



FASHION | By [Claudia Galassi](#); photos by [Walter Piretti](#) | sep. 7 2018, 12:27 pm

these are six of the talented nominees for the 2018 group

Yesterday, the designers of Liching 2018 presented their work to the deciding jury at the Victoria Hotel Amsterdam. We were there and spoke to some of them about their final collection and future ambitions.



In total, fourteen finalists will show their work during the Liching 2018 show at Amsterdam Fashion Week on September 7th. The lucky winner goes home afterwards with a prize of ten thousand euros. i-D spoke to six of the promising nominees.

Nathan Klein - Maastricht Academy of Fine Arts and Design





What is the story behind your final collection?

My final collection "The First Time He Kissed a Boy" is based on my teenage years, and the first young childhood love that makes you lose your innocence. It is about the period in which a young person is biologically, but not completely emotionally, mature and is experimenting with his emotions and sexuality. A coming-of-age story, in which I melt my identity and cultural background together with my love for material and color. From there I designed a romantic collection for young men who, just like me, want to be their authentic self.

What is more important: the process or the product?

For me the process is essential but also very personal. Through development and experimentation, special creations arise that I never dreamed of. The design of this collection was very intuitive, with the final product telling my story. That is very important to me.



What is your favorite design of the collection?

I find that very difficult. But if I really had to choose a design I would go for my black-white coat with matching skirt-pants and leather giraffe-bag, under the guise #neverkillyourdarlings

What do you owe your success to?

To my wonderful family. If I had not been adopted then I would never have had the opportunity to study fashion in the Netherlands. I also owe my success to my unforgettable internship which I went through in London at the legendary fashion house of Vivienne Westwood & Andreas Kronthaler.

What is beauty according to you?

For me, beauty means self-assurance. Inner beauty is on the inside and that reflects to the outside. Your identity is your strength.

What is the most important thing you have learned so far?

Always dare to be yourself and never let your dreams go.

What is your ambition for the coming time?

I would prefer to gain more experience in the fashion industry in the coming years. My aspiration for the future is to work at a big fashion house as a designer, maybe back to Vivienne Westwood, who knows. I also have the ambition to start my own label! But now first of all enjoy the student life.

Rena Jansen - Utrecht School of the Arts





What is the story behind your final collection?

My collection "Y So Serious?" is about the millennials, my generation. Figures show that my generation would be "behind" with all the developments that we associate with becoming adults. We do not grow up as expected for one reason or another. But what does it look like when we can no longer postpone it and enter the mature world? For example, if we get a serious job and can no longer behave like children? That is the question that I have investigated in my collection, in which I used the gray jacket as an archetype that has been merged with shapes inspired by my own children's drawings.

Can fashion have a political or social ambition?

Yes, I think so. Fashion, like other art forms, is a medium that can be used to visualize things, including political or social issues. That is also what I try with my collection, to visualize the wrestling of the millennial generation in a playful way. My work often looks cheerful and airy, but almost always has a deeper load and a serious subject. I think this is a more effective way to bring serious issues to light, with a bit of humor.



What do you owe your success to?

I grew up in a super creative household, which has encouraged me to be creative from an early age. I had friends who were not allowed to go to art school from their parents, but at home it was the opposite, and it was encouraged. Because I was exposed to art from childhood, and because I got this freedom, I had the opportunity to discover and develop myself creatively. In addition, work hard. You can have great ideas, but if you do not work hard to make these ideas a reality, then nobody cares. I take my work super seriously, and am huge (and often a little too ambitious). I think people can see the love that I have in my creations, and therefore have faith in me.

What is beauty according to you?

For me, beauty is when someone can be completely themselves and feels great about it. I think that clothing has the power to change the wearer in a positive way. The moment someone puts on a great piece of clothing and is no longer afraid of being himself, that is what pure beauty is to me, no matter how cliché that sounds. I often find people who deviate from the mainstream ideal of beauty, and who proudly rock, the most beautiful people there are.

What is the most important thing you have learned so far?

That you should not be afraid to experiment, and that not everything you make needs to be "beautiful" or "successful". The research phase in your process should be a bit of a rocky road,

and good ideas do not come before you've tried twenty really bad ideas. And a "designers block" does not exist. Waiting for inspiration does not make sense, you just have to start with something and then the creative ball starts rolling.



What is your ambition for the coming time?

My plan is to gain some work experience first, to learn more about the "practical" side of fashion. Ultimately, I would like to start my own label in a duo or collective. This because I would probably go crazy on my own, and it would be nicer to go crazy with someone else.

Mathieu Jonker - Willem de Kooning Academy



What is the story behind your final collection?

