enough expertise for my field of work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>it didn't show the daily work of a fashion designer in a commercial business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The were good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I learnt a lot and was great experience but I somehow feel I could have studied something else that would have been more beneficial and easier to find a job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenging, hard, but as well very satisfying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not had one certain expectation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had false expectation of the field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I didn't like the first part of my graduation. It was an interdisciplinair project and it had nothing to do with fashion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was a lot tougher than I thought! I learned loads in such short timespan but ofcourse, its never enough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I got the right amount of freedom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Even more. Very intense and high quality course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was informed by teacher what it would be like. Though I did not expect it would be this hard!!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The technical part was I lacking. And the egos of tutors could not 'allow' you to work on. All different suggestions made you feel completely going out of track.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had all the freedom and insights to experience the life of a fashion design student (stress, no sleep, that amazing feeling of passing something, failng, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I learned more than I could ever think, before I started. it was even better, it created opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We were not prepared for the commercial fashion world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I never knew what to expect. And now looking back it was really what I would imagine from a fashion studies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hard work pays off</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I learned the techniques I wanted to learn, but was surprised about how the conservativeness of fashion influenced the department so much.

Curriculum contains relevant foundational knowledge and set of skills for the contemporary fashion industry.

Ja, behalve de voorbereiding op het starten van een label of voorbereiding op een baan

because you have your own way to think different and feel free to be different.

Beside the emotional rollercoaster, the satisfaction balances it.

WDKA was focussed on conceptual fashion development. Looking back I needed more specialised support. Maybe an even more commercial approach.

You develop yourself as an independent designer in every way possible

I could discover my own style, work preferences, research in my own interests

The study itself was as free and conceptual as I expected focusing a lot on concept development and image development.

What I wanted to learn I got to learn their. For me it was experimenting with materials, shapes, actually experimenting with everything. The school really lets you do your thing.

I am trained in a wide range as a fashion designer.

It was really like the Devil Wears Prada movie. Some of the teachers were corrupt and only gave grades depending on if you were the favorite of the Head teacher.

During my study it met with my expectations and I learned a lot, but looking back I would have wanted to be more prepared for the work field.

What is your current employment status?

40 responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment Status</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employed full-time</td>
<td>17 (42.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>17 (42.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freelancer</td>
<td>17 (42.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of work for more than 1</td>
<td>4 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of work for one year</td>
<td>1 (2.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A student</td>
<td>2 (5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In what field are you employed? What is your position?
40 responses

Studying fashion knitwear design (specialising)

Working on my own brand

Working on my own brand

Head of jersey design, menswear

For material research and concept thinking

Footwear designer. I have my own studio.

self employed fashion designer & Customer Care Teamleader

Own label

Im a part of a gallery

I work currently as a self employed designer, I do make wedding dresses and I do a lot of collaborations with other designers mostly related to leather bag design

Jr. Footwear Designer

My own design practice and freelance goldsmith

Stylist at Orangebag.nl

I have my own label besides that I do different freelance jobs in fashion

I have my own label besides that I do different freelance jobs in fashion

High end luxury fashion brand

Fashion, freelance

Design, textile, pattern, knitwear

I work as a freelance fashion teacher, designer and theater stylist

Co - founder

art direction & own boss

Fashion, Sales Ambassador

Co - founder

I am a freelance fashion/textile designer

Junior footwear designer

I am currently interning at Asger Juel Larsen in Copenhagen. Being allround from print design to studio organisation. Also I keep working on my own portfolio and new ideas for projects in the future.
Creative director and freelance designer

Several jobs in the cultural field.

Own design studio, freelance commissions, design education

Junior designer menswear bij WE en een eigen heren label

Junior designer

Fashion stylist in retail

Museum, event management

Fashion, designer

I start my own brand

I am not working with textile anymore. I am an consultant for artists and designers. Founder and director of an agency called Meraki Agency in Rotterdam.

At the moment I'm working on launching my own brand.


Cause I really loved Thierry Mugler and Alexander McQueen and wanted to be as big as them.

