

“ FOLLOWERS ARE OUT ”

An interview with Anne Bernecker. She works as a trend scout for fashion houses, and says: “I can predict what we’ll find attractive in a few years.”

📍 ANDREAS WEIHER

Trend scouts don't have a terribly good reputation. In fact, many are considered imposters or charlatans ...

Anne Bernecker: In my opinion, it's not enough to attend a few fashion shows or leaf through the major fashion magazines. What you see there is actually already on its way out.

So what do you do?

I examine the situation before products are developed or trends arise. I work out what the status quo is for my customers, and try to get a sense of what the markets will be wanting a few years later. Where are art, politics, architecture, and industry headed? What technological developments are in the chute? These are all elements of a long-term analysis, which of course also draws on intuition and experience.

Can technical developments influence fashion?

Yes, absolutely. The fashion industry has discovered 3D printing, for example. Adidas is bringing its first mass-produced sneaker with a 3D-printed sole onto the market. Uniqlo's fall/winter collection will include 3D-printed knitwear. Sociological and economic aspects are also important. How is the zeitgeist

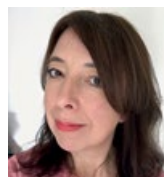
changing? Right now we're in the middle of a discussion on gender. How compelling will this topic be in three or four years, and how will the market respond? What about fair manufacturing conditions in the clothing industry—how is our awareness of this issue likely to change? Fashion is not the only thing that keeps changing—the target groups do too. Trends are shaped by the needs and desires of society.

How are consumers changing?

Our most recent focus has been on Generation Z; now we have to think about Generation Alpha. The children who can already use an iPad at the age of five—what will they want when they get older? The over-70 age group, sometimes called the silver society, has also undergone a lot of change. Life expectancies have risen. Developments in medicine and the cosmetics industry, combined with purchasing power and an eye for fashion, make this group an extremely lucrative source of business. Many of them want sustainable, high-quality products, and prefer to buy locally.

How do you see the next two years unfolding?

Migration will change our society. Emotions exert a strong influence on decisions. Art will become more politicized again. T-shirts with slogans, like Dior's “We Should All Be Feminists,” are in. Young designer labels like Vetements are rebelling against stereotypes. In the next few years you can expect to see a greater emphasis on individuality and personality than on the need to follow trends. ←



Anne Bernecker earned a degree in fashion design from London's Central Saint Martins College in 1997. She works as a trend forecaster and fashion designer.

📍 ANNE BERNECKER