



PONDER.ER



PONDER.ER is the brainchild of creative duo Alex Po and Derek Cheng. The pair met whilst studying at the prestigious Central Saint Martins in London, with both BA collections being selected to showcase at the Press Show. Po then went on to further sharpen his skills and vision at the Royal College of Art specialising in Men's knitwear.

With a common interest in exploring the world of Menswear through an alternative approach, the creative partnership was formed in 2019 with the intention of challenging gender stereotypes and raising questions against social norms. PONDER.ER, a gender fluid label was born to expand and reinterpret the contemporary Men's wardrobe through dissecting and reconstructing ideas inspired by traditional Menswear, found objects and everyday experiences in urban cities.

DESIGNER PROFILE

Alex Po graduated from Central Saint Martins in 2016. His BA collection, inspired by the 1930s Men's swimsuits and the 1970s Men's disco suits won the Alcantara Sponsorship Award and was showcased at the annual Press Show. While studying Po interned at Simone Rocha, Charlie Allen Bespoke and Christian Wijnants. Upon his graduation, Po continued his studies at the Royal College of Art specialising in knitwear, challenging the different possibilities of combining Menswear with knit. He was chosen to work with Botto Giuseppe for an exhibition in Pitti Filatti in 2017. Po received incredible feedback from the industry with his MA collection in 2018, his work has received press coverage from both online and print publications including Vogue, HERO Magazine, 1 Granary and more.



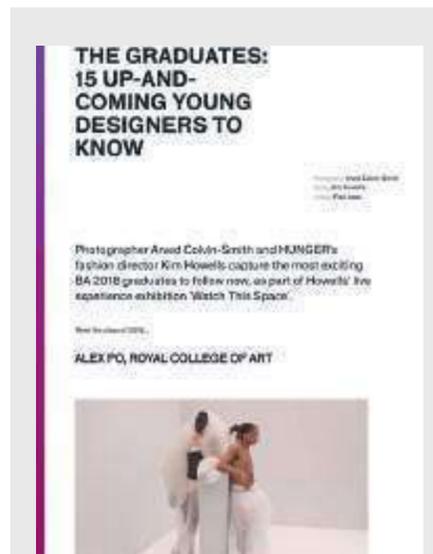


PRESS

1st Row:
HERO Magazine, Re-Edition Magazine, i-D, HUNGER

2nd Row:
Procrastinate Magazine, 1 Granary, Rain Magazine, Clash Website, FORM Magazine

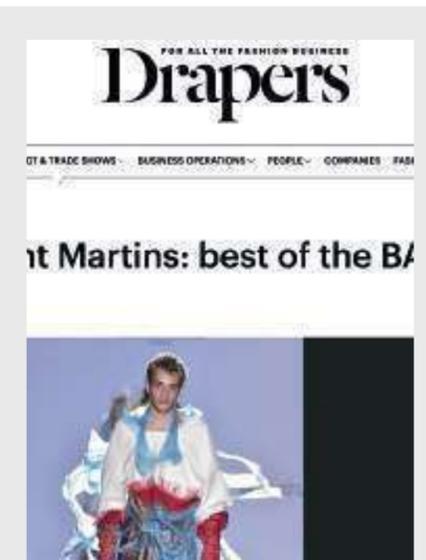
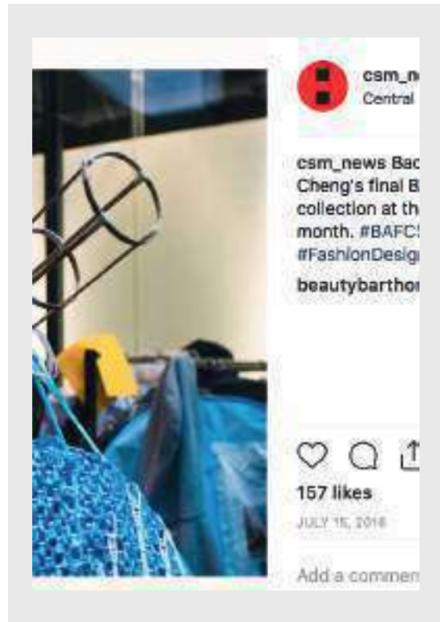
3rd Row:
No Substances Magazine, Drappers, Evening Standard, HUNGER Website, HK01



DESIGNER PROFILE

Derek Cheng is a Central Saint Martins graduate whose BA graduation collection was included as part of the institution's 2016 Press Show. The collection titled "Objects of Hong Kong" pays tribute to Cheng's homecity, celebrating local cultures and exploring relationships between garments and social changes. The collection was featured on Vogue, HIGH-SNOBIETY, WGSN/INSIDER and more, Cheng was also selected as one of the CFDA+ graduates in the same year. During his studies, he had gained work experience with 1 Granary, Aitor Throup, Nicomede Talavera and Ximon Lee.





PRESS

- 1st Row: VOGUE, HIGH-SNOBIETY, because
- 2nd Row: CFDA, WGSN/INSIDER, CSM News
- 3rd Row: Drapers, ARTS THREAD, 1Granary



A person is shown from the back, wearing a white, heavily textured, short-sleeved sweater. The sweater has a complex, scale-like or shell-like pattern. The person's hair is short and dark. The background is a wall with a light-colored, abstract, textured pattern. The lighting is soft and even.

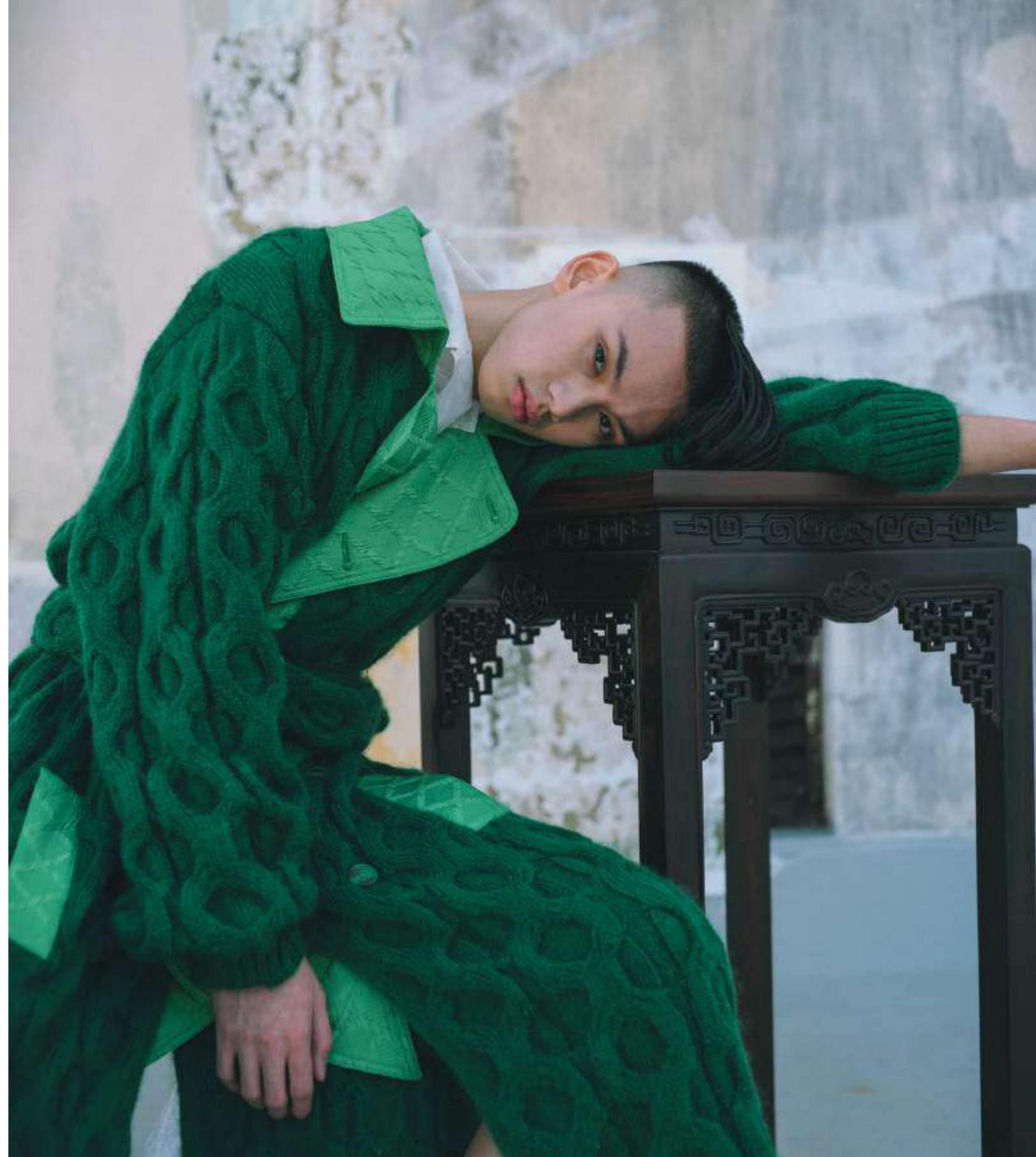
AUTUMN WINTER 2020
UNSETTLED SHELL

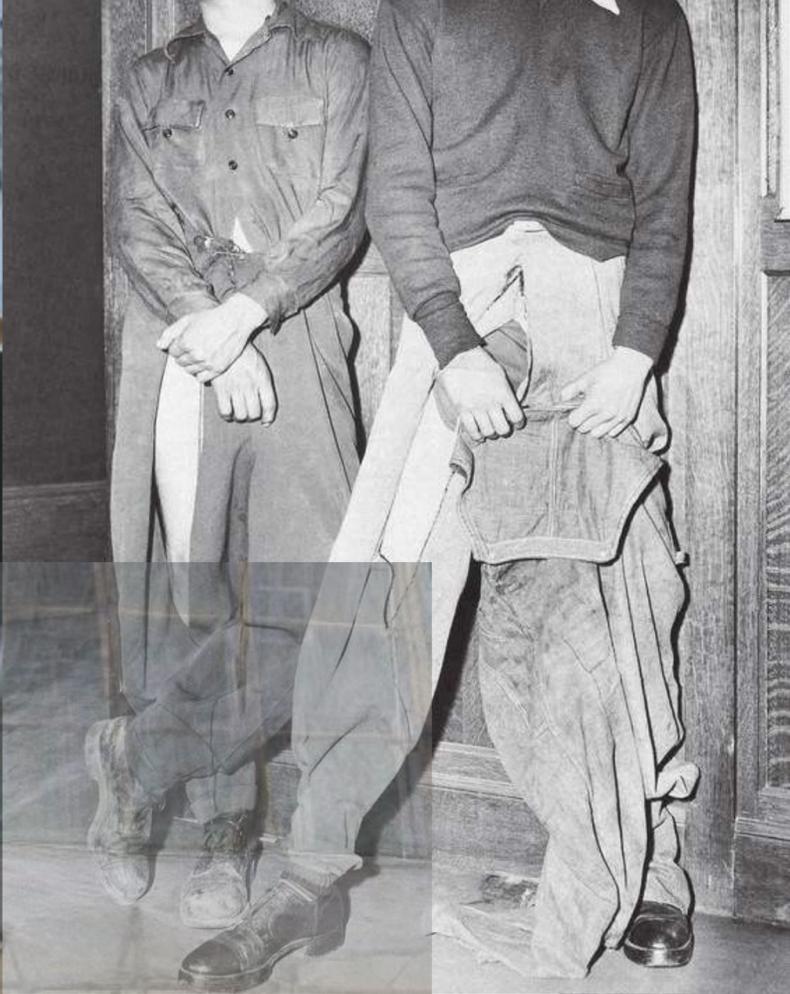
AUTUMN WINTER 2020 **UNSETTLED SHELL**

Titled *Unsettled Shell*, PONDER.ER debuts its first seasonal collection during Paris Fashion Week Men's as a continual exploration of how garments as our second skin reflects fragments of the life growing up as a modern man. Blending traditional menswear details with textures inspired by an array of abandoned objects such as a discarded mattress and mounted tarpaulins on the streets of the creative duo's home city – Hong Kong, PONDER.ER strengthens its focus in disrupting familiar forms through delicate textile manipulations.

