

THE BIG PICTURE

a quest for better fashion systems
a trend research of future sales channels for
CLOSING THE LOOP



[AR app Apparel, image courtesy: Normals]

by Dominique Ellen van de Pol
Master of Fashion Strategy
Freelance researcher for the Centre of Expertise FUTURE MAKERS (Arnhem, NL)
December 2016

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD	3
I.) CLOSING THE LOOP	5
A) FROM FIELD TO FIBRE	6
B) FROM FIBRE TO FABRIC	8
C) FROM FABRIC TO FASHION	11
II.) EVALUATION OF INTERVIEWS	15
A) INTERVIEW PARTNER: BEN RATELBAND (STEXFIBERS)	15
B) INTERVIEW PARTNER: PETER BOS (TEXPERIUM)	16
C) OTHER INTERVIEW PARTNERS	17
III.) CROWDFUNDING AS A TREND BAROMETER	20
GREENVESTMENT AS AN ACT OF SOCIAL DESIGN	20
BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLE: LOOP.ALIFE	22
IV.) THE BIG PICTURE	25
A) THE OMINOUS OMNICHANNEL	25
B) DUTCH ONLINE RETAIL AND CROSS-BORDER SALES	27
C) POP UP STORES AS A SALES STRATEGY	29
D) PRODUCT PRESENTATION AS A SALES STRATEGY	32
E) VIRTUAL REALITY BRAND EXPERIENCES	35
F) CHATVERTIZING	37
G) THE POWER OF PERSONAL RATINGS	38
H) BEYOND POKÉMON GO: AR BASED RETAIL SOLUTIONS	40
I) 3D PRINTING AND HYPERLOCAL DESIGN	42
V.) LONGING FOR LOCAL	45
1.) LOCALLY PRODUCED FOOD AND HOW TO SELL IT	46
A) BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLE: TOFINO (ESSEN, GERMANY)	47
B) BEST PRACTISE EXAMPLE: BIO-FLEICHEREI BURCHARDT (ESSEN, GERMANY)	48
C) BEST PRACTISE EXAMPLE: FLOTTE KAROTTE (BOCHUM, GERMANY)	50
2.) PRODUCT TRACKING IN FOOD & FASHION	51
PRODUCT TRACKING AFTER SALES	56
VI.) NEW PATTERNS OF CONSUME	59
SLOWING DOWN THE CYCLE	59
VII) CONCLUSIONS FOR FUTURE MARKETING AND SALES	62
THE TARGET GROUP: THE CARETAKER	62
HOW TO INVOLVE THE CARETAKER INTO CIRCULAR GOALS?	65
A POSSIBLE SCENARIO	66
SALES STRATEGY	68
TEXTILE ALCHEMY	69
VAN O POP-UP STORES	69
ON THE ROAD	71
REFERENCES	72

FOREWORD

~~TAKE, MAKE, WASTE~~

Breaking the rules of throwaway fashion

Throughout the last years, the destructive nature of fast fashion has been revealed. More and more media reports and documentaries like „The True Cost“, (2016) by Andrew Morgan focused on the harmful impact of today’s fashion and its complex global product chains.

The research project CLOSING THE LOOP (CtL) in Gelderland, The Netherlands tries to break the rules of the predominant fashion system. Instead of outsourcing fashion production CLOSING THE LOOP supports the development of locally produced textiles and garments out of Dutch hemp and locally recycled denim, right there in Arnhem, Enschede and Nijmegen. It brings together local textile suppliers, designers and fashion experts in order to find and test new ways of local sustainable production methods and circular design principles with the aim to develop sustainable product chains for fashion which all participants can profit from.

A quest for better fashion systems

Combining a journalistic-narrative approach with methods of forecasting, qualitative social research and socio-economic data this report focuses on the big trends and new developments ahead of us.

Shifts in the way we live, the way we consume and interact with technology. Shifts that will shape the future of fashion retail. A collection of visions and insights to inspire the further development of the brand CLOSING THE LOOP as well as any other fashion brand that intends to participate actively in the market of the future.

This paper questions the concept of linear product chains and presents different best practice strategies to go further in order to close the loop. It features inspiring examples of local fashion production, looks deeper into the food sector for trends that might influence the future of fashion as well.

The aim of this report is to present the BIG PICTURE of the context in which the project CLOSING THE LOOP is gaining momentum. To showcase a wide array of inspiring examples of how the rules of throwaway can be broken to rethink fashion and transform it into a tool of positive interaction.

I.) CLOSING THE LOOP

The first task of my research was to conduct personal interviews with the inner circle of the CLOSING THE LOOP production network based around the three Dutch cities of Arnhem, Nijmegen and Enschede.

So I set out for the Netherlands to find about the status quo of the project and to gather the individual experiences and visions of the different members of this emerging textile platform.

The following chapter presents a short selection of the interviews with the inner circle of CLOSING THE LOOP and their textile journey so far:

„LET’S BREATHE NEW LIFE INTO THE RICH TEXTILE HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS AND REVIVE TEXTILE MANUFACTURING TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY“ „LET’S MAKE HEMP THE NEW BLACK“ „MAKING TEXTILE RECYCLING BUSINESS AS USUAL“ „LET’S CREATE BETTER FASHION SYSTEMS THAT ARE A WIN-WIN FOR ALL PARTS INVOLVED“ „EVERYONE IN THE INDUSTRY JUST TELLS YOU WHY IT CAN’T BE DONE. WE HAVE TO PROVE THAT THIS IS POSSIBLE!“ „I HAVE LEARNED A LOT ABOUT SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS AND THE CHALLENGES OF DEVELOPING A NEW FIBER“ „GETTING ACCESS TO INNOVATIVE SUSTAINABLE YARNS AND FABRICS WITH LOW MINIMUM ORDER QUANTITIES.“ „A LOCAL PRODUCTION MAKES YOU MUCH MORE AWARE OF THE FULL IMPACT OF YOUR PRODUCT CHAINS.“ „THE STARTING POINT OF MY DESIGNING PROCESS IS THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT. THE STARTING POINT OF A REGULAR DESIGNING PROCESS IS USUALLY THE CONSUMER. THAT’S THE DIFFERENCE.“

A) FROM FIELD TO FIBRE

STEXFIBERS BV.

INTERVIEW WITH BEN RATELBAND (MSC), JULY 27TH 2016

Stexfibers is a local developer of high quality hemp fibers. Their future vision is to help making hemp the new cotton and thereby greening the fashion industry and reducing its footprint.

What makes hemp such an interesting and promising material?

*"I really believe in hemp and its material qualities. Hemp is **better** and **more comfortable** than e.g. cotton. I'm even wearing a hemp shirt today. In summer it feels very **cool** and **dry** as it absorbs moisture very quickly. At the same time it feels nice and **warm** in winter due to its hollow core which isolates from the cold outside. All in all, a very comfortable material that gets **softer** each time you wear it."*

Where do you receive your raw hemp fibers from?

*"There are only two suppliers of hemp fibers in the Netherlands. We work with the company **Pantanova** who operates in between those Dutch hemp farmers and the industry. We cannot buy enough fibers from Gelderland yet which I believe won't change in the near future. At this moment the fibers mainly come from the eastern part of the Netherlands. But Pantanova has the vision to start growing local hemp right here in Gelderland."*

What is the status quo of the project and where are you heading?

"We are not there yet but our goal is to develop hemp fibers that can be spun on existing cotton rotor spinning machines."

What are the concrete challenges of this project and how do you deal with them?

"We work with relatively short filaments (around 3cm) and the wood particles inside the hemp make it hard to create fibers that don't break and which can be used to make fashion textiles out of it.

*We work closely together with the local textile developer **Texperium** who makes yarns out of our fibers. Up to now they managed to create two different yarns out of our fibers which are blends of **recycled-cotton**, **hemp** and PES. In the future we can easily replace the*

PES by sustainable alternatives, e.g. by recycled PET. This project is still a real technical challenge but as soon as we are able to make good fibers that can be spun into yarns, we are in business right away! Because the demand for high quality hemp is extreme, especially from the Jeans industry. I'm in touch with many big denim brands like Levis, G-Star, Chasin and Score. We have all these contacts and they are all simply waiting for European hemp or even better: hemp from the Netherlands!"

HEMP FACTS:

The first Jeans invented by Levi Strauss in the 1850s for gold miners in California were almost certainly made out of hemp canvas. Even the word „canvas“ itself is directly connected to hemp as it derives from „Cannapaceus“, the Latin word for „cannabis“ meaning hemp. Besides many other positive material qualities hemp is extremely durable. Therefore, it was used e.g. to make sails for boats and became popular as covers for the wagons of the early settlers in the US very quickly. Therefore, Levi Strauss had this fabric with him as he wanted to sell it to the gold miners. In the end, he started to design a new form of work wear for them instead and the first Levis Jeans was born. Making hemp the new cotton would close an historical loop. It could revolutionize today's denim industry and make it much more sustainable.¹

Is there something that would make this journey more effective and help you to meet your goals?

“The thing is we only have very small equipment. Therefore, we can only produce a few kilograms of fiber a day. And if a big spinning company wants to do a test run they need hundreds of kilos to do so. So in our stage of the process they are not of any help. It would be helpful to have more partnerships with small spinning factories like Texperium to develop our yarns together. It's very important to invest more time and energy now to succeed in making fibers and yarns for CtL that can be used for fashionable products in the future.”

Is there something you can already say about the certain qualities of the future CtL material ranges?

“I believe it will be very hard for us to develop very fine yarns out of our two basic materials hemp and recycled cotton. Therefore, the future CtL fabric range won't include very fine qualities normally used for shirts, etc. The future yarns might not be suitable for clothing

but they may be perfect for textile design or furniture.”

What would make the future CtL hemp fabrics special?

“In my opinion hemp made in the Netherlands would make the product chain much more transparent regarding ecological and social aspects. Momentarily, conventional hemp mostly is imported from China and it is almost impossible to get any information about where or how the hemp material or the people were treated.”

What product aspects could be optimized in your opinion?

“One of the funny things I feel is that I always thought a mixed material would be harder to recycle than a pure material. If you have a mix of recycled denim, hemp and PES I feel that it’s difficult to recycle. I’d rather have a yarn out of 100% hemp for instance. But I’m not an expert on that. And within CtL Texperium is the recycling specialist so they should know better.”

What is your vision for CtL and the future of local fashion and textile manufacturing?

“I hope that in the future everything could take place right here in Gelderland, - from crop to fabric to fashion. But for now, and the near future I would suggest that we use dutch hemp, provided that we still deal with very small quantities.”

B) FROM FIBRE TO FABRIC

Stichting TEXPERIUM

Making circular strategies and textile recycling business as usual

Interview with Peter Bos (chairman and Co-founder) (August 8th 2016)

Texperium is an open innovation center for high quality textile recycling. Its goal is to support companies and institutions in developing new methods of textile recycling. It is a workspace for scientific experiments and helps to create new fibers and yarns which are both sustainable and profitable.

What can you tell us about the yarns you are developing for CtL?

„Our task is to develop the best techniques to spin high quality yarns that can be used for woven fabrics and knitwear. For CLOSING THE LOOP we focused on two main materials:

*Firstly, we work with **recycled cotton** coming from **post-consumer denim** jeans. Secondly, we want to develop yarns from **locally sourced renewable material** such as **Dutch hemp**. It turned out to be quite a challenge to create a good yarn from the existing Dutch hemp that is both strong and soft enough for fashion application. Therefore, we put our focus on the recycled cotton component first and used high quality hemp from China for now. At the moment, this is still a huge technical challenge but I strongly believe that we can do it if we keep up working hard. As we only have a very small amount of Dutch hemp from Stexfibers (800g) we have to use it wise and can't do experiments over and over again.”*

Could you show us a material blend as a concrete example?

*„Here for example we have a yarn which is a mix of recycled jeans (50%) and 50% PES. The PES will be replaced by a sustainable material in the future, e.g. by Lyocell or by recycled PET. In that case, we could even have a **100% recycled yarn**. In every case the second component is necessary to make the yarn strong enough for spinning. As soon as we are finished with developing the yarn we can give it to a spinning factory for industrial production and they can replace the PES part easily with a green material like e.g. recycled PET.“*

Is there already enough Dutch hemp available for a commercial production of hemp yarns, which could be used for CtL?

„If we want to source and produce locally we have to support the local production industry first. I don't think there are and will be enough hemp from the Netherlands soon to facilitate the production of materials in a larger commercial scale. For large-scale production we might have to use hemp from central Europe first and then switch to Dutch hemp as soon as the suppliers are ready. Another problem for the large-scale production of hemp is that there are no suitable spinning companies left in the Netherlands. But there are good spinners close by if we look over the border to Belgium, Germany or France.”

What is the status quo of the project?

„We are working very hard to make the yarn better and better to have a product in the end that really

works which can be used for different materials. This development turned out to be much more tricky than we all expected. Therefore, it took a lot of time and patience but now we are taking great leaps forward. Our goal is it to reach a very high material standard like the hemp qualities available from China.”

Regarding the fineness of the future CtL yarns, - what can we expect?

„18 was the finest yarn quality we were able to work on so far but I think we could achieve a 20 in the future. But that may not be fine enough for typical shirt fabrics used in fashion. So I think it would be wise to think about realistic applications and focus on textile design in general rather than only on fashion applications for the future CtL products. Or to think about fashion products that work well with rather solid and rough materials.”

