

atlas of **FASHION** designers

LAURA ECEIZA

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FASHION designers

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Photography by Ian Guillet

Fashion Identity, Diversity and Design Around the World

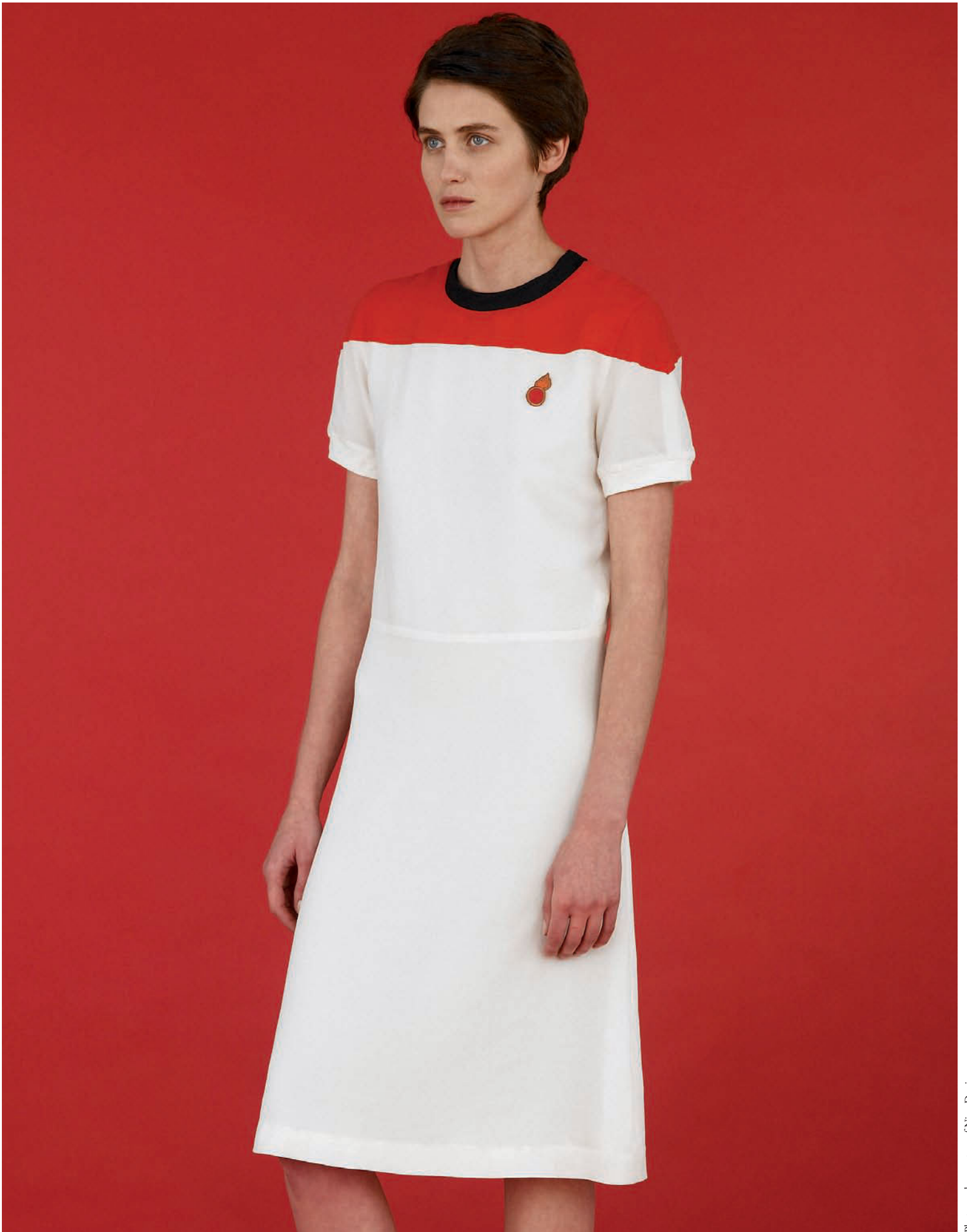
The traditional demarcation line of fashion—London, Paris, New York and Milan—is changing its original boundaries. Humanity is too rich, heterogeneous, multicultural and dynamic to center its attention exclusively on these four cities. While we continue to view these places as the neuralgic centers of fashion, we are increasingly paying attention to designs coming out of different parts of the world, ones that promise to explode the panorama of international fashion in the years ahead.

This is the idea on which *Atlas of Fashion Designers* is based: the importance of looking beyond the epicenters of fashion, yet without losing sight of them. It represents a way of evolving in a diverse, increasingly connected world, one in which a 180-degree turn is expected in the new millennium.

