



PHOTO: ETON SHIRTS

Eton represent a classical approach to shirt making, but often present their garments in modern contexts.

SWEDISH FASHION:

WEAVING SOCIAL ISSUES WITH ART

Swedish fashion truly is in a state of transition. While designs get bolder and more experimental, the industry actively pursues a sustainable agenda. Fashion is also increasingly used as a platform to discuss social phenomena – gender identity not the least.

During the past few years there have been intense media discussions on the interrelations between fashion, gender and power. Many Swedish fashion brands have used these discussions as a starting point to explore new ways of expressing gender through their designs, pushing for a less binary and more fluid way of understanding masculinity, femininity and everything in-between.

The desire to participate in a larger societal debate has also led the designers and stylers of Swedish fashion to develop in more experimental and avant-garde directions. Even though larger and more established companies – such as department store Åhléns and H&M-owned

Weekday – have created both advertising campaigns and collections challenging outdated perceptions of gender, it is among young fashion designers that the question of gender is thoroughly explored.

For these fashion brands, a feminist approach is not limited to an occasional campaign, but a feminist understanding of gender is integrated into the daily work on design and marketing, as well as into the overall brand concept. Lines between masculinity and femininity get blurred, and the unisex category is explored through cutting-edge designs and high-quality fabrics.

In 2016, **Lazoschmidl** won the Swedish Fashion Council Changers Award for their

innovative and groundbreaking interpretation of contemporary menswear, which includes hot pants, crop tops and transparent shirts, all made-to-measure and produced by hand in Stockholm. Lazoschmidl define their collections as ‘menswear and no gender’, signalling that you don’t have to identify as male to wear the clothes.

lazoschmidl.tumblr.com

Appletrees have been praised for their minimalist and unisex designs. Their shirts are known for exquisite details and high quality, designed to be worn by women and men alike, in styles that fit with cultural expressions from all corners of the world.

appletrees.se



LEARN MORE

3 MINIMALIST CLASSICS

Even though Swedish fashion is changing, there is still plenty of room for the clean lines and timeless silhouettes that remain at the core of Swedish design.

Ever since her early years as a fashion blogger, Elin Kling has been a strong profile in Swedish fashion. Fashion brand **Totême**, which she runs together with Karl Lindman since 2014, has received much praise for their sleek silhouettes and minimalist style, inspired as much by the crisp architecture of Stockholm as by the New York City skyline.

toteme-nyc.com

Since 1928, **Eton** have produced high quality shirts, and their main office and original factory are still in Gånghester outside small city Borås. Today they are represented in approximately 50 international markets.

etonshirts.com

Creative director and founder Roland Hjort has always had a passion for art, music and tailoring. In **Whyred**, these three expressions come together, bringing a sub-cultural edge to their clothes, as seen in their signature parka. Whyred design both menswear and womenswear.

whyred.com

FASHION ACCESSORIES

Efva Attling is a fashion model and pop star turned silversmith. Her jewellery often carries words with inspirational messages. Today, her company is a global business with shops around the world and a loyal fan-base including Madonna, Meryl Streep and Sharon Stone.

efvaattling.se

Working in the intersections of fashion, jewellery and interior design, many of **Pia Wallén's** pieces have become iconic. In particular, she is known for her bracelets in brass, plated with gold and with felted wool on the inside.

piawallen.se

Krista Kretzschmar represents a more folkloristic and eclectic jewellery style, as she searches for inspiration in the organic shapes found in nature.

kristakretzschmar.com



PHOTO LEFT: LAZOSCHMIDL, RIGHT: APPLETREES

Lazoschmidl (left) and Appletrees (right) are two among many Swedish fashion brands that blur gender lines deliberately.

- **Hope**, winner of Guldknappen ('Golden Button', one of Sweden's most prestigious fashion awards) in 2010, explore ways of blurring the lines between their menswear and womenswear collections. Known for minimalist and almost utilitarian designs, the brand also produces the unisex collection 'Changes'.

hope-sthlm.com

Designer **Minna Palmqvist** incorporates details of the female body into her fashion to investigate what it means to be a woman while also blurring the line between body and garment. Her work has been frequently publicised and awarded, both in Sweden and internationally.

minnapalmqvist.com

FASHION AS AN EXPERIMENT

Swedish fashion is still very defined as functional, understated and homogenous in colour. But there are daredevil designers too.

Our Legacy take design classics such as the button-down shirt and the bomber jacket as their starting point to create something radically new. Results include T-shirts in terrycloth and the suede jacket/shirt-hybrid, one of their signature garments.

ourlegacy.se

Swedish fashion's enfant terrible **Ann-Sofie Back** is known for her avant-garde designs as well as clever communication strategies – including a memorable short film in which she was taken hostage for her 'crimes against fashion' – often going against the traditional and conventional.

annsofieback.com

Acne Studios are first and foremost known for their jeans, but also for their artistic collaborations and works with other

creative industries. Examples include a scented candle produced together with lifestyle brand Byredo, a group of furniture inspired by the work of furniture designer Carl Malmsten, and a collaboration with photographer Lord Snowdon that resulted in both a book on photography and a small collection of shirts, all in blue, the favourite colour of Snowdon.

acnestudios.com

Since 2001 **Ida Sjöstedt** runs her own fashion house. She is known for her lavishly romantic look and expert craftsmanship, which has secured her reputation as one of Sweden's most interesting designers. In 2016, she was named designer of the year by Swedish ELLE magazine.

idasjostedt.com

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BEHIND THE LENS

A number of renowned fashion photographers originate in Sweden. **Camilla Åkrans** has worked with Harper's Bazaar, Vogue Japan and Numero, while **Mikael Jansson** is best known for his skilful use of the camera together with emotionally charged images. Clients include Calvin Klein, Christian Dior and H&M. **Elisabeth Toll** is internationally recognised for her romantic and rich vision of fashion.

