

*of increasing the credibility of the content being shared as it comes from a trusted source.”*<sup>69</sup>

It is not easy, however, to find the most appropriate and the most effective method of communication with the recipient for your brand, but the universal rule is to strive to create an attractive message that stands out from the crowd of information coming from the competition. The communication message should first of all fulfil the basic rules: be credible, reliable and up-to-date. The most important thing is to decide what you want to convey to the recipient – whether you want to talk about brand identifiers, personality and values, or collections.<sup>70</sup>

Social media allow designers and business owners to conduct in-depth, accurate research and analysis, and obtain information about the structure and needs of the target audience. They also provide knowledge about customer opinions and attitudes towards the brand. Dynamic participation in social media contributes to two-way communication directly with the target group, which by appropriate action can be encouraged to engage in active co-creation of the brand, which may then result in greater attachment to the product and the company itself.<sup>71</sup> This engaging strategy is used by most large companies and businesses in every industry, but in Poland, it is still not a popular business model in fashion.

Communication according to the rules of social media marketing is one of the most demanding activities, because it is based on constant, continuous, and consistent

69 [https://pl.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social\\_media\\_marketing](https://pl.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_media_marketing), accessed on 01.02.2021

70 J. Kall, A. Perchla-Włosik, A. Raciniewska, K. Sempruch-Krzemińska, *Marka modowa. Jak zrozumieć konsumenta mody i stworzyć markę szytą na miarę?*, Polskie Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne, Warsaw 2018, pp. 44-89.

71 A. Całka, B. Mróz-Gorgoń, *Rola mediów społecznościowych w procesie komunikacji marketingowej - przykład marek modowych*, in *Marketing i Rynek* 11/2014.

contact with the recipients, reach-out and observation, but also holding an on-going dialogue with them. It should be remembered that there should be no turning back from this. According to Kinga Stopczyńska, the main advantage of social media marketing is that it is part of permission marketing activities, which means that it does not force the recipients to focus on the message, but only gives them a chance to do so, while the users decide themselves whether they want to interact with or ignore the message, as well as the fact that the message is delivered on a one-to-one basis: the recipient is not distracted by other messages coming from the competition. From the brand's point of view, a great advantage lies in the fact that the statistics and measurements regarding the on-going market activities are available almost immediately.<sup>72</sup>

In social media, communication can take place not only between the brand and the user but also between the members of the community which a given brand profile unites, who can exchange comments, opinions and remarks, often resulting in group discussions. Social media guarantee fast and dynamic information flow, therefore an effective brand communication model should be far from a traditional, purely sales oriented approach to the customer, based on flooding the recipient with pushy commercial information. In social media, it is much better to feel out the consumers and try to provide them with the information and products they are looking for in customized form. Especially because we, as designers and owners of company social

media profiles, have access to specific statistics and data about our followers who form a clearly defined target group. We can accurately track specific user behaviour - such as profile visits, posts comments, clicks, time of interest in advertising, commenting frequency, opinions. Appropriate technological solutions in specific social

72 K. Stopczyńska, *Social media marketing – kreowanie wizerunku firmy w przestrzeni wirtualnej*, in: *Prace i materiały Wydziału Zarządzania Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego 2012*, vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 515-523.

media services enable us to evaluate the effectiveness of our actions and adjust them to the community we build and gather on our websites. Appropriate interaction with members of this community tightens the bond between the brand and its recipient, and thus creates feeling of sympathy and attachment, just like in the real, non-virtual world.

The role of fashion brand communication in social media marketing is to combine the product, its ideology and design identity into a coherent, attractive and understandable whole for the recipient, thus creating an image that makes the brand real. The more simple the message is and the more it is adapted to the recipient group, the greater the chances of its correct reception and effectiveness. It should be remembered that the recipients of the message are not only the final customers, but also intermediaries, competitors and the general public, practically every user who enters the brand's profile.<sup>73</sup>

The most common classification of social media is based on their basic functions. Some of the social media, especially the most popular ones such as Facebook or Instagram, are not clearly and permanently assigned to particular categories, because their character can be hybrid. Often the functions are intertwined. While a few years ago Facebook was seen mainly as a site designed for contact with friends, used in leisure time, nowadays for many companies it is the primary business and marketing channel, and for many non-business people, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, it has become a platform for typically professional contacts.

The basic division of social media by function is presented in many publications as follows:

73 A. Całka, B. Mróz-Gorgoń, *Rola mediów społecznościowych w procesie komunikacji marketingowej - przykład marek modowych*, in: *Marketing i Rynek* 11/2014, p.125.

1. Ones which allow unrestricted exchange of opinions and views as a basic element of social media. Examples: all kinds of social media platforms – Facebook, LinkedIn, blogs, forums
2. Sharing platforms – platforms that allow content sharing of photos and videos, usually used as external galleries. These allow for quick dissemination of files on external sites. Examples: YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat, TikTok, blogs, Facebook.
3. Ones used for building and maintaining relationships – based on connecting users and creating relationships between them, content is secondary. Examples: Facebook, Nasza Klasa.
4. Ones focused on the here-and-now and real-time communication and discussion. Examples: messengers, chat rooms such as Messenger, Skype, Webex, Microsoft Teams
5. Ones which allow for ongoing commentary, reporting and interpretation of current events, in the form of short high-frequency text posts. Examples: microblogs (Twitter is by far the most popular), alert services, livestreams, livecasts
6. Ones based on co-creation or collaboration – usually of a pre-planned, defined objective. They are most often created for a specific period of time and are operated as closed groups. Examples: GoogleDocs.<sup>74</sup>

The beginnings of social media popularity in Poland date back to 2004, when the *Web 2.0* era started and network users became co-creators rather than just passive recipients. That year saw the appearance of Grono ([grono.net](http://grono.net)), the first social media site. In 2005, the international YouTube was created, followed in 2006 by Twitter and Nasza Klasa ([nk.pl](http://nk.pl)) which for several years dominated the Polish Internet.

74 A. Całka. B. Mróz-Gorgoń. *Rola mediów społecznościowych w procesie komunikacji marketingowej - przykład marek modowych*, in: *Marketing i Rynek* 11/2014, p.133.

In 2010, Facebook entered our country and slowly began to put Nasza Klasa in the shade. In that same year there also appeared Instagram, which was bought by Facebook in 2012 for billions of dollars. In 2011, Snapchat was created, reaching its top popularity level in Poland in 2016 and setting the tone for other social media, such as Facebook and Instagram. In 2019, TikTok entered the Polish market, hitting the spot mainly with teenage tastes. The year 2020 with its COVID-19 pandemic saw a growing popularity of all social media which became overnight the only option for private and professional contacts. We are now teleconferencing and instant messaging on an almost daily basis, youngsters have online classes, including via social media. Forecasts suggest that attachment to social media and virtual interaction will undoubtedly remain with us and grow from strength to strength even after the pandemic is over. Social media were created to facilitate contacts between friends and have since developed over time into a reach-out platform for celebrities, designers, influencers, institutions or organisations. The year 2020 has shown that social media is a necessity. During the lockdown, when everything was closed and the world came to a standstill, people realized that social media is precisely what can save and sustain ailing businesses.

Social media platforms are growing day by day, but the main and most important channels used by the largest number of Internet users in Poland (data from July 2020) include<sup>75</sup>:

1. YouTube (92%)
2. Facebook (89 percent) and Facebook Messenger (72 percent).
3. Instagram (55%)
4. Twitter (35%)

75 <https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.money.pl/gospodarka/media-spoiecznosciove-ktore->

## FACEBOOK

Facebook is the undisputed number one social media site in the world, with over 2.8 billion active users (as of the end of 2020). It is not only a site, but an entire ecosystem, which also includes Instagram, Messenger and WhatsApp bought by Facebook. Together, these services have more than 3.3 billion users worldwide monthly. More than 1.5 billion use Facebook daily.<sup>76</sup>

Facebook has become so much a part of our lives that we look suspicion on a young person who has no FB account. We start wondering if they have something to hide or whether there is perhaps something wrong with them. It's the same with major companies and fashion brands – their absence in social media raises doubts about the credibility of their actions. Due to COVID-19, we followed fashion brand exhibitions mainly on social media which were the only venue for such events. That is why the information, which reached the world at the beginning of January 2021, about the Bottega Veneta creative director Daniel Lee's decision to completely withdraw the brand from social media, seemed so shocking. While most designers presented their spring-summer 2021 collections on Instagram, YouTube and Facebook, Lee organized an intimate, local show in London. Catwalk photos did not appear on the brand's website until two months later. After Bottega Veneta removed itself from social media, journalists speculated about the backstory of this decision, writing that the brand probably wants to emphasize its elitism and inaccessibility to the general public, or temporarily arouse interest and later return to the network. This strategy seems plausible, especially with revelations from American Vogue that Kering, the owner of Bottega Veneta, is looking for a new social media manager (ad posted in November

76 <https://www.statista.com/statistics/264810/number-of-monthly-active-facebook-users-worldwide/>, accessed on 10.02.2021

2020).<sup>77</sup> This only underscores that a social media presence for designers is a must these days, even if they take a break from publishing content for a while.

Stressing the importance of social media and Facebook in particular, Anna Nacher says that it is “*not just a medium, it is the interface of reality*”<sup>78</sup> (interface being a medium for connection two or more different devices that could otherwise not work together).<sup>79</sup> In this context, they do not only present users and their views, but form part of them.

The social media leader Facebook was founded in 2004 by Harvard student Mark Zuckerberg with the student community in mind. Registered users could find and keep in touch with school friends, while also sharing news and photos. Its popularity soon started gaining momentum, as it entered other American universities and then European ones. Two years later, the service started offering a feature known as *News Feed* (the cornerstone of Facebook as we know it today), listing in chronological order posts uploaded by the user’s friends to let others know what they are doing at any given time. This sparked a wave of criticism pointed at the platform’s founder, with accusations being thrown around that the tool was harmful and pointless. These words were said in the context of cyberstalking. Three days later, Zuckerberg responded to the criticism with an open letter, apologizing to the users for his idea. However, the criticism did not affect the growing popularity of Facebook, as its market value climbed to \$15 billion in 2007 following a buyout of 1.6% of its shares by Microsoft. Only 54

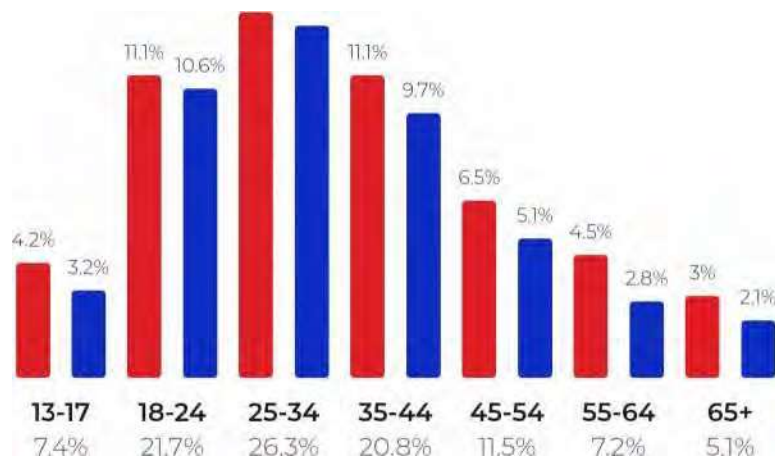
77 <https://www.vogue.pl/a/bottega-veneta-znika-z-mediow-spolecznościowych> accessed on 10.02.2021

78 A. Nacher, *Web 2.0: między wikinomią a kontrkulturą – przypadek Facebooka*, in: *Annales Universitatis Paedagogicae Cracoviensis Studia de Cultura I* (2010), Folia 88. Internet i okolice.

79 [https://plm.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interfejs\\_\(device%20device\)](https://plm.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interfejs_(device%20device)). accessed on 10.02.2021

54 months after its creation, the site had a whopping 100 million active users.<sup>80</sup>

In Poland, Facebook is used monthly by over 21 million users, or 57.2% of the total population. The largest group includes people ranging in age from 25 to 34 years (data from January 2021).<sup>81</sup>



**ILLUSTRATION 28**  
**NapoleonCat.**

Source: NapoleonCat.com

80 <https://pl.mi.wikipedia.org/wiki/Facebook> accessed on 10.02.2021.