A delicate lace knit polo shirt is paired with intricately smocked semi-transparent nylon trousers printed with hand drawn objects of Hong Kong; White poplin shirts and trench coats are crumpled and liquefied whilst a pair of men's boxers shorts and denim jacket are constructed in see through mohair cable knit. Conventional Menswear pieces have been re-imagined and contemporised into garments with new identities, inviting the viewers to re-think the definition of masculinity and the role of gender in fashion.

Throughout the collection, these objects of masculinity are being fragmented, liquefied and recreated to look fragile and unsettling. This design process stays true to the brand's core value of embracing the beauty of male vulnerability, while expressing frustrations towards social norms and gender stereotypes.





AW20 UNSETTLED SHELL



AW20 UNSETTLED SHELL



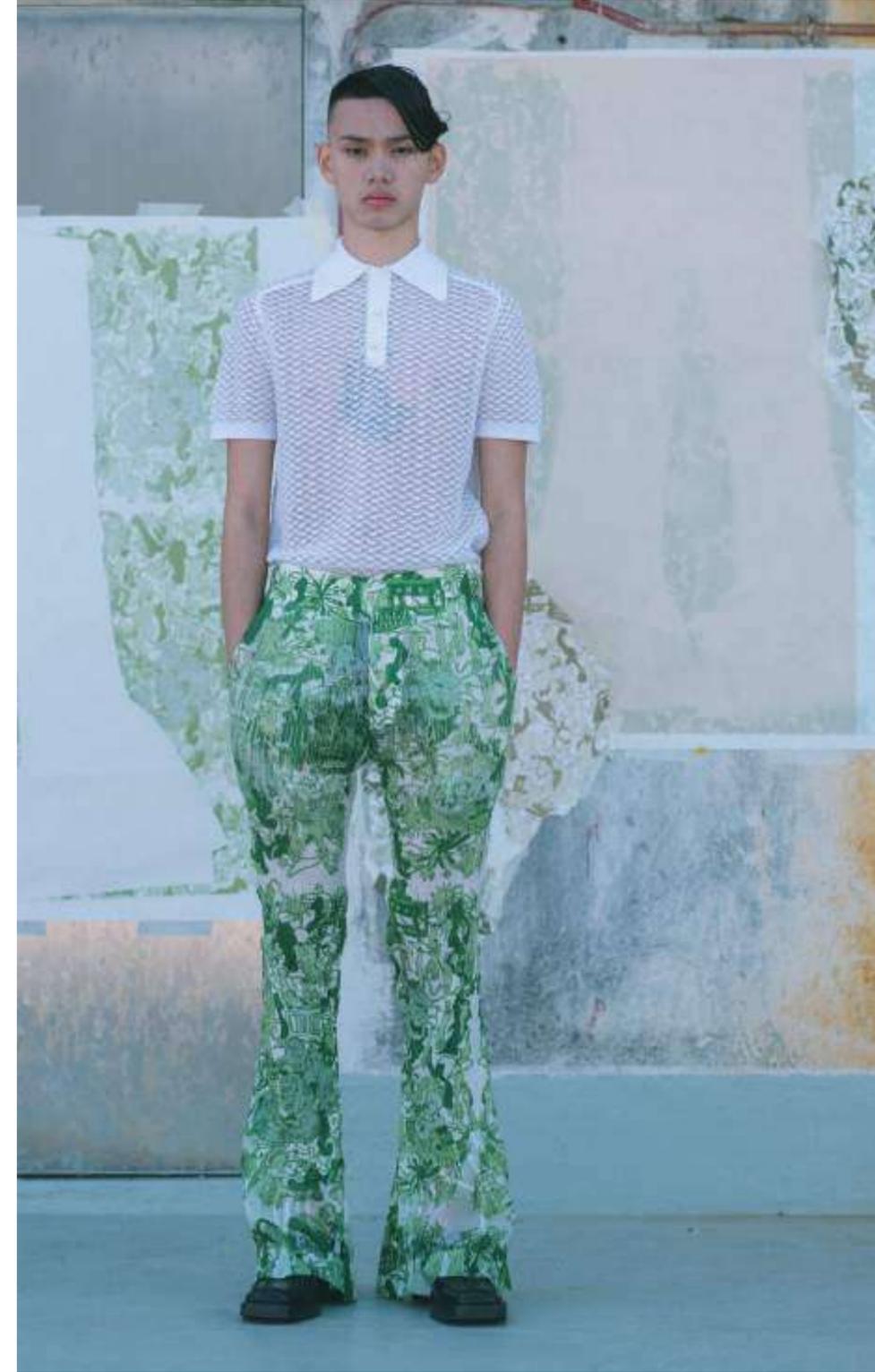
AW20 UNSETTLED SHELL



AW20 UNSETTLED SHELL



AW20 UNSETTLED SHELL



AW20 UNSETTLED SHELL



CONFIRMED STOCKISTS (AW20)



LABELHOOD, SHANGHAI



WUT, TOKYO



BIFFI BOUTIQUES, BERGAMO



BIFFI BOUTIQUES, MILAN

CONCEPT FILM UNSETTLED SHELL

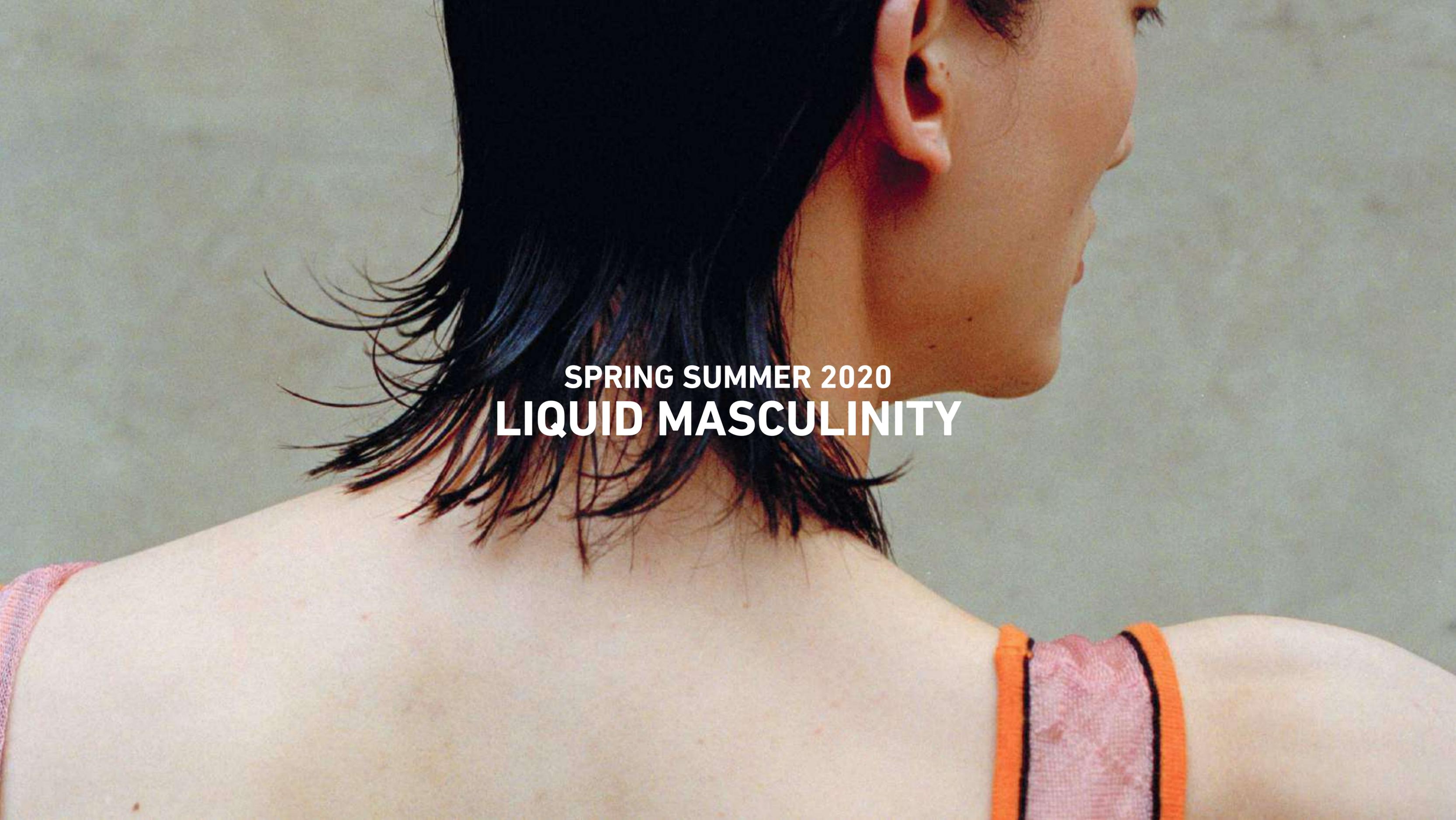
Our first concept film *Unsettled Shell* features 7 Hong Kong-based creatives who have inspired us in their own ways. The film is a love-hate letter to identity, gender and our homecity, Hong Kong during this time of self-reflections when the world is on pause.











