



Fashion & textile design

The study programme Fashion and Textile Design at the ABKM has gained a high profile on national as well as international level. The programme is taken care of by an ambitious team of lecturers and teachers. They are professionals in their respective field of work while at the same time giving lessons at the department.

The unique cooperation between both specializations, fashion and textile design offers great advantages. The subjects keep their own characters but strengthen and influence each other. This creates a productive interaction between students and lecturers.

Therefore, products reach a high level of depth and consequently, our department gives lots of attention materiality, i.e. the material itself. We highly estimate individual study advice, but our students are no clones of their teachers. They learn how to use their strengths and weaknesses and develop their own vision of the subject. Self-study is

stimulated and emphasis is put on research, innovation and a modern vision. We therefore organize regular excursions, as we deem it important that our students expand their perspectives beyond their respective field, for example by visiting a variety of museums. The development of professional expertise is our first priority, on a technical level as well as with regards to design.

Students are provided with perfectly equipped working areas, where they are taught and where they can work either independently or under supervision. The fashion show is a magnificent ending of the

academic year, which combines the work of all our students and those at other departments to an outstanding event that takes place at changing and sometimes surprising locations.

All students are highly motivated and hard-working, which explains why the atmosphere at the department has such a good vibe. Perhaps this is also the reason why employers know where to find us when they are looking for future employees and interns. ■

This specialization educates students to become fashion designers and is an applied discipline. Developing an insight to design is central to the programme; students acquire a modern and “fashionable” vision on designing clothes. They are trained to communicate their work and ideas by means of sketches and oral presentations.

Before graduating, students design their own clothing range on the basis of a self-chosen theme. A part of this collection, thus a series of clothing has to be produced. The choices students make can vary from a collection of experimental form studies to a practical, modern and consumer-based collection. At the end of the year, all collections are shown on the runway, in an especially arranged fashion show. Next to that, students assemble professional photographs of their work in a book. ■



Students are provided with perfectly equipped working areas



TEXTILE

This specialization educates professional textile designers, who can work in the area of interior design or fashion.

Here, mostly “half-products” are used and worked with, which means patterns, fabrics, wallpapers etc. Students are stimulated to formulate individual and self-chosen or provided themes and to translate them into the material, in form of images, design, fabric and pattern collections. The students’ good feeling of the zeitgeist is essential. Before graduating, the student develops, with the help of the teacher team, a coordinated range of products, either for interior or fashion. ■

The development of professional expertise is our first priority on a technical level as well as with regards to design





Claartje van den Oever 4th year of Textile Design

What do you study? How would you describe what you are doing?

I study textile design, which is very different from fashion and product design. In our last year, when we graduate, we can opt for a specialization; that is either, we design textile for use in fashion or we choose to design textile for interiors, which is what I am doing now. I have been enjoying it very much.

Why did you choose for the ABKM?

When I was choosing my study programme, I heard that the ABKM was a good academy and that the atmosphere was very good—there were no stories of too much rivalry between students or very strong competition thinking. One of my mother's friends had a son studying here, so I trusted the first hand experience. The propedeutic year was very broad but very interesting as you got an insight into lots of different fields of arts and design. Only then you are allowed to choose.

Why did you then decide for textile design?

First, I thought I would like to go into the direction of product design, but realized that I was more attracted to follow the textile specialization, because the choice of materials offers you so many possibilities. Different combinations of materials are then also reflected in my designs. I like to play with them.

If you look back, did you make the right choices?

Yes, I did. I have had a brilliant time as a student in Maastricht; it's a very nice student city. As regards my studies, I could not have chosen better: Our teachers are very motivated and enthusiastic, and this is very important for a stimulating and inspiring environment. I cannot believe that the four years are over already. I am moving to Utrecht in a couple of weeks!

What are you going to do in Utrecht?

I think Utrecht is a good place to be in order to find a job. I already have an offer at the firm where I did my internship, but from Utrecht, you are quickly everywhere you want to be in the Netherlands. I really want to start working now. I am so looking forward to it!

Where would you like to work later?

What are your dreams?

I would prefer a small firm or design office, and I would also like to have time to work independently. I don't want to study for a master, but I do think it is important that you keep on learning—in a small office or firm you have the chance to further develop yourself and your visions. I would like to work in a strong and nice team that complements each other on all levels, so that you can develop your skills and compensate for personal weaknesses. Hopefully, I will also work in a firm that is not only focussed on one particular direction of design; I would also like to explore new fields and not be stuck with one thing, but always move forward. At the moment, I do not know which techniques I would like to employ, as I have a passion for all techniques. But I know that I want to work with interior, designing textile for fashion is no option for me. *I would also like to stay in the Netherlands, and continue my work here.*

What was the most important thing you have learned during your studies, as well as on personal level as from an academic point of view?