81 <https://napoleoncat.com/stats/facebook-users-in-poland/2021/01>. accessed on 10.02.2021



The average Pole spends 2 hours a day on average using social networking sites and applications. Over 6 hours in total are spent on Internet activities. In comparison, TV viewing takes only 3. The Hootsuite report shows that women are much more likely to click on Facebook ads. On average, women click on Facebook ads 23 times per month, compared to 15 clicks for men.<sup>82</sup>

Facebook is the largest medium in the world, although it does not create any content by itself – everything is generated by the users, and the service provides them with the necessary infrastructure. It was originally created to make and keep friends, and it still serves this purpose today, while also allowing us to keep track of the news and follow people we never met but find inspiring and interesting as well as observe companies and brands we want to be part of. This is possible with a **personal profile** which every registered user has. Here, daily life events can be shared with friends to build an image of self with the profile photo, background photos, descriptions, posts, videos and “likes” for other profiles. At the other end, there is the **fanpage**, designed for companies, public figures, products or well-known brands. As the name suggests, it is a page for fans.

Personal profiles and fanpages are used to share posts that create a content stream, called a **News Feed**. This is the space that displays your friends’ activities, as well as posts from pages you’ve liked – the main dashboard that appears as soon as you log into your Facebook profile. The tools of the service allow for interactions relating to the content posted in the stream – we can add the so-called reaction – by pressing a chosen emoticon: “Like!”, “Love”, “Care”, “Ha Ha”, “Wow”, “Sad” and “Angry”.



*ILLUSTRATION 29*

<sup>82</sup> <https://socialpress.pl/2020/02/social-media-w-polsce-i-na-swiecie-najnowsze-dane>. accessed on 10.02.2021.

Another option is to comment on the post and exchange comments with other users. Facebook also allows you to share content on your profile. (using the “share” button).

The service also has its own messenger for users to exchange messages (both private and business) – **FB Messenger**. The service enables free voice calls (including group calls) and video calls. The most popular Facebook marketing tools for business profiles include<sup>83</sup>:

- **Facebook Video** - an alternative to YouTube channels. Facebook has provided the functionality for users to add their own videos to advertise a product, show behind-the-scenes work or create an expert programme.

- **Facebook Mentions** - a live video broadcasting feature where a group of viewers watch a video in real time, asking questions and making comments in real time.

- **Facebook Notes** – a Facebook tool for blogging

- **Facebook Instant Stories** – this feature redirects to external websites without having to leave Facebook. The idea is that users are more likely to click on published links, because after reading the content, they do not have to restart the Facebook application - everything happens internally.

- **Facebook Messenger** – now used mainly for direct communication through person-to-person dialogue

83 <https://www.e-kjstudio.pl/5-niezbednych-narzedzi-marketingowych-facebook> accessed on 10.02.2021

Facebook has been on the market for over 15 years and its business model is constantly changing. Setting up a profile or fanpage, content publishing and using the service have always been free. A brand or a fanpage owner trying to promote their products or works want to reach the largest possible audience. It would be ideal if all our fans could see all the posts that we add. On Facebook this is impossible, the reach will never stretch to its maximum extent. This is due to the algorithms of the service, which are an important part of it. They adjust the content to our behaviour and preferences, filtering out excessive information and showing us only what we might actually be interested in. In theory, they protect us from the overload of posts, but have been heavily criticized, especially in recent years, as they make it very difficult, or sometimes even impossible, to reach the user with any kind of message without paying a fee for displaying it. For a long time the so-called 'sponsored posts' or other forms of advertising were paid on Facebook but only where new non-friend users were approached. Recently, the platform has limited the reach of and access to the fanpage group of followers, meaning that payments must be made in practice. Thanks to the algorithms, the organic reach (i.e. basic, free) is often about 2-3% - only so many people interested in a given fanpage are actually reached by it. This is a big problem especially for smaller creators, such as young fashion designers, who want to present their work. Even if they have gathered a strong following, they cannot reach it without financial resources (which they usually don't have), not to mention new users.

It is impossible to give specific rates for advertising on Facebook, as each campaign depends on many factors. However, considering different objectives, it is possible to estimate certain price ranges for particular activities in Poland<sup>84</sup>:

84 <https://www.teamsolution.pl/blog/ile-kosztuje-reklama-na-facebooku> accessed on 10.02.2021.

**reach** – prices usually ranging from PLN 5 to 20 per 1000 views

- **website redirection** - on average about PLN 0.50-1.00 per click; some industries pay less e.g. several groszy, while others are charged even several PLN per click

- **product purchase** - a transaction priced anywhere from PLN 15 to 50

- **liking the page** - average rates from PLN 0.20 to 1.50 per like

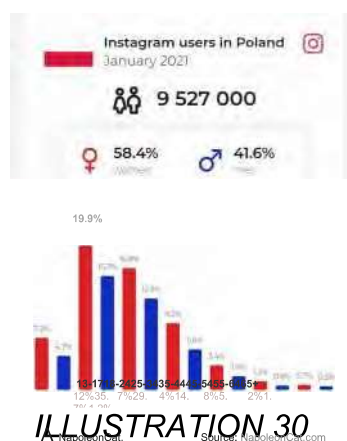
- **post-related activity** - sometimes a few groszy for activity related to popular posts

Although the rates seem not very high at first glance, but costs pile up especially because practically every post needs “help” to reach a satisfying percentage of recipients. The situation is only getting worse each year, and organic reach is dropping steadily. It is obvious that Facebook is not running a charity business and needs to make money, like any other medium. However, I think that with the current profile of this platform, it is not the best social media tool for promoting young designers and is not worthy of investing all one’s resources. Without a doubt, however, the very presence on Facebook, having a Facebook page, posting about your achievements and projects, and reaching out to as many recipients as the algorithm and the organic reach will allow, is a must. This allows artistically minded people to find and explore art. It also allows us to make ourselves seen by recipients through talking and exchanging ideas. If we want to know their needs and try to adjust our design work to them - it is still an extremely useful and important tool.

## INSTAGRAM

Instagram is a mobile application created in 2010 by Kevin Systrom and Mark Krieger for hosting photos and short videos, allowing users to edit pictures and clips with the option of using digital filters, and share them after posting on other social media platforms. The photos were characterized by their square shape, similar to that used in Kodak Instamatic, Polaroid and Instax instant photography cameras. The application's initial logo itself depicting an old-style camera is also throwback to that theme. In 2015, the option was added to upload photos and videos in other formats. In 2012, Instagram was bought out by Facebook for \$1 billion.<sup>85</sup>

Around the world, Instagram is used by more than a billion people, and in Poland more than 9.5 million users, which accounts for 25% of the country's population (data from January 2021). Women predominate at 58%. As regards age statistics, the most sizable group has people between 18 and 24 years old (3.4 million). The application is therefore definitely for the young.<sup>86</sup>



Instagram is a visual content platform where user profiles are based on a library of photos and videos displayed in thumbnail form. Personal and business profiles related to brands and companies do not differ in appearance, both have identical format.

85 <https://pl.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Instagram>, accessed on 10.02.2021

86 <https://napoleoncat.com/stats/instagram-users-in-poland/2021/01>, accessed on 12.02.2021

However, a professional profile, unlike a personal one, offers access to detailed statistics (containing exact data on the target audience and figures on the number of people reached by the posts and stories). On top of all this come **Instagram Stories**, are available for viewing for 24 hours following publication and disappear after that time is over. With this users can present bite-sized entries as a single “story” takes seconds to watch. In order to create them, Instagram provides a number of useful viewer survey, questionnaire, quiz and countdown tools, while also offering the possibility of making a charity donation. There is also a live broadcast option (which is no longer limited in time unlike the single story), during which the “followers” (people watching the profile) (profile followers) can add comments, questions and even connect with the live broadcast’s host via video conference. This form of broadcasting was used by most fashion houses when presenting their collections during the coronavirus pandemic.

Another new feature is **IGTV**, which is similar to TV and allows users to add longer videos that, unlike InstaStory, do not disappear after 24 hours. This means that fashion show footage, such as behind-the-scenes (backstage) material, advertising spots and campaigns can be published. This is used by Dior, Gucci and other large fashion houses, which very quickly began to publish previews of their premiering collections. Additionally, on IGTV you can post videos showing the different stages of product creation – from the drawing board stage to the finishing touches. Such videos are published by Dior to provide an manageable dose of knowledge about how the design process comes about.<sup>87</sup> This is a great and entertaining way to interact with the audience, while also being a completely free-of-charge and effective communication and marketing tool.

87 <https://gomobi.pl/blogi/byc-trendy-komunikowaniu-marki-modowej-poznaj-przydatne-funkcje-instagram/>, accessed on 12.02.2021

**Hashtags** are an inseparable part of Instagram (and now also of other social media); they are words or phrases preceded by the characteristic # symbol (# is a hash and tag is a label). Hashtags are used to organize content, or group it into appropriate channels. Hashtags are like catchwords that, when clicked on, allow you to reach the same themed photos of other users and thus reach your own content. Currently, the most popular hashtag on Instagram is #love, featuring more than 2 billion posts. Without hashtags, communication on Instagram is far less effective.<sup>88</sup>

Instagram provides the ability to buy and publish ads, through the “Ad Manager” tool. These can then be streamed to users, or in other words mixed with the posts of the accounts that the person is following, or show up in the Story section, including InstaStory, of the profiles that you are following. The ad rates are higher than on Facebook, but the sponsored material is definitely shown in a less intrusive and more natural form. However, speaking from experience, I think buying ads is not necessary, especially for beginner fashion designers and clothing brands, because Instagram allows a much easier reach-out both to the audience and new users, making it one of the most useful marketing tools for young creators. You only need to know the platform’s basic functionalities, run a well-organized and systematic profile, with eye-pleasing and appropriately hash-tagged visual content and maintain a steady relationship with your audience. Instagram allows you to get closer to your followers – both through private messages, as well as numerous InstaStory tools to facilitate communication. Also, you can easily “leave your mark” and thus be noticed by new entrants. The brand can be utilized to attract user attention by allowing them to “like” (i.e. click on the thumbs-up button) or comment on their posts – every form of attention is an opportunity for brand development.

88 <https://brand24.pl/blog/hashtag-co-to-znaczy-i-jak-z-nie-go-korzystac/>. accessed on 12.02.2021.

## YOUTUBE

YouTube is a social media platform founded in February 2005, where people can upload, rate and comment on videos for free. The CEO since 2014 is Susan Wojcicki.<sup>89</sup>

More than 2 billion people use the service every month. Every day, Youtube plays 1 billion hours of video materials, and every minute 500 hours of new videos are uploaded. 70% of views are on mobile devices, while statistically the time of one session using the platform is about 40 minutes.<sup>90</sup> In Poland, it is the most popular social media platform. User age is very varied, similar to Facebook – the largest groups are 26-34 and 35-44 year-olds, but there is also a large group of 55+ users. Compared to other platforms, YouTube is very popular among the youngest – teenagers and children under 10 years old. This is confirmed by the fact that the most popular video on YouTube is “Baby Shark Dance” targeting toddlers. The video has 7,899,764,313 views (data from 10 February 2021).<sup>91</sup>

A characteristic fact about YouTube is that unregistered users can freely watch videos, while registered users can upload an unlimited number of videos on their profiles, or ‘channels’. Registered users can also subscribe their favourite channels, thanks to which subsequent films of the same creator will be displayed as proposed viewing. In addition to watching, viewers can also react to the content compared to Facebook, the variety of reaction options is smaller but more clear-cut. If you like the video, you click

89 <https://pl.mi.wikipedia.org/wiki/YouTube>. accessed on 12.02.2021

90 <https://www.whysosocial.pl/uzytkownicy-social-media-w-polsce-i-na-swiecie/>. accessed on 12.02.2021

91 <https://www.whysosocial.pl/uzytkownicy-social-media-w-polsce-i-na-swiecie/>. accessed on 12.02.2021



the thumbs up icon (positive feedback), if not – the thumbs down icon (negative feedback). Users can also comment on the video and share it via social media. The more interest a particular video generates, the wider its reach is.

In terms of content posted by brands and companies, the most popular thematic video segments are:<sup>92</sup>

- **entertainment** - advertising spots resembling music videos, vlogs, live reports
- **information and knowledge** - coverage of events, brand history, news, PR
- **education** - i.e. instructional videos, product guides, customer service, reviews

In the case of fashion designers and brands, the most frequently published content includes videos from shows, clips presenting new collections, backstage footage from photo shoots, as well as reviews or interviews.

## TWITTER

Twitter is a microblogging service started in 2006 where users share their short thoughts – the character limit for a post is 280 characters (until 2017 it was only 140 characters) (in comparison, the maximum length of a text message is about 160 characters).

Twitter is currently used by 330 million users worldwide, 139 million of them daily. Only 34% of Twitter users are women, and 63% are in the 35-65 age bracket. More than half a billion tweets are published daily, and an average Twitter session lasts 3.39 minutes.<sup>93</sup>

92 M. Żukowski, *Twoja firma w social media. Podręcznik marketingu internetowego dla małych i średnich przedsiębiorstw*, Wydawnictwo Helion, Łódź 2016, p. 158.