In contrast to previous years, the most important international catwalks are beginning to be dotted with the work of designers of diverse origins: Russians, Indians, Brazilians, Poles, Chinese, Pakistanis, Israelis, Ghanaians, South Africans... This shift is a reflection of the new millennium, one characterized by a melting pot of cultures that wish to express and reassert their identity in an increasingly globalized world.

The principal aim of this book is to demonstrate the heterogeneous nature of current fashion, fashion that transcends frontiers as the only mode of growing and renovating itself in order to avoid becoming obsolete, fashion that keeps in step with the signs and symbols that define our times. Identity, globalization, place, hybridization, sustainability, innovation, research, luxury, and new systems of productions, all linked to craftsmanship and fair trade, form the centerpiece of the work of designers who articulate this new conception of identity in the twenty-first century, one with local roots yet a global projection.

Such is the case of Brazilian designer Isabela Capeto, whose work is characterized by its high level of social commitment and a warm, indigenous craftsmanship marketed successfully throughout the world. This is also true of Indian designer Manish Arora, who has ably transported his singular aesthetic to Western markets, ones fascinated by the exuberant richness of his culture. These examples are no accident, as India and Brazil, along with Russian and China (the so-called BRIC nations), are countries in full economic expansion



Photography courtesy of Nina Donis

that are penetrating and taking positions in the world of fashion, with designers such as the abovementioned Manish Arora and Isabela Capeto, as well as Ashish Gupta in India; Anunciação and Karlla Girotto in Brazil; Nina Donis, Denis Simachev, Alena Akhmadulina and Igor Chapurin in Russia; and Blanc de Chine in China.

Along this same line of vindicating one's own identity, designers are also emerging who delve into their own culture and proudly export the best of their tradition in the form of luxury brands, such as South African label Sun Goddess and the Chinese brand Blanc de Chine. Others fight to keep haute couture out in front, such as renowned brands like Viktor & Rolf, Alber Elbaz for Lanvin, Karl Lagerfeld for Chanel, or the recently arrived Spaniard to Parisian haute couture, Josep Font.

Textile research and the forging of new paths also represent the spearhead of current fashion. This can be seen in the work of Helen Storey of Great Britain, whose highly original way of fusing the worlds of science and fashion is carried out through an eponymous foundation, as well as in the work of designers finding alternatives to textiles in recycled garments, such as New Yorker Susan Cianciolo, Brazilian Karlla Girotto, and the inimitable Maison Martin Margiela, whose "Artisanal" line attempts to inject new life into obsolete garments and objects.

In *Atlas of Fashion Designers*, men's fashion takes root within a predominantly feminine panorama, redefining itself without casting aside its traditional character through displays of exquisite skill and mastery of classical tailoring. British Timothy Everest and Neil Barrett, North Americans Thom Browne and Craig Robinson, Dutch of Hindu origin Jeroen van Tuyl, and Ghanaian Joe Casely-Hayford are some of the designers who, from an innovative perspective, view the masculine wardrobe with a tailor's eyes.

Sixty-nine designers of thirty-two different nationalities, all working in fashion from diverse perspectives, places, cultures, identities, techniques and philosophies, make up the map of current fashion presented in this book, one in which the reader will find not every new designer out there, but will encounter every one that is changing the face of fashion today.



Addy van den Krommenacker

The fashion shows of designer Addy van den Krommenacker exude pure classical cinema. Kim Novak, Veronica Lake and Joan Crawford could easily choose his elegant and refined pearl satin dresses for having a gin fizz in any cocktail bar. If there is something that this Dutch designer knows how to do with his mastery, it is recreating the elegance of the golden age of Hollywood and making it available to today's woman.

His creations, elegant and distinguished with precise patterns, tailored waists and a studied hang, envelop the delicate figure of a woman who wishes to be elegant, special and breathtakingly feminine with care and brilliantly luxurious materials, recovering the glamour of 50s and 60s cinema.

In a shifting and increasingly androgynous aesthetic universe, one in which the reinterpretation of femininity is at the forefront, Addy van den Krommenacker looks backward in order to recover the mysterious women reflected so well in the cinema of previous decades.

It is no surprise, then, that his unabashed objective is for today's woman to feel like a princess, an aim that can be felt in each pleat and every hang of his dresses. In the game of seduction that he proposes, the women he dresses need only show up to draw attention to themselves, to make the slightest gesture to cause a sensation wherever they go.



Photography by Jeroen Snijders



Photography by Jeroen Suijders

The designs of Addy van den Krommenacker are conceived for standing out on the red carpet, due to their delicacy, feminine forms, and, more than anything, the fact that the Dutch designer knows better than anyone else the meaning of the word “elegance” linked to the most cinematographic glamour.



Photography by Jeroen Snijders

- What inspires you?

My inspirations are movie stars throughout the decades. Women are so elegant in the movies of the 50s and 60s. I like to make clothes with the area of those times and the comfort of today.

