

# 12 Between Craft and Commerce

## Norwegian and Danish Textile Design in a Time of Change

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### Introduction

The late 1960s was a time of upheaval for the textile and fashion industry in the Nordic countries. Improved production technologies increased the garment industry's output leading to saturated markets. At the same time, customs duties on clothing were lifted, which led to increased imports and competition, especially after the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) was founded in 1960. This development challenged the fashion industry's traditional ways of operating, leading to a fundamental restructuring, which changed the focus from production of staple wares to design, marketing, and branding. In this process, a new commercial persona emerged, the fashion designer, who came to occupy a central role in the new system of provision and acquisition. The process was not, however, without challenges, and the period saw debate on the collaboration between the creative designers and the commercially oriented manufacturers. After a survey of the efforts to approach fashion within the clothing industries in the 1950s and 1960s, this chapter will explore further developments up to the 1970s based on two cases: Norwegian weaver Sigrun Berg (1901–1982) and Danish textile printer Grete Ehs Østergaard (born 1938). Both women were trained as textile artisans but went on to work with the textile industry. Together, the two cases illustrate the rapid and radical changes in the textile and fashion industry in the 1960s and 1970s, and how this affected the role and professional identity of the textile designer.

### The Norwegian and Danish textile and clothing industry

In the 1950s, the clothing industry had recovered from the restrictions of the war years. New means of mass-production meant that output was higher than ever before. The garments were primarily sold on the home market, which was protected by import restrictions. During the 1950s and 1960s, the political focus changed from protectionism to market liberalisation, and the import restrictions were gradually lifted. Both Denmark and Norway joined the EFTA in 1960. In 1973 Denmark joined the European Common Market, while Norway chose to stay outside. The market liberation led to increased competition in the domestic market for both countries. Clothing manufacturers found themselves facing an increasingly volatile market, characterised by falling prices and unpredictable consumer preferences (Figure 12.1).



Figure 12.1 Workers packing underwear at Lillestrøm Trikotagefabrik, Norway, about 1950. Photographer: Mary Pedersen/Norwegian Museum of Science and Technology.

In the face of this development, the clothing manufacturers in Norway and Denmark established fashion councils to strengthen their competitiveness. The Norwegian Fashion Council for Shoes and Leather Goods was established in 1949. Three years later, the Norwegian Fashion Council for Coats and Suits was founded, owned by twenty-six clothing factories (An. 1957). In Denmark, the first national fashion council, the Danish Footwear Council, was founded in 1952, and in 1958, the Danish Men's Fashion Council was established, followed by the Danish Women's Fashion Council in 1959. In both countries, the goal was to support the local industry by creating an attractive alternative to imported goods. This was done through a plethora of initiatives, such as the establishment of trade magazines, fashion prognoses, international representation and by organising fashion shows and fairs (Pedersen 2011). These initiatives aimed to strengthen the industry's competitiveness and to stimulate consumer demand (Pedersen 2011, 148–153). In both Norway and Denmark, this endeavour entailed an increased focus on fashion as a means of staying abreast of the international competition.

In the 1960s, a new type of clothing company emerged, which produced ready-made garments in advance of expected demand. In contrast to the producers of factory-made staple wares, these companies produced small collections intended for quick turnover (Leopold 1992, 103; Melchior 2013, 59). Design became a crucial factor for the new industry, and the companies designed their own collections and

put these into production, either at their own factories or with other manufacturers. The fashion identity of the manufacturer became an essential sales parameter, and many ready-to-wear companies collaborated with professional designers to develop an attractive and coherent identity for their product lines. Examples of this include the cooperation between the ready-to-wear producer ABO in Oslo, cooperating with the Paris-based but Norwegian fashion designer Per Spook. Another concept was a new fashion line called Fjord-Look, inspired by national costumes and Norwegian nature (Figure 12.2). The project was led by the Norwegian Textile Manufacturers' Association (NTTF) representing about 30 textile and clothing manufacturers. The garments were criticised for being too folkloristic, and the concept was not the success the ready-to-wear industry had envisioned (Rasch 2011, 83–84; Rasch 2020, 181–182). In Denmark, the companies Dranella, Margit Brandt and InWear were all structured around distinct design profiles (Melchior 2013, 59–72).



