



PATH TO CHANGE

TURKISH FASHION FABRICS

**FF** MAGAZINE



**BTSO**  
BURSA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY



PV PARIS



innovation  
& technology

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# TURKISH FASHION FABRICS TFF MAGAZINE



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BURSA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

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*Illustration by Zeynep Alkan*



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"A good designer can design anything."







## İBRAHİM BURKAY

Bursa Chamber of Commerce and Industry  
Chairman





The fashion and textile industry stands at the threshold of a new era where form and content are redefined and aesthetics, technology and responsibility converge in a shared vision. This transformation demands an innovative mindset that breaks away from traditional molds. With centuries of textile heritage behind us, we are embracing this global shift not as followers but as pioneers.

In this context, our vision under the theme “Path to Change” serves as a powerful roadmap to address the challenges of the fashion and textile industry and to advance toward a sustainable future. Guided by this understanding, we aim to collectively build a new industry approach interwoven with sustainability, technology, cultural heritage and ethical values.

Today, the resources we use, the environmental impact of production processes, the respect for labor and the benefits provided to society have become key factors shaping consumer preferences. This new reality imposes a great responsibility on our industry while also offering opportunities to build a stronger future.

Technical textiles focused on technology, circular production models that reduce environmental impact, a redefined sense of craftsmanship and designs that reflect cultural diversity form the cornerstones of this journey of transformation.

With its historical legacy and production power, Bursa is among the cities best positioned to lead this transformation. Our expertise in green production, ethical supply chains and digital transformation distinguishes us on a global scale. However, it is the mindset that boldly steps forward, embraces change and holds the will to design the future that will bring this potential to life.

One of the most concrete examples of this approach is our fair, the Turkish Fashion Fabrics Show, an impactful and dynamic platform for trade and transformation. Organized by KFA Fuarçılık, this event brings an innovative vision to our industry and connects our companies with high-quality buyers. It also serves as a platform where inspiring ideas are shared through trend zones, seminars, launches and fashion shows.

Turkish Fashion Fabrics Show is the reemergence of a city that inspires the world with its production capacity, now through design, technology and the vision of “Path to Change.” This significant event is a meeting point for transformation, innovation and the ideal of a sustainable future. Every collection prepared, every partnership formed and every step taken strengthens Türkiye’s journey of transformation in textiles.

As Bursa Chamber of Commerce and Industry, we remain steadfast in our efforts to make our textile industry more competitive and sustainable on a global scale. The history Bursa has woven into fabric is now touching the future.

We wish for all our efforts in advancing our sector and building a stronger future for our country to bring prosperity, and we extend our warmest regards and respect.



**A  
Manifesto  
for  
the  
Future  
of  
Fashion  
and  
Textiles**



# PATH TO CHA NGE





As we stand at the crossroads of the present and the future, the fashion and textile industry faces an urgent need for transformation.

The path ahead is one of innovation, responsibility, and respect for the craft, the planet, and the people who make it all possible. This manifesto calls for a movement toward a sustainable, ethical, and forward-thinking industry that celebrates both its cultural heritage and its potential for future growth.

**Embracing Sustainability:**  
*A Responsibility We Cannot Ignore*

The fashion and textile industry holds the key to both the environmental impacts and the solutions. Reducing waste, minimizing carbon footprints, and making our production processes more responsible are the cornerstones of a sustainable future. By adopting the circular economy approach, turning to eco-friendly materials, and implementing responsible production processes, we can protect our planet while advancing the industry towards the future and maintaining its competitiveness.

**Technical Textiles:**  
*A New Era of Functionality and Sustainability*

The role of technical textiles cannot be overlooked in the future of the fashion and textile industry.

With innovations in fabric technology, smart textiles, and functional fabrics, we are entering an era where fashion is not only about aesthetics but also about performance, sustainability, and even health.

By integrating these advanced materials into everyday wear, we not only enhance functionality but also reduce the environmental impact of production, opening up new possibilities for both high fashion and everyday garments.

**The Power of Change:**  
*Innovating for a Better Tomorrow*

Change is the only constant, and the fashion and textile industry must lead this change. The future of fashion is not built on yesterday's practices but on new ideas, technological advances, and the courage to challenge the status quo.

By embracing innovation—whether in sustainable materials, manufacturing techniques, or business models—we open the door to an industry that is not just reactive but proactive in shaping a better world. Let us invest in research and development, in new technologies like 3D printing and smart textiles, to create products that respond to the needs of the modern world.





### **Honoring Craftsmanship and Skills:** *The Heartbeat of Fashion*

In an age of mass production, we must not forget the artisans, the skilled craftsmen and women whose talent and labor bring authenticity and quality to the pieces they create. It is vital to preserve these crafts and the knowledge passed down through generations.

The future of fashion lies in the marriage of innovation with tradition—combining the artistry of handcraft with the efficiency of modern technology. Let us celebrate the rich heritage of textile creation and ensure that these timeless skills continue to thrive.

### **Celebrating Culture:** *Fashion as a Reflection of Our World*

Fashion is not just about clothing; it is a reflection of who we are, where we come from, and what we stand for. Our designs, patterns, and materials are deeply rooted in culture, and it is our responsibility to honor and protect these traditions.

As we move forward, we must embrace diversity, inclusivity, and the stories embedded in every fabric, while fostering a greater understanding of global textile practices. This cultural richness must be preserved and celebrated, not appropriated.

### **Building the Future Together:** *Industry-Wide Collaboration*

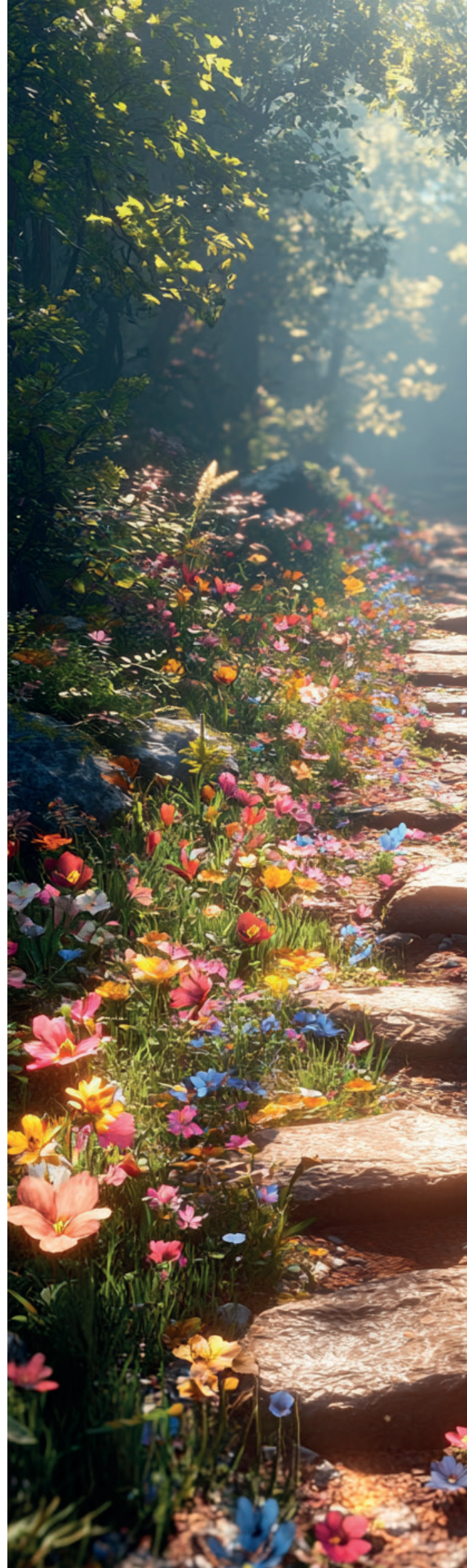
The journey toward a sustainable and ethical fashion future is not one that can be traveled alone. We must work together—designers, manufacturers, consumers, and policymakers—to create a cohesive strategy that supports ethical practices, responsible sourcing, and innovation. Collaboration across the entire value chain will ensure that we build a resilient, adaptive, and future-ready industry.

### **Redefining Trends:** *The Evolution of Fashion and Society*

Fashion today evolves rapidly, and trends are not only changing in style and design but also in values. In the future of fashion, aesthetics will not be the only focus; ethics and sustainability will also play a significant role. The fashion industry should shift away from short-lived trends and move towards long-lasting, meaningful designs. Inclusive, diversity-celebrating, and eco-conscious trends will shape the style of the future. These trends will promote not just consumption but also conscious shopping, encouraging societies to engage with fashion in a more responsible way.



The Path to Change is not a distant dream; it is an immediate necessity. As we step into the future, we have the power to reshape the fashion and textile industry—one that is sustainable, respectful of cultural heritage, driven by technological advancements, and committed to a better world for all. We must act with urgency, purpose, and vision, because the choices we make today will define the industry of tomorrow.







*Let us walk this path together, hand in hand, towards a brighter and more sustainable future....*



SS 26 & AW 26-27

SEASONAL COLOR & TREND STORIES +  
MATERIAL INNOVATION

MERT ÇELEBİ







## OVERVIEW OF THE SS/26 SEASON

# Ecosystem & Circularity

**Climate Change:**

Increasing extreme weather events and resource scarcity.

**Nighttime Activities:**

Lifestyle shifts driven by rising temperatures.

**Biotechnology and Bioindustry:**

Artificial intelligence, synthetic biology, and precision fermentation + biological alternatives to everyday materials.

**Small-Scale Innovations:**

Creative and localized solutions.

# AI Collaboration

**Optimized Efficiency:**

Human-machine collaboration.

**Legacy System Transformation through AI:**

Acceleration of productivity and sustainable systems + optimization of inefficient processes.

**Personalization:**

Inclusion of the consumer in the design process.

**Fashion Strategies:**

Order management and inventory planning powered by artificial intelligence.

# Craft and Sensory Experience

**Multigenerational Living:**

Rising living costs and the growth of the sharing economy.

**Sensory Appeal:**

Sensory experiences as a response to stressful living conditions.

**Tactile Hedonism and Glimmer Moments:**

Plush, satisfying materials and elements of surprise + small design details that spark joy.





# WISDOM OF NATURE

The “Wisdom of Nature” concept explores the intelligence of the natural world and how this wisdom can inspire fashion.

Embracing the necessity of making more conscious and sustainable choices for the future of society, this concept represents a search for deeper, more meaningful transformation within the world of design.

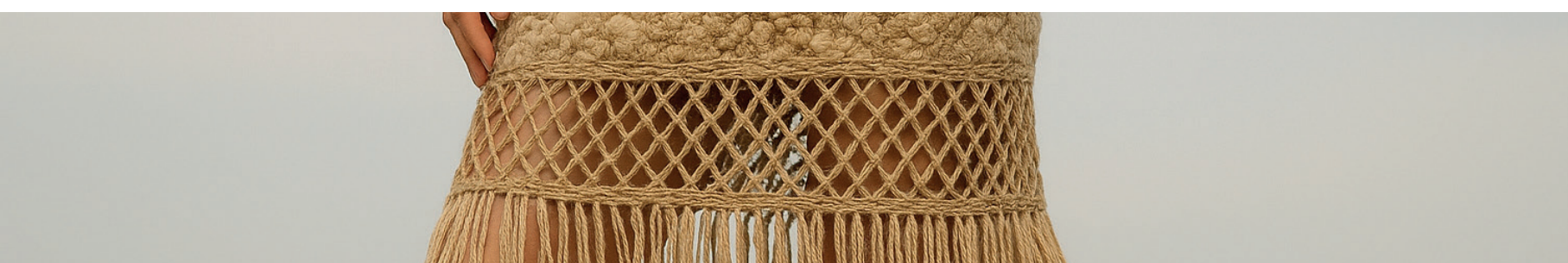
Tuscan Clay

Terracotta Dust

Coffee Fiber


Inspired by nature’s raw and organic forms, this approach blends ancient techniques and natural materials with a contemporary design perspective.

Earth-like textures, irregular surfaces that bear the traces of craftsmanship, and biophilic forms offer a unique style for both summer collections and knitwear.



Yarns derived from raffia and natural fibers support the hypertexture approach embraced by brands like Stella McCartney, while materials such as linen, macramé details, hemp, and ramie contribute to relaxed yet sophisticated silhouettes.

In this theme, sustainability takes center stage not only in material choices but also throughout the production process. Earth-friendly renewable fibers, plant-based dyeing techniques, and the support of traditional methods practiced by local artisans elevate the designs beyond aesthetics toward an ethical statement.





Nostalgic Pink

Core Bordeaux

Golden Mist

Enchanted Green

Rooted Green

Celebrating the exuberance and romance of nature, Bloomcore elevates the power of flowers through exaggerated, three-dimensional, and tactile forms.

Following the 2024 Met Gala, interest in floral patterns has surged, with large-scale, bold, and vibrant floral motifs forming the core of this aesthetic.



In design, pieces enhanced with layered floral appliqués, laser-cut details, and textured embroidery stand out for their volume and richness.

The color palette features saturated floral tones inspired by artificial intelligence and includes hyper-realistic nature prints. Orchids and lilies serve as key motifs, while tropical fruit and leaf patterns infuse collections with a dynamic energy.

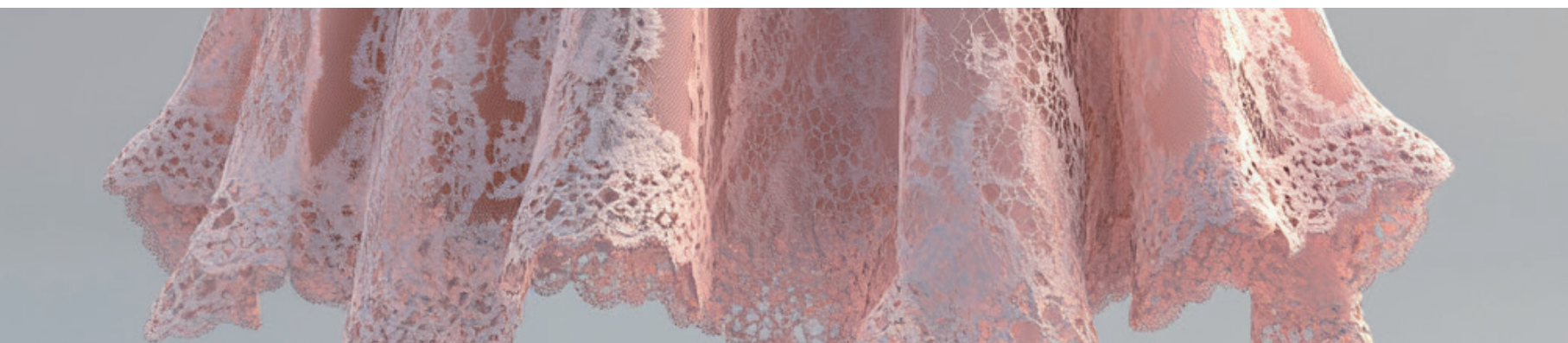
Glacial Light

Neon Indigo

Infinite Navy

Inspired by the fluid forms of nature and a sea-breeze-infused boho style, Bohemian Waves combines soft silhouettes, layered details, and effortless elegance.

The return of the free-spirited boho fashion of the 2000s, blended with nautical aesthetics, brings a sophisticated and modern interpretation to this theme.





In this design approach, drawstrings and elasticated details shape curvy silhouettes, while voluminous skirts and wide sleeves reflecting wave forms evoke a sense of movement.

Rope-like embellishments and ruffled layers add a romantic touch, while lightweight textured fabrics made from natural fibers form the foundation of a breezy summer style.

# GOODNESS OF TECHNOLOGY

The Goodness of Technology concept introduces a new era of functionality and sustainability in technical textiles. This concept highlights the power of change and the possibilities that innovation can create for a better tomorrow.

With the opportunities provided by technology, vibrant and luminous colors come forward, merging and blending seamlessly. These color transitions symbolize the evolution of technology and the continuous advancement of innovation.

In the world of fashion and design, this innovative transformation brought by technology represents a significant step toward a more sustainable future.



With the rise of new generation minimalism, Tonal Comfort redefines simple and effortless dressing through a modern lens. Originally emerging in the early 2010s as a response to the “hype” culture, the Tonal Comfort movement is making a comeback today as a reaction to excessive micro trends and constantly shifting fashion fads. Its color palette composed of warm neutrals and washed pastel tones creates a soothing and tranquil atmosphere.



The design approach reinterprets essential pieces with a contemporary style. Layered combinations, soft tonal transitions, and functionality take center stage. Considering the increasing levels of stress and fatigue among consumers, restorative and comfort enhancing functional materials are used. Patterns are kept to a minimum; tone-on-tone textures are favored in line with NonPrint trends.



As the integration of technology into human life deepens, wearable neurotechnology devices and applications that promote lucid dreaming are shaping a new form of digital consciousness.

As an artistic reflection of human machine interactions, fluid forms, light-responsive surfaces, and digital aesthetics are making their way into the world of fashion.



Voluminous forms created with layered transparent fabrics, along with fine fringes, ruffles, and wavy details, define the standout silhouettes.

In terms of textures and materials, fluid surfaces inspired by digital filters, heat-sensitive color changing fabrics, and translucent effects shape the direction of this theme.

Transparent panels and patterns that evoke a sense of digital manipulation are also among the key highlights of the theme.



Traditional office wear is being reinterpreted with a rule breaking perspective that highlights individuality.

Gen Z’s evolving understanding of work life, their perception of success, and interest in low tech lifestyles are key pillars of this trend. Inspired by the neutral and monotonous work attire seen in the sci-fi series Severance, an ironic stance is adopted against conformist office style.



Oversized shirts, loose blazers, asymmetric cuts, and draped details define the standout silhouettes.

In the realm of textures and fabric stories, wrinkled materials reminiscent of unpressed looks, loosely tied ties, and carelessly buttoned garments come to the forefront.

Dropped shoulders, gathered sleeve details, and forms that appear slightly imperfect are among the notable design elements.





# DIGITAL STORYTELLING

The DIGITAL STORYTELLING concept explores the fusion of craftsmanship with technology and the meeting of nostalgic elements with new production approaches.

This concept reflects the richness of cultures and the power of cross industry collaborations, illustrating the blending of traditional handcraft with modern technologies.

By uniting the wisdom of the past with the innovation of the present, this theme builds a bridge that shapes the future.

Frosted Pink

Cranberry Puree

Hazy Lavender

Digital Fuchsia

Powdered Pink

Following seasons dominated by minimalism, a return to maximalist expression is emerging highlighting rich details and artisanal craftsmanship.

This movement offers a bold and dynamic aesthetic that celebrates the labor of artisans and traditional techniques.

A striking aesthetic emerges from the fusion of colorful, layered, and mixed textures.

However, the true focus of this narrative lies in the collaborations with artists and artisans.

The blending of traditional techniques with contemporary interpretations enables the creation of timeless and valuable pieces through a slow production philosophy.

Craft-intensive details such as embroidery, hand-painting, and crochet not only support sustainability but also imbue each piece with an artistic identity.

Pure Linen

Peach Puree

Cinnamon  
Touch

Bitter  
Espresso

In an era dominated by minimalism and understated luxury, a powerful wave of romanticism is rising bringing dramatic storytelling back into fashion.

Opulent collections like Galliano's couture line for Margiela and Simone Rocha's collaboration with Jean Paul Gaultier reinterpret historical references through a contemporary lens.

This trend draws inspiration from various eras, blending the grandeur of the past with the aesthetics of today.



Minty

Rooted  
Green

Pomegranate  
Red

Faded  
Emerald

Interest in the glamorous party style of the 1970s and 1980s is being revived, offering a luxurious and sophisticated alternative to the dominance of the Y2K aesthetic.

This movement avoids excessive nostalgia, instead blending the era's bold silhouettes with the refined touches of contemporary fashion. Elegance and sophistication take center stage.

Bandage dresses, voluminous party tops, concealed shoulder pads, balloon skirts, and blouses with bow details are among the key pieces of this trend.

While retro influences are preserved, overly theatrical '80s references are avoided, creating a sense of modern luxury that aligns with today's aesthetic.

## PLANET-CENTERED TRANSFORMATION

### Climate Crisis as the New Normal:

Climate change is no longer just a matter of awareness it has become a reality embedded in our lives.

In this new era, consumers will prefer brands that not only focus on sustainability but also prioritize holistic well-being.

### Adaptability:

As the effects of global warming intensify, designs, raw materials, and production methods that adapt to seasonal changes will come to the forefront.

### Circular Thinking / Resource Reuse:

At the industrial level, open source technologies and regenerative practices will provide solutions to resource scarcity while becoming tools for preserving originality and quality.

Consumers will gravitate toward simplification and a "less but better" consumption approach.

## CREATIVE ESCAPES THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

### Human + AI Balance:

Artificial intelligence is no longer just a tool; it has become a partner that must be redefined within a societal context.

In human-machine collaboration, the goal is not only speed but also emotional connection, environmental awareness, and cultural preservation.

### Meaningful Connections:

This season highlights technology rooted in "wisdom" designs that facilitate connection while empowering individuals to maintain control over their digital experience.

### The Power of Play:

Play is no longer solely about entertainment; it takes on a strategic role in helping individuals and communities cope with stress, loneliness, and burnout.

Brands will invest in game based processes that benefit both designers and consumers alike.







**NEW SOCIAL FRAMEWORKS AND THE FUTURE OF CRAFTSMANSHIP**

**Collective Consciousness:**

In the new season, the social structure is evolving toward an inclusive perspective that balances individuality with collective consciousness. People are seeking belonging and acceptance and they expect the same sensitivity from brands.

**Craftsmanship, Meaning, and Identity:**

In this era, craftsmanship is not merely a nostalgic element; it becomes a vital tool for preserving identity, culture, and authenticity.

**Collective Approaches in Design:**

Competition is being replaced by collaboration. Brands are no longer striving against each other but are joining forces to find solutions to shared challenges.

Interdisciplinary collaborations within design teams will increase, and the sharing of materials and processes will be recognized as a valuable and sustainable method.





# SENEM KULA

*Sustainability-Focused Textile and Fashion Designer*





## Shaping the Future of Textiles Through a Circular Economy

The textile industry, unfortunately, ranks as the second most environmentally impactful sector.

For many years, the dominant linear fashion economy has been based on a take make use dispose model. However, it is now clear that this model is unsustainable.

For the future of both the industry and our planet, the circular economy is not just an alternative it is an inevitable necessity.

The circular economy approach requires a multilayered transformation spanning from design and production to retail, consumption, post-use revaluation, and recycling processes.

This transformation should not be limited to producers and consumers alone. It must be implemented within a systematic structure—supported by legislation, NGOs, educational content, and individual awareness.

### DESIGN

It is now essential for designers to think with a circular systems mindset. Products must be designed to generate minimal waste, use fewer resources, and have a long lifespan throughout their entire life cycle.

During the design process, the following questions should be considered:

- How can it be produced using the least amount of resources?
- Is it possible to reduce the use of chemicals, water, and energy?
- How can we extend the product's lifespan?
- How can the product be recovered after use?

In this context, new design strategies are coming to the forefront such as timeless and high quality designs, zero waste patterns, easily disassembled constructions, 3D digital prototyping, and upcycling applications.

### MATERIAL SELECTION

A significant portion of textile waste stems from material choices. Therefore, materials that are reusable or easily recyclable should be prioritized in the selection process.

The use of mono-materials (single-component fabrics) facilitates recycling processes.

In addition to recycled materials such as cotton and wool, it is important to consider whether those materials can be recycled again in the future.

Biodegradable materials, as well as natural fibers like linen and hemp which require less water and fewer chemicals are also gaining prominence.

Throughout these processes, certification systems, ethical production methods, and transparency principles must be foundational.

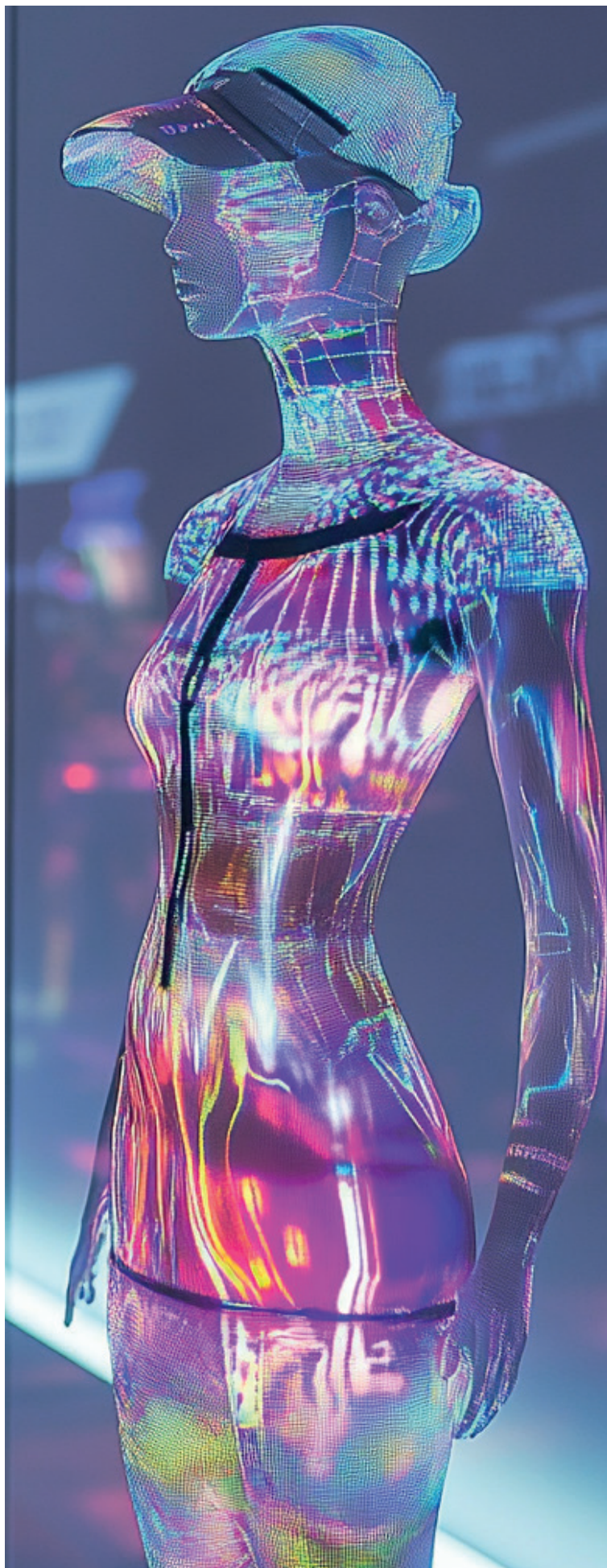
For dyeing and finishing treatments, industrial natural dyeing, bio-based dyes, and water-saving nanotechnologies (such as airdye and solution dye) should be preferred.