Design Assistant

**Do you think the education prepared you enough for your career?**

40 responses

![Pie chart showing 70% Yes and 30% No.]

If no, what skills were you missing?

31 responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business and production</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business and production</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A lot of skills (technical/commercial side of fashion and the business side) to name a few, but the good think is I was already working in fashion during my study which helped a lot

Money wise
Money wise

Uni can’t teach you the skills necessary for the industry. One just needs to land first job and learn.

Business skills.

Business skills, also my studies didn’t show me how a commercial fashion designer is working.

Marketing and communication. Selling ones work.

Collaborating, and how to run your own business.

The practical part of business.

Computerskills

Portfolio building.

Business skills, commercial skills and just broadening your horizon, there is more to fashion than just being an artistry designer! (and there is more in life than fashion)

Technical

The step in stone into the real world, wish we would get more connections during the study

x

Technical skills

Yes, but a bit more business insight could be a great addition

I did not miss these skills, because I knew I would not learn this there and I also think it is not the place to learn this. There was already enough to learn. Therefore I tried to get as many experience outside the academy during studying, especially in organisational skills.

Je leert alleen het design deel maar er komt veel meer bij kijken

think commercial

I think it would have been good to discuss more about existing companies during the study. To have a more realistic idea when you enter the world. Not to practice designing for another company, but just some more realistic visions. Some goes for positioning after study - what where how?

Commercial insight

Artistically yes, but other than that no. I knew nothing about how to start up a business or how to sell my designs.

definitely business skills, we haven’t learn a lot about how to sell you stuff

Of course I dont work in the field anymore, so this doesn’t really apply to me. Having a lot of experience though with artists and knowing if I would have continued I would have missed a lot of practice skills from project management to pr.

It’s a very much one sided view of the art form fashion/textile learned at the kabk more as a fine artist then any other, all the other carrier possibilities are not spoken of, nor prepared for.

The theoretical and practical skills to start your own business.

Commercial skills

Know-how of a retail business and illustrator skills
If you could change something in the curriculum that you obtained, what would that be and why?

40 responses

- Business and production too
- Nothing
- Give the students an actual realistic view on fashion and learn them how to be commercial
- Teach more about starting a business
- More objective feedback
- Let choose subjects freely and make own curriculum, make collaboration projects with people from other disciplines
- More practical. Business oriented and hands-on skills. For example, dealing with factories etc.
- An internship provided from school that really shows the daily work of a fashion designer in a commercial position.
- More about PR and selling
- Learn more about business and a more modern approach to preparing students for the after student life in retrospect to fashion.
- Internship, not 1 but more, and also the way of graduating, its really about your own collection, but in the real world you never do everything alone. Its always about a specialisation
- More Internships
- Philosophy and writing
- Maybe a specialization
- Creating a bridge between your last year at school and your first job, don't just focus on the graduation collection but also what happens after that
- Have more teachers/people from outside the academie for workshops
- The industry requests knowledge about merchandising and product development, 2 aspects that school doesn't focus on.
- Teach students how they can build a career when they finished their studies. Teach them about all the options, and how to proceed once they know what they want.
- I would have loved to gain an internship during my bachelor study as a part of it.
- Internship, I would go abroad
- Probably would change fashion to graphic design. After graduation I felt that direction more suits me.
- A bit more business and marketing insight and also working with external companies like production factories etc.
more business related schooling

More guest teachers and more teamwork related assignments

more elaborate focus on finance, production, funding, online & copyrights in design

more deep in different options career in fashion industry

To be honest, I am quite happy with my curriculum.

Realistic approach on entrepreneurship

I would have first worked at several company's instead of starting my own label fresh out of college.

business school

Even as a consultant I dont think the art academy is a place for preparing yourself with the real practical information about running a business, by writing a business plan or such. Art academy is a place for artistic development, and the focus should lay on that. However doing so in a complete bubble where the end result is fine art is to narrow for me, I would recommend more experimentation with different industries like in the fashion/textile design. And the ability and freedom to prepare yourself broader for after the academy.

