

## Design Museum: What next for Aitor Throup?

by Silvia Bombardini



Dear Shaded Viewers and Diane,

A couple of nights ago, when the sky was clear and the Tower Bridge rested supine, lulled by the Thames, in the most suitable venue of London's Design Museum, Tim Blanks invited Aitor Throup to speak to us there his very own New Design Language, a careful balance of principles and themes.

7 years or so since his graduation from the Royal College of Art, his first close call to a commercially viable collection just recently released, Aitor proudly owns his own seam, his own button hole, his own sensational shoulder. With *New Object Research* he strives somehow romantically, for an innovation that goes beyond form, authenticity of construction, an almost luminous purity of concepts. He taught himself to forget his tools, in order to reach that fabled state of naivety where we should know by now great solutions to come from. "For me the idea that trousers must finish at the ankle is like, does it?" he muses, perplexed "your legs finish at your toes". How lazy to follow such established old rules. Design, the Aitor Throup-way, is how you would do things if you didn't know how things are done, a childlike bliss, following anatomy to create new shapes.

Such resolve gives way to incredibly refined, surprisingly self-assured clothes, quite literally cut from the same fabric of superheroes' capes. When hung in your wardrobe, they brim with potential. When worn, they question your own perception of your body, tickling pleasantly like new muscles. A recurring motive throughout his practice, Aitor's fascination with comic book characters intertwines with his awareness of

football hooligans' uniforms and working class sportswear, and comes from his childhood years spent between Buenos Aires and Burnley, looking up to brands like Stone Island or C.P. Company. During his London MA, and specifically with the collection "When Football Hooligans Become Hindu Gods", a new variable was added to his vocabulary, and yet, perhaps, not as off-topic as it may sound. *"Symbolism in religion, particularly Hinduism, is effectively comic book characters"* he explains, *"physical characteristics designed in a way to convey an attribute"*. As such, the collection featured a piece with six hoods to reference the six heads of Kartikeya, and the story behind it was one of a search for redemption: a group of eight football hooligans in a racist attack inadvertently kill a young Hindu boy, then out of guilt give up their lives to become him, so that he may live through them.

This idea of transformation and the hybrid, deeply rooted in solid social commentary on the injustices of our world, will feature again in Aitor Throup's projects, for example in his work "On the Effects of Ethnic Stereotyping", dedicated to the tragic death of Jean Charles de Menezes, the innocent Brazilian mistakenly shot by anti-terrorist police at Stockwell Underground Station, in July 2005. Such charged themes, that we are more used, somehow more comfortable with when handled by arts other than fashion, are meant to wake people up, the way certain music, like hip-hop, tends to do. Aitor himself often teams up with musicians, and just last month has been confirmed as Creative Director for the rock band Kasabian and their fifth album "48:13". What's more, earlier this week he has been announced as creative consultant for the brand G-Star RAW. But rather than worrying about how these tasks might leave him little time to work on his own line, Aitor deems collaborations fundamental. *"I feel like I'm in a position where my creative potential is even bigger because of that."* he says, *"I can bring all of that back into my own work, and bring my own work into all of those things. It's like a system that fuels itself, and it's amazing"*.

Later,

Silvia

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