Furthermore, industrial symbiosis systems where the waste of one industry becomes the raw material of another are shaping the future of the materials ecosystem.

Innovative materials such as Orange Fiber (from orange peels), Piñatex (from pineapple leaves), and Apple Leather (from apple peels) are prime examples of this approach.







## PRODUCTION

The goal of production processes should be to establish systems that minimize waste and utilize resources efficiently. In particular, filtering and reusing wastewater in dyeing processes is critically important for water conservation.

Systematizing recycling infrastructures in industrial zones, approaching waste management collectively, and planning production based on actual demand are fundamental steps toward sustainability.

Additionally, promoting local manufacturing directly contributes to reducing the carbon footprint.

## RETAIL

As one of the leading brands in circular fashion, Patagonia made a bold statement against consumer culture with its slogan "Don't buy this jacket."

The future of retail is being shaped by transparency, conscious production, and the establishment of sustainable relationships with consumers.

Innovative practices such as augmented reality (AR)-powered virtual fitting rooms and QR code tags providing detailed product information are significant steps toward raising consumer awareness. Additionally, in-store recycling bins and garment repair/upcycling workshops have become integral parts of the circular fashion system.

## REUSE AND SECOND-HAND SALES

According to GlobalData, second-hand clothing sales are expected to reach \$230 billion globally by 2025, with projections indicating this figure will exceed \$350 billion by 2028.

This growth is largely driven by the environmental awareness of Gen Z and Millennials, their preference for more affordable options due to economic reasons, and the increasing adoption of circular consumption habits.

## SMART TEXTILES AND CIRCULARITY

*"The textiles of the future must be not only smart, but also conscious."*

Innovative textiles that adapt to changing climate conditions are shaping the industry when aligned with the vision of circular fashion.

Examples include:

- Ultra-light running jackets that collect sunlight during the day and emit light at night
- Seamless, zero-waste, and fully recyclable garments produced with 4D knitting technology
- Mono-material knits with built-in bounce and no need for foam (such as the "No Foam Knit" project)

Additionally, developments such as lab-grown, mushroom-based bioplastics and microorganism-derived, chemical-free dyeing techniques are revolutionizing the textile industry.



## THE ROLE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE AND CRAFTSMANSHIP

In future-oriented projections, craftsmanship, handwoven textiles, upcycled products, and details highlighting women's labor are becoming increasingly prominent.

At this point, Türkiye holds significant potential with its deep rooted weaving and craft traditions:

Our heritage in natural dyeing, Ahimsa silk from Hatay produced without harming silkworms, Kutnu fabric from Gaziantep, Şile cloth from Istanbul, Gılamık weaving from Antalya, Tırnak Bağı technique from Kastamonu, and the richly diverse silk weavings of Bursa these are just a few examples of invaluable cultural assets.

The circular economy reminds us that the key to the future lies in remembering and preserving the values that have always existed in our past.

## IN CONCLUSION...

A circular textile and fashion economy is a holistic system that aims to eliminate waste at every stage from design to production, and from use to post use while remaining in harmony with nature.

This system not only protects the environment but also honors the artisan, the designer, the consumer, and all stakeholders offering a value driven vision for the future rooted in innovation, ethics, and human dignity.





# TOYGAR NARBAY

*TGSD Co-Chairs*





**In recent years, the Turkish ready-to-wear industry has begun to secure a significant position in the global market. What are your thoughts on how these developments have contributed to the international success of Turkish brands?**

Following the removal of quotas in 2004 and China's emergence as a strong player in the market, Turkish ready-to-wear companies underwent a major transformation—from being contract manufacturers to becoming design sellers and brand creators.

The average export unit value, which was \$9.67/kg in 2001, has risen to \$15.20/kg by 2025.

Thanks to the contributions of R&D and Design Center programs, many of our companies first established brand identities in the local market. With the support of the Turquality program, they expanded their brand presence abroad through retail stores, e-commerce, and wholesale networks, increasing their share of branded product sales in international markets.

Increasing the export unit value in ready-to-wear will be possible either through the design and production of technical textiles and niche products or through strong branding efforts.

**What strategies should we pursue to ensure greater global recognition of Turkish ready-to-wear brands? What kind of vision is TGSD putting forward in this regard?**

Becoming a global brand without a strong country brand requires immense effort and resources. Today's globally renowned brands largely come from countries with well-established national identities such as the USA, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, Austria, Switzerland, and France.

Access to long-term financing, the presence of investors for start-ups, and strong institutional and systemic support within these countries are key factors. The value of a brand is recognized by both society and investors, and governments support and protect brands through various regulations, including those that prevent unfair competition.

We believe it is crucial for our country to cultivate a similar ecosystem. Efforts to build a national brand identity should be pursued systematically and framed as a national policy.

**At a time when digitalization and e-commerce are rapidly growing within the industry, how can Turkish ready-to-wear brands strengthen their presence in the digital world?**

It is essential for Turkish brands to establish stronger partnerships with digital service providers and online marketplaces. At the same time, companies need to further develop internal digital transformation processes and ensure integration with marketplaces and logistics providers.

Product and service quality, efficient stock management, and well-executed advertising and marketing strategies must all be redesigned with a digital mindset.

**Can you tell us about the support TGSD provides to companies in the industry? What opportunities are offered, especially for small and medium sized enterprises?**

Founded in 1976 and granted public benefit association status by the Council of Ministers in 2003, TGSD (Turkish Clothing Manufacturers' Association) represents the entire value chain of the sector with nearly 500 members, who collectively account for a large portion of Türkiye's ready-to-wear exports. TGSD is recognized as the most inclusive NGO in the industry.

TGSD aims to support the institutionalization of the ready-to-wear sector by focusing on innovation, digitalization, and green transformation working to improve efficiency, product and service quality, and ultimately to brand the Turkish ready-to-wear sector globally.

Since 2008, TGSD has organized the Istanbul Ready-to-Wear Conference, which is also featured in international calendars. Through this platform, as well as TGSD Development Academy, TGSD monitors industry developments, informs its members through daily, weekly, and monthly bulletins, and plays a leading role in shaping the sector.





**Can you tell us more about the training programs and projects TGSD offers for young designers and entrepreneurs? What kind of support do you provide to help them enter the sector more easily?**

Through the TGSD Development Academy, webinars are organized on topics relevant to the current needs of the sector. Additionally, with Genç TGSD (Young TGSD), we help create the necessary environment for younger generations to integrate into the industry, build networks, and develop projects in collaboration with key stakeholders.

**As an association, what types of collaborations are you pursuing to make the Turkish ready-to-wear sector more competitive in the international market?**

The Turkish ready-to-wear sector is highly sensitive to Türkiye's monetary and fiscal policies, as approximately 65% of its production inputs are priced in TL and 35% in foreign currency.

In the past two years, the industry has faced major cost pressures due to high inflation combined with suppressed exchange rates and elevated interest rates. Between 2022 and 2024:

Inflation increased by 138%

Labor costs by 249%

Financing costs by 258%,

while the exchange rate rose by only 101%.

As a result, the competitiveness of Turkish apparel companies has significantly declined.

In response, TGSD has publicly addressed the issue and presented a 10-point solution plan to restore competitiveness in the sector.

In addition, TGSD promotes the sector through partnerships with counterpart organizations in both the U.S. and the European Union, helping establish connections with stakeholders abroad and laying the groundwork for international collaborations.

Moreover, during the second day of the annual Istanbul Ready-to-Wear Conference held every October, B2B meetings are organized to bring together domestic and international buyers with companies in the sector, enabling our members to connect directly with potential business partners.

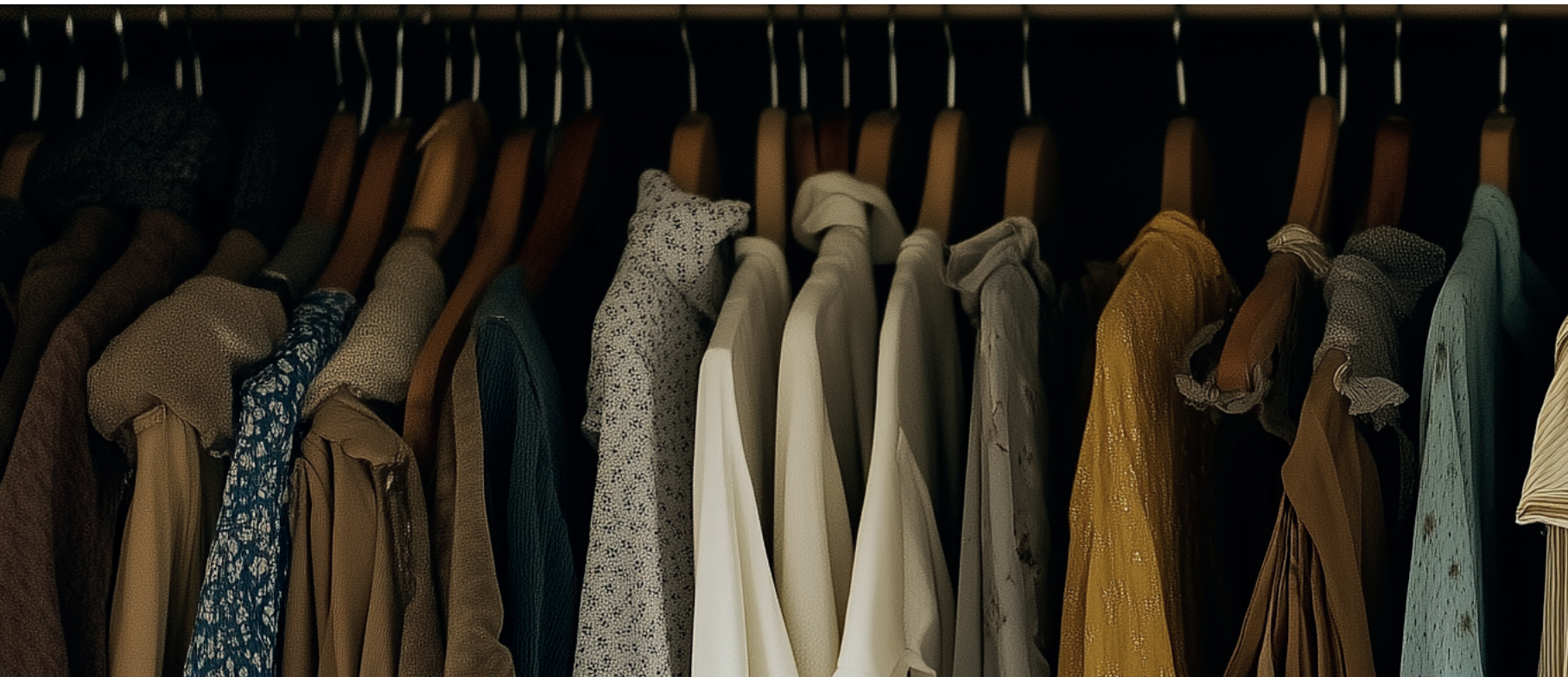
**What do you see as the biggest opportunities and threats for the future of the Turkish ready-to-wear industry? Which strategies should be prioritized during this period?**

The most significant threat currently facing the Turkish ready-to-wear industry is the loss of competitiveness due to the rising cost structure driven by monetary policy. With foreign currency based costs increasing by 27%, Turkish manufacturers have become 61% more expensive than their Far Eastern competitors and 46% more expensive than North African competitors. If the sector is not urgently supported, the risk of further market loss will grow.

In addition, labor shortages particularly in the western regions of Türkiye also pose a major threat.

However, there are notable opportunities:

The end of conflicts in Russia, Ukraine, and Israel may lead to increased sales in those markets.





Steps taken toward becoming a regional fashion hub could boost sales to neighboring countries through both wholesale and retail channels, including e-commerce.

Tensions between the U.S. and China in the Asia Pacific region are prompting American and European buyers to seek more secure supply chains, opening opportunities for Türkiye as an alternative production base.

Regulations introduced by the European Green Deal such as carbon border adjustments, product passports, and eco design standards as well as EU buyers' increased focus on responsible sourcing and stock management, are pushing for more localized and frequent small batch purchasing. Türkiye stands to benefit from these shifts thanks to its logistical proximity and flexible production structure.

**Sustainability has become a key topic in recent years. What path should the Turkish ready-to-wear industry follow in this area, and what steps should be taken toward sustainable production?**

The Turkish ready-to-wear industry must prepare for upcoming regulations such as eco-design requirements and product passports.

Key actions should include:

Developing sustainable materials and products

Improving IT infrastructures to enhance traceability and transparency across production processes

Establishing systems to monitor carbon footprints both in supply chains and within companies themselves ensuring readiness for product passport compliance

**Digital technologies are increasingly impacting fashion design and production. How should the Turkish ready-to-wear sector adapt to this digital transformation?**

IT infrastructure and the integration of artificial intelligence are emerging as key areas of competition.

To stay ahead, companies must:

Utilize portals for market research and fashion trend analysis

Accelerate design processes through 3D design software

Manage design workflows more effectively via PLM (Product Lifecycle Management) systems

These tools and strategies will be essential for companies seeking to maintain a competitive edge in an increasingly digital fashion landscape.

**What are the biggest challenges facing the Turkish ready-to-wear sector today? How can the industry create a sense of solidarity to overcome these issues?**

The most pressing issue currently faced by the sector is the 27% increase in foreign currency-based costs, driven by monetary policy over the past two years.

To restore competitiveness, TGSD has shared a 10-point proposal package with industry stakeholders.

**What are your proposed solutions regarding production costs and supply chain challenges in the industry? How can Turkish brands become more efficient in these areas?**

To improve overall efficiency, companies should focus on digitalization, engineering studies to enhance operational efficiency, lean manufacturing practices, and effective supply chain and cost management. These areas are crucial for navigating the current economic environment and maintaining competitiveness.





## As Turkish ready-to-wear brands gain global recognition, what strategies should be followed to protect and develop domestic production?

Türkiye must prioritize production-focused policies. In the 1990s, Europe pursued a deindustrialization strategy by outsourcing the production of industrial and consumer goods to the Far East, thereby reducing inflation and shifting its workforce toward service sectors—leading to short-term prosperity.

Meanwhile, China adopted a strategy of becoming the world's manufacturing hub. Today, building on its foundational industries, China threatens the existence of many European firms with its advancements in AI, autonomous vehicles, quantum computing, robotics, biotechnology, superconductors, and polymer technologies.

Now, Europe is attempting to correct its policy mistake through the European Green Deal, aiming to restore competitiveness to its industry. Similarly, the U.S. began intense efforts under the Trump administration to bring production back to American soil.

Therefore, deindustrialization must be reconsidered, and Türkiye must not abandon its production capacity.

To support production, TGSD has proposed the following 10-point policy package:

The exchange rate should move in parallel with inflation and be brought to its real value. If policies continue to maintain a strong currency, exporters should receive a 10% conversion support based on their net export revenue.

Eroding working capital should be replenished through loans with variable interest rates at half the reference rate or through long-term foreign currency loans. Interest on rediscount loans should be collected at the end of the term.

Eximbank credit support should return to the 2018 level, equaling 16% of total exports, with longer maturities and increased limits via Credit Guarantee Fund (KGF) and similar mechanisms.

Minimum wage support should be provided based on regional development. The support level for the 1st region should serve as a baseline, increasing by region. In the 5th and 6th regions, ready-to-wear companies should receive 2,500 TL per employee as a direct wage support payment, or regional minimum wage should be reconsidered.

To support compliance with the European Green Deal, the bureaucratic obstacles preventing solar power plant (SPP) investments should be removed.

KOSGEB (SME Development Organization) supports are vital for SMEs, but new incentive mechanisms are needed to encourage business growth. For firms to manage areas such as R&D, design, branding, ESG, and digitalization, scaling up is essential. Therefore, policies that support company growth are crucial for value-added production.

For cross-border e-commerce, micro-export and VAT refund processes should be simplified, and structures that support affordable, fast shipping should be incentivized.

To retain know-how and workforce lost due to early retirement (EYT), support should be provided to encourage experienced workers to return, and social security premiums should not be collected from retired employees to discourage informality.

To increase women's participation in the workforce, social security premiums should be waived for three years for women who are not currently employed but whose spouses are registered in the social security system.

To further support women's employment, local governments and ministries should invest in childcare centers tailored to regional needs.









# CEMAL BAYAZIT

*Director of İMA*



**İMA**



**The fashion industry is undergoing rapid transformation on a global scale. How do you think this transformation is reflected in fashion education in Türkiye?**

**Where does Istanbul Moda Academy stand in this transformation? What kind of “path to change” are you charting as an institution?**

The world is changing fast, and the fashion industry is at the forefront of this transformation. Concepts like digitalization, sustainability, and artificial intelligence are no longer futuristic they are today’s realities. Naturally, this transformation is directly reflected in fashion education.

Since our foundation, we have been an institution that anticipates sectoral needs and restructures its educational models accordingly. In order to train the fashion professionals of today and tomorrow, we are pursuing a comprehensive path focused on technology, creativity, and sustainability. We embrace an industry-integrated, hands-on, and visionary educational approach. At Istanbul Moda Academy, we are at the very heart of this transformation. To further support women’s employment, local governments and ministries should invest in childcare centers tailored to regional needs.

**How is the new designer profile evolving? What is the biggest difference between them and today’s graduates?**

**How are you preparing for the future of fashion while developing your academic programs? What skills are you investing in?**

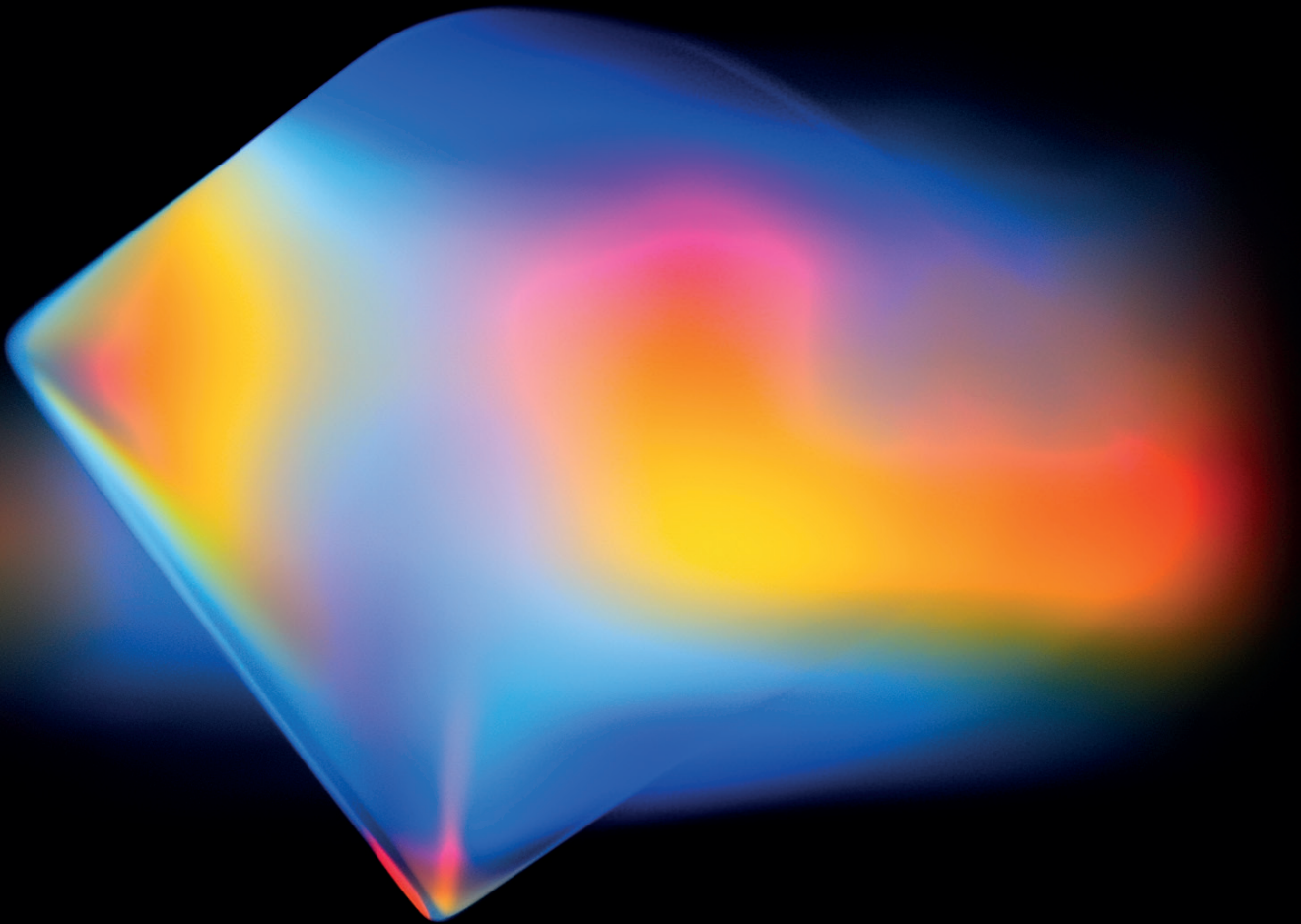
The new generation of designers is no longer just creating products they’re creating meaning. For them, a collection isn’t merely clothing; it’s a mindset, a statement, a stance. What sets them apart from past graduates is their heightened awareness both of global issues and their own inner voice.

Today’s designers are not only aesthetically driven but are also multi-dimensional thinkers who are tech savvy and environmentally conscious. The skills a designer needs today include data literacy, proficiency in digital tools, knowledge of sustainable materials, and cultural awareness. The fashion of the future will be shaped not only by what is designed but by how and why it is designed.

At Istanbul Moda Academy, we carefully analyze these needs and reshape our curriculum accordingly. Our aim is not just to impart technical knowledge but to instill a holistic design perspective. Through our programs, we train individuals with advanced skills in 3D design and digital modeling, while strengthening their environmental awareness through sustainability principles and material lifecycle education. We cultivate human-centered thinking through cultural literacy and ethical design, and equip students with strategic thinking and data interpretation skills to become active professionals in tomorrow’s fashion world.

For us, the “future” is not an uncertainty it’s a space for design. We invest particularly in skills such as interdisciplinary thinking, sustainable material knowledge, digital design tools, systems thinking, and storytelling. Because in the future, a designer’s role will not just be to create beautiful objects, but to create meaningful impact.

We also prepare our students for tomorrow’s fashion landscape through future oriented modules such as AI-assisted design tools, VR/AR presentation techniques, avatar modeling, and digital fitting.





**Sustainability is no longer a trend, but a necessity. How is fashion education adapting to this imperative? What place does sustainability hold in IMA's curriculum?**

Sustainability is no longer a choice it is a global imperative. And at its core, this responsibility begins with education. At Istanbul Moda Academy, we place sustainability at the heart of our curriculum to ensure our students graduate with this consciousness.

We aim to instill both knowledge and awareness across a wide spectrum from sustainable design principles to circular economy, from eco-friendly production techniques to ethical fashion practices. As a pioneer in the transformation of fashion education, we are training the next generation of fashion professionals to be responsible, conscious, and innovative individuals.

**Technologies such as digital fashion, AI, and 3D design are transforming the sector. How does IMA integrate these into its education?**

**How should the balance between technology and traditional craftsmanship be maintained?**

Technology is transforming the fashion industry, and education lies at the center of this change. At Istanbul Moda Academy, we don't just adapt to technology we make it one of the pillars of our educational philosophy.

To nurture creative professionals capable of shaping the future, we offer our students a wide range of competencies from advanced 3D design software and AI-assisted creative tools to digital fashion presentation techniques, data analytics, digital marketing, and smart manufacturing systems.

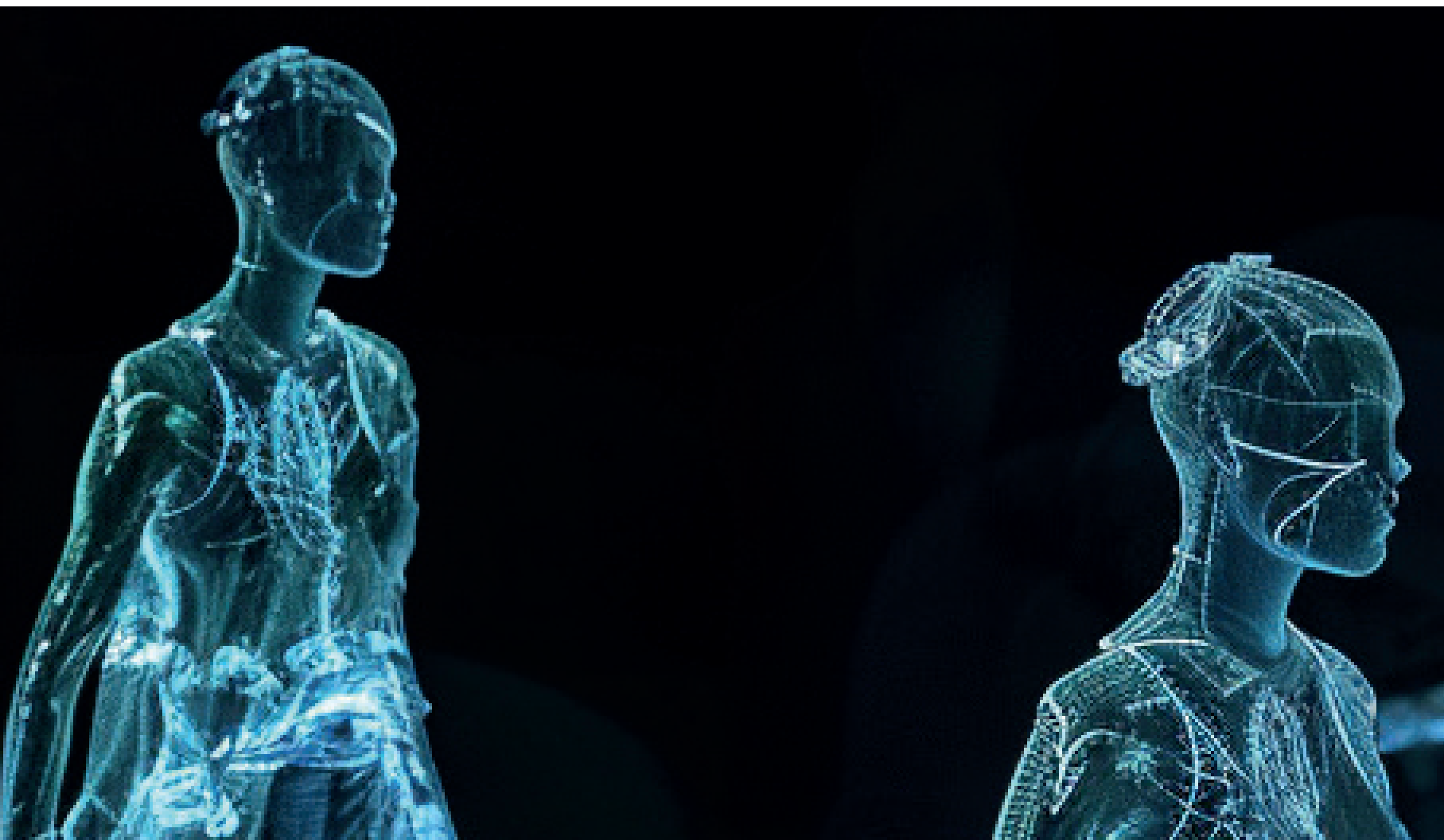
Yet, we believe that true transformation happens where digital technologies meet traditional knowledge. The real value in fashion education lies not only in the tools themselves, but in understanding how and why those tools are used. When the delicacy of craftsmanship and the richness of cultural heritage come together with the speed, flexibility, and boundless creativity of digital design, the result is work with both aesthetic and emotional depth.