I think that the ABKM, and academies in general, help you very much with your own personal development. You have a very good personal supervision and your supervisors



EXAM STUDENTS

develop a feeling for you and your personality. My supervisors have gone through a lot with me, in the beginning I was always afraid to fail, but together are able to overcome this. Now, shortly before our final exam, this feeling is coming back and they realized that and are helping me again. I really like that personal touch to our academy and department.

Is there something you are very proud of? One particular design for example?

I have designed lots of things already, so it is very hard to say which one is my favourite. I am very happy with the work I am doing now for my final exam—I am combining wood with other fabrics, and I am really enjoying that. But during my internship I have also designed lots of things I am proud of.

Where does your inspiration come from?

I have made the experience that those designs that have a very personal character are the best. My grandmother's name was Anna and I am creating a kind of dream world around her. I live in that dream world, in a little cocoon, in which I feel very good and safe. The designs, I am creating, reflect the interior Anna would have lived in if she was 30 today. Further, I am researching interior designs from the 1920s and 1930s, the time when Anna was really young. I was still very young when she died, but, the image I got from her is still very present. In fact, there are two topics that come together in the collection for my final exam, a work that is very personal. ■



Yvonne Laufer 4th year of Fashion Design

What do you study and what are you doing for your final exam?

I study fashion design and am now in my fourth year. For our final exam we have to design a collection of clothes (six silhouettes). In January, we started designing and searched for inspiration. That can be travelling, a book, or other things that inspire you. It is important that there is a story behind a collection, some kind of red thread. I always like to start with scientific or philosophical topics. These themes inspire me a lot. When I have the feeling I found something unexplored, something unknown I try to discover it and give it a shape via fashion. When I start researching, I have to feel that the chosen issue leaves space to my imagination, that I can create my own story out of it. Every decision I make afterwards, in the choices of shapes, fabrics or colours, is based on the concept. This time I have started with the string theory and base my collection on organic materials, and have put a concept together. The string theory states that our reality is not as solid as we want it to be and that you can influence reality easily. You can be at two places at the same time for example. My graduation project is called enlightenment and deals with the fact that the human consciousness is not material. It exists although we cannot see it. We have to feel it.

Why did you choose for fashion design? Did you want to do that before your first year already?

I had always wanted to design fashion—when I was around 12, I had already started to draw some sketches and at some point I took my mother's sewing machine and started to tailor myself. Then one step followed another

and I came here. Very cliché, but arts had always been my favourite subject, and my teacher at some point advised me to go and try to get in the ABKM when I told him what I wanted to do later. He said that especially the fashion department was excellent.

Is there something special that you have learned in your studies? Some highlight?

As regards sewing and tailoring, I have learned that you have to take on a risk. If it does go wrong, you cannot just try and fix it, you have to do it again. On a personal level, I have learned how to persevere and face challenges. It is not always fun, but you have to follow your dreams. You have to give a hundred percent, all the time.

What is the atmosphere like at your department?

The fashion and textile design department is very lively, because there are always students here—just because we need a lot of time to work on our projects. It is an intensive study programme. The atmosphere is always nice, we know each other well. But sometimes, if there is high time, like now with the final exams, it is really busy, and things can get a bit stressful around the department.

Is there anything you are particularly proud of?

There is not anything that I would point at as the one and only grand success, but I have achieved several smaller ones. I have learned so many different methods and I like to explore new fields of arts. Every time I manage to achieve something different from what I normally do, is a little success to me. Therefore, I like to work in different apartments, as well. I have worked with



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plaster casts recently and it is also nice to get to know and stay in touch with people from different departments. We also cooperate, in fashion, it is a lot about teamwork.

What are your plans for the future?

I am going to do a master in fashion design after my bachelor. Then I would like to gain more work experience, preferably in a bigger firm. I have done my internship in a smaller office, and although I have enjoyed it very much, I would like to experience a position in which you are only designer: In a small office, you tend to be designer, tailor and stylist all at the same time. You are busy with organizing, but not with being creative.

What does fashion mean to you?

My aim is to design and produce fashion for the world—clothes that are sustainable and don't involve cheap labour, but recyclable materials. I don't want to make clothes for the high society, but clothes that underline a person's character. Fashion, that is aesthetic and wearable. Fashion to me however is also something very personal—I do not design for others, I am doing it for myself. It makes me happy. ■





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