*Figure 12.2* The Norwegian fashion line, “Fjord Look”, published in the teenager magazine *Det Nye*, autumn 1968. Photographer: Sohlberg Foto/Dextra Photo, Norwegian Museum of Science and Technology.

## Craft fashion

The status of textile design was the object of considerable debate in the period, focusing particularly on whether textile design possessed the same qualities as other types of arts and crafts and design. The clothing producers had a clear interest in linking their products to other types of Scandinavian arts and crafts products, which enjoyed wide international acclaim in the period. In 1956, architect Esbjørn Hjørt wrote an article in Danish trade journal *Clothing Makes the Man* titled 'Clothing as an Applied Art'. In the article, Hjørt argued that garments should be approached with the same level of ambition as other kinds of applied art, such as furniture and silverware (Esbjørn Hjørt, quoted from Melchior 2013, 55). Around the same time, however, the same kind of reasoning found another expression through the emergence of the so-called arts and crafts garments (Toftegaard 2011). This movement drew on the same thinking of elevating the status of garments but was less commercially oriented. The arts and crafts garments had roots in the 19th-century artistic movements, but from 1950 a new generation of Danish textile artisans revitalised the concept (Toftegaard 2011). Arts and crafts garments are neither bespoke tailoring, made to measure for a particular client, nor are they mass-produced ready-to-wear. They were defined by being produced by textile artisans, combining competences in garment construction with textile printing. In contrast to other types of garments, the textile would often be custom-made for the style, so that the finished garment would form an integrated whole. The textiles and garments were made by hand in small series and sold in specialty shops, which carried other types of arts and crafts, rather than in dedicated clothing stores. The textile artisans constructed the fabric, pattern, and cut of the garments with great care to obtain the desired total effect. They saw themselves as creating arts and crafts based on a high level of workmanship. In line with this, many of them were directly opposed to the idea of fashion, focusing instead on creating well-designed artefacts with a long material and aesthetic durability. Many of them related to the progressive leftist movements of the time and saw their garments as a way of promoting new, more informal ways of living. The following sections explore two key figures in the Nordic textile arts and crafts movement, Norwegian textile designer Sigrun Berg and Danish textile printer Grete Ehs Østergaard and discuss how the changes in production methods and consumer preferences impacted their work and professional identities.

### Sigrun Berg

The position of designers was strengthened in the textile industry in Norway in the middle of the 20th century, especially in the printing and weaving mills. At this time, most designers were educated in arts and crafts, and they often worked with a combination of industrial design and craft in their studios. The textile designers were an integrated part of the applied art movement and participated regularly in specific exhibitions on textiles or in group exhibitions. Interior design was the focus; however, fashion design also was a part of the exhibition programme, especially in the years after World War II (Rasch 2006, 248).

Sigrun Berg was one of the textile designers who excelled in the 1950s. Her education was fragmented, as she was educated at the National College of Arts and Crafts (Statens håndverks- og kunstindustriskole) in 1918–1919, as a midwife in the 1920s