This union not only fosters innovative solutions but also supports sustainability and ethical production principles.

**What steps should be taken for Turkish fashion to have a distinctive presence on the global stage? What role does education play in this journey?**

**Can you tell us about IMA's international collaborations and the global opportunities you offer your students?**

For Turkish fashion to establish itself globally with a unique identity, cultural values must be blended with contemporary design perspectives. In this regard, education becomes not only a platform for gaining technical skills but also a space for designers to develop





their vision, discover their cultural heritage, and learn to express it in a universal language.

At Istanbul Moda Academy, we train students to contribute not only to the local market but also to the global fashion ecosystem. Through a comprehensive approach covering everything from design to production, we help them become both creative and strategic thinkers. The vision we cultivate at IMA enables our graduates to represent Turkish fashion internationally in a unique and powerful way. Since its founding, Istanbul Moda Academy has placed international thinking and action at the core of its education model. As a member of the International Foundation of Fashion Technology Institutes (IFFTI), IMA has been part of the board of directors since 2020 and works within a strong global network of esteemed fashion schools.

Our strategic academic partnership with University of the Arts London / London College of Fashion ensures that our students receive education aligned with global standards. Through EU projects focused on digitalization and sustainability, we also help students build strong connections with the industry.

**What does “change” mean to you, personally?**

To me, change means questioning the current state and seeking improvement. I believe that growth is not a destination but a continuous journey. Throughout my career, I’ve focused on guiding these transformation processes strategically and striving to build something better at every step.

**What has been the biggest change in your own career journey?**

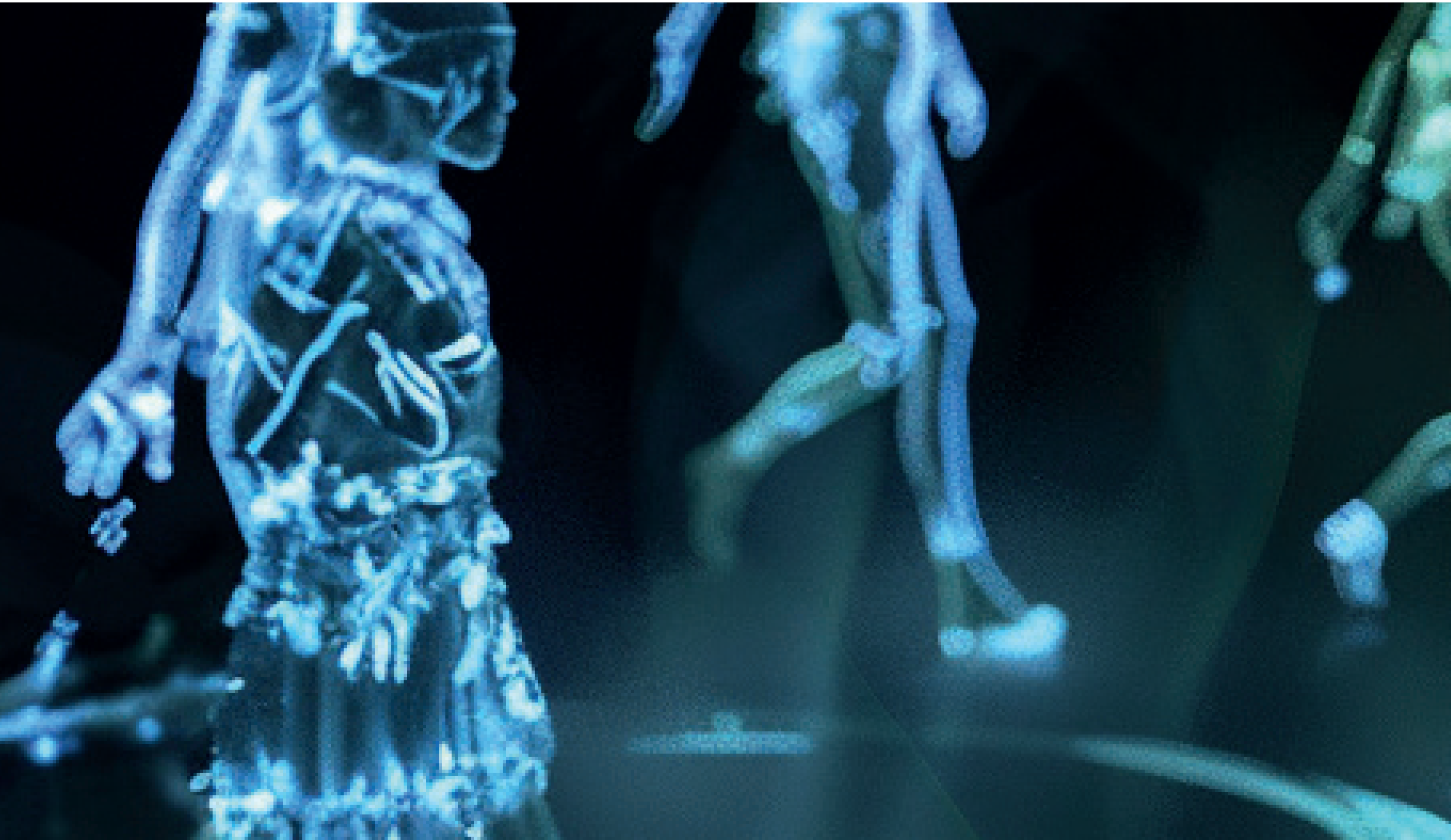
After many years of working within the Turkish Exporters Assembly and Istanbul Apparel Exporters’ Association—both of which are deeply embedded in the heart of the industry taking on a leadership role at Istanbul Moda Academy has been a profoundly meaningful and distinctive experience for me. IMA is a forward-thinking institution that plays an active role in the sector’s transformation.

**Where do you see both IMA and the Turkish fashion industry in the next five years?**

As a subsidiary of Istanbul Apparel Exporters’ Association, Istanbul Moda Academy is playing a pioneering role in the transformation of the Turkish fashion industry.

We see our institution not only as a fashion school that cultivates skilled professionals, but also as a strategic hub contributing to the formation of a creative, innovative, and globally competitive apparel industry.

While concepts like digitalization, sustainability, and artificial intelligence reshape the foundations of fashion, we at IMA are positioned right at the center of this transformation, aiming to support the strong future and continued growth of Turkish fashion.





**What kind of vision would you suggest to today's young designers and fashion professionals?**

**What would be your first piece of advice for a student just beginning their "Path to Change" journey?**

A true journey of transformation begins by asking yourself bold questions. Who are you? What do you want to express? What mark do you want to leave on the world? Curiosity, self-inquiry, experimentation, failure, and starting over these are all essential parts of the process. Real change happens outside your comfort zone, where you discover your potential.

This journey is not just about acquiring technical skills; it's also a space where you build your mindset, your perspective, and your creative identity. Following the artists and movements that inspire you is valuable but never forget that one day, you too can inspire others.

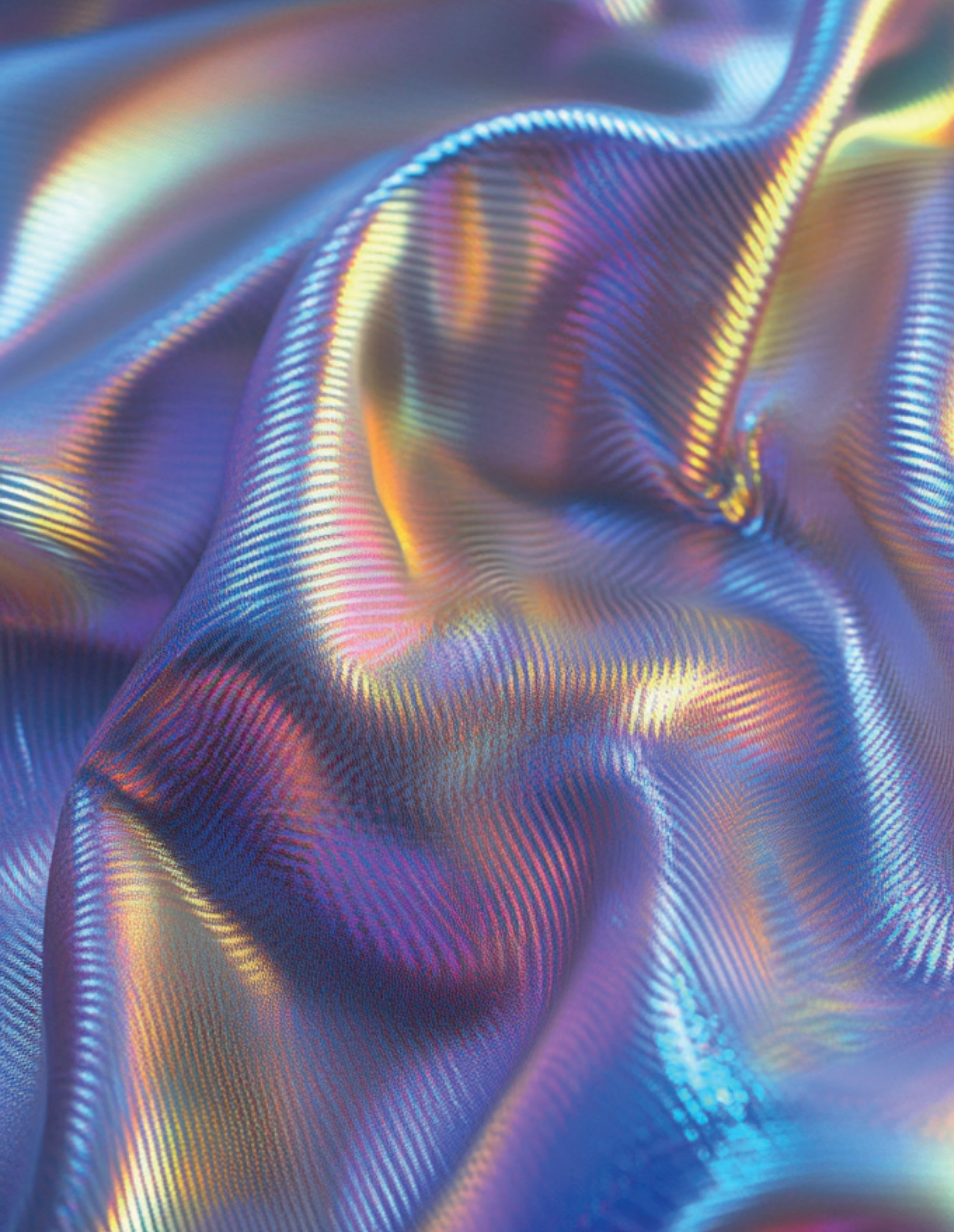
Fashion is not just about interpreting what exists it's about having the courage to create something new.

Today's young designers are no longer just aesthetic producers they are also strategic thinkers and future leaders. This new generation, equipped with technological fluency, environmental awareness, and cultural sensitivity, is poised to move beyond creative direction and become the CEOs who will shape the industry's transformation.

Design is no longer just about form it's about meaning, strategy, and building the future.

Every student has the power to find their voice and share it with the world. Istanbul Moda Academy will guide you on this journey but the most important steps are yours to take. The more original and courageous you are, the more transformative your path will be.







# Dilek Hanif

fashion designer





**How does your design process begin? Can you tell us about your sources of inspiration and your creative journey?**

My design process begins with defining a concept. First, I enter a phase where I reflect on the theme of the collection I want to create. At this stage, my sources of inspiration can vary sometimes it's the Ottoman Era, sometimes a blooming garden, or even a painter's collection or a specific artwork.

Once I've identified my source of inspiration, I begin building the collection in alignment with that vision.

**As a designer, how has your style changed over time? How has your perspective on fashion and design evolved?**

As a designer, my style has naturally evolved over time. These changes are closely tied to my journey of self-discovery. It's a shared experience a path we all walk while searching and growing. Over time, our tastes and perspectives shift, and with that, our understanding of fashion begins to transform as well.

In my own journey, I've come to realize that I've gradually embraced a more minimalistic and refined style.

**As a globally recognized brand, how do you promote Turkish fashion? What are your thoughts on Türkiye's place in the global fashion industry?**

I present my collections in many parts of the world, especially in major fashion capitals such as New York and Paris. As a Turkish designer, having the opportunity to participate in these arenas showcasing collections during both couture and ready-to-wear fashion weeks, and having our products sold in stores and department stores across various countries is incredibly valuable to me. I believe this success carries not only personal significance but also great meaning for Türkiye as a whole.

I believe we have brought fashion design in Türkiye to a highly advanced level. There is a significant difference between the perspective on design in 1991, when I first started my career, and today's approach. Back then, Türkiye lacked a well-established design identity; it was a time when imported European products were often imitated. But today, we have our own designers, original creations, and brands that are recognized internationally. In this sense, I believe we've made remarkable progress.





**In your past collections where you've blended traditional fabrics with modern touches, how do you achieve this balance?**

Transforming traditional fabrics with modern touches has always been a great pleasure for me. In fact, this is a step we should have taken much earlier. If we don't bring our original weaves and artisanal crafts into the present day, unfortunately, they risk fading away over time.

That's why reinterpreting them through my own design perspective and approaching them with a fresh eye is a vital responsibility we, as designers, must take on. I truly believe that all of my fellow designers will, in time, give these natural materials the appreciation they deserve and help pass them on to future generations.

**What can be done to further increase the global recognition of Turkish fashion? What role does the Dilek Hanif brand play in this effort?**

There are many things that can be done to enhance the global visibility of Turkish fashion in a more distinct and powerful way. For this to happen, we need to be present internationally with the right teams and the right partners, and designers must be provided with the necessary resources throughout this process.

I have been pursuing these efforts within my own means for some



time now; however, with broader support and greater opportunities, we could accomplish work that makes an even stronger impact.

At this point, it is essential to approach the matter with full professionalism and to support designers through the process of becoming structured businesses. It's a fact that the journey doesn't end with design alone the financial structure must also be integrated into this process. Today, every globally recognized brand has powerful investors and professional teams behind it.

**What are the main obstacles preventing Turkish fashion designers from standing out in the global market, and how can they be overcome?**

One of the biggest obstacles preventing Turkish fashion designers from standing out is financial limitations. It is truly not easy to take part in international platforms serious and sustainable budgets are required for that.

With the right steps and strategic investments made in the right people, this kind of success is certainly possible. However, it cannot be achieved alone it must be a team effort.

At the same time, how these efforts are marketed plays a critical role. Having a strong and effective marketing force behind the work is just as important as the work itself.



## What advantages does Türkiye's fashion industry particularly the ready-to-wear sector hold on a global scale?

Türkiye holds a remarkably strong position in the ready-to-wear sector. Today, we have a broad and highly capable local production infrastructure that manufactures for many major international brands. If we combine this production power with our own brands and designers, we can create a much stronger branding process in the global market. Therefore, collaborations between large manufacturing companies and designers could serve as a highly impactful model, bringing significant momentum to the industry.

On the other hand, the government does provide support for exporters and the textile sector. However, these supports need to be directed more strategically especially by integrating designers into the process. Actively involving designers in these initiatives is crucial to enhancing Türkiye's global presence in the fashion industry.

## Sustainable fashion has gained increasing importance in recent years. As Dilek Hanif, how do you integrate sustainability into your designs?

I have been interested in sustainable fashion for quite some time and strive to do my part in this field. Today, textile waste is one of the leading contributors to environmental issues, which places significant responsibility on both designers and manufacturers.

Personally, I pay special attention to fabric selection in my designs. I've also reduced the number of collections I produce each year cutting back from four collections annually to nearly half. Similarly, I focus on creating fewer but more refined and high-quality pieces. My collections mostly consist of timeless garments, which allows me to offer designs made from quality fabrics that can be enjoyed for years, rather than encouraging overconsumption.

In addition to my personal work, I also design outerwear for corporate clients. Sustainability is a priority in these projects as well I make a conscious effort to use recyclable and eco-friendly materials.

In this way, I aim to promote the principles of sustainable fashion through both my individual and corporate projects.







**Digitalization and sustainability trends are transforming the fashion world. How are you adapting to these changes?**

Digitalization and sustainability are now at the forefront of everyone's agenda. I make a conscious effort to actively incorporate both of these areas into my work whenever and wherever necessary.

**Do you think Turkish fashion brands need to take greater responsibility in adopting eco-friendly production processes and using sustainable materials?**

Turkish fashion brands absolutely need to place greater emphasis on eco-friendly products and the use of sustainable materials, and take ownership of this process. I'm pleased to observe that awareness in this area has begun to grow. In all the organizations I work with, I come across wonderful examples of this shift.

That's why I remain hopeful for the future I truly believe that in the coming years, we'll see a more sustainable textile industry that causes less harm to the environment.

**As a female designer, what have been the biggest challenges you've faced in the fashion industry?**

As a female designer, I've never faced difficulties on the creative side while trying to manage both the design and production processes. On the contrary, I believe that truly understanding women and their needs has given me a significant advantage. I trust my instincts when it comes to designing what is most functional, aesthetic, and appropriate for them.

However, the production and management side especially when I was running the brand on my own became an entirely separate area of responsibility. At that point, I had to wear not only the designer hat but also that of a businesswoman.

While I've always approached the design process with passion and joy, I would have certainly preferred to have someone else handle the financial and operational aspects. But since that wasn't an option, I had to manage everything myself. In the end, I do what needs to be done and I keep moving forward.

**We are in a time where women are becoming increasingly visible in the Turkish fashion industry. What further steps do you think should be taken in this regard?**

Women have already become much more visible across many sectors. The necessary steps are being taken, and progress is being made. I truly believe that from this point forward, women in Türkiye will achieve even greater things and have an even stronger presence in every field.



**What were the biggest motivating factors while building your success? Do you have any advice for young designers?**

The greatest source of motivation for me while building my success has always been the deep love I have for my work. I've always enjoyed working, and that passion naturally became my driving force. Seeing my work appreciated and receiving positive feedback further strengthened that motivation.

I pursued the work I believed in, and my commitment to my craft kept me going even during the most difficult times.

The most important advice I would give to young designers is this: If you truly love what you do and feel determined to pursue it, no obstacle can stand in your way. You can overcome any challenge and carve out your own path. The key is to know what you want and never give up on it.

**What new trends or developments in the future of fashion excite you the most?**

To be honest, I'm not a designer who closely follows trends. What truly excites me are sustainability, environmental consciousness, ecological fabrics, and how these elements blend with technology to harmonize with fashion.

I believe this approach brings us a fresh perspective and a new vision. That's why I find these areas far more meaningful and valuable.

**What role do you envision for yourself in the world of digital design and virtual fashion in the coming years?**

In my opinion, artificial intelligence can only replicate a designer's work up to a certain point. The profession of design involves creative processes such as producing something from scratch, creating, and developing original ideas processes that can never be entirely handed over to AI.

Of course, AI can assist us, making our work easier, faster, and more efficient. However, generating an idea from the ground up or creating an original design is, to me, a process rooted in natural talent and human creativity.

That's why I don't believe digitalization or the virtual world will ever fully replace the designer. But I do believe that when these two forces human creativity and digital innovation are combined, they can produce far more impactful and powerful results.





# Özlem Süer

||| fashion designer







**While reflecting on the evolution and transformation of fashion, what was the greatest turning point in your career?**

For me, completing my doctoral studies in art (**Proficiency in Art**) with a fashion show and a thesis presentation both delivered as a powerful performance marked the beginning of my brand journey.



**What does the theme “Path to Change” mean to you? How do you adapt to changes in the fashion industry?**

One might ask whether the definition of “**Path to Change**” represents a deeply personal journey or a broader social transformation. To me, it embodies both. Questioning the current state, taking steps toward a better future, using eco-friendly materials, and creating collections that carry strong social messages these are all at the heart of this concept.

Moreover, “Path to Change” also embraces individual stories. For example, in the context of my project “Inspiring Women”, the theme provides a powerful framework to tell the stories of women who, despite challenges, have created change, forged their own paths, and inspired others along the way. The way these women transform step by step their courage and determination is truly inspiring.







**What are the most significant changes you have observed in the fashion world in recent years? How have you contributed to these changes?**

Fashion has become noticeably more inclusive and diverse. Models of different body types, and culturally diverse backgrounds are now more widely represented. There is a growing sensitivity toward gender and body diversity, which has become essential in shaping industry standards.

Technological innovations such as digital fashion designs, virtual runways, and augmented reality experiences have also found their place in the industry. In particular, digital garments and NFT-based fashion pieces have given designers the opportunity to express their creativity without boundaries. In this direction, we created our 2025/26 AW collection with our digital team.

Designs rooted in craftsmanship and cultural heritage have gained increasing value in recent years. Hand embroidery and traditional decorative techniques are being integrated with modern design to create unique collections. Local production and artisanal crafts have come to the forefront. We also contributed to this movement with a recent collection inspired by nature, incorporating ancestral tree motifs and nature-based details.

The fashion industry has also taken important steps toward reducing its environmental impact. Reusable and recyclable materials, along with waste-reduction techniques, have become more common. Especially major brands have initiated efforts to reduce their carbon footprints and water usage. As part of this collective movement, we incorporate sustainable fabrics and handcraft-based production processes in our collections inspired by nature. Recycling principles form the foundation of our ateliers.

**Do you believe that change is not limited to design but also crucial in production processes? What is your perspective on this?**

Absolutely. Change is not limited to design; production processes are at the very heart of this transformation. In recent years, the fashion world has placed increasing importance on transitioning to sustainable and ethical production methods. Unlike fast fashion, producing limited quantities of high-quality pieces helps prevent resource waste. Timeless designs and long-lasting garments represent a more harmonious approach to the nature of fashion.

In our collections, we embrace this philosophy by aiming to offer

consumers a more conscious shopping experience. In summary, to create real change in the fashion world, it is essential to go beyond design and transform the way we produce.

**Sustainability has become a major trend in the fashion world in recent years. How does Özlem Süer approach this concept in her collections?**

Our focus is on principled production creating sustainable collections through the spirit of recycling, using “upcycling” and “zero-waste” techniques to repurpose fabric waste. By collaborating with women’s cooperatives and local producers, we aim not only to support economic development but also to elevate handcrafted, artisan-based designs.

**What steps do you think should be taken to make the fashion industry more sustainable?**

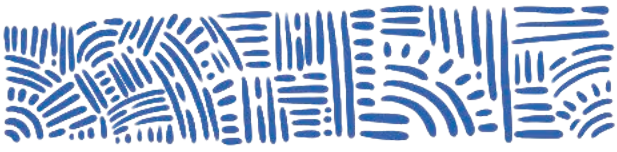
Achieving a more sustainable fashion industry requires broad and holistic actions. Everyone has a role to play in this process from designers and brands to suppliers and consumers. We believe that sustainable collections, such as our nature-inspired Spring/Summer 2025 ready-to-wear collection, can make a significant contribution to this transformation.

Collaborating with local artisans, using sustainable materials, and implementing waste-reduction strategies during the design process are key steps that will help the fashion industry move toward a greener future.

**How do you bring an innovative perspective to your creative processes? In particular, how do you prioritize environmental and social responsibility in your designs?**

In fashion design, embracing an approach that carries not only aesthetics but also meaning and responsibility is essential. By placing environmental and social responsibility at the forefront, it becomes possible to create designs focused on sustainability and awareness. Every collection presents an opportunity to tell a story and lead a change. This mindset supports not only individual success but also the progress of the fashion industry toward a more sustainable and ethical future.





**How do you see the future of the fashion world? How do you evaluate the impact of digitalization and technology on fashion?**

The future of the fashion world is undergoing an exciting transformation driven by the rapid advancement of digitalization and technology. This transformation is evident in every stage from design processes to production, retail, and consumer experience.

Technology will continue to revolutionize fashion, especially in terms of sustainability, personalization, and accessibility.

**What changes or innovations can we expect in your upcoming collections? How will you reflect the “Path to Change” theme in them?**

We are in a constant state of evolution. Fashion is a living, breathing, and ever-innovative organism. The “Path to Change” theme represents a journey of transformation and progress, and as such, it should be approached in a multi-layered and profound way within fashion design.

In our upcoming collections, we aim to reflect this theme through designs that are in harmony with nature and carry emotional and social messages.

**What was the biggest turning point in your career, and could you share a moment from that journey that inspired you?**

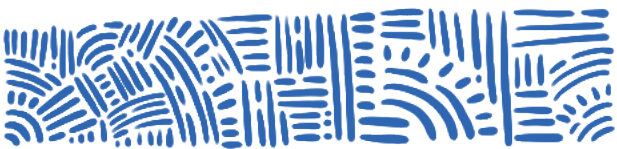
Every moment within this vibrant 35-year journey has been filled with richness and inspiration. From the very beginning, having a presence on international platforms offered immense value.

With nearly 50 solo fashion shows, I’ve had incredible experiences both in Türkiye and across the globe. From London to Paris, New York to Tokyo, Milan to Düsseldorf I had the opportunity to meet and collaborate with many remarkable individuals. Every second of this journey has been deeply inspiring and transformative.

**What are your thoughts on the role of women in the fashion world? How can women’s contributions to fashion and business be further enhanced?**

Women have always been at the forefront of the fashion world with their creative vision and leadership. However, to further unlock this potential, it is essential to provide equal opportunities, financial support, mentorship programs, and inclusive work environments.

Fashion is not only an aesthetic field but also a powerful tool for social change. Empowering women contributes to building a more innovative, equitable, and sustainable future for the fashion industry.