Is there something that would make this textile journey more effective and help you to meet your goals?

„It would be good to **broaden our network of suppliers and spinners**. No spinning company wants to count only on one supplier for quality, quantity and strategic reasons. If we want to build better fashion systems that really work, we have to slowly scale up our production network. I think otherwise it will be hard to have an impact.”

What do you think about taking back systems and how could we make use of them for CtL?

„If you throw it away to the bins of the Salvation Army, a pair of jeans makes about 5 Eurocents a kilo, (the costs for transportation and sorting included). Some green brands ask their customers to send back the products after use and offer them a discount on further sales. It has to be clear that financially this makes no sense. It is rather a **marketing strategy** for tying customers to a brand. The thing is that you need a lot of logistics to get the product back to the brand, which has an ecological impact as well. So if we think about **taking back strategies** for CtL we have to think it through completely.”

What is your experience with local textile networks and what are the possibilities?

„I really believe in local recycling networks. Therefore we initiated the project „Twentse Textielcirkel” in 2014 and developed a campaign to make collecting of post-consumer textiles much more efficient. Thereby we were able to save countless textiles from trash and get them back to the cycle. The collected textiles and old-clothes go to a local sorting center where only people are hired that won't

get a chance to work otherwise. That way we were able to **create new jobs** in the region and to collect 80% more of old textiles than before! So recycling is also a matter of good communication. The Twentse Textielcirkel is a local social enterprise that is profitable and not subsidized! We have organized it and proven that it really works.”

What is your future vision for CtL and for local textile and fashion production in general?

„The conventional fashion industry we feel are talking a lot about sustainability issues but act little. It is all about margin. That is why you need the small green companies to be the **storytellers** and to break new grounds. If you talk about sustainability you have to be transparent and true. If you produce locally that is much easier as you are much closer to everyone involved and to everything that happens to the product.

So we need small pioneering companies and projects like CtL to prove that it can be done: to create better fashion systems that are a win-win for all parts involved: the people, the eco-system and the economy. Everyone in the industry just tells you why it can't be done for so many reasons. We have to prove that this is possible!”

C) FROM FABRIC TO FASHION

MOYZO

Honest fashion for a better world

Interview with Gertie Teunissen, 1st of September 2016

Moyzo is an eco-conscious fashion label from Nijmegen. They are using eco-materials and fair trade production to design timeless fashion pieces, such as dresses, tops and multifunctional basics for women.

What is the status quo of your Work for CtL?

„The ultimate goal of MOYZO, participating in the project CtL, is to realize a **knitted collection** with the CtL yarns that aren't there yet. MOYZO only works with sustainable and natural materials. The starting point for us regarding the project CtL is to create a blended yarn of virgin hemp and recycled cotton which would be highly sustainable. Therefore it would fit in with the MOYZO

philosophy very well. The challenge for MOYZO, in this matter, is to keep the ecological footprint as small as possible during the entire process of the realization and the sale of this collection. For this reason MOYZO has done an internal study on how to realize this ideal. Inspired by this and because there wasn't a high quality yarn available yet, MOYZO started a circular linen collection."

What has your experience with CtL been so far?

„I was highly inspired by the project and very motivated to do my utmost in terms of sustainability and to keep the ecological footprint as small as possible. Besides that, I have learned a lot about sustainable fibers and about how difficult it is to develop a new fiber. It is a little disappointing that there is not yet a suitable fiber available because for me, as a company, it is difficult to push forward planning”.

What about the concept of CtL did convince you to become an active member of the network?

*„The most important starting-point to participate was to have access to **innovative sustainable yarns** and fabrics. It is still very difficult to find and purchase certified sustainable fabrics. The minimum order quantity is huge. Besides that, the local character of the process is inspiring: creating a **local production chain** that decreases the footprint and working with local entrepreneurs.”*

What is your vision regarding CtL?

„It's a beautiful initiative to realize a local sustainable production chain. In order to realize this, a completely new yarn has to be created which costs a lot of time and energy. However, we must continue our efforts to the utmost until we have got a high-quality yarn. The result will give us a beautiful concept which can be taken forwards and be used by others too.”

As the locally produced fabrics probably won't be very fine in the end, what design applications do you see?

„It can be assumed that there will be quality yarn, finally. Whether this will be a fine or coarse yarn doesn't really matter because the designs can be adapted. MOYZO likes to work with yarns with a crafty, coarse look, especially in case of a knitted collection. Furthermore, the yarn for a knitted collection doesn't have to be as strong as it should be for a woven one. In case the appropriate quality

for knitting will not be achieved, I will consider making shawls and wraps of it."

If there were sustainable CtL-fabrics from hemp and recycled cotton ready to use, how and where do you imagine the production of your designs could be done?

*„As CtL pursues a product chain that is **as local as possible**, MOYZO wants to keep production **as nearby as possible**. In case of the knitted collection we opt for: Breierij de Reuver at the village of Beneden-Leeuwen (20km,) and for the woven collection we opt for Atelier Wilma at the village of Alverna (6km.)"*

How would you like the idea of a local CtL-production atelier giving work to socially disadvantaged people or women? Do you think this would be a good solution?

„That's a very good idea! I have considered it several times as well but I just do not have the time to organize this. Especially half a year ago, when thousands of refugees settled in Nijmegen."

Do you have experience with design4recycling strategies? What would it mean for you as a designer having to meet future CtL-requirements in order to design for disassembly?

„I did not have any experience yet. But these projects did inspire me indeed. This resulted in a circular linen collection and in a circular woolen collection which will soon be available on our website."

Do you feel that this kind of new fashion network challenges the role of the designer? If so, what is the difference compared to a conventional design process?

*„It is the job and task of the designer to consciously handle materials and consciously interact with people during the entire clothes production process. By communicating this to the consumers, they will also handle them more consciously. Offering the consumer a sustainable collection gives them the opportunity to participate in this ideology. The starting point of my designing process is the **environmental impact**. The starting point of a regular designing process is usually the consumer. That's the difference."*

Is there something you learned so far within the process of CtL?

„That sustainable fashion is more than just using a sustainable piece of fabric and that we still have a lot of work to do in this area."

Why are local fashion networks a good thing and why is this idea worth spreading to other regions?

*„Because the impact of a production chain becomes really **visible** when it takes place in your **own region**. It makes people more conscious. In addition, cooperation in your own region is better for social contacts, works much **more efficiently** and has a lot **less impact** on the environment. Reason enough to spread it out worldwide.“*

II.) EVALUATION OF INTERVIEWS

Due to the technical challenges the fiber and yarn development turned out to be, it makes sense to take a deeper look onto this first steps of the CtL product chain:

A) INTERVIEW PARTNER: BEN RATELBAND (STEXFIBERS)²:

status quo:

- still in progress
- our goal: to develop high quality blends mainly from Dutch hemp and locally recycled denim for wovens and knitwear.

challenges:

- huge technical challenge to create a hemp blend that doesn't break and that is soft enough for fashion applications.

chances:

- if we are successful we are in business right away because there is a huge demand for Dutch hemp from the denim sector.

future CtL-products:

- future Ct- fabric ranges: we won't be able to produce very fine qualities normally used for shirts, etc., so the future fabrics may work better for textile/furniture design than for garments.

my vision of CtL:

- to support the national hemp industry, so future CtL-productions could be realized in larger scale (now: small-scale only) or even with from local hemp from Gelderland.

what CtL stands for:

- transparent product chain
- Dutch hemp
- nationally/regionally sourced materials

B) INTERVIEW PARTNER: PETER BOS (TEXPERIUM)³:

status quo:

- still in progress
- no final fiber blends/yarns yet
- we have used high quality hemp for now from China because the Dutch hemp hasn't got the high quality we need.
- We strive to reach a good quality level in the end and we believe we will reach it soon.

challenges:

- large-scale production not realistic yet (not enough Dutch hemp available yet and in the near future). Only for very **small-scale production** realistic.
- there are no spinning factories anymore in NL but close by in Belgium, Germany or France

chances:

- we believe in **local networks** and that they give opportunities to our community/region and for sustainability in general.
- We created a local recycling network "Twentse Textielcirkel" (2014) which works very efficiently & creates new jobs in the region -> proven it can work!

future CtL-products:

- goal for future CtL-yarns: **20 fineness** won't result in very fine qualities normally used for fashion
- therefore the designers should also think about textile applications rather than for garments, or about fashion that works with rough materials, too.

my vision of CtL:

- to prove that local textile production can be done and product chains where everyone profits from.
- Help the industry to grow back and produce more local successively.

what CtL stands for:

- local production makes it much easier to be transparent which is the basis for sustainability.

C) OTHER INTERVIEW PARTNERS:

In the following interviews, I gathered the visions and values of the CtL-designers and other network partners as follows: 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

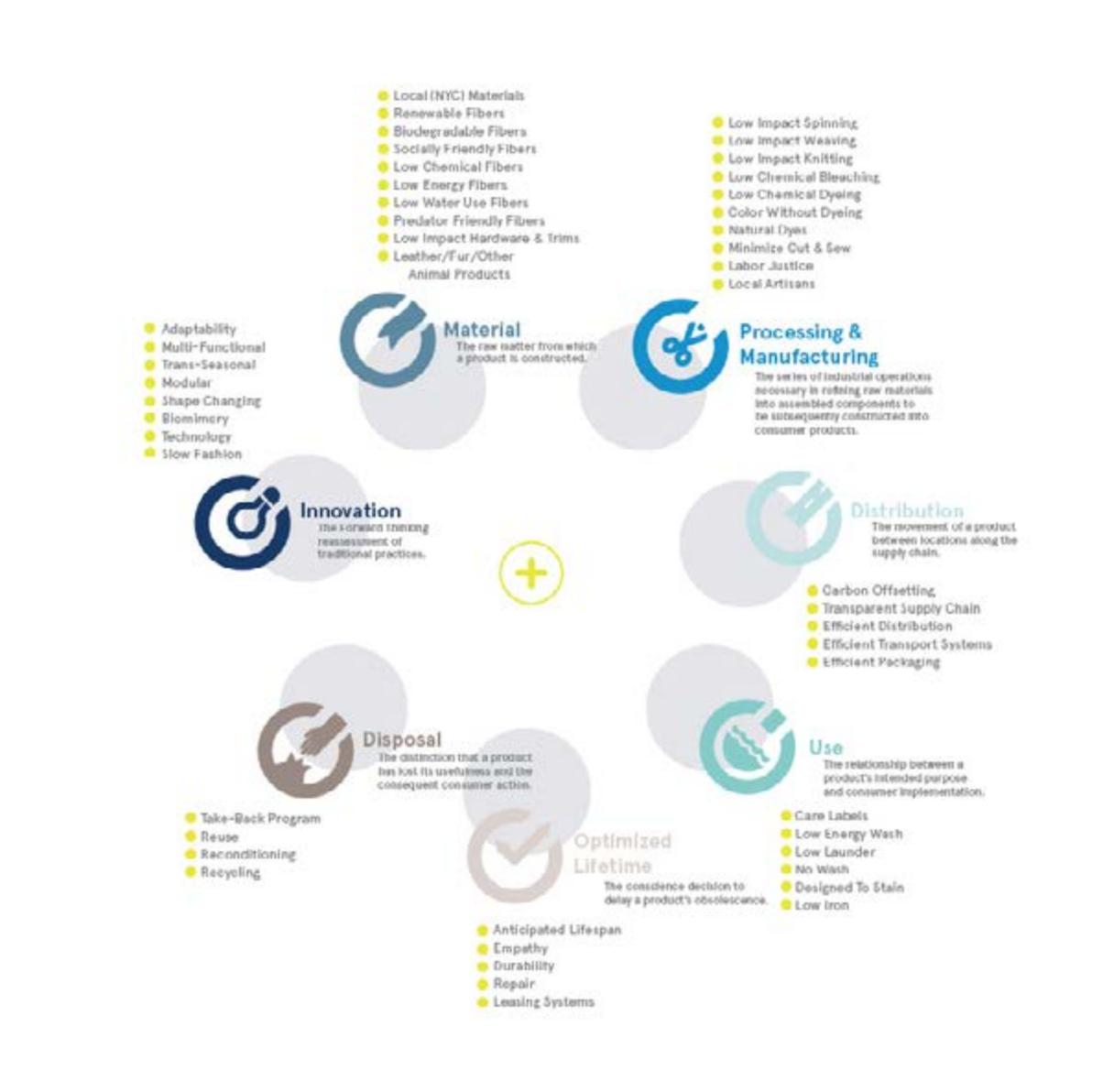
	my vision of CtL and future products:	for me CtL stands for:
Alcon Advies (Anton Luiken)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to help establishing Gelderland as a Design Hotspot 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - highly sustainable (low impact) - exclusive - circular - local (=meaning central European)
Jones Arnhem (Judith ter Haar)	<p>for me CtL is about creating a platform to promote Dutch newcomer designers. They receive design guidelines/materials from the CtL- network, they are responsible to develop and produce the final products themselves. In return they get promoted as partners of CtL. Design will be key for success, rather than just a nice green story.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - advanced design/aesthetic exclusivity - Dutch design - curated collections (Art Direction by CtL)
Saxion (Theresia Grevinga)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to establish different values in fashion (not only about prices and margins) - even if local production can't be done in every part of the chain yet, I believe it is important to share this vision to get closer step by step (as local as possible!) - to reinvent the local textile industry and make it better than it has ever been 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - local materials (e.g. Dutch hemp) - locally manufactured products - added value of local networks (e.g. direct exchange & collaborations) - no/low waste strategies
tous les chéris (Els Bugter)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - material challenge (for baby products, as the final textiles have to be very soft!) - CtL asks for a different design process (design follows material) compared to conventional design - material as starting point for everything - highly inspiring material (undyed blends in soft indigo shades) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a very personal network of manufacturers - inspiring new insights & experiences of the wonders/challenges of making textiles - collaborative - interdisciplinary - interconnected
Moyzo (Gertie Teunissen)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - make a knitwear collection from innovative sustainable yarns (hemp/ recycled denim) - if only wovens will be available, no problem for us - if final material should be too rough for garments, textile accessories are an option - beautiful vision: a local sustainable production chain - direct feedback helps to make the process more transparent, efficient and sustainable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - local manufacturing (maybe in form of a social project (e.g. with refugees?)) - highly sustainable products - design4recycling - low impact production

The interviews have shown that every member of the CLOSING THE LOOP network has an own vision and an individual set of values that is different from person to person. To push the project further in the direction of a concrete brand vision the question the CtL-members should

answer collectively in the future is:

What is most important to us as one CtL-collective?