The curriculum was changing at the time I graduated, but I think the could also pay some attention to the business side of fashion when graduation.

-

I would at least add 1 more internship to give myself more work experience, because after graduating, when you're looking for a job, working experience is all they ask for

What was your biggest professional challenge after your graduation?

40 responses

To get the brand noticed. Balance between creativity and sales

To get the brand noticed. Balance between creativity and sales

finding a job or an investor

finding a job or an investor

Reconstruct

Reconstruct

Building a portfolio extensive enough to communicate my work, as well as my website.

Combining creative expression with the demands of the industry

To find a way to make own designs possible (financial), get a job (junior position)

To get paid for freelance assignments.

find a job as fashion designer & establish my brand

Amsterdam Fashion Week
An art exhibition
Starting my own label
A lot of companies ask for a lot of experience (3-5 years)
Build a network and knowing the daily reality of the creative industry
Lichting. Present myself to the judges.
Getting a foot in the door
Putting a professional portfolio together
Assistant designer for Benetton
How to set up a business? I had no clue!
Working for a boss. :)
finding a job in the field
To find a job/opportunities to start a label.

Getting a job within fashion. They offer a lot of internships but no jobs for people who don't have that much work experience
Finding a paid job...
starting up my own brand
Finding my own voice in my work again.
Gap between commercialism and conceptualism
Het starten van een eigen bedrijf
Feel comfortable to make mistakes
My internship at Raf Simons.
Finding my place in the art/fashion world
Making a fair honorarium for myself. Everybody wants something for you but for free. It's very difficult to make an honest living. In Art School we never talked about money so it was a real challenge to discuss that in the beginning.
writing a marketing plan, finance stuff and in what I should invest

Stepping out of the bubble and experiencing all the possibilities and finding my way in it.
Supporting yourself and your brand
-
Finding a job
getting a job
From your experience, what are the main traits you need to have as a designer in the contemporary professional environment?

40 responses

- Be a multitasking machine!

- An artistic vision and a good network

- Self believe

- Strong mindset; you need to really want it, be committed and hard working. Also be able to work with others and be creative 100% of the time.

- People skills.

- Ability to collaborate, positive attitude, non-competitive thinking (in a team), curiosity, ability to learn and expand skills, thinking for future

- Persistence, temperate and creative.

- Passion, vision, creativity, focus, power of endurance, being organized and capable of a lot of stress

- Patience and confidence

- You need to have taiwrn bur yi also should k ow how to present and market yourself in an applicable way in our current times.

- A very big network

- Be eager, work hard, show discipline, are open for new people

- A personal approach and signature

- You really have to sell yourself and your product by socializing. Meet people in the fashion scene. Or be very innovative.

- Stamina, talent, luck and kindness

- Be good at networking

- Good communication skills, written and verbal

- It's mainly business, and just a tiny bit of creative designing.

- self-discipline, eagerness to go on and the most important what I find --believing Yourself.

- Confidence

- Having/unique identity

- Technical skills

- Positive energy, a new and sustainable vision and of course enough money or good investors.

- be organized

- I see myself not as a designer and so I am not working as a designer.
good balance between technical foundation and insight into contemporary fashion system
zelfverzekerd
Think out of the box
Continue no matter what.
Punctual, patient, pragmatic and on the other side being able to take distance from all this to create
You need to be a true entreprenaur and have a lot of social skills. You really have to sell yourself. Designing comes second to that.

network, people around you who are willing to help, and have a big influence in the society
Reflection and understanding of your own work. Knowing why you do what you do, what the effect is of your work and where to implement it.

motivation, stay true to yourself and your thoughts on design.
Besides being creative you need to have an active attitude, stay up to date, and be determined.

Commerciality

social contacts are, how irritating it may be, the main importance. If you know someone, its so much easier to get in..

