

2025

The Netherlands

Cracking the fashion system:

Study on DURAN's journey —
from concave to convex

April 16th

Education

First stop: Gerrit Rietveld Academie

When it comes to schooling, it is worth emphasizing how Duran Lantink, the apprentice, shaped himself into a representative from the free academia of Amsterdam. Lantink's notorious and impactful decision in choosing an art and design school that provides liberal guidance on creative practices and constantly questions fashion's systemic behaviors in relation to the student's own needs allows for individualism rather than the collective shaping of an entire student class under one expertise. Lantink's BA graduation collection titled ASCENSU ET DESCENSU was displayed in an old Free Congregation Church—a cultural venue since the 70s—in Amsterdam city center in June 2013 in a show orchestrated by Niels Klavers, the head of the academy's fashion department at the time. The misty space provided the feeling of a late-night service where each graduate's clothes marched under the frequency of selected hymns in a genuinely convincing way. Lantink's take on sculptural shoes, displayed at the show's end, was a particularly holy part of the procession.

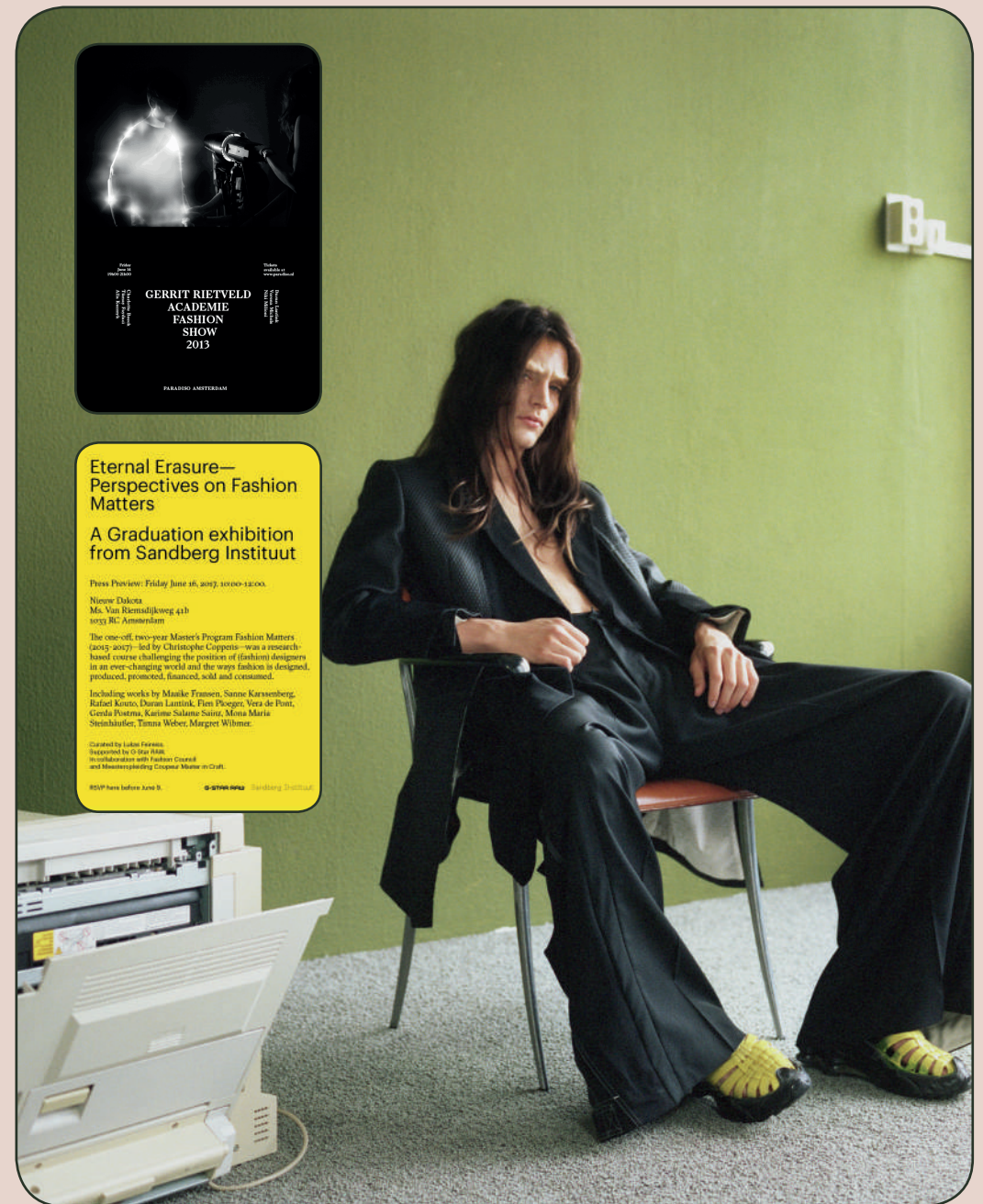
Second stop: Sandberg Institute

When the BA years ended, a period of experimentation and self-discovery followed, and Lantink did not hesitate to spend some time at the temporary MA program Fashion Matters in Design. Undoubtedly, Lantink wanted to find more answers within the system he was positioning himself to join before fully belonging to it. He was aiming to enter it, but with the focused intention of cracking it open. Coincidentally, the Sandberg Institute was training a limited group through the one-off, two-year post graduate program under the direction of Christophe Coppens, a Belgian multidisciplinary artist, designer, and opera director. In June 2017, over the course of a two-day exhibition, the MA graduation took place on the other side of the river IJ, Amsterdam's waterfront. Each of the eleven well-harvested researchers graduated with a very particular story, like eleven islands, eleven satisfied professionals facing the complex field of fashion after two years of intense nourishment. Lantink's installation looked like an abandoned warehouse, and questioned our love towards textile as waste.