A handy tool in order to sharpen and structure the value focus of a brand can be the so-called Sustainable Strategies Wheel:



(image courtesy: Brooklyn Fashion + Design Accelerator at Pratt Institute, 2016)⁹

**“SUSTAINABILITY CAN BE OVERWHELMING,
COMES AT YOU LIKE A TIDAL WAVE.
SO WE BREAK IT INTO PIECES THAT ARE MORE ACCESSIBLE,
STEPPING STONES BASED ON YOUR VALUES:
WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO YOU?”¹⁰**

(Deborah Alden, CEO of the Brooklyn Fashion + Design Accelerator)

III.) CROWDFUNDING AS A TREND BAROMETER

GREENVESTMENT AS AN ACT OF SOCIAL DESIGN

Globalization, the economic crisis and climate change have resulted in a rather critical attitude towards capitalism and a new social design idealism. Investing money has therefore turned into a powerful tool for societal and political activism.

Many new crowd-funding platforms have emerged to meet this new interest: to deliberately invest money in projects and start-ups people consider important. Business concepts they are willing to support financially to help them get realized in the near future. Those crowd-funding platforms facilitating the funding process can be filtered for certain topics people are willing to support actively. In this context **sustainability** and projects around its various facets are creating a big buzz.

In the following chapter I will gather relevant crowd-funding data to find out about the public's real interest and support of sustainability related projects.

Topics like circular, local and sustainable have been popular topics for several years already. As the project of CLOSING THE LOOP is about to define its core values, it can be highly interesting to have a look at the topics that have been crowd-funded most successfully.

To get figures that are most relevant and representative, it is advisable to focus on **kickstarter.com**, which is the most important crowd-funding platform up to date.

Kickstarter.com¹¹ is the biggest crowd-funding website for creative projects worldwide.

Founded in 2009 the NY based platform has presented 326.275 projects so far with a general success rate of 36%. That means that in general more than 1 of 3 projects gets funded.

Fashion is one of altogether 15 project categories Kickstarter.com works with:

The success rate for fashion projects is 23% and much lower. That means that less than 1 of 4 fashion projects get funded in average. Looking closer to the kickstarter category of fashion we find out the following:

- 18.275 fashion projects have been presented so far.
- 4.236 fashion projects have been successfully funded.
- 371 fashion projects are in the state of funding right now.

We can filter the past and current fashion projects for certain values that are important for the future products qualities CLOSING THE LOOP is focusing on to gain more insights about which ones the public might be interested in the most:

- circular : 2 projects (example: **ReBlend**),
2 funded, success rate: 100%
- sustainable : 280 projects, 110 funded, success rate: 39%
- fair : 110 projects, 38 funded, success rate: 35%
- recycling : 146 projects, 47 funded, success rate: 32%
- organic : 318 projects, 96 funded, success rate: 30%
- eco : 285 projects, 86 funded, success rate: 30%
- local : 234 projects, 66 funded, success rate: 28%
- hemp : 56 projects, 11 funded, success rate: 20%

(Ordered by the average success rate that I have calculated, based on the number of projects and the number of those that were funded successfully)

BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLE: LOOP.ALIFE:

If we look for successful circular fashion projects at other crowd-funding platforms, the Dutch project of „loop.alife“, that has just been funded successfully via opc (www.oneplanetcrowd.com), can serve as a nice example of the public's interest in circularity if the story is told in the right way:

Oneplanetcrowd International B.V. [NL] <https://www.oneplanetcrowd.com/nl/project/171857/description>

LOOP.ALIFE - INVESTEER SAMEN MET ONS IN 'TRULY CIRCULAR'

BRIGHTLOOPS B.V. uit Amsterdam, Nederland

€ 12.682
GEFUND VAN € 10.000 DOELBEDRAG
STREEFBEDRAG: € 15.000

127%

DONATIE / VOORVERKOOP ⓘ
82 FUNDERS

PROJECT SUCCESVOL
GEFUND OP 2 DECEMBER 2016

KIES BEDRAG

€ 25

BECOME A FRIEND

Wil jij ons graag steunen en heb jij toevallig geen extra truien of sjaal nodig, helemaal goed! Fijn dat je samen met de ons de wereld weer in balans wilt brengen.

„truly circular“ & „100% recycled“

are the core values loop.alife has set their focus on.

Their individual approach to circularity and sustainability:

- reducing the use of water by upcycling old sweaters (mechanical recycling of post-consumer textile waste) into new ones („saving 500 liters of water for each new loop.alife sweater“¹²)
- „fundamentals“: timeless design essentials that can be worn for many seasons
- their garments and accessories are produced in the Netherlands as local as possible
- extensive color-sorting before recycling allows loop.alife to do without additional dyeing and waste of water.
- If their recycling fibers have to be blended with others for fiber strength they are using upcycled industrial waste of knitting machines or new green fibers.
- loop.alife is coordinating each and every step of their product chain to guarantee full transparency.

Together with 82 funders the new circular fashion start-up of loop.alife managed to be funded with 12.682€. They easily reached their financial funding target of 10.000€ and will be sending out their first products on December 20th 2016 to their faithful funders.

IN SHORT:

The most important topics (related to the search keys shown above) were
(according to the number of fashion projects that were submitted in general):

- organic (318 projects)
- eco (285 projects)
- sustainable (280 projects)

The values most important to the public are:

- circular (100%)
(not that representative, because not enough projects yet but still promising)
- sustainability (39%)
- fair production (35%)
- recycling (32%)

Conclusion:

All of those topics mentioned above and fashion projects incorporating these qualities have a much better success rate than the average fashion project at **kickstarter.com**.

Fashion projects around the topics of sustainability, fair, production or recycling together add up to a success rate of 35% in average which makes them about 50% more successful than a common fashion project at kickstarter.com.

The fact that only 2 fashion projects have been submitted in the past and that there is no current project at all around the topic of ‚circularity‘ suggests the following:

Even if circularity and seems to be a trendy media topic in the context of green fashion coverage, this concept still isn't really implemented into the business of fashion yet. There seems to be a market niche for circular fashion projects as well as a general public interest to meet and support projects about circularity, sustainability and fair production.

So the question is how to push the network project of CLOSING THE LOOP forward to the next level? Which value should CtL focus on to sharpen their brand vision?

Looking back to the circular fashion brand loop.alife, which was successfully crowdfunded, we found out the following: **Loop.alife** chose to set their main value focus on „truly circular“. At the corporate homepage of loop.alife we found out about other values important to the brand, e.g. recycling, local production and transparency. All in all, they share a very similar mix of values with the network project of CLOSING THE LOOP.

As our research of crowdfunding has shown, their value focus on circular makes total sense as there is a big support for sustainable start-ups in general and for circular projects in particular.

These results indicate that **circularity** might be the most promising **overall focus point** for the project of CLOSING THE LOOP/van O as the topic is still not overly present in the market and therefore a suitable unique selling point. It seems very advisable for CLOSING THE LOOP to set their main focus on „circular“ and use the existing buzz to establish their brand successfully in the market.

Nevertheless, the topic of circularity is still relatively new within the fashion industry and the general public. The focus on circularity makes it necessary to introduce the new expression of „circular“ and get it across to both customers and retailers at the Point-of-Sale.

This is why **communication** will be a key factor to get across the new ideas behind the concept of circularity to achieve identification and emotional bonding with customers.

IV.) THE BIG PICTURE

In the following chapter, we will dive into the retail and sales market of today and tomorrow, mapping out important trends and inspiring best practice examples to inform the further journeys of the **CLOSING THE LOOP**-collective.

A) THE OMINOUS OMNICHANNEL

The **digital disruption** has become more and more present during the last decade. The terms of „omnichannel” or „mobile driven personalization” are coining today's and tomorrow's retail landscapes. To participate in the retail market of the future it has become necessary to radically merge offline and online activities.

Amazon go - No lines, no checkout – just grab and go!

The perfect example of how the retail store of the future could look like, where the two worlds of online and offline are blended completely is „Amazon go”:

An innovative store concept for stationary retail that will be launched with the first Amazon go store opening in Seattle in 2017¹³. The store offers different food products ranging from basic food articles like bread and milk to convenience products like instant meals and boxes ready to cook. The high-tech store automatically identifies each product a customer grabs and takes with him or her leaving the store. No queuing at the cash desk necessary anymore, as the products will be paid using the customer's Amazon account automatically. After leaving the store a receipt will be sent by e-mail listing all the groceries that were bought. The idea of skipping queuing at the cash desk isn't exactly new. But Amazon is the first retailer to actually implement this vision into the market of today. Besides, Amazon is more than capable to realize more of those high-tech stores in large scale.



(image courtesy: Amazon go)

IN SHORT:

- Omnichannel means the merging of both analog and online sales
- Mobile payment solutions - no queuing at the cash desk needed anymore
- stock management of both online sales and stationary retail sales can be done together and in real-time.

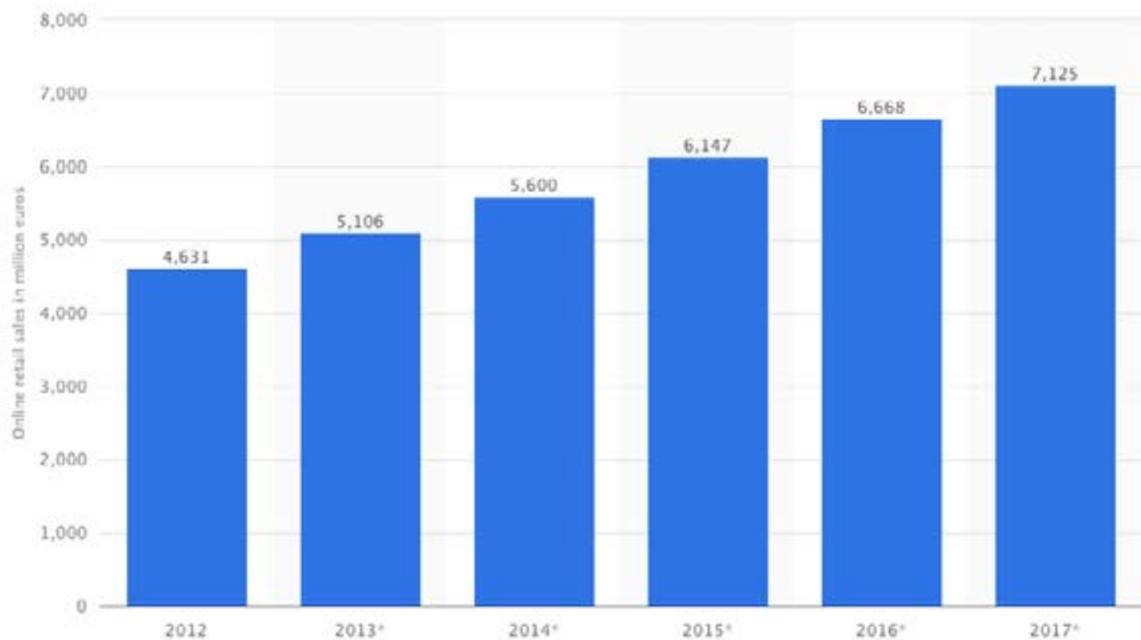
Conclusion:

If CLOSING THE LOOP / van O is entering the next project stage, it is advisable to think about how to merge online and offline sales with each other to create an individual omnichannel approach:

- Rather than to decide for online or offline as one brand focus, it is advisable to identify the different roles both online and stationary Points-of-Sale can play best from customer perspective.
- Online shopping offers a maximum of convenience.
- A physical store can become the perfect stage for personal interaction and for a multi-sensual brand experience.
- to both go for a strong stationary retail concept and an exiting and user-friendly on-line-store (with responsive design for mobile devices like e.g. a smart phone).