In Poland, Twitter is not very popular, especially in the artistic circles. Personally, I don't know anyone who uses this platform, but having in mind the percentage of Polish users, a thorough study cannot ignore this medium. Besides, I believe that it is a good idea to know all the possibilities, as we never know what the future popularity of a given service will be. There is a widespread belief that Twitter is actively used mainly by politicians and journalists, with a predominance of men (65%). Access to tweets (posts) is unlimited, because even unregistered people can read them. It is estimated that in Poland Twitter has about 800 thousand active users, although there is no access to official statistics - experts suspect that this information is intentionally withheld in order to avoid comparisons to other social media and negative evaluations that could affect the service's shares. According to Twitter, the interests of Polish users differ from those of Facebook users (who most often go for lifestyle, fashion and entertainment). The creators of the tool are mainly interested in technology, politics, the Internet, books and films. There is not much room for fashion.

Designers abroad definitely use Twitter more actively as its popularity is much higher in other countries. By running brand profiles, they present current collections, cover current events and share other graphic materials. A few years ago, it even became popular for fashion brands to hold model auditions for fashion shows. In April 2014, Marc Jacobs decided to announce a best-face (or actually faces) competition to select a face to represent the campaign's winning collection. Candidates had to post their photos on Instagram and Twitter and tag them with the hashtag #CastMeMarc. More than 70 thousand people applied. From these, nine finalists were chosen and flown to New York for a photo session with photographer David Sims and stylist Katie Grand.<sup>93,94</sup>

93 <https://www.whysosocial.pl/uzytkownicy-social-media-w-polsce-i-na-swiecie/>, accessed on 14.02.2021

Other social media platforms that deserve attention are Pinterest and Tumblr. While their popularity in Poland is far from that of media giants such as YouTube, Facebook and Instagram, they still hold their own in certain industries, especially fashion.

## PINTEREST

**Pinterest** is an American social media platform founded in 2010 by Ben Silbermann, Paul Sciarra and Evan Sharp, whose central idea is to share visual materials (images, GIFs and videos). The platform operates mainly as a visual, interactive notice board (“pin” + “interest”) accumulating content from creators which the user finds valuable, mainly for inspiration or motivation. Content adding is possible, but most Pinterest users will just treat as a mood board, a way to store found and created content. The main profile functions as in other social media – we can share it with our friends as public, but there is also an option to create hidden boards, visible only to the creator and specific invited people.<sup>94 95</sup>

Worldwide, Pinterest is used by about 459 million people, mostly in the United States, where the application was ranked a high third among social media platforms in terms of popularity (higher than YouTube). In Poland, the medium has been available since 2013 and has about 3.7 million active users.<sup>96</sup>

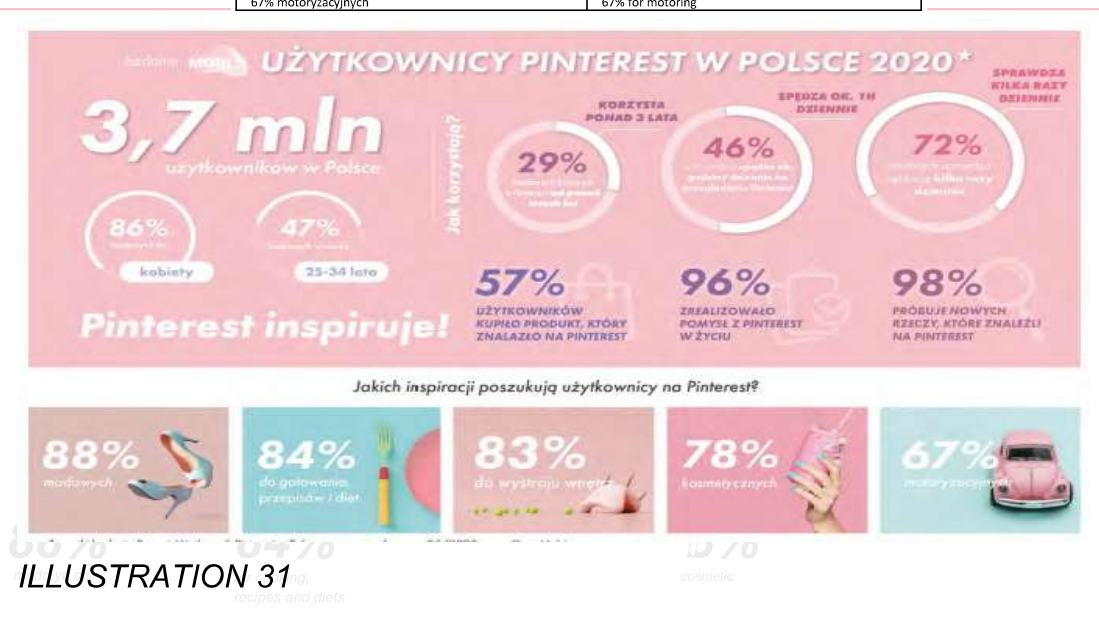
94 <https://www.elle.pl/artykul/kampania-marc-by-marc-jacobs-jesien-zima-2014-2015>, accessed on 14.02.2021

95 <https://plm.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pinterest>, accessed on 14.02.2021

96 <https://www.statista.com/statistics/463353/pinterest-global-mau/>, accessed on 14.02.2021

According to a survey conducted by Open Mobi agency, the largest group of users in Poland are people aged 25-34 years (47%), and the vast majority are women (86%).<sup>97</sup> In the fashion industry, Pinterest is one of the most popular apps used to find inspiration not only for consumers, but also for designers. According to statistics, users most often search for issues related to fashion (88%).<sup>98</sup>

Please note that this table may not include some of the captions in the picture below due to low resolution of the image	
UŻYTKOWNICY PINTEREST W POLSCE 2020 – badanie MOBI	PINTEREST USERS IN POLAND – survey by MOBI
3,7 milionów użytkowników w Polsce	3.7 million users in Poland
86% badanych to kobiety	86% of those surveyed were women
47% badanych w wieku 25-34 lata	47% of those surveyed are aged 25-34
PINTEREST INSPIRUJE	PINTEREST INSPIRES
57% użytkowników kupiło produktu, który znalazło na Pinterest	57% of users bought a product they'd found on Pinterest
96% zrealizowało pomysł z Pinterest w życiu	96% made a Pinterest idea a reality
98% próbuje nowych rzeczy, które znaleźli na Pinterest	98% are trying new things that they found on Pinterest
Jakich inspiracji poszukują użytkownicy na Pinterest?	What kind of inspiration do users look for on Pinterest?
88% modyowych	86% for fashion
84% do gotowania i przepisów i diet	84% for cooking, recipes and dieting
83% do wystroju wnętrz	83% for interior design
78% kosmetycznych	78% for beauty treatments
67% motoryzacyjnych	67% for motoring



\* results of a Pinterest User Report, conducted on 05/2020 by OpenMobi.

Pinterest has some of the best algorithms, making delving into the site's resources incredibly immersive – once you click on one image, the platforms automatically

97 <https://www.google.com/amp/s/mobirank.pl/2020/09/17/uzytownicy-pinteresta-w-polsce-raport-2020/amp/>, accessed 14.02.2021

98 <https://www.google.com/amp/s/mobirank.pl/2020/09/17/uzytownicy-pinteresta-w-polsce-raport-2020/amp/>, accessed 14.02.2021

searches for similar, thematically related posts, similar in style and look. In this way, the user is given an endless supply of suggestions for inspiration. As a fashion designer, you can use Pinterest not only to find inspiration, but also by actively adding images of your work, hoping that they will appeal to other users who will pin (share) them to their board, thereby expanding the reach of the platform. However, it is important to properly describe each photo with the name of our brand or surname, because on Pinterest 97% of posts are unbranded – that is, they are out of context and do not specify the source of the photo.<sup>99</sup>

## TUMBLR

Tumblr is a website founded by David Karp on 19 February 2007. It combines features of blogs and social media platforms. Its central idea is adding posts (usually visual – photos, videos and GIFs, often with short descriptions or quotes), sharing them with followers inside and outside the service on other connected platforms (e.g. Facebook and Instagram). Posts are displayed in a specific layout on the main profile (the so-called template) in the form of a micro-blog (in which the order of appearance of the content can be set and modified by the user) or a newsfeed, similar to Facebook. Tumblr is known as a short-form publishing site, with more than 425 million blogs, but the service does not provide data on the number of blogs still active. Users can subscribe to blogs on the platform, “like” individual posts by other creators, and share them on their wall. It is re-blogging that forms the core of Tumblr, allowing published content to spread wide.<sup>100</sup>

99 <https://www.google.com/amp/s/mobirank.pl/2020/09/17/uzytownicy-pinteresta-w-polsce-raport->

100 <https://www.intemetmatters.org/pl/hub/guidance/what-is-tumblr/>. accessed on 14.02.2021.

Amid the coronavirus pandemic, social media and instant messaging have become the primary channel of contact, including in the professional sphere. Realizing this, clothing designers around the world were forced to find ways to adapt to the “new reality” of lockdown, restrictions on shows and photo shoots. As a result, they just reached out to social media.

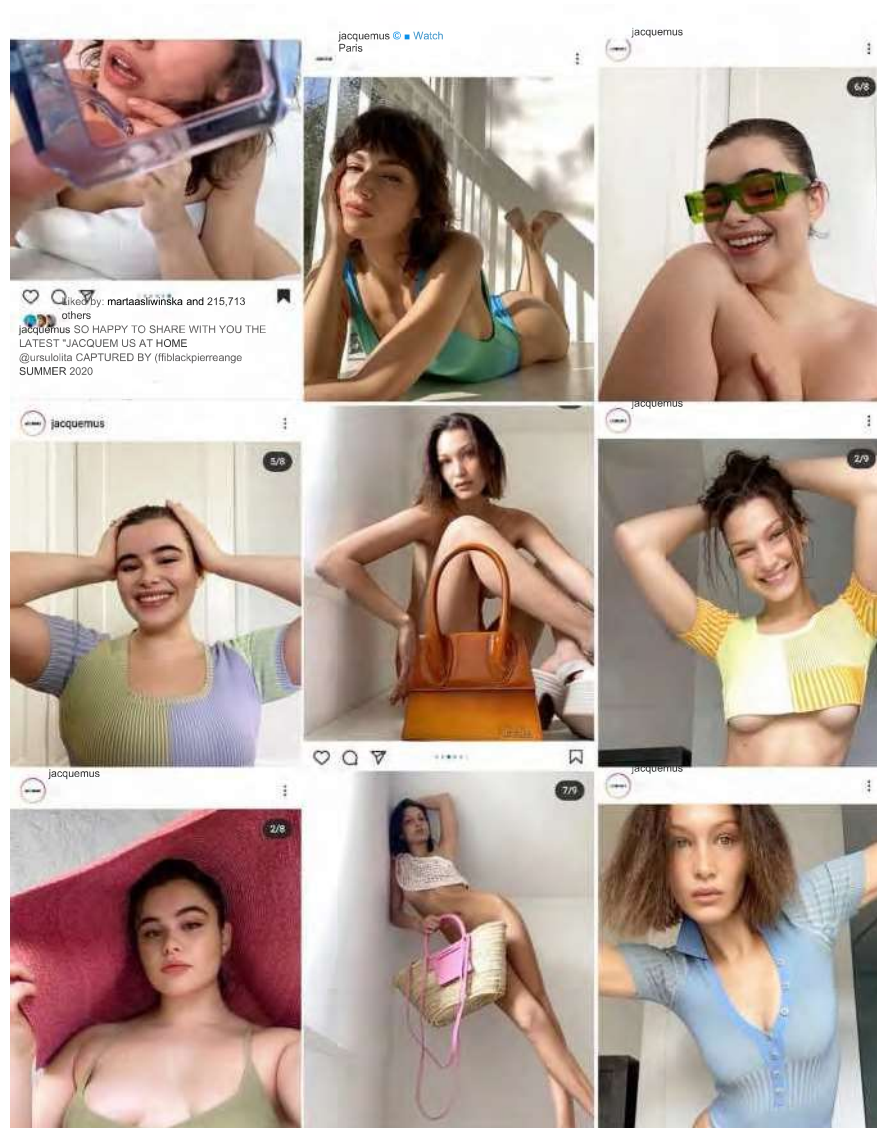
In April 2020, the first ever remote-only campaign was published on Instagram - via mobile devices (iPhone smartphones) and FaceTime social messaging (using videoconferencing).<sup>101</sup> French designer Simon Porte Jacquemus invited top model Bella Hadid, actress Orsula Corberó and plus-size model and actress Barbie Ferreira to pose in front of their smartphones for the collection’s designs. The photos (or actually screenshots) were taken by photographer Pierro-Ange Carlotti, who had joined in via Face Time for a video chat with the models. “The session” took place in their respective homes, obviously without a professional crew, such as hair and makeup artists. *“A fantastic few hours where we were able to see each other again,”* Hadid summed up the experience. The campaign for spring-summer 2020 is entitled “Jacquemus at home” and can be found on Instagram published under the hashtag #jacquemusathome.<sup>102</sup>

101 FaceTime is an iOS mobile application developed by Apple in 2010 for making voice or video calls over the Internet. This allows communicating with other people without paying for phone calls. It is a messenger whose functionality is similar to Skype or WhatsApp, but it is designed for users of Apple devices and it allows making calls only between two users. Source:

<https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.komputronik.pl/informacje/co-to-jest-facetime-jak-use/amp/>,

accessed on 01.02.2021

102 <https://www.vogue.Pl/a/domowa-kampania-reklamowa-jacquemusa-z-bella-hadid>. accessed on 14.02.2021



**ILLUSTRATION 32**

In the same month (April 2020), the Italian edition of “Vogue” published a photo shoot also made entirely with phones and FaceTime, with Bella Hadid again. The session was produced by Lauren Perez, Brianna Capozzi and Haley Wollens. The model posted excerpts from the shoot on her Instagram, along with behind-the-scenes photos from the making of the materials.

