

EXCERPT FROM: Elisabeth Längle/Foreword to "Everlasting Collection" - Tokyo 2010

...Susanne Bisovsky is one of the most extraordinary phenomena in fashion, who mistrusts the zeitgeist and the principle of destroying the current. She develops her own means of reanimating the past, and transforms the familiar into something unfamiliar, which stands above the tides of fashion. Her works speak the languages of numerous traditional costumes, national garbs, local clichés, forgotten, breached and lost traditions. She has the purity and honesty of an avant gardiste who has always done what others only ever have to do tomorrow: returned to authentic creation, extensive quality, craftsmanship and spiritual independence from the mainstream, hypes and trends. In this role, as creator, she finds the medium of provocation every bit as appropriate a means of lending her work a many-layered but always organic totality, which is new in this form, as blasphemy, anarchy and irritation. That makes her a revolutionary against excess, and a standard-bearer for modernity.

KUNSTHALLE WIEN: Angela Stief (Curator) on Susanne Bisovsky's "Mitgift"

Far removed from the seductive power of fashion photography and advertising images, miles away from the temples to commerce, fast money and the cult of brands, contrary to the seasonal rhythms of the fashion industry, the oeuvre of Austrian artist Susanne Bisovsky, fashion designer, settles. With her philosophy, which shows itself not so much in words as in the pronounced posture of her clothing designs, she sails deftly around the plague of the mainstream and the elite luxury industry. Her work, which is currently finding a high point in series of photographs such as "Frida" (about Mexican painter Frida Kahlo), consciously rails against the features that currently characterise goings-on in the fashion industry. It's also why she submits such an idiosyncratic profile.

Bisovsky, who studied at the University for the Applied Arts in Vienna, counteracts the exclusivity and individualism of conventional runway haute couture with folklore-like bonds, debunking the hype that fashion victims are short-lived, superficial phenomena of consumption-led liberalism. She succeeds in pulling off the balancing act between old and new, tradition and vision. Her motto, that nothing is less modern than the modish high point of the age, is cynical. And "modish" a monstrous word. With her "Everlasting Collections" haute couture collection, the individual parts of which are subjected to a treatment process lasting years, Susanne Bisovsky rejects the fast pace of our age, focussing her interest on ancient production processes, craftsmanship, almost forgotten materials, slow, costly textile processing techniques, and proportional studies.

The Viennese fashion designer also loves the style of Biedermeier, amongst others. However, her effect is anything but "bieder" - unsophisticated - and she is considered a rediscoverer of other times, places and cultures. Bisovsky makes use of the widest imaginable range of regional costumes. Recently this has included the lively traditions of a German-speaking minority, the Sorbs, and their "Bescherkind", or present-giving ceremony. She translates this knowledge of the past into a contemporary concoction of the very highest quality. Bisovsky is inspired by an archive of clothing production practices, created together with her partner over the past 15 years. The archive contains reports from the world of dressing up, as it does clothing worn against the plague, baked skirts, whitewashed hats, pierced pinnars, types of sorrow recognisable in us by our clothing, blood skirts, individual pieces not washed for a lifetime, and much more besides. Her unintentionally avant-garde art, which makes us so aware of the post-modernist patchworks of recombining and citing, amazes us. The careful way in which she deals with the outsider becomes the placeholder for a critique which shows that the consumerist universe of a throwaway society can also be hollowed out from within.