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# YOUNG DESIGNERS WORK WITH MERINO WOOL



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Giving fashion design students the opportunity to work intimately with wool gives way for the fibre to remain in their future collections, which is why The Woolmark Company builds and maintains healthy relationships with the world's top design schools.

The Woolmark Company works closely alongside the Amsterdam Fashion Institute (AMFI) and shows third and fourth year students an edition of The Wool Lab to inspire the emerging designers.

Fashion students Monika Lovas and Sladjana Pengic chose to work with Merino wool for their graduation collections, gaining support from The Woolmark Company and the opportunity to gain exclusive knowledge about the Merino fibre.

"The relationship between AMFI and The Woolmark Company is very close," Benelux country manager Ingrid Oomen said. "We support students who chose to work with Merino for their final collections and we remain in contact on a regular basis.

"Both Monika and Sladjana have come to me for regular advice and have done their research in finding the perfect wool for their collections."

The two designers have used Merino wool in their graduation collections and allowed for experimentations and powerful results.

Sladjana's collection, titled When I was 7, was created after overcoming a personal struggle.

"I am Bosnian and the war in Bosnia started when I was seven," she said. "My collection has been inspired by military camouflage winter uniforms, express in oversized silhouettes and details in different shades of white, expressing a victory over my struggle.

"I chose natural materials to show pure beauty: the undyed wool flannel and cool wool fabrics form a perfect image for my collection and with beautiful, natural materials you can form a simple colour palette with strong imagery and a powerful story."

Monika also used a historical reference as the heart of her collection. She found interest in experimenting with digital printing onto Merino wool fabric.

"My collection is titled It's not that red and was inspired by the story of the Hiroshima bomb," she said.

"At the moment of the (bomb's) explosion the sky became a deep, blazing red and the story brought me closer to colours and the colour red, until finally the entire collection became red.

"Four out of my ten garments are made from wool and I wanted to see if digital printing worked on wool and how deep the colours would be. The results proved that there is so much to discover by digitally printing onto Merino wool."

By supporting these two students The Woolmark Company was able to promote the use of Merino wool in fashion and further educate of the fibre's natural benefits: its delicate composition and natural properties; it is soft, breathable and comfortable; and its beautiful drape and natural elasticity.

AMFI head teacher of Fashion and Design and Creative Manager Individuals, Peter Leferink, enjoys seeing his students experiment and use natural materials.

"They have more character and give proof of life," Mr Leferink said. "Natural fabrics age in an elegant way, almost

like with people.

“Students are gradually getting more conscious and responsible when it comes to choice of materials and we at AMFI try to stimulate this.”

And it’s not only on the runways where AMFI students are working with wool.

“Last year in October during the Campaign for Wool the students decorated a special Individuals window display at department store Maison de Bonneterie in both Amsterdam and The Hague,” Ms Oomen said, adding that similar projects for the coming year are currently in discussion.