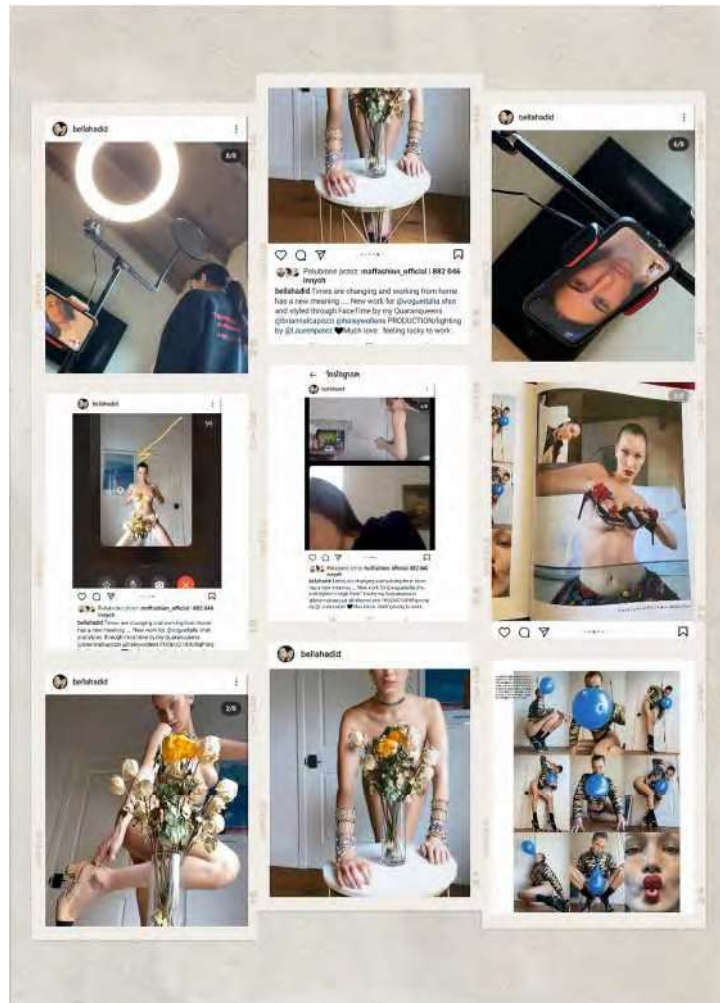


ILLUSTRATION 33

One of the brands that decided to present its new collection during the pandemic, in the form of an online broadcast from the catwalk, was Versace. During Milan Fashion Week for spring/summer 2021, the Italian fashion house organized a show where the audience consisted only of (COVID-negative) Versace employees but the event could be watched by any Internet user via Instagram. *“I wanted to create something groundbreaking, to break the rules. I think that what worked a few months ago makes no sense today. In creative terms, it meant finding a way to bring the DNA of Versace to a new reality, for people who have undergone a profound change”* said Donatella Versace on the day of the show.<sup>103</sup>

103 <https://www.vogue.pl/a/vogueinternational-osiem-postow-z-instagrama-ktore-przejda-do-historii>.



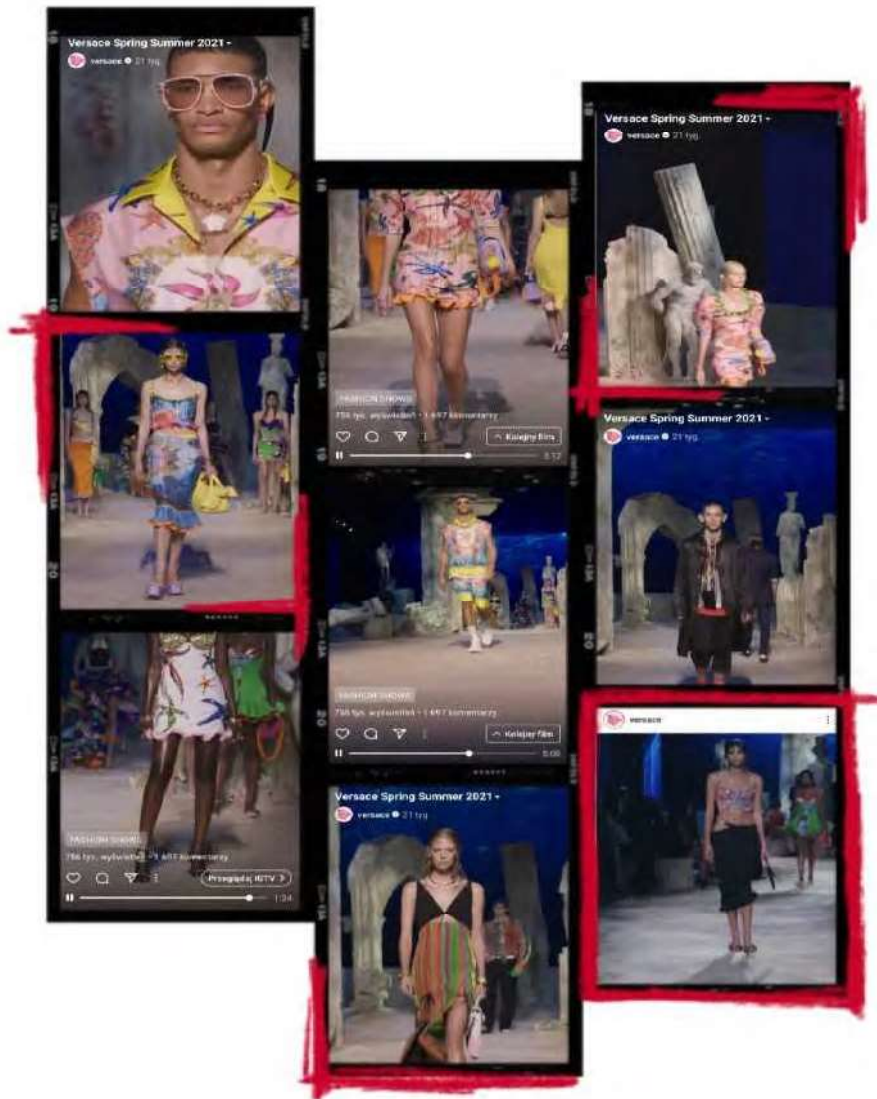


ILLUSTRATION 34

## 9. RESEARCH: POLISH FASHION DESIGNERS IN SOCIAL MEDIA

In Poland, social media has also become an important tool for fashion designers who actively use it to present their work, to gain creative inspiration, knowledge and professional advice. Social media are used less frequently to establish relations with the audience and clients, preventing the full utilization of the communicative potential existing between creators and recipients.

I have decided to do some research among Polish fashion designers to gain a better insight into how they use the social media. The research would have the form of anonymous one-time online questionnaire (taking place between 9 and 17 February 2021). The survey consisted of 9 close-ended answers (some of them with the option

to give a different answer to the ones provided:

Projektanci w mediach społecznościowych	Designers in social media
Czy prowadzisz profil swojej marki na FB?	Do you have an FB profile for your brand?
Wybierz jedną odpowiedź	Select one answer
TAK	YES
NIE	NO
Czy prowadzisz profil swojej marki na Instagramie?	Do you have an Instagram profile for your brand
Czy prowadzisz profil swojej marki na YouTube?	Do you have a YouTube profile for your brand
Czy korzystasz z mediów społecznościowych do zbierania inspiracji do nowych kolekcji?	Do you use social media to get inspiration for new collections?
Które media społecznościowe inspirują cię jako projektanta?	Which social media outlets inspire you as a designer?
Inne	Other
Żadne mnie nie inspirują	None
Która platforma social media jest według Ciebie najwygodniejsza i najlepsza do prezentacji swojej twórczości?	Which social media platform do you think is the most convenient and best for presenting your work?
Czy szukasz porad dotyczących szycia, dostępności tkanin i półproduktów w mediach społecznościowych (np. grupy, fora)?	Do you look for advice on sewing, fabric availability and semi-finished products in social media (e.g. groups, forums)?
Czy często rozmawiasz ze swoimi klientami/ obserwatorami w wiadomościach prywatnych?	Do you often talk to your customers/followers in private?
Bardzo często (codziennie)	Very often (every day)
Często (przynajmniej raz w tygodniu)	Often (at least once a week)
Sporadycznie (raz w miesiącu)	Occasionally (once a month)
Rzadko (raz na kilka miesięcy)	Rarely (once every few months)
Nigdy	Never
Czy często odpowiadasz na komentarze swoich klientów/obserwatorów pod postami?	Do you often respond to your customers'/followers' comments under posts?

## Survey statistics

Fashion designers on social media

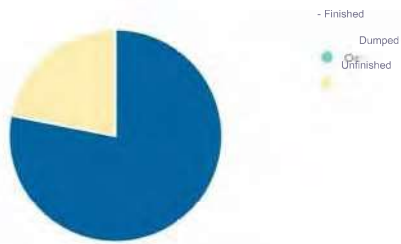
105  
Visits

82  
Finished

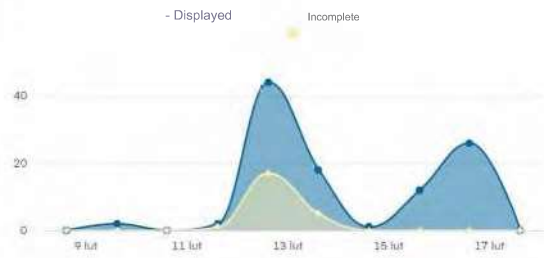
23  
Unfinished

78,1%  
Percentage finished

### Number of visits



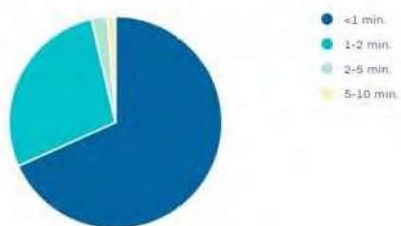
### Visit history



### Sources of visits

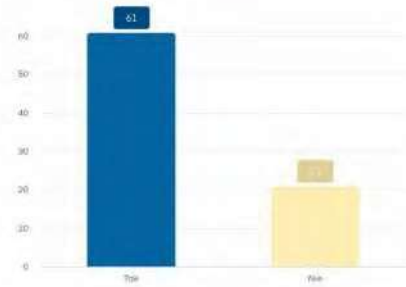


### Time to complete the survey

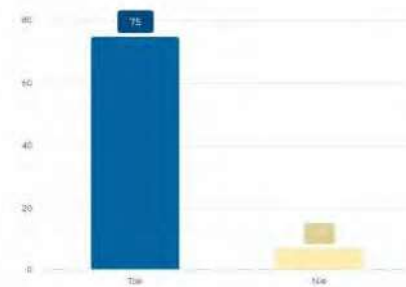


## Survey results:

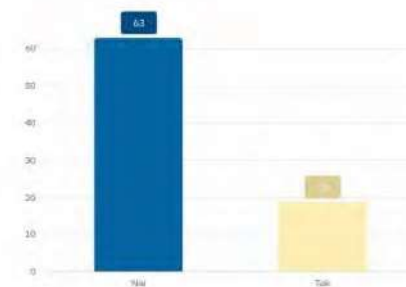
1) Do you have a Facebook profile for your brand?



2. Do you maintain an Instagram profile for your brand?



3. Do you have a YouTube profile for your brand?



The questions were multiple- or single-choice, meaning that sometimes only one answer could be clicked and sometimes more. I posted a direct link to the survey on a Facebook group called “Forum for Fashion Designers in Poland,” which is a specialized forum for Polish fashion designers. The survey had 82 respondents.

The results show that the most popular social medium among Polish designers was Instagram, which 91% respondents used in a professional context. The designers said that it is by far the most convenient and best platform for presenting their work (93%).