B) DUTCH ONLINE RETAIL AND CROSS-BORDER SALES

Online retail sales in the Netherlands from 2012 to 2017 (in million euros):



This timeline shows the online retail sales figures in the Netherlands from 2012 to 2017, in million euros. Online retail sales in the Netherlands totaled 4.63 billion euros in 2012 and are expected to grow to 7.12 billion euros in 2017¹⁴:

A retail study by GfK for **ShoppingTomorrow**, which was published in November 2016, suggests that in the year 2021 Dutch consumers will purchase at least one third of everything they shop via online channels¹⁵. In comparison to that, during the first six months in 2016 just 22% of shopping by Dutch customers was done online. That means that GfK predicts a growth of online sales about more than 45% for the next five years to come. This success of online shopping is directly connected to the rise of the smart phone. E-sales that were done by smart phone were increasing about 66% in the Netherlands, comparing the years 2015 and 2016 with each other.

Especially the younger generations are using online sales channels. In the year 2021 they are expected to do most of their online shopping using their smart phones. Therefore, an increasing number of products purchased online comes from foreign stores. In 2016 this so-called „cross-border shopping” has went up about 31% in the Netherlands and is creating new sales opportunities for local stores in particular.

IN SHORT:

- In only 5 years, one third of everything Dutch consumers are buying will be purchased online.
- The main tool for online shopping will be the smart phone.
- Online cross-border shopping will become more important, creating new opportunities for selling to international customers.



(image courtesy: tous les chéris)

Conclusion:

As soon as all the CtL-members are at the stage of collectively choosing a set of brand values to focus on in the future, they should do the following:

- Focus on values that customers from abroad can identify with as well to pave the way for future cross-sales prospects.
- even if the value of local production was named most frequently by the different CtL-members, the term „local” is always connected to a certain region only. Customers outside that

certain region won't have a very strong emotional bond with.

- It is therefore advisable to choose a set of brand values that speaks to everyone sharing those values (e.g. design, circular, eco-social, etc.) not depending on where they are living.

Dutch design made in Arnhem

This could be a good term to include the focus of local production, while using an expression that appeals to international customers with the added value „Dutch design“, at the same time. Moreover, this expression only will be appropriate if the main part of the actual confection takes place in Arnhem or in the region nearby, e.g. at an own CtL atelier in Arnhem.

C) POP UP STORES AS A SALES STRATEGY

If we compare the pedestrian areas of big cities like Amsterdam and those of smaller Dutch towns we experience two different retail realities: While shopping districts in Amsterdam are crammed with people, smaller towns have to deal with the challenge of shop vacancies. A brilliant new strategy to fill such dead retail space with new life is to use it for Pop-Up concepts.

The old city center of Baarn is a good example of how Pop-Up shops can be realized even in smaller towns, enhancing the overall shopping environment. A highly interesting mix of small concept stores and green fashion shops for grown-ups and children alike have established in Baarn successfully.

The green concept store ÈNZ.FAIRWEAR for example contains of three different kinds of products: The main area offers limited fashion by ÈNZ which is produced in their own atelier. Customers inside their store can glance directly into the atelier space and observe production in progress. Besides their own ÈNZ collections, the store also sells green fashion labels like People Tree and Wunderwerk. Upstairs there is even a Vintage section for clothing and Accessories.



(image courtesy: ÈNZ.FAIRWEAR)

Moreover, shop vacancies are quite present in the pedestrian area. Nevertheless, different Pop-Up stores offer locally produced fashion, vintage products, as well as interactive events and workshops for shoppers and families.

Starting in 2015, the furniture store Nijhof rearranged its whole store to launch its own 250 sqm Pop-Up concept in Baarn. Themed „Broeikas voor talent“ (engl.: “talent incubator”) Nijhof presented and sold products of about 15 newcomer designers and labels, showing selected furniture and homewear products over a period of three months. After that new designers and labels took their place inside the Pop-Up store to freshen up the range of available products.

The e-platform **popupplaza.nl** has become a popular space to find and search for diverse Pop-Up activities taking place in the Netherlands. Moreover, the platform facilitates networking for future Pop-Up shop collaborations. Besides it is a good source of information about the latest Pop-Up shop openings, like the first bio-based Pop-Up store of the Netherlands, that opened November 11th 2016 in Bergen op Zoom until end of January 2017.

We can see an increasing amount of Pop-Up shops around certain concepts (e.g. like „bio-based”). So, the question is: Does a Pop-Up format that could accommodate the future products of CLOSING THE LOOP/van O exist?

PAUSE: conscious Pop-Up Store

· A multi-sense experience to “Pause the way that you like”

„P A U S E IS A PROJECT OF CONSCIOUS POP-UPS BASED ON ADAPTABILITY, DYNAMISM, INCLUSION, AND COLLABORATION. YES, IT IS THE PERFECT PLACE FOR FASHION AND ART TO SHINE. MEET BRANDS, DESIGNERS, ARTISTS AND PERFORMERS (...) AND BE INSPIRED BY AN ECLECTIC MIX OF EXHIBITIONS, ARTIST INTERVENTIONS, PERFORMANCES, AND OTHER LIVE EVENTS. BELIEVE US, THIS EVENT WILL CHANGE YOUR EYE ON FASHION AND CULTURE ONCE AND FOR ALL. ALLOW YOURSELF TIME TO THINK ABOUT YOUR WARDROBE AND THE WAY YOU WANT TO PRESENT YOURSELF TO THE WORLD.”

(curated by the Amsterdam based artist and performer Irina Baldini¹⁶)



(image courtesy: Irina Baldini)

IN SHORT:

- Pop-Up concepts are an exciting sales strategy to fill vacant shops with new life
- online-platform popupplaza.nl is the number one site to promote and look for new Pop-Up activities.

Conclusion:

Pop-Up concepts have the power to revalue the shopping atmosphere completely. They offer great opportunities to present smaller brands and special products to the public. The Pop-Up format inspires customers by creating an exclusive shopping experience.

New Pop-Up concepts are emerging around special topics, e.g. bio-based products or conscious fashion, (e.g. the Amsterdam based PAUSE: conscious Pop-Up Store) which could be a great sales channel for future CtL products.

D) PRODUCT PRESENTATION AS A SALES STRATEGY

Best practice example: Die Sellerie

Curating and developing design goods since 2010

The Vienna based concept store Die Sellerie is a great example of how good design has the power to spread from local to international. A small collective of graphic designers has opened the curated store for selected goods like fine art prints, stationery and home accessories. Sellerie is a combination of showroom and store, creating the perfect stage for Sellerie's small but highly inspiring product ranges. The Sellerie skillfully stretches the boundaries of fashion and art and became known for their intricate, arty and minimalistic visual style.



(image courtesy: Die Sellerie.com)

Their talent to stage is their unique selling point, which quickly received much media coverage and interest for Die Sellerie outside Vienna and even Austria. Their success has led to an online store with international shipping of Sellerie-products. Once a month they send out a highly visual newsletter to their excited fans, who share the same aesthetic visions. Sellerie thus reinvents the ordinary e-newsletter, which suddenly doesn't feel like advertisement at all, but more like a constantly revolving art and design exhibition.

We can be quite sure that good old stationary retail won't disappear in the future. But to thrive it will have to transform in order to fulfill a different mission:

IN SHORT:

- product staging as unique selling point (usp)
- artistic product staging as a strategy to add value: to the actual products, to the brand image and to every marketing and sales output (e.g. Newsletters)

Conclusion:

Unique and inspiring product presentation has the power to push sales from local to international

dimensions. Especially for smaller brands it can be a highly efficient strategy to boost brand presence. Exciting imagery can add a sensual quality to the different Points-of-Sales. Great visuals work for various sales channels, like for example a physical store surrounding as well as an online-store, an e-Newsletter, etc..

It is very advisable for CLOSING THE LOOP to make use of the power of high quality visuals and inspiring product presentation: to develop a unique visual style to stand out, to push customer interaction and boost brand presence on the market.

E) VIRTUAL REALITY BRAND EXPERIENCES



The retail store of the future will set the stage for personal and sensually exciting brand experiences. To fulfill that mission new technologies can prove very useful:

Best Practise example: Tommy Hilfiger VR store experience

Since 2015 already selected flagship stores of the international designer brand **Tommy Hilfiger**'s offer a virtual reality experience of their catwalk shows: Using a Samsung GearVR head-

set, shoppers can watch a 360-degree, three-dimensional version of the runway, as though they are sat at the front row.

“Through virtual reality, we’re now able to bring our one-of-a-kind fashion show to the retail setting,” said Tommy Hilfiger himself. *“From the incredible set and music to exclusive backstage moments, consumers will be able to watch the clothes move and see the collection in the original show environment – it’s a compelling and interesting elevation of the traditional shopping experience.”*

Coming back to the phenomenon of digital disruption, we can learn a lot from the big players in online retail, like Ebay, Amazon, Zalando and others. These brands have changed global Retail and Sales deeply and influenced our daily patterns of consume.

„IT IS NOT THE MOST INTELLECTUAL OF THE SPECIES THAT SURVIVES; IT IS NOT THE STRONGEST THAT SURVIVES; BUT THE SPECIES THAT SURVIVES IS THE ONE THAT IS ABLE BEST TO ADAPT AND ADJUST TO THE CHANGING ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH IT FINDS ITSELF.“

(Megginson, Leon C. (1963): „Lessons from Europe for American Business“. Southwestern Social Science Quarterly)

Best practice example: The world’s 1st VR dept. store by Ebay Australia and Myer

Ebay is a highly successful brand that actively embraces change, - a strategy that will be crucial for anyone willing to shape the retail landscape of the future. **Ebay** is actively breaking new grounds for future visions of retail: Together with **Myer**, Australia’s biggest department store chain, Ebay Australia launched „The world’s first virtual reality department store“ this summer. All the customers need to stroll around their new VR dept. store is a so-called „Shoptical“ (a low tech cardboard frame to convert ones smartphone into a VR-head set) together with a mobile App. Inside the VR-store customers can navigate through the vast product landscapes by using the new technique of „Sight Search“ which was developed exclusively. By focusing on one product for several sec-

onds you automatically zoom into the product and further details about it. Moreover, with every visit the product assortment gets more and more adapted to individual taste of the customer. The virtual reality store offers about 12.500 products until now.



IN SHORT:

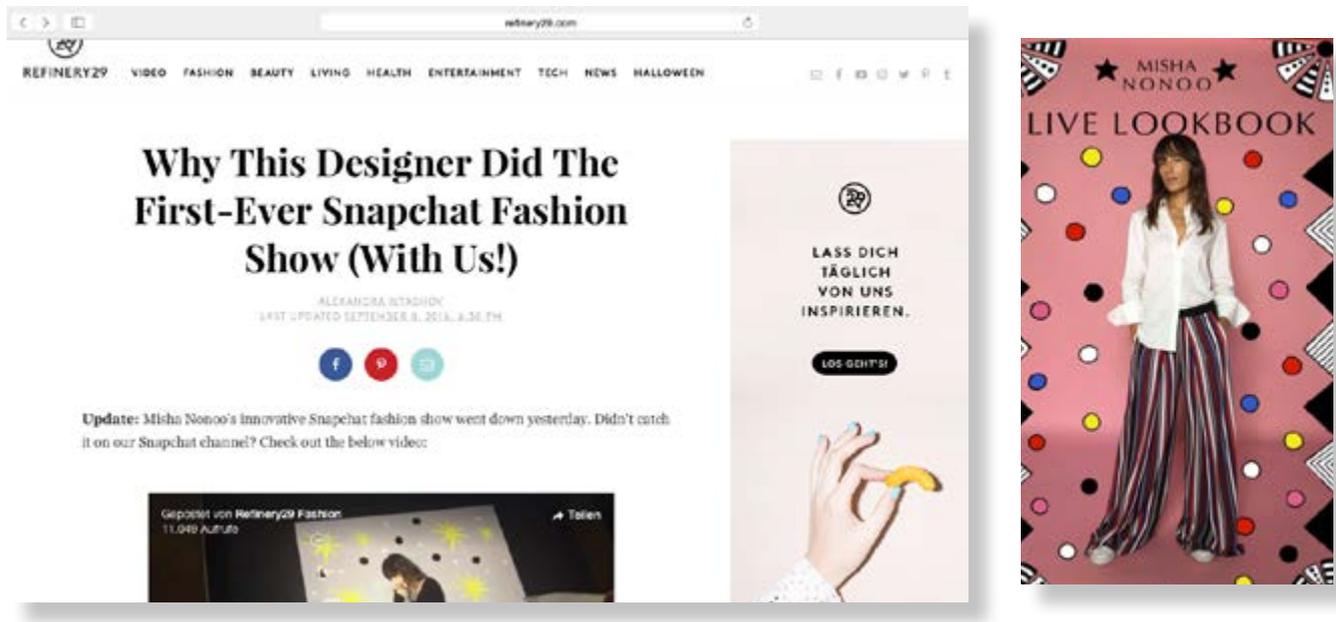
- virtual reality concepts can offer a magical 360° experience to customers at the Point-of-Sale (at a physical store or even online)
- it can offer them their first VR-experience ever
- it can virtually transport them to other places, e.g. the first row of a fashion show
- as a brand of the future you need to be curious and to embrace constant change and new experiments and developments.