SPRING SUMMER 2020
LIQUID MASCULINITY

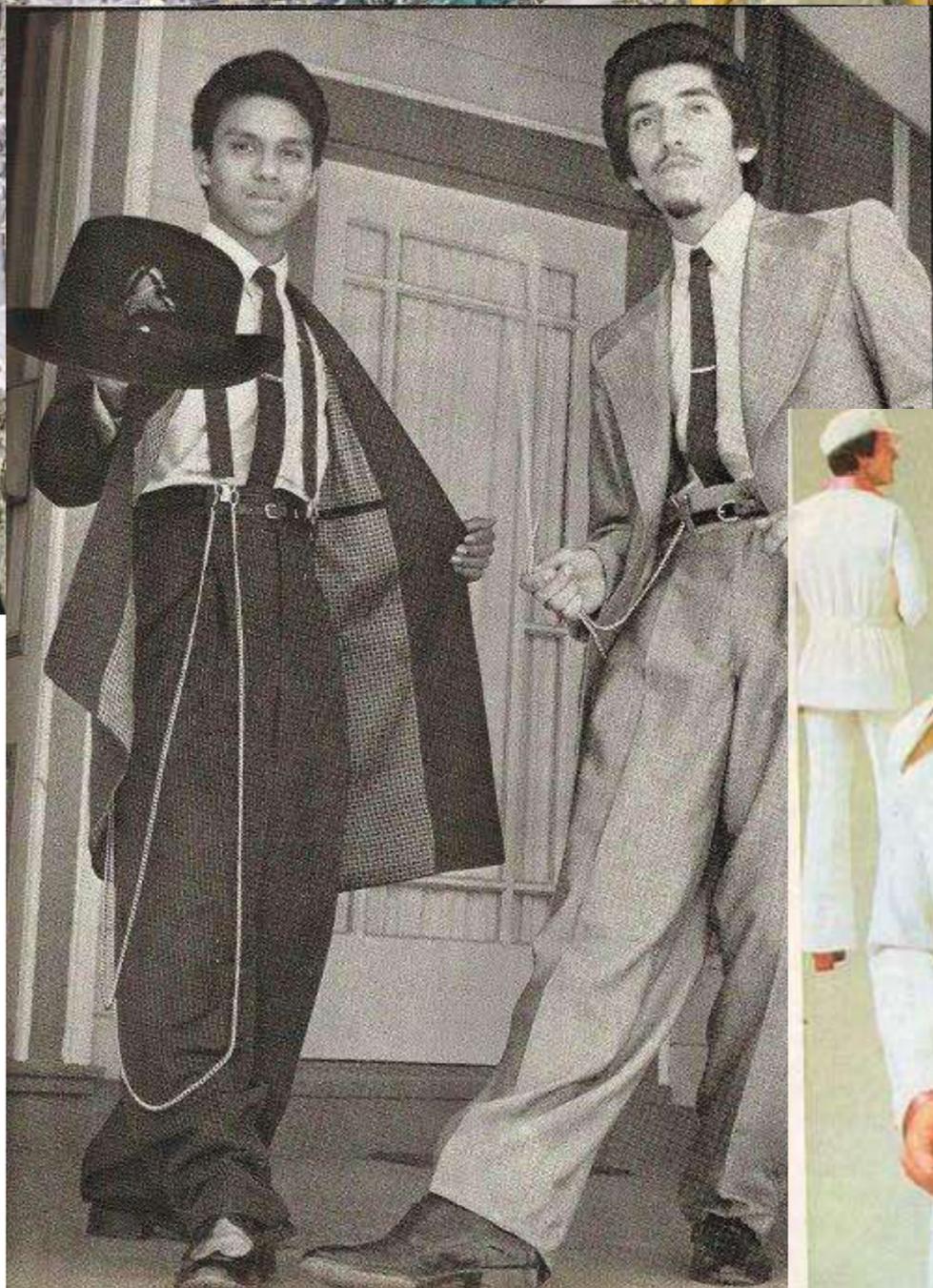
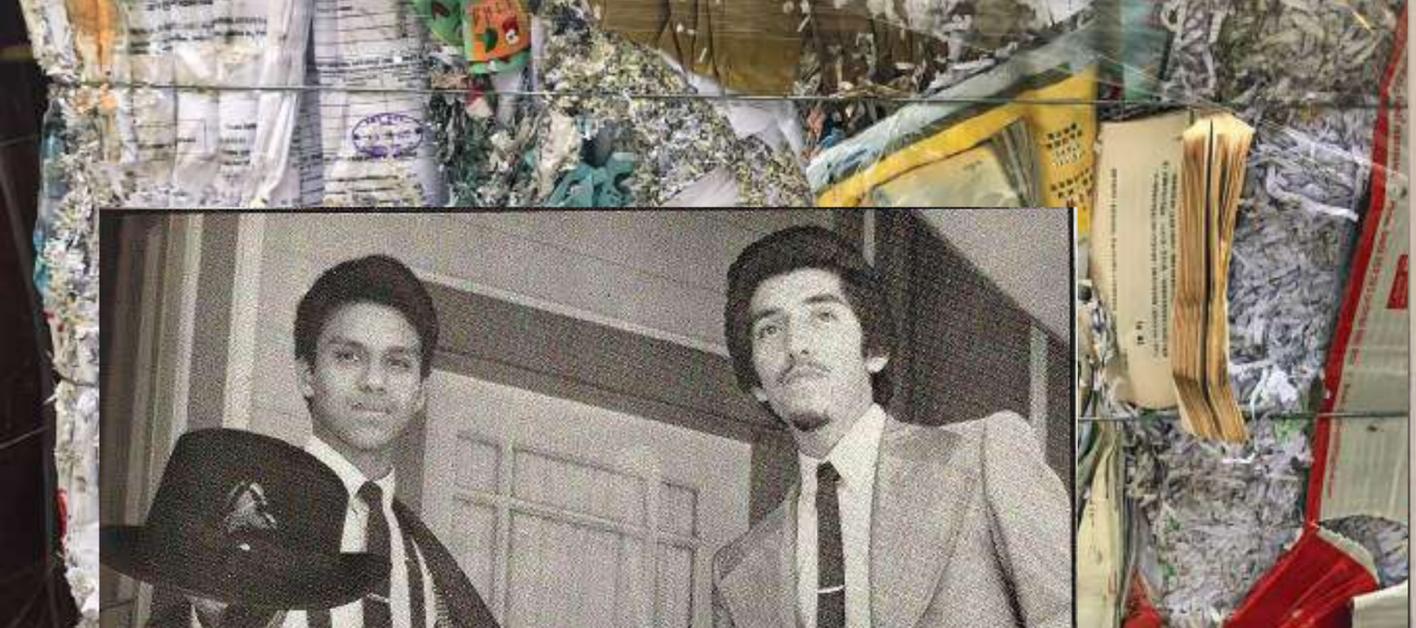


SPRING SUMMER 2020 CAPSULE **LIQUID MASCULINITY**

PONDER.ER unveils its first capsule collection, "Liquid Masculinity", via social media as a teaser to their upcoming debut in January 2020. Ideas from the two designers' graduation work are extracted, examined and distilled into one cohesive collection.

Once familiar forms of masculinity have evolved into new contemporary looks - a white smocked poplin shirt is paired with lime green knit trousers with subtle transparent panels; whilst a 1970s inspired Men's trenchcoat has been reconstructed with a multi-layer reversible form. The Men's suit has also been reinvented with cut-outs and half-detachable sleeves, directing "the gaze" onto the male body. PONDER.ER encourages its viewers to rethink and reconsider the definition of masculinity and how modern men dress.

Textile experimentation plays an important role in the development process of the collection. Ordinary shapes are reimagined and transformed by applying intricate fabrications. Delicate silk organza jacket and trouser pairing have been constructed with denim-like top-stitch details before undergoing a garment hand-dyeing process with natural Yamato Indigo dye. Smocking, digital printing and fabric-bonding are featured throughout the collection to achieve cutting-edge effects that truly disrupt the shapes of the pieces. Knitwear is also a crucial part of the collection; bold colours and expressive yarns are used in skin-tight tops, sharp graphic looking bodysuits inspired by Men's 1930s swimsuits and straight-leg textural trousers.



