



A.P. MONDE

A Belgian Kimono

The creative force known as ANJA PERISIC has transformed a Japanese traditional garb into a modern piece of high fashion. *Excerpts.*

The Japanese kimono could easily be the most iconic traditional garment of all time. It holds within it the history and lore of a proud East Asian culture, and has been a canvas of talented artisans for generations. Still commonly used in current Japanese society, the rest of the world has begun to regard it less as exotic; instead reimagined as contemporary all-occasion clothing, influencing many new designs and adaptations.

One designer in particular has drawn inspiration from the garb to create a unique brand of exquisite, high-quality collections. Hailing from Antwerp, a landmark locale of the famous Belgian fashion industry noted for its seamless melding of Eastern and Western aesthetic, the brilliant Anja Perišić offers a vision of the classic piece for the modern era.

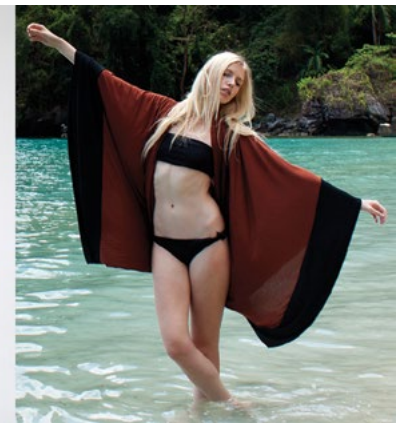
Her stylish creations were exclusively showcased in the recent 2015 Hong Kong's Most Valuable Companies Awards, where she shared her perspective on the kimono's universal possibilities.

What is the inspiration behind your line of kimonos?

A kimono to me is like 'the little black dress'. Everyone should have at least one in their closet. But it is also a generic term for countless possible garments. The original Japanese term literally means a thing to wear, rather than one specific type of garment. It is a uniquely universal thing to wear. I have set out to make kimonos even more ubiquitous. Take the kimono outside of the home and beachwear, where it has been stuck for a few decades now.

What do you offer the Hong Kong market, already spoilt-for-choice and brand names?

Our customers are people with refined



taste for fashion, who enjoy quality and luxury. We offer a one of a kind combination of European craftsmanship and Asian design. Our kimonos are made in Belgium by a very dedicated Belgian and Japanese team. Our fabrics are sourced all over the world. All our creations are unique, handmade pieces. We only work with natural fibers like silk and cotton. And we make sure our production process is ethically responsible. A.P. Monde kimonos can be ordered online, from anywhere in the world via our website. For the particularly selective client we offer custom-made design. It is 'Love made Luxury'.

What unique aspects of the kimono distinguish it from other kinds of clothing? What are its best traits?

Unlike western clothing, a kimono does not impose its shape on the human form. It glorifies the female silhouette, and plays with the empty space between the fabric and the body. The choice of fabric is crucial within the design process. The form of your body cannot be seen while standing still. It is only when the kimono changes its expression, that is, through motion, that a woman's inner form can be perceived. The way you let your kimono speak is like a musical composition - it is enhanced by your body

language. It is up to you what song you wish to sing.

For the image conscious dresser, what would be the ideal occasions to wear your creations?

We have a wide selection of kimono types. There are Kimonos one can wear to the office, to a meeting, to a wedding, a party or just to the beach. The beauty of this garment is that it can be used everywhere. We like to say, 'we offer you a garment you choose how to use: at home, for a dance, on a beach, in a dream.'

Currently we are specifically developing a party collection and a series of obi (traditional wide Japanese kimono belt) -inspired belts that can change the look of your kimono in an instant. So ideally, one should be able to wear the same kimono to different occasions.

What are your plans for growth in Hong Kong and Asia?

So far, we do have a few Asian customers who are very pleased with our product. We are focusing on the wedding market for the upcoming year. It is a very interesting niche for rapid growth within the Asian fashion market. ■

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