- What is your dream as a designer?

My dream is that women all over the world feel like princesses in my clothes and are happy that they bought a dress from my collection.

- What has been the most important achievement of your career?

The most important achievement is my prize of best foreign designer at the Look of the Year event in Italy.

- How important are trends?

Trends are important, but I like to make clothes that are timeless, which you still can wear whenever you want to. On the other hand, I like to dress stars in trendy clothes of mine.

- What does fashion reflect in the twenty-first century?

Fashion these days is a combination of the 50s and the 80s. Clothes nowadays need to be comfortable and practical while retaining the glamour of the new area.

- What book would you recommend to every fashion designer?

The book I would recommend is the history of Balenciaga.

Addy van den Krommenacker

Verwersstraat 79

5211 HV 's-Hertogenbosch

The Netherlands

www.addyvandenkrommenacker.nl



Photography by Jeroen Snijders



Photography by Jeroen Snijders



Photography by Jeroen Srijders

The principal fabrics of this Spring/Summer 2008 collection were pure silk, organdy, brocades, and silk chiffon, which along with the volumes and pleats of dresses proved triumphant on Rome's Haute Couture catwalk.



Alber Elbaz (Lanvin)

At the age of twenty-five and with 800 euros in his pocket, Alber Elbaz packs his bags and sets off to New York to seek his fortune. In 2007, he appears in *Time* magazine as one of the 100 most influential people in the world. So far, there's nothing so odd about this: the typical story of a hardened man who's had enough, drops everything in pursuit of a dream and attains it. What is not common about it, however, is that Alber is one of the most beloved professionals in the field of fashion. His earns elicit swarms of praise not only for his creations but for the designer himself. The creative passion he invests in his garments is also shared with his admirers and the people he works with.

He began his career with a small fashion company. Later, he came into contact with Geoffrey Beane, who taught him the rules of tailoring which would make him the refined and meticulous designer he is today. In 1997, he began working with Guy Laroche and subsequently worked with Yves Saint Laurent on the design of his pret-a-porter collection, a project in which demonstrated the depth of his dedication and affection in spectacularly realized work. Some time after, Alber distanced himself from the project, in what he himself has described as an emotionally traumatic separation, given that it involved the splitting up of a group, of a family. He then moved on to Lanvin. Entering this company was, for him, the equivalent of inheriting a noble title, an arrival to an established institution where he has not only found a home, but has elevated the legendary house to an even higher place in the fashion firmament. All of this is the result of lavish self-expression in the form of unrepentant volumes and pleats and garments sculpted by the air. An artist in a joyful reencounter with his universe. Alber Elbaz: a designer whose creations are as moving as the man himself.



Photography by David Sims





© Lanvin

With characteristic mastery, Alber Elbaz offered a Spring/Summer 2008-2009 collection charged with color, fluid textures and spherical forms. In these images, we find two cocktail dresses in electric colors of brilliant satin.

- What inspires you?

Everything inspires me: light, emotions, my neighbors...

- What is your dream as a designer?

Having more time. I would like to push back the limits of each day.

- What has been the most important achievement of your career?

My wedding day with Lanvin in 2001.

- How important are trends?

My philosophy aims to make women beautiful, no matter the trends.

- Fashion has always reflected a certain era. What does fashion reflect in the twenty-first century?

It reflects a time of technique and technology, where we use the past in a modern way.

- What book would you recommend to every fashion designer?

Lanvin book by Rizzoli Publications, or the work of Jeanne Lanvin revealed in broad daylight.

Alber Elbaz (Lanvin)

15, rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré

75008 Paris

France

www.lanvin.com





Photography courtesy of Alena Akhmadullina



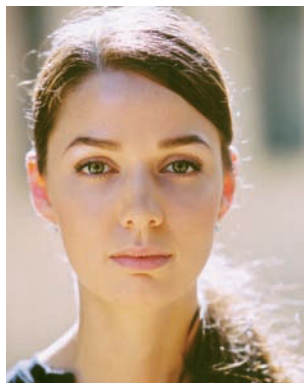
Alena Akhmadullina

In just one glance, an anthropologist attending an Alena Akhmadullina show could gather synthetic information about the historical and cultural legacy of Russia in recent times. In her collections, fragments of Russian iconography succeed one another as if they were archeological vestiges of another time.

Russian constructivism, the Cossack and military look, and the aesthetic influence of the painter Tamara de Lempicka are some of the influences at work in her creations, which consist of a mosaic of aspects astutely reinterpreted and assimilated with pride and elegance.