SS20 LIQUID MASCULINITY



Job Name: nylon_A_25cm x 17cm_000000



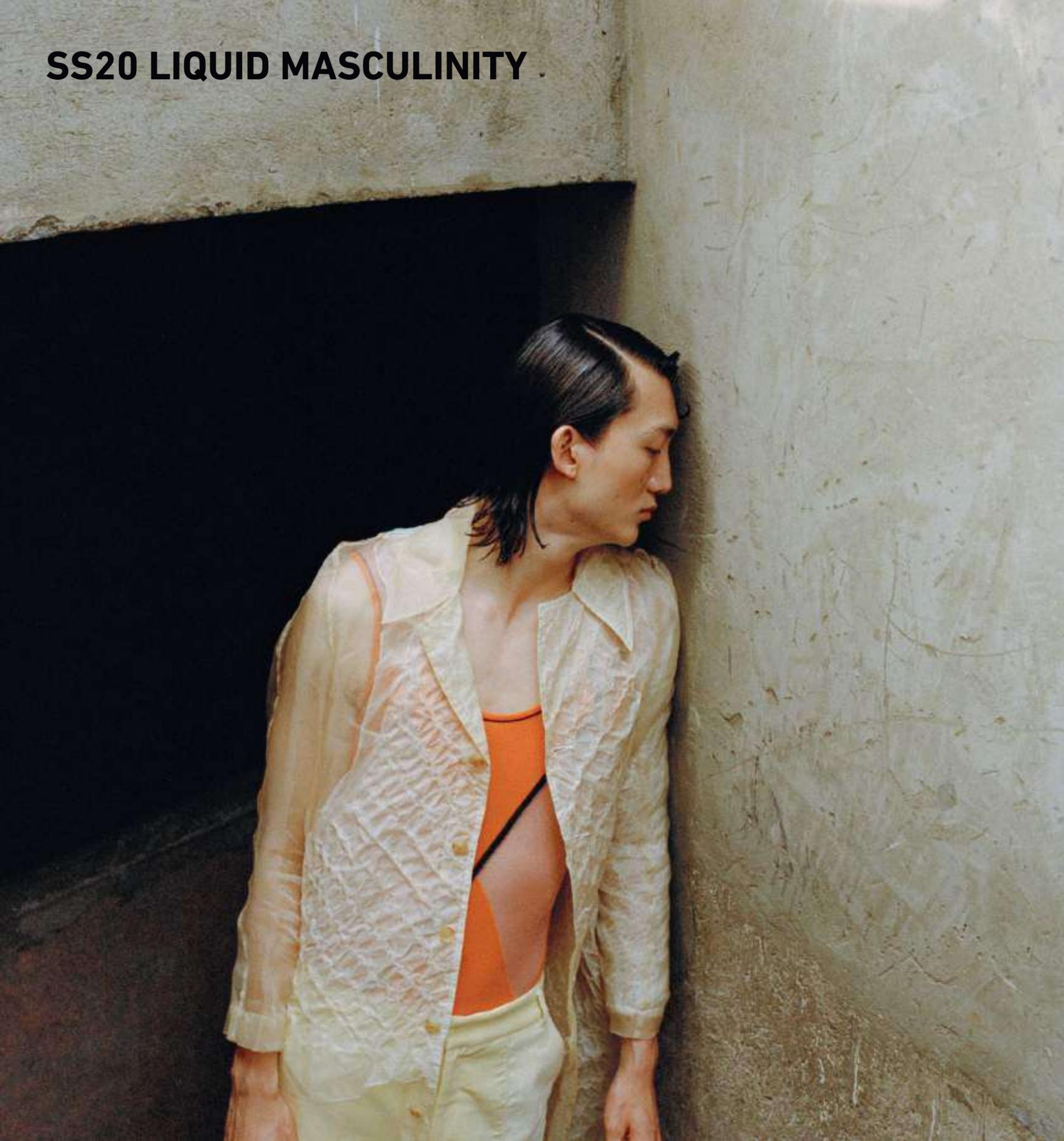
SS20 LIQUID MASCULINITY



SS20 LIQUID MASCULINITY



SS20 LIQUID MASCULINITY

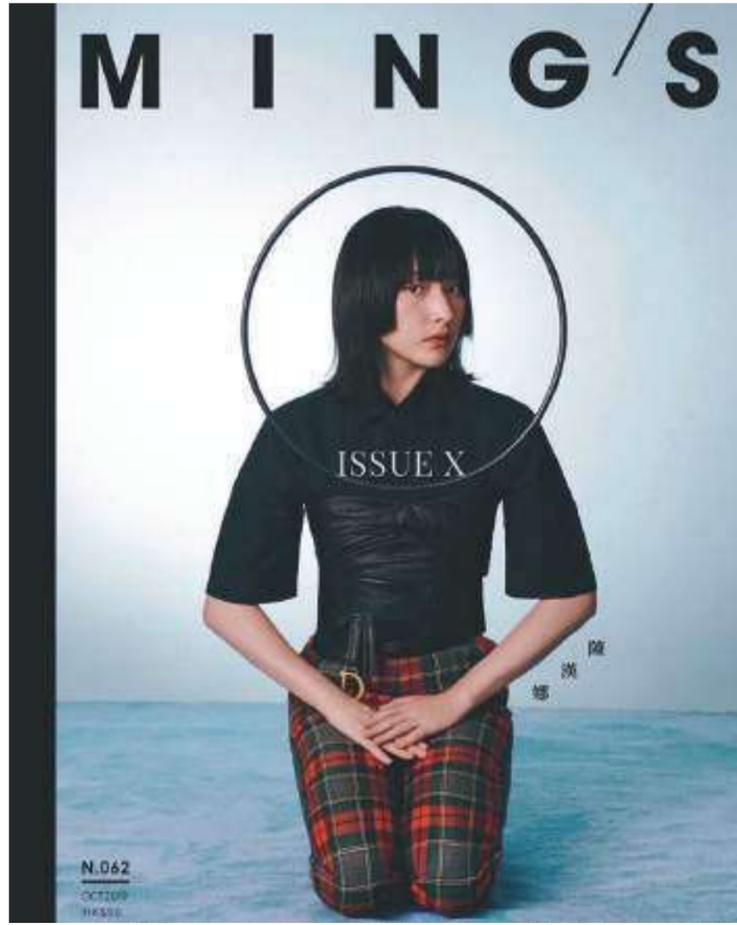


SS20 LIQUID MASCULINITY

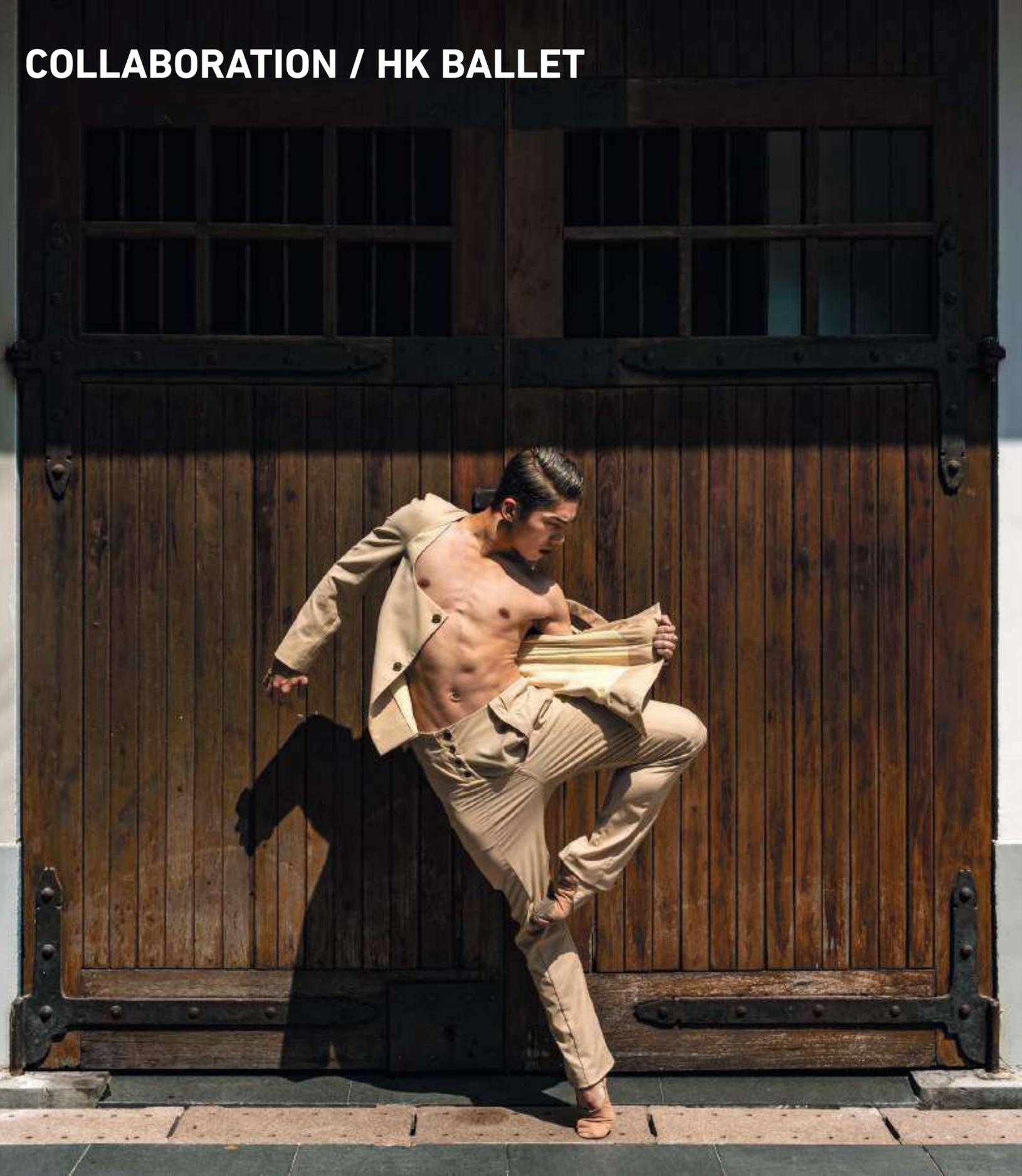


SS20 LIQUID MASCULINITY





COLLABORATION / HK BALLET



PRESS COVERAGE: MEN'S UNO MING PAO DAILY MARIE CLAIRE Harper's BAZAAR JET MAGAZINE

Headline: WearDance 舞動全城
Page: p.144



03/ Brooks Brothers 經典衣櫥

擁有近 160 年歷史的 Brooks Brothers 一直以其經典的時裝和優質的工藝而聞名。其經典的時裝系列，如 Polo 衫、襯衫、西裝等，深受全球男士的喜愛。Brooks Brothers 的時裝設計，一直秉承著簡約、優雅、耐用的風格。其經典的衣櫥系列，更是展現了品牌深厚的設計功底和對細節的精益求精。



01/ WearDance 舞動全城

WearDance 是一個結合了時尚與舞蹈的創舉。它旨在通過時尚的力量，推廣舞蹈藝術，並為舞者提供更具表現力的服裝。WearDance 的服裝設計，充分考慮了舞蹈的動作特點，既保證了舒適性和靈活性，又兼具了時尚感和藝術性。通過 WearDance，舞者們可以在舞台上展現出更加自信和優雅的姿態。



02/ Stella McCartney 環保新設計

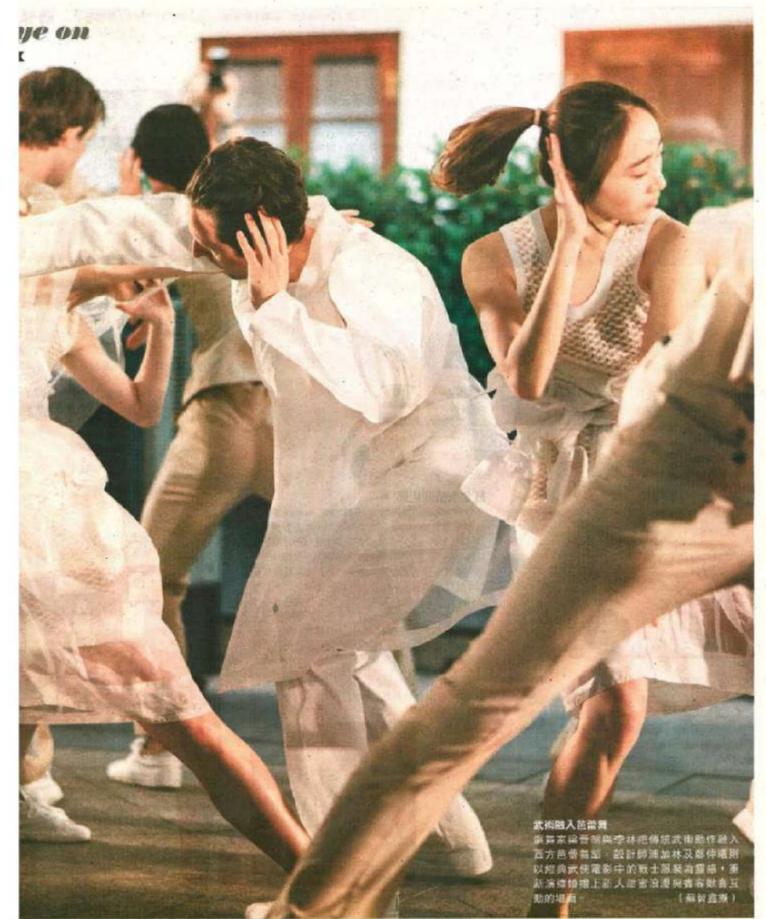
Stella McCartney 以其環保和時尚的設計理念而著稱。她致力於將環保材料與時尚設計相結合，創造出既環保又時尚的服裝。Stella McCartney 的環保新設計，不僅關注材料的可持續性，還關注生產過程的環保性。通過她的設計，我們可以看到時尚與環保的完美結合，為未來的時尚發展提供了新的思路和方向。

UNO FASHION SCROLLING NEWS
SWEN
DAILY NEWS
JET MAGAZINE



ling Pao Daily News
pe: Daily
n: 22,000
ecember, 2019

Headline: 古典現代藝術交流 時尚走進芭蕾舞舞台
Page: p.12-13



藝術家入駐舞團
與舞團合作，藝術家將他們的創作融入舞團的演出中。這不僅豐富了舞團的藝術表現力，也為藝術家提供了展示其創作的平台。通過這種合作，藝術與舞蹈得到了完美的結合，為觀眾帶來了更加精彩的視覺享受。

BALLET
香港芭蕾舞團
Media: Harper's BAZAAR
Media Type: Monthly
Circulation: 32,000
Date: December Issue

Headline: THE SHAPE OF AESTHETICS
Page: p. 55



THE SHAPE OF AESTHETICS

一場精彩的表演，背後需要龐大的團隊參與。從表演者並非獨自一人，從編排、設計、服裝到燈光等等，幕後的付出同樣重要。香港芭蕾舞團最近推出創舉項目「WearDance」，項目由香港特別行政區政府「創意香港」資助，將時尚設計師與芭蕾舞團合作，共同創作時尚與舞蹈的結合。這不僅豐富了舞團的藝術表現力，也為時尚設計師提供了展示其創作的平台。



Media: Marie Claire
Media Type: Monthly
Circulation: 44,708
Date: December Issue

Headline: WearDance Makes Fashion on the Move
Page: p. 131



WearDance Makes Fashion on the Move

藝術無疆界，香港芭蕾舞團 (Hong Kong Ballet) 聯同 6 個本地新晉時裝設計單位及 9 位著名編舞家，結合時裝和芭蕾舞，合作名為「WearDance」的全新創意跨界項目。《嘉兒》專訪香港芭蕾舞團藝術總監 Septime Webre，以及 6 個本地新晉時裝設計師單位，暢談箇中點滴。
Lui Kaka, Photography: Desmond Shek, Instagram: HK11, @hongkongballet



PONDER.ER 陰柔的男子氣概

Issue: DEC 2019 VOL:208

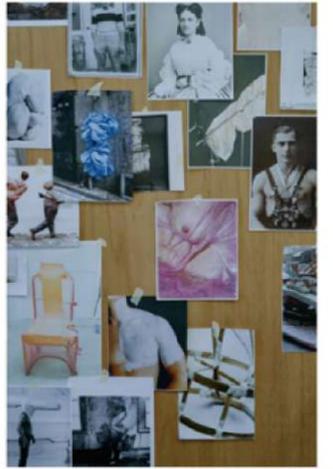
2019-12-03 17:48:54

與PONDER.ER設計師談男子氣概
「我們對Masculinity (男子氣概) 這個字有點抗拒」，Alex Poon說。有趣的是，他與拍檔Denk Cheng一起創立的時裝品牌PONDER.ER，首個系列主題便是「Liquid Masculinity」。「男子氣概必定是高大、強壯、充滿力量嗎？對我們品牌來說並非如此。」

TEXT Calvin Wong
PHOTO Ponder.er, Bow Chan (Portrait)



男子氣概不是與生俱來，而是自小灌輸的教育。母親告訴你，男孩應用黑藍綠，女孩則用紅黃紫。父親則兒子加入足球隊，女兒則學芭蕾舞。電影中的打鬥場面以男性居多，他們訓練勇毅，氣喘吁吁，被放大的二頭肌在鏡頭下抖動，媒體總彷彿地為我們定義男子氣概。總而言之，原來男子氣概是從外裝上裝出來的。Alex和Derek對此頗有微詞。「如果一位穿著粉紅色的男士，因男人取笑他而放棄粉紅色，我覺得這個行為反而不夠man，因為他不甘於被社會和男人限制了選擇，改裝成自我表達。Masculinity其實很stereotype，亦很矛盾。」正因此，二人決定利用時裝去改變性別的刻板印象。



Derek和Alex相識於英國著名時裝學院Central Saint Martins，2016年畢業後回港，在上海時裝周期間，見識到中國設計師的才華，佩服他們的獨到想法。當時心情，作為剛畢業的學生，覺得他們的設計作品，高台階的藝術感，設計時往往能創作及展現PONDER.ER品牌。Brooks Brothers (左圖)，在時裝周中出

Buyers Seek Sustainable Alternatives at Paris Men's Trade Shows

Attendance was up at Man and its adjacent coed venue, but Tranoi Bourse was impacted by the French transport strike.

