

Project Proposal maHKU MA Design pathway Fashion Design

#1 Technical Innovators are the designers of the future

Since a few years I have a growing interest for technology and technical items. This started at secondary school by my interests for mathematics and science, and grew to computer technology and my graphic design education. From this point my interests shifted to the field of technological materials in textiles and wearable electronics. In the last few months I have been orientating at the latest developments at different companies. Who is doing what? What are the latest developments? Who are the competitors and what are they doing? In February I visited TNO textile development, Saxion Commercial Textile Management and Kwantet KLM work wear. In March I visited Ten Cate Advanced textiles and Ten Composites. All of these companies are not really in fashion, but are innovators in the fields of textiles.

I am interested in the fashion branch, especially to work with textiles and making forms on the human body. However, I am even more attracted to the more timeless branch of textiles. The fast production and the 'no-time-to-waste-because-then- this-fashion- is out', which is made by the big fashion concerns is what I do not like in fashion. From my point of view the only target seems to consume more, and to take more money. This does not correspond with the current trend of a sustainable world. I think the focus in fashion should be more on protection, functionality, sustainability, quality and advanced capabilities of cloths.

I think it is very interesting to develop a collection with a technically high classed material (materials with very specific qualities). In my collection I would like to have a special focus on these qualities. Ten Cate Composites is producing a very special aramide and carbon material. This is used in airplanes, aviation and space-industry. I would like to do research to see if these materials can be used for clothes.

Because of the special qualities of the material, I would like to make it for a specific target-group. For example safety clothing, work-wear in the medical world or uniforms for airplane personnel. But I would like to design shapes out inspired by material research. I would like the collection to become an inspiration for other designers to use more innovative materials or for technical innovators to look for more applications for these materials.

For my thesis I could research some historical subject, like what has been happening in the last 200 years in textile development? Or a technical market research, like who is producing what? Or maybe a more specific start: How will the shapes of an airplane change when they are built out of new materials? Can I find the same changes when there are new textiles developed in fashion?

#2 Physical Challenge

I would like to be involved in designing clothes for physically challenged people. In particular people that suffer from disorders concerning their upper body parts, in this case missing limbs and deformed chests. The people that suffer from these disorders are part of our society and have the need for fitting, fashionable and functional clothes just as others do.

Translated to a theme in fashion, we would be talking about tailor-made garments from all perspectives. I would like to make out an inventory that should point out: a) where demand lies for special garments concerning the target group; b) what solutions can be found to answer these demands and whether these could be catalogued on different levels; c) how far these solutions can be taken visually and to what extent they will still be accepted by both the target group as well as by society.

The inventory will be based on a number of interviews with member of the target group, big enough for further exploration. Clothes that are both fitting and contemporary as well as functional. I presume most solutions will be found in relatively simple adjustments to the ready-made patterns.

The choice of materials and the use of seams will have its effect on the style of the garment. This could be either stylish or casual. I would prefer to use both styles in a collection. The more casual items could be related to the sub-culture of, for example, skating.

In the first instance I would want to keep the research separate from the final collection. The emphasis of the research can be put on people's disorders and whatever special treatment these require concerning their garments. The outcomes can then become a source of inspiration for the eventual collection, that can be worn by a larger part of the population.