My collection 'Influences from the underworld' is based on the story of Willem Halleeder and his entourage. Each look is a representation of another character. In this way I can manipulate the story to my own taste by presenting the relationships among each other as I wish - who has an influence on who, for example. A men's collection with a contrast between grim and romantic. Bitesweet. Current events also make the story tangible: I find it interesting how everyone has an opinion about the criminal case.

What is more important: the process or the product?

The process is the product, and in that sense the process is much more important. As a designer, you have to be able to explain your thinking, so that you develop a design method. Personally I spend a lot of time reading and sketching, after which I develop what I have outlined. Then I evaluate whether I have achieved my goal, and adjust things accordingly.

What is your favorite design of the collection?

The bomber jacket, with embroidery on the back. In the embroidery and logo of 'SVO Schietvereniging Osdorp Amsterdam' a target has been incorporated, which Astrid [in my imagination] wears on her back - a reference to the current situation of Astrid Halleeder, if we have to believe the news.

Can fashion have a political or social ambition?

I see fashion, especially clothing, as a sort of canvas that you give meaning to. This can be political or social, but also decorative. It is just what you make of it yourself. My preference, however, goes out to fashion with an underlying story.

What do you owe your success to?

I grew up bilingual [Dutch and French] so I often went to Paris at a young age. Fashion is visible and felt there, so I have developed an eye for detail. Furthermore, I have always had a passion for fashion fabrics. What does the material exude? What is the quality? What makes it exciting? Soon I gave my mother and her friends style advice. During my academic years I have always worked on a network where I now reap the benefits.

What is beauty according to you?

Beauty is self-confidence. A unique character says much more than a few perishable external characteristics. A sort of balance between appearance, excitement and mystery. Because a person with too much self-confidence, for example, can quickly lose his tension and mystery.

What is the most important thing you have learned so far?

I have taught myself. From the moment I actually knew what I wanted to do and in what way, I did everything to work towards it. The perseverance is also essential. I could have gone to Paris to work there, so to speak, but I'm glad I got my diploma.



What is your ambition for the coming time?

I am looking for an internship in Paris, to gain at least a year of experience, preferably at a large fashion house. After that year it can go two ways: I put together a brand [together with a friend], or I keep working at an existing company.

Pia Waller - Maastricht Academy of Fine Arts and Design





What is the story behind your final collection?

'AWE' combines our modern and increasingly digital life with the advantages of experiencing raw nature. Despite the many benefits that technology has, it is also a burden for our mental and physical health. People have always retreated into nature. Man is always looking for wonder: a mix of surprise, fear and surprise. I believe that we need both worlds to stay happy and healthy. Technology helps us to develop further, and nature keeps us grounded. To visualize this, I combined tents and army parts with sportswear, technical fabrics and digital prints.

What is more important: the process or the product?

They are both equally important to me. The process is important because it keeps my mind busy and challenges me. The product confirms that the process was successful, and of course brings along feelings of happiness.

What is your favorite design of the collection?

The outdoor dress, or the "outdoor bride", as the dress is sometimes called. It was the very first outfit that I developed and it is still my favorite. I have designed it very intuitively. I also think that this dress represents my aesthetic best.



What do you owe your success to? Success is a big word, but my personal development is the most important aspect of it. Especially living in London and doing an internship there in 2017 has had a major impact on my thoughts and my independence, and therefore also on my work.

What is beauty according to you? The ability to always find something that you can appreciate: something interesting, something instructive. Not only if it is obvious, but if you can retain that ability and be interested in the smallest things and during the most horrible periods. That is beauty for me.

What is the most important thing you have learned so far? The only person who stops you is you yourself. A lot depends on your own attitude and how you reflect on yourself and your work. You can embrace negative thoughts and use them to grow. In the end, it's not about how uncomfortable a situation is, but how you choose to react to it. Working together and surrounding yourself with positive people is also very powerful. Many people are only busy with themselves nowadays, and therefore we easily overlook the importance of our environment.

What is your ambition for the coming time? Find my place as a Junior Designer in the fashion industry and gain more experience. I also see myself setting up my own brand in a few years. I still have too much to say to stop.

Berend Brus - Willem de Kooning Academy





What is the story behind your final collection?

'Queer' is a celebration of the lgbt+ community - a collection of subcultures, which in a sense are separate from each other. My goal is to bring all these beautiful people together and connect their cultures. I want to do this by celebrating their individuality and uniqueness and do not see these differences as a negative divider, but as something positive to cherish. Ultimately, there is one thing that should connect us all and that is love. The collection is largely made of the same denim fabric, to show that we were all cut from the same cloth, performed in unique variations.

What is more important: the process or the product?

