



fashion & beauty

Discover Dutch fashion

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Beyond the design duo Viktor and Rolf and the denim industry, most fashionistas would be hard-pressed to expound for more than a few minutes about Dutch fashion. But the small European country is investing heavily to change this.



Using the July Amsterdam Fashion Week as a springboard, the Dutch government has a multi-pronged strategy to make Dutch fashion as universally acknowledged and popular as, say, French or Italian fashion. The strategy — market fashion and design through globe-trotting shows (some heading to India), invest in collaborations (multi-design stores, private-public partnerships, and global alliances such as Dutch DFA in India), invest in education and training (schools for the old-fashioned arts of tailoring and pattern-making) and trying to get Amsterdam Fashion Week seen as being in the same league as New York, Paris, Milan and London.

The Netherlands is using its reputation for innovative design and trend forecasting — they've given the world Li Edelkoort (who predicts developments in tastes and behaviour before anyone is aware that these will become consumer trends), designer Marcel Wanders (whose work has been seen in design collections and exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art in New York and San Francisco) and architect Rem Koolhaas (a name known even outside the design world, and whom Time magazine called one of the world's most influential people in 2008) — to promote a design aesthetic that shows off a perfect marriage between form AND function.

Premisela, the Dutch government run design initiative, has already been to Bangalore with its Connecting Concepts exhibition. Now they plan to bring Basic Instincts, featuring 95 product, furniture and fashion designers, to India.

A more exciting project keen to get to India is Mariette Hoitink's RedLight Fashion Project. Started three years ago in Amsterdam's famed red light district as a shop window for 18 emerging designers, RedLight Fashion features designers showing their wares in the windows, which typically feature women selling sex. Mariette, who is the managing director of HTNK (a fashion recruitment and consulting agency) hopes to bring these designers to India in a small, carefully curated show some time in the new year.

Mariette is however more excited about her Denim Diner project. Denim Diner (which in India may be renamed Denim Deli) was a pop up diner set up in Berlin in early July on the sidelines of Bread and Butter, the biggest jeans fair in the world to showcase innovation in denim. This included everything from showing off the designers who were making their mark in this field, to new technologies being used in the Netherlands to different ways of ensuring that denim is less of a hardy cloth and more of a cult item of clothing.

What defines dutch design

STRUCTURE AND FORM

The Dutch are big on tailoring, bespoke and hand stitching with several government-sponsored initiatives to bring old-fashioned tailoring back into a country known more for its conceptual thinking than it's execution. From the ArtEZ fashion academy in Arnhem to the new Meesteropleiding Coupeur in Amsterdam itself, the focus is on cut and structure.

SIMPLICITY AND PARING

The Dutch are restrained but inventive with colour. You can smell the seaside ice cream stand when a lemon sherbert and blush pink shorts ensemble is sent down the catwalk or see the spiky sharp lines in the exaggerated form of tailored suits when a designer wants to make the point that form is function.

The big names:

Viktor & Rolf
Daryl van Wouw
Marlies Dekkers
Joline Jolink
Mart Visser
Frans Molenaar
Antoine Peters
Addy van den Krommenacker
Ilja Visser
Jan Taminiau
Jan Jansen
Hester Vlamings
Paul Schulten
Spijkers & Spijkers
Bas Kosters
Aziz Bekkaoui
Alexander van Slobbe
Francisco van Benthum
Claes Iversen
Iris van Herpen
Juliette Booker
Christian Lagerwaard
Hans Ubbink

Designers to watch out for

Spijkers and Spijkers

www.spijkersenspijkers.nl

The blonde twins are so well-loved and branded that they have a special collection being shown off at the Museum of Modern Art in Arnhem. Their collection at Amsterdam Fashion Week last month showed off the simple, pared-down, sharp tailoring that has made the Dutch twin sisters, Truus and Riet, born 12 March 1970 the darlings of the fashion press.

Since 2000, they have shown an annual Spring/Summer and Autumn/Winter collection in Paris, London and Milan.

The People of the Labyrinth

www.labyrinths.nl

POTL is, simply, super-sophisticated, ultra-luxurious street fashion.

In 1984 Hans Demoed and Geert de Rooij started specialising in hand-printed and hand-dyed creations. They stock clothing for women, men, an interior collection and a cosmetics line. They are inspired by heraldic art, history, photography and science. Each garment is handmade, dyed and printed.

Sjaak Hullekes

sjaakhullekes.blogspot.com

Old-fashioned tailoring and hand-finished garments have placed Sjaak Hullekes at the forefront of the Dutch fashion fraternity's return. While Sjaak does a small women's range, it is his men's shirts that are in demand. Fine fabrics, exquisite finishing is at the heart of collections that Sjaak himself describes as "wearable clothes for the contemporary man, the modern dandy".

Sjaak is also a graduate of Artez. In 2009, he won the Mercedes-Benz Dutch Fashion Award.

The collections are mostly made at manufacturers in Belgium and Poland. Other pieces are made in the Netherlands, to guarantee precise knowledge and workmanship to the customer.

+1 0 Vind ik leuk Vind dit als eerste van je vrienden leuk.

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