



Is it safe to say that fashion global taste is driven by that of West European and North American fashion brands? Is it safe to say that because of that phenomenon those brands have been dictating what is acceptable, what is appropriate, what people should be wearing in certain seasons, and so on and so forth? In brief, are they the mainstream of the fashion industry? If they are, what is the next question? What is the next wave? Do other corners of the globe have a say in fashion world? If they do, do we see a lot of it? Do we see a lot of fashion ideas from unknown parts of the globe? Do we see a lot of different cutting from unknown parts of the globe? Do we see a lot of different fabric pattern ideas from different parts of the globe? If not, what should we do as designers with different ethnic backgrounds who traditionally aren't part of the big fashion industry?

To my opinion, the simplest yet most pivotal action is to incessantly bring forward ethnic fashion or ethnic inspired fashion to the eye of the world. And one person and one organization that I came to know doing exactly this is Miss Natalia Koter and Etnomoda. I first met Miss Koter at a fashion event organized by Indonesian Embassy in Warsaw as part of Indonesian Independence Day Celebration in 2019, just before Covid hit a few months after. At that I was invited by Indonesian Ambassador for Poland H.E. Mme. Siti Nugraha Maulidiah to show my design at a fashion show called 'Indonesian Fashion: Batik and Beyond', to which Miss Koter was amongst the audience. She and I had a talk right after the show, and it was a really gratifying surprise to my part for I found that we were actually in a somehow the same wavelength in terms of our dreams – if not ambition – to push ethnic fashion and/or ethnic inspired fashion to a broader and wider audience. Also from that conversation I learned that Miss Koter is the director of Etnomoda, a fashion festival which focuses on ethnic fashion and/or ethnic inspired fashion with designers from European Union Countries, as well as Middle Asia and Pacific region countries.

The ambition to bring forward ethnic fashion – especially to me, tradition-inspired motives in fabric – is definitely commendable, and the effort to popularize and present the fashion festival to international levels is without a doubt worth the highest praise. It is never easy to do something new, something that has not been done, or that has never been done successfully, however Miss Koter and Etnomoda has succeeded in



managing the festival as a continuous and simultaneous activity, which I believe will become a powerhouse to reckon with given it receives the right amount of attention from global fashion world. And yes, they have the right spirit to do just that. Miss Koter and Etnomoda has been involving me in being the judge for ethnic motives in fashion category, which I absolutely appreciate, I can honestly see the focus and the determination they have to propel ethnic and tradition inspired fashion to international fashion world. As I said, it is never an easy task to do so, but someone has to start somewhere. Miss Koter has started it and will continue doing it.

During my time as a member of the judge panel I witnessed many talented designers participate. Designers who – with the right push, the right help, the right channels – undoubtedly will be able to compete in the bigger pond, i.e international fashion industry, with other talented designers. It remains one big question for every ethnic and/or tradition inspired fashion designers, that is how to marry that ethnic and/or tradition inspired idea with the so-called global taste which has been dictated by what is now considered the Mecca of the fashion world. Why is this question? Because I believe that to be able to 'speak' in international fashion industry, like it or not, we have to satisfy the already established market, which means playing their game while retaining our own values.

And I think Miss Natalia Koter as the director of Etnomoda is the right person to help do just that.

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