Vlisco has been designing and manufacturing distinctive fabrics loved by African women since 1846. The specially crafted fabrics – Wax Hollandais, Super-Wax and Java – continue to be made with time honoured methods and materials in Helmond, the Netherlands.
Vlisco’s products are a result of creative journeys and an unique production process. The heritage and craft, and the ambition to innovate and inspire, have made Vlisco’s products to what they are today – authentic and high quality fabrics for a group of expressive, aspirational women.
In current times Vlisco sells mainly to women in Central and West Africa. Women with a mid to high income and the age of 40 and up. But most importantly; **women who are not afraid to show themselves and their hopes and dreams.**

Interesting about this target group is the **brand loyalty.** Vlisco has grown to be a status symbol, a precious gift and a form of storytelling. Therefore the target group still deeply values the brand. So much that they actively participate in the sharing of stories, prints and symbols, both online and offline.
With 95% of sales coming from Central and West Africa, this is the main market for Vlisco. The fabrics are sold on the local markets both directly to the customers as to the tailors. All the fabrics are then made into designs by the personal tailors, perfectly fitted to the consumer and her needs. Every piece of clothing made from Vlisco prints is therefore made to measure and unique.

However, Vlisco's sales are decreasing because of the competition coming up from China. The Chinese fabrics are not as qualitatively good, but definitely cheaper. An immense opportunity for these new Chinese brands as the big group of young Africans is not willing to pay as much for Vlisco fabrics as their parents did. The group of loyal women is declining, and the youth is not as interested in Vlisco prints.
So, a few years ago Vlisco decided to expand their market to the West. The Netherlands as a part of Vlisco's identity being the perfect place to start. With the same values, communication strategy and goals they bust into the Dutch market. And it failed. The target group is different, the positioning is as well and therefore the communication strategy and product should be too.

In the Dutch market Vlisco has to compete with clothing brands since consumers don't buy fabrics, they buy clothing. Also the target group is younger, critical and opinionated. Vlisco has to win back their trust and prove them they are still the brand that the target group used to know.

A NEW MARKET
A NEW VLISCO

Doorkijk
Instead of offering the Dutch consumer solely prints, Vlisco is due to sell clothing. **Changing the product to the needs of the consumer, creating a collection is an essential part in Vlisco’s strategy.** Crucial because the average Dutch consumer does not have access to a personal tailor nor is capable of designing a beautiful piece of clothing herself.

The collection should thus fit the Dutch wardrobe and contain clothing with a Western cut. Nonetheless, lose its expressive, colourful feel.
The changed market leads to changes in the target group. The new target group is young, creative and has a dual cultural identity. They know Vlisco from their family in Central and West Africa, but are unable to connect with the brand themselves. They are critical towards the brand and the image Vlisco displays of Africa. It feels incomplete, stereotypical. Critique that comes from the search for the own identity and the fear to lose parts of this newly created identity to the Western masses. The target group's insecurity about the own identity makes for a collective group identity; a new culture in which they DO fit in. A new culture based on the communal collage identity.
In the Netherlands the competition changes completely. **Because of the change in product from fabrics to clothing the rivalry are now medium to high priced clothing brands that work with their dual cultural identity.** Brands that create a community identity and are actively there for the target group. Brands that show the many verges of both the Western as the African culture.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Several cultural identities</th>
<th>High price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vlisco</td>
<td>Dent de Man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily Paper</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa Folawiyo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L’origine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afriek</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maison Chateau Rouge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For the upcoming period Vlisco has many goals, most importantly; creating a more positive brand image and in doing so increase the revenue. A goal that only when reached makes the move to the Dutch market worthwhile. A goal that could be reached by distancing Vlisco from cultural appropriation, since this is the main reason the brand ever obtained a negative image. By distancing Vlisco from cultural appropriation the critics will be able to connect with the brand again. A connection that, when done well, can even lead to a new group of loyal consumers. Also, by ending the negative critics the other customers with a like for the brand will feel comfortable buying the brand’s products. And just like that we are back at the main goal; a more positive brand image and higher sales.

A MORE POSITIVE BRAND IMAGE & AN INCREASED REVENUE
For Vlisco the communication target group is formed by the brands’ critics. These young creatives with a dual cultural identity are the ones damaging the brand, but also those that are deeply connected to Vlisco and its products - since the brand has been a part of their cultural roots for ages.