INDUSTRY SUPPORTER

The Association of Swedish Fashion Brands, often referred to as ASFB, is an independent organisation with the aim to support the Swedish fashion industry. They also organise Fashion Week Stockholm twice a year. asfb.se

FASHION COUNCIL

Since 1979, the Swedish Fashion Council works to strengthen, inspire and support the development of the Swedish fashion industry. They arrange the talent programme Swedish Fashion Talents, distribute scholarships and act as trend advisors to several companies. swedishfashioncouncil.se



PHOTO: SWEDISH FASHION COUNCIL

Womenswear creator Louise Körner was named Swedish Fashion Talent of the Year in 2016.

PROMOTING THE NEW

Amaze Stockholm is an alternative fashion event that strives to promote new and upcoming designers. A mix of 1960s performance art and 1990s deconstructed fashion, it pushes the boundaries for how fashion can be displayed, and has quickly positioned itself as one of the most interesting platforms for emerging Swedish fashion designers.



PHOTO: SIMON PAULIN/WAGEBANK SWEDEN/SE

Nudie Jeans are internationally recognised for their work on sustainability and denim, which challenges conventional approaches to consumption.

MAKING FASHION SUSTAINABLE

Like any business, fashion cannot ignore the threat of climate change. The Swedish fashion industry invests substantially into research, striving for more sustainable ways.

The aim is to go from linear production to circular, where materials are not discarded after use but instead recycled or used in other ways so that the waste is kept to a minimum. New business models are currently being explored, often based in a radical redefinition of what the term 'fashion' constitutes.

Pioneering companies

Traditionally, fashion has been defined by change and a desire for constant new designs; however, now companies also actively work to make sure that their garments last longer, even though it might mean they make less money on their products in a short-term perspective. Many companies have also started to collaborate to find solutions and share their knowledge in order to speed up the progress.

The ambitious research programme **Mistra Future Fashion** strives to implement a systemic change towards sustainable fashion. They focus on four areas: design, users, supply chain and recycling. They make sure that the scientific results reach the fashion industry and work with a number of key industry partners, such as H&M, Lindex, Eton and Nudie Jeans. mistrafuturefashion.com

Long-lasting garments

Filippa K is at the forefront among Swedish brands when it comes to integrating sustainability with the company. One of their most successful approaches to creating a sustainable fashion brand has been Filippa K Lease. Garments from previous seasons are rented out, so that a 'library' is created with a growing selection of garments. The lease concept allows them to explore a new business model and more sustainable ways of consumption. When no longer suitable for leasing, the garments will be sold second hand.

filippa-k.com

Gothenburg-based **Nudie Jeans** have committed themselves to a strict code of conduct requiring them to only work with a carefully selected group of suppliers, demanding that they continuously supply Nudie Jeans with reports, action plans and certifications. They also repair your old Nudie jeans so you don't have to buy new ones, which challenges the idea that fashion should always be defined in relation to what is new and in style. nudiejeans.com



H&M is in many ways the main driving force in Swedish fashion, not least in terms of innovative design.

SWEDEN'S FASHION CORNERSTONE

Combining affordability with guest appearances by superstar designers, H&M remains one of Sweden's instantly recognisable fashion brands.

GOING CIRCULAR

In 2011, H&M committed to phasing out the use of all hazardous chemicals to reach zero discharge by 2020. H&M also envisions a 100 per cent circular enterprise, closing the loop of textiles through reuse and recycling. Consumers can now recycle garments and textiles at all H&M shops across the globe. H&M also has 'conscious collections' and 'conscious products' made of sustainable materials, working with for example recycled and organic cotton, recycled polyester and organic hemp.

Following a humble start in Sweden in the 1940s, **H&M (Hennes & Mauritz)** have gone through a series of expansion phases and now have around 4,100 stores around the world. Affordable clothing has remained a central strategy throughout the years, while global expansion has come with effects such as a wider span of styles, campaigns with top-of-the-line designers and pop stars, and a focus on sustainability.

Besides its own name brand, H&M also controls a variety of other companies with contrasting profiles. **COS** are known for their clean lines and architectural shapes. **Weekday** is the edgier, street-style brand, while **& Other Stories** represent a more sophisticated style. Since 2009 H&M have also had

a say in home styling thanks to the introduction of **H&M Home**.

Guest designers

Since 2004, H&M have made star collaborations – with designers such as Karl Lagerfeld, Donatella Versace and Stella McCartney, pop singers such as Madonna and Beyoncé acting as models, and even game developers Maxis participating – a recurring theme. These collections are available for a limited time and often sell out quickly. A more lasting collaboration has been its role as a breeding ground for young designers. Several of today's hottest Swedish designers have worked for H&M at some point, including Roland Hjort of Whyred, Ann Ringstrand of Hope, and Carin Wester.

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