

YOUNG DESIGNERS

Trying to get a foot in the door

"If you can't start work somewhere, how can you get experience?" complains fashion design student Agnès Baldomà

● When Agnès Baldomà was a little girl she used to make dresses for her dolls, just like other girls, but it soon became clear that her interest in clothes was more than just a passing phase. Next year, she graduates with a degree in design, specialising in fashion and textile design.

If a zip breaks, would you know how to change it?

Of course! I've been sewing for years.

So they also teach you these things at fashion schools?

Yes, right from the start they teach you all the basic stuff and then you learn more advanced things.

What's the difference between specialising in textiles and in clothing?

If you study textiles, you're working much more with everything to do with fabrics, while studying clothing is for those who are more interested in producing collections.

And which do you prefer?

From the very start, I knew that I was interested in clothes-making. One day, I'd like to have a go at producing *haute couture*, but I know that at first

it will be good for me to work in a few companies to gain experience.

Do companies give young students enough of a chance?

No. You only get in if you've got a name, and that's very difficult to get. I've called several places and they always ask for experience. But it's always the old problem of how can you get any experience if you can't start work somewhere first?

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"One day, I'd like to have a go at producing haute couture, but first I need to work to gain experience"
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Is academic training fundamental for a designer?

Yes, but what's really important is pattern design and dressmaking, though many other students wouldn't agree.

Why?

Perhaps because they see it as being too much work, or because they think that in the future they won't have to do it. But if you want to be designer, it's absolutely indispensable.

What's your opinion of the



Agnès believes that if you want to work in clothes design, you need to know about patterns and dressmaking / A.PUIG

training you've received?

It's quite good, because you learn about working in very different fields, but I think that it would also be good to do more practical training. But then

you'd need much more material to work with. You can learn all the theory, but if you can't put it into practice, then nobody's interested.

Is your course expensive?

Very expensive, especially the material. I work summers and weekends, but that's not enough. If my parents hadn't helped me out, I wouldn't have been able to carry on.



An item from Silvia Presas' recent award-winning collection "Flesh"

The creative process

An intimate conversation with Silvia Presas, designer and owner of The Avant

MARTA WENDLINGER
● Have you ever wondered what goes on in the minds of fashion designers before they start creating? I asked the winner of last year's Circuit 9 "Move On" for Best Collection, Silvia Presas, to enlighten us.

Let's start from the beginning—how do you go about designing pieces?

It never happens the same way twice: I see a silhouette of someone that I want to discover; she doesn't exist and I want to make her real. Then I start thinking about details such as big hips with big trousers, big flat colours with collapsing shoulders, and then things like

button holes, threads and mixing fabrics.

Does your original vision change as you experiment with shapes, materials and volumes?

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"I try to balance comfort with my beginning idea or goal, always keeping the silhouette in mind"
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I think that the silhouette doesn't change that much because you have a clear idea of what you see and what you want, but the original idea is not that detailed. What I consi-

der changing are small things. I try to balance comfort with my beginning idea or goal, always keeping the silhouette in mind.

What happens as the design becomes an item of clothing? What kind of changes do you make?

You do want to be completely sure that you're telling the truth; if your first idea, for which you may have high expectations, doesn't take you anywhere you have to start again. You can't be inflexible.

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