and at the National Art Academy (Statens kunstakademi) in 1934–1935 (Mannila 1988, 46). In 1947, she established a weaving studio, which she further developed in the following years, partly with her own artistic activities and partly as an industrial designer. She collaborated with weavers in rural areas, manufacturing ready-made garments in Sigrun Berg design for sale. Her main significance was that she created woollen textiles in a new way, designing wool craft in an innovative way within art, fashion and furnishing textiles. She was a pioneer in using wool from an old Norwegian sheep breed and used plain binding systems, sometimes combined with traditional decorative techniques like rosepath or tapestry. The colours were natural from the wool or dyed in harmonised shades. Sigrun Berg received Diplôme d'Honneur, at the Triennale di Milano in 1954 for two rugs (Råge 2020). A couple of years later she designed and wove ten knotted rugs for the new cathedral in Bodø, and in 1959–1961, she was assigned together with the two artists Ludvig Eikaas and Synnøve Anker Aurdal to redecorate Håkonshallen in Bergen. The commission was prestigious. The medieval celebration hall had been reconstructed in the 1910s and destroyed during World War II. The hand-woven textiles designed for Håkonshallen expressed a deep interest in and continuation of the national textile heritage. Her efforts in promoting traditional Norwegian wool were especially appreciated. In 1963, Sigrun Berg was awarded with the highest valued design prize in Norway, the Jacob Award (Mannila 1988, 48).

The cooperation between Berg and the textile industry started by designing woollen curtains for the factory Røros-Tweed. In the late 1950s, she became a freelance designer at woollen manufacturer De Forenede Uldvarefabrikker (DFU), for whom she designed upholstery fabrics, blankets, and woven sweaters. She was awarded with the prestigious gold medal for upholstery fabrics at the Triennale di Milano in 1960 and 1963. Handwoven rugs were one of her specialties, and in the beginning of the 1960s, she designed machine-woven rugs at Haldens Bomuldsspindleri og Væveri. From 1964 to 1968, she was a freelance designer for Solberg Spindleri, designing the cotton fabric “Nova”. The advertisements promoted the flexibility of colours and well-adapted shades in the plain textiles, well-suited for interior decoration.

Sigrun Berg was regularly interviewed in the press; either in newspapers, women's magazines or *Bonytt*, a monthly magazine for interiors and applied arts (Dubo 1955; Hauge 1959; Clayhills 1964). The interviews had in common a particular focus on weaving as a handicraft and the weaving studio as an important site for design, creativity, and manufacturing. With her roots in traditional hand weaving, she made finished products like scarfs and ties with a minimum of sewing techniques. The characteristic simple design was cut in basic forms and inspired by historical costumes. Tailor-made clothes were avoided, and round-woven tubes were transformed into hoods and dresses. Despite the historical preferences, the design suited modern times. She emphasised the clothes without “any specific style” and continued: “I assume others than me think it's boring to get dressed in the morning. It's easier if you can just pull something colourful over your head” (Clayhills 1964).

Her employees were young women, recently graduated from the textile and design schools with a serious interest in the craft (Figure 12.3). After a journey to India in 1954, she designed a simple cut jacket, called Sami turf hut coat that became one of her most popular garments throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Feminist journalist Birgit Wiig characterised her clothes as a concept for the generation of young lefties in the 1970s, both men and women (Wiig 1984, 114). A woman is cited in a book about



*Figure 12.3* Sigrun Berg weaving studio in Damstredet, Oslo, 1960s. Berg is standing behind the weavers, enclosed by looms and other weaving equipment, yarn, and drawings. Photographer: Teigens fotoatelier/Dextra Photo, Norwegian Museum of Science and Technology.

Oslo fashion, telling how she, as a high-school pupil wearing this jacket, hoped that people she did not know would think she went to the arts and crafts college (Kjellberg 2000, 52). The school represented a lifestyle that was an ideal for many young people, and the clothes Sigrun Berg made were an important part of this style.

In addition to those clothes designed by Sigrun Berg herself, fashion designer Kirsten Ledaal Osmundsen presented garments using Berg's fabrics. These were closer to contemporary fashion (Kjellberg 2000, 54). Osmundsen collaborated with Sigrun Berg on several occasions and her clothes were sold by applied art boutiques such as Albertine in Oslo.