It would seem that a young woman born in the Leningradsky Region with dreams of becoming a designer would be tempted to abandon her roots and follow the guidelines set by the icons of fashion in New York, Paris, Milan, and Britain. Alena, however, has remained true to herself, presenting her art just as it is. And many are the prizes she has earned for exhibiting this respect toward herself, this dignified attitude. Since graduating from the State University of Technology and Design in St. Petersburg, she has received a slew of important awards, including the best designer at Moscow's Dress of the Year in 1999 and, in 2000, the Smirnoff International Prize for Design.

And the fact is Alena remains original while simultaneously embracing the past, innovative in salvaging what is obsolete, unique and unparalleled in immersing herself in the collective iconography of her homeland. For this reason, she is considered one of the most important discoveries in Russian design of recent times.



Photography courtesy of Alena Akhmadullina



Photography courtesy of Alena Akhmadullina

The aesthetic of the Russian designer's Fall/Winter 2007–2008 collection takes inspiration in a nineteenth-century photography salon: women dressed in masculine suit jackets as a symbol of the incipient women's liberation.



- What inspires you?

Plentiful Russian culture and art inspire me in the creation of my collections. For instance, I'm interested in the history of the Russian czars. The mystique of both Russian customs and literature appeal to me. I mean various mystifications, charming transformations and dialogue with natural power, as well. In clothes, it can be expressed by using plenty of prints or by the presence of unique, concealed details.

- What is your dream as a designer?

To answer the purposes of the brand's business context, possessing immaculate creative latitude. For any designer, reaching such harmony is the highest stage of professionalism. You are creating a collection the way buyers want it, and it is moving successfully.

- What has been the most important achievement of your career?

Our brand develops step by step, and every step is an achievement. A recent success was the active creation of the brand's team, consisting of very talented, unique people. They make my job a work of art. Our relationship and cooperation is very interesting, and I'm sure that very soon it will be reflected in the brand itself.

- How important are trends?

Fashion is a current art, which is why trends are very important. In the luxury segment, a brand's ability to produce trends and to be in phase with other designers' ideas brings not only moral and creative satisfaction, but also impressive figures in the profits column.

- Fashion has always reflected a certain era. What does fashion reflect in the twenty-first century?

Fashion cannot but retreat to background experience. And it is endless. Just as fashion's visualization of the future is most often expressed in the use of glossy materials, minimalist forms and space technologies. That is why designers often return to past decades, established styles and previous streams of art when creating a collection. Such nostalgia always cuts to the client's heart, so it is very pleasant to work with. Although, using different vintage forms and transforming them in the right way, it is possible to read a fashion of futurity.

- What book would you recommend to every fashion designer?

The books of Alexandr Vasiliev are the most delicate, elegant and exact research of fashion history. All of these publications are filled not only with unique photo materials, but also with very deep analysis of everything in the fashion industry during a given time slot.

Alena Akhmadullina
Rochdelsky, 15
123022 Moscow
Russia
www.alenaakhmadullina.com





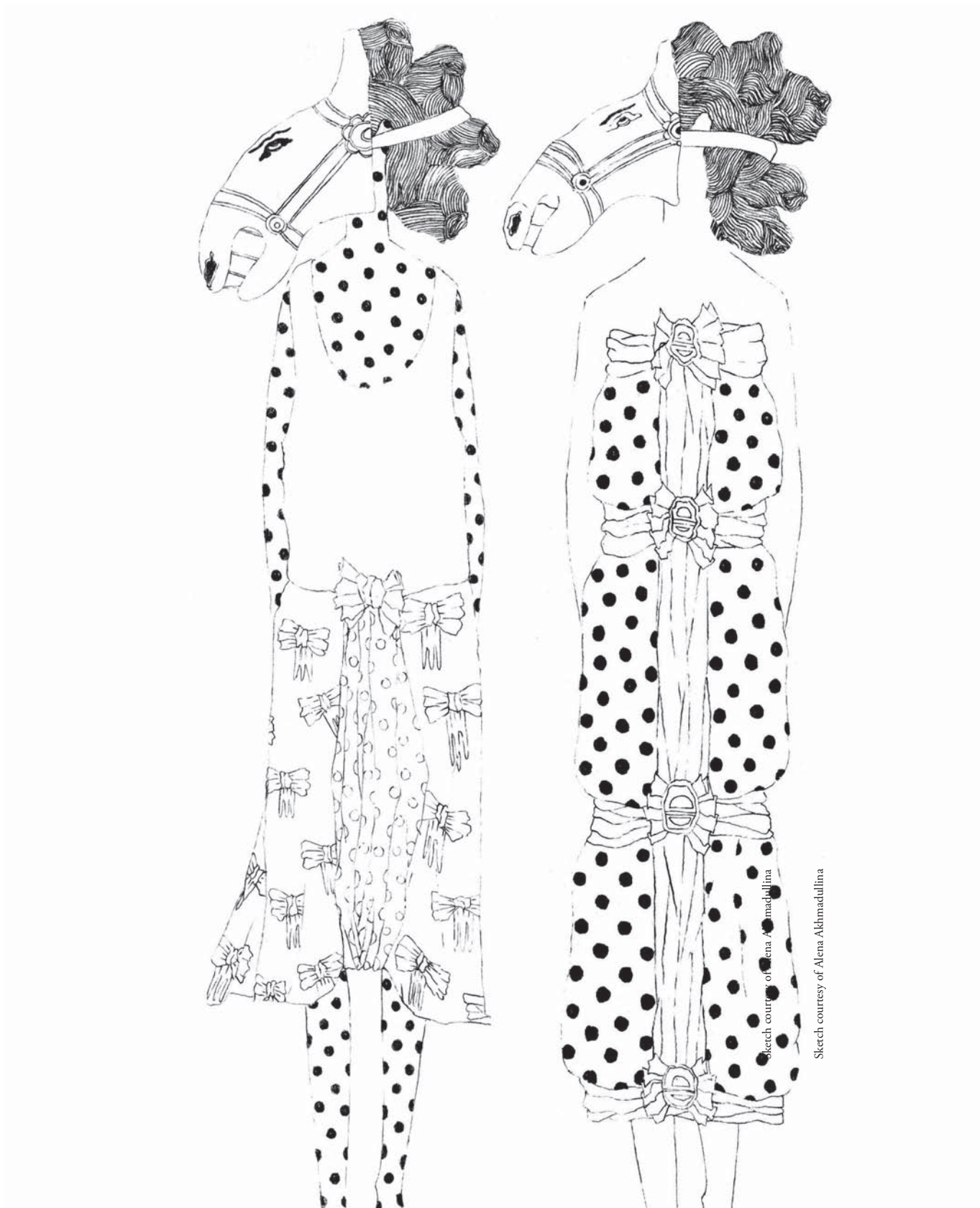
Photography courtesy of Alena Akhmadullina