4. Do you use social media to get inspiration for new collections?



5. Which social media outlets inspire you as a designer?

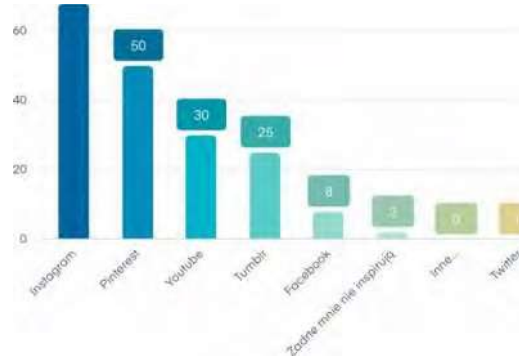
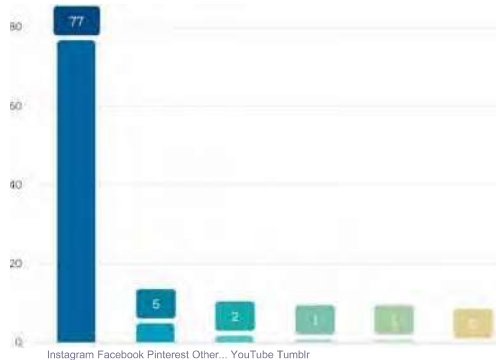


ILLUSTRATION 37

Respondents admitted that they used social media to get inspiration for new collections (93%), and cited Instagram (82%) as the most inspiring, followed by Pinterest (60%), YouTube (36%), Tumblr (30%) and Facebook (9%).

2% of respondents said they also use social media for career advice on specialist groups and forums.

6. Which social media platform do you think is the most convenient and best for presenting your work?



7. Do you look for advice on sewing, fabric availability and semi-finished products in social media (e.g. groups, forums)?

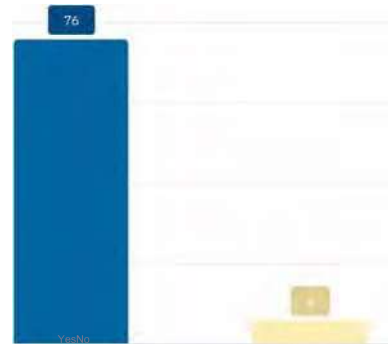
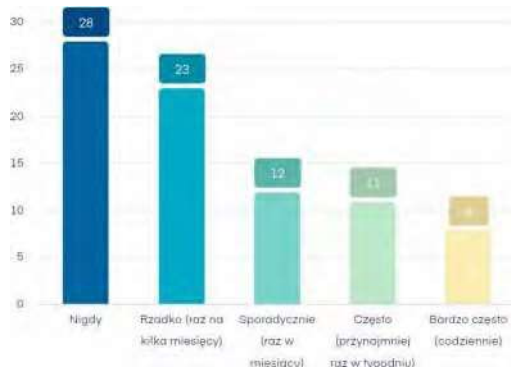


ILLUSTRATION 38

When asked about the frequency of communication with their audience via social media, most designers said they rarely (28%) or never (34%) talk to their clients and followers in private messages. The situation is similar when it comes to their responding to observer comments under their posts – 23% do it rarely (once every few months) and 21% never.

8. Do you often talk to your customers/followers in private?



9. Do you often respond to your customers'/followers' comments under posts?

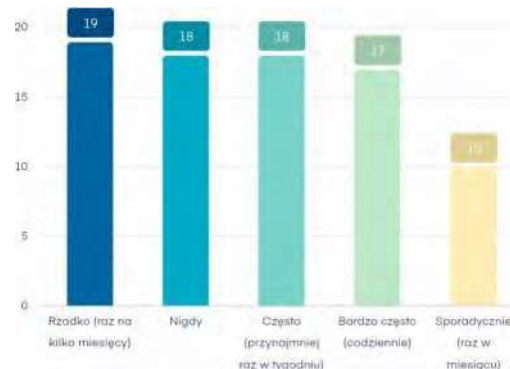


ILLUSTRATION 39

The research findings confirmed the aforementioned need for greater interest from artists, who largely ignore observer and client feedback. Designers are still relying on the standard design model of one-way communication – once the collection is ready, they only publish the product on social media which they see as a portfolio for displaying their work rather than communicating or forming a closer relationship with their clientele. This ignores the social media's enormous potential for consulting and gauging client groups and consequently creating better-tailored designs.

In this respect, the use of social media by designers requires a change in their thinking and creative system. Therefore, the main objective of my work is to test a new alternative model focusing on the viewer, using the possibilities and tools of social media, which can play a much greater role in the process of designing clothes than just a source of inspiration and a platform for presenting creativity.

My research at this stage has shown that Instagram has overwhelmingly overshadowed other social media, becoming the key platform in the fashion community. I also much prefer this particular platform as having the most convenient technological solutions and the most user-friendly interface. That is why I decided to do more research on my group of recipients via Instagram.

## 10. THE PROSUMER ERA

According to Derrick de Kerckhove, a Belgian sociologist and media expert, the basic features of all social media are interactivity, communicativity and hypertextuality, corresponding respectively to the body, intelligence and memory zones. Interactivity enables the recipient to participate directly in events taking place anywhere in the world, communicativity allows for free exchange of information, knowledge and experience, and hypertextuality allows for access and efficient searching, archiving and linking of content. Thus, the dynamic, complex nature of social media allows the free combination of ideas, interaction and dialogue between creators and recipients, and between the recipients themselves. In digital culture, the roles of sender and recipient are not clearly separated, as the recipients often become the senders of the message. Being a creator is no longer reserved for a select few.<sup>104</sup>

In the past, the notion and status of an artist was ascribed to a narrow group of specialized professionals, but now, thanks to the near-unlimited distribution channels, such as the Internet and social media, as well as their associated tools with which creativity can be expressed in an uncomplicated way, the artist's status has changed fundamentally.

Press expert Ignacy Stanisław Fiut points out in his work "Convergence of the Media and Communication" that "*the way in which media activists operate may take various forms, from fundamentalism in creation, to innovative and sometimes even revolutionary attitudes in reception, which in the long run may become ossified, while affecting the process of telecommunication evolution*".<sup>105</sup>

104 K. Sitkowska, Kulturowy wymiar ewolucji mediów w ujęciu przedstawicieli „Szkoly Toronto”, in: Kultura - Media – Teologia 2012 nr 11 pp. 42-54.

According to Fiut, creativity nowadays is not only about creating something new, but also about processing, remixing, editing – in general, about almost any kind of intervention or activity.

However, it is necessary to separate the level of activity in social media as opposed to across the network. Media expert Magdalena Szpunar proposes a division in which the highest level of activity is the creation of and publishing your own work – in other words, creative activity. A lower level is the reproductive activity, which is seen in publishing posts, reviews and content commenting. Representatives of reproductive activity are, therefore, more than mere consumers; they are individuals who adapt online materials to their own needs and desires, experimenting independently and integrating them into their own lives.<sup>105 106</sup>

People in their relations with the media should not be only passive recipients – they should show an active attitude and try to satisfy their creative needs, which is opposed to passive reception model, characteristic of exposure to mass media (television, radio, press), which typically broadcast a one-way message.

In terms of market behaviour, today's consumers are increasingly rejecting a completely passive attitude, showing more and more interest in their surroundings and want to engage in activities that go beyond simply making purchasing decisions and using products. The growing awareness is heightening demands, aspirations and willingness to get involved. Customers' desire to expand their role and level of activity has become the basis for the development of today's marketing, and companies from

105 I. Fiut, S, *Konwergencja mediów a komunikowanie*, in: K. Pokorna-Ignatowicz and J. Bierówka (eds.). *„Stare” media w obliczu „nowych”, „nowe” w obliczu „starych”*, Krakowska Akademia im. Andrzeja Frycza Modrzewskiego, Kraków

106 M.Szpunar, *Nowe-stare medium. Internet pomiędzy tworzeniem nowych modeli komunikacyjnych a reprodukowaniem schematów komunikowania*, Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN, Warsaw 2012, p. 191.



all industries have even started to notice the necessity to involve buyers in the process of co-creating value. This gave rise to the idea of prosumption. The creator of the concept was Alvin Toffler, who used it for the first time in 1980 in his book “The Third Wave”, in which he predicted the direction of consumer market development. He linked the titular third wave directly to the emergence of new technologies allowing for unrestricted communication between individuals thanks to services in a move away from mass consumption towards an individual customer approach. In his words, it is a natural consequence of the first and the second waves, the first being agrarian, occurring about 10,000 years ago, accompanied by inventions and agricultural skills as well as a sedentary lifestyle, while the second being industrial with the invention of printing and the steam engine, steel production, electricity, new means of transport, standardisation and unification.<sup>107</sup>

Toffler emphasizes that the consumer, by creating or adapting products to their own needs or by cooperating with creators, becomes a prosumer. The enormous impact carried by social media, which are taking up an increasingly large part of our lives, coupled with easy access to new mobile technologies enable consumers to communicate with each other (share opinions about products and brands) as well as with companies that are under their constant supervision. Canadian business strategist Don Tapscott says that prosumers are mainly people from the so-called “network generation” who treat the world not as a place of consumption but as a place of creation. They are not passive consumers, they need liberty and freedom of choice, they need to personalise and adapt things to their needs (customization), they need to make decisions, engage in dialogue, entertainment and fun, while also requiring fast pace and innovation.<sup>108</sup>

An often-used term associated with Toffler’s third wave, describing contemporary contexts is the “prosumer era”. The concept underlines the key role of prosumerism

107 [https://plm.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alvin\\_Toffler](https://plm.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alvin_Toffler). accessed on 15.02.2021.

108 E. Szul. *Prosumpcja jako aktywność współczesnych konsumentów – uwarunkowania i przejawy*. Instytut Socjologii UMCS w Lublinie

for individual companies or brands as well as the entire economy as we now know it.

Primary literature lists a number of terms with a meaning similar to or synonymous with 'prosumption.' Practically every author uses a different terminology, such as co-creation (Zwick, Bonus, Darmodt), joint manufacturing (Etgar), co-creation of value with the customer (Prahalad, Ramaswamy), buyer involvement in the virtual environment and Web 2.0 (Izvercian, Seran), productive consumption (Ritzer, Dean, Jurgenson), partner production (Benkler), wkinomics (Tapscott), collective intelligence (Maleszka, Nguyen), crowdsourcing (Howe, Sobocińska), collaborative consumption (Rudawska), customer empowerment (Fuchs, Schreier), innovative consumption (Seybold, Baruk) and smart consumption (Zalega). The large number of definitions of prosumption arises from the difficulty with its unambiguous interpretation, stemming from the relative novelty of the creator and recipient functions being blurred on the market and within a marketing context. This has a similar effect on how many authors redefine the idea of prosumption and its process. In my opinion, the issue is one of complexity of its mechanisms and the extent, to which an individual company, brand or designer allow the recipient to be involved and impact the product. Moreover, activity and involvement cannot be framed within a rigid structure. At the same time, all of this depends on the business model or the work concept a given artist has. However, to simplify matters, prosumption is about the recipient's specific involvement in and impact on the creation, co-creation or production of tangible (e.g. a product or packaging) or intangible (e.g. marketing offer, promotional message, brand image or reputation) values. The very existence of prosumption requires a relationship between customer and creator to be established.<sup>109</sup>

109 A. Baruk, Prosumpcja jako wielowymiarowe zachowanie rynkowe. Zakres aktywności marketingowej nabywców, Polskie Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne, Warsaw 2017, p.19.

Author	Definition of presumption
Toffler	The combination of consumption with production, distribution and sales in the person of each individual acting as producer and consumer through the manufacture of products, including for his/her own needs.
Izvercian, Potra	Buyers who are “creative agents,” having innovation potential and involved in the activities of the company and creative enough to participate in the process of generating open innovation.
Kieźel	Participating in the creation of new products and solutions, having knowledge about the offering that facilitates the buyer’s decision-making process and sharing this knowledge with others, especially via the Internet.
Tapscott, Williams	The most important form of activity in the new economy era based on cooperation between its participants.
Free	Enabling continuous growth of innovation and creativity, achieving higher profits by reducing costs and building a community of users.
Bylok	“Tailoring the product to the customers’ specific needs by giving them the opportunity to be involved in its design”
Prahalad, Ramaswamy	Leveraging consumer experiences and creating value and products with creators
Backlog	Intersection of production and consumption by blurring the boundaries between them – buyer resistance to mass production

**Table 1:** Definitions of prosumption according to scholars<sup>110</sup>

110 The table was compiled on the basis of: A. Baruk, Prosumpcja jako wielowymiarowe zachowanie rynkowe. Zakres aktywności marketingowej współczesnych nabywców, Polskie Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne, Warsaw 2017, p.19.