### **What steps can be taken to increase the international recognition of the Turkish fashion industry?**

Strategic and creative steps are essential for the advancement of the Turkish fashion industry. Türkiye's rich cultural heritage, strong traditions in craftsmanship, and innovative design approach hold great potential for establishing a solid presence in the global market. To gain greater recognition on international platforms, it is important to adopt strategies that merge traditional artisanship with contemporary design, while focusing on sustainability and digital innovation.

### **What strategies do you think should be prioritized for Turkish designers to achieve global success?**

To achieve global success, Turkish designers need to embrace an innovative and sustainable vision. Creating original collections rooted in storytelling, establishing a strong presence in the digital world, forming strategic collaborations, and actively participating in international fashion platforms will be key pillars of this journey.







**As a leader shaping the future of fashion, what advice would you give to young designers or fashion professionals?**

One of the most important pieces of advice for young designers and fashion professionals who aspire to shape the future of fashion is to stay true to their authenticity and find their unique voice. Fashion is not just about designing garments it's the art of expressing a vision, an emotion, and a message.

Designs that are rooted in your personal story, your geography, and your cultural background will set you apart and make your work truly original. Don't be afraid to tell your story. Today, fashion is deeply connected not only to aesthetics but also to social and environmental issues. When your collections carry a strong message and meaning, your brand will attract more attention.

Fashion is a multidisciplinary field. Enrich your design language by drawing inspiration from areas such as photography, art history, and textile technologies. Tools like 3D design software, augmented reality (AR), and artificial intelligence offer limitless possibilities embrace them and grow in these areas.

Working with established names in the industry and learning from their experience can offer valuable new perspectives. Internships and mentorship programs are highly beneficial in this regard.

Remember: success takes time. In fashion, success doesn't happen overnight. Every collection and every experience brings you one step closer.

In conclusion, the greatest advice I can give to young fashion professionals is this: preserve your unique identity, and let your designs speak for what you want to say to the world. Every piece you create is a perspective you offer. Be bold, don't fear innovation, and keep carving out your own path.

And if you're ever looking for more advice or resources on this journey, I'm always here to continue the conversation.





# Çiğdem Akin

fashion designer





**How have your designs evolved from the beginning of your career to today?**

In the early years of my fashion journey, I focused on bespoke pieces and limited collections. Back then, my designs were more niche and deeply personal. Over time, especially with the expansion into exports, the collections grew and their stories deepened. Today, I create timeless and original pieces that can accompany a woman throughout her day from the first light of morning into the night. Balancing functionality and aesthetics, creating designs that resonate with a broader audience has become my priority.

**How do you observe the transformation within the fashion industry? What trends do you think have been on the rise in recent years?**

Fashion today is shaped not only by aesthetics, but also by speed, technology, and social change. With the influence of social media, trends spread instantly, and consumer habits have shifted radically. The culture of fast consumption has accelerated fashion cycles,

but it has also led to a devaluation of garments. While fast fashion continues to rise, there is also a growing awareness and selectivity among consumers.

Technology plays a major role in the future of fashion. 3D-printed garments, sustainable materials, and digital fashion are pushing the industry into a new era.

**In line with the theme “Path to Change,” how do you, as a fashion designer, adapt to these industry transformations?**

To avoid getting lost in change and to truly make a difference, I focus on creating timeless designs with character rather than chasing fleeting trends. Fashion is no longer just about style; it’s a form of storytelling. And to tell that story well, one must be open to transformation but remain true to one’s originality.





# ÇİĞDEM AKIN



## **For you, is fashion merely an aesthetic field, or does it also offer a platform for social change?**

For me, fashion is far beyond aesthetics it's a powerful form of expression, and at times, even a tool for resistance. A garment isn't just something that covers the body; it reflects identity, stance, and the values we believe in.

That's where social change begins. Through fashion, we can question norms, celebrate diversity, and break molds. With every collection, I try to tell a story sometimes aiming to give voice to the unseen.

## **What role do sustainability and ethical values play in your designs? How do you internalize this shift?**

Sustainability isn't just a trend for me it's at the core of my design philosophy. Respect for nature and labor is a priority in every piece I create.

For instance, the "Çulha" collection is a tangible reflection of this approach. It featured handwoven natural fabrics brought to life by women's labor. It was both environmentally conscious and supportive of women's employment during the production process. I believe fashion isn't just about what we wear, but also how and by whom it's made.

## **How do you think fashion will evolve in the coming years, and how do you plan to contribute to that transformation?**

Fashion is shifting away from speed toward functionality and sustainability. Thanks to technology, fabrics that don't stain, don't cause sweating, and are long lasting will stand out. Consumers will make more conscious choices with fewer but higher quality pieces. I aim to contribute to this shift by creating timeless and durable designs. Fashion should no longer be momentary it should carry long-term value.

## **Can you share a personal memory that deeply inspired or influenced your journey of transformation?**

Creating a collection in collaboration with Barbie, my childhood dream, was an unforgettable experience. I played with Barbie passionately as a child, and even raised my own children with her. Working with such an iconic brand, especially for their 60th anniversary, and presenting a collection that resonated around the world, was truly special. Collaborating with a brand that holds such meaning in my life was one of the most inspiring moments of my design journey.

## **Do you believe there should be more women designers and entrepreneurs in the fashion industry?**

Absolutely! Even though fashion is largely inspired and led by women, decision making in the industry is still dominated by men. The rise of more women designers and entrepreneurs would not only make fashion more inclusive but also more visionary. Women sharing their stories from their own perspectives adds a deeper and more original layer to the industry.

## **If so, what are the barriers to this change?**

The business world still largely operates within a maledominated leadership model, and women often face limited opportunities for advancement. Additionally, women's roles in the workforce are often undervalued or insufficiently recognized. For real change, we need more equal opportunities, support systems, and strong networks that empower women.



**What are your thoughts on the impact of technology in fashion? How has digitalization changed your design process?**

Technology has drastically accelerated the design process. In the past, every design had to be hand drawn, sampled, sent to the client, and then reworked based on feedback. It was a time consuming loop.

With digitalization, we can now present a design in a virtual format without producing a sample, and get instant approvals. This has been a game changer, especially for export operations. It's much more efficient in terms of both time and cost. We can present finished products faster and manage production and marketing simultaneously. I can confidently say that technology has given us speed without limiting creativity.

**Do you think fashion should reflect not just appearance, but also the inner world of a person?**

Absolutely. Fashion is not just about outer appearance it's a form of self-expression. The colors we wear, the fabrics we choose, even how we style ourselves that day is deeply connected to our mood and energy. For instance, materials like natural linen carry strong energy; their texture and feel on the skin can genuinely affect how we feel.

I believe people, consciously or unconsciously, reflect their inner world through their clothing. Out of thousands of garments, the one you choose says something about you. It reveals how you see yourself and the image you want to project. Sometimes it changes depending on your work or your environment but at its core, fashion is the reflection of the soul.

**How do you connect inner transformation with outer appearance in your designs?**

I believe everything we create has a soul. When we design, we're not just making a product we're conveying a feeling, an energy. When a woman wears a piece, it affects not only how she looks, but also how she feels. A design that touches someone's inner world expresses much more than appearance. That's why I always try to embed a story, a feeling into each piece because fashion is as much about how we feel as it is about how we look.

**Has there been a turning point in your journey as a designer that challenged or transformed you?**

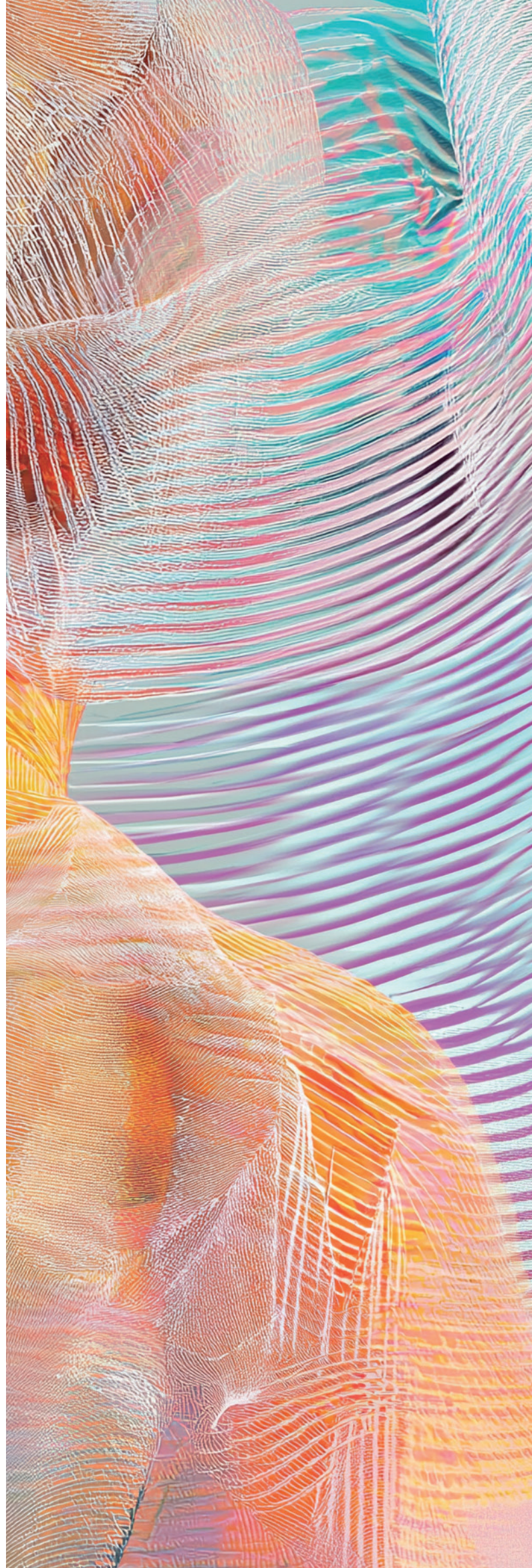
The biggest turning point was when I left the corporate world and decided to carve my own path. Starting my own brand was not just a career move it was a full identity journey.

Now, I'm at a new phase of that journey. We've been exporting for years, but now we're opening our own boutique in France, positioning our brand on an international level in a more permanent way. This step isn't just about business it's about deepening the identity of the brand and expanding its vision. Meeting a new culture while staying true to our roots is something I find incredibly exciting.

**What's the most important advice you'd give to young designers or anyone looking to build a career in fashion?**

The most important thing is to work hard, be resilient, and never give up. Design takes patience, time, and a lot of trial and error. It's not about staying on the path it's about being on the journey. Because design is a constantly evolving process.

It's also essential to stay engaged with the world observe people, life, culture. Inspiration is everywhere, but to see it, you need to keep your eyes, mind, and heart open. If you truly want to say something through your designs, you need to understand yourself deeply and then continue creating without ever letting go of that truth.





Hakan Yılmaz  
contemporary  
media artist





**Do you see yourself standing at the intersection of art and fashion? How do you relate fashion design to media arts?**

Yes. We can say that all concepts involving color, composition, collage, imagery, and pattern belong to one large collective domain. One of our former professors, Esin Karol, used to say, "A good designer can design anything."

Although it sounded strange to me at first, I later witnessed how a skilled designer could create anything from a shoe to a media installation.

Since the fashion industry is deeply intertwined with technology, it's not difficult to establish a connection between it and media arts.

**Fashion and textiles hold a significant place in today's art world. As an artist, how do you create impact in this field?**

Today's art world can be seen in many different ways: for some, it's a prestige project; for others, a marketing tool; and for many, a form of sublime creation. For that reason, fields like textile and fashion or even other industries have found their way into the art world.

Personally, I closely follow the steps the fashion world is taking toward sustainability. I act as a kind of translator for brands that are making strides in this area helping them communicate more effectively.

I try to translate their efforts into the language of art, and share those stories with people in a meaningful way.

**How do you use textiles and fabrics in your art? What kind of messages do you aim to convey through these materials?**

Absolutely, I use them. At my core, I'm an art historian, and the main purpose of my artistic practice is to act as a cultural carrier.

In doing so, I naturally make extensive use of textile materials that bear traces of our cultural heritage.

I don't approach my work with the intention of delivering a specific message. However, I firmly believe this: *"Nothing can survive unless it is modernized."*

**How do you evaluate the impact of media arts on today's fashion world? What kind of innovation can digital tools bring to textile design?**

They already have. I know many brands are using AI-assisted pattern generation.

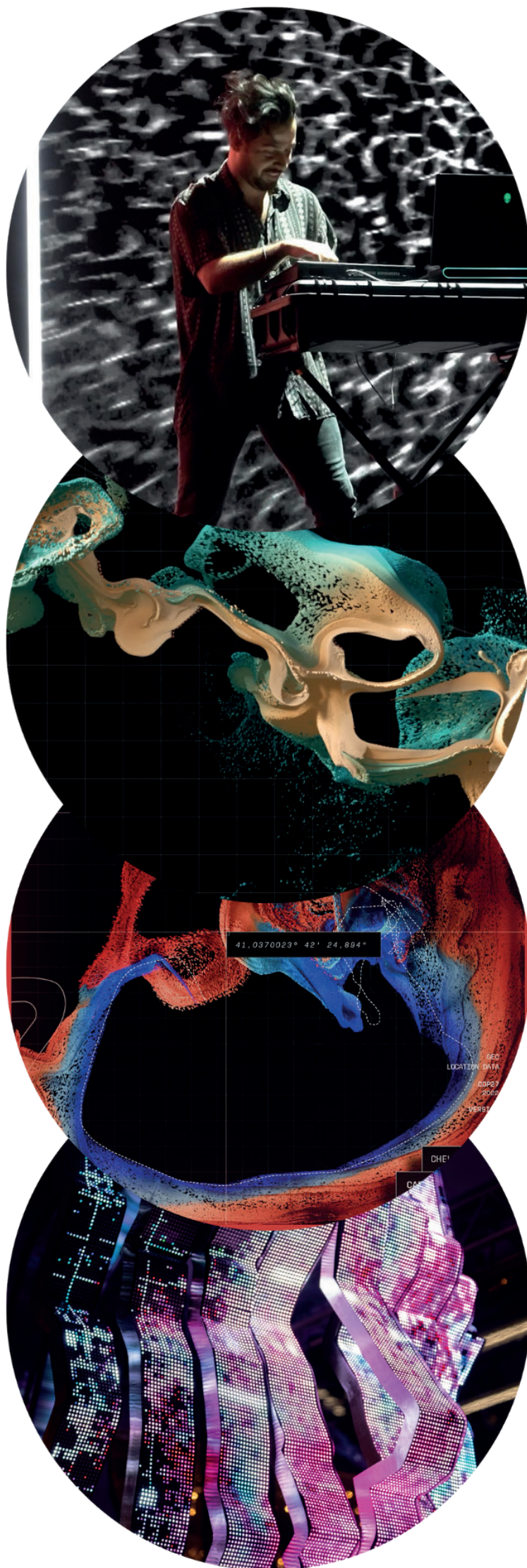
I also see that many brands are incorporating media arts into their communication tools.

Digital tools offer brands speed, creative richness, and reduced costs everything I expect from a true innovation.

**As an artist, how do you merge textile design with the fashion world? What do you particularly pay attention to when selecting fabrics and materials?**

I prioritize the story.

I try to incorporate every design that carries a meaningful narrative into my artistic work.





**Sustainability has become a major topic in the fashion world in recent years. As a media artist, what is your perspective on this issue?**

As a media artist, sustainability is the topic I follow most closely in the fashion world especially because the industry has, in past years, entered our lives with some unfortunate news in this regard. I genuinely admire and respect the brands that have taken responsibility and made real efforts to improve themselves.

I also make a note of those brands engaging in greenwashing. When I come across brands that are truly committed to sustainability, I do my best to help them communicate their purpose and efforts effectively.

**What are your predictions for the future of the textile industry? What are your thoughts on how digitalization and technology will transform textile design?**

Technology is transforming almost every industry at a similar pace. It brings speed, design diversity, and reduced costs for designers.

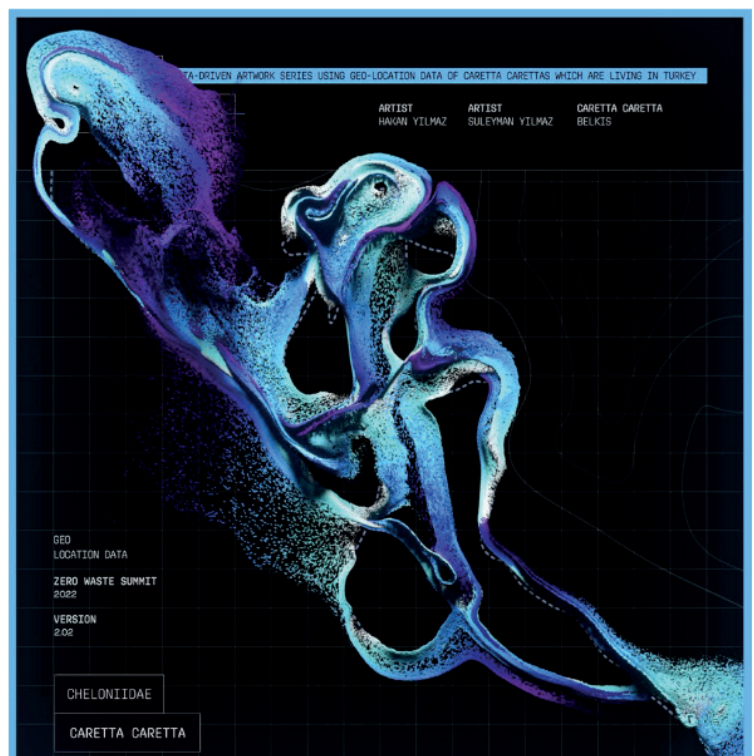
It may still be too early to fully discuss the advantages and disadvantages, but I believe we will start seeing clear and measurable outcomes within the next five years.

**What are your priorities for the future of the textile and fashion industry? What roles do sustainability, innovation, or alternative design approaches play in your perspective?**

We can no longer call a design “good” if it isn’t sustainable. There are now more important concerns than just aesthetic value. The best design is the one that can be produced using the most sustainable methods. And the most innovative brand is the one that pollutes the least especially when it comes to water.

**Which movements do you see yourself aligned with in the textile and fashion world? Which artists or designers have influenced you the most in this field?**

I’m a historian by nature, and most of the artists or designers who have influenced me are no longer living. What truly warms my heart are works produced under the influence of the Bauhaus movement in the West and traditional methods in the East.







**As a media artist who has earned a strong place in the art world, what inspires you most about the textile industry?**

Wearable tech products.

I'm eagerly anticipating textile pieces made entirely from digital screens.

The idea of wearing garments with dynamically changing designs excites me deeply.

**Was it an easy process to transition between art and fashion? What were the most challenging and most inspiring aspects of this journey?**

I don't believe I've fully transitioned between the two my mind is fluid. I can think in terms of fashion or art, depending on what's needed at the time.

I believe anyone who has received a solid art education can do both.

I didn't find it particularly challenging, but it did feel strange when fashion professionals called me an artist, and artists referred to me as "*the fabric person*."

Yet to me, all fashion designers are artists and all artists, in one way or another, understand fashion.

**Could you tell us a bit about your upcoming projects? Are you currently working on anything new in the fashion or textile field?**

Yes, this year I'm working on an installation for a textile fair.

I'm exploring the relationship between media arts and textiles hopefully, it will result in something beautiful.

**As a media artist, what is the biggest innovation you hope to see in the fashion and textile industry?**

I'm eagerly waiting for the arrival of wearable digital screens.

**What advice would you give to young designers and media artists who want to get involved in this field?**

I'm not sure I'm at the age to give advice yet but following the paths of masters is always a good way to progress in a creative career.



# Burak Döleker

## influencer





**How would you describe the change in your lifestyle over the past few years? How has your approach to fashion or your daily life transformed?**

Over the past few years, I've observed a significant transformation in my lifestyle. Especially when it comes to fashion and healthy living, I've started to make more conscious and sustainable choices. I've embraced a lifestyle closely intertwined with technology, which has made both my personal care and daily routine more efficient and stylish.

A few years ago, both my lifestyle and approach to fashion followed more of a fixed mold. Constantly trying to keep up with trends didn't feel right to me. It was as if I was reflecting and representing someone else not myself. And truthfully, that wasn't very sustainable.

As time passed, the changes within me became clearer. I owe this transformation to the natural process of aging, the growing clarity and firmness of my thoughts and ideas, the calm mindset that comes with maturity, and most importantly, finally knowing what I truly want. As days, months, and years went by, I began to define myself more clearly. I stopped trying to conform to the outside world and started discovering what I wanted, paving my own path accordingly. This inner transformation continues to evolve in a positive direction. I'd like to close with a quote from Gianni Versace that deeply resonates with me:



*"The key to creating a great outfit is to be yourself. Don't bow to trends! Don't let fashion own you decide who you are, what you want to express by the way you dress and the way you live."*

~ Gianni Versace ~

**What does "Path to Change" mean to you? How does this concept relate to your personal life, and what can you share about the changes you've experienced?**

For me, the "Path to Change" represents a continuous journey of growth, openness to new experiences, and the pursuit of becoming better. In my personal life, this concept is reflected in every step I take toward my goals and in the consistent efforts I make with determination.

Change often begins with small but meaningful steps and gradually leads to significant transformation. What matters most in this process is the ability to turn challenges into opportunities and not be afraid of change.

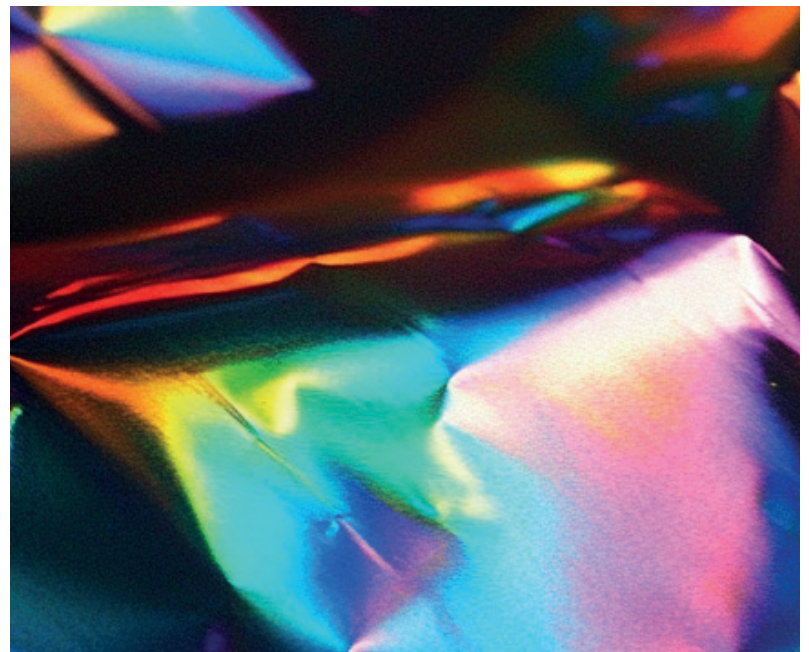
The changes in my life span a wide range from adopting a healthier lifestyle to embracing new career opportunities. I've started to approach fitness and nutrition with more discipline and awareness, and I've also begun using technology more effectively for personal development.

My interest in the fusion of fashion and technology has allowed me to make room for sustainable and functional innovations in my lifestyle. Change is not only an external journey but also an internal one. Through this path, I aim to transform both my body and my mind.

**With globalization shaping modern lifestyles, what kind of changes do you observe, and how do you balance local traditions with contemporary trends?**

Balancing local traditions with modern trends is, for me, a personal choice and a conscious effort. While I embrace the innovations and technological advancements offered by modern lifestyles, I also strive to show respect for the values and traditions of my local culture.

In finding this balance, my goal is to benefit from the best of both worlds honoring my roots while staying open to global influences.





**How important are sustainable living, environmental impact, and sensitivity to nature to you? How do you envision your lifestyle evolving in the future with regard to these values?**

To maintain a sustainable lifestyle, we need to consistently uphold the habits we adopt. This is essential not only for our own comfort and well-being but also for leading a fulfilling life in the long term.

Sustainable living, environmental awareness, and sensitivity to nature are deeply important to me. Embracing an environmentally conscious approach both in my personal lifestyle and in my overall worldview is one of the fundamental responsibilities of being a mindful individual. Protecting nature and using resources efficiently are matters that directly impact both our present lives and future generations.

Respecting the environment we live in means recognizing and appreciating the gifts we've been given. Breathing clean air, walking down clean streets, enjoying the beauty of nature, and living among people who care about the planet these are privileges, in my view.

As our world becomes increasingly polluted and overburdened with waste, my goal for the future is to live more sustainably. I aim to embrace a more conscious approach to consumption and adopt a lifestyle that is in harmony with nature one that protects myself, my surroundings, and the environment, allowing me to lead a healthier and more meaningful life.

**What role does the theme of "change" play in your life? Do you live with a vision for the future, or are you more connected to values rooted in the past?**

Change represents transformation and evolution in every aspect of

my life. I don't know exactly where I'll be in the future, but what I do know is that my current habits, daily routines, disciplined approach to life, and my commitment to working diligently focused solely on becoming the best version of myself, free from external influences are all like a trailer of the life I'll one day live.

