



Well known designer to speak at PERFORMANCE DAYS

The German designer **Anne Prah** has lived and worked in London for more than 20 years. She is known for always having sustainability in mind when making her sporty and stylish designs. In her Expert Talk on May 09th, she explains ways to design and produce new functional styles that are both stylish and sustainable. In the following interview, she gives an initial perspective:

PERFORMANCE DAYS: Anne, the fair's Focus Topic for May 2019 is 'The Beauty of Function' – what do you think about this?

Anne Prah: *"It's is a very interesting theme, as it allows us to really explore what makes a fabric beautiful in the context of functional and performance clothing. For me, this comprises fabrics that you can't take your eyes and hands off, as they draw you in with attractive colours and interesting textures and surfaces, while being irresistible to touch. When I think of the beauty of a functional piece of clothing, colour is a really important factor and personally I love colours that put a smile on my face and I am intrigued by the positive and motivational power of colours during exercise, training and performance. Other elements to make up a beautiful performance product are comfort, especially next-to-skin and a good fit. Functional fabrics and innovative manufacturing technologies play a huge role in enhancing the comfort and wellbeing of the wearer and I think there are exciting innovation opportunities in this field".*

PD: Does functional clothing need to become more attractive and if so, what can we achieve through design or material choices?

Anne Prah: *"I think there is a lot of beautiful functional clothing out there already and I have to say that at the last ISPO I felt like a kid in a sweet shop. There was an abundance of must- have products, utilising striking colours, appealing fabrics and innovative manufacturing technologies, such as seamless knitting and stitch-free quilting and padding. I think we have entered an era where churning out the same old stuff in updated colour ways is no longer good enough, consumers are becoming more demanding in terms of innovation and are expecting to be surprised, be it in subtle or more obvious ways. As functional clothing is designed to perform in specific circumstances, these products generally display unique features, making them an essential part of active consumers' wardrobes. However, as we are seeing a huge shift towards more sustainable products, attributes like durability and product longevity will gain in importance".*

PD: What should change regarding aesthetics and touch in the future, while preserving function and performance of fabrics?

Anne Prah: *"I think that fabric mills are becoming more adventurous and innovative when it comes to aesthetics and touch of performance fabrics. I am always amazed at the variety of surfaces and textures on show at **PERFORMANCE DAYS**. My only request would be to merge environmental considerations with the development of aesthetics and fabric handle. We are still seeing the use of too many harmful processes to create these eye-catching surfaces, I would like to see more innovation around fibre and fabric engineering to provide function and performance through construction, rather than finishes and treatments".*

PD: To what extent do performance requirements limit the design options?

Anne Prah: *"In theory performance requirements should not limit but inspire the design of functional clothing. The challenge for the designer is to blend emerging trends in colour, textiles, silhouettes and styling with the end-user's needs, to create unique and desirable products. Some designers may see performance requirements as an obstacle to their creative freedom but the beauty of functional clothing is that products are designed for a specific end-use, and therefore should become items that the consumer loves to wear for a long time to come, rather than throwing the item out after a couple of uses".*

PD: Or do we need a radical rethink? If so, how could performance clothing be designed, in the future?

Anne Prah: *"For the next few years, I expect to see lots of incremental innovation around fabrics, manufacturing and recycling technologies. We will also see the continuation of new consumption models, such as sharing, rental and reuse, which will have an impact on how functional clothing is designed and used. In response to growing consumer demand, so-called sustainable fabrics will become more ubiquitous and commercially viable. The industry's long-term future looks more disruptive, as we will see a new generation of bio-based materials that are lab-grown and engineered, as well as 100 % recyclable and biodegradable textiles fit for the circular economy. This move will also affect how fabrics are coloured and finished and clothes are manufactured, so they can be fully recyclable or biodegradable at end-of-life. This will no doubt lead to highly unique and surprising aesthetics, silhouettes and styling. Another important factor in designing and developing functional clothing in the future will be the use of digital and 3D tools and systems. Some of these tools, including digital material libraries, 3D design programs, virtual prototyping, digital and automated manufacture and digital sales, will provide exciting opportunities for designing and producing original and customised clothing".*

PD: How can sustainability be integrated into future design and manufacture of performance clothing?

Anne Prah: *"This is the big question I have been exploring since deciding to focus on sustainable design innovation ten years ago. I have been working with many different companies, large and small, to find creative ways to make sustainability part of the design process. The first step is to have a clear vision on what sustainability means for the brand we are designing for. This vision needs to be inspiring and achievable and requires a good support system, so that designers and developers can make the vision reality through educated choices. In my opinion, we need to embed sustainability right into our design concepts. This can be done through training and inspiring designers on sustainable and circular design strategies and making sure that sustainability becomes part of the design brief. Based on the design concept, we need to choose the best possible fabrics and components, both in terms of environmental and functional performance. As designers, we also need to constantly push fabric suppliers and clothing manufacturers, in order to push the innovation agenda and having a wider selection of sustainable options to choose from in the future".*

What can the audience expect from Anne's talk:

The well known designer **Anne Prah** is specialised in sustainable design innovation. She always looks at everything through her 'sustainability goggles', and therefore her Expert Talk will investigate what role sustainability plays within the context of beautiful functional fabrics and clothing. She will explore the meaning of beauty and how it can be created through a combination of colour, texture, fabric handle and garment construction, before outlining some of the sustainability challenges this brings. The talk will also focus on providing inspiring design concepts that embed sustainability principles into the creation of functional clothing to produce clothing that blends aesthetic and tactile beauty with environmental and human wellbeing. This will include concepts for designing products that get better with age and products that become favourites through personalisation and customisation, as well as clothes that exploit groundbreaking textile, colouration and manufacturing technology innovation.

Don't miss Anne's Expert Talk Designing Beauty: Considered Innovation for PerformanceProducts.

Thursday, May 09th at 12:45h!

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