Digitization and widespread access to social media definitely facilitate establishing that relationship. While the Internet is not a prerequisite for communication, it provides many tools to facilitate the prosumption activities of consumers, which would not be possible via traditional media. However, not every Internet user is a prosumer, just as not everyone is equally open and willing to actively engage in creative activities.

Research by Gemius has shown that the network prosumer, who is not a passive Internet user, is most often active on three different levels of involvement:<sup>111</sup>

1. evaluating, reviewing and searching for proven products on Internet forums, online shopping sites and specialist groups
2. actively responding to campaigns organized by brands and participating in activities undertaken to make the offering or message more attractive, e.g. by proposing ideas, asking questions, completing surveys
3. innovator prosumers who, besides the activities listed above, want to personally impact the brands' offering by taking the initiative to propose their own solutions. This group forms by far the smallest percentage of Internet users

Customer needs and changes to today's market models lead to a new brand profile being created, one that is open, cooperative with customers, sharing its resources and operating on a global scale. A new business strategy based on partner production is implemented to allow for a better utilization of people's potential, skill, knowledge and

<sup>111</sup>[https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&url=http://pliki.gemius.pl/Raporty/2009/02\\_2009\\_Polski\\_internet\\_2008\\_2009.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwiN9-3nle3uAhXpo4sKHaiPDN8QFiABeqQIBBAJ&usq=AOvVaw3kUWvi5ZW4JkGvzWZ1dbpF](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&url=http://pliki.gemius.pl/Raporty/2009/02_2009_Polski_internet_2008_2009.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwiN9-3nle3uAhXpo4sKHaiPDN8QFiABeqQIBBAJ&usq=AOvVaw3kUWvi5ZW4JkGvzWZ1dbpF). accessed on 16.02.2020

ideas. The new strategy is realized in a combination of crowdsourcing (recipient information capture, providing a platform for voicing opinions on the company's offer) with collective intelligence, or collective knowledge (meaning the sum of knowledge accumulated as a result of the recipient activity, choices and opinions).<sup>112</sup>

Another feature of presumption-based strategies is product personalization and product hacking. In personalization, consumers have a say about the product offered, deciding on its features and functionalities, so that their wants and needs are better catered for. A case in point: tailor-made services designed specifically for individual customer requirements. Researchers believe that active participation in the design of a personalised service is the highest form of prosumption. Product hacking involves modifying finished products in order to improve and adapt them to individual needs, usually often without the creator's permission. In some cases, however, companies themselves make room for improvements by supplying customers with ready-made tools - e.g. IKEA furniture modification (the effects of consumer creativity are often published on video services in the form of video tutorials) or changes to electronic equipment software (e.g. smartphone update).<sup>113</sup>

As marketing specialist Agnieszka Baruk points out, "*prosumers are often referred to as 'freelancers', 'unpaid employees' or 'working buyers' of companies. Although they do not receive remuneration in the normal sense, they gain benefits of a different kind, starting with products that better meet their needs to a sense of satisfaction and heightened self-esteem. In this way, prosumption activity allows satisfying different*

112 E. Szul, *Prosumpcja jako aktywność współczesnych konsumentów – uwarunkowania i przejawy* – Instytut Socjologii UMCS w Lublinie

113 I. Manczak, K. Sanak-Kosmowska, *Zaangażowanie młodych konsumentów w prosumpcję*, Organizacja i Kierowanie No. 4 / 2018 (183)

*types of needs at the same time, including the need for self-actualization, aesthetics, experience, and knowledge.*<sup>114</sup>

Prosumption activity is inseparably connected with marketing – its effects influencing how creators to be better tuned to customer needs and expectations than is the case with brands that prepare their offering on their own without having a relationship with the client. The very involvement of prosumers in the creative process allows them to satisfy various needs, both material and spiritual, resulting from their internal motivation (desire for self-esteem, desire to be noticed by others, expanding knowledge, experience and contacts). It allows having one's individual and communal needs met, leading to a tightening of mutual relations and experience sharing.

From the creator's perspective, the goals of presumption are to improve certain aspects of functioning, e.g. image, market position, customer feedback, sales performance, or create products more suited to customer needs and desires. The long-term goal is to gain detailed knowledge about customers. Prosumption as a complex market behaviour also serves functions which can be divided into two groups - primary (providing the impulse to engage in activity) and secondary (what happens and what results the activity gives). Agnieszka Baruk presents the following classification:<sup>115</sup>

Primary functions:

1) **communicative** - necessary to start the process of customer activity. The condition is a two-way flow of information, such as opinions, comments and suggestions;

114 A. Baruk, *Prosumpcja jako wielowymiarowe zachowanie rynkowe. Zakres aktywności marketingowej współczesnych nabywców*, Polskie Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne, Warsaw 2017, p.28.

115 ibidem, p. 30

2) **educational** – involving mutual exchange of knowledge and experience, which raises client and recipient awareness

3) **supporting** – the creator's awareness that establishing cooperation with the recipient allows achieving completely different effects than when acting alone (or within a closed company/brand team)

4) **relational** – mutual contact and cooperation leads to creator-recipient relations being built and strengthened

Secondary functions:

1) **image-building** - from the creator's perspective, prosumption builds and consolidates his/her image as an open-minded creator of modern solutions, and from the recipient's perspective, it builds and consolidates his/her image as an active, conscious and decision-making market user

2) **innovative** – the effect of cooperation is the creation of innovative product, marketing and social solutions

3) **therapeutic** – joint activities give the creator confidence in creating better, more tailored products or strategies, and provide the recipient with a feeling of fulfilment and improved self-esteem

4) **developmental** - through successful cooperation, both parties grow and learn from each other. The entire market and product grow as well.

The primary and secondary functions listed above are complementary and overlapping. Building and maintaining relations, creating a positive image, creating innovation and

development rely on efficient and informed communication between both parties who support each other, share knowledge, experience and skills.

While presumption usually appears in the context of marketing strategies of companies and brands, it does not mean that it does not translate into art and artistic creation. On the contrary – its assumptions are almost identical to the idea of participatory art and open work. The domain of clothing design is very specific and complex one, characterized by a combination of art (creating collections as artistic works) with the requirement of typically marketing-oriented thinking: indeed, fashion is part and parcel of mainstream and pop culture. Designers must therefore be both artists and marketers, knowing how to reach customers and partners. It is essential to be aware of the market, to know the media mechanisms and tools to establish contact with the audience and the organisations, without which the presentation of design art would be impossible. That is why the ability to think about art and marketing as one is so important – only then will the clothing designer have a chance to assert his/her presence in the industry, as well as attract and maintain interest. It is necessary to be open to new technologies, new tools and new solutions in the design process.

## 11. MAIN RESEARCH FOR THE DISSERTATION

### Objective

The modern world is changing every day, and with that interpersonal relations transform. Our personal relations are becoming more lax in favour of Internet communication. This also impacts the customer-brand (fashion) relationship. Consumers are moving away from traditional shopping to the Internet, as they look for original products better suited to their needs.



According to the classic scheme of fashion design, in which a collection is created at least a year in advance, it is difficult to precisely define the preferences of the recipients, when they themselves, overwhelmed by stimuli, constantly change their

preferences under the influence of a wave of micro-trends and changing life factors. Therefore, there is a need for radical changes in the field of clothing design process, in order to meet the expectations and requirements of modern people. In my opinion, the only way forward for a creator which is fully compatible with the times and recipient lifestyle, is to open the work through a controlled invitation to influence its final shape.

My objective is to shift away from the prevalent attitude of a dictatorial fashion designer and create a collection of clothes based on research into my target group, using social media as the main tool for clothes design. A collection that follows the needs of today's customers, in which the designs are to be a direct response to their preferences and emerging needs. For this purpose, it is necessary to be always in tune with the recipients, to widen interaction with them and to know their expectations. Achieving this in the widest and most effective way is possible through the tools offered by modern technologies.

Social media are what has become my basic tool in creating blueprints for fashion collections. They allow better understanding and more intimate contact with the client (without territorial limitations), making it possible to consult ideas and receive immediate feedback. As a result, they can become a major supporting tool in the design process, used within a much broader scope than just for creative inspiration.

The research objective was to identify the design assumptions for the collection as an acid test of the target group's needs and preferences. The idea was to reach out directly to the group of people interested in and familiar with my work so far (i.e. the group of clients and potential clients) so as to activate them and collect feedback

necessary to point me in the right direction in my work on the collection. In this way, the feedback served as a strict guideline for my own design work.

Research methods and tools:

As I analysed the possibilities and tools of all social media channels, as well as the convenience and functionality of use, I decided to conduct the main research through Instagram. The research took the form of an online survey, but users also had the option to send me private messages. The most active and engaged recipients often used this form of closer contact to share their thoughts, ideas and comments. However,

I focused most on the results of the survey, and it was these that I gave most consideration in the research process analysis - because of my priority of gaining wider access to a larger group of users.

In terms of access to respondent information, the survey was open, meaning that answers to questions were linked to a specific Instagram profile (as a researcher I had full knowledge who gave which answer).

The survey consisted mostly of close-ended questions where the user had to choose one out of two answers. There were also two open-ended questions.

When constructing the questions, I tried to ensure that they were specific, unambiguous and understandable for the respondent, defining the most important concepts, logically arranged, jargon-free, brief, with simple sentence structure, without double negatives or suggesting any answers, while also being a basis for testing my research hypotheses.

I asked the questions by posting them via InstaStories. The most important aspect of this tool for me was that the recipients answered fully voluntarily. They could also skip a question and move on to the next one. Once clicked, the answer could not be changed. Users could also view the question without answering it, then return to it and answer later. The questions were available for 24 hours from the time they were posted – exactly the lifespan of a standard InstaStory. A special feature of this tool is that after selecting the answer, the results for the question are immediately displayed, and the respondent is also informed what percentage of users gave which answers. Following the survey (and after each individual part), the percentage results for all questions were published by me in the Featured Stories section under the title “Research” and viewable by users after accessing my main profile on Instagram.

The result view for each question separately (available only to me as administrator) has specific information about how many people have the question, how many have answered it and how the answers were distributed (by percentage and number). A list of respondent profiles is assigned to each answer.

Recipient group

Instagram’s statistical tool (linked to professional profiles) allows viewing detailed data regarding the audience, i.e. followers who watch the profile.

klaudiamarkiewicz\_ ©



696 38.9 thousand 531

Posts Followed by Following

KLAUDIA MARKIEWICZ  
#fashion #designer from  
showcased in 13 countries:  
contact.kludiamarkiewicz@gmail.com  
www.kludiamarkiewicz.com/

Edytuj profil   Promocje   Statystyki  
Zapisane   Dodaj sklep   Adres e-mail

Research   Travels Lofficiel   Lofficiel   Lofficiel   Vogue



ILLUSTRATION 40

### Statistics

#### Last 30 days

#### Recently highlighted

You reach +106.7% more accounts in the last 30 days compared to the period 8 Jan - 6 Feb.

#### Overview

4 496   **+106,7% >**  
Number of accounts reached

0   0% >  
Interactions concerning materials

Your audience   [View all](#)

38.9 thousand.   -0,7%  
Total number of followers

#### The content you shared

#### 7 relations



My brand account where I share my creativity and design work on a daily basis, is followed by 38,935 Instagram users at the time of my research, with around 17,500 of them using the application daily. It is to this community of people, gathered in one place (by observing my profile) that I addressed the survey questions, which were the basis of my research.

Most popular locations

- Warsaw
- Łódź
- Cracow
- Poznań
- Wrocław

Country	Gender
Płeć	Gender
Kobiety	Women
Mężczyźni	Men
Najbardziej aktywne pory	The most active times
Przedział wiekowy	Age range
Najważniejsze lokalizacje	The most important localities
Godziny dni	Hours/days
Wszyscy	All

86.4% Women 13.6% Men

Gender %

86.4% Women 13.6% Men



Hours Days

419 729

Age range All Men Women

13-17	11.1%
18-24	27.3%
25-34	36.1%
35-44	19.3%
45-54	4.7%
55-64	0.8%
65+	0.7%

Age range All Men Women

13-17	7.0%
18-24	28.8%
25-34	35.2%
35-44	19.6%
45-54	6.4%
55-64	1.1%
65+	1.8%

The data shows that 86.4% of my audience are women. Most of them live in big cities – Warsaw (8.8%), Łódź (3.9%), Cracow (2.8%), Poznań (2.3%) and Wrocław (2.1%). The dominant age group among all observers is 25-34 years (36.1%), followed by 18-24 years (27.3%) and 35-44 years (19.3%). Among the women themselves, the age distribution is very similar, with the group of 25-34 year olds representing 36.2%, 18-24 year olds - 27.2%, 35-44 year olds -19.1%.