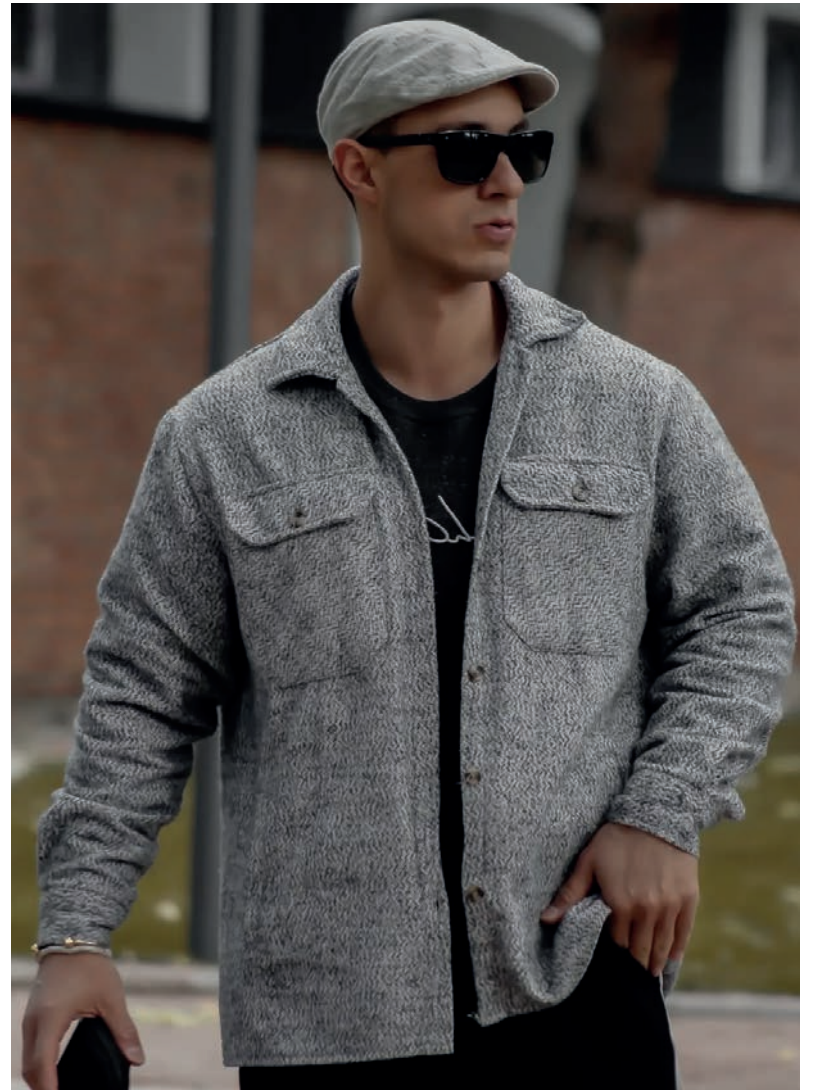
There are moments when we may look at other people's lives and begin to underestimate our own journey. But the truth is, our path is unique and entirely our own. Everyone's steps, experiences, and the challenges they face are different. Comparing ourselves to others can make our own journey feel less valuable, yet we must remember: our story is just as meaningful as anyone else's.

Every step we take, every moment we live brings us to who we are today. We don't have to be perfect all the time every step matters, every effort counts. So please, be kind to yourself. And never forget: your story is one of a kind in this world. You deserve to appreciate and honor your journey.

**How do you emphasize your culture and traditions in your daily life? How do you blend cultural heritage with modern living?**

In my daily life, I take small yet meaningful steps to highlight my culture and traditions. I incorporate conscious choices and rituals into my routine. For example: traditional recipes and culinary heritage, music and art, clothing and design, education and sharing, and the use of social media.

Through these practices, I blend my cultural heritage with the dynamics of modern life embracing a lifestyle that preserves the values of the past while meeting the needs of the present.





**How has technology influenced your lifestyle? In your opinion, how are digitalization, social media, and new technologies transforming the way you live?**

There are several key areas where technology has transformed my lifestyle. Thanks to digitalization, I can instantly communicate with my loved ones and colleagues. Video calls, instant messaging, and social media platforms allow for interaction without the limits of physical distance.

The internet and digital resources have completely changed how I follow the news, conduct research, and access cultural content. It's now possible to stay informed about global developments at any moment.

Social media platforms play a major role in sharing and exploring my interests, hobbies, and even cultural values. Through these platforms, I build new friendships and engage with different cultures. Smart home technologies, mobile apps, and digital services make daily life more efficient and convenient. From shopping to home automation, I benefit from the ease technology offers in many areas.

This transformation opens the door to innovative and flexible approaches in both personal and societal lifestyles though it also brings challenges, such as occasional distractions caused by constant digital connectivity.

Overall, technology adds broader perspective, convenience, and accessibility to my life.

**How would you like to shape your future lifestyle? What kind of approach do you adopt to create an innovative and distinctive way of living?**

As I shape my future lifestyle, I embrace an approach centered on sustainability, technological innovation, and personal growth. I aim to make my living spaces more efficient and environmentally friendly. This allows me to enjoy the conveniences of technology while maintaining a lifestyle that respects nature.

I place great importance on self-improvement through continuous learning and gaining new skills to keep up with a rapidly changing world. For me, the most important aspect is leading a healthy and sustainable life. Eating organically, choosing locally sourced products, and acting with environmental awareness are the cornerstones of my lifestyle. This approach significantly supports both my physical and mental well-being.

Exploring different cultures and blending local traditions with modern life also play an important role in how I live. In doing so, I stay connected to my roots while becoming part of a community enriched by innovative ideas.

Ultimately, I embrace a dynamic and flexible vision for the future.

**What lifestyle advice would you give to younger generations? What steps do you think they should take to discover themselves and adapt to a changing world?**

Take time to discover your own values, talents, and interests. It's important to create opportunities for deep self-reflection. By exploring hobbies, personal goals, and areas of passion, you can begin to truly understand who you are.

Embrace a culture of lifelong learning develop new skills and stay open to the changes happening around the world.

Take care of both your physical and mental well-being. Regular exercise, healthy nutrition, and effective stress management are essential foundations for long-term success and happiness.

Change is inevitable. Approach challenges with flexibility and look for new opportunities within them. Being open to innovation and unafraid of taking risks will prepare you for the future.

I'd like to end with a quote I truly love:

*"Be yourself. The world admires originality."*







The Art of Fabric

Didem Baykal  
**AKADEMİ**  
Kumaş Tasarım Akademisi

# Didem Baykal

Textile Engineer, (ITU) / Founder of DidemBaykalAKADEMİ

Turkey Representative of EAT GmbH

Lecturer at MSGSÜ, Department of Textile and Fashion

Lecturer at Yeditepe University, Department of Textile and Fashion





# What Are We Doing Wrong?

Even those outside the industry are well aware of how much has been invested in the textile sector in Türkiye over the years from ready-to-wear and fabrics to leather exports, employment rates, and the sector's critical importance for Türkiye's future. Major investments, our advanced machinery, skilled workforce, and practical intelligence have all played a crucial role in bringing us to this point.

I don't intend to repeat statistics or facts that we already know or can easily find with a quick online search.

What feels more realistic to me is to talk about how the textile sector in Türkiye can progress beyond its current state, what we should or shouldn't be doing to achieve that, why we've fallen behind in producing value added products and in the branding process, and why we tend to demonstrate our quick thinking, work ethic, and problem solving only in short bursts of momentum failing to implement them through systematic planning and sustainable principles.

When we look at many of the leading companies in the industry, we often see that they are still operating with outdated production and management methods. They struggle to internalize and adapt to technological advancements and the changing demands of our age. They often neglect to provide the necessary training support to improve employee awareness and efficiency, resulting in a lack of motivation. They delay investing in R&D and product development. In such a setup, achievements often remain individual and coincidental, rather than evolving into structured, institutionalized, and sustainable success.





**So where is the global textile industry headed, while things remain like this in Türkiye? Why is this thing called “innovation” so important? Where do we stand in terms of innovative efforts as Türkiye, and what can we expect over the next ten years?**

*Let's take a closer look.*

There are common global dynamics at play: consumer demands are constantly shifting; sustainability has become a highly topical issue discussed in nearly every setting; and rising costs and competition have pushed price based competition aside in favor of quality driven strategies. The global issues of depleting natural resources and environmental protection are compelling the textile industry to act more responsibly especially in terms of waste production and consumption of natural resources, notably water.

With the European Green Deal of 2019 and its 17 core principles, the regulations around these issues are now more strictly monitored, and the targets set for the next 10–20 years are crystal clear. This pressures textile producers to focus on creating more functional fabrics, maximizing the use of recycled materials, or developing next-generation raw materials that are biodegradable and require no recycling at all.

Even trendsetters have begun to advocate for longer lifecycle color trends rather than seasonal ones, urging a shift from fast fashion to slow fashion, and designing products from recovered waste to help reduce landfills. In doing so, they are trying to reshape the conventional perception of fashion and guide both producers and consumers toward more responsible behavior.

Nature's silent cries, which have echoed for centuries, have now transformed into loud warnings manifesting as bizarre weather phenomena, climate changes, frequent and intense natural disasters, and the decreasing fertility of the soil. Since we've delayed the steps needed to reach net-zero carbon emissions, the next era must be navigated not by contemplation, but by acceleration.

## HOW CAN INNOVATION BE ACHIEVED IN THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY?

By developing smart textiles that are sensitive to climate and environmental changes, offer user advantages, regulate heat and moisture balance, and can generate or benefit from energy (such as temperature and humidity responsive products for athletes, or garments that can measure body temperature and heart rate)

By integrating nanotechnology products that add extra features to textiles, making them more durable, more functional, and more hygienic (such as self-cleaning curtains powered by solar energy, anti-allergenic and stress relieving mattress fabrics, water- and stain-repellent textiles, and UV-protective materials)

By producing sustainable textile raw materials and biotechnology products from recycled or biodegradable sources (such as fabrics made from mushrooms and algae, repeatedly recyclable fibers like hemp, and certified regenerated fibers that require fewer chemicals)

By focusing on technical textiles for special purposes (such as military camouflage, vehicle surface coatings, or medical products like artificial heart valves)

By adopting production methods that minimize the consumption of natural resources, manage water stress effectively, use green energy, and operate with minimal chemicals or in closed-loop production systems (such as factories using solar energy, recycling their wastewater, operating with waterless machines, and reusing separated chemicals)

By utilizing AI-supported, autonomous production systems that rely on software and data management to minimize errors and maximize efficiency (including AI software, autonomous systems, quality control robots, and data management platforms)

By producing personalized products and digital manufacturing methods that are based on accurate user analysis, tailored to the target audience's dynamics, offer a balance of price and performance, and are suitable for long term use

By building a workforce of conscious and well educated employees, advanced testing laboratories, and platforms that allow the industry to follow global developments and access relevant information

We will only be able to keep pace with the world's progress when we start planning and producing such products, when we value the branding process, when we shift from a subcontracting mentality to an “innovative productivity and R&D” mindset, when we design and launch high value-added products, and when we finally start giving design and designers the recognition they deserve. Only then will we truly understand that designing is far superior to copying.

To achieve this kind of innovation, we must recognize the importance of textile engineers, textile designers, vocational textile school graduates, industrial and business engineers, mechanical engineers, and many other professions. And above all, we must face the reality that progress in the textile sector will only come through a multidisciplinary approach and strong collaboration between all these fields.

Just like the holistic approach that has proven successful in the field of medicine, we must learn to address problems in the textile sector by identifying and eliminating root causes before issues arise. We need to look at the entire process holistically not by covering up issues or patching them with temporary fixes, but through fundamental changes and improvements that invest in both technology and people.

For Türkiye's success in the textile industry to grow exponentially, we need cooperation from all employers, institutions, and employees within the sector. Education is vital at every level. At DidemBaykalAKADEMİ, we strive to be a bridge between educational institutions and the industry, and we are continuously evolving to meet the textile sector's educational needs. As employers and workers in Türkiye's textile industry, I hope we will address our shortcomings and reach 2050 as a country that truly stands out.







Yalçın Kesen  
creative director





### Why are you doing this job?

I've always seen printing techniques as a form of artistic production. Fabric feels like a blank canvas to me, and my desire to be at the very heart of creation led me to textiles. Today, as a Creative Director, I not only build the color world of collections but also connect many aspects from design to lab work, from marketing to customer experience. I think of color as a memory that gives life to fabric, and every day I work still excites me.

### Do you think there's a connection between industrial fabric production and art?

I believe these two are not far apart in fact, they nourish each other. Artists like Nancy Atakan have reminded us of the aesthetic value of textiles and repetition. Today, even in industrial production processes, it's possible to take creative steps. Fabric should not be seen merely as an output, but as a surface for expression. Brands like Zara now demand fabrics, patterns, and colors that tell a story. In the coming years, textiles without artistic value or narrative may struggle to find their place.

### Do you believe the texture, color, and drape of a material can tell a story?

Absolutely. Every fabric carries an attitude. For example, pieces made of silk can feel more delicate and melancholic, while raw linen is more grounded and connected to nature. Surfaces carry emotion; a story without texture feels incomplete. If you can't imagine something when you touch a fabric, it means that fabric isn't really telling you much. We use fabric specifically as a tool for storytelling.





**Do you think there are new paths ahead where textiles and art will evolve together?**

Definitely. Art and technology are creating new hybrid fields through textiles. Smart fabrics, interactive surfaces, or data-driven textiles are now becoming a new means of expression in the hands of artists and designers. Production-focused companies also need to be part of this transformation. Art is no longer confined to galleries it can now be found in the fibers of fabric, in the spaces between threads.

**Is sustainability just a technical necessity for you, or do you also see it as an aesthetic opportunity?**

Sustainability is not just an ethical obligation it's also a new aesthetic language. Using waste materials or creating collections from recycled fibers are not just solutions; they also spark creative thinking. Projects like Worn Again or Lucy Orta's exploration of the relationship between clothing and society bring this perspective into the art world as well.

**Do you think textiles are valued enough as an art form?**

For many years, textiles were confined to the framework of "industry and mass production," and their connection to art was overlooked. But today, textiles are gaining strong representation in contemporary art galleries and biennials. Textile is not just a material; it's a storytelling medium, a memory keeper, and a multi-layered art form. It feeds art, and in turn, art offers new solutions to textile.









Hülya Yalçın

collection director of  
tek desen







### **In your opinion, what is the most prominent trend in the textile industry today?**

These days, trends are becoming more fluid and blurred. We see that each brand, each institution, is now creating its own trends based on their unique dynamics. It's difficult to pinpoint a single dominant trend. Every region has its own currents students, working mothers, even Gen Alpha all have their own styles. That's why current films, music, and even political figures and world leaders continue to influence the fashion world. For example, even Trump's posture has a wide-reaching influence. These kinds of social and political phenomena will shape the fashion world even more in the future.

Can you give an impressive example from the fashion world?

Take Beyoncé, for example she's currently on a major tour, and the stage aesthetics emphasize glitter and shine. Zara's design team is following her tour closely and shaping their clothing collections around this theme. In today's fashion, it's not only about popular culture, but also about political stances and the attitudes of global figures. Fashion is no longer just about aesthetics it's also about making a statement and being bold.

### **Where do you draw your inspiration from? Is it more from the past or innovative approaches?**

Honestly, both are appealing to me. I draw inspiration from the younger generation, from the streets, antique markets, and that sense of lived experience. I especially pay attention to Gen Alpha. They are still very young, but in the future they will shape consumer profiles, and that guides us in understanding future trends.

### **What do you think about the use of vintage and second-hand fabrics?**

The world has reached such a level of consumption frenzy that recycling and second-hand use have become essential. The fashion industry is beginning to take this more seriously. Levi's, for example, is selling jeans with a 50-year guarantee, and old clothes are being resold. This movement isn't only environmentally important, it also carries cultural value. Prada reissuing old collections, for example, shows a kind of respect for the past.

### **Do you find the sustainability policies of fast fashion brands to be genuine?**

At the moment, I can't say that I find these policies entirely sincere. Many brands are using sustainability as a mere marketing tool. A truly eco-conscious production process is still lacking in many companies. Sustainability has become a necessity, so some brands are implementing it, but the depth and integrity of these practices should be examined more thoroughly.

### **Are textile waste and recycled materials truly sustainable solutions?**

I believe we still have a long way to go, but recycled materials can certainly be a sustainable solution. In the past, when we were children, we would unravel old sweaters and create something new out of them. These practices actually date back a long way, and recycling should be fully integrated into our lives. Not just in textiles, but in our general lifestyle as well like reducing food waste. Instead of throwing everything away, we need to repurpose and reshape what we already have.



**What should consumers pay attention to in order to determine whether a brand is ethical or not?**

Consumers should pay close attention to product labels. The content of the product, the fabric, and the authenticity of the materials used should be examined. For example, if a product is labeled “recycled” but actually isn’t, that’s a form of greenwashing. Consumers need to be more aware and act like regulators for these brands. Understanding whether a brand is truly ethical becomes clear over time not through their claims, but through their actions.





**What are your thoughts on handcraft and fair pay systems in the fashion industry?**

This is truly important, but unfortunately it's not discussed enough. Handcraft and fair compensation have always remained in the background of the industry. However, it's clear that awareness on this topic must increase. The rights of producers, designers, and artisans should be more visible and respected. The fashion world should take stronger steps in this direction.

**Lastly, it's not just about creating something new what matters is carrying the essence and soul of the past into the future.**

What we need is not more "success stories" in an unjust and imbalanced system, but real storytellers who reconnect us with our roots, with nature, and with each other. We need designers who don't just follow trends, but who bring them to life in a clean, sustainable, and sincere way. People who rediscover the values within their own roots and make them visible are the ones who will truly lead their companies and themselves toward real success.





# Iskender Uprak

creative director /  
fashion consultant







**How did your journey in fashion begin? How did this layered career triangle (fashion consultant, creative director, fabric designer) take shape?**

As a child, I either wanted to be a singer or a fashion designer. Of course, back then, I didn't even fully understand what a "fashion designer" was, but I always had a deep passion for aesthetics. Life took me on a different path. During university entrance exam season, I had a serious car accident and spent 28 days in a coma. After recovering, I took the exam and got into mining engineering but it didn't last long. It was a field that just didn't align with who I was.

Later, I studied Fashion Management at Lasalle College. It was an area that wasn't well known at the time, but to me, it's one of the most critical aspects of fashion. Fashion isn't just about dreaming it's also about system, math, and strategy.

My first professional experience began at a store in Akmerkez. I was both involved in adjusting collections and working in sales. Then I started working as an assistant designer at an export company. I stayed there for 19 years. At first, we were only designing collections for Germany, but over time, we evolved into a structure that created collections for global brands like Zara and Mango and I was part of that transformation.

**How did your fabric design journey begin? Was it challenging to combine technical knowledge and creativity?**

This journey started as a bit of a challenge. During H&M's "Sister Company" project, the company I was working for was paired with a fabric supplier. When they showed me the fabrics, I didn't like any of them. They said, "Then come and make your own."

That was a very empowering start for me. I didn't have formal technical training in textiles, but I turned that into an advantage. I began thinking of fabric in relation to the garment first imagining what I wanted to create, and then designing fabrics to match that vision.

At first, since I didn't know the technical terms, I'd say things like, "This one bites me," or "This one's too noisy." But in time, I learned everything. Designing not only aesthetically pleasing but also functional fabrics became my core principle.

**How do you balance artistic expression and commercial success when making creative decisions?**

For me, fashion is not just a quest for beauty it's also a form of sociological and political expression. One of my collections during the pandemic was themed "Trying the Untested." Because we were all facing things we'd never experienced before.

I used fabrics resembling medical gauze, a color palette inspired by medicine tones, orange-red transitions, bold blues... All of it reflected the spirit of that time. Before selecting a theme for a collection, I don't only look at fashion I look at current events: Is there a war? A drought? Sometimes even a new movie or video game can become a source of inspiration.

**What's the most creative moment or process for you?**

The most creative part is deciding on the theme and building a world around it. Design isn't just what we see on runways. You have to follow cinema, music, economics, the mood of society... For example, in the late '90s, millions wanted to dress like Carrie Bradshaw that was a source of inspiration. Sometimes a character, sometimes a crisis, sometimes even a glimmer of hope can determine the direction of a collection.

İskender Uprak's fashion journey reminds us once again that the most powerful designs are nourished by emotion, observation, and reality. And fashion is not just about clothing it can be the feeling of an era, the voice of the world, and the inner voice of a human being.





REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE  
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**TİM**

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UTİB  
ULUDAĞ TEXTILE EXPORTERS' ASSOCIATION

**Türkiye**

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TEMA  
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### LEVEL UP

Idea Stage Entrepreneur  
Category

### SCALE UP

Developed Product & Service  
Startup Category

# IDEAS SHAPING THE TEXTILE OF THE FUTURE

*Meet the Finalists of the  
6th TechXtile Challenge  
Design Competition*

Organized by the Uludağ Textile Exporters' Association (UTİB) under the coordination of the Turkish Exporters Assembly (TİM) and supported by the Ministry of Trade of the Republic of Türkiye, the contest supports creative ideas that shape the future of the textile industry with a focus on sustainability, innovation, and entrepreneurship. TechXtile Challenge, which reaches a broader audience each year, offers a strong ecosystem that enables entrepreneurs to access both national and international markets.

The TechXtile Challenge Design Competition, which created a wave of innovation in the textile industry, has concluded. Organized for the sixth time this year by the Uludağ Textile Exporters' Association (UTİB) with the support of the Turkish Ministry of Trade and under the coordination of the Turkish Exporters Assembly (TİM), the competition brought together 16 finalists who advanced through months of seminars and eliminations. These finalists competed to be among the top three in two main categories.





### Level-Up Category winner Faruk Olpak

In the Level-Up category, which includes early-stage ideas, the first award went to Faruk Olpak with his project “Innovative Designs and Performance Enhancement in Leno Weaving.”

Second place was awarded to Rifat Buğra Bildiri and his team for the project “Naturalg: Microalgae Cultivation in Textile Wastewater and Bio-Based Product Development.”

Third place went to Emriye Perrin Akçakoca Kumbasar and her team for the project “Wound Dressing with Antibacterial Nanofibers.”



### Scale-Up Category winner Mehmet Görkem Gökoğlu

In the Scale-Up category, which features commercialized projects, the top prize was awarded to Mehmet Görkem Gökoğlu and his team for their project “M-Based.”

Mehmet İmrak and his team took second place with “Mesai Inline Metalizing Machine,” while Atakan Yıldız took third place with “Soilbiom.”





### Women Entrepreneur Special Award Goes to Birce Avcu

The Women Entrepreneur Special Award, given annually to encourage women in entrepreneurship, was awarded to Birce Avcu for her project "Creative Destruction - This Project Was Created to Be Destroyed."



### Bahar Korçan Sustainability Special Award

In memory of the late renowned fashion designer Bahar Korçan, the Sustainability Special Award was granted to Atakan Yıldız and his team for their project "Soilbiom."

### Innovation League Champions: Almaxtex and Kipaş Textile

Under the umbrella of the TechXtile Platform, the TechXtile Innovation League showcased innovation-driven projects from companies' R&D and design centers.

**Almaxtex** and **Kipaş Textile** were named the champions.

**Almaxtex** received the **Most Sustainable Project Award**, while **Kipaş Textile** earned the **Most Innovative Project Award**.









# DIGITAL FASHION TRENDS

## IFA Paris



# MARIA EUGENIA ARGENTOU<sup>o</sup>

## Once Upon A Stitch: A 3D Revolution

In the ever-evolving world of fashion, sustainability has become more than just A trend it is A necessity. As designers strive to tackle issues like textile waste, overproduction, and environmental harm, A revolutionary shift has emerged: digital fashion. This innovation not only addresses the urgent need for eco-friendly practices but also empowers designers like me to break free from traditional boundaries, unlock creativity, and redefine fashion's boundaries.

I have personally experienced the transformative power of digital fashion through my work with Browzwear V-Stitcher, A cutting-edge 3D garment creation software. This platform has allowed me to bring my most outrageous designs to life without wasting A single thread or piece of fabric. This journey was not just about reducing waste; it was about discovering the boundless potential of creativity when freed from the restrictions of physical materials.

Guided by my professor, through hyper-realistic recreation, I have learned to breathe digital life into ideas that challenge traditional beauty standards. Starting from the iconic Micky Mouse himself, I have created fierce and alternative versions of iconic Disney characters, such as A Cruella de Vil with A shaved head, an empowered Ursula owning the shaved look, A Maleficent who exudes dark elegance, an otherworldly Eleven, straight from the upside down world of stranger things and six of the Powerpuff girls, ready to save the world before bedtime! I have also explored the duality of human nature through A black-and-white swan design, symbolizing the eternal dance between light and darkness.





Beyond fairytales, my creations extend into the realm of boundless imagination. I have modelled the ethereal beauty of A mermaid, A mystical fairy with lotus landing wings, A playful Smurf, and even the powerful iron man. Taking inspiration from HBO's game of thrones, I reimagined the Targaryen dragons as A dazzling golden iron nymph. I have even focused on simple real-life items, like A fresh daisy straight out of the whimsical forest, or even A cute little mushroom, guiding Alice in her own magical wonderland. These designs, once trapped in my imagination, now exist digitally, completely sustainable and without wasting A single thread or drop of dye.

Sustainability in fashion is not just about the materials we use it's about revolutionizing the entire design process. With digital fashion, the waste of trial-and-error is eliminated. I have had the freedom to experiment, iterate, and perfect designs without ever having to cut A single piece of fabric. This creative freedom has allowed me to push the boundaries of fashion design like never before, giving me the tools to think outside the box.

Beyond its environmental impact, digital fashion is A feminist revolution. It empowers women to take control of the creative process, free from the constraints of traditional manufacturing. As A fierce advocate for female empowerment, I use my digital creations to celebrate the strength and beauty of women. In A world that often tries to limit us, this technology has allowed me to break free and redefine fashion on my own terms. My journey into digital fashion has not gone unnoticed. My first-year trends collection, born from my exploration of Browzwear, earned me A certificate of special achievements from my trends and sustainability professor, Dr. Irena Funduk. With the encouragement of Dr. Funduk and my Browzwear professor, miss Ayşegül Atik, I was encouraged to push the limits of design and experiment without fear. Their faith in my abilities strengthened my belief that nothing is impossible. Recently, I had the honor of having my maleficent Browzwear project featured on IFA Paris Istanbul's Instagram, alongside works from other students. This moment reflected my hard work and confidence gained through Browzwear.

Sustainability is more than A concept; it is A movement. And in this movement, digital fashion is one of the most powerful tools we have. It allows designers like me to dream without limits, create limitlessly, and shape A future where fashion is both ethical and exceptional. Through 3D technology, we are not only reducing waste but also empowering A new generation of designers to embrace creativity without the fear of material loss. Digital fashion breaks down the boundaries of traditional fashion norms, opening new pathways for experimentation. It eliminates the need for wasteful samples, encourages infinite possibilities, and defies the limits of physical materials. This is not just A change in how we work; it is A revolution in how we think about fashion.

We stand on the brink of A new era, one where fashion is no longer A contributor to environmental harm but A beacon of change. Digital fashion is the catalyst that will propel us toward A sustainable future. It represents the manifestation of creative freedom, A declaration that we can achieve boundless innovation and A fashion industry that does not destroy the planet. Through these tools, we are not just designing clothing; we are reimagining the very foundation of the fashion industry. This revolution is just beginning fuelled by passion, vision, and A relentless pursuit of A sustainable future. As designers, we are the ones leading this charge.