Berg also collaborated with fashion designers at Solberg Spinderi. During those years, the factory built up a professional design business, fitting the wide range of cotton goods produced by the factory. Yarn for needlework was sold to home production like knitting, crocheting, and hand-weaving. The weaving mill produced fabrics for clothing and furnishing fabrics for private homes and public interiors. Solberg's product range reflected the diversity in the production of textiles and clothes in Norway at the time. Most of the consumed textiles were domestically produced. The garments were alternately produced by ready-to-wear factories, at home by female family members or by often unskilled, but competent seamstresses. In Denmark,

the textile printer, Grete Ehs Østergaard, followed a similar path of balancing craft ideals with the demands of industrial production although her work primarily focused on children.

### **Grete Ehs Østergaard**

Grete Ehs Østergaard (hereby referred to as Ehs) graduated from the Arts and Crafts School (Kunsthåndværkerskolen) in Copenhagen in 1958, where she specialised in textile printing. She worked in a Dutch textile print workshop for a year, then returned to Denmark where she founded her own workshop, creating hand-printed textiles for unique garments, home products, and textile installations. In 1965, she gave birth to her first child, and in 1968 to her second. Becoming a mother opened her eyes to children's wear as a designated field of design. In a newspaper article from 1968, she describes the situation as follows:

I have two girls of my own, one is two years, and the other is a month old. It was first when I had to find clothing for them that I realised how hard it is to find good things. In fact, it was impossible. Everything was pink and baby blue, and most things had ruffles. That was not exactly what I wanted. That is why I started up.  
(Elle 1968)

Based on this experience, she started producing children's wear for her own daughters. In 1968, she had a small exhibition in Hanne Hansen, which was a known and respected shop for Danish arts and crafts products in the heart of Copenhagen. The first batch sold out almost immediately. Based on this success, Ehs established proper production of children's wear, which in time developed into a regular industry. In its twelve years of business, the company produced approximately 28,000 items of children's wear out of 3.3 tonnes of jersey. The collection won wide acclaim in the press and was sold in arts and crafts shops all over the country. The initial collection was quite small but was gradually expanded until it covered children from three months to six years of age. The garments were made from natural materials, primarily cotton. For the smaller children, cotton tricots were preferred because they offered more give and flexibility and were thus deemed more comfortable for the child. For the older children, overalls were made using more durable fabrics, such as twill, which could withstand the wear and tear of active children.

From the beginning, the level of ambition was high, and the styles were as carefully worked out as her adult's wear. The first collection was printed and sewn by hand, but as demand grew, this model became untenable, and printing and sewing was contracted out to factories and home seamstresses. Still, Ehs remained involved in all stages of the production, from knitting the fabric to the final finishing of the products. She ordered the cotton herself, which was then knitted at a factory in the town of Ikast, while another factory, Martinsen's Fabrik in Brande dyed and printed the finished fabric. The rolls of fabric were delivered to Ehs. In the beginning, the garments were sewn by home seamstresses, but Ehs soon entered into an agreement with knitwear factory, which took care of cutting and sewing in order to increase the output. She recalls that factory production demanded more careful planning of the collection because each cutting process resulted in larger amounts of each pattern part, which she had to find a use for. Hence, the transition to factory production

led to increased rationalisation of the production. Still, the relatively small batches challenged the company's running economy. To keep down cost, Ehs would still be involved in the finishing of the garments, such as making the zippers ready for instalment. Hence, although production was made more efficient, the garments still required significant amounts of handwork.

The colour palette was an important focal point in the development of the collection. Ehs resented the conventional and insipid colouring of traditional children's wear and wanted to provide an alternative to create a more lively and joyful look. To obtain this, she developed a range of saturated colours, such as turquoise, grass green, intense yellow, dark blue and orange, which she used to dye her fabrics. After the dye process, the fabrics were printed to create narrow stripes, often in unconventional and conspicuous colour combinations. In her scrapbook, Ehs explained this choice as follows:

I always wanted to experiment and take up new challenges in my work, in the 1950s and 60s it was said that green/blue and pink/orange didn't go together! I think it was about time to break those norms. Therefore, I printed dresses in the *forbidden* colours, men's jackets in new models and textiles and tablecloth on a heavy linen/cotton fabric.

