



Sensual Skin

Photography by **Peter Garmusch** Interview by **Isabel Baier**



Her fabrics are like a second skin: unique pieces with all the characteristics for telling a very personal story. Austrian fashion designer Ingrid Thallinger sets no boundaries when it comes to the stuff that fashion dreams are made of.

When a textile designer begins to create fashion by herself, one thing may be taken for granted: conventional fabrics and industrial manufacturing technology won't be in the picture. Ingrid Thallinger goes a step further and in her designs questions basic premises of today's fashion industry, such as its fast pace and the compatibility of design, comfort, and functionality. Her accessories are genuine allrounders, distinguished not only by the handcrafted fabrics but, especially, by their multifunctionality. Her latest creation, "you can do more", too, tells us a story unlike any we've heard before (or maybe like one we've heard and forgotten). A story of felted Cashmere in a garment that cannot easily be typified as shawl, jacket, or skirt. Clearly, Ingrid Thallinger has her highly idiosyncratic ideas about what fashion and clothing should be capable of being.

None of your designs can be easily categorized. What is it you demand of fashion?

To encourage women to regard, and deal with, fashion in a freer, more playful, and more flexible way. My clothes offer infinite possibilities for change, for a playful approach of the existing shapes and silhouettes of fashion. A modern woman depends on this kind of flexibility in her daily life. My wish is that those who wear my designs can overcome the obstacles of fashion and free themselves of existing conventions. My collections encourage experiments instead of limiting them. Their purpose is to make women play with fashion, to encourage them to find their own approaches to fashion.

Multifunctionality is a keyword for your creations; but what exactly does it mean for you?

I don't find it relevant whether one has a huge collection of clothes at one's disposal. I'd rather have some individual pieces that can be combined in a novel and original way. For me, multifunctionality doesn't only mean extracting a maximum of styling options from a single piece of clothing but also that their special quality makes these pieces timeless. The fast-paced changes in fashion tend to devaluate clothes. My accessories and the clothes from my collections are distinguished by their very special material quality. This lifts their status above that of a mere seasonal object that is bound to soon look unfashionable. In my thesis I dealt very exhaustively with the way people deal with their individual favourite clothes.

The accessory you presented is called "You can do more". Some sort of challenge, isn't it?

Absolutely. I'm inspired by sentences like "keep on moving" or "you can do more". They express a sense of dynamics and somehow move me, which is why these messages can also be found in my collections. For me, it's all about breaking up existing structures, about admitting more verve and movement. "You can do more" is a wake-up call, just like the piece of clothing itself. You can wear it as a shawl, a cloak, a jacket, a skirt, even as a dress. And, as it name proclaims, every woman can find her one way of wearing it in a manner that is hers alone.

