

Looking at innovation in the designs of Alexander van Slobbe:



Alexander van Slobbe, 1994.

Alexander van Slobbe explains in the book Orson + Bodil about his light blue line from 1994: “an attempt at making a collection in one colour and one material; a woollen panama and crêpe in light blue, used in different ways. Two-dimensionally trying to find a more graphic form, or the opposite, three-dimensionally for as round an effect as possible. We had three aims: to do without any male constructions, to do without the usual difference between inside and outside and to do without detail. Or rather, details were no longer to be presented as such.”

To me it seems as if innovation¹ when it comes to fashion, lays mostly in the approach of the designer, towards the garments and the “look” of the line.

There is no talk about inventing “the new”, however the goal is: to be innovative in the approach, innovation precisely in form and in construction. Sometimes, more often than not, it is not possible for the inexperienced to see the innovative concept of the lines. For this one needs to read and research, and still it seems that it is not easy to find a clear sentence about the approach for the certain line.

So it seems that the innovation becomes a pure conceptual expression. If you look at the sentence about details from above, then the concept is: “to do without details”, but in reality that means approaching detail in a different way: so to hide the details, simplify them, the detail being in itself the fact that there are none of what is usually perceived as details.

So to understand this better we need to look at where innovation exists. Since there is no “new” left, “everything has been done”, we need to understand that the innovation of the designer is existing in the concept he or she use to work with. It is really a matter of convincing people that it is new and innovative. The limits of people's knowledge leaves space for “the new”. Innovation is using the area outside the limits of one's knowledge to approach the subjects inside.

1) A new idea, that is turned into a new or improved product.