In this Spring/Summer 2007 collection, Alena Akhmadullina delved into her past to give us garments in white tones inspired by the vertical static dresses of cutout dolls, as if they attached to the body thanks to a little tab.





Sketch courtesy of Alena Akhmadullina



In these sketches from the Spring/Summer 2006 collection, Alena returns to one of her most common sources of inspiration: Russian folklore, in which it is customary to dress up as animals in popular celebrations, as these drawings of a horse's head on a human body demonstrate.



Photography by Dan Martensen



Alexander Wang

If at first glance anything calls attention to Alexander Wang, it would be his youth. At just twenty-three, he has already become one of the designers that young Americans adore most. This is due in large part to his ability to give his garments that insouciant yet elegant urban look that so fascinates Americans, one not everyone knows how to carry off with such skill and expertise. This, alongside a style founded on the juxtaposition of elements (good and bad taste, the 80s and current trends, the luxurious and the basic, etc.), has given Wang's creations an unusual identity that adapts very well to current preferences.

His designs are cherished by urban women with a rebellious bent, in search of comfortable garments with a flawless cut and the refined silhouettes of fashion that emerges from the street. This makes perfect sense, given his youth and restlessness. He is both an observer of and participant in the germination of these street trends, as well as the first to capture and reproduce them in the form of collections. An example of this is his Spring/Summer 2008 collection, which offered an unconventional reading of 80s fashion filtered through the lens of the movie *Working Girl*, exploring the feminine work wardrobe and reinterpreting it for current times.

Alexander was born in California in the heart of a Chinese-American family. When he was eighteen, he decided to leave San Francisco and move to New York to study at the Parsons School of Design. In a short time, he has traveled an impressively long road. Marc Jacobs and Derek Lam are some of the brands he has worked for, and still under twenty-five, he is now presenting his seventh collection. In short, he is a true prodigy of fashion.



Photography by Dan Martensen



Photographies by Dan Martensen

Spring/Summer 2008 collection for women looking for comfort, freshness and the opportunity to explore the chicest side of their nature. Above, oversized garments combined with mini shorts or drainpipe trousers represented some of Alexander's most striking designs.



Photography by Dan Martensen

- What inspires you?

Inspiration usually doesn't stray too far from home. It's my friends, the streets, art and music. I try not to push too hard to find inspiration, because it's usually right under my nose.

- What is your dream as a designer?

To change the way people perceive what is acceptable for red carpet fashion and to create a lifestyle that people can adapt to and feel comfortable in.

- What has been the most important achievement of your career?

To actually be sold in stores is thrilling, and so is having an amazing team working with me.

- How important are trends?

Not important at all. A trend means you are conforming, and that's not what my brand is about.

- Fashion has always reflected a certain era. What does fashion reflect in the twenty-first century?

For me, it's individuality and comfort.