“[Duran] was known for his playful take on upcycling and outgoing designs. I remember him going for any crazy ideas he had, and not thinking too much about what others thought about it. One such instance during the MA was when he started cutting up high-end designer clothes like a Chanel jacket for his upcycling work... Cutting up high-end brand clothing was quite radical and new, especially when doing it in a sort of freestyle way as Duran did. But he made it work.”

Timna Weber, Lantink's MA classmate 2015-2017

Lantink's graduation work shows his dedicated path through Amsterdam's classrooms, both instances illuminating the facial expression of a young professional with iridescent eyes who aim towards a brighter and more uncertain future beyond the results of the exams. Envisioning a living fashion in constant motion rather than framed by diplomas, Lantink unleashed what he had learned the most from the school years at his back: freedom around the continuity of creation.



Photography:

© Olya Oleinic - Duran Lantink look 7 - Fashion Masters Sandberg Institute 2017

© Gerrit Rietveld Academie - Show invite 2013

© Sandberg Institute - Press preview invite 2017

Duran, the retail anthropologist

During his studies, Lantink had already manifested himself as someone with great interest and loyalty to retail. He frequently paid visits to high end stores, whether department stores or multi-brands, not just in Amsterdam, but all across the country. It was Lantink's natural curiosity in visiting those magical spaces where his favorite designers were displayed, the ones boosting his vision, that gave him the self-possession he needed when he had to decide on his future role.

Like most Dutch students that hold side jobs, Lantink soon discovered his innate potential as a stylist, delivering images to national magazines and newspapers while collecting prestige in return.

At one point, he was unanimously respected by store owners and buyers for both his professionalism and his natural charm. He registered each season from what was on the racks in stores, what was selected by buyers, what sold and, even more lusciously, what was left on the rack after discounts. It was that retail awareness that gave Lantink the confidence and, thus, the access to start customizing luxury garments while addressing sustainability.

Could we say this retail exercise marked the starting point of his decision to use a scalpel to mix-and-match expensive garments? On the collection press release from DON'T ASK ME TO REMAIN THE SAME from June 2017 we read a resounding "Yes!" Lantink credits five national luxury stores for their contributions to the creation and

giving him the means to mutate Balenciaga and Céline and many others. In order to cut- or even dare to- you first need to look, and that was Lantink's journey for several years: observe and reobserve the existing stock in stores. He ensured that the act of cutting was not violent as it may initially seem, but



rather embellishes and revamps the existing products, thus generating a new type of consumer.

I must admit that it was painful for me to see, for the first time, two designer's garments compressed into one. Yet right after, I visualized a new aesthetic coordinate and, more importantly, understood that what I witnessed was a solution to bring life back to all those sleeping beauties hiding in store's warehouses. It was a way to block capitalism from defining their lifetime as a mere product. Blocking and cracking, that's was it all about: Lantink had organically patented this technical audacity worldwide by medio 2017.

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 © Luca Tombolini & Shoji Fuji - duran paris FW2025 look 49
 © Shoji Fuji - duran paris SS2024 look 27



Gentileza, his female influencer

Re-appreciating charm, this specific designer quality, can be seen as largely inherited, and in Lantink's case is quite obviously transferred from his dear mother. Visiting fashion stores together not only transformed him into a sort of social anthropologist, but reflects perfectly the exchange of ideas that occurred between these two, constantly learning from each other. Brazilian prophet José Dadrino's famous words, "kindness begets kindness," come to mind and can aptly be applied to the journey: two thirsty explorers searching for involvement and reflexional connection provoked by garments and accessories in fashion stores. You can research alone, but when guided by and linking arms with the person who has supported your dreams since childhood, it becomes an irreplaceable experience. These lines turn sweeter and sweeter, like diving into the sugary, deep center of a pie. The ability to witness the natural and neutral

interaction between mother and son regarding style advice is and always will be the personal privilege of those working in

a store, and Lantink's focus and attention when asking for style advice made more than one sales associate melt over the years. Kindness in Lantink's designer chromosomes could be understood as glamor in the mainstream, but here is more associated with white feeling of l'amour and all that caring going on behind the scenes. Are we referring to those sculptured passionate hearts and red shapes seen on the runway? We believe they are stuffed with the exact same kind of love. Now, as we leave behind Lantink's journey through retail, whether solo or in a pair, we can confirm he had a strong orientation toward the market since the early days. He knew precisely how these well-valued products needed to be handled, and recognized the differentiation from those displayed at the mainstream shops. He has shown the relevance of hearing more voices than just his own while in conversation and deliberating over what fashion stands for.