Due to their age, my audience is considered to be the typical “millennials”, i.e. the generation of people born in the 1980s and 1990s. It is also called “generation Y”, “Millennium generation”, “next generation” and “digital generation”. For the first time this term appeared in 1993 in the “Advertising Age” weekly. There is no clear age division within generation Y, but their birth dates are most often assumed to fall between 1980 and 2000, so they are on average 20-40 years old now. A distinction is made between older millennials born before 1989 and younger millennials born before 2000.<sup>116</sup>

Polish members of this age group do not remember the communist era, they were brought up in the free market reality. Electronics and the Internet are an inseparable part of their lives. They use media and digital technologies and are constantly connected to the Internet. According to research, they are also self-confident and care about the high quality of life, have high needs and requirements, know their value and can assert themselves.<sup>117</sup>

PwC "Total Retail" study (conducted in 25 countries) shows that generation Y is very open to advanced consumer electronics technology. They use smartphones 1/3 more often than other generations to compare prices, search for product information and discounts. They are likely by half to give their opinions about purchased products on social media and give ratings to shops. Millennials also build interpersonal relationships using modern technologies and social media more often and more intensively than older generations. Generation Y is the first truly global generation in the history of civilization. Regardless of where they were born, they grew up during the peak of popularity of reality shows, world music and pop culture stars. The natural environment for millennials is metropolises, where they find fit in very well and do not show any desire to move to a quiet suburb (just like their parents or grandparents did).

116 [https://plm.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pokolenie\\_Y](https://plm.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pokolenie_Y). accessed on 19.02.2021.

117 <https://www.google.com/amp/s/porta.abczdrowie.pl/milleniarsi%3famp=1>. accessed on 19.02.2021

The needs of generation Y are often described with the acronym 3F - Food, Fashion, Friends, coined by members of the BCG company. They indicate that for millennials eating out is very important, for which they are able to allocate a significant portion of expenditure (greater than, for example, on body care products). High on the pyramid of needs is also fashion, to which they pay great attention. Women from the Millennial generation buy clothes 1/3 more often than older generations, spending twice as much on purchases. The quality, comfort and usefulness of clothes is also more important to them than the brand itself.<sup>118</sup>

Generation Y is not very receptive or open to traditional forms of marketing. This is because they have been bombarded with conventional and digital versions of it since childhood, and having grown up with technology and the Internet, they have become more sensitive to false information and unfair offers. Hence millennials are strongly distrustful of corporations and brands. However, they are much friendlier towards well-chosen, personalised marketing messages. They prefer quick messages, and their tolerance for protracted conversations or content is quite low. So the best way to get their attention is through social media, which is an integral part of their lives.<sup>119</sup>

The questions I asked in the survey were strictly related to the design assumptions of the collection, necessary for its further elaboration, but also general issues, with the purpose of deeper understanding of the habits and purchase decisions of my target group.

There were twenty-nine questions in total and the screenshots on page 167.

118 J. Kall, A. Perchla-Włosik, A. Raciniewska, K. Sempruch-Krzemińska, *Marka modowa. Jak zrozumieć konsumenta mody i stworzyć markę szytą na miarę?*, Polskie Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne, Warsaw 2018, p. 98.

119 <https://socialwifi.com/pl/baza-wiedzy/marketing/kim-sa-milenialsi-i-dlaczego-sa-wazni-dla-twojego-business/>, accessed on 19.02.2021

## INSPIRATION FOR THE COLLECTION

In a survey conducted by me, the recipients voted the sea theme to be the most popular of all (68%) and suggested it should be used as potential inspiration for my collection.

Living on land, far from the seas and oceans, we very rarely realize how important these environments are for our lives. Scientists point out this is where life supposedly started and continues to evolve. Indeed, as much as 94% of life on Earth takes place in the deep sea. Water covers about 70% of our planet's surface, which equals 1,386 million km<sup>3</sup>.<sup>120</sup>

Although we take seas and oceans for granted, our knowledge about them is almost non-existent – people have so far explored only about 5% of the underwater world, and the rock bed of the ocean remains largely unexplored. In fact, scientists have more accurate maps of the surface of Mars than the oceans.<sup>121</sup>

The deepest place in the ocean ever explored by man was 11 km deep and it was only explored by three people – Jacques Piccard, Don Walsh and director James Cameron. This is four times less people than made up the moon-landing crews during the six Apollo missions. Amazingly enough, it is actually easier to reach a point in space 385,000 kilometres away than a point only 11 kilometres inside the bowels of our planet.

The unknown excites fascination in equal measure with fear. No wonder, then, that a multitude of stories, legends and myths have sprung up around the sea theme,

120 R. Hofrichter, *Tajemnicze życie oceanów*, Wydawnictwo Prószyński Media, Warsaw 2018, pp. 14-121  
121 <https://www.national-geographic.pl/artykul/oceany>, accessed on 19.02.2021\_



accompanied by sailor tales. Maritime legends were most often created out of a distorted imaginative belief in the real and the imaginary may co-exist under specific conditions and at a favourable moment. “*Every sea voyage is in a way an abandonment one world and a passage to another,*” writes Zofia Drapella in *Myths and Legends of the Sea*. This chasm between the mainland and the open sea was certainly felt very intensely at a time when sea-farers could not get in touch with their loved ones on land. In such conditions, imagination had to work very intensely, often transforming the unknown into the paranormal.

The mysterious history of the sea and ideas that people had about its inhabitants have inspired works that revolutionized poetry, prose, cinema and painting. The subject's status as a long-standing source of inspiration combined with our scant knowledge of the seas and oceans only inflames our desire to fantasize about what the deep holds. The collection designed I have designed is a type of unique story about how I interpret the marine theme, based on unrealistic images of legendary and mythical sea creatures, as well as on their derived symbolism derived, which can be successfully applied in modern times.

The theme is clearly visible in the drawings I created and then transferred into patterns. Central to the theme is the octopus motif, inspired by the Kraken, a giant sea creature from the legends of the Northern European peoples. It was said to stalk the coasts of Norway and Greenland, making itself known to people by attacking their ships. According to sailors, kraken were often mistaken for islands because of their enormous size. When sailors went ashore, they woke the monster, which then dragged the ship with the crew underwater. In mythology, Kraken is also known as Trianul. There, it

122 ZDrapella, *Mity i legendy morskie*, Wydawnictwo Morskie, Gdańsk 1972, p.14.

remains under the power of Neptune, but listens to whoever it sees when awake. The Kraken is said to lie dormant for a hundred years before attacking ships for another hundred.<sup>123</sup>

The Kraken is also mentioned in the Hawaiian creation myth, which describes that the present-day cosmos is the last to rise from the rubble of previous universes that have been destroyed. According to this story, the octopus would be the only survivor of the previous world. Octopuses became one of the most significant inspirations in the Japanese erotic art called *shunga*. Hokusai's ukiyo-e (paintings on wood) *Dream of a Fisherman's Wife* (*Tako toama*, 1814) depicts the eponymous ama, or fisherman's wife, entwined in a sexual embrace with a large and small octopus. The painting is a precursor to erotica, still used today in hentai (pornographic anime, manga).<sup>124</sup>

Carl *Linnaeus* was the first to try to classify this type of creature in the first edition of *Systema Naturae* in 1735 under the name *Microcosmus*. It is now known that the origin of the Kraken story was most probably inspired by contact with the giant octopus, which can weigh up to 272 kilograms and has a tentacle span of over 9.6 m, or with the giant squid, whose largest specimen to date was found in 1887 off the coast of New Zealand and was about 18 metres long, 12 of which were tentacles.<sup>125</sup>

Octopuses and squid are the most intelligent creatures among invertebrates, they have an astonishing spatial imagination, the ability to learn by observation, plan activities and play. *“The sight of it evokes in humans a paradoxical feeling of closeness combined with horror – because of its quasi-human head mounted on eight snake-shaped tentacles extremely tenacious thanks to their suction cups. As a result, it attracts and*

123 <https://pl.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kraken>, accessed on 19.02.2021

124 <https://pl.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/O%C5%9Bmiomice>, accessed on 19.02.2021

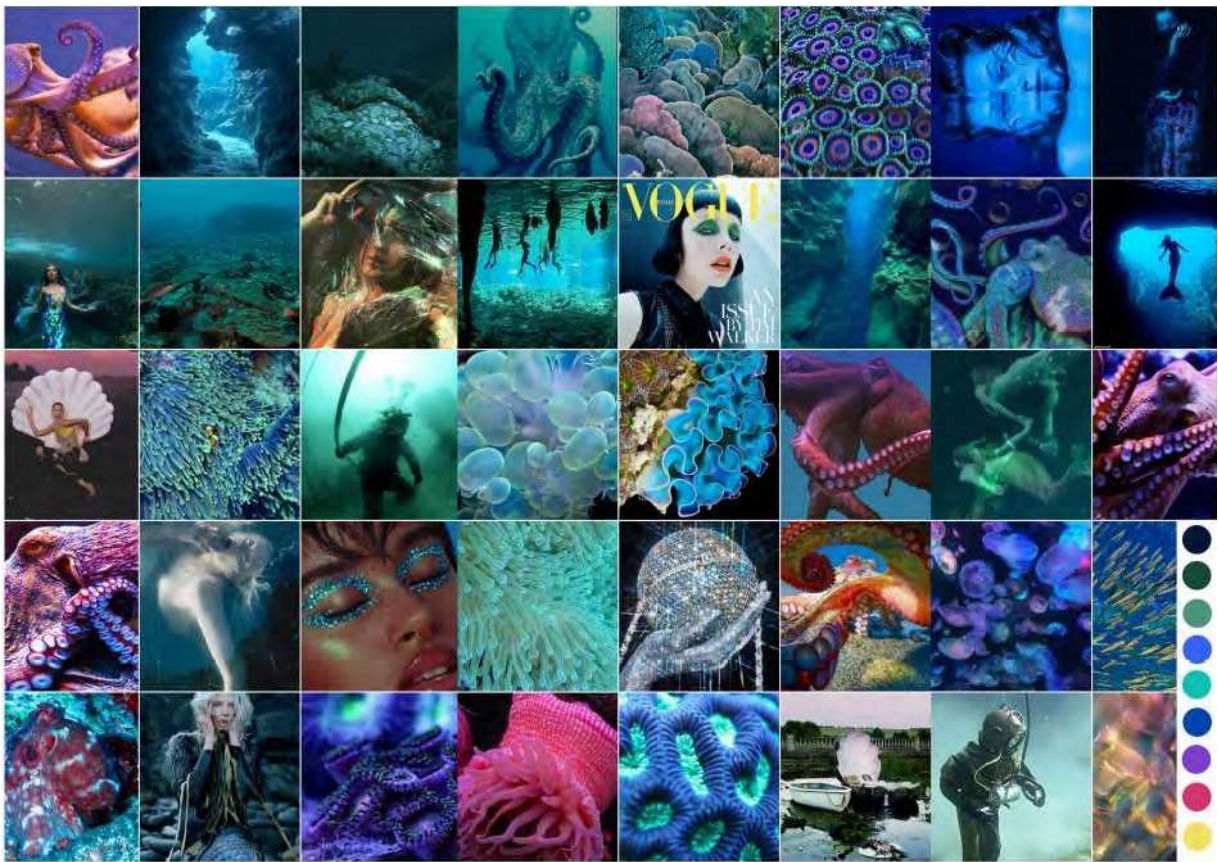
125 <https://pl.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kraken>, accessed on 19.02.2021

*repels us at the same time. Its effigies can be found in the ornamental art of the Celts, Cretans, Polynesians and Indians; because of its curling tentacles it has a symbolic affinity with the spider and the spiral; as a inhabitant of the seas, who hides from enemies in a cloud of dark liquid, it may symbolize subterranean forces. The eight arms of the octopus symbolize for the Hindus the eight elements of yoga, or ashta-anga-yoga, which make up the path prescribed in the Yoga-sutra by Patanjali – the eight arms that intertwine in unity. Kanaloa, the creator-god in Hawaiian mythology and at the same time the god of the underworld and magic, has the form of an octopus. Also the images of the many-handed gods (e.g. of India – the guardians of dharma - wielding various dangerous tools as well as a vessel filled with water of life), or giants (gr. ekatoncheirs) may have arisen under the influence of its form. It was – probably due to its resemblance to a radiant shield – an important solar symbol in some ancient cults. The octopus with its limp and malleable body is also a symbol of our inherent adaptability, potential for change.”<sup>126</sup>*

The cited aspect of symbolism associated with adaptability and potential for change has been most inspiring for me, especially in the context of modern times, when modification and adaptation to the current difficult conditions in the world is a necessity. It can be viewed on two different planes, as the need for adaptation concerns us both as consumers/recipients (who were forced during the pandemic were forced to completely transform our habits, interpersonal contacts, relationships and review the entire system of values) as well as creators who must adapt to modern realities and the needs of the recipients, and consequently change their way of thinking and the model of the design process. The octopus has become for me the symbol of the change of the old form of design into a new one, more adapted to the needs of the environment.