BY DEVORAH LAUTER



Strikes heavily skewed attendance for some men's and coed trade shows in Paris this month, while others hardly noticed an impact, as enthusiastic buyers welcomed the beginning of a new, sustainable fashion cycle driven by higher quality.

Forced to further tighten already packed schedules due to blockages in public

Innocenti. "It's an exciting moment." Junaid Ansari, who owns the Oxford, England, men's store Burtons & Hara with his father, Sultan Ansari, said he is as "not looking for a brand that offers a huge range, just a specialist product." He found just that with Anderson Anderson's Danish heritage sailor sweaters at Man, whose models are developed over years, and carried through every season.

"It's a sustainable, good quality product, it aligns with all of our philosophies. It's not a fashion-forward brand. It's more a responsible focus on the product and the customer," said Junaid Ansari. He said customers are asking for well-made garments "and not boring, traditional with a little contemporary twist." This was Ansari's first buying trip to Paris, "because we've exhausted the U.K. avenue and shows," he said.

Despite the social upheaval, buyers said the French capital was their top choice for European heritage, craftsmanship and design, largely thanks to exciting discoveries found on the city streets. "We find brands and inspiration by taking time to walk around Paris. It's a critical part of our visit," said Coline Zani, owner of two concept stores, Cocoon Market and Les Garçons, in Albertville, Savoie.

Hélène Batard for Penstamps, a sustainability, is don't see every accessories worth adding brands. I were emerging I like the glow-in-the-dark recently came up is now designed.

The multifaceted Progress, and it hats by Béton Ci Batard also plastics, and the traditional for it working as hair, color, but in the and navy," she said. However, so were drawn into

Other men's wear trends included strong outdoor and Japanese influences, and plenty of sharp linings on outerwear and accessories. Sneakers were still popular, though evolving toward more boot-driven products, corresponding with the much welcomed, general shift from street to more dressy, which could also be seen in pre-collections for women.

At Tranoi Bichelleu, Japanese concept store owner Rie Tamura said she was excited about the collections by two young British brands, Worstick and Akbarafza, and her favorite at the show, Jordanluca. As part of her expansion into more urban, sustainable products, Tamura chose Paris over New York. "I'm trying to stop going to New York, because I'm looking for more different and special items that I'm finding here in Paris," she said.

Designer Jordan Bowen of Jordanluca said the collection, which he described as more elevated, had been well received.

"For example, we launched knitwear, and have gone as sustainable as we possibly could, which means probably 95 percent of the fabrics are either upcycled, recycled, organic," said Bowen. "I don't even want to shout about it too much because at the same time, I feel it's just what we should all



PONDIERER

Alex Poulakos en Derek Cheung ontmoeten elkaar tijdens hun studie in de mode in de Londense universiteit Central Saint Martins.



Nahin modeste die in Londen kwamen Alex Poulakos en Derek Cheung vier jaar terug naar Hongkong. Tijdens de Parijse modes en de laatste drie maanden met hun merk Pondier.er.

"We waren niet de meest bekende jongens toen we opvoerden," zegt Derek Cheung. "En daarop ontstond onze mode over. We wilden uitdrukken wat onze visie op de wereld was. De details waren allemaal voor iedereen anders."

"Vindt men hun parma en stoffen kunnen uit Japan en Italië. 'Hongkong ligt op de lijn China dat het voor de hand ligt ook met lokale fabrieken te werken.' Daar wensden de ontwerp over."

"Vooral in de textielmarkt wordt overgeleverd op 'made in China'. Het is niet dat iets veranderen. Er zijn hier nu meer fabrieken die duurzamer proberen te werken."

Ontwerpers studeerden aan prestigieuze modescholen en de overvloed aan fabrieken in China geeft hun een voorsprong

'Ontwerpers studeerden aan prestigieuze modescholen en de overvloed aan fabrieken in China geeft hun een voorsprong'



SICKY MAGAZINE



SICKY MAGAZINE

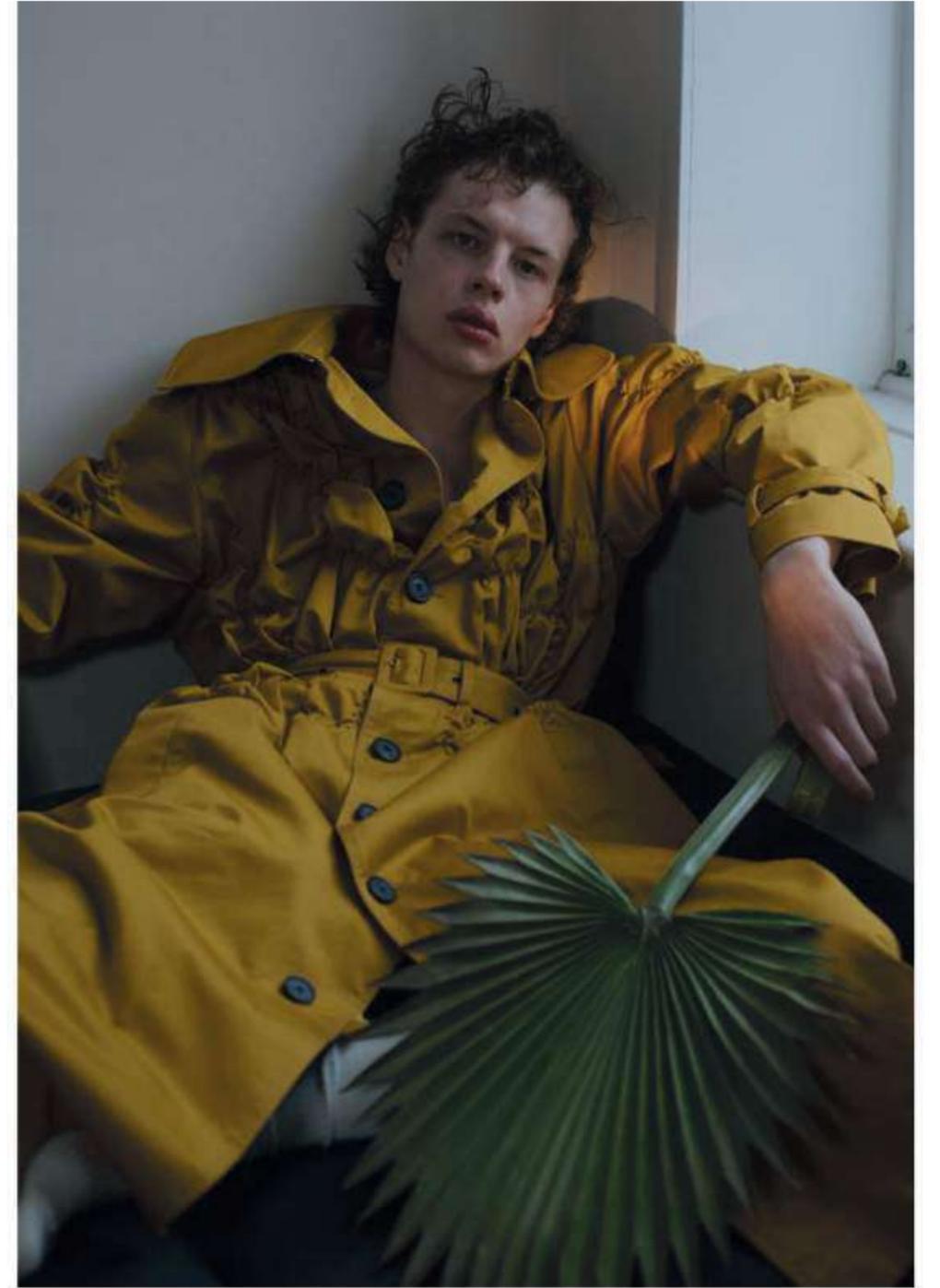
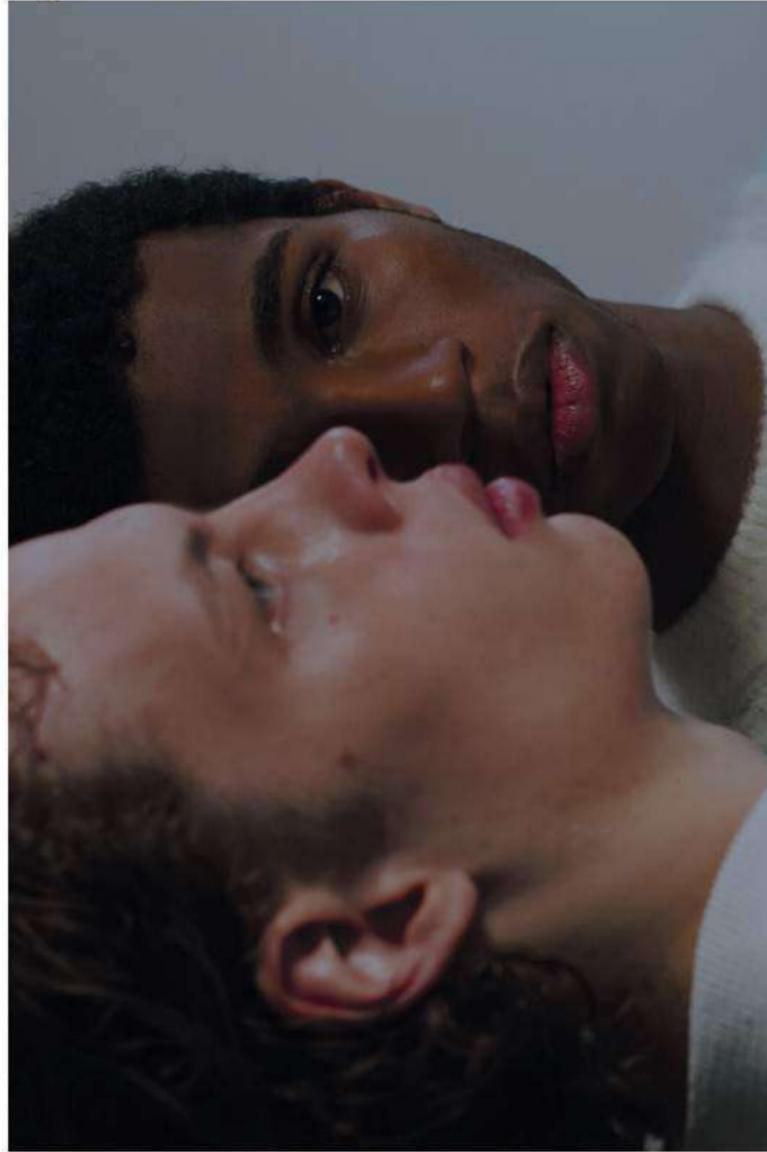


ENDS OF A SPECTRUM

by Adriano B.