- The book you would recommend to every fashion designer is...

Atlas of Fashion Designers.

Alexander Wang
386 Broadway, 3rd floor
New York, NY 10013
United States
www.alexanderwang.com



Photography by Dan Martensen





Alexandra Moura

Alexandra's designs evoke a somber, exhausted landscape; a misty, futuristic panorama populated by garments with pleats and knots that intersect to form organic fabrics; a second skin, melancholy yet comfortable, created out of elegant materials and pale colors that warmly embrace and shield the body.

Alexandra was born in Lisbon, where she received her training as a designer. It is easy to appreciate the nostalgic atmosphere of the city in her work. Nonetheless, her creations do not represent a yearning for the past; retro references are few and far between, and there is an absence of sentimental longing for times past and traditional Portuguese fado music. Instead, an existential sadness sets its gaze on the near future. For this reason, the designer dresses artists that embody the new, modern, sophisticated spirit of Lisbon such as Madredeus lead singer Teresa Salgueiro. The rough sophistication of her garments could very well be employed in the recreation of a science fiction movie, her designs and colors reminiscent of the sober futurism of *Mad Max* and *Blade Runner*. An elegant, disaffected look. Simple, comfortable, and the very opposite of ornate.

Since 2001, Alexandra's career has drawn attention to itself through the designer's participation in numerous events and projects. Her collections are shown twice a year during Lisbon Fashion Week, and her designs have appeared at various European events such as the Biennale Internationale du Design in Saint Étienne, Bread and Butter in Barcelona, and the 12th Belgrade Fashion Week. With the same flexibility characteristic of her work, Alexandra continues to carve out a place for herself in the world of international fashion, exhibiting her Portuguese spirit by reinventing a Lisbon of the future.



Photography by Diana Dias



© Rui Vasco/courtesy of Moda Lisboa

Reflecting her exhaustive study of the human body, the Lisbon designer presents this Fall/Winter 2007–2008 collection based on the structures of organic tissues like muscle, tendons and cartilage.



- What inspires you?

A photo, a person, an object, a sensation, a feeling. Everything that is beautiful through my eyes, everything that has the capability to put me in another world, another dimension, everything that makes me dream and gives me the power to have ideas.

- What is your dream as a designer?

The constant challenge of creating and achieving ideas. It is, no doubt, the designer's dream.

- What has been the most important achievement of your career?

My main achievement is the fact that I have a company that produces and sells my ideas.

- How important are trends?

Trends are important mainly because of information and the constant updates on the times we are living. It is important to look for the trends, but they are just information. With my creations, I don't follow trends; I just follow ideas and concepts, which I explore until exhaustion, finally arriving at the collection.

- Fashion has always reflected a certain era. What does fashion reflect in the twenty-first century?

It is a reflection of the fusion of several eras in a single moment, the fusion of various criticisms and analyses of different states of mind. It has all become a special, singular twenty-first century fashion.

- What book would you recommend to every fashion designer?

Histoires de la mode, written by Didier Grumbach.

Alexandra Moura

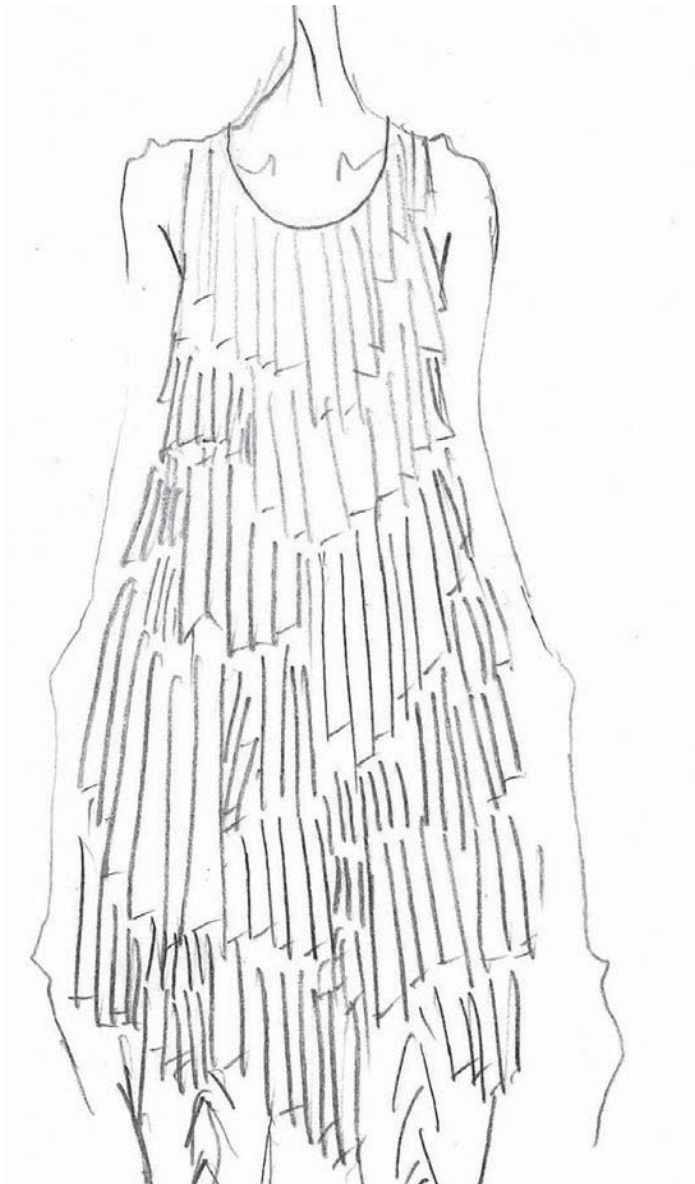
Rua Latino Coelho, 33, 1º esq.