126 J. Herder, *Leksykon symboli*, Dom Wydawniczy tCHu, Warsaw 2009, p. 255.

## MOODBOARD



### Colours

My research showed a preference for cold colours (67%). As to the degree of saturation of the colours, the votes were split almost evenly, with a slight majority of saturated ones (53%). When selecting the colour palette, I was most interested in introducing colours associated with peace and a sense of security, which we need so much these days due to concerns for our health and the health of our loved ones. That's why I decided that the collection will be dominated by shades of blue and green, complemented by touches of fuchsia and violet. *"Blue is a colour full of symbolism,*

*has almost as many qualities as red. Some of them are: spirituality, peace, hygiene, tranquillity, water, freshness, purity and coldness, but also dynamism, creativity and inspiration. Blue is also the colour of friendship. It is also sometimes seen as a symbol of attachment to tradition.*"<sup>127</sup> The fact that blue is a colour with positive

associations is confirmed by a study conducted in 2003 by Joe Hallock, who found that it is the favourite colour of 42% of people. This is the highest score in the set, followed by green and purple with 14% preference.<sup>128</sup>

When conducting research on the audience, I first deliberately asked respondents about their colour preferences. When I received the result indicating cold colours, I used them to prepare questions about the theme, using a functionality in the Instagram tool that allows on-the-fly analysis of incoming results. In the end, I chose two themes that I associate most with cool colours, namely the sea theme and the forest theme. As sea was chosen by 68% of the recipients, the colours of the collection are a direct reference to the colours of the seas and oceans as well as the fauna and flora found there.

Purchasing preferences of the recipient group

Asked if they try to keep up-to-date with fashion news, 80% of the respondents admitted that they followed trends. Moreover, 75% of people admitted that their attitude to the clothes they wear is casual and relaxed. They approach them with humour, claiming that fashion should first and foremost be fun. Classic elegance is not a priority for them.

According to the results of the survey, my group believes that it is a good idea to invest in unique items with handicraft elements. The respondents definitely (69%) prefer to pay a

127 [https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barwa\\_niebieska](https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barwa_niebieska), accessed on 19.02.2021

128 [http://www.joehallock.com/?page\\_id=128](http://www.joehallock.com/?page_id=128) 1, accessed on 19.02.2021\_

higher price for an exceptional, unique design than buy the same amount of cheaper clothes from chain stores. However, as far as the price ceiling is concerned, it cannot be extremely high, as 77% of people admitted that they did not spend more than 500 PLN on clothes per month.

In terms of ecology and fair trade ethics, as many as 61% of respondents said that they are guided by moral principles when buying clothes. This confirms the growing awareness of the dangers, environmental issues and human rights.

The vote regarding the preferred place for shopping was split nearly evenly (practically 50-50 with brick-and-mortar shops having a slight edge – 55% – over online shopping). However, the question about where best to look for fashion inspiration and knowledge, the vote was overwhelmingly in favour of online sources (86%), with only 14% choosing books and magazines. This definitely proves the growing crisis of mass media, which are losing sway. 63% of the respondents admitted that they no longer buy printed fashion magazines such as Elle, Vogue, Glamour.

## Season

Recently, a gradual, systematic departure from seasonality has become a visible trend in the approach to fashion design. It is more and more pronounced in relation to the date of presentation of the collection itself (e.g. collections premiere during the spring or autumn Fashion Week) rather than to the type and nature of the clothes of which it consists. The globalization phenomenon has brought about a general availability of designer collections and the possibility of buying them all over the world (in boutiques and online). As society is better connected, geographical boundaries are not much of a problem in purchasing the desired product. Designers are beginning to create more universal collections, with season-specific clothes all thrown together. Designed presented in the spring/summer season will feature winter coats, padded

jackets, sweaters and every other type of outerwear, just as autumn/winter collections will contain flowing dresses, light tops, caps and shawls. This is done to reach the widest possible audience, regardless of geographical area, temperature and local conditions.<sup>129</sup>

In the context of recent events and the situation in the world, the time regime imposed by the system governing fashion, with its short-lived seasons causing a huge supply of clothes on the market, seems to be absurd and harmful to the environment. Until now, the number of collections presented by designers in a year usually depended on the size of the brand. The smallest ones, due to financial reasons, usually limited themselves to two seasons: spring/summer and autumn/winter. Those more developed and with greater financial resources often presented four to six or even eight collections a year. Officially the seasons were as follows: spring/summer, pre-fall, fall/winter, resort, cruise, holiday, divided into women's and men's fashion, haute couture or bridal fashion. With all of this, there were many opportunities for presentation during the year. For example, Chanel organized six shows of women's collections: pre-fall, spring-summer ready to wear, spring-summer haute couture, fall-winter ready to wear, fall-winter haute couture, and resort.<sup>130</sup>

Such a seasonal system was quite normal in fashion – until the year 2020, when the whole world was plunged into a pandemic crisis and the far-reaching effects of the collapse of the global economy were felt. This forced many entrepreneurs, including designers, to re-evaluate their priorities and create completely new business strategies. People increasingly realized that the fashion industry and its continued growth had accelerated dangerously fast. In May 2020, the British Fashion Council and the Council of Fashion Designers in America, the two largest fashion associations,

issued a statement calling for change in the industry as it reached a critical moment,

129 <https://www.highsnobiety.com/p/why-are-resort-cruise-pre-collections-important/?format=amp>. accessed on 19.02.2021

130 <https://highxtar.com/chanel-keeps-its-calendar-of-6-collections-per-year/?lang=en>. accessed on 19.02.2021

following a path to self-destruction. The BFC and CFDA also pointed out that the global slowing down due to the pandemic was an ideal opportunity for restructuring.<sup>131</sup>

One of the first brands to address this issue was Gucci. Alessandro Michele, the creative director, posted a statement on Gucci's official Instagram profile on 23 May, announcing that he was abandoning the creation of seasonal collections and decided to reduce the number of annual collections to two: *"I will abandon the tired ritual of seasonality and shows in order to gain a new rhythm, closer to my creative vocation. We will meet only twice a year to share the chapters of a new story. These chapters will be irregular, joyful and totally free, mixing rules and genres, feeding on new spaces, language codes and communication platforms"* – Michele declared.<sup>132</sup>

In the same month (May 2020) an open letter appeal was published by an independent group of fashion designers, led by Dries Van Noten, Tory Burch and Craig Green, creative directors and retailers, calling for a fundamental rethink of the way clothing is designed and produced, and for greater efforts to promote sustainable development. The call was the result of a series of conversations between forty fashion leaders video-conferencing on the social networking platform Zoom. *"We unanimously agreed that the current situation, as challenging as it will be, presents an opportunity to make a fundamental and necessary change that will impact our businesses by making them more environmentally and socially sustainable, by making them more relevant to customer needs,"* reads the letter. The main demand is to reduce the number of seasons and restore the distribution of the spring/summer collection from February to July and the autumn/winter collection from August to January, instead of selling them well in advance. The authors of the appeal emphasize that they hoped that: *"these*

131 <https://k-mag.pl/article/gucci-rezygnuje-z-sezonowosci-i-zdecydowanie-ogranicza-ilosc-pokazow-w-year-1>. accessed on 19.02.2021

132 <https://www.instagram.com/p/CaikoMCCYEw/?igshid=c002t8kb0hec>. accessed on 19.02.2021



*steps will allow our industry to become more accountable for its impact on customers, the planet and the fashion community, and bring back the magic and creativity that has made fashion such an important part of our world.”<sup>133</sup>*

During the first stage of my research, I assumed that my collection would be dedicated to a specific season. Following consultations with the audience on Instagram, it was supposed to be the spring/summer season (as suggested by 72% of respondents). However, in the context of the changing situation and social moods, I decided to retrace my steps and once again address the validity of seasonality. 76% of the respondents agreed that an off-season model of clothing design is definitely more reasonable.

Taking into account the above factors, the collection I have designed has an off-season character. It includes both heavy overcoats such as coats or padded jackets, and flowing chiffon dresses. Here, I have focused primarily on my own artistic vision, leaving aside the seasonal purpose of the clothes. In the context of the whole, it is therefore a universal collection, designed to be used freely by the recipient.

## Objective

When I asked my follower group what kind of design they prefer, 65% chose artistic, visionary, with a rich form. That is why the collection I designed is not typically casual, although individual elements can definitely have an everyday character, depending on the styling in which they would be composed. The study showed that despite the fact that the collection was designed and created during the coronavirus pandemic, my recipients expect something unusual, original and unavailable for

133 <https://www.fashionnetwork.com/news/Designers-fashion-ceos-and-retailers-call-for-revolt-against-existing-delivery-system.1215210.html>, accessed on 19.02.2021

the general public – as opposed to chain-store clothing. As I thought about the clothes that made up the collection's silhouette designs, I wondered how the current situation would affect the target group's preferences. By then, I had become known to observers as an artist whose designs are far more avant-garde than regular products, often intended for parties or even for the stage, so within the lockdown context, with society severely restrained in its ability to participate in such events, I was very curious about recipient expectations regarding my work and – in particular – this collection. They did not look for everyday items such as comfortable tracksuits or home clothes from designers, preferring to buy them cheaply at a chain store, as 81% of the respondents said they did. They did not put much value on that clothing category, so they did not want to invest more money in it. They turned to designer creations only in exceptional situations, on special occasions. I think that this is why expectations about the collection I designed as part of my PhD dissertation did not lead to a drastic reevaluation of my previous creative aesthetics and ideology, and the audience is still looking for an artistic, avant-garde rather than casual character. This means that by analysing the results of the research, I made my own decisions regarding the final look of the designs without any worries, while the suggestions of the recipients only pointed me in the right general direction.

## Form and style

Interestingly, the results show that 60% of the respondents prefer oversize cuts, i.e. clothes that are definitely not clingy. As for the question about style, the most popular answers were as follows: glamour (55%) and sexy style (57%). The initial challenge was to combine the two seemingly extreme directions (sexy and oversize), but I think it is a misconception to strictly

connect what is attractive only with a strong exposure of the body and very tight clothes. Sexy does not have to be (and for me it is not) vulgar. Therefore, to emphasize this trend, I decided – in a somewhat tongue-in-cheek manner – to design a collection which will definitely focus on covering rather than hiding the body. In order to maintain the proportions of the silhouette (especially in keeping with the audience's preference for oversize cuts), I decided to balance out the voluminous outer forms with tailored base assortments to obtain a “second skin” effect – overalls, leggings, gloves. All silhouettes in the collection can be freely worn without them, but for me they are a starting point, mainly because of the concept of covering the body.

The designs mainly feature organic, soft, streamlined forms, with a predominance of symmetry in keeping with the maritime inspiration.

Among the responses about the nature of the collection, retro style ranked high (59%). Because of that, I introduced an accessory which for me is quintessentially retro, i.e. scarves made of natural silk. I decided to create them in a large size - 110 cm x 110 cm, thanks to which they gained in functionality – they can be worn classically on the head, around the neck, as a form of cover-up, as a belt or even as a top. The scarves have been digitally printed over and treated with high temperature without using any chemicals. In keeping the retro style, the collection also features long gloves, made of patent leather and printed knitwear.

## Fabrics

As many as 70% of respondents prefer eco-friendly fabrics, e.g. eco-fur or eco-leather, which they would rather choose than natural leather. That is why both natural materials (cotton with various basic weight, natural satin-like silk, worsted wool) and artificial ones (ecological fur, ecological leather, chiffon, tulle, satin, taffeta, sequins, lycra) have been used in the collection.

Many of them, both natural and artificial, have been digitally printed with original graphics in various scales.

## Texture

Inspiration drawn from the sea and ocean, and the animals and vegetation that inhabit them, influenced my thinking about the textures used. Taking into account the results of the preference survey, I focused on patterns in the largest part of the collection, but there is also a variety of structures. I was particularly inspired by the surfaces of vegetation and coral reefs, which I almost naturally associate with the texture of fur, pleats, thick fleshy knits and the rhythm of ruffles, embroidered sequins and beads.

## Patterns

Patterns are for me a very important part of the collection. The graphics I created are a combination of classical drawing and computer technique in direct reference to the overarching motif of the sea. It depicts the fantastic figure of the Kraken, described above, which is the central dominant figure in the show, in the depths of the sea, surrounded by aquatic flora and fauna. The supporting figures are mermaids - water nymphs - half women, half fish, regarded (especially in the Antiquity) as a symbol of the dangers of sea voyages and the image of deadly threats lurking in murky depths.

The inspiration for the way I drew, and in fact for the overall linear approach to drawing, came from antique centuries-old prints of marine flora and fauna from botanical atlases. I subjected the fully hand-drawn pattern to graphic processing and introduced colour. The final version was transferred onto fabrics and knitwear both in 1:1 form and multiplied as a report.