Conclusion:

Virtual reality has the power to redefine the traditional shopping experience. VR can facilitate special moments that are both futuristic and magical. For CLOSING THE LOOP, VR could offer the technology to relive all the different steps of production and to connect to all the different people behind a product. A customer could dive into network of CLOSING THE LOOP and track the full life span of a CtL-product from the raw fibers to the tailoring team in and around Arnhem. VR could become the ultimate tool to experience the magic of making.

F) CHATVERTIZING

More and more online platforms like for example **Snapchat**, **Instagram**, or **Youtube** develop into innovative sales channels:



Best practice example: Live Lookbook at Snapchat by Misha Nonoo

Instagram has been a fashion week favorite for years but this season, you can expect to see much New York Fashion Week activity on Snapchat. **Vogue** just launched its Snapchat Discover Channel, part of a mix of stories that will include unveiling new content twice a week, the Los Angeles Times¹⁷ reports. Fashion designer **Misha Nonoo**, who had made headlines for revealing her spring-summer 2016 collection on Instagram only, went further in her quest for alternative sales channels: in September 2016 she presented her „Live Lookbook“:

Pairing **Snapchat**'s native functions with mobile photography, video, illustrations, and artwork, Nonoo became the first fashion brand to create a lookbook exclusively on the platform. She therefore staged an online fashion happening including a photo shooting of her new collection as well as live-illustrations made for each outfit.

Her **Live Lookbook** fashion show was aired by the highly popular Snapchat channel **Refinery 29** and available on Snapchat for **24 hours only**.

Misha Nonoo uses Snapchat as a new sales channel as it creates a direct and personal connection between designer and customers bringing new products straight to their smart phones.

Therefore, Misha Nonoo is no longer selling via wholesale, focusing all of her marketing and sales efforts on e-commerce exclusively.

IN SHORT:

- new social media channels can serve as interesting new sales channels allowing direct B2C interaction
- Snapchat in particular can present exclusive content, that is available only for a very short time (24hours)
- Snapchat can help to create a new form of online fashion event/happening inspiring consumers to become one of the few fashion insiders that will be able to follow the event (connoisseurship)

Conclusion:

New social media formats like for example Snapchat can facilitate personal interaction and B2C communication in exciting new ways. As Snapchat has become widespread with teenagers around the globe, it is still quite new to “older” audiences (above 30 years). Hence, the criterion to decide if one of those new and trendy channels would fit a certain brand profile will be future customers and their favorite platforms of communication.

G) THE POWER OF PERSONAL RATINGS

As the **Millennials**, also known as **Generation Y**, are gaining market importance, a different sales focus becomes necessary. With Millennials, personal ratings and mouth-to-mouth has turned out to be much more efficient than classical marketing methods. **Airbnb** for example has shaken the international hotel industry to the core, integrating personal ratings effectively into their booking procedures in an user-friendly way. Every Airbnb accommodation is presented to customers together with the rating of former guests. Their personal experiences with that particular host and accommodation have a direct influence on the booking behavior of other Airbnb users.

In 2016 a research has shown that personal ratings have become a highly relevant criterion of purchase, no brand should ignore: 92% of consumers now read online reviews vs. 88% in 2014, star rating is the number one factor used by consumers to judge a business¹⁸ nowadays.

Even if a customer is strolling through a retail store in town more and more people search the web for product ratings first before they actually buy the product. New technologies can smoothen out this process and even make it an exciting experience for customers to hunt the place for additional product information, personal ratings and styling ideas.

IN SHORT:

- personal ratings for products and businesses have become a major sales criterion
- they can serve as an highly effective marketing method (mouth2mouth)
- ratings can have a strong positive or negative impact on brand image and sales
- therefore, more manpower is needed: for being able to react immediately on negative ratings if necessary

Conclusion:

CLOSING THE LOOP could be at the forefront to make use of this highly effective marketing method in the field of fashion. Furthermore, it would add transparency on a product level, if people could share their experiences online. Nevertheless, a negative rate of a business or a product can have an highly negative effect on the brand image and on actual sales. Therefore, online content maintenance has to be seen as form of PR and has to be taken seriously. A brand using personal ratings really needs to be willing to constantly improve its rating and customer relations.

Next possible steps for implementation:

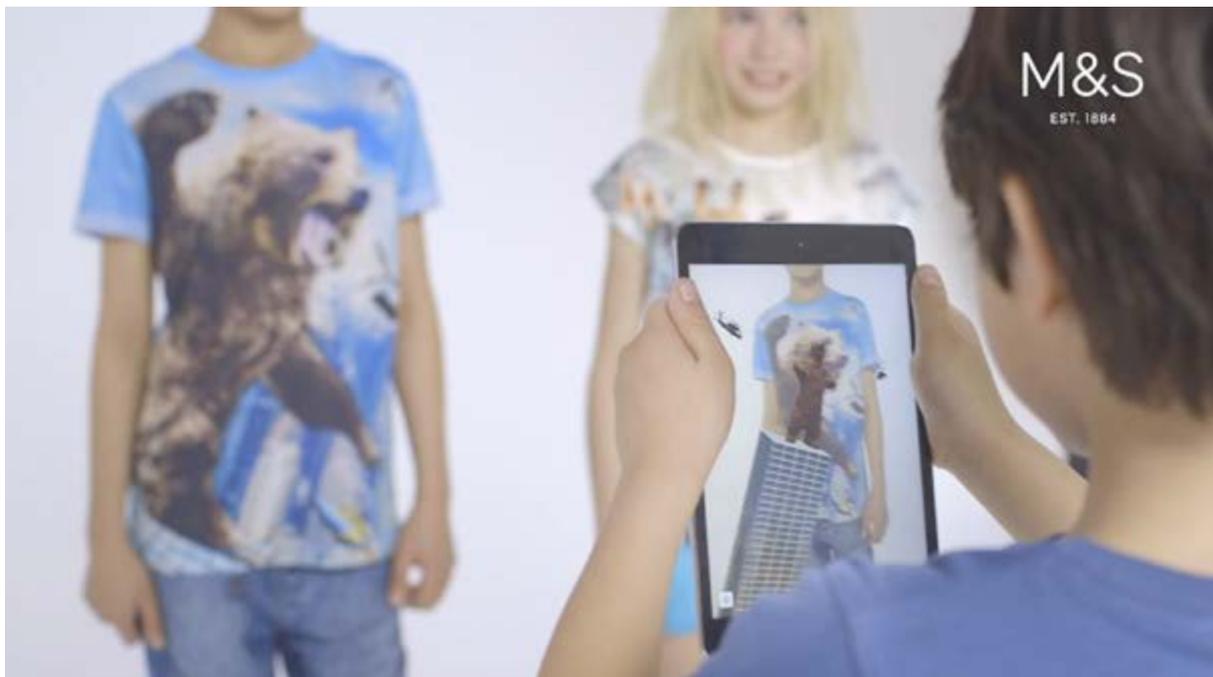
- to find a suitable online market place to collaborate with (preferably with green focus) that meets the high aesthetic of CtL and offers a user friendly user-experience including a personal rating system
- to create an own CtL-online-store that incorporates product ratings together with additional style input (e.g. about how to wear a product, etc.) or further product suggestions

H) BEYOND POKÉMON GO: AR BASED RETAIL SOLUTIONS

New technologies do offer very interesting ways to interact with customers and to inspire highly emotional interactions, which can have a direct effect on sales figures:

The fascinating technology that became highly popular in 2016 through the AR gaming app Pokémon go. **American Apparel**, America's biggest producer of fashion with a local production facility downtown L.A. may be in deep crisis at the moment¹⁹. Nevertheless, with their own **AR App** (2013) they were one of the first fashion retailers to implement **Augmented Reality** into their stationary retail stores, making personal customer reviews available instantly next to many other product features. Since sizing can be an issue when ordering online, this app brings together the best of online and offline shopping: offering customers the convenience and full range of options of a web-like shopping experience.

In summer 2016 the brand **Marks & Spencer** presented their 2016 AR collection for kids: a range of colorful T-shirts printed with wild animals that became alive through a special AR app. The collection was a great success and thus sold out quickly.



(image courtesy: not-studio.com)

The App Layer offers another option to include additional content layers to a product:

Founded in 2009, the Amsterdam based company **Layar** became one of the most popular developers of AR tools and apps. Using Layar people can go on real-life treasure hunts to discover various tags and hidden content in their direct urban surroundings. Moreover, Layar is very popular AR tool for any kind of print Product.

Since 2016 even the renown print magazine **Elle Decoration** is using Layar using AR to offer their customers the magical experience of exploring hidden layers, animations and short and movies within their print magazine. All the readers have to do is look for the Layar symbol they can find on selected pages, scan the whole page with the Layar app to receive inspiring background information of all kind.

Quick-and-easy tools for Augmented Reality

Furthermore, Layar offers user-friendly DIY-tools to publish and share digital content online in just a few steps. That fact makes the app a very handy tool for small companies in particular, who often don't have large IT budgets available.

IN SHORT:

- AR store smartphone app (by American Apparel) to check product ratings and reviews while shopping at a physical store
- AR as a tool for omnichannel sales, merging the benefits of both online and offline shopping
- AR as a playful tool to bring (textile) prints and all sorts of hidden content to life

Conclusion:

Augmented Reality in particular, like for example the Layar App could be an interesting tool for CLOSING THE LOOP, as it offers a great variety of options to bring the production collective and the future product ranges to life.

The future CtL-customers could discover inspiring content, e.g. by scanning a hangtag, an attached sewing label or a print brochure. They could be invited to a walk through the city of Arnhem to scan hidden tags in the urban surroundings or to hunt for inside information and product promotions right in the middle of a hemp field in geo-caching style.

At any rate, augmented reality could be a highly effective tool for customer interaction:

- to dive into the different production locations behind CLOSING THE LOOP
- to discover the various production steps behind a certain fashion product
- to connect with the different people behind a product and the overall CtL-collective

Augmented reality offers an exciting format to experience the magic of making and to take the vision of a transparent production one step further.

I) 3D PRINTING AND HYPERLOCAL DESIGN

„3D PRINTING IS NOTHING SHORT OF A NEW INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION THAT HOLDS POTENTIAL FOR MAJOR INNOVATION OF ECONOMIC MODELS“²⁰

(Pascal Morande, President of the Fédération française de la couture)

Another exciting innovative technology that is about to revolutionize the future of fashion is the art of 3D printing. In an interview with **The Business of Fashion** Pascale Morande describes why he is convinced that 3D printing will spark a **new industrial revolution** that also holds potential for major innovation in terms of economic models, not least via on-demand production. He believes that 3D printing will have significant effects within the segment of luxury fashion creating new and exciting possibilities for design and production.

The celebrated 3D creations of **Iris van Herpen** illustrate how technology and fashion can be merged to open up radically new aesthetic dimensions.



(image courtesy: Iris van Herpen)

The **demand** of both the market and the media for 3D designs is **very high** at the moment as this new technology is taking big leaps forward: now even folded patterns can be realized, allowing the production of much bigger pieces of fabric at a time. Besides, there are more and more biodegradable components available on the market, like for example a **hemp-based printing filament**.

The main challenge at the moment is to reduce the printing time and find a way to recycle and reuse the printing powder, but progress is encouraging.

IN SHORT:

- 3D printing is expected to spark a new industrial revolution
- with the potential to revolutionize the luxury industry by facilitating new economic models via on-demand production
- high demand for 3D printed designs and textiles
- new biodegradable components available, (e.g. hemp-based filament)

Conclusion:

The technology of 3D printing could provide new means of **hyperlocal** production: The fact that objects can be created on site, making freight transport obsolete, could make this technology highly interesting for CLOSING THE LOOP.

Especially as one of the pioneers in 3D printing is the international company **Materialise**, whose Headquarters in Leuven (Belgium) are just around the corner of the CLOSING THE LOOP-network.

Moreover, 3D production on-demand could help to minimize overproduction, which is a big issue regarding sustainability in present-day fashion production. On-demand production would perfectly fit the circular vision of CLOSING THE LOOP and pave the ground for zero waste mono-material products.

Furthermore, 3D printing makes it much easier to customize a product individually, allowing customers to play a more active role in the creative design process. 3D printing with customizable design options could enable the future CLOSING THE LOOP customers to become part of the collective of makers themselves.

V.) LONGING FOR LOCAL

In the last decades, the food industry has proven to be at the forefront of green lifestyle trends. A highly interesting field to observe for new values and patterns of consume bound to influence other industries like fashion subsequently.

As „local production“ turned out to be the value most frequently mentioned in the CtL-interviews, we will take a closer look into the market of **„local“ food products**.

The trend of local has been very present in the food sector for several years already. It is born out of a longing for closer and more authentic bonds to the world around us and to the products we consume. In times of total globalization we see ourselves drowning in sea of endless product choices. Highly branded products with constructed meanings that bear to real connection to ourselves anymore. Food with complex and nontransparent product chains, that has been processed somewhere out there in the world.

In contrast to that, local products relate to a certain area, a wider community spreading around each one of us. An environment we can identify with and relate to. The concept of local offers a sense of closeness, of transparency and authenticity. Furthermore, the act of „buying local“ has become a political act in order to consume mindfully. Consumers willing to lead a sustainable lifestyle and to reduce their carbon dioxide footprint are keen to buy local products, that don't have to be shipped around the world.