16 Apr. EDITORIAL. EXCLUSIVE.

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LONDON FASHION WEEK DIGITAL JUNE 2020

LONDON FASHION WEEK

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Inspiration



LONDON FASHION WEEK
12-14 JUNE 2020

Positive Fashion



UNSETTLED SHELL

VOGUE HONG KONG THE NEXT LIST 2020

78 Feature

Ruby Crook

Ponder.er

Harrison Tsang

Vain Fook

Momy Lam

Porche Poon

Roger Che

The Next List: Hong Kong Power

任何大師也曾是新人。經歷接近一年的不穩定，香港的創意力量躍躍欲上，在國際間發光發亮。這次 (VOGUE) Hong Kong 挑選來自香港最負期待的時尚新力量，讓我們重新感受創作的熱情。

by 張磊 Daniel Cheung

79

Ponder.er, Fashion Designer

Alex Ho (蕭浩軒) 和 Derek Cheng (鄭仲權) 於倫敦 Central Saint Martins 學商兩項畢業，隨後共同創立的時尚品牌 Ponder.er。Ponder.er 與藝術和電影、傢俱設計等元素緊密地聯繫在一起。「我們二人在成長過程中，都對電影和藝術有極大的興趣，所以希望透過服裝，展現藝術上的創作靈感和想像力。」他們認為，時尚是為時裝界帶來衝擊，對一些傳統的時尚規則，舉一反三的機會。反思自己在服裝款式上有甚麼可改變。他們也有，很多時候在界人士和時尚界前輩的鼓勵下，他們明白只要 stay creative，對未來的態度自然正面。雖然品牌成立只有一年，但從經驗中，他們藉此獲新的啟發和靈感。希望 Ponder.er 能愈來愈為大眾帶來更多有趣的設計。

voguehongkong

Hong Kong Power

voguehongkong



another_man • Following

another_man @ponder.er, the Hong Kong label doing menswear differently

"Our brand is about questioning and challenging what modern masculinity means and the possibility of menswear," explain @bafcm graduates @alexpokalam and @derekcch, who launched their brand PONDER.ER last year. "It's all about embracing that vulnerability, and directing the gaze onto the male body." Link in bio

by Xin Li

20h

derekcch

Liked by derekch and 1,165 others

20 HOURS AGO



anothermagazine • Follow

anothermagazine @ponder.er, the Hong Kong-based brand challenging traditional ideas of menswear and masculinity

@alexpokalam and @derekcch's adrogynous collections seek to "liquefy" familiar tropes of masculine dress. "It's definitely satisfying to make something look fragile and unsettling," they say. "It's all about embracing that vulnerability, and directing the gaze onto the male body." Learn more about @ponder.er at the link in our bio

by @_xinli_

2d

Liked by alexpokalam and 1,798 others

2 DAYS AGO



PONDER.ER, the Hong Kong Label Doing Menswear Differently

ANOTHER MAN / ANOTHER NAME TO KNOW



PONDER.ER Photography by Xin Li

"Our brand is about questioning and challenging what modern masculinity means and the possibility of menswear," explain Central Saint Martins graduates Alex Po and Derek Cheng, who launched their brand PONDER.ER in 2019

JUNE 25, 2020

TEXT Chidozie Obasi



experiences as young men for: "More significantly, growing up as 'too soft', and some would say 'feminine' boys, our brand is about questioning and challenging what modern masculinity means and the possibility of menswear," says Cheng. "Just like one of the featured creatives from our latest project *UNTITLED SHELL*, Jason Mui, said, masculinity is about confidence and freedom."



PONDER.ER Photography by Xin Li

Why do I want it? Po and Cheng's adrogynous collections seek to "liquefy" familiar tropes of masculine dress - their Spring/Summer 2020 collection was titled *Liquid Masculinity* accordingly, whereby semi-sheer body-clinging knits, delicate shirting and cut-outs sought to "to rethink and reconsider the definition of masculinity and how modern men dress" (the pair called it a coming together of both of their graduate collections). "It's definitely satisfying to make something look fragile and unsettling,"

FASHION FARM FOUNDATION

FFFRIDAY PRESENTATION
PONDER.ER

FFFRIDAY PRESENTATION
FEASTON
KA WA KEY
PONDER.ER
SFZ & SON
YMDH



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About the presentation

Representatives from various creative industries perform a series of body movements to express the concept of Ponder.er's collection 'Unsettled Shell'. Inspired by self-isolation due to the current epidemic, Ponder.er's presentation aims to encourage people to break free from their own shell and grow more confident within themselves.

About PONDER.ER

PONDER.ER is the brainchild of creative duo Alex Po and Derek Cheng. The pair met whilst studying at the prestigious Central Saint Martins in London, with both BA collections being selected to showcase at the Press Show. Po then went on to further sharpen his skills and vision at the Royal College of Art specialising in Men's knitwear.

With a common interest in exploring the world of Menswear through an alternative approach, the creative partnership was formed in 2019 with the intention of challenging gender stereotypes and raising questions against social norms.

PONDER.ER, a gender fluid label was born to expand and reinterpret the contemporary Men's wardrobe through dissecting and reconstructing ideas inspired by traditional Menswear, found objects and everyday experiences in urban cities.

@ponder.er www.ponder.er.com

FFFRIDAY 2020
FFFRIDAY PRESENTATION – PONDER.ER

Organized by Fashion Farm Foundation
Major Sponsor: Create HK

Designer: Alex Po, Derek Cheng
Model: Jason Mui | Wilson PK | Skene Milne | Rose Ng | Xin Li | Rita Chan | Espen Cook
Videographer: Daniel Teo

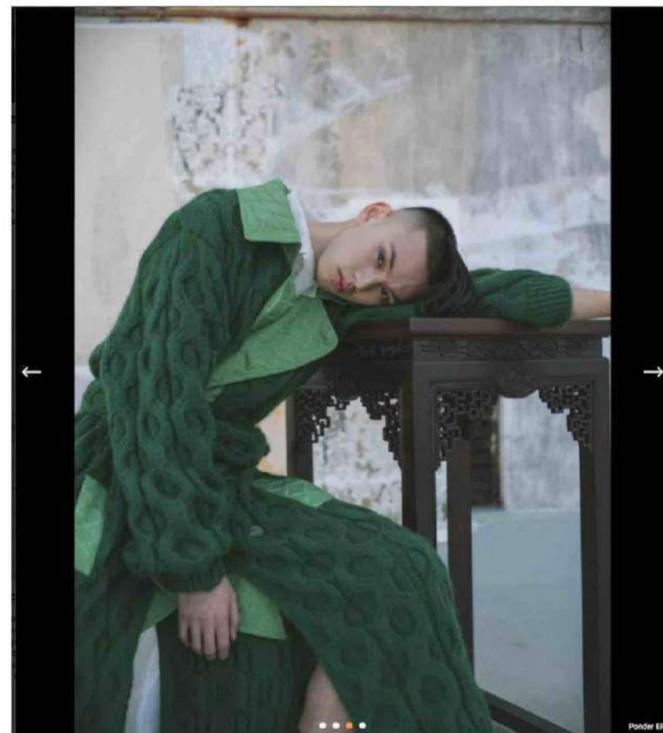
WGSN #brandstowatch



#softmasculinity
#stayhomestyle
#brandstowatch

Hong Kong-based Ponder ER is a gender fluidifying brand that taps into our #softmasculinity trend. We love the nicely ruched textile surface and bright vivid colours in the A/W 20/21 collection, where the contrasting sheer layers and chunky knit also speak to our ongoing #stayhomestyle story.

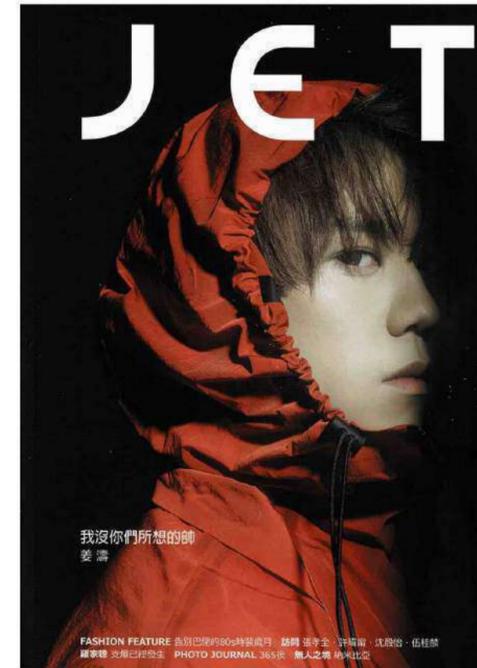
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#softmasculinity
#stayhomestyle
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20.05.20



我沒你們所想的帥
姜濤

FASHION FEATURE 告别巴黎的80s时装周 薛明 张宇全 许瑞智 沈殿忠 伍廷贤
羅家輝 沈耀仁 陈冠生 PHOTO JOURNAL 365次 物人之境 神来比况





2020-06-17 20:07:56

PONDER.ER：液化男裝

Text: Calvin Wong

Photo: Bowy Chan (products), PONDER.ER



系列目前在哪儿發售？

2020秋冬系列將於日本WUT Store、意大利BIFFI Boutiques和上海LABELHOOD發售。未來會陸續登陸更多的買手店，目前正在籌備於今年開設自己的網店。



“CRUSH” Short Jacket \$6,770

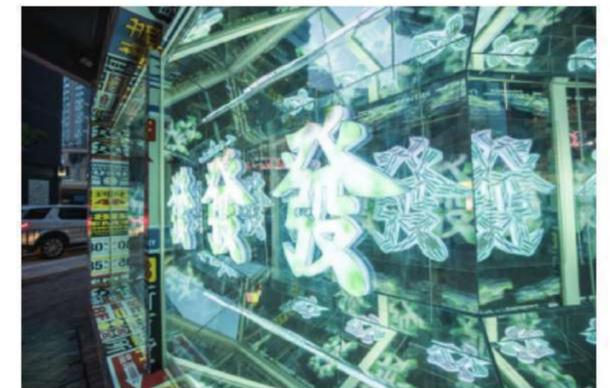


“MEMBRANE” Printed Shirt \$4,360



早前參加FFFriday的「發發發星期五」企劃後，有什麼新發現？

今次FFFriday的活動，令我們在疫症期間獲得更多支持和空間繼續創作。希望可與更多本地的creatives合作，探討大家對設計、性別定型和社會問題的看法。以前常說香港是文化沙漠，現在漸漸發現，在這個商業城市的外殼下，其實仍有很多深層的本地文化、有潛能的創作人，以及有待大家探索的靈感。





N.070
JUN 2020
HK\$50



四十三
PANTS PONDER.ER
DRESS STYLIST'S OWN
"ODD GARDEN N.06" CERAMIC MUK

第十五天，風來了。和風一起來的，是從中央公園飄過來的櫻花雨。一位清秀的青年，他們留在舞台，我坐在餐廳旁，大家保持著兩米安全距離地喝茶。

「因為人類不在，松鼠、兔子、野鴉，各種雀鳥都次地可以在樹下賞花賞鬆，真係好熱鬧呢。昨天竟然連唐及淑那一家人也來了，我也是第一次見到牠們。」

「你覺得沒有人類會比較開心嗎？」我後快的問，臉一下紅了。不知是因為櫻花雨亮的容顏，還是因為對人類的破壞自然的行程感到羞愧。

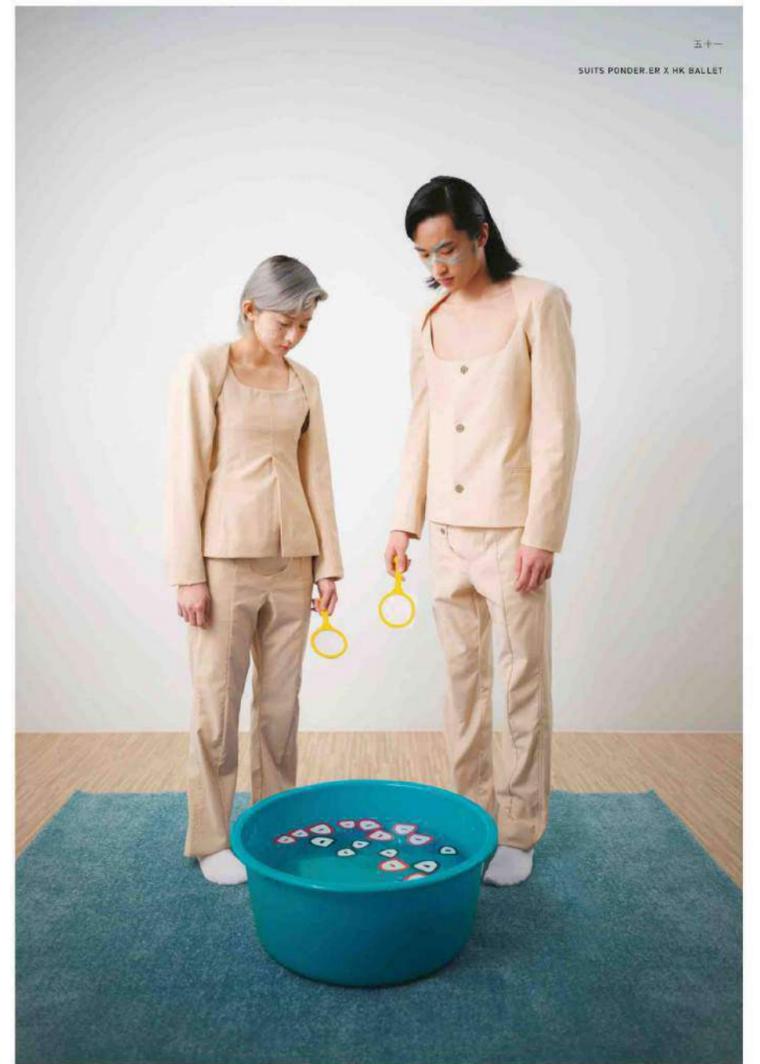
「當人類離開我的花今年比上半年時我會很高興，只要他們不要把我的手扯下來拍照，甚至茶餘回家就好了，真的很高興！為什麼要這樣呢？！」