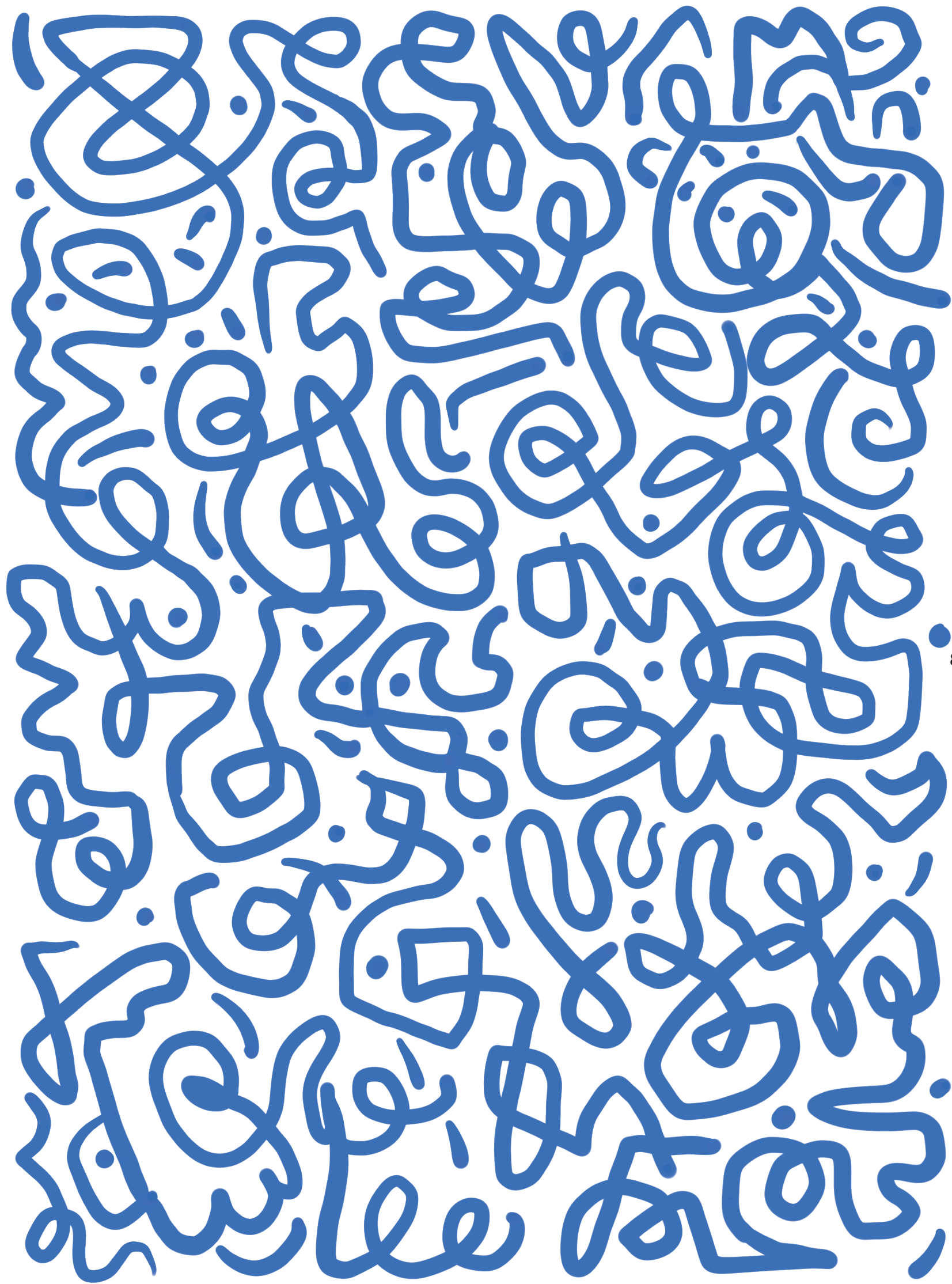
Fashion has always reflected the times in which it exists, and as we move toward A more sustainable future, digital fashion will lead the way. It is the ultimate intersection of art, innovation, and responsibility a testament to what we can achieve when we challenge conventional boundaries. As A woman in this industry, I will continue to use digital fashion to champion change, break barriers, and prove that sustainability and creativity can coexist. They are not mutually exclusive; they are the future.

This is more than just A passion; it is my mission. And if there is one thing I have learned, it is that the power to create, inspire, and transform does not lie in the materials we use, but in the boundless imagination that fuels our dreams. Digital fashion gives us the power to bring those dreams to life, to transform our ideas into reality, in A way that is sustainable, beautiful, and limitless. It is A tool that provides new opportunities and new freedoms it is the future of fashion.

As we step into this new era, it is clear that digital fashion holds the key to reimagining how we design, create, and think about fashion. The boundaries that once constrained us are being broken down, and in their place, A new world of infinite possibilities is emerging. A world where fashion is sustainable, ethical, and unleashed from traditional constraints. This movement is just beginning, and I am proud to be A part of it pushing boundaries, challenging norms, and leading the charge toward A more sustainable fashion industry. The revolution has begun.









# SHARON PIMENTA ALT<sup>o</sup>

## Digital Fashion In Unstable Times

Fashion trends have always reflected the historical moments they emerged in, being shaped by social, psychological, political and economic factors. However, a significant change has occurred in recent decades: the development of digital spaces. With the expansion of these new virtual worlds, an urgent question arises: how does digital fashion, this new territory of aesthetic expression, react to contemporary crises? We already know how individuals behave in difficult times in the physical world, but what about in the digital world? What visual and behavioral signals emerge in these contexts of instability?

A very clear example of economic influence on fashion is the hemline index. The term originated from a study by economist George Taylor during the 1920s, where he studied the connection between the height of women's skirts and the economic climate. He observed that in times of prosperity, women chose to wear shorter skirts, and in times of crisis, their skirts increased in length. Something that has also been observed is the increase in conservative thinking in the midst of crises as a form of escapism and control.

In a context of economic crisis, digital fashion consumption may become a more affordable alternative, DRESSX research shows that 84% of generations Z and Alpha say their real-life fashion choices are influenced by how they dress their avatars. In addition, self-expression and identity are priorities for both generations. Avatar skins allow them to experiment with different styles without the constraints of the physical world. Even in an economic crisis, the need to express individuality and connect socially in virtual spaces such as Roblox, Fortnite and Snapchat, where virtual wearables signal status and style, will likely persist. Digital fashion offers a way to maintain this personal and social expression without the high costs associated with physical fashion.

DRESSX also points out that a significant portion of Gen Z is willing to spend money on in-game fashion, with 58% saying so. Even in a difficult economic climate, digital entertainment and maintaining a virtual identity may remain priorities for this demographic, leading to an allocation of resources to digital fashion.

Studies and reports by WGSN (Worth Global Style Network) indicate that future consumers will be greatly impacted by economic crises, some of their characteristics will be: Valuing truth (transparency and simplicity amid misinformation); Autonomy (valuing personal values since conventional values seem unattainable); Minimalism (wanting to live a simpler and more real life); Curiosity (wanting to integrate technology in a more human and emotional way into their lives).

### Most popular types of clothes



\* DRESSX specific data on Roblox, Meta, Snapchat Bitmoji Avatars and GEN AI, aggregated  
\*\* Images were created by DRESSX using Zepeto, Roblox and Bitmoji avatars





## But how can we visually observe these behavioral trends in digital fashion?

The creation of hyper-individualism caused by the highly-fed algorithms of social media platforms created the desire for customizable and interactive clothing.

Users of digital worlds do not want to be isolated in virtual lives, they want to integrate it with their reality. For this reason, many feel the need to buy digital clothes that are also available in real life.

Statement accessories are in high demand in digital fashion, as they are bolder and a creative way to express yourself, since there is no question of being wearable in real life.

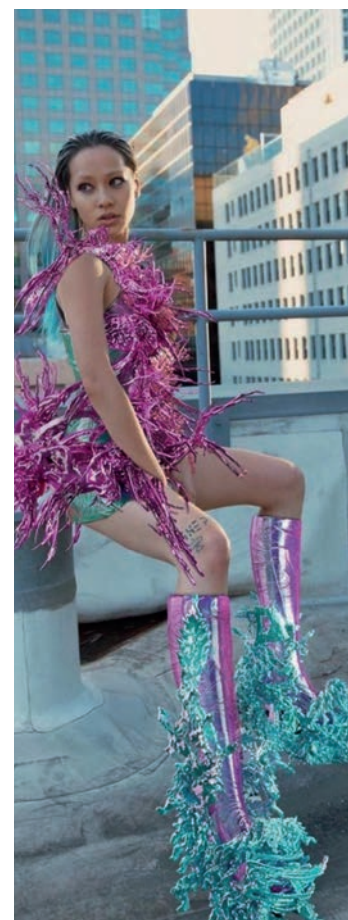
Another very interesting trend is limited items connected to an event, collaboration or season. These items help build a virtual community and the feeling of “I was there at that moment,” or “I lived that,” reflecting the feeling of loneliness that many of these generations have been saying.

Neutral colors and statement pieces are common. The colors are very much inspired by the outside world, such as Pantone’s color of the year (17-1230 Mocha Mousse), which expresses comfort, class and contentment. The viralization of Dress To Impress (online look competitions) demonstrates the return to being different and participating in social interactions that would not be possible in the real world.

The aesthetics of nostalgia, especially of moments that the current generation did not witness, is something very present in both the real and digital world. Clothes and colors from the 1990s and 2000s, as well as the romanticization of old technology such as digital cameras, flip phones, feathers, jeans and silhouettes.

When discussing the self-isolation of younger generations, it is essential to consider the emotional and behavioral impact of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. The forced isolation of that period left deep scars and currently manifest themselves in the form of voluntary social distancing. This behavior, combined with the current economic crisis and the lack of optimistic outlook for the future, helps to explain why so many trends have migrated from the physical to the digital. In virtual environments, it is possible to simulate an ideal life, escape reality and express oneself freely, with less financial costs and without the pressures of face-to-face social interactions.

If fashion has always been a mirror of economic reality, the digital version is no exception. Amid inflation, unemployment and uncertainty, we see a growing demand for alternatives that allow personal expression without spending a lot — and that’s where digital fashion flourishes. Buying a virtual piece costs less, doesn’t require physical space and still guarantees status in online communities. Digital consumption becomes a direct response to instability: an affordable luxury, a psychological escape and, at the same time, a new form of belonging. And as economic crises shape our desires and behaviors, are we replacing the desire to “have” with the desire to “show off”? The future of fashion may not only lie in what we wear, but in how we project who we want to be — even if it’s just in pixels. When the world gets tough, fashion doesn’t disappear. It adapts. The question is: do we adapt with it... or do we run away within it?





# EMBRACING SUSTAINABILITY



# IMENE TIMSILINE

## Sustainable Fashion : Rethinking Style in a Changing World

Fashion is more than self-expression, it's a global industry that shapes culture, economies, and the environment. But beneath the beauty lies a hard truth : fashion is one of the world's most polluting industries. According to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the sector contributes up to **10% of global carbon emissions**, more than all international flights and maritime shipping combined, and uses **93 billion cubic meters of water** each year.

As climate change accelerates and ethical concerns rise, sustainability is becoming a defining force in the future of fashion. No longer a niche concern, it's a call to rethink how clothes are designed, made, and consumed.



Over the past two decades, fast fashion has transformed how we shop : cheap garments, trendy styles, and an endless cycle of new arrivals. But this model comes at a steep cost. Every year, the fashion industry generates **92 million tonnes of textile waste**, with most ending up in landfills or incinerators. Fewer than **1% of garments** are recycled into new clothing, according to the Ellen MacArthur Foundation.

Producing one cotton shirt can require **2,700 liters of water**, and polyester, used in 60% of clothes releases nearly **three times more carbon than cotton**. The environmental cost is mirrored by human suffering: low wages, long hours, and unsafe working conditions are common in garment factories, especially in Bangladesh, India, and Vietnam. The 2013 Rana Plaza collapse, which killed over 1,100 workers, remains a tragic symbol of fashion's dark underbelly.



## Circular Fashion : Closing the Loop

To move forward, fashion must go circular designing products with their end-of-life in mind. This means choosing materials that can be reused, recycled, or composted, and minimizing waste throughout the production cycle.

Brands like **Patagonia** and **Eileen Fisher** lead the way with repair, resale, and recycling initiatives. Patagonia's Worn Wear program, for example, extends the life of products through repairs and secondhand sales. **The Global Fashion Agenda** estimates that industry-wide adoption of circular practices could cut emissions by 39% by 2030.

Even luxury brands are adapting. **Stella McCartney** has pioneered zero-waste pattern cutting and vegan materials, proving that sustainability and high fashion can coexist.

## Innovation in Materials

Science and technology are unlocking sustainable materials that look good and do good. Take **mycelium leather**, made from mushroom roots: it offers a luxurious alternative to animal leather, without the carbon-heavy process of livestock farming. Brands like **Adidas**, **Hermès**, and **Lululemon** are already integrating mycelium-based products.

Other innovations include:

**TENCEL™** : A biodegradable fiber made from wood pulp in a closed-loop system that recycles water and solvents.

**Recycled PET** : Turns plastic bottles into fabrics, reducing landfill waste.

**Plant-based dyes** : Avoid toxic chemicals found in synthetic dyeing processes, which pollute water and harm ecosystems.

McKinsey & Co. found in 2022 that broad adoption of alternative materials could reduce fashion's environmental footprint by up to 25%.

## Digital Fashion and the Slow Movement

Technology is also reducing physical waste. With 3D design, AI-assisted planning, and digital sampling, brands can cut down on fabric waste and overproduction. The rise of **digital fashion** clothing that exists only in virtual environments is an exciting development. Gucci, Balenciaga, and Nike have all launched virtual clothing lines and NFTs, creating value without resource use.

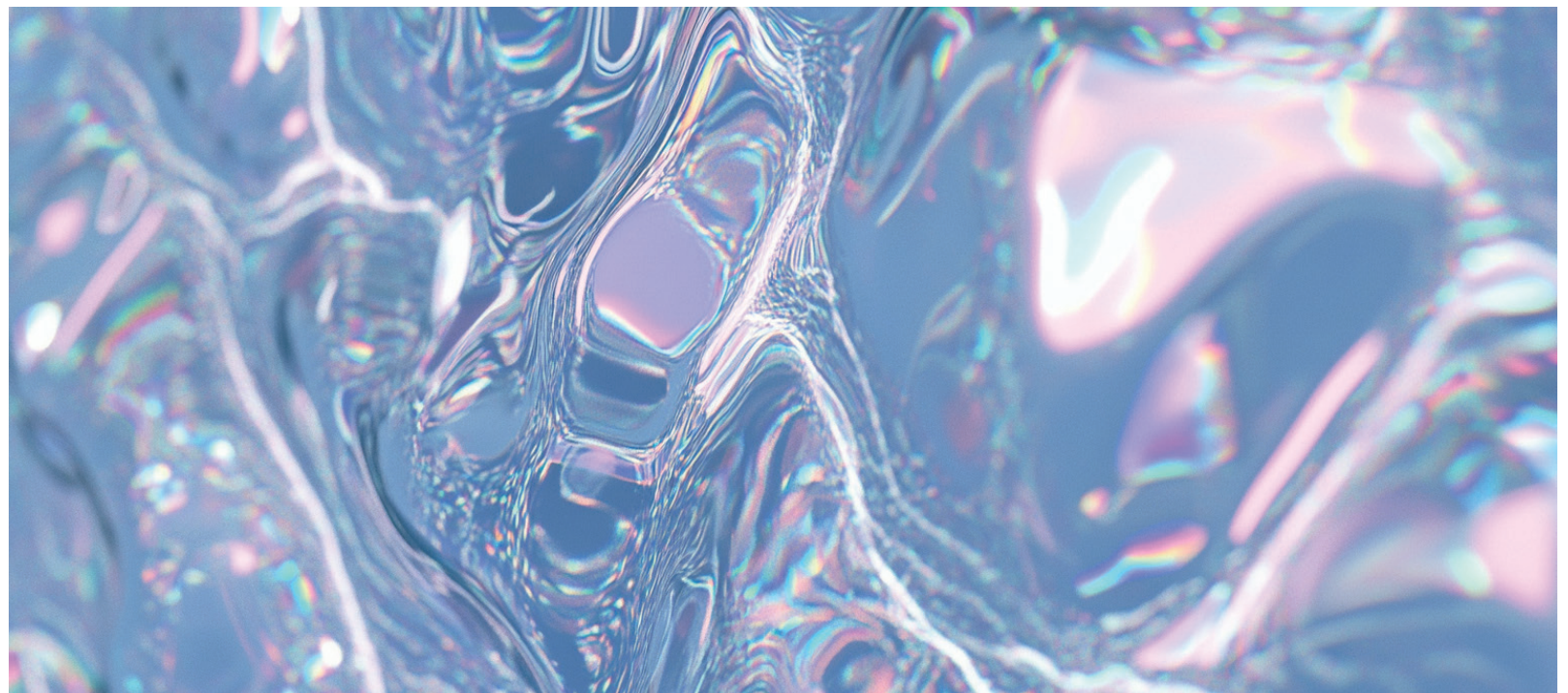
At the same time, the **slow fashion** movement is gaining ground. Instead of chasing trends, it promotes fewer, better-quality items made ethically and built to last. Designers like **Mara Hoffman** and **Bethany Williams** are proving that mindful fashion can still be innovative and expressive.

Consumer values are shifting, too. A 2023 **ThredUp** report found that 70% of Gen Z shoppers are willing to pay more for sustainably made clothing, and the resale market is booming expected to reach \$350 billion by 2027.

## Transparency and Ethics in the Supply Chain

Transparency is central to ethical fashion. Consumers increasingly demand to know who made their clothes and under what conditions. Blockchain technology is being used to trace garments from raw material to retail, ensuring fair labor practices and environmental compliance.

Certifications like **GOTS**, **Fair Trade**, and **OEKO-TEX** help shoppers identify responsible products. However, **greenwashing** where brands make misleading claims about sustainability is still a problem. In response, the EU is cracking down : 2023 legislation now requires companies to back up green claims with scientific proof.





## A Cultural and Educational Shift

The future of fashion also depends on changing mindsets. Schools like **Parsons** and **London College of Fashion** now offer degrees in sustainable design, preparing a new generation of designers to think ethically and ecologically from day one. Meanwhile, public figures like **Emma Watson** and **Billie Eilish** champion ethical fashion, using their platforms to promote awareness. Social media and documentaries like *The True Cost* have played a major role in driving consumer consciousness.

## The Road Ahead

Sustainability in fashion is no longer a luxury it's a necessity. As the climate crisis deepens and ethical concerns become impossible to ignore, fashion must evolve. From **regenerative materials** to **circular systems**, **transparency** to **education**, the solutions are already here. The next step is scale. As designer Vivienne Westwood said, "*Buy less, choose well, make it last.*" In the years to come, those simple words may be the most fashionable mantra of all.





# FASHION AS A CULTURAL REFLECTION



# GENNA AIRAM<sup>✶</sup>

## Threads of Culture

Fashion is more than what we wear—it's a living, breathing reflection of who we are. As cultures evolve, so does fashion, offering a canvas for stories rooted in tradition, memory, and identity. Today, some designers are choosing to use their platforms to preserve heritage while pushing creative boundaries.

As someone currently studying fashion media, I've become increasingly drawn to the intersection of storytelling and design. Like VINO, I see myself as a storyteller. Sometimes the narrative unfolds through fashion, other times through literature or photography—but at the heart of it is the same desire: to tell stories that move people. This isn't something I do because I have to, or because it's expected of me or even because I consciously want to. Sometimes, it's simply a need. Storytelling is a form of self-expression that feels essential to who I am. For me, fashion is powerful precisely because it can carry deeply personal or culturally resonant messages without a single word. Coming from Mexico, a country steeped in rich traditions, I often see echoes of my background in my own creative work even when the stories I tell aren't explicitly Mexican.

Knowing VINO personally and admiring her commitment to sustainability and cultural preservation through her brand, VINO Supraja, I knew she was the perfect person to explore the idea of fashion as a cultural reflection. Her designs are rooted in heritage yet speak effortlessly to global audiences. What followed was a conversation that revealed how she weaves her personal and cultural identity into garments that tell unforgettable stories both intimate and far-reaching.

### How has your own cultural identity influenced your perspective as a designer?

"Every collection that I have done so far has always been inspired from my childhood, from my roots, from the culture that I have grown into," VINO shares. She emphasizes that as an artist, one is deeply impacted by personal experiences, and that her creations are a natural extension of those roots. She points out that even when a collection isn't directly tied to her geographic origin, there remains a deep personal connection often expressed through architectural references, reflecting her background as an architect.

Her debut collection, inspired by the novel *Kite Runner*, exemplifies how literary and cultural narratives have long shaped her creative process. VINO sees no separation between her personal identity and her brand, affirming, "My brand is just my reflection, right?" Each of her collections serves as a chapter of her life, a cultural narrative rendered in fabric and form.





**Fashion is a powerful storytelling medium. Could you share how your designs narrate the cultural history and stories of the communities you work with?**

Initially drawn to fashion with dreams of dressing celebrities and showcasing on runways, Vino's path evolved as she began working closely with artisan communities. "As I started making collection after collection organically, the inspiration started coming from the roots. So I had to go back to the roots and work with and talk to these people," she reflects.

Recent examples include a collection inspired by a traditional folk performing art and another centered around a unique weaving technique from the Bhavani region. For Vino, storytelling takes precedence over trends: "I'll always be seeking stories to tell, rather than seeking inspiration for collections to showcase. When I seek an interesting, meaningful story that I want to say, it will automatically become a collection."



**Could you share a particular piece or collection that strongly resonated with audiences culturally? What do you think made it impactful?**

Two standout collections illustrate her impact. Buoyancy, presented at Brooklyn Fashion Week, was inspired by the 2015 Chennai floods and celebrated the resilience of the city's people. "The city bounced back within a week. People organized social volunteer groups on Facebook and WhatsApp... nobody gave anybody any task. It just organically [happened]," she says. The collection received a standing ovation, with the mayor of Brooklyn and the chief justice in attendance.

At London Fashion Week, Vino showcased a collection that included a live performance of a traditional art form an unprecedented move in the fashion world that earned her an award at the British Parliament. "These two collections had major impact, [and were] very well received by the audience," she reflects.





**Sustainability is integral to your brand. Can you explain the cultural significance of sustainability in traditional Indian textile practices, and how you've incorporated that ethos into your brand?**

"The minute you embrace heritage and traditional techniques, right? That has been always sustainable. It is only the modernity and mass production which has made things worse in terms of sustainability," Vino explains. Her brand reflects this belief through practices such as working directly with artisans, using organic fibers, traditional weaving methods, and azo-free dyes, while minimizing plastic in packaging.

"Sustainability is a very vague umbrella. Anybody can claim to be sustainable. The meter of sustainability should be in the brand's heart, that there need not be an external body coming and judging you," she says. She also acknowledges limitations, emphasizing the importance of staying informed and adjusting practices as new insights emerge. "We try to be as sustainable and as ethical as possible... We learn, we unlearn."



**Have you encountered any challenges when blending traditional Indian elements with contemporary aesthetics? How do you navigate potential cultural sensitivities?**

"My whole mission is to bring the craftsmanship of these people to the global platform," Vino asserts. While local appreciation exists, she believes true support requires global visibility and adaptation. "You can't make something very, very Indian and traditional out of what they make, and then try to sell in the global market, because it will never be as appreciated as it is locally."

Her solution is to reimagine: transforming traditional items like rugs into functional fashion pieces, such as premium bags. "But there were challenges... rugs are rectangular. In bags, you need to bend them, add darts, top stitching..." The same applies to silhouettes: "It can be the point of inspiration, but it has to be relevant with what is happening in the world currently."

"You have a rich inspiration in hand, but if you're going to present it as it is, it will look overly traditional or culturally specific in a way that might not fully translate across audiences, and you cannot expect everyone in the world to be attracted to it. You want to appeal to the global mass, not just the niche that loves Indian stuff."





**Your brand celebrates artisanship. Can you discuss the importance of preserving traditional craftsmanship in today's fast-fashion dominated world?**

Vino offers a passionate account of her visit to Bhavani, a town once known for its rug-making. "My heart was weeping to see hundreds of looms broken with cobwebs... there was one operational loom where an 80-plus-year-old man was sitting and weaving." She stresses that crafts are disappearing as younger generations seek government jobs instead of continuing artisanal traditions. "These hidden gems... are just fading off. These artisans don't know how to reach markets, can't respond to emails, don't understand global standards."

Her call to action includes government training programs, stipends, and support to connect artisans with international audiences. She leaves us with a beautiful metaphor: "If I cannot be the sun, which will give light to the whole world, I will at least be a street light... If I cannot even be the street light, I'll be a lamp inside a house."

J

COLLECTION



HERITAGE HANDBAGS FROM

 VINO SUPRAJA



**What advice would you give emerging designers who wish to honor their cultural roots while appealing to international markets?**

"It should come to terms even before entering this bandwagon, that it is not going to be an easy win," Vino cautions. She urges young designers to let go of glamorized expectations and focus on the journey: "Just look at that particular step, step after step and go. Just keep going."

Her advice is rooted in authenticity and persistence interpreting culture in ways that feel personal yet universal. "You have to balance tradition with global relevance," she adds. Success lies in transforming rooted inspiration into expressions that speak across borders, not just to niche audiences.

In reflecting on our exchange, it's clear that Vino Supraja's work is a compelling reminder of fashion's capacity to honor history while shaping the future. Through her thoughtful storytelling, sustainable practices, and commitment to preserving traditional craftsmanship, she offers a blueprint for a more inclusive, culturally rich fashion landscape.

Listening to Vino speak reminded me that fashion doesn't need to shout to make an impact. It can whisper stories of community, echo ancestral rhythms, and still command a place on the global stage. In a world hungry for authenticity, Vino proves that fashion can do more than dress—it can document, uplift, and transform.





# HONORING CRAFTSMANS HIP & SKILLS



# LAIBA ZAIDI

In the chaos and captivation of fashion trends and styles we sometimes foresee the main masterminds of the fashion industry, who quite literally run the world and are secret ingredients of a successful fashion industry, which are craftsman and artisans. When we think of fashion, our minds often jump to glamorous models, bold designers, and the dazzling chaos of runway shows. But the soul of fashion lives in the atelier, in the studio, and in the countless hours of meticulous work behind each collection. Craftsmanship is the backbone of haute couture, luxury fashion, and even high-quality ready-to-wear. In a world of fast fashion and rapid production Beauty lies within traditional techniques made with love, care, dedication and creativity. Craftsmanship in fashion is not simply about making clothes. It is the art of transforming fabric into emotion, concept into wearability, and design into legacy.