1050-132 Lisbon

Portugal

www.alexandramoura.com





Sketch courtesy of Alexandra Moura

Illustrations by Alexandra Moura for the Fall/Winter 2007-2008 season. Knots, interlaced fabrics of different textures, and cream colors were the principal actors in this collection.





Sketch courtesy of Alexandra Moura

Sketches and compositions made from remnants and different accessories is the starting point for the singular collections with which Alexandra shakes up fashion runways.



TUDO NAHA





Photography by Dan & Corina Lecca

Ángel Sánchez

Ángel Sánchez gladly entered the family business, a sewing shop in Venezuela specializing in customized work, where he soaked up fashion over the years among the sewing machines and scissors. Time and other interests, however, caused his initial dream to gradually fade, and he ended up enrolling as an architecture student at Universidad Simón Bolívar in Caracas. Ángel's architectural studies provided him with the additional tools he needed to arrive at the profession he finally opted for: that of fashion designer. With this idea in mind and a head full of doubts, he thus decided to devote himself to fashion.

In 1995, Ángel opened his own showroom in New York. That same year, the coronation of a Miss Venezuela dressed in one of his garments made it clear to him that he had been born to make dresses for the most beautiful women on the planet. His garments are an architecturally immaculate armature conceived to emphasize femininity with elegance. Made with a meticulous attention to detail, his light, vaporous designs extol the figure of a harmoniously proportioned woman.

As Karl Lagerfeld and Cavalli did for H&M, Ángel has designed a collection for the Venezuelan chain Beco, in what seems to represent an evolution from the most refined haute couture to a more elaborate and elegant pret-a-porter for everyday wear.

The trajectory of this great master has extended beyond the frontiers of his native Venezuela, and he is currently one of the most coveted designers for the biggest stars in Hollywood. And the fact is that few are able to build dreams on a single pattern.



Photography by Anibal Mestre



Photography by Dan & Corina Lecca

To the right, a black silk tulle cocktail dress. Over it, tulle body embroidered in small antique silver pieces. To the left, deep blue silk chiffon dress. All belong to the 2008 “Evening Resort” collection.



- What inspires you?

In my work, you find nostalgia and modernity existing alongside each other. Nostalgia comes from my childhood fascination with the cinematography of the 50s, but the simple lines are the result of my training as an architect.

As an architect, each design begins with a drawing, but it's the construction and the way a dress gets assembled that interests me most—achieving the right proportion and hang, and without being a minimalist, trying to economize when it comes to ornamentation and different purposes in a single design.

The romantic and Latin side is also very present. I'm seduced by the drama and impact a design can generate, and I'm fascinated by that almost forgotten sense of elegance and glamour, which is why I always work with classical figures, although I reinterpret them, giving them a subtly modern and unexpected touch.

- What is your dream as a designer?

Like any designer, I have to admit that I want international recognition and to grow and expand in terms of offers and products, but I don't dream of inspiring a revolution with my work. The truth is, I only try to use fashion as a way of expressing myself, and for me it would be a great achievement to continue feeling the intimate and immediate satisfaction that I've always felt with my work and to enjoy being acknowledged for it along the way, which would give me the necessary resources and strength to express my ideas in a more definitive way.

- What has been the most important achievement of your career?

My wisest decision was made just as I was enjoying my best professional moment in my country. It was having taken the risk and having had the courage to move beyond the boundaries of my own success and face an international competition. After that, my wisest move was being able to persevere and survive until I'd made a name for myself, even if just a small one, in a business as competitive as this one.

- How important are trends?

I make use of trends as a way of ensuring that my own work evolves and doesn't grow old and repeat itself.

- Fashion has always reflected a certain era. What does fashion reflect in the twenty-first century?

Accessibility and freedom.