The **expression „locally grown“** refers to products that have been produced within short distance. However, the term ‚local‘ is not defined by a maximum distance between the place a product comes from and its Point-of-Sale. Therefore the distances behind a „local“ product can vary substantially:

Asking vendors at a farmer's market selling their local products, they might define ‚locally grown‘ as within a distance of 100 km maximum or even much less. In contrast to that big supermarket chains sell ‚local‘ or ‚regional‘ products that have been grown up to 450 km away. The inflationary use of the term ‚local‘ thus weakened its added value over the last years.

Into the wild

Taking the concept of local even further, the hyperlocal trend of wild food emerged: letting avant-garde chefs combing the wilderness for uncultivated food products like forgotten herbs and mushrooms. This hyperlocal trend of wild inspires people to rediscover their direct environment and to reconnect with nature.

The pioneer of this new nativeness is René Redzepi, head chef of the famous restaurant **Noma** in Copenhagen, which was awarded „Best restaurant of the World” four times by the British journal Restaurant. Redzepi explores the Nordic woods and countryside for new culinary experiences, so his guests can savor cloudberry, musk ox and many other most unusual creations like for example **edible earth**, their legendary signature dish.

Wild food speaks to our sensual curiosity, our spirit of adventure and our desire to leave behind the limits of the ordinary.

IN SHORT:

- local as an attitude of De-Industrialization and a countermovement of globalization
- interest in locally produced products out of a desire for “real”, authentic connections
- the term of “local” is quite undefined, which has weakened its added sales value successively
- the hyperlocal trend of “wild” has emerged, revaluating uncultivated and forgotten foods and the adventure to hunt the wilderness for edible treasures

1.) LOCALLY PRODUCED FOOD AND HOW TO SELL IT

CtL celebrates the vision of **thinking global and acting local**. Based on this concept, I will take a closer look onto my direct local environment, to gather further insights about the different sales strategies of local food that can again be related to a global scale. Zooming into an area, that I know inside out, allows me to map out new market developments most effectively.

Thinking about the most popular places for the hipster folk is meeting in the area I immediately had to think of a burger place called **Tofino**:

A) BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLE: TOFINO (ESSEN, GERMANY)²¹

- Burgers from 100% organic local meat
- 100% fresh: grilled on demand, not pregrilled



(image courtesy: Tofino)

sales channels:

- small, stylish restaurant in a premium location
- own **food truck** that can be booked for events. Besides, the food truck is touring the country to sell at nightlife events and trendy street food markets, like for example at the popular **Streetfood Market** at Schöner Alfred in Essen.
- Tofino cooperates with the new delivery service network of **foodora** that is using bike couriers (much more sustainable than car delivery) to bring their burgers to the homes of their customers directly.



(image courtesy: Tofino food truck)

The locally produced meat Tofino uses for their burgers comes from a local butcher shop nearby:

B) BEST PRACTISE EXAMPLE: BIO-FLEICHEREI BURCHARDT (ESSEN, GERMANY)²²

- certified and awarded organic butcher shop
- meat from local or regional organic farmers (documentation of provenience in form of a booklet, displayed at the product counter)

sales channels:

- small butcher shop in b-class location

special sales strategies:

· Initiative: Essener Weideschwein:

Customers are paying 18€ per month to support local organic farming in the area and get a discount of 10% on all pork products. Their fee helps to pre-finance the cruelty-free care and cultivation of pigs of an old breed and pays a fair wage for organic farmers.

· DIY-events: Make your own sausages:

Every three months Burchardt offers different DIY-workshops where participants can make their

own sausages to take home with them afterwards. These workshops are highly popular and have become a great success.

Besides classical and organic supermarkets and small health food stores, farmers' markets always have been a popular Point-of-sale for local groceries. With more and more consumers interested in the story behind a product, farmer's markets have become even more popular for shopping local food on the one hand and for meeting the people behind a product on the other hand.

Another classical Point-of-Sale are **farm shops** where customers can buy locally produced groceries from producers directly. Around the city of Essen for example you find a handful of local farms growing organic food in a small scale. They offer diverse agricultural products including vegetables, eggs, meat, and so on. To get out of the city to buy those products asks much more effort from the customers of course. Visiting one of those farms myself I was positively surprised by a unique shopping experience: After being welcomed kindly by the farmer himself he offered me a tour around the farm and into the cowshed. He encouraged me to pad the cows and to have a look at their newborn babies. Despite its remote location, the farm and the farm shop were well attended by many young families who seemed to be the number one target group of that farm. With the many different kinds of life animals and children's toys at the entrance it became an outdoor playground for all the city kids **excited to experience** farm life first hand.

Healthy convenience is another big trend in the food sector that could influence other industries as well. This trend is all about finding clever and convenient solutions for leading a healthy lifestyle. The thermomix for example has turned into a new status symbol for the both busy and health conscious and there are a rising number of food subscriptions and delivery services popping up. Besides international brands for home delivery food boxes, like for example the Berlin based **Hellofresh**, there are also smaller companies, that are successfully operating in delivering local food products:

C) BEST PRACTISE EXAMPLE: FLOTTE KAROTTE (BOCHUM, GERMANY) ²³

- producer and distributor of organic and locally produced food products
- claim: „**100% Bio, frisch ins Haus geliefert**“

Delivery service for organic groceries (vegetables, fruits, meat products and bread), mainly from local production.

retail & sales structure:

- Subscription for home delivery of mixed, seasonal groceries (assortment changing every week)
- 2 assorted product boxes available at selected partner shops (e.g. Bio-Fleischerei Burchardt: same values (sustainable, local, transparency) and target groups with complementing product ranges (in this case: organic, locally grown meat).

communication:

- transparent product chains: List and web links to all suppliers
- every week new cooking recipes are presented online as suggestions of what to cook from the delivered product assortments

IN SHORT:

- Stationary sales presence: Small but stylish POS (e.g. in form of a shop/restaurant)
- Additional sales channels: mobile shop/restaurant concepts (e.g. via food truck) to sell at hip food events like Street Food Markets or to be booked for private events.
- new and ecofriendly distribution formats (e.g. Foodora bike delivery) help to create new delivery services and expand the customer range of high quality restaurants.
- Special subscriptions: to support local organic farming, cruelty-free animal care and pay fair wages to local organic farmers. In return, customers get a permanent discount.
- DIY-Workshops (e.g. to make your own sausages) for participation and transparent production.
- Farm shops outside the city have become a popular place for young families. A place for kids to experience the countryside and farm life, to get in contact with animals and to

see where our food comes from.

- Healthy convenience as another important food trend with a rising number of food subscriptions and delivery services (e.g. of preselected food boxes)

Conclusion:

Zooming in to the food sector you see that producers that focus on selling **local** groceries have a relatively small customer reach. This is because the added value of term **local** is restricted to the direct area around the place of production.

If you zoom into food producers or food related brands, that are successful nationally or even internationally, you see that they put their focus on **organic, healthy, fresh or fair** instead.

Coming back to CLOSING THE LOOP and the most promising brand values to focus on for future marketing and sales, the findings indicate the following:

That values like **organic** or **fair** (independently from where the future CtL-customers might live) should be preferred to the term **local**.

2.) PRODUCT TRACKING IN FOOD & FASHION:

Walking into the conventional German Supermarket „Edeka“, I stroll around the corridors scanning the countless shelves for relevant products. After passing heaps of apples from „regional“ origin I come to hold at a huge product display.

If we think about food products that succeed in communicating their product chain in a transparent and traceable way, there is one product that instantly comes to mind: the **egg**.

Opening one of the egg cartons I finally find what I was looking for: each tiny egg is printed with the so-called **KAT-code**, consisting of a certain set of letters and numbers. The German institution **KAT** (Verein für kontrollierte alternative Tierhaltungsformen e.V.) offers consumers both an online database and a smartphone app to type in the code to trace back the origin of the egg they are holding. The code gives information about the country of production, about the kind of animal housing (e.g. „laying batter“ or „free range“, etc.) and even the farm where they have been

produced. This database facilitates good product traceability but it also means a huge challenge to keep the system and all the content updated.

Just next door to the Supermarket there is a **dm** store. With 3349 shops and 56.537 employees this German drugstore is the biggest in all over Europe. They offer a variety of both conventional and organic baby and children clothes. Their „Alana“ clothing brand is based on natural materials such as certified organic cotton. Since 2013 each Alana piece is provided with an additional „Pfad-Finder“ (engl.: path finder) sewing tag, showing an individual product code:



(image courtesies: dm-drogerie markt GmbH)

By typing in this product code on dm's website „pfadfinder.dm.de“, customers get the following information: in Turkey the raw cotton has been grown and the fabric has been produced, in Ukraine in the city of Lwiw the garment has been cut, sewn, shipped to Denmark for distribution, then brought to Karlsruhe (Germany) to dm headquarters and their distribution center to be sent to the different dm stores afterwards. Next to the country (and city) of production dm uses images and texts to give an insight into the different stages of production, also showing some of the people behind the products.

One could argue that the information given could be much more detailed, including the actual factories and suppliers' names. On the other hand, it shows that much more transparency than the ordinary „Made in xy“ sewing tag is possible even in the context of large scale-production.

The next store I am visiting is Essen's best address for green fashion: The **cob concept store**, in the most popular district of Rüttenscheid, offers a wide variety of green lifestyle products from fashion, jewelry, to interior and handmade stationary. I'm meeting Meike Pfeiffer the owner and creative mastermind behind the curated store that offers green fashion labels such as: Armed Angels, Bleed, Braintree, Greenbomb, Koi, Komodo, LangerChen, Les Racines du Ciel, Miss Green, Paala, People Tree, Recolution, Seasalt, Studio Jux, Wunderwerk and many more.



When asking the owner for a green fashion label that shows a special strategy in making their product chains more transparent she shows me a beautiful green dress from the current autumn/fall collection by Studio Jux.

Best practice example: Studio Jux

This Dutch company for organic fashion goes one step further in their approach for traceable product chains. Meike Pfeiffer is turning the dress around in her hands, searching the inner side seams for a special sewing tag she holds into my camera:



It bears the number „10” and the following information: „Meet your tailor Studiojux.com/handshake”

- 10 -

RAMILA CHEPANG
Tailor

Nepali date of birth 02/02/2049
Western date of birth 16/05/1992

'I grew up with two brothers and one sister. That's why I always like to work in a group. I learned my stitching skills from an old tailor in Kathmandu. Yeli and Usha are very close friends of mine. We live close by and walk together to the factory every morning, to have a some girls chat.'

If I type in that web address I meet the person who has been sewing that piece of clothing back at the production facility in Nepal owned by Studio Jux.

In my case the green dress was sewn together by 24 year old Ramila Chepang from Kathmandu.

Every one of their tailors at the Studio Jux production is presented shortly on the brand homepage with their individual number, offering all of their tailors some space to tell something personal about themselves. By opening their own production facility in Nepal Studio Jux has taken responsibility for their product chain and successfully used their added product information as an added value for storytelling and marketing.

IN SHORT:

- The egg serves as a great example of product traceability in food. Printed with the so-called KAT-code an online database tells customers about the country of production, the kind of animal housing and the actual farm where it has been produced.
- Europe's biggest drugstore chain **dm** sells a range of organic baby clothes with individual product codes. By typing in the code online customers get informed about: Every big step of the production chain and in which country (or city) it has taken place. This shows, that even in conventional large scale production, more transparency can be achieved.
- Studio jux uses short product codes on their garments to trace their pieces back to the Nepali tailor, who has been sewing them. By giving the people behind their production some online space to present themselves personally, they can use transparency and storytelling as an added value for their products. These textile connections inspire customers to bond emotionally with their products.

Conclusion:

CLOSING THE LOOP could create an own website to tell customers out about the people and the production of their products. They could create an online platform for customers to experience the „magic of making” with their own eyes. The biggest challenge and opportunity will be to give such insights into the actual production an attractive format and a stylish outlook. Because that is exactly what the industry is lacking so far.

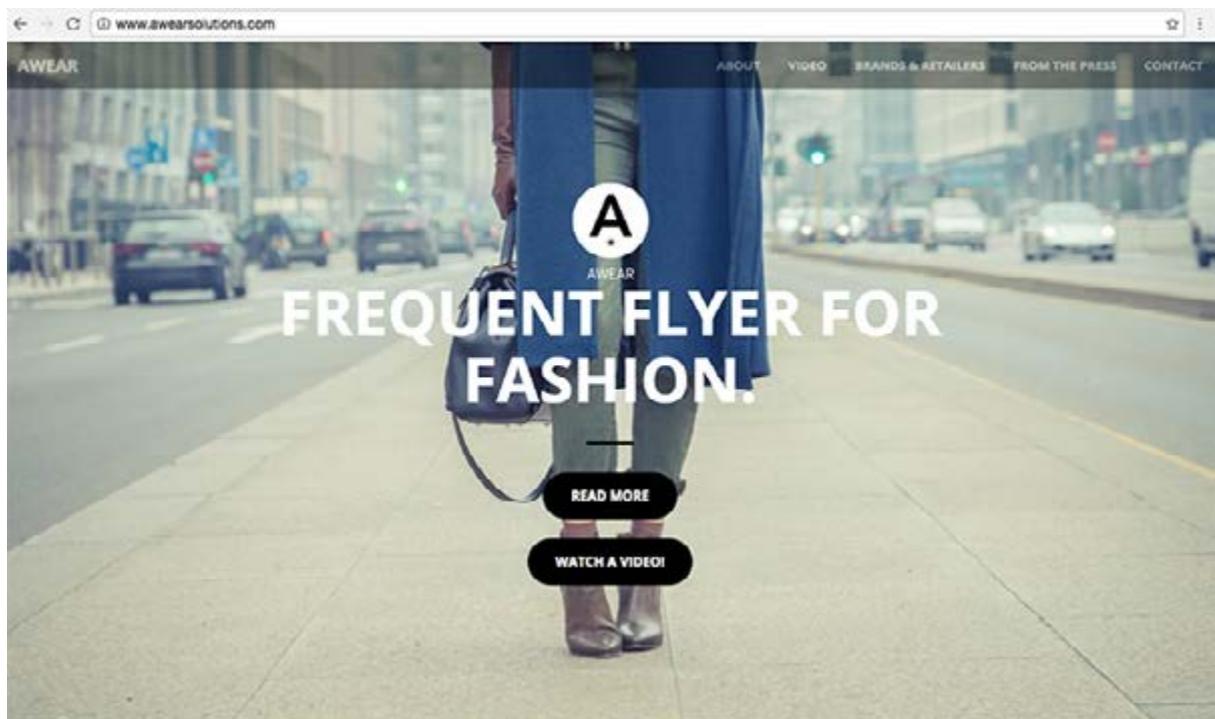
PRODUCT TRACKING AFTER SALES

We now saw different strategies to label food and fashion products in order to make their origin traceable. But if we think in terms of circularity we could go even a step further.

