

**CENTRAAL
MUSEUM**

PERSBERICHT

Utrecht, 5 August 2013



ARRRGH!

Monsters in Fashion

Including Malson Martin Margiela, Viktor & Rolf and Bas Kosters

The spooky and humorous avatars, video game characters and comic heroes are becoming more and more frequent in current fashion design. Monstrous creations take over the catwalk and conquer high fashion. *ARRRGH! Monsters in Fashion* is the first international fashion exhibition on character design. From 19 October 2013 through to 19 January 2014 these monsters will be gathering at the Centraal Museum in Utrecht, the Netherlands.

ARRRGH! displays more than 70 designs of 40 established and emerging designers. These include Rick Owens, Issey Miyake, Bernhard Willhelm, Walter van Beirendonck, Viktor & Rolf, Bas Kosters, Bart Hess, Charlie Le Mindu, Maison Martin Margiela and Craig Green.

Monsters in Fashion: the exhibition

The *ARRRGH! Monsters in Fashion* exhibition is curated by the Greek collective ATOPOS Contemporary Visual Culture. The exhibition includes outfits that have recently been presented on the international catwalk. *ARRRGH!* was first on show in 2011 at the Benaki Museum in Athens and then moved to La Gaité Lyrique in Paris, in Spring 2013. In Utrecht, the Centraal Museum will be adding one more design: *L'Hiver de l'Amour* by Viktor & Rolf from 1994, the earliest design of this duo in the museum collection. Bart Hess and Bas Kosters will be both creating a new design, specifically for this exhibition, commissioned by Centraal Museum. In addition, two outfits of the up-and-coming British designer Craig Green from his Autumn/Winter 2013 collection will be acquired by Centraal Museum, completing the exhibit list.

The most distinctive feature of *ARRRGH!* is that the monsters are not exhibited on pedestals or on stage, but on the ground. As a visitor, you literally come face-to-face with the designs and you are invited to compare yourself to the monsters

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and question your own ideas on beauty. Do we accept things that are different to us or just things that may compare to ourselves?

Craig Green was commissioned by ATOPOS cvc and La Gaité Lyrique to create the visual identity of the exhibition in Paris. He created four colourful and playful 3D creatures, with a graphic look. These monsters fit together like male and female forms; they are couples in love.



© Craig Green. Commissioned by ATOPOS cvc and La Gaité Lyrique, Paris, 2013.

Monsters in Fashion: the research

The exhibition *ARRRGH! Monsters in Fashion* is based on the idea and research of ATOPOS cvc. This collective noticed that since the 1990s monstrous characters had been appearing on the catwalks of different designers and researched this phenomenon for three years. The outcome of this research was compiled in the book *Not a Toy, Fashioning Radical Characters*, which was published in 2011 by Pictoplasma Publishing, Berlin. This is how *ARRRGH!* was born.

In contemporary fashion the human body is often mutated and transformed into unknown and monstrous figures. Participating artists and designers of this exhibition give atypical shapes to fabrics and create extreme volumes. They cover and mask the face, transforming the human body into hybrid creatures with supernatural forms, vibrant colours and abstract elements. The relationship between body and clothing and the potential of the human body is redefined by questioning our own view on the definition of beauty.

The most direct explanation to the introduction of characters in fashion shows could be the aspect of masquerade, of becoming someone or even something else. Besides our actual lives, we now also lead a virtual, digital life on the internet. We develop our own avatar.

Another significant underlying aspect of many character fashion shows is a childhood nostalgia for superheroes, comic figures and video game mascots. Many of the designers featured in this exhibition grew up in the heyday of 'Saturday morning cartoons', a clear source of inspiration for their fashion shows and collections.

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ATOPOS cvc

ATOPOS cvc is a curatorial and artistic collective in Greece, founded in 2003 by Stamos Fafalios and Vassilis Zidianakis and recently joined by Angelos Tsourapas. With their varying backgrounds of architecture, art, anthropology and mathematics, the three have merged their interests and visions to create an interdisciplinary platform for the arts. The collective's aim is to implement innovative projects of contemporary visual culture, with particular emphasis on the human figure and costume. ATOPOS cvc is a platform for research projects of an international interest, collaborating with designers and artists and realizing new ideas in the form of exhibitions, publications, performances and events.
www.atopos.gr

Fashion in Centraal Museum

The Centraal Museum fashion collection comprises of more than 8.000 items, covering fashion history from the 17th century up until the present. The collection was started in 1875, making it one of the oldest and largest costume collections in the Netherlands. The extensive national and international collection contains historical costumes alongside contemporary fashion, haute couture alongside ready-to-wear.

Besides leading Dutch designs, the museum's sub-collection of contemporary fashion consists of work by international designers including Maison Martin Margiela, John Galliano, Vivienne Westwood, Issey Miyake, Hussein Chalayan and Junya Watanabe. Acquisition policy focuses on the design process and an interdisciplinary relationship with other art forms. The Centraal Museum regularly organizes large exhibitions such as *Blue Jeans - 350 Years of Jeans* and *Fashion for Thought. Alexander van Slobbe, independent fashion designer.*

Participating artists and designers

Alex Mattsson SE
Alexis Themistocleous CY
Andrea Ayala Closa ES
Bart Hess NL
Bas Kusters NL
Bernhard Willhelm DE
Boris Hoppek DE
Bronwen Marshall UK
Cassette Playa & Gary Card UK
Charlie Le Mindu FR
Chi He CN
Clo'e Floirat FR
Craig Green UK
David Curtis-Ring UK
Digitaria GR
Filep Motwary & Maria Mastori CY & GR
George Tourlas GR
Helen Price UK
Henrik Vibskov DK
Heyniek NL
Hideki Seo JP
Issey Miyake & Dai Fujiwara JP
Jean-Paul Lespagnard BE
Kim Traeger DK
Leutton Postle UK
Luis Lopez Smith UK
Mads Dinesen DK
Maison Martin Margiela FR
Manon Kündig CH
Mareunrol's LV
Nasir Mazhar UK
Pictoplasma DE

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Pierre-Antoine Vettorello FR
Piers Atkinson UK
Rejina Pyo KR
Rick Owens US
Stefan Galt IR
Toma Stenko RU
Viktor & Rolf NL
Walter van Beirendonck BE

Note to editor

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An exhibition by:

ATOPOS
CONTEMPORARY VISUAL CULTURE

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