What is your advise for fashion schools?
40 responses

To incorporate a bit of business lessons
To incorporate a bit of business lessons

More class in technical and in how to be commercial yet artistic at the same time
More class in technical and in how to be commercial yet artistic at the same time

Prepare those kids and inspire
Prepare those kids and inspire

Learn from eachother, Its not all about competition. Collaboration!

They are overrated

Don't prepare students for a 'harsh' reality treating them the same way. Eliminate stressful environment. Teach to collaborate.

more respondents to the individual career wishes of the students. Not everyone wants to be head-designer at a fashion house.

focus more on showing your students how the real fashion business will be

Be realistic, about the fashion indestrie. Listen to the students and what they want to do in the future and help them out from there.

To striving being innovative and teaching more than just sewing and being creative in a process. To focus boycotting unjustified internships and be able to start or collaborate on own labels.also looking on how to put an end to the fast fashion culture.
Make the education more about collaborating. And also more about Commerce. We can't all be Coco Chanel. In this world couture is such a small part of the actual industry.

Get the most out of your students. On personal and professional way. Have a good look for the work of the student in a professional way.

More interaction with the field.

Make sure the students will do more projects in collaboration with a designer or a client.

Don't just focus on the graduation collection but look beyond that, the real work starts after you graduate!

Keep in touch with ex-student and create a good network that way.

Add merchandise courses (minor/guest college)

I can't say this enough, business skills please! And especially for art schools, please note that design jobs require lots of computer skills, we barely got taught the right skills. We know very little of Indesign, Canvas and for instance Cad/cam. But most design jobs do require those skills. Which means we don't get considered for those jobs very easily. Apart from the fact that we don't learn to design in a more commercial way.

Give more 'build up' critique (if you wanna criticize) Otherwise just Don't.

connections for after school!!!

first impressions of students are important but not everything! give students a chance to grow!

Prepare your students for after graduation except only for academy time.

Please emphasis that the fashion world doesn't have to be 'bitchy' like it is always portrayed. And teach people more about sustainability and the whole production chain of the fashion industry so it is more included to be able to make ethical decisions.

Tutor more in real life.

Be much more open for the rest of the (cultural) world and be open for cross-overs.

Do not underestimate the classic technical skillset in terms of all techniques required for fashion design.

Studenten meer voorbereiden op de toekomst.

Please let students developed the new ideas and support them.

Fashion is stressful. Planting fear does not always give the best results. A lot of motivation comes from excitement. Too much negativity is exhausting. Give positive stress.

Be more pragmatic, focus on techniques, craftsmanship.

Also help the students to prepare them on a professional level. How to price your products, how to sell them.

teach more about the real world, how to get in, where to sell our stuff, for how much can you sell things, learn how to invest.

Burst the academic bubble from time to time.

Really focus on developing talents, not so much on rules to follow.

To prepare designers more how to set up your own business.

Act less like a diva, you're not Karl Lagerfeld. Be open to other ideas. Maybe your way of teaching is old and very last century. Something you don't expect working in fashion, always looking for the newest trends.

Prepare your students for their life after the study, but also stimulate to new media! This is so important!
What is your advise for young fashion students?

40 responses

Be true to yourself and know for which market would you like to design. Do you want to work for a company that restricts your creativity, create museum pieces, own brand... just for yourself.

work in fashion during your study to gain experience

Believe in yourself

Really think if you’re committed to this subject, do you eat/breathe/sleep this subject? Will it motivate you to get up in the morning?

You don’t have to go to uni to get a job in the industry.

Trust your guts. Find what you’re happy to do and what can be a core for a constant growth

Ask for help.

be 100% sure you want to do this

Don’t be a free intern all you’re life. Don’t take bullshit

To set realistic goals. And to not put unhealthy amount of pressure and stress just in order to be able to ‘make it’.

Make sure you do not have the idea of being the next Raf Simons, there so many people working in the shadows of the big fashion names. The Fashion academies gave us the idea that with great talent and hard work you will succeed, but it depends on so much more! Mostly luck and also being able to communicate and have an impressive network

Be open for what is going on in the world. Be aware of what is going on in art, fashion and design. Get as many experience as possible and get to know people.