By targeting the critics two important things happen. First of all the critics are able to connect to the brand again and if done well become loyal consumers of the brand. But besides this, another group is added to the brands’ clientele as well; the group of men and women who, however wanting to wear Vlisco prints, didn’t feel comfortable wearing Vlisco designs before, afraid to be cultural appropriating. Now that Vlisco is distanced from cultural appropriation and its negative effects this group will be buying the brands’ clothing once more.

Vlisco can reach this group of critical people by contacting right where they first met; the internet. The place where this critique was spread and the image damaged is the perfect place to reinvent Vlisco and its connection to the target group. By giving the target group a voice, listen to this voice and actively react on the critics, the power relations will shift and the Vlisco’s image will better.
In order to create an opportunity for Vlisco in the Dutch fashion market the first problem to tackle is their negative image based on the brands connection to cultural appropriation. This is an image that can only be solved by creating a renewed relationship with the critics and even adding them to the consumers group. A goal that can be reached by showing them Vlisco is aware of cultural appropriation and is actively choosing not to connect to this.

A goal that can be reached by giving the critics the opportunity to show what they would like Vlisco to look like, what they would like Vlisco to do. And a goal that can be reached by showing the critics that Vlisco listens to them and most importantly acts on what they hear. When Vlisco overcomes this first problem the road will be cleared of trouble and their spot on the Dutch market secured.
Vlisco, Dutch, African. It’s both. It’s neither. As a collage of influences, cultures and perspectives Vlisco brings stories. Told by the people that dress, look and think. All combined in a brand that is communicated by the inspiring people outside of the brand. The people that experience the brand. 

**Vlisco Collage.**

This concept will be actualised in the campaign in several ways, both visual as literal. By working with collaborations a collage of influences, people and styles will be created. Also the entire Vlisco Collage campaign will have a collage inspired visual style. Like this many influences, perspectives and styles become one. One collage identity.
The actualisation must display the collage identity of Vlisco and the target group by showing many perspectives, influences and opinions.

The actualisation must actively speak to and involve the critics.

The actualisation must create awareness of cultural appropriation.

The actualisation must support (non)-Western creatives.

The actualisation must be interactive; the target group must be able to share their own vision.

The actualisation must give a community feeling.

The actualisation must display the African roots.
ONLINE COLLAB COLLAGE

On the Vlisco website a tab will be added called “Vlisco Collage”. This part of the website displays several collaborations between Vlisco and creatives.

Starting points
- Community feeling
- Several perspectives
- Inspiring
- Equality
- Equal representations

JOIN YOUR SELF

Through this page it's possible to participate in the Collab Collage yourself. As soon as you enter the project Vlisco sends you the needed materials to work with. Finished doing what you do best the work will be displayed on the Collage page.

Starting points
- Stimulating the sharing of creativity
- Togetherness
- Community feeling
- Stimulating the sharing of opinion
- Feeling heard

BUY

Through the overview it's possible to buy the displayed collaborations.

Starting points
- Creating value
- Support starting creatives
- Making the effort valuable
- Community feeling

SHARE

Vlisco uses the shared work for the own communication. Vlisco also uses this community of creatives as a job pool in which they can search when they need a print designer, photographer, or campaign creator etc.

Starting points
- Vlisco is communicated from several perspectives
- Distance Vlisco from cultural appropriation
The submitted collaborations will be judged by a jury formed of diverse, independent individuals.

**Representation**
Vlisco must be clearly visible.

**Communication**
The contact form must be filled in completely.

**Originality**
The collaboration must be original.

**Aesthetic**
The collaboration must be pleasing to the eye and representative.

**Ethic**
The collaboration must not offend or damage the viewer nor Vlisco.

**Qualitative**
The collaboration must have a certain quality in order to display it online.

**Based on these six conditions** the submitted collaborations will be judged by a jury formed of diverse, independent individuals.
MONTH

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

** ACTION **

- Vlisco's own Social Media Canals
  - Openings Campaign
  - Constant usage of the collaborations on the own social media.

- Pop-up event
  - Half year event with all the joining creatives

- Magazines
  - The project is mentioned in several magazines

- Vlisco Collab Collage Page
  - Vlisco Collab Collage - The website and submission process