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## **The Concept of Beauty and Fashion Design**

*A Look at Creative Work in Commerce*

Design is a part of the creative process. In contrast to art, it is economically oriented. Design is therefore an artistic concept that is realized in industrial production. "Design projects react to technical, functional and cultural needs and seek innovative solutions that convey meaning and emotion and ideally go beyond the limits of current form", is stated in a work about design of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Art is created for its own sake. Its purpose is not to arouse sympathy or positive feelings about beauty. Free artistic work expresses, through the aspect of truth, a beauty that grows out of realization. Because of this, it is a significant inspiration for new trends and new ways of looking at things. It makes one perceive new things and understand those things, which until then, no one dared to recognize. Design on the other hand, makes beauty accessible to many.

The attractiveness of a design can be gauged by supply and demand, i.e. the market. There are two ways to work with it: Either a new design conquers a new segment of the market or the market receives the design that is momentarily expected. An example: The fashion label OSKA, which develops, produces and sells its own collections, remains with its fashion inside of its own market segment; a niche that grows stronger through an increase in demand. In this case, design is consciously developed. Stefanie Schmitz, responsible for the design of the women's collection, sees independent and self-confident individuals as the target group. Women and men who can identify with this style, set great stock in comfort, a casual look and original details and fabrics. These individuals are mature personalities who are specifically looking for high-quality design without vanity.

What motivates and inspires this creative work? "As a designer, I deal with many realities. Conception, production and cost-calculation are all a part of my work day. I have to specifically make space for creation. I need that space in order to create and maintain the collection's style and what OSKA is about. Once the season sample collections have been produced they are presented at trade-fairs and in showrooms. Therefore they can be experienced as an integrated whole only by specialists, who visit our presentations. During sales, our customers, usually retailers choose certain items. As the designer, it is also my job to give the collection a coherence, so that the look remains consistent up to the individual sale. This challenge includes taking the preferences of various countries into account, as we supply customers from all over the world".

What happens during the creative process, how does design come about?

"My knowledge of OSKA's style and my knowledge of the target group join together during the creative process with personal feelings on topicality. A designer has his or her world in their gut. They act out of this internalised reality and from this they create again and again. The designer absorbs impressions from the fashion world, culture and sociology and reflects them. In order to do this, I have to clear my mind from time to time and make room for new impressions and influences. Going on trips is a good way to accomplish that. When travelling I can consciously open up and let inspiration find me. When I activate my "general antenna" I find stimulation everywhere".

In this way, creations arise that are built on current topics, yet are also rapidly developed. Some OSKA designs became classics, they can be found in a modified form in every collection, as a stable basis. Other items are developed further; completely new designs and influences are added.

Stefanie Schmitz sees herself as a realist. "I feel grounded and find inspiration in my immediate surroundings, daily life, culture and the world in which I live. These stimulus flow into my design work. Out of the many bits and pieces there is a flash of colour here or a new idea for a collar detail there. That is how the next collection is created during the design phase.