In true words and what truly represents, and honors skills of craftsmanship is Culture of quite excellence, Unlike the faces we see on magazine covers or the designers whose names headline fashion weeks, the artisans and craftspeople work quietly behind the scenes. Yet, without them, fashion would be a mere sketch, an idea not yet brought to life. We as consumers tend to fantasize haute couture dresses from big fashion houses like Gucci, Chanel, Prada, even giant jewelry pieces tend to fascinate us looking glamorous like they were made with perfection but what we don't see are the are the invisible hands that turn vision into reality, ensuring that each garment not only looks good but also lasts, fits beautifully, and tells a story. Artisans play fundamental roles in shaping the intricate landscape of fashion through their unique and specialized techniques. From delicate embroidery to hand-woven textiles, from master tailoring to intricate beadwork, these unsung heroes are the keepers of centuries-old traditions and the creators of timeless beauty.

Preserving traditional craftsmanship is a cornerstone of luxury manufacturing, where the artistry and meticulous attention to detail elevate products beyond mere objects. The luxury industry has long cherished the unique skills involved in creating handcrafted items, distinctly setting them apart from mass-produced alternatives. This dedication is what fuels the desire for high-end goods, from exquisite haute couture fashion to stunning fine jewelry and watches. The artistry inherent in these luxury items often reflects generations of knowledge and tradition, contributing to their unmatched character and quality. Moreover, it is this rich heritage that imbues luxury products with their distinctiveness, making them coveted by discerning consumers. However, as we navigate the rapid advancements in technology and the growing demand for efficiency and convenience among consumers, there looms a significant threat: the risk of losing these treasured traditional skills. It is imperative that the luxury manufacturing sector continues to champion and support traditional craftsmanship, ensuring that it not only survives but thrives in this evolving landscape.



An artisan's touch is the heart of fashion industry, whether it's the quiet rhythm of a loom in a rural village or the focused stillness of a couture atelier in Paris, the human touch makes all the difference. Craftsmanship is not simply a method of making; it's a philosophy. As the fashion industry accelerates towards modernity, fueled by AI-generated designs and the rapid pace of fast fashion, the significance of traditional craftsmanship has never been more pronounced. These artisanal skills not only ground the industry in authenticity but also serve as a poignant reminder that fashion transcends mere commerce; it embodies culture itself. Encouragingly, an increasing number of designers are reconnecting with their heritage, opting to collaborate with local artisans and revive time-honored techniques. Whether it's the intricate hand-block printing of India, the exquisite lace-making traditions of Italy, or the vibrant indigo dyeing practices of West Africa, the fashion world is discovering innovative avenues to honor age-old wisdom. These partnerships are not only visually stunning; they play a vital role in safeguarding craft traditions that are at risk of being forgotten.

In recent years, a fascinating trend has emerged within the realm of luxury fashion: collaboration with local artisans from small communities. These partnerships allow renowned fashion houses to not only display the unique skills and techniques of these artisans but also to extend vital support to them. A striking example of this is Dior's collaboration in 2020, where the distinguished couture house worked closely with Moroccan tribes and local female artists. Over the course of several months, artisans from four Anti-Atlas tribes crafted exquisite hand-woven and hand-henna painted panels, alongside intricate wax fabrics that were seamlessly integrated into various designs. This initiative not only highlights the artistry inherent in traditional practices but also fosters a meaningful connection between luxury fashion and cultural heritage. Renowned for its dedication to preserving ancient crafts, the esteemed Couture House Chanel stands as a leading pioneer in this vital pursuit. Since 1985, Chanel has made significant strides by acquiring or partially funding nearly 30 artisan workshops, with the aim of nurturing the traditional skills that underpin its exquisite specialty products. These workshops, comprising local French weavers, jewellers, embroidery specialists, and plumassiers, benefit immensely from such efforts. Remarkably, these initiatives have not only bolstered these crafts but in many cases have played a crucial role in their survival. What sets Chanel apart is its commitment to respecting the creative independence of these suppliers. Despite their financial support, Chanel refrains from interfering with the production processes or management of these artisan workshops, thus allowing them the freedom to collaborate with other fashion houses. Let us honour the hands that stitch dreams into fabric, the minds that preserve technique through time, and the spirit of craftsmanship that elevates fashion from industry to art. Let us continue to uplift the artisans. Let us tell their stories, wear their work with pride, and preserve their skills for generations to come. In doing so, we ensure that the heart of fashion keeps beating — one stitch at a time.



# LUXURY BRAND MANAGEMENT & INFLUENCER MARKETING



# GENNA AIRAM

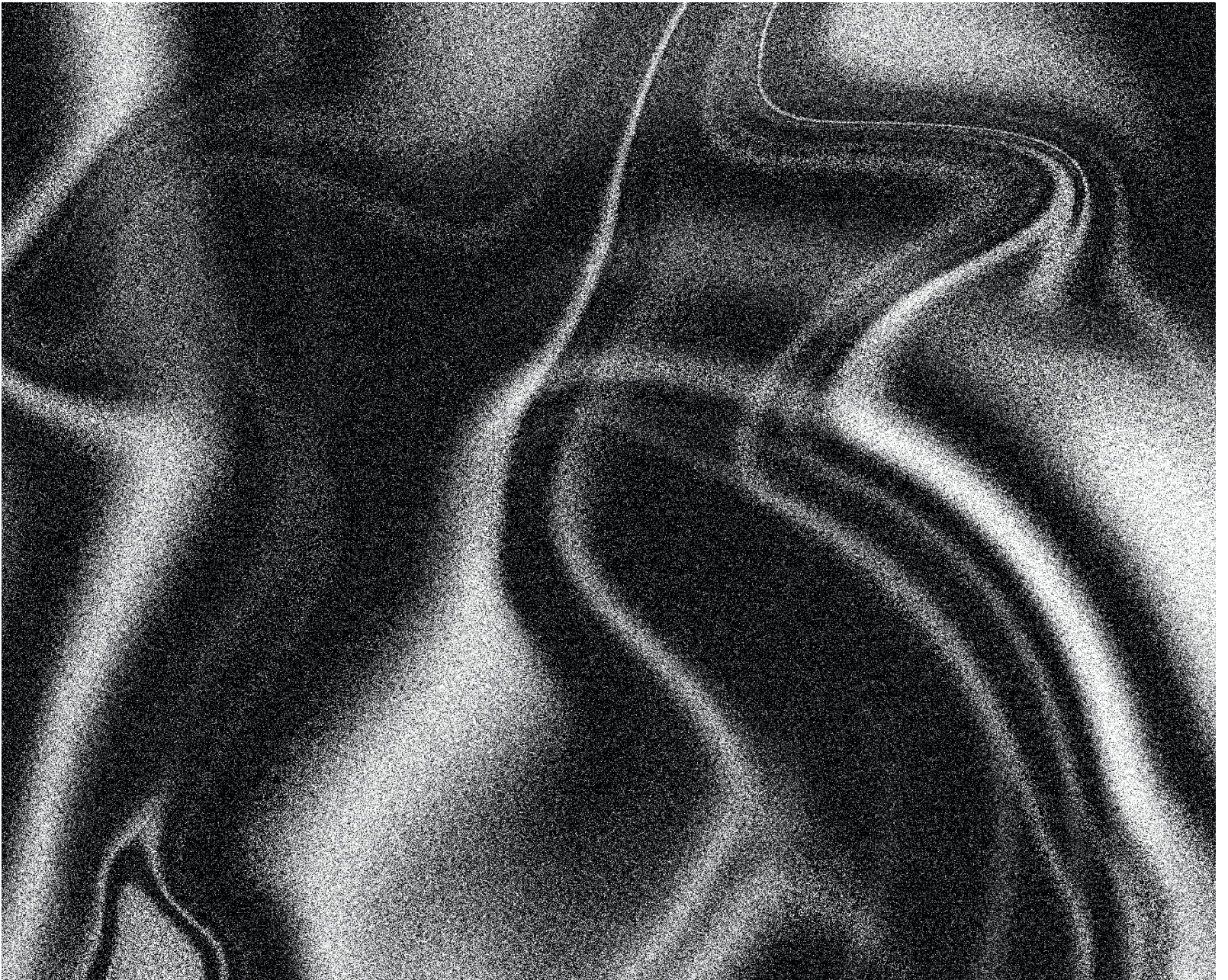
## Exclusivity in the Age of Exposure

Once upon a time, luxury was defined by scarcity. A whisper of a waitlist, an invitation-only showroom, a glimpse of something you could never just buy online. Then came social media. Then came influencer marketing. And suddenly, the most exclusive brands in the world were showing up in unboxings, GRWMs, and discount code shoutouts. Spoiler alert: luxury isn't dead but it's definitely under pressure.

As someone who's worked as a brand manager across wellness, beauty, and now real estate (yes, luxury exists beyond fashion), let me say this plainly: influencer marketing is not inherently luxurious. It can be, but only if executed with curation, strategy, and taste. Inaccessible ≠ snobby. It means selective. And luxury lives in that selectiveness.

## The Brand Manager's Golden Rule: Consistency Is Queen

As a brand manager myself and currently working as a brand consultant if there's one truth I'll stand by, it's this: brand consistency isn't optional. It's the foundation. Every product, post, package, partnership it all needs to speak the same visual and verbal language. And when it comes to influencer marketing? You're not just handing over a product; you're handing over the mic. If they go off-script (or worse, off-brand), your brand takes the hit. That's where most brands get it wrong. They chase reach instead of resonance. They go wide instead of deep. And they forget that in the luxury world, everyone isn't the goal the right one is.





## Case Study: Louis Vuitton's Neverfull Inside Out Campaign

Let's talk about Louis Vuitton. Iconic, aspirational, and, for decades, a master of mystique. Which is why their recent Neverfull "Inside Out" campaign raised eyebrows. The rollout? Massive. Influencers galore, from A-listers to nano-creators, all flaunting the same bag with the same copy. The result? Saturation.

What was supposed to feel exclusive ended up feeling algorithmic. And while the intention was likely to reintroduce the Neverfull to a younger audience, the execution cost the bag some of its cachet. When a luxury item suddenly shows up in everyone's feed, it stops feeling like a trophy and starts looking like merch.

Now, I'm not saying the campaign was a failure it definitely sparked conversation (this article included). But it's a textbook example of what happens when a brand prioritizes visibility over selectivity.

## Curated Influence: It's Not a Numbers Game

The best influencer marketing doesn't feel like marketing. It feels like alignment. The kind where you see someone wear a bag and think, of course they did that's so them. That's when it works. But that level of harmony takes intention.

As brand managers, we need to ask:

*Does this person reflect our values?*

*Does their audience mirror our aspirational client?*

*Does their visual style enhance our own?*

When these boxes aren't ticked, influencer campaigns become noise. Worse, they can become liabilities. Because let's not forget influencers are human. And in today's cancel culture, their drama can become your PR crisis overnight.





## Case in Point: Influencer Strategy Done Right

There are brands getting it right. Here are a few current campaigns that struck the right balance:

### Marc Jacobs x Nara Smith (Mother's Day 2025)

A love letter to modern motherhood, this campaign felt intimate, elevated, and unmistakably Marc. It wasn't about reach it was about resonance. Nara's aesthetic, values, and vulnerability brought softness to a brand often seen as edgy.

### Burberry x Rosie Huntington-Whiteley & Jack Draper (SS25)

Old world meets new. Burberry tapped into its heritage while staying fresh by pairing supermodel sophistication with rising tennis talent. Two faces, one story: elegance with charisma and next-gen relevance.

### Swarovski x Ariana Grande ("Wicked" 2025)

Talk about synergy. With Grande starring in Wicked, the collab's pink-and-green color palette became more than trendy it became narrative-driven. The crystals weren't just pretty; they told a story.

These campaigns weren't just well-executed they were well-cast. And that's the difference.

## Protect the Brand: A Strategy Checklist

If you're managing a luxury brand or a brand aspiring to luxury status here's your cheat sheet for influencer strategy success.

### **Start with a clear goal**

Are you building awareness? Repositioning? Launching a product? Don't jump into influencer marketing without knowing the "why."

**Choose your influencers carefully** not just by follower count. Look into their past partnerships, values, audience engagement, and tone.

This is less speed meeting, more background check.

### **Build long-term relationships**

Luxury doesn't rush. Instead of one-and-done posts, aim for multi-month ambassadorships. Familiarity breeds trust.

### **Stick to your narrative**

No trend-hopping. No random reels for algorithm juice. Your brand story should be timeless not trend-chasing.

### **Monitor performance beyond numbers**

A campaign can go viral and still damage your brand. Measure sentiment, not just reach.

## Conclusion: Prestige Requires Restraint

In a world obsessed with going viral, luxury must dare to stay rare. That doesn't mean avoiding digital spaces it means showing up with purpose, taste, and alignment. Influencer marketing is a powerful tool but like anything in luxury, it only works when approached with care, control, and intention not noise for the sake of noise.

So let's stop throwing bags at every girl with a follower count and start treating our brands like what they are: legacies in the making.





# PSYCHOLOGY OF COLORS & TRENDS



# IMENE TIMSILINE

## The Psychology of Colors and Trends : Why We Wear What We Wear

Color is more than visual, it's visceral. It speaks to emotion, culture, identity, and even biology. In fashion and design, color choices aren't random ; they're deeply rooted in human psychology, influencing how we feel, behave, and perceive the world. As trends evolve seasonally, color remains one of the most powerful tools in shaping consumer choices and creating cultural narratives.

This article dives into the psychology of color and how it intersects with fashion trends, supported by research, real-world examples, and insights into why we're drawn to certain shades at specific moments in time.

### The Science Behind Color Psychology

Color psychology explores how hues affect perception and behavior. While interpretations vary culturally, certain emotional responses to color appear to be universal. Studies from the Institute for Color Research reveal that people make subconscious judgments about products within 90 seconds, and up to 90% of that judgment is based on color alone.

According to psychologist Angela Wright, who developed the Color Affects System, different colors stimulate specific psychological responses :

**Red:** Energy, passion, urgency. It raises heart rate and stimulates appetite hence its use in sales signs and fast food branding.

**Blue:** Trust, calm, professionalism. Often used by banks and tech companies, it's considered the most universally liked color.

**Yellow:** Optimism, warmth, attention-grabbing, but also associated with caution.

**Green:** Nature, health, renewal. It's soothing and often tied to sustainability.

**Black:** Sophistication, power, mystery. In fashion, it represents timeless elegance and authority.

Color also interacts with memory and cognition. A 2015 study published in *Frontiers in Psychology* found that warm colors (like red and orange) are better at grabbing attention, while cool colors (like blue and green) enhance focus and comprehension.





## Color Trends and Cultural Shifts

Colors don't exist in a vacuum, they reflect societal moods and cultural shifts. The rise and fall of color trends often mirror the collective emotional climate. For example, after periods of economic or global instability, consumers tend to gravitate toward comforting, neutral tones. In contrast, post-crisis periods often usher in bold, expressive palettes as a form of psychological liberation.

Pantone's Color of the Year is a prime example. Selected annually since 2000, it reflects the global zeitgeist. In 2021, Pantone chose a pairing : Ultimate Gray and Illuminating Yellow symbolizing resilience and hope in the aftermath of the pandemic. In 2023, Viva Magenta, a bold crimson red, was chosen to signify vitality and self-expression in an age of reinvention.

According to Leatrice Eiseman, executive director of the Pantone Color Institute, color trends "*offer insight into how people are responding emotionally to the world around them.*"

## Fashion, Color, and Emotional Identity

Fashion uses color as a language of mood, power, and self-expression. Designers often choose color palettes that communicate deeper themes : rebellion, harmony, nostalgia, futurism.

For instance, black, once a color of mourning was reclaimed by designers like Coco Chanel as a symbol of chic minimalism. Today, it's synonymous with urban sophistication. On the other hand, millennial pink dominated the 2010s, signaling softness and self-love, as gender norms relaxed and emotional openness became more culturally accepted.

A 2014 study in Color Research & Application found that clothing color affects perceived traits. Participants rated individuals in red as more attractive and assertive, while those in blue were seen as more trustworthy and intelligent. This has direct implications for branding, personal style, and even hiring decisions.

## Color Trends in Marketing and Retail

In branding and advertising, color is crucial for recall and emotional connection. Research by the University of Loyola, Maryland shows that color increases brand recognition by up to 80%.

Fast fashion brands often align their color palettes with seasonal psychology. Spring typically brings pastels and florals symbols of rebirth and optimism, while fall trends lean into earthy tones like rust, moss, and ochre, evoking stability and introspection.

Luxury brands use color to communicate exclusivity. Think Tiffany & Co.'s signature blue, which is trademarked, or Hermès' deep orange colors that have become synonymous with heritage and status.

## Gender, Culture, and Color Bias

Cultural context heavily influences color perception. In the West, white represents purity and weddings, while in many Asian cultures, it's associated with mourning. Red, linked to danger in some cultures, is a symbol of prosperity in China.

Gender associations with color have also evolved. Blue-for-boys and pink-for-girls wasn't always the norm. A 1918 Ladies' Home Journal article suggested pink for boys (as a "stronger" color) and blue for girls (seen as "delicate"). These gender-color associations became deeply entrenched only after the 1940s due to targeted marketing.

In recent years, the rise of gender-neutral fashion has challenged these binaries, giving rise to more fluid, expressive use of color across the spectrum.

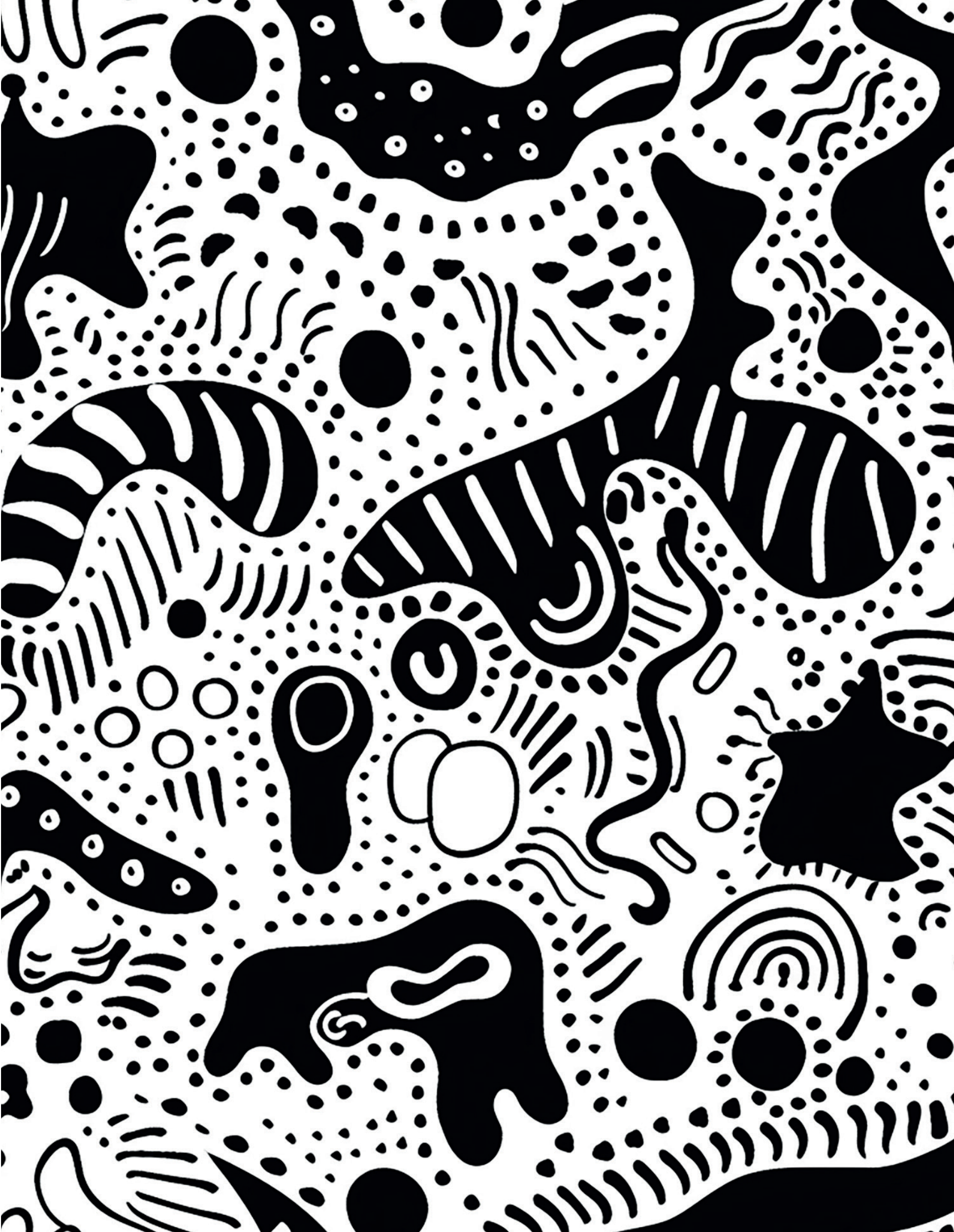
## Conclusion : Color as a Mirror of the Mind

From catwalks to closets, color is one of the most powerful forces shaping our emotional lives and aesthetic choices. It tells stories, sets moods, and reflects both individual identity and collective experience.

As we continue to navigate a world of uncertainty and reinvention, color will remain a key player in how we express, protect, and project ourselves. Understanding the psychology behind it doesn't just explain trends, it gives us the power to use them more consciously and creatively.

Because in the end, we don't just wear color ***we feel it !***







# DR. IRENA FUNDUK

Dr Irena Funduk holds a Doctor of Philosophy degree with honors (Cum Laude) from the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia (EU), in the field of Fashion and Textile Design, Production Technologies, Engineering, and Graphic Communication, with additional specialization from Central Saint Martins, University of Arts London. With over two decades of experience in the fashion industry, she has worked across creative direction, design, textile innovation, education, and academic program development. Today, she channels her expertise into shaping the future of fashion through her teaching at IFA Paris' Istanbul campus, where she leads courses in Color Theory, Trend Research, Conceptual development and Sustainability. In this conversation, Dr. Funduk shares her journey and offers insightful perspectives on the psychology of color and the evolving nature of trends in contemporary life and fashion.

## Trends!

### What are the key factors that influence the emergence of new trends?

Trends don't just appear because someone in a high fashion office decides what's going to be "in" next season. That's a misconception. Trends are born from **multiple layers of interconnected influences**, but above all, they emerge from changing **world events** and general socio-cultural context – **the Zeitgeist**. These events create an emotional response across society not just in individuals but in the collective emotional field. When a large group of people begins to feel the same kind of emotions, that emotion reflects outwardly. It shapes what we gravitate toward in design, color, texture, and form.

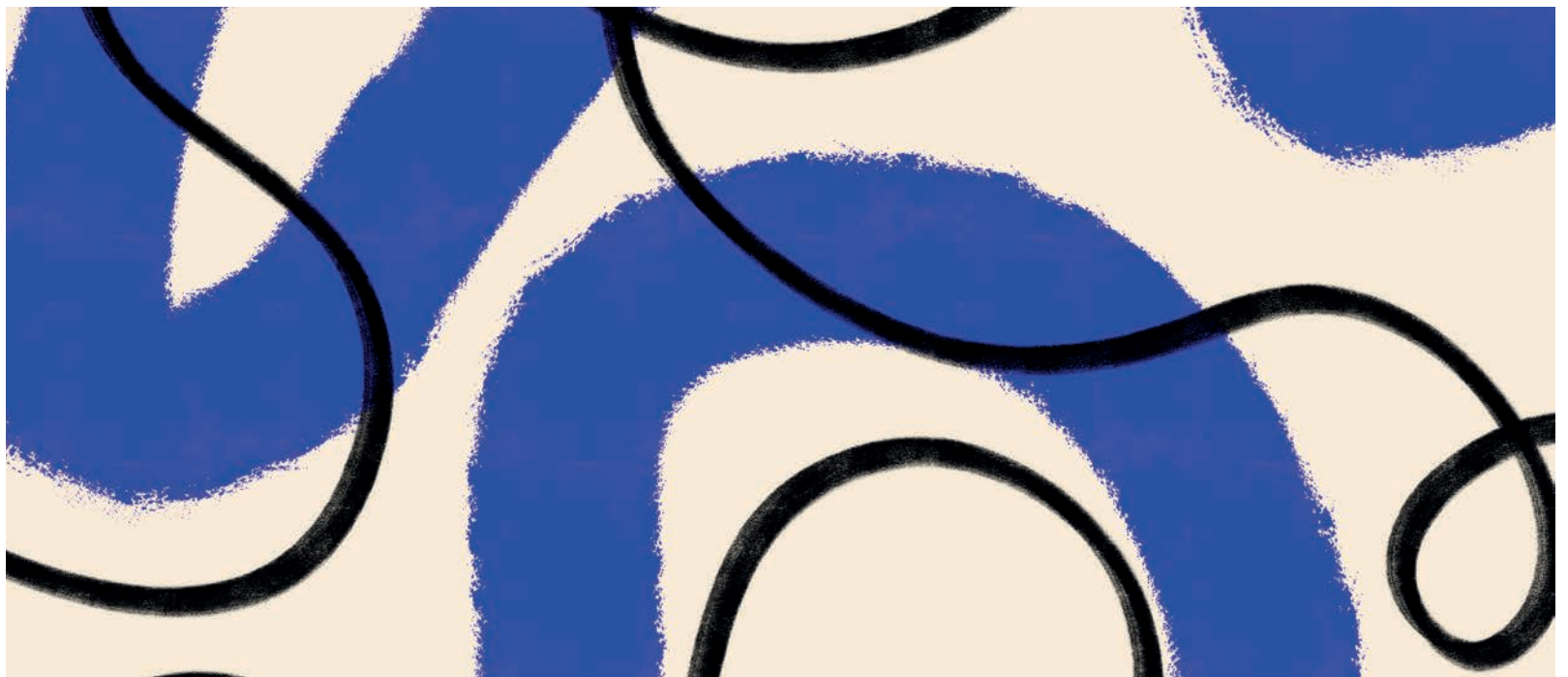
Take the color magenta, for example. If it becomes popular among people, it's not random. There are deeper causes behind its rise. Perhaps people are craving energy, boldness, or emotional release and magenta answers that need.

So, **trends are not prescriptions** handed down from the top. They are **reflections of the emotional climate**. They are expressions of feelings, hopes, dreams, or rebellion about the world we're living in. If a trend gains power, it's because it resonates. It touches something in us. That's why, when analyzing a trend, we should always ask ourselves: "**What is this trend reflecting in me, in us? What emotional truth does it speak to?**" That's where the real understanding of trends begins not on the runway, but in the emotional undercurrents of everyday life.