Lockdown, when?

By the time we all got unexpectedly glued to our homes in early 2020, Lantink was already a big name in the global industry, with a few particular stand outs. Janelle Monáe's "PYNK" pants had gone viral in April 2018; Post Black Friday Shop at Somerset House in London, February 2019; Utrecht's Centraal Museum "Old Stock" had shown on the top floor in July 2019; and, finally, a dress had been designed for the 20th anniversary of V Magazine in New York, August 2019. Though the brand articulated several appearances from his home country from 2020 to 2022 --most of them relatively commercial allowing the brand to profit from dynamic and generated content --it became more and more clear that Paris was becoming the explicit short-term goal. Decision-making was all about positioning the brand and merging it into the major operational arenas of the French fashion capital. There were no doubts anywhere about where the brand's future would be. In one of the last performances in the concave, Australian brand Ellery commissioned Lantink to rework archive pieces (October 2020) and prove the possibility of upscaling his design techniques. He did not let this difficult time, with its high barriers in the industry,

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intimidate his dreams. As expected, the boilers began to boil and the magic happened: Lantink gave the best show in the Netherlands, his home country, in May 2021 at Paleis Soestdijk.

Filmed within the property's empty rooms and introducing the mega no-season combo collection springsummerfallwinter, all of the models were followed closely by drones. The fashionistas were shocked by speedily sent vibrations hitting their stomachs. Were all those drones escorting Lantink in his departure for Paris already? An energy that had been impossible in the previous years burned in its totality and was suddenly

drawing a linea-recta from Soestdijk to Paris on that spectacular occasion. In that show, the change in design is visible, the upcycling traceable here and there, but the focus on new shapes dominated the collection. The show has become a fashion TV classic and is worth watching when in need of inspiration for breaking horizons and projecting yourself into a fabulous landscape.



Moving from Paris to midtown Manhattan's Dover Street Market in March 2024, the honored retailer held for the first time a duran paris spring-summer 2024. Here, the sales associate explained who duran paris was while holding a night-blue hooded duffle, sleeveless vest that imbues a feeling of secured love. After a rushed tour through all floors, I understood that the silhouettes throughout the entire space and the designer's selection were a perfect match.

Catapulted into Paris

And then, in March 2024, Duran Lantink changed seemingly overnight to duran paris and it felt so right.

From the early days developing techniques focused on the concave to now studying the human body and mastering the next step: the convex.

Each step accomplished with great force, duran paris arrived at its final stop, the city of love, and is there to stay. Justifiably and well deserved as we say in Dutch through the word - terecht - the curve of Lantink's career was curvy enough, and the speed was high and moving towards supersonic. It was under those conditions and with that same vitality that Lantink faced it head on to finally crash his own creative drive into the global markets, officially presenting his shows and sales campaigns in Paris. Leaving behind the years of bearing criticism and confronting journalists, influencers, retailers and thinkers with innovation, Lantink finally found his secure place in space.



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A free entity wins

By March 2025 Lantink has several major awards in his pocket, as well as interviews, tons of magazine covers and hundreds of deserved pedestals for the last years' efforts. Ultimately, this reflects how Lantink's autonomy has been won and the brand has been exported beyond the stratosphere.

There's another word that summarizes much of Lantink's autonomy in design at first sight: ungovernable. Why fit in the existing drawn fashion orbits when one could just alter them? While fashion is in deep need of changes around circularity, voices like Lantink's are influencing the consumer's eyes when facing their own wardrobes. It's worth pointing out and appreciating the fact that this is not about easy pieces, but rather it's about writing a long-term formula with no end and that remains elusive. Thanks for that, duran paris!



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"I see in him the energy, audacity, and playful spirit through fashion that I had at the beginning of my own journey: the new enfant terrible of fashion. Welcome, Duran."
 Jean Paul Gaultier

One of the reasons I value the backstage work of Sydney-based photographer Sonny Vandeveld is for the way he brings Lantink's notion of the ungovernable into movement and generates smiles, activating in a far more empathetic way than catwalks are able. In the end, each shape deserves a life



and a body for transportation, and the right to freely behave or misbehave. Inside each of those cascos is a living soul, rotating and giving stimulant properties all while enlarging the eye's pleasure. What duran paris makes are not disposables that can be left outside at the neighbor's when not at home or at the pick-up point around the corner when ordering online, and thank goodness for that. Jean Paul Gaultier recently baptized Duran Lantink as the house's creative director, a choice which reflects the importance of having a vision that moves beyond mere commerciality. Lantink's creative foundation is still the same as when he first entered the Amsterdam classrooms to absorb

as much as he could during his education. Distance in space was needed to revise all his ideas, and he might have gotten no sleep, but victoriously has returned to earth. And the rest is coming from Paris!



Stoer

From the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the last word is stoer, I would like to translate it for you as toughness. Precisely what Duran Lantink will be bringing into the Parisian ateliers, thoughtful toughness.

All backstage and runway images belong to duran paris fall-winter 2025 "Duranimal"
P.3: duran paris SS2024 look 27
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