

Mila Petrova

OPEN / GIRLS

The main inspiration for my collection „OPEN / GIRLS“ is the prolific work of acclaimed Japanese photographer Araki, in particular his photo compilation ‘Tokyo Lucky Hole’, depicting the booming sex industry and adult entertaining facilities of the late 1970s/early 1980s in Japan.

There is a ubiquitous and profound beauty in Araki's work. The undeniable magnetism does not lay in the explicit or the vulgar, but rather in the almost celebratory style of portraying nihilism and/or the pursuit of freedom, respectively. His documentary approach is what the garments aim at – to create the illusion of a woman, radiating power and self-confidence without applying judgement or engage in a play with social and moral stigmata.

The collection develops around the conflict between basic and vulgar, noble and refined. This is a theme also followed through in the choice of textiles - the fabrics vary between see through silks to heavy velvets, denim, wools and shirting materials. This variety should give the illusion of walking through a woman's wardrobe, with each garment depicting her in different situations. The colors are reduced to black and white with pops of shiny red or yellow. It is in the haptic quality of textiles, the sound fabrics produce while moving, the play with sartorial semantics that in helping a story to develop. It is a rather straightforward approach towards clothing – the cut is consciously kept very clean, almost minimalist at one time or another. The silhouette shifts between bodyconscious and oversized. The look is clean and strong.

Similar to Araki's woman, functioning as an object for the beholder (passive and submissive) on the one hand, the woman wearing the clothes knows exactly what she is doing. There is no sense of shame or guilt. One can argue that it is almost a somewhat feminine statement on feminism.

Exactly this dichotomy is what creates a tension. This conflict is what the collection is based upon, and ultimately, this tension is what it is aiming to achieve. Essentially, it is about portraying characters and mixing them all up. It is an ongoing back and forth between opposing personalities - the innocent girl vs. the matronly lady, the housewife vs. a working girl, etc., combining them to a new whole, or a take on the quintessence of a woman.