### Do you think trends are becoming more cyclical or more fragmented due to social media? How should we stay trendy in nowadays world of fads/short trends?

Social media is the phenomenon of our time. It has radically changed the nature of trends **accelerating their life cycle** and **splintering them into countless directions**. We've never seen this kind of speed before. With just one post, a new idea can be shared across the entire globe instantly. That kind of power means that trends not only cycle faster but also **fracture** into micro-trends, subrends, and personal reinterpretations. Young people nowadays are no longer just following they're **fusing and inventing** their own versions and realities. That's what makes today's trend landscape so rich and chaotic at the same time.

As for **how to stay trendy** that's a personal decision. Do you want to stay trendy in the **outer world** or in your **inner world**? Real style doesn't come from chasing trends. It comes from **authenticity**. From being **original, sincere, and in tune with yourself**. And sometimes, that means doing the exact opposite of what's trendy. Trends are, by nature, **mainstream**. But an original person often **doesn't need to follow the crowd** they become a source of their own momentum. So, how to stay trendy today? Start trending inside yourself constantly. And you'll always be relevant. Anywhere. Anytime. In any trend cycle.





### What advice would you give to young designers trying to anticipate or even create the next big trend?

I always tell young designers, no matter their approach, to keep one eye on trend analysis and forecasting. It's not about blindly following the prescribed trends but about understanding where they are coming from. Trends are a reflection of emotions and events happening in the world. **To anticipate the next big trend, you need to observe people** watch them and listen to their dreams, their fears, and their hopes. By contemplating these, you'll develop an intuitive sense of where trends are going. Even nowadays, avant-garde designers are aware of trends, as understanding them is helping them to stay ahead of the curve. Always be two steps ahead how? by feeling the pulse and essence of time, of what's coming, and by reflecting on the world around you.

### In your opinion, what trend from the past 5 years has had the most surprising longevity?

After the pandemic, we noticed the pandemic of **white sport shoes** which were initially reserved for tennis or casual activities, and now they started to be paired with elegant and professional outfits, even for business and professional settings. This fusion of sporty and formal reflects the post-pandemic zeitgeist. Even now, I combine them with avant-garde or asymmetrical looks, as they fit the fast-paced, modern lifestyle. They've endured as a symbol of practicality and style.

### And what is trending in your life personally now ?

Cats, Cats, Cats and Cats. Cats are trending for so long in my life, strongly and severely, that I'd say they've surpassed being a trend. They've become my mega trend, or better yet, my classic.

All kinds of cats: black cats, white cats, orange cats, tuxedo cats, silver cats, Chinchilla cats, street cats... you name it. They're all part of my life in a big way. Not just physically, but emotionally and aesthetically. **Black cats**, especially, are my favourite because so many people reject them they think they're cursed or connected to bad luck, and they discard them. But to me, they're the most elegant, the most rebellious, and the most antidepressant creatures in the world. They're high fashion. Long legs. Graceful silhouettes. Mysterious. Naughty. Tornadoes of personality. And they're just endlessly beautiful.



## Colors:

### What is your approach to understanding and forecasting color trends?

Color trends are similar to general trends, as they are based on extensive analysis and methodology, but colors are also **deeply personal and emotional**. People develop their own interpretations of trendy colors. With my students, I focus on fostering sensitivity to colors appreciating even the smallest changes in shades, undertones, and brightness. It's about understanding colors on both a global level, based on predictions, and a personal level, connecting with how individuals relate to specific colors.

### Do you believe color preferences are more emotional or cultural or a mix of both?

It's definitely a mix of both. Cultural elements influence how we perceive colors, often subconsciously. For example, the meaning of red can be very different in Europe compared to Japan. However, the emotional factor is more about intuition how we feel and connect with colors on a personal level. So, both play a significant role in shaping our color preferences.

### Would you say that the emotional element is nature and cultural element is nurture?

Yes, I would be ever stricter. Cultural preferences are like hegemonic rules these are invisible, prescribed norms that we often don't question. For example, in the Gulf, red is almost forbidden in fashion due to cultural and religious reasons, while natural tones and green are more welcomed. These are cultural prescriptions we may not always be aware of, but they shape our preferences. On the other hand, emotional preferences are more authentic and personal, coming from within, and are more real and genuine to who we are.



## How has digital media changed the way we perceive and use color in fashion and design?

Digital media, especially during and after the pandemic, has played a significant role in shaping our relationship with color. The rise of virtual worlds and digital design has introduced **vivid, bold colors** like magenta, deep indigo, and electric blue. These colors evoke emotions and transport us to imaginative places. Additionally, the **high contrast** often seen in digital media has influenced fashion, making contrasting colors more acceptable and even sought after. In general, digital media has helped us become more aware of and sensitive to these once unconventional or difficult-to-adopt colors, which are now becoming more common and accepted in the fashion and design world.

## How do colors affect consumer emotions and behavior in fashion today?

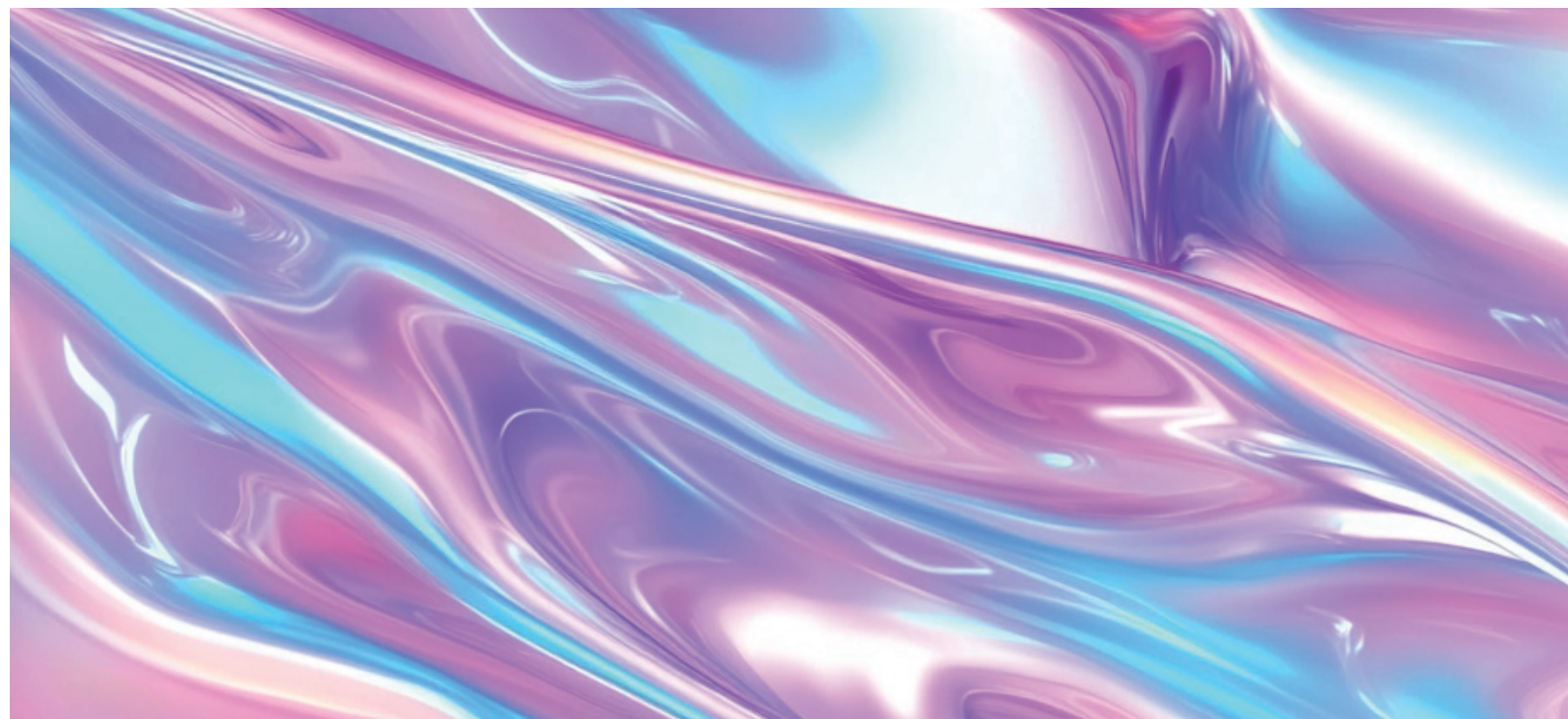
Colors are incredibly influential in fashion because they are one of the primary contributors to the emotional impact that a garment has on the consumer. When people shop, they are looking for the garment with the right shape, fabric, fit and color. If a customer finds the perfect coat in terms of shape, fabric, and fit, but the color is wrong for instance, if it's green instead of black they will not purchase it. The color can create a sense that something is off, and that feeling of dissonance can prevent the purchase regardless of how perfect the design and material were. The color is often the most important factor in determining a consumer's emotional response and, therefore, their behavior. It's an unconscious decision that can make or break the purchase. Even if consumers say shape or material is most important, when it comes to the actual act of buying, **color plays a central role**.

## Are there any colors or combinations you feel are currently underused or misunderstood in the industry?

I wouldn't necessarily say that some colors are misunderstood, because color interpretations are highly personal. People perceive colors differently based on their own experiences and emotions. However, what I do wish is that the generally announced colors of the year by companies like Pantone or WGSN, would offer more commentary on emotional depth and psychological impact. For instance, this year's Pantone color, Mocha Mousse, feels a bit too grounding in terms of the hard realities in the world and sustainability, but it also feels kind of somber. I believe that colors should also elevate emotions and make our lives better, not just represent an earthy, grounded aesthetic. Sometimes, we need colors that inspire us, make us dream, and guide us to something better.

## Have you observed any shifts in color preferences during times of social or economic uncertainty?

These preferences are emotional consequences of certain events. So of course, during times of social or economic uncertainty, there are changes. The colors tend to become more muted, not so loud and vibrant. They aren't typically associated with happy, optimistic, joyful emotions. Instead, they shift toward calmer tones like a quieter, more subdued palette. It's almost like the colors start to whisper. They reflect a deeper emotional truth about the world and where we're heading.



## Has your perception of trends and color shifted over the years of teaching and researching?

Yes. In the past, I would have followed color trends more faithfully, relying heavily on what was prescribed to us from the outside. However, as time has passed, I've become increasingly aware that the decision and choice of color is far more personal and subjective than I once thought. It's not just about following trends; it's about how we, as designers, consumers, and even educators, feel about colors. By adding your own creative touches, you create something more authentic and sincere. This approach, in my experience, is always more successful. The way I see color and trends now is much more about individual expression, and connection and less about blindly following external prescriptions.



### Do you have a personal favorite color or color story you always return to? Why?

The magnetic power of **magenta** seduces me over and over again. The depth and charismatic essence that I can not find in any other color resonate with me strongly. Even though I wear it rarely, only for holidays or meetings with special people.

For professional and everyday life, I prefer darker colors like black and hues of dark blue – indigo blue, navy blue, titan blue. **Black** feels like it encompasses all colors, even though technically it's considered the absence of color. For me, it represents sophistication and professionalism. It helps me maintain a sense of distance and authority, almost like people respect my space when I wear it. On the other hand, deep **blue** colors give me the freedom to dream. They provide me with the space to fly and think creatively.

### Can you share a memorable moment when a color or trend changed the way you thought about design?

One of the most memorable moments for me was the impact of the movie *La La Land* and the way it used color. I remember being deeply moved by how the colors in the movie reflected the emotional depth of the story. It made me see color in a completely new light, not just as a design element but as a nonverbal communication tool that conveys emotion.

The film explored the relationship between complementary and split complementary colors, which felt like a love story between the colors. Some colors bring out the best in each other, while others might bring out the worst. This contrast mirrored human relationships and emotions some connections make us shine, and others challenge us.

This experience made me realize how color can be an incredibly powerful tool in design, not just for visual appeal but for conveying deeper meanings and emotions. It reinforced the idea that color is a form of communication, much like the emotions in a love story. Artists like Van Gogh dedicated their whole lives to exploring the relationships of complementary colors. *La La Land* brought this concept into the contemporary world in such a beautiful and accessible way, making me appreciate color even more.





# Sustainability in Trends & Color:

## How do you see sustainability influencing trend development and color choices in fashion?

For a long time, people misunderstood sustainability as just another trend. But humanity sobered up quickly sustainability is not a trend, it's a necessity. Sustainability is now declared a megatrend it's not going anywhere. And because of that, it's driving real innovation in design.

Previously, sustainable design was mostly reserved for a few "intellectual" designers. But now, this knowledge is reaching young creatives who are bringing fresh perspectives to sustainable design. They see it as intellectual design, but they're also transforming it into something emotional, original, and expressive more than ever.

There's a huge misconception that sustainable fashion has to be green, and organic cotton... True sustainability addresses in the essence overproduction and overconsumption. The most powerful strategy a designer can take today is to use **deadstock** fabrics and practice **upcycling** both of which are now elevated to the level of art and even couture. Why produce brand-new organic cotton, using up energy, water, and sometimes unethical labor, when we already have a massive amount of leftover fabrics waiting to be reimagined? Working with deadstock offers limitless creativity. You're not limited to muted, earthy tones on the contrary, the color palette becomes expansive, diverse, and unexpected. Sustainability in design doesn't restrict expression it amplifies it.

## Do you think "eco-color palettes" (like earthy tones or undyed fabrics) are becoming trend drivers or visual clichés?

Visual clichés. Sustainability and being conscious about the environment, social justice, and animal welfare are values that don't come from a color palette. They come from a deeper decision: to contribute to life, not to death.

It's easy to create a collection and cause massive harm to the environment. You can damage people by underpaying them, making them work in unsafe or inhumane conditions, without proper lighting, air conditioning, social security, or family benefits. You can damage the environment by using toxic materials. You can harm animals by treating their lives as resources. And yet, some still call this art. But real sustainability presents a simple choice: you're either supporting life, or you're supporting death. As designers today, we have to decide what we stand for at every step of the process. From selecting zippers and threads, to choosing fabrics, to deciding how much to pay the people who help bring the designs to life. Every decision matters.



## What role can designers play in encouraging more responsible trend adoption?

Designers are innovators. They need to offer their audience solutions that meet the needs of contemporary life on many levels. That means creating **seasonless garments** and collections, **transformative pieces**, and **gender-fluid designs**. Ideally, this begins at the very start of the design process setting parameters based on your conscience and values. It also involves learning and practicing the magic art of upcycling in fashion. Through these choices, we tell stories and truths to our audience, we expand their awareness and provide them with the knowledge.

## Do current events like social movements or climate issues affect trend direction in fashion? Is it enough or should more attention be paid to these issues?

I feel that it's absolutely and disgracefully not enough. Especially in the luxury sector, the adoption of an ethical dimension in fashion is moving painfully slow. Some countries and companies have made steps forward, like giving up on exotic animal skins, fur, and leather. But if we observe the luxury sector overall, they refuse to give anything up, even when sustainable alternatives are available like pineapple leather, mushroom leather, coffee leather, corn leather, citrus leather.

These innovations are trending, yes but mainly as a surface-level trend. Ethically speaking, the killing of animals and the exploitation of natural resources that don't belong to us is still being justified in the name of luxury and status symbols. You'll see trend forecasts talking about mycelium fabrics from mushrooms Stella McCartney has been using those for 15 years. But brands like Louis Vuitton and Dior? Still committed entirely to leather. Hermès website lists the names of all these beautiful animals whose skins you can choose from for your Birkin bag.

In my opinion, the pressure, the tax and also the legal limitations on luxury brands should be much stronger. We should be taking a faster and clearer path toward sustainable choices. And at the top of those priorities must be the non-killing of animals. We should stop using fur, skins, and coats that were never ours to take in the first place for something as trivial as a bag.







# TECHNICAL TEXTILES & FABRIC INNOVATION



SREYA NARAYANAN

## Clothes That Think: A New Wave in Fashion Fabrics

We walk past textiles every day; touch them, wear them, sit on them, but rarely stop to think about what they're made of or what they're doing. At the doctor's office, a white coat and gloves seem routine. They're made of anti-bacterial materials, designed to prevent the spread of germs. At home, you might throw on a pair of cut-resistant gloves to chop wood or handle tools. Another example of textiles designed with specific, protective functions in mind. These are **technical textiles**, and they're quietly working behind the scenes in our daily lives.

But fashion isn't content with "quiet" anymore.

Today, technical textiles are stepping into the spotlight, not just to function, but to fascinate. Designers are turning these high-performance materials into storytelling tools, pushing the boundaries of what clothing can do and say. One of the most exciting brands leading this movement is **Coperni**. Known for its experimental approach, Coperni blends utility with spectacle. In their SS21 show *Ready to Care*, they debuted a custom-developed jersey fabric called C+, a material that is both **anti-bacterial and anti-UV**. It's a fabric that protects the body, reflects our growing health awareness, and still manages to look effortlessly modern.

But Coperni didn't stop there. In their SS23 show, they captured the fashion world's attention with stunning **holographic flower prints** and, more famously, the spray-on dress. In a moment that went instantly viral, Bella Hadid stood on stage while a liquid fiber was sprayed directly onto her body, forming a wearable, reusable dress in real time. Created in collaboration with scientist **Manel Torres** and **Fabrican Ltd**, the fabric is made from cellulose fibers that can be washed, re-worn, and even broken down to be sprayed again. This moment didn't just make headlines, it sparked conversations around sustainability, technology, and the future of clothing.

*"The idea behind Coperni is to mix this notion of chicness, of our French DNA, and blend it with something more futuristic."*

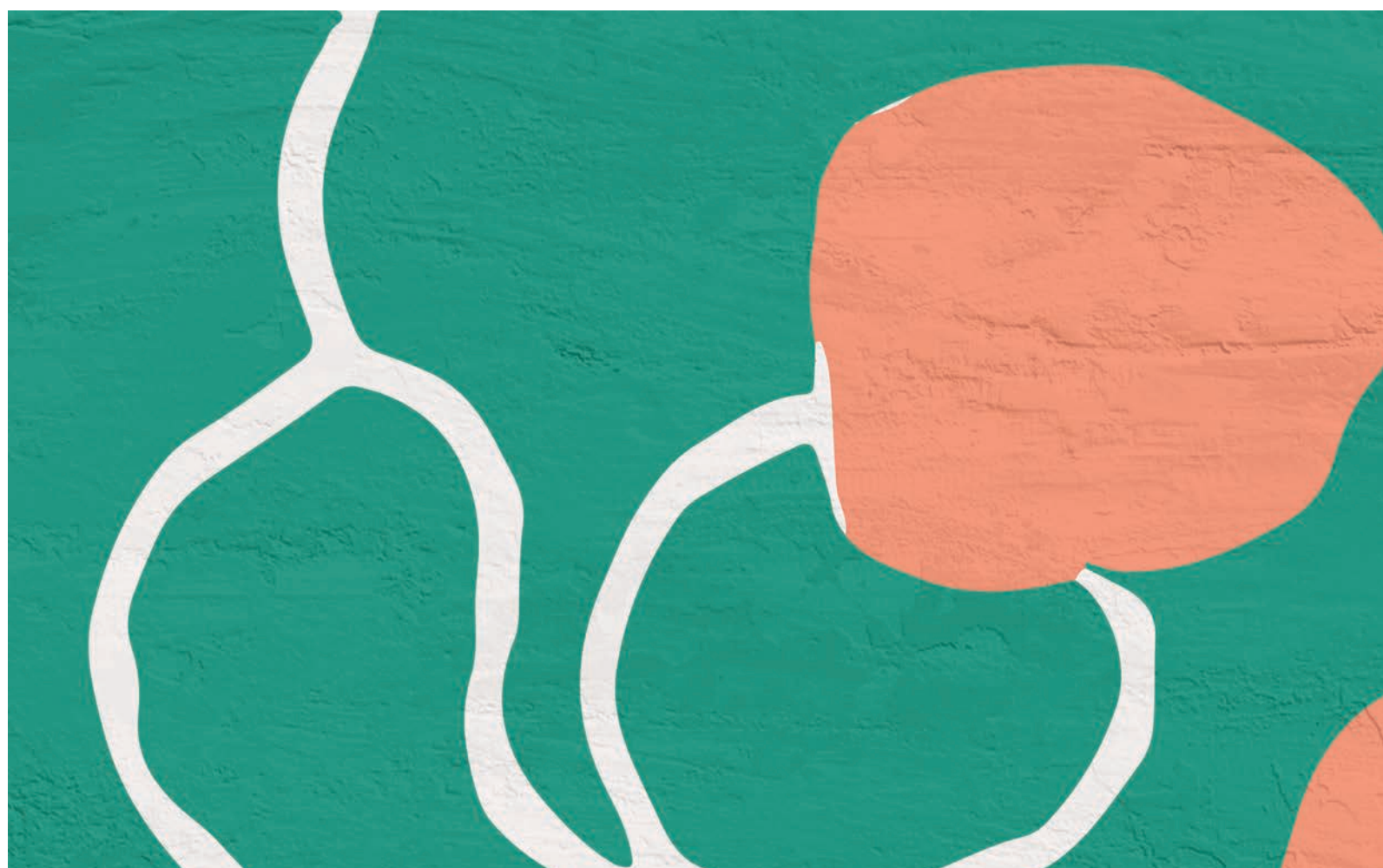
— Arnaud Vaillant, Coperni





Coperni isn't alone in this pursuit. **Iris van Herpen**, a pioneer in tech couture, has been incorporating **3D printing**, **laser cutting**, and **kinetic structures** into her designs for years. Her garments often look like they belong in a science fiction film, but they are very real and always deeply rooted in innovation. These are dresses that move, respond, and almost breathe are pieces of art made from the future.

Even digital companies are getting in on the action. **Adobe's Project Primrose** is a concept dress embedded with **flexible digital screens** that can shift colors and patterns, allowing the garment to transform in real time. It's the kind of creation that lives at the intersection of fashion, digital art, and immersive experience, a piece you wear as much for how it feels as for how it reacts.







Meanwhile, at **MIT**, students and researchers are building garments that truly think. They're experimenting with **smart textiles** woven with tiny **electrodes and sensors**, creating clothing that can respond to its environment or even to the person wearing it. In one project, they developed assistive gloves that help people with limited motor control grip and lift objects more easily. That's not just fashion, it's an intersection of engineering, empathy, and design.



In the accessibility space, **adaptive fashion** is becoming more than just a niche; it's growing into a movement. Brands like **Tommy Hilfiger** are designing clothes with **magnetic closures instead of buttons**, **easy-open zippers**, and **adjustable hems** for wheelchair users or people with prosthetics. These small changes make a huge difference for people who may find traditional clothing frustrating or impossible to wear.

There's also **Open Style Lab**, an inclusive design organization that works with engineers and designers to create clothing for people with disabilities. They've developed pieces like **jackets with magnetic seams for easy dressing**, **garments that self-adjust for changing posture**, and **materials that are soft, seamless, and pressure-free** for people with sensory sensitivities. Some of their work is even being trialed in rehab centers and hospitals.



And then there's smart clothing that actively assists people with **physical challenges**. One **standout example** is Seismic's Powered Clothing, a suit that looks like athletic wear but has **built-in motors and sensors** that help support the hips and lower back. Originally designed to help older adults or people recovering from injury, it could one day be used in fashion-forward ways that blend support and style.

### So, what does this mean for the future?

It means clothing is no longer just about appearance it's about **adapting to the person wearing it**. These innovations open the door to more **inclusive, practical, and responsive fashion**.

We already see it happening. There are now **clothes made for people with eczema**, using soft, breathable, anti-irritation fabrics like silk-based blends or fabrics infused with **antimicrobial silver** to reduce inflammation. There are garments for people who are **sensitive to UV rays**, woven with **UV-blocking fibers** to reduce sun damage. For people with disabilities or limited mobility, **adaptive clothing** and **wearable tech** are helping make dressing easier and more dignified. Velcro fasteners, magnetic buttons, stretchable materials, and sensor-equipped clothing are all small steps that make a big difference.







**Walking through the streets of Paris is akin to leafing through the pages of a design compendium; each step unveils a new harmony of colours, each pause reveals a unique texture.**

The city's architecture, fashion houses, and distinctive spirit resonate like poetry within the world of textiles and fashion. Every stone, façade, and archway carries a story crafted to withstand the test of time. Haussmann's orderly boulevards, when bathed in golden light streaming through windows, evoke the shimmering delicacy of fine fabric. The elegant curves of Art Nouveau, with their intricate ironwork, wrap the city like embroidery; designers reinterpret these organic forms in their collections, building bridges between past and future.

**Paris is not only a global fashion capital; it is also the birthplace of Haute Couture.** The very concept of made-to-measure luxury was born here, setting standards of craftsmanship, innovation, and elegance that continue to shape the fashion world. Each couture house, from Chanel to Dior, carries within it the legacy of this artisanal excellence – where a single stitch tells a story, and a silhouette becomes a symbol. **Beyond fashion's surface lies a profound cultural and historical foundation.** The Musée des Arts Décoratifs, home to France's largest textile collection, offers an invaluable archive of fabric, embroidery, and fashion history. Nestled within the Louvre's western wing, this museum is a testament to France's enduring commitment to textile excellence and sartorial innovation. From 18th-century silk damasks to contemporary couture, the museum narrates a story that every fashion student and designer must know.



**Each fashion house bears its own historical imprint: the meticulousness of a hemline, the elegance of hand-crafted buttons, the poetry in a tailored curve.** What begins as a sketch in a quiet atelier in Le Marais may later glow in the spotlight of Avenue Montaigne's display windows. Chanel's iconic black jacket dances in harmony with the grey hues of Parisian stone, while Dior's delicate ruffles echo the gentle breeze of the Seine.

Paris's cosmopolitan fabric brings together cultures from around the world, nurturing boundless creativity. Moroccan carpets, Japanese silks, and Latin American patterns intertwine effortlessly in this city. Designers draw on these global influences to craft new couture narratives: Arabic embroidery on tailored jackets, African prints woven into contemporary gowns. And when these garments take their place on global runways, they do so with a Parisian signature — a mark of prestige and inspiration.

The city is also a cradle of innovation. Smart textiles are born in Parisian laboratories and showcased in the boutique windows of Rue Saint-Honoré. Sustainable materials find inspiration in the city's gardens; recycled silks bloom as vividly as the cherry blossoms in the Tuileries. At its core, Paris holds hands with both heritage and futurism — every collection is a tribute to its living spirit.

**This is why Paris is more than just a capital of fashion — it is a living art gallery, a temple of inspiration, and an eternal journey of creation in textile and style. From the first Haute Couture ateliers to tomorrow's sustainable innovations, Paris continues to shape not just garments, but the very soul of fashion.**





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