The question here is: Are there labels on the market already, which succeed in tracking their products after sales? As the circular vision aims to bring as many sold products back to the cycle after use, product tracking could be a way to monitor and optimize that process.

AWEAR SOLUTIONS

The company Awear Solutions has created an extra-small smart tag that for the first time ever, providing fashion brands to keep track of their products after they are sold to their customers. Their clientele are fashion brands interested in real-time, post-sale analytics about their consumer's product usage to inform their future merchandising decisions. To facilitate customer interaction Awear has developed a smartphone app similar to a "frequent flier program", promising VIP experiences and special offers for active users.



(image courtesy: Awear solutions)

The field of **shareconomy** offers some interesting ideas to monitor products after sales based

on the concept of product leasing. The circular Dutch brand MUD Jeans became famous for their so called „Lease a Jeans” concept they offered to customers besides the traditional purchase of their products. Recently however MUD decided to stop their leasing concept, due to the major bureaucratic challenge these two different business models were causing administration wise.

But there are other companies focusing only on product leasing, successfully meeting the challenge of increased administration the tracking of all products and this continuing customer care is creating:

The German e-store **Kilenda.de**²⁴ offers a wide range of second hand clothing for kids and pregnant women to rent. Customers can order and keep the clothes as long as they want and send them back as soon as they don't fit anymore. They have to pay only the exact amount of time they actually use the products. Besides, all garments are covered by insurance in case they get damaged so customers don't have to pay if something gets broken. Customers can also buy a product if they want to keep it.

Kilenda has integrated an interesting online tool into the **wardrobes** of their customers. Based on each kilenda-wardrobe the „Eco-race” tool calculates the ecological footprint customers are saving by renting the pieces of clothing instead of buying new garments (visible on the right side of the picture below)



If customers place an order at Kilenda they get an own account to log in at kilanda.de. So if they log in to their personal „Kleiderschrank“ (engl. wardrobe), they get a good overview about everything they are renting at the moment and all current and past orders and invoices. Once a month each customer gets a bill and a list of all the products he or she is renting at the moment. This helps both kilenda and their customers to keep track of all products in use.

IN SHORT:

- Smart tagging (Awear) as a way to track products after sales and use the rich data to inform future merchandizing strategies. A “frequent flyer fashion” program offers VIP-experiences and discounts for owners of tagged fashion items.
- Shareconomy shows different strategies to monitor products after sales, though it creates an increased administrative effort at the same time.

Conclusion

On the examples of **MUD Jeans** and **Kilenda** we have seen that in shareconomy a brand automatically has to track their products after purchase. However, the fact that MUD Jeans has stopped their leasing services completely shows that constant customer interaction can be very demanding for a business. As long as a company is concentrating on a leasing service e.g. for children’s clothing, the time product tracking makes sense, because it is the core of the business.

However, if the leasing service is just another service of a company it can result in a lot of administration that amounts to higher costs than the actual financial income created through that service.

As attractive as the new technology of **smart tagging** (Awear) might be for some target groups, the idea of being monitored that way can be an absolute no-go for other target groups at the same time. Especially for customers favoring alternative models of consume like e.g. **Slow Food & Slow Fashion** or the much discussed **shareconomy** may be not be pleased at all to find themselves observed in such ways.

VI.) NEW PATTERNS OF CONSUME

So in the following chapter we take a closer look on these alternative models of consumption and the future customer that are to be addressed.

For many decades there was this ideal of acceleration, of pursuing progress by speeding up the fashion cycles. Looking at new developments in the fashion industry we have to highlight several fashion brands and designers that have been looking for new modes to react to the predominant business model of Fast Fashion.

Burberry and **Tommy Hilfiger** have recently revealed their plans of aligning their shows with retail availability: According to Forbes, both of them have rescheduled their runway and retail timings, dramatically reducing the gap between the unveiling of their collections and their appearance in stores to avoid getting coopted by knock-offs from fast fashion retailers.²⁵

Tommy Hilfiger has taken a different approach to the same end as their runway show will from now on be broadcasted live via different social media channels. Simultaneously all products can be bought instantly through its own online and retail channels. These brands and designers are at the forefront of these new developments. But we can be sure that their new approaches will spread throughout the entire luxury and upper mid-priced industry.

SLOWING DOWN THE CYCLE

“THE WHOLE SYSTEM JUST DOESN’T WORK ANYMORE. THIS WHOLE VICIOUS CIRCLE TURNS AND TURNS AT A VERY FAST SPEED AND KILLS BOTH THE CREATIVITY AND THE BUSINESS.”

(Demna Gvasalia, Creative Director)

The fashion cycles have become too fast and too demanding for everyone inside and outside the system. Independent fashion designers are unable to compete with the fast pace of fast-fashion.

Many designers are experimenting with alternative ways to do fashion in order to slow down the fashion cycle, e.g. the Parisian design collective **vetements** who is about to reinvent fashion retail at this moment. Their mission? To disrupt or rather fix the fashion system, that is broken to the core by a frenzy of speed:

Pace of grace

That is why vetements has been actively looking for ways to slow down their fashion cycle. Their innovative plan:

- to produce only two collections a year, skipping pre-collections completely
- to produce limited collections only to create exclusiveness and a real demand for their products
- to shift the seasons and showing the main collections during the pre-collection timing in June and January already
- showing their women's and menswear together



(image courtesy: vetements, spring collection 2017)

Beginning in January 2017, right in between the seasonal men's shows and women's couture shows, they will start their new collection cycle.

IN SHORT:

- designers and brands (like e.g. Burberry and Tommy Hilfiger) are breaking new grounds to react on the frenzy of fast fashion
- another alternative strategy (as shown by vetements) is to slow down the fashion cycle

Conclusion:

This bigger shift from fast to slow can be seen both in fashion and the food industry. While customers in the past have been mainly asking for cheaper, faster and more convenient food solutions, new desires and needs become tangible through the powerful movement towards Slow Food and Slow Fashion. The new sets of values behind that movement have an increasing impact the whole food industry and the expectations a food brand/producer has to meet (e.g. in terms of transparency).

VII) CONCLUSIONS FOR FUTURE MARKETING AND SALES

THE TARGET GROUP: THE CARETAKER

We have found out that more and more customers are turning their backs on the frenzy of fast. Instead, they are reaching out for their new ideal of **mindfulness**.

We live in a time where online and offline worlds are merging into each other, becoming inseparable. The digital flow of data has become an aura around us permanently interacting with us. A data flow of energy to express ourselves and to connect with others. A constantly moving second skin of bustling data signals, calling our attention all at the same time. As we have seen in the Slow Food and Slow Fashion movement, more and more people crave to slow down this perpetual motion machine.

To filter their sphere in order to keep out everything that is distracting their focus. Just as we have seen in Slow Food, this will result in a new revaluation of the senses and in a deep desire and curiosity for “real” **experiences**. The caretakers want to connect deeply with the world surrounding them. They want to slow down, to embrace the **moment**, to feel and taste life with all of their senses.

In the face of financial and economic crisis of global scale, the caretakers are using their loving attention to reach out to the immediate environment. Products promising special experiences, one-in-a-lifetime moments, or means to capture them are what the caretakers are interested in. After the concept of owning a product, or just using it, the caretaker does what he or she deeply believes in: taking care.

The caretakers are therefore interested in products and services that inspire social interaction or products to facilitate self-reflection. Examples of this new set of values are magazines like e.g. **Flow**. Or the male pendant **Wolf** that has just recently been published. Both of these lavishly illustrated print magazines share a handmade feel and a unique mix of articles and products around the topics mindfulness and lifestyle.



WOLF

WOLF

№ 01

„Nur wer seinen eigenen Weg geht,
kann von niemandem überholt werden.“

Marlin Brando



THEMEN

Mehr offline Wie weniger Dinge, echte Freunde und mehr Zeit alles verändern

Mehr Freiheit Jetzt einen Ort nur für sich finden. Draußen. Endlich

Nur Mut Mit der Achtsamkeits-Methode fokussiert, entspannt und langsam leben

(image courtesy: Wolf Magazine)

Stationery holds a big potential for designing sensual experiences to excite the caretaker. Another example for this desire is the current success of exclusive preprinted notebooks that inspire the owners to collect a precious moment each day.

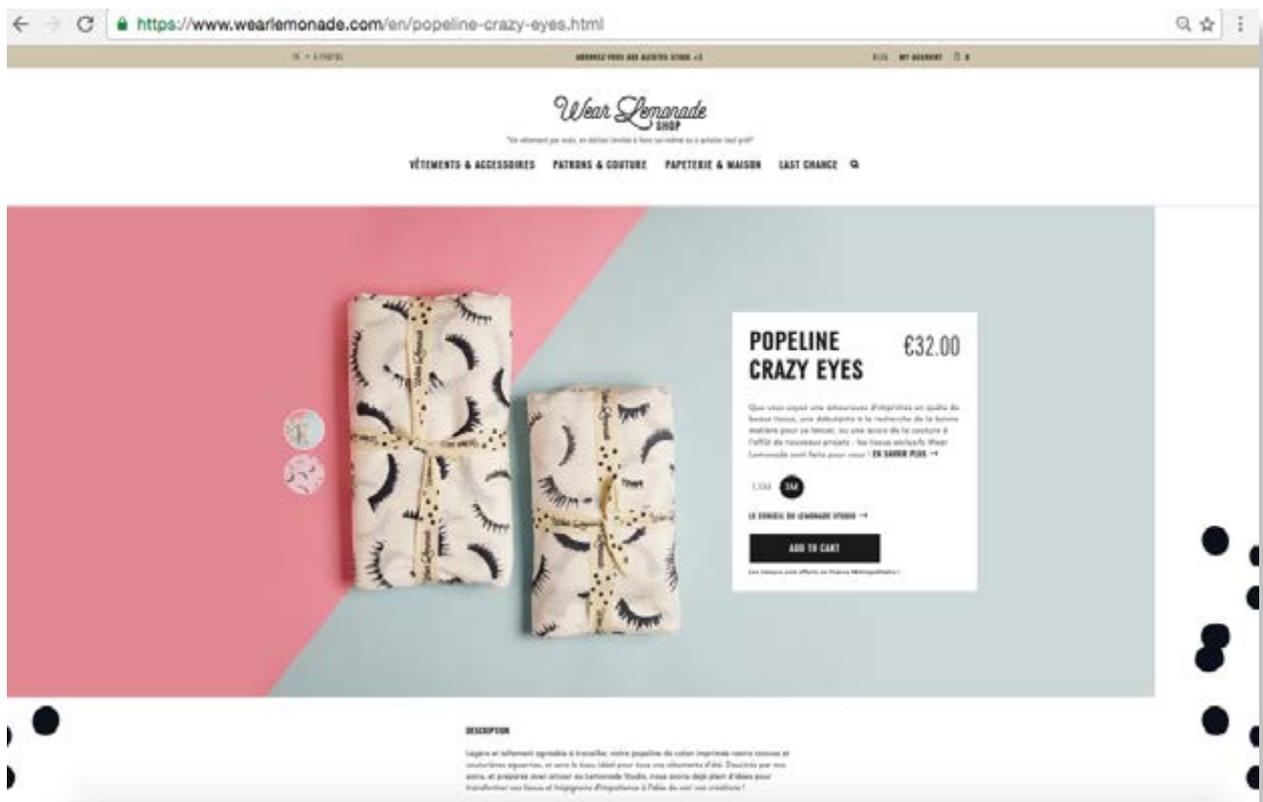
The spiritual approach of the caretaker is merged with a strong desire for good design. Therefore, a product or a service aimed at exciting this kind of customer has to offer great content that is presented in a highly appealing and well-designed format.

Besides the caretaker is crazy for the human touch in everything like little personal details, hand-made or hand packed products and handwritten notes. Such analog added values like little notes and special packaging are key for the unwrapping experience.