Find out what you can add to the creative industries. Take time to take an internship and find role models. Who seems to have the perfect job. Call to person to ask about the daily reality if what they are doing.

Make sure you really want to do this. Otherwise you will not make it in the fashion scene.

Work hard but mostly have fun! Its the most interesting, fast paced and crazy fun bubble but its not for everyone

Do a lot of internships

Everything needs to come from your own, nothing will come itself/automatically. Don’t get insecure when things not working out.

If you want to be an artist, go to art academy. If you want to be a fashion designer, go to AMFI or find the right education abroad.

If you go slow in your path, no worry—enjoy... Making small steps might bring you further than No steps. Don’t let you make crazy... 😊

do what you want to do, don’t stick too much on feedback. you will regret, when you fail or even ass with something you do not like

always give your best , and know that you have to work hard, but in the end it’s the one thing you love to do most.
always give your best, and know that you have to work hard, but in the end it’s the one thing you love to do most.

Think about if its worth it to do a study that is so intense without any job perspective

Don’t stress to much because in the end it is just clothes. Always make sure you’re happy about what you’re doing because you’re doing something you love and you have the freedom to do it!

you can do anything if you just want it badly enough

Try to find a good balance in making work on your own and in a team of students.

be aware of everything going on on all market levels

?

Don’t be afraid to make mistakes

Always continue. There are no ups without downs. Don’t take everything personal. Have an opinion and learn to use it.

be prepared to shape your life according to your career

Work at several brands/company’s and enhance your social network.

start already with widen your own field. make sure you have already a lot of followers, that you can reach easily a lot of people when you need to reach them.

Use the art academy to experiment and to develop your signature, reflect on it along the way, and inform yourself about the complete possibilities within the industry. Prepare yourself for the outside world within the bubble of the academy.

Experiment while you’re still studying. Enjoy your study and really focus on the future when you graduate.

Try to have an active role in the fashion scene to get recognition for your work, for example by participating for exhibitions or competitions.

Be strong, Have fun. Apply for commercial companies. That’s where you will see reality. We live too much in a bubble at fashion schools.

be creative, try to do everything you do during your study for yourself. not because school wants you to. and sometimes, if school tells you no, you should do yes anyway!

Please feel free to add additional thoughts:

11 responses

Good luck with thesis!

I think so many fashion students whole concept around fashion is outdated dreams and hopes that are becoming more difficult to achieve. I think that it should be more time we live in realistic and innovative what goals we set. Not to become the next Raf Simons or Margiela or to be a junior designer somewhere after x amount of years graduating. Thinking the system currently should be boycotted and speak up and work up because the young generation is able to change it. But everybody lives in smartphone bubbles and trying to live the idyllic fashion life.

Keep up the good work! Very interesting subject!

Listen to your intuition

Good luck with your research/thesis! I’m interested to see the results!

Still do not regret my study, and I absolutely love what I do!
I feel that schools could be an open network, inside and outside school. There should be more collaboration between companies and students. I mean this in a broad way, from machinery to information platforms. We lose too much time to learn on our own, professionals could offer knowledge to the ones interested. We do have the IST (International study track) for this possibility. But you have to find your own connections. I miss a databank.

Best of luck to all graduates.
Appendix 12 Graduation Collections 2016

1-4 - (Source: Textile & Fashion KABK, 2016)
5-8 - (Source: Team Peter Stigter, 2016a)
9-12 - (Source: Team Peter Stigter, 2016b)
13 - (Source: Michelle Lievaart, 2016)
14 - (Source: Vrolijk, 2016)
15 - (Source: Studio AAN, 2016)
16 - (Source: Kelly de Gier, 2016)
17-20 - (Source: Team Peter Stigter, 2016c)
21-24 - (Source: Amsterdam Fashion Academy, 2016)
25-28 - (Source: Team Peter Stigter, 2017d)
29-32 - (Source: Team Peter Stigter, 2016e)