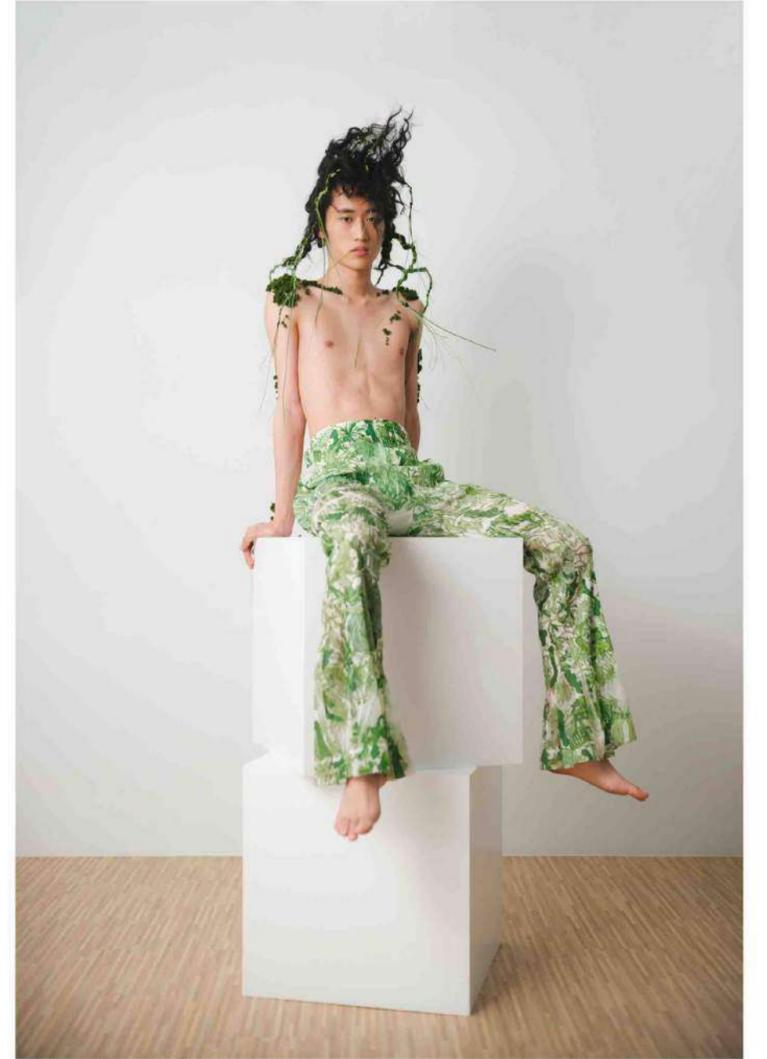
四十四
DRESS VYHAMMÄRSGATAN
KNIT BRIEF PONDER.ER

第二十六天，風帶來兩個滿面驚恐之色、渾身落泊的黃衣少年。

「我們本來住在三珍市，這星期是我們最難關，也是油菜花節最熱鬧的日子，每年都有二、三十萬名遊客來拍照。政府害怕市民忍不住出來打卡引發大規模感染，於是從周末前一下子把我們全部用綠泥車鎖走！我倆剛好乘上風才能逃脫，其他油菜花都被送去堆田區了……」



五十一
SUITS PONDER.ER X HK BALLET



Harper's Bazaar China September 2020 Issue

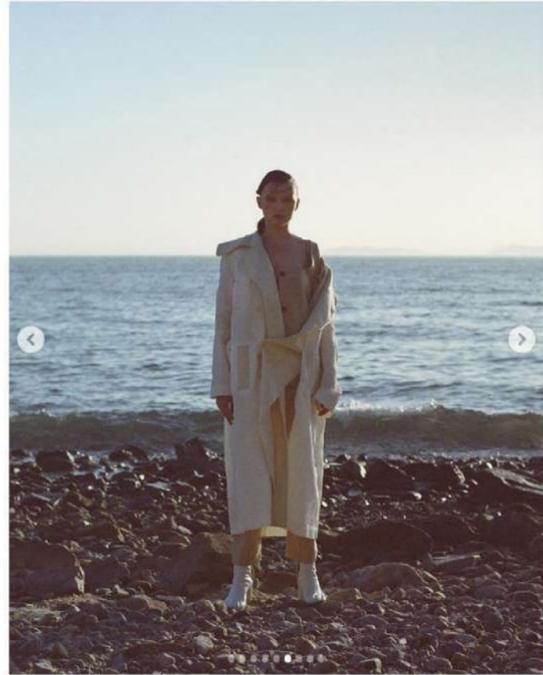
左页 蔡梓梓 印花丝巾上衣、印花拼接半裙 SNOW XUE GAO 宁中仪 印花拼接连衣裙 SNOW XUE GAO
谷海臻 印花拼接上衣 SNOW XUE GAO 陈雅莉 印花拼接连衣裙 SNOW XUE GAO
右页 潘洁文 褶皱夹克、褶皱印花长裤 PONDER.ER 谷海臻 褶皱夹克、针织短裤 PONDER.ER
宁中仪 褶皱上衣、褶皱长裤 PONDER.ER 诗展婕 透视针织衫、印花拼接长裤 PONDER.ER 蔡雅琪 针织衫、褶皱长裤
PONDER.ER 诗展婕 褶皱夹克、褶皱长裤 PONDER.ER 魏珊珊 褶皱拼接上衣、针织短裤 PONDER.ER



PONDER.ER

东方东方的图案，
与时代的光影相融合，
以先进的数码印花工艺和全新面料，
东方元素对于我们的生活环境，
总是在细微之处，悄悄地影响你。

PAP MAGAZINE "NOBODY KNOWS WHAT HAD HAPPENED"



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Hong Kong

pap_magazine 'Nobody Knows What Had Happened'. Photography by @tung903 — Stylist by @saralliii — Makeup by @kiddsph — Hair by @toyoho — Model by @mable_g_ in exclusive for PAP MAGAZINE — link in bio

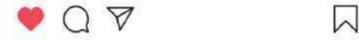
Fashion by Ponder.er, Zara and Maison Margiela

#nobodyknowswhathadhappened
#ponderer #zara #maisonmargiela

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JUNE 14

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Post





A look from Hong Kong-based brand Ponderer's spring 2020 collection.



An image from Private Policy's Asian Family Dinner project.

The Fight to Defetishize The Term 'Gaysian' in Fashion

Creatives of Asian backgrounds urge the gay community to take a more progressive view of the "Gaysian" culture and what it truly represents. BY TIANWEI ZHANG

LONDON — Racism exists within the LGBTQ community and gay Asian men, who are often grouped together by the term 'Gaysian,' are often being fetishized — in a similar way to how Asian women have been perceived by the general public — and underrepresented in Western society.

Asian creatives who work in the fashion industry are increasingly voicing their concerns and demanding change regarding how they are perceived and how they should be represented within the community and in popular culture, especially after the outbreak of the Black Lives Matter movement across the U.S. following the killings of George Floyd and many other Black people at the hands of white policemen.

"I don't like the word 'Gaysian,'" said Alex Po, cofounder of Ponderer, a Hong Kong-based brand that aspires to redefine modern masculinity. "It's a combination of two stereotypes. It's a fetishized term to group Asian people who are gay together in white-dominated societies."

"I acknowledge that we like to label ourselves, as if there aren't enough labels going around in society. While sometimes it can be fun, like a harmless joke, looking at it as a bigger picture, it could be problematic," he added.

Jamie Gill, chief executive officer at Roksanda, who is gay and of Indian background, said the term 'Gaysian' is not politically correct. "Gay Times once grouped together all leading LGBTQ+ BAME [Black, Asian and minority ethnic] people,

and they called it the 'Gaysian Issue,' which I just thought was not the best way to celebrate what we have achieved," he said.

Their sentiment is echoed by George Ichikawa, head of creative and design at Puma Japan, and chairperson at Mr. Gay Japan, an annual pageantry event that aims to increase visibility and positive connotations for gay people in the country.

"I do not want to be called 'Gaysian.' I am myself and I am George. Yes, I am gay and I am part of the LGBTQ+ community, but I do not need to have an extra label attached to myself other than that. It is a term that is created to group us, and not in a positive way," he said.

That's also why Ichikawa started Mr. Gay Japan, to champion individuality and diversity.

"I started this with a group of friends and my partner around three years ago. By creating this platform, we are able to give voices to Japanese gay people to speak up about their own experiences and also able to get them some media attention. Even though some people might want to put us in a category for Japanese gay people, each one of us is different and we all face different issues living in Japan as a part of the LGBTQ+ community," he said.

Yu Masui, a Japanese fashion writer who is known for gender-fluid street style, said the idea of gender is historically more fluid in Asia. Being a man doesn't require many traits commonly seen in Western gay culture, such as muscles or a mustache.

For example, there was a movement

of androgynous dressing back in the late Nighties in Japan. Even straight men were wearing tight-fitting T-shirts and had feminine hair cuts. Nowadays, it's still much preferred for male idols in China and South Korea to be clean-shaven and androgynous.

"They were called 'Femi-o [o means man in kanji character.]' So it was not so difficult for Asian designers or even students to bring strong genderless concepts in fashion, such as Moto Guo's kawaii style or the more arty style as seen in Xander Zhou's male pregnancy a few seasons ago," Masui said.

Across the Pacific Ocean, Haoran Li, cofounder of New York label Private Policy, who has been living in Manhattan for over a decade and is a regular on the dance floors from downtown Manhattan to Flushing, is frustrated by the under-representation of people like him in mainstream culture.

"Not only are Asian gays underrepresented, but the image of the Asian male is also underrepresented. It is really hard to find a major Asian male image in media and popular culture. We should definitely work on this, and see where the problem is. And this is also what our brand stands for," said Li.

"We did a full Asian cast show back in 2018 during London Fashion Week to show the diversity within the Asian community overseas. That was an emotional show for us. Also, we did an 'Asian Family Dinner' project in New York during the last fashion week to truly show how important family as an element is in Asian culture," he added. ▶



Xander Zhou showcased male pregnancy in his spring 2019 collection.

The brand has also collaborated with New York-based party Bubble T, a party that celebrates Asian queer visibility, on multiple occasions.

"We celebrated and hosted the Lunar New Year party in the Museum of Chinese in America in New York back in 2019. I think events like this really brought the community together. We embrace Asian culture and our own identity through the events and we were happy that we saw people from different backgrounds come to enjoy and experience progressive diversity," Li said.