Those two can not be disconnected from each other. I find beautiful materializing a floating thought in your head. The moment you see a look completely and it turns out to be correct, makes the frustration and the blood, sweat and tears all the better.

What is your favorite design from the collection?

Conceptually, the 'Business Queer' suit is one of my favorites. But when it comes to the best representation of my collection, it is two other pieces: the patchwork jacket and the 'gay cloud'. Love and equal, I find the most important messages. The cloud through what it represents: love. The patchwork jacket because I wanted to replace another design at the last minute. As a result, the days before the photo shoot I still have patchwork like a madman. My mother was so sweet to knit the edges by hand. In that jacket is therefore the most love (and stress).



Can fashion have a political or social ambition?

Of course. For example, the flapper dresses from the twenties or the 'silence = death' slogan shirts during the AIDS epidemic in the eighties. More current examples for me are Melania Trump's "I do not really care, do you?" Coat or the (from Obama) brooch that Queen Elizabeth wore during the state visit of Trump. My collection itself also has social ambitions; I would like to see a change in the attitude of society towards LGBT people.

What do you owe your success to?

Perseverance, optimism and coffee.

What is beauty according to you?

Authenticity. There is nothing more beautiful than someone who is sincere and himself. And tall.

people. And a smile.

What is the most important thing you have learned so far?

The things that I owe my success to: perseverance and optimism.

What is your ambition for the coming time?

My ambition is to continue with my label 'Berend Brus'. I am very happy with all positive reactions, it gives me extra energy for my next creations. Thanks to winning the Rotterdam New Talent Award, I get the chance to exhibit at ART Rotterdam in early 2019. In other words, there are still enough nice things to come.

Jasmijn Taken - Utrecht School of the Arts



What is the story behind your final collection?

As a millennial I grew up between two worlds: the digital and analogue. We now live in a society where everything seems to have been premeditated; a stylized world. You can see that the differences between the earlier analogue and the current digital age are increasingly occupied by young people. There is a collective desire for sincerity; back to the appreciation for the everyday, simple things. This made me nostalgic about the time I was born, 1994 - here I got my inspiration. I come from a close family from a village and have always been very interested in the old photos and stories of my parents. The atmosphere that speaks from these stories and photos is something I find very special; the "normal" and positive life. The feeling that radiates from these photos is ease and disinterest, arising from the clothing style of my father and his cafe-guests. She does not seem to care what they look like, it shows a certain atmosphere and attitude of that time. With my collection 'WHATEVER FOREVER!' I show in a positive way an "I do not care" look, unstressed and nonchalant in the middle of a world that seems to revolve around perfection and speed. By using proprietary materials I create a world of my own with the recognizable signature of the early nineties translated into a new silhouettes image, unstressed and nonchalant amidst a world that seems to revolve around perfection and speed. By using proprietary materials I create a world of my own with the recognizable

signature of the early nineties translated into a new silhouettes image, unstressed and nonchalant amidst a world that seems to revolve around perfection and speed. By using proprietary materials I create a world of my own with the recognizable signature of the early nineties translated into a new silhouettes image.

What do you owe your success to? During the creation of my final collection I was very aware that 'my success' is not only formed by myself, but also by the people around me. Without the feedback from teachers and help from my dear family and graduating friends, I had never come to the collection that I have now made. I am a down-to-earth person and always try to keep fun during the process. I also look back on a hectic but at the same time fun and instructive graduation period. That my teachers have chosen my work to go to the Litching 2018 is therefore a compliment and great honor.



What is beauty according to you? I find beauty a difficult concept, because what is beauty anyway? Today we are so influenced online about what is beautiful and what 'hears', that it is hardly possible to form a personal opinion. I like it when people let go of this and draw their own plan. For me, beauty is also being yourself, each in her own way.

What is the most important thing you have learned so far? During my study at the academy I learned to design things that suit me and that I can always support. To be open to feedback from teachers and people from the profession, but not to lose yourself in this. To stay who you are and to have fun in what you do and create. This is a mega cliché, but without humor and a certain level of sobriety, I would not like this profession for long and lose myself in a mass of designers.

What is your ambition for the coming time? In the coming period I want to discover how I can work as a young designer separately from the academy. I am 24 and have never been to school. The free and indeterminate frightens me, but also gives room to discover and become independent. I hope to be able to do nice projects with inspiring people from different disciplines and in the future I would like to follow a Master in other countries. My graduation does not feel like the end, it is an exciting beginning in which I have so much to learn and discover.



You can read our previous interviews with the other eight finalists in the reports of the graduation shows of the *Rienold*, *KABK*, *AMFI* and *Ariëz*.

