



CULTUURFONDS MODE STIPENDIUM - EDITION 11

JURY REPORT

The recipient we are about to honour here today is a poster child for the new era in Fashion; a design discipline that has only recently committed to a much-needed questioning of its values and practices, and is today undergoing a profound transformation.

Fashion is and always will be a reflection of the times. Other than that, there is no status quo that fashion will not take on to challenge and transform. Those who work in fashion know that it takes great courage to embrace, translate and address the zeitgeist through creative research and the uncertainties that come with every design process. *Did I sense and see it right? Does what I present make sense in the NOW?*

The result of such creative processes can be unsettling. From the very beginning, today's recipient has been raising the questioning itself as a central motive to even *do* fashion in the first place. And in doing so, convincing a new generation that questioning everything is indeed the only way to transform the world, the only way forward from where we stand today. The message was loud and raw from the beginning, touching on a punk mentality; a deliberate choice that aimed for impact.

Is presentation and representation secondary to actual garments in fashion? Can clothes be understood as the cultural good they are without 'the spectacle'? Today's recipient has been unabashed in putting these rather theoretical questions center stage, presenting them *as fashion*. And with that this recipient positioned itself as a pioneering brand for the Post-material Generation.

It puts everything on the agenda: attitude, identity, freedom, propagating that fashion should not exclude *any body* – as it notoriously has been doing - but instead embrace all.

This recipient is a true freedom fighter, the jury feels, overthrowing the exclusivity mindset and replacing it with 'friendly anarchy'. The work presents every human being the freedom to discover who they are or would want to be through fashion.

This recipient has never put the commercial message first, and has never bowed down to commerce where it is amoral. And by doing so, became a strong figurehead for a generation for whom sustainability is actually something we do, inclusiveness is self-evident, and embracing a new world order means living the hope. Is this utopian? Contributing to crucial dialogues through a fashion practice is laying the foundation for a better world. We wouldn't all be working in fashion if we didn't believe in this magical power it has.

The recipient's way of working is closely linked to the values conveyed by the work and its presentation; intuitive at its root, allowing the search to be leading, interdisciplinary and almost tribal in the way of collaborating with other creatives, and unabashedly confident in the way the authentic creative output is presented to the audience, time and time again. Pushing fashion's boundaries. Leaping into the future. Infectious, energizing, engaging and inspirational indeed.

Today's recipient does not so much present us new clothes to live in, but rather an entire universe in which clothes can be understood as liberating the individual wearer, which can be *any body* indeed. As a viewer, you are invited to take the lead role and place yourself center stage, where nothing is self-evident anymore, and where humour is disarming. A transformation is imminent by design. This is what 'friendly anarchy' means. It is a completely non-violent overthrowing of - what we may not even have been aware of - was an obstacle. An obstacle for personal liberation, and for freedom for all.

This recipient's work has been a radical proposal for inclusivity from day 1, it is radically democratic and lovingly anarchistic and generous. It is design for the new age, provocative in the sense that the recipient refuses to offer a self-perpetuating aesthetic as well as the accompanying commercial value attribution to exclusivity. Instead everyone gets to shine in the foreground.

Imagine this for a moment: a genderless fashion universe that makes everyone feel at home and safe to explore. Every human body lovingly embraced and freed from complexes by the joy and humour of fashion. A playful deconstruction, analytical and revealing, of what we consider the norm.

This universe can never be perfectionist. It has to be a happy chaos, an intuitive mash up, a collage like approach to design, a clash of extremes, a visual orgy. It's theatre, performance, music, video, graphics *and* fashion.

Fearless and purposeful, the recipient we celebrate today has achieved many memorable presentations on both national and international stages, always pressing forward and eager to grasp and channel the energy of our time, to let it manifest in an outburst of craft and creativity. And in doing so, facilitating with great generosity a space and context for other artists and designers too, the jury believes.

I guess by now you all know who is the 11th recipient of the Cultuurfonds Mode Stipendium...

MAISON the FAUX!