HBO Max removed "Gone With the Wind" last week for its untruthful portrayal of slavery. Li pointed out that films like "Breakfast at Tiffany's," "The Good Earth," "Ghost in the Shell," and many more are equally problematic.

"They have given negative stereotypes to Asian images. These historical backgrounds really resulted in some terrible consequences. Such as the stereotype we often heard that 'Asian men are not attractive.' And this also resulted in a lot of self-hate and doubt within the community," he said.

"On dating apps, you can see there are people who would say 'Asians to the front' or more often 'No Asians.' Instead of being individuals, sometimes I think I am fetishized by people. And this was really damaging for me in my early 20s," he added.

Junting Zhou, a filmmaker in New York whose work on how his family in China dealt with the coronavirus outbreak was recently featured in The New York Times, agreed that Asian gays are terribly misrepresented in the U.S.

"Few people know that just 100 years ago, it was still in the American law [The Chinese Exclusion Act] to prohibit Chinese men working in the country, and they can't become citizens through marriage. Unfortunately, today the gay culture still inherits this racist tradition of emasculating Asian men. 'Gaysian' is a category that limits the expectation and possibility of what we can be. I feel like I am at the bottom of the food chain in New York. I am definitely more popular in China," Zhou said.

With Ponderer, Po and his business partner Derek Cheng, wants to defy the stereotypes.

"There is always a stereotype of gay Asian men being overly dramatic and feminine. Can a gay Asian be masculine? I feel the media says no," Po said. "That's why we are trying to break the stereotype of Asian gay men. Men don't have to be masculine, playing sports, strong and tough, but it's OK to be fragile, vulnerable, but not exactly feminine."

Cheng added that, "We have built our brand based on ourselves, growing up as two 'soft' and 'nonmasculine' boys by the stereotypical social standard. Our designs are often based on breaking down and remixing classic men's wear. It's our way of telling the world that if masculinity is a quality a boy or a man needs to possess, we definitely need to widen the definition of that word by now."

"In the most recent concept film we did, titled 'Unsettled Shell,' we brought together creatives to talk about the topic of gender and identity. A few of them have mentioned that modern masculinity is about being confident, and embracing your vulnerability and authenticity. If you avoid wearing pink because you are scared of being called 'gay,' how masculine are you?" he said.

Having lived in London for almost 10 years, Cheng observed that there is a huge percentage of gay Asian men who are only interested in white males.

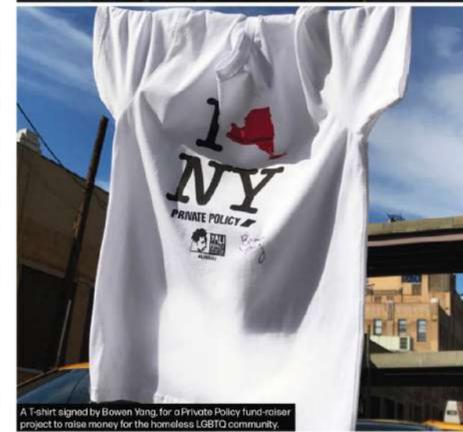
"I feel like it has something to do with how aesthetics are represented in the media, even more so in the East. If you go to Thailand, for example, you can see billboards everywhere featuring Caucasian or mixed models; you seldom or never see models with darker skin, not to mention that a lot of Asians have the mind-set of white skin equals wealthy and pretty," he said.



A look from Hong Kong-based brand Ponderer's fall 2020 collection.



Awkwafina, Bowen Yang, Lori Tan Chinn and BO Wong posed together to promote their show 'Awkwafina Is Nora From Queens' during the 2020 Winter Television Critics Association Press Tour.



A T-shirt signed by Bowen Yang for a Private Policy fund-raiser project to raise money for the homeless LGBTQ community.

"A lot of people from BAME backgrounds in the LGBTQ+ community all share one challenge growing up: self-hate. Looking up at big screens in the cinema thinking 'I wish I had bone structures like Henry Cavill or Timothée Chalamet.' It's sick that we are in 2020 and we are still being fit into these 'inferior' boxes, whether being put into it or self-inflated," Cheng added.

"I remember going into a huge gay club in New York when I was interning there, there was this Asian corner where the Asians gathered. This is a question I ask myself a lot as well, is it our problem? That we love to stick together, or are 'Gaysians' really less accepted in the gay circle? It is a bit of both, I think," he said.

Thomas Villeneuve, a French gay man who has lived in Guangzhou, China, for 15 years and is an organizer of the city's Pride events, shares similar sentiments. He said the rules gay Asian men imposed on themselves, and how they form Asian-only, tight-knit groups, can be hard for people like him, who are willing to learn more about them to truly get to know them.

Pressure from the traditional family values also stops a lot of Asian gay men from being their authentic selves, Villeneuve observed. "Even if the mainstream media have a great gay Asian men representation, as long as their parents are not, it will be hard," he said.

Speaking of positive media representation, Marc Ma, a Shanghai-based fashion producer who spent his early 20s in Paris, said, "Bowen Yang appearing on 'Saturday Night Live' was a turning point for gay Asian men in recent memory. The last gay Asian man that had good media visibility in the U.S. was probably BD Wong."

"SNL is very white, frankly speaking, even it has a diverse cast. So when I saw Bowen become one of the permanent cast, I felt a bit touched. But, of course, he would still do the impression of Kim Jong-un or whatever, but still, it's a start," he said.

Zhou said another good example in the media for having a positive portrayal of Asian gay men includes the documentary "All in My Family" on Netflix, by Hao Wu. "It is about his experience of dealing with his Chinese parents when he chose to have kids as a gay Chinese father," he said.

Other works that showcase the complexity of gay Asian men include Ang Lee's film "The Wedding Banquet," "Farewell My Concubine" by Chen Kaige, "Happy Together" by Wong Kar-wai, and "The River" by Tsai Ming-liang.

In response to the Black Lives Matter movement worldwide, the gay Asian community has been showing support for fighting systemic racism in society and speaking up more.

Private Policy, for example, launched a T-shirt fundraiser project with Billy Porter, Tan France, Bowen Yang and Chella Man in order to raise money for the homeless LGBTQ community.

Li thinks gay Asians need to speak out and share their stories more in order to break the stereotype. "A lot of us feel shy and do not like to speak out, but we face bullies in real life as well. Our future is in our hands," he said.

Ichikawa joined the Black Lives Matter Tokyo march last Sunday in solidarity with the movement. "I am a believer in equality 100 percent. Without Marsha P. Johnson, a Black transgender woman leading the march at the Stonewall Uprising 50 years ago, our LGBTQ+ rights, what we have achieved, would not have happened," he said. "The only reason why Asians are so misunderstood and have never been paid enough attention in the West is that we are too soft," said Ma. "We compromise too much and are too modest and too shy. So not only the white but also other races would think that we are muted. The Asian vote is not even a thing for the presidential election, so who cares if Asian lives matter or not?" ■

Tatler Hong Kong

T

FASHION

Meet The 5 Hong Kong Designers Shaking Up The Local Fashion Scene This Year



Ponder.er



even more so now as he's fashion system and

And to hopefully change

What do you love most about Hong Kong?

AP & DC: The diversity of people, the eagerness for people to thrive and to search for new ideas, the real and one-of-a-kind local culture and identity hidden underneath this cold and hyper-capitalist shell.

Tell us a story behind one of your designs

AP & DC: We often attempt to liquefy traditional menswear shapes and details. It was a challenging process creating our mohair knit cardigan with denim jacket details. Our knit technician warned us that by using such a method the garment would lose its structure, we insisted that we want the whole garment including all details to be liquefied like water, both the knit technician and us bursted into laughter after but thankfully she was so helpful in achieving our vision, and we named it "Water" because of this incident.

Who would you most like to see wear your clothes?

AP & DC: Tilda Swinton, Oh Hyuk from Hyukoh, Harry Styles, Leslie Cheung (If we were born earlier)

The Standard

Standard WEEKEND GLITZ Interview



From left: Po as a kid; Cheng as a kid; the duo with friends at Central Saint Martins; Po's designs from his BA collection Bouncing Bozzzz; pants from Bouncing Bozzzz; Po's MA collection Looners; outfits from Cheng's BA collection Objects of Hong Kong; outfits from Objects of Hong Kong; knitwear from Ponder.er's first seasonal collection Unsettled Shell; and outfits from Ponder.er's Liquid Masculinity.



Conventional wisdom has it that men should be masculine, play sports and not wear pink. But should they, really? Alex Po and Derek Cheng want to question these stereotypes and show that men do not need to live up to others' expectations with their fashion brand Ponder.er.

Po and Cheng never bought into the stereotypes themselves. They did not find it an issue until adults told them it was. "Once, my primary school vice principal told my mother: 'your kid is very well behaved and academically perfect, but he really needs to man up,'" recalled Cheng. The comment left a deep mark. "I think he was commenting on how I spoke, and that I played with girls more than boys."

He started to doubt himself. "Why do I have to act and speak in a certain way to be a boy or a man?" he wondered. Po faced similar criticism, as his father wanted him to conform to the stereotype. "I was more of a 'soft boy,' as I did not play sports or do boyish stuff. My hobby was drawing," said Po. "My father wanted me to take up kung fu, and once said he wanted to send me to the Shaolin monastery for a summer to toughen me up."

Peers, though, accepted them for what they were. "I got teased a lot," said Cheng. "People would say I seemed more like a girl than a boy. But I didn't feel like it was an attack, just playing." These struggles growing up gave them added strength of character.

Becoming friends after meeting at Central Saint Martins, where they were both studying fashion design, they set out to design a line of menswear that broke the norm in terms of design and colors. "With womenswear, there seem to be no limits, but not for menswear," said Po. They believe the barriers for menswear are unnecessary. "If you are confident, you should be able to wear anything you want," said Cheng. "Boys are afraid of wearing pink because they are not confident or do not want to stand out as being too feminine."

Though they did not set out to address gender norms, their design philosophy was always there, as reflected in their final collections for their degree. "My BA collection was inspired by 1930s men's swimsuits and 1970s men's disco suits," said Po. "I put big balls on trousers and made bouncy jersey

tops." Apart from the bold design, he used uncommon menswear colors such as light pink and baby blue. Cheng's BA collection was just as bold. "I took elements from the streets of Hong Kong, such as bamboo scaffolding," he said. "The colors I used were bright and shocking." Their collections attracted public attention, and were featured in magazines and newspapers from Britain to Hong Kong.

Realizing their vision had potential, the duo started Ponder.er in 2019 with the aim of starting a revolution in menswear. "Gender stereotypes were imposed on us when we were kids and it is still happening to other kids and adults," said Cheng. "They still have to hide and make decisions based on stereotypes. This is something we want to play with." Despite being a young brand, Ponder.er has received a warm response.

"We received overwhelming support from creatives in Hong Kong," said Cheng. "Buyers would give us advice for free. Photographers, models and videographers also approached us." Collaboration opportunities with Hong Kong Ballet and Fashion Farm Foundation also came calling. However, as the designs are not considered mainstream, it is still not

easy for Ponder.er to survive in Hong Kong. "We are not planning to have Hong Kong customers, but more Chinese, European and Japanese ones," said Po. "We know it is a niche market, but we have received orders from both men and women, as well as buyers who want to sell to women." For now, the interest is enough to keep them going. "It is only our first commercial season and we have a lot to learn," said Cheng.

The pair are also freelancing to gain experience and supplement their income. Although the path ahead is challenging, the former college flatmates are lucky to have each other as partners. They have completely different styles in design, but those differences allow them to fill the gaps. "Most of our arguments are on the choice of fabrics. But we try things out, have sensible conversations and choose the best one for the brand," said Cheng.

Their family members are also their biggest supporters. While Po's mother expresses her care by preparing lunchboxes for her son, Cheng's mother supports him secretly. "My mother would secretly buy magazines that we were in and read the articles," said Cheng. "Once I went home and she told me she really liked the garment I was wearing on TV. I hadn't even told her I would be on TV!"



PONDER.ER

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