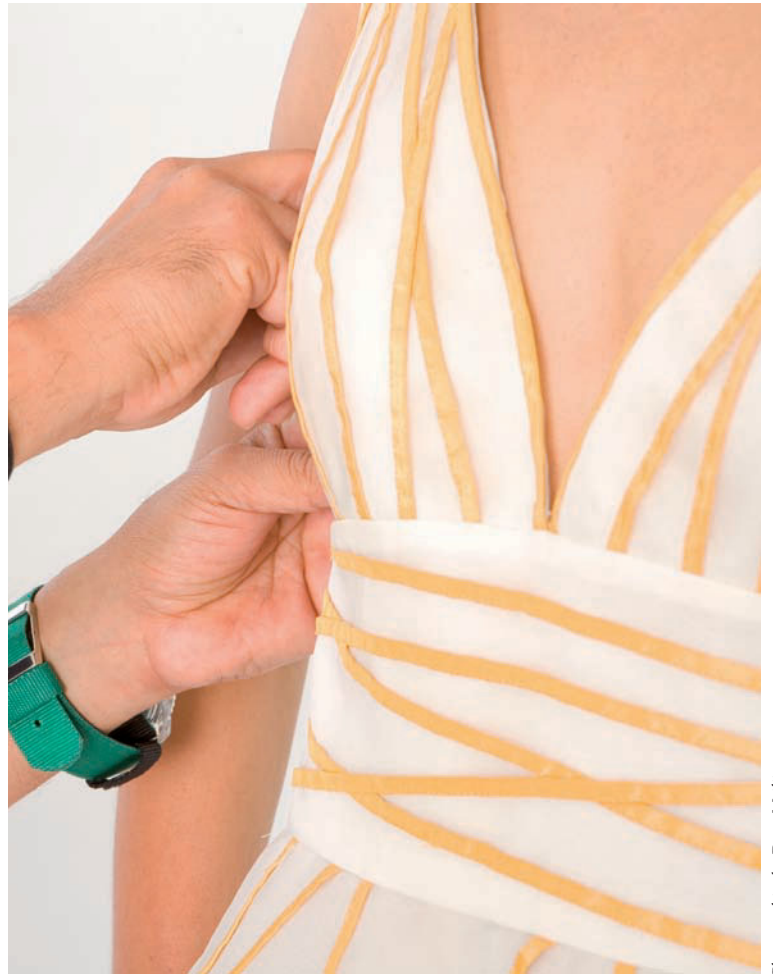
- What book would you recommend to every fashion designer?

A biography of Cristobal Balenciaga. It could be *Cristóbal Balenciaga* by Lesley Ellis Miller (1993).

Ángel Sánchez
148 West 37th Street, 7th floor
New York, NY 10018
United States
www.angelsanchezusa.com



Photography courtesy of Ángel Sánchez





Photography by Dana Meilijson

Trained in architecture, Ángel Sánchez resorts constantly to cultural and academic references in his work, as in the Spring/Summer 2008 collection, the creative process of which can be seen in these images.



Photography by Rogério Mesquita/styling by Greison Albuquerque/model: Taísa Maciel

Anunciação

Appreciating the beauty of the work of Maríá Elvira Crosara requires only a glance. But if you move a little closer, you will see that these garments are also the result of the slow sedimentation of cultures. The dresses, kimonos and shirts from Anunciação's latest collection emerge from the confluence of an Italian artistic training and the raw force of Rio de Janeiro, all of it awash in the aesthetic imaginings of a Colombian illustrator with undeniable Japanese influences.

Maríá Elvira was raised in Goiás among table linens, embroidery and the meticulously crafted curtains of local artisans. Before long, she decided to follow her own passions, traveling to Florence to study jewelry design at the Italian School of Fashion Design. She later completed this training with classes in fashion design at Universidade Federal in Goiás.

In 2003, without much pomp, the company Anunciação was born. This gave free rein to the artist's evocative and unusual aesthetic universe. With a certain collector's spirit, her childhood memories are brought forth, in addition to a taste for embroidery, a joyful tribute to nature and life inherent in all her creations, and a deep respect for craftsmanship, which is reflected in the names of the individuals that hand-embroider her designs.

Festive colors and the pagan tropics imbue the work of Anunciação, printed on an exquisite, meticulous cut that transmits fresh and subtle sensuality. All of this is the result of the vision of an extremely talented designer who is able to articulate her unique perspective with rare balance and immaculate taste.



Photography by Rogério Mesquita



Illustration by Catalina Estrada

Illustrations by Colombian illustrator Catalina Estrada in which the artist establishes a nexus between her own imagination and the world of Anunciação. To the right, two designs with prints by the artist from the Spring/Summer 2008 collection.



Photographs by Rogério Mesquita/styling by Greisson Albuquerque/model: Taísa Maciel