

LARISSA FALK

ALIENATION

'The body is the sum of being and have been being. The lived time is visible and how it was lived'. Marlene Streeruwitz

The collection is based on my experience of growing up in a Gasthaus in rural Styria in Austria owned by my parents. In my family's Gasthaus, the women worked in the kitchen and served beverages and food for mainly male customers. Men enjoyed their company, while the women were exposed to their gaze on daily basis. They did not show their skin, but their bodies and curves were nevertheless always visible. Being looked at by the men in the Gasthaus, made me feel abused and objectified.

The exposure of the female body, and how unveiling the skin has historically changed in many cultures are the main topics of my thesis and my collection. I want to examine and question the fetishization of the female body and its parts, such as breast, butt, and 'female' curves. To enlarge curves and to reveal skin were the two main forms of my exploration.

In everyday life, female bodies are exposed to male observers even if they are dressed since the garments are a mold of the body and shape them. Garment patterns follow the contours of the body. In our society, women are pushed to constantly question their bodies and themselves through images in an advertisement, magazines, television and on the internet. Therefore, many women hate their bodies, are ashamed of them, and spend much of their time trying to meet unattainable beauty standards.

I want to explore shapes and create silhouettes that are changing the female physical appearance of the wearer. Creating a chance to explore a different persona and self-perspective. I create abstract female body shapes that deform the body appearances of the wearer and also create a cover for their own body. Garments can offer visual protection by disguising the self, experiences, and the body.

To demonstrate the everyday exposure of female bodies, I decided to create my body prints and reveal the shapes by printing them on top of my garments. With my knitwear, I worked with the body print of my breasts and disguised it through the ruffled, uneven surface.

I want to expose the skin and foreground the fact that women of any age should be proud of revealing their skin and should not feel ashamed of not being 'perfect', 'artificial', or flat. Historically, wrinkled skin was usually hidden by clothing and not meant to be presented - nowadays women are supposed to not have any wrinkles at all. My collection is a commentary on the exposure of the hidden female body. I want to encourage women to be proud and feel attractive at any age. Revealing skin and body should not be a matter of age but rather of awareness of why and for whom.

Streeruwitz Marlene (2001) *untragbar Mode als Skulptur*, Deutschland: Hatje Cantz Verlag, page 76.

² Sykora (2001) *untragbar Mode als Skulptur*, Deutschland: Hatje Cantz Verlag, page 90.

³ McRobbie, Angela (2015) Notes on the Perfect, *Australian Feminist Studies*, 30:83,3-20, DOI: 1080/08164649.2015.1011485,

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/08164649.2015.1011485>, page 8.