Wear Lemonade is a very good example of how fashion, the love for great stationery and lovely details regarding product presentation go together.

Best practice example: Wearlemonade.com

The Paris based design studio offer wonderfully printed textiles in limited quantities, fashion, pattern for DIY sewing of their styles and their own stationery products. All of their products can be bought online at their website and are send out to customers by post. The success of Wearlemonade.com shows that brands don't have to focus on one product category anymore. Instead it's all about the right aesthetic that can stretch and combine many kinds of products.



Online and offline **experience** exceptionally well designed. Personal, lovely details are waiting for every customer opening their parcel with a Wearlemonade product. Beautiful letterpress cards and beautiful wrapping papers let customers feel like a child at Christmas.

The caretakers believe both in minimalism and style. An example of this liaison is e.g. the **Fixie bike subculture** where owners take care of their bikes lovingly, permanently working on their Fixie to keep it in good state, to repair it themselves or update it style wise.

The caretakers strive to consume mindfully. To shop responsibly and to know the negative or positive impact they have on the world. That is why they highly value transparency and brands that work towards that ideal. If the caretakers look at a product, they are curious to connect themselves with every person and place that played a part in the history of this product so far.

To really address that new kind of customer the industry has to facilitate their desire for “real” experiences and authentic connections.

HOW TO INVOLVE THE CARETAKER INTO CIRCULAR GOALS?

How to get the new target group of the caretaker involved in production chain/circular goals? The solution is to make him or her part of the **collective of makers** CLOSING THE LOOP and an O stand for. By developing the right products and services that fit the **caretaker's** inner motivation to connect.

Possible strategies:

- to create exciting circular events for creative participation (e.g. online facilitation of offline fashion events e.g. Repair Blind Dates)
- DIY-repair events & workshops to celebrate co-creation, creative participation and reinvent the cultural skill of repairing (the endangered skill of repairing as an analogy for **care-taking** in the context of fashion)
- Implement new technologies like e.g. 3D printing (as a form of hyperlocal production)

If we translate this to the future product ranges of CLOSING THE LOOP/ van O, the future products and services could be:

Products (limited collections) and services:

- Locally produced eco-social fabrics and fashion pieces
- DIY-sewing kits and/or patterns of selected collection pieces
- Regular repair workshops: learning to take care of beloved
- Small collection of 3d printed textiles and circular sewing supplies, like e.g. alternative fasteners or buttons that can be taken apart easily after for post-consumer recycling

A POSSIBLE SCENARIO

To push the project of CLOSING THE LOOP / van O to the next level, I developed a possible vision for future marketing, sales and brand communication. It could serve as the backbone for any future marketing and sales communication, for example as web content for a corporate homepage, an e-store, to be printed on hangtags, etc.

This scenario and the respective communication concept is based on the vision of opening an own production atelier in Arnhem. If the CtL-members ultimately decide for another kind of production, it could be altered accordingly.

van O

circular design made in Arnhem.

A regional production network breaking the rules of throwaway fashion.

A collective of textile makers and fashion innovators

celebrating sustainability, style and the wonders of making.

OUR VISION:

- to create better and more sustainable fashion systems that don't exploit but support all individuals and communities involved
- to revive the rich history of Dutch textile production

Why local/regional manufacturing makes perfect sense?

- to reduce the extreme logistics of globalized production chains to a minimum
- to make our product chains as sustainable and transparent as possible

OUR MISSION:

- to break the rules of throw-away fashion and reduce, reuse and recycle
- to celebrate creativity and the wonders of making

thinking global acting local:

to make our product chain as transparent and sustainable as possible we decided to produce right here: in the city of Arnhem and the wider region around. That way we are close to everyone involved in our products and to everything that happens.

VALUES:

we believe in:

- sustainability and circular strategies for long and fantastic product lives
- collaboration and relationships of trust
- innovation and great design
- transparency

MATERIALS:

to keep sourcing as local and sustainable as possible we focus on these three fibers:

- **recycled cotton** (postconsumer denim, locally sourced and mechanically recycled near in the area of Enschede)
- **hemp** (Dutch hemp or European hemp, if larger quantities needed)
- **Lyocell** (Made in Europe)

These materials are mixed, spun, woven or knitted, processed and refined in a radius of 300km or less around the city of Arnhem.

CLOSING THE LOOP:

in our attempt to reduce, reuse and recycle we work with several strategies:

- Recycling of post-consumer textile waste
- Design4recycling
- Circular design thinking

We happily take back all our old products to close the loop and give them a new live (either as part of our Vintage Collections or by recycling them.)

PRODUCTS:

from fibre to fashion:

We design and develop eco-fair yarns, textiles, and fashion made right here in Arnhem and the region nearby.

We celebrate the *magic of making* and want to inspire you to co-create our products with us: Just order one of our sewing pieces or DIY sewing kits to create one of our products yourself. Or come to one of our regular DIY Workshops at our atelier or selected Pop-Up stores.

SALES STRATEGY:

- A corporate website including an online-store with a highly visual approach to make production transparent and to meet the people behind the products.
- The production network of CtL- would be online as a virtual landscape, to discover and experience and dive into each step of the product chain
- Omni-channel approach: e.g. by using the Augmented Reality App **Layar** or by using product codes to tell how, where and by whom this product was made.
- Pop-up store concept for different sized locations
- Van O caravan as mobile Pop-Up space on tour. **The Atelier/retail/action space:**
- the head and heart of the **van O collective of makers**
- transparent production: atelier behind a glass wall at the POS to make the people behind the products visible so customers can witness the magic of making him/herself by looking directly into the production atelier
- actively experience it by DIY-Workshops

- a space combining retail and production, celebrating transparency and the wonders of making
- a platform to connect: for regular network meetings open for other local makers to join.

TEXTILE ALCHEMY

Creating a website and a highly aesthetic and visual approach to celebrate the **magic of making** could be the key to successfully position CtL/van O within the market. That website could become the place where customers can dive into the various stages of production. The place where all threads are merging. By typing in their product code, customers could find out exactly **where**, by **whom** and **how** their van O piece was made. As moving images are the most effective format to attract the attention of web users, the CtL/van O online platform is well advised to invest in the power of a strong visuals.

To do so, it could be promising to collaborate with upcoming visual artists (e.g. from ArtEZ) that could help to differentiate and implement the brand of CtL/van O in the market. What is more, the circular idea behind the project of CLOSING THE LOOP could even be taken one step further by celebrating the **poetry of material life**, of becoming and passing away and of being transformed into something new.

VAN O POP-UP STORES

Besides an informative and visually inspiring company homepage (including an e-store application that is responsive for mobile devices) and as much brand presence at suitable retailers as possible (e.g. green concept stores), it could be a great sales strategy to develop strong **pop-up shop concept** (in different sizes S/M/L).

The idea: to pop up in Dutch cities to boost market presence and an avantgarde brand image. As many smaller cities are facing the challenge of prevalent shop vacancies and their negative impact on the overall shopping atmosphere, an inspiring **van O Pop-Up concept** could be a great way to turn shop vacancies into exciting Pop-Up spaces. To define in which regions Pop-Up activities could be used as an additional sales channel for the future Products of CLOSING

THE LOOP respectively **van O** In this context it is interesting to have a look at the different regional expansion potentials within the Netherlands:

Expansion potential for clothing



(image courtesy: GfA.com) ²⁶

Regarding local supply and demand the research suggests that Utrecht, the South and North of the Netherlands are the regions with the most **potential for local stationery retail**. So besides bigger cities like Arnhem, Utrecht and Amsterdam, those regions would be interesting to launch the first Pop-Up shops if adequate locations are available.

ON THE ROAD

To take this idea of Pop-Up-concept for CLOSING THE LOOP/ van O one step further, a caravan could be transformed into:

A mobile van O Pop-Up shop touring the country for special events like fashion fairs and street food markets.

An old caravan, given a second and much more glamorous life.

A highly inspiring, surprising and minimalistic product stage on wheels.

A space for customer interaction.

A symbol playing with the cliché of Dutch camping culture, mixing and matching it into current lifestyle trends of **minimalism** and **modern nomadism**.

This mobile space could be used as a shop on wheels, a miniature action space for DIY-Workshops using and promoting the van O fabric ranges, a meeting space to interview different CtL-partners and fashion activists and make their ideas and experiences around the vision of circular fashion heard.

**A FOOT AND LIGHT-HEARTED
I TAKE TO THE OPEN ROAD,
HEALTHY, FREE, THE WORLD BEFORE ME,
THE LONG BROWN PATH BEFORE ME LEADING
WHEREVER I CHOSE ...**

(Walt Whitman's Song Of The Open Road)

REFERENCES

- 1 (2016): „The Origin of Levi's“. neatorama.com. November 21st 2016. <http://ma.com/2010/05/17/the-origin-of-levis/>.
- 2 Ratelband, Ben (2016): „Stexfibers: project status and future visions of CtL“. Skype-conference. Interviewer: Dominique Ellen van de Pol“.
- 3 Bos, Peter (2016): „Texperium: project status and future visions of CtL“. Enschede. Interviewer: Dominique Ellen van de Pol“.
- 4 Ratelband, Ben (2016): „Stexfibers: project status and future visions of CtL“. Skype-conference. Interviewer: Dominique Ellen van de Pol“.
- 5 Ter Haar, Judith (2016): „Jones Arnhem: project status and future visions of CtL“. Skype-conference. Interviewer: Dominique Ellen van de Pol“.
- 6 Grevinga, Theresia (2016): „Saxion University: project status and future visions of CtL“. Skype-conference. Interviewer: Dominique Ellen van de Pol“.
- 7 Bugter, Els (2016): „tous les chéris: project status and future visions of CtL“. Arnhem. Interviewer: Dominique Ellen van de Pol“.
- 8 Teunissen, Gertie (2016): „Moyzo: project status and future visions of CtL“. Skype-conference. Interviewer: Dominique Ellen van de Pol“.
- 9 image courtesy of Brooklyn Fashion + Design Accelerator at Pratt Institute, (2016): Sustainable Strategies Wheel.
- 10 Lange, Dörte (2016): „Expert Q+A With Deborah Alden/BF+DA: How To Start Your Sustainable Fashion Business“. THE LISSOME. November 17th 2016. <http://www.thelissome.com/blog/2016/4/13/in-conversation-with-deborah-alden>.
- 11 (2016): „Kickstarter Stats — Kickstarter“. Kickstarter.com. November 14th 2016. https://www.kickstarter.com/help/stats?ref=about_subnav.
- 12 (2016): „Truly circular - Brightloops“. Brightloops Truly circular. December 15th 2016. <https://www.brightloops.nl/truly-circular/>.
- 13 (2016): „Amazon Go: Der Supermarkt der Zukunft ohne Kassen und Warteschlangen eröffnet 2017“. Trends der Zukunft. December 6th 2016. <http://www.trendsderzukunft.de/amazon-go-der-supermarkt-der-zukunft-ohne-kassen-und-warteschlangen-eroeffnet-2017/2016/12/05/>.
- 14 (2016): „Netherlands: online retail sales 2012-2017 | Statistic“. Statista. December 1st 2016. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/260257/forecast-of-online-retail-sales-in-the-netherlands/>.
- 15 (2016): „Consumenten verwachten één derde van hun bestedingen online te doen in 2021“. Gfk.com. December 4th 2016. <http://www.gfk.com/nl/insights/news/consumenten-verwachten-een-derde-van-hun-bestedingen-online-te-doen-in-2021/>.
- 16 For more Information: <http://www.irinaosterberg.com/>
- 17 <http://www.latimes.com/fashion/la-ig-vogue-20160906-snap-story.html>
- 18 Shrestha, Khusbu (2016): „[infographic] 50 Stats You Need to Know About Online Reviews - Vendasta“. Vendasta. December 1st 2016. <https://www.vendasta.com/blog/50-stats-you-need-to-know-about-online-reviews/>.

- 19 Hill, Amelia (2016): „The rise and fall of American Apparel“. the Guardian. December 6th 2016. <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2010/aug/25/rise-fall-american-apparel>.
- 20 (2016): „Op-Ed | What 3D Printing Means for Fashion“. The Business of Fashion. December 6th 2016. <https://www.businessoffashion.com/articles/opinion/3d-printing-technology-disrupt-fashion-and-luxury-pascal-morand>.
- 21 (2016): December 12th 2016. <https://ilovetofino.wordpress.com/>.
- 22 (2016): „Bio-Fleischerei Burchhardt – 100% Bio-Handwerk“. Bio-fleischerei-burchhardt.de. December 12th 2016. <http://www.bio-fleischerei-burchhardt.de/>.
- 23 (2016): Flottekarotte.de. November 29th 2016. <https://www.flottekarotte.de/home.html>.
- 24 (2016): „Kilenda - Babysachen und Kindersachen einfach mieten“. Kilenda. December 13th 2016. <https://kilenda.de/>.
- 25 (2016): „Forbes“. Forbes.com. December 17th 2016. <http://www.forbes.com/sites/paularosenblum/2016/02/13/feeling-fast-fashions-pinch-burberry-and-tommy-hilfiger-shift-runway-retail-calendars/#2c60e24f7654>.
- 26 (2016): „European retail in 2016: Slow but real-value growth“. Gfk.com. December 1st 2016. <http://www.gfk.com/insights/press-release/european-retail-in-2016/>.