(Ehs 2003)

As the quote demonstrates, Ehs positioned her work as a rebellion against sartorial traditionalism. The striped fabric was used to sew a wide variety of models, which became the company's bestselling product range. Later, several other patterns were developed, which were adapted to the small scale of children's wear, but they never reached the popularity of the stripes. The collection was based on thorough functional analysis and elimination of non-essential elements. Decorative effects were not added but were based on "upgrading" functional elements such as the fabric, zippers, or pockets. In an interview conducted in 2018, Ehs, underlined the process of deselection as being essential to her children's wear:

In my opinion, the child must be *one thing*. Because it is so small, that child. There isn't room for a whole lot of pleasantries. That will only compete with the child. And then on such a small character. No, why should it be decorated? The decoration is that it has a lovely colour. This is how I see it.

(interview with Ehs, September 2018)

In sum, Ehs' children's wear was based on a functionalistic mindset. Traditionally, functionalism has primarily been related to developments in architecture, furniture, and product design, but this case demonstrates that functionalistic reasoning also impacted garment design, where it emerged with domain-specific knowledge of the body and its movement. In line with this, the garments were based on a strong anti-fashion ethos, which prioritised material and aesthetic durability over fleeting fashion trends and effect-seeking design. Instead, the garments' expression depended on well-balanced proportions, carefully selected colour schemes and purpose-made prints.

The garments were sold in arts and crafts shops around the country. Apart from Hanne Hansen, which was the main sales venue, Ehs sold her garments through other venues which carried products of high standard. This included "Den Permanente",



a cooperative exhibition venue and shop run by a circle of craftsmen as well as the shops of the organisation for promotion of needlework, Haandarbejdets Fremme. Both organisations operated with curated selection, meaning that products were only accepted for sale after careful consideration by a panel of professionals. Despite their simplicity, the garments were not cheap, and the customers were primarily sold to a discerning audience of middle-class professionals (interview with Ehs, September 2018).

Although production had been streamlined, the quality fabric and manual processes limited the potential for price reduction. As the 1970s drew to an end the product line was challenged and eventually outmatched by mass-produced, imported garments. As Ehs explains:

In the middle of the 80s the shops began to import cheap textiles from the East and Mexico, among other places. The goods were sold at prices that were so low that we couldn't compete. Many arts and crafts shops closed and suddenly it was difficult to sell the collection.

(Quoted from Wonsbek 1998)

The production of children's wear was phased out and came to a complete stop in 1980. This heralded a larger shift towards imported, mass-produced garments, which took over the children's wear market from the late 1970s, and focus shifted towards marketing, branding and fashion.

### **The textile designers between craft and commerce**

The two cases above illustrate the transformative state of the Norwegian and Danish clothing industry from the 1960s. Both Sigrun Berg and Grete Ehs Østergaard had been trained as textile artisans, Berg as a weaver and Ehs in printing. Both started their careers as artisans, producing interior decorations and unique specimens, as well as small product series, but went on to work for or with the textile and clothing industry. Sigrun Berg started her weaving studio in 1947 when she was a mature woman, with less family obligations than younger women had. She could devote all her time to work and did not belong to the generation of architects and designers who dominated the applied art scene in the 1950s and 1960s. Her path also became different. She started with craft and ended her career with craft, as she ran her studio almost until she died in 1982. Her cooperation with the industry took place almost entirely during the decade from 1958 to 1968, and at the same time she worked with art projects. Except for the ready-made sweaters she made for DFU, her industrial design was directed towards furnishing fabrics. The Norwegian textile industry moved in the direction of furnishing design during the 1960s, due to the earlier mentioned economic and political changes in the textile trade. In retrospect, it is hard to say how much this was intended by Berg, or if it was accidental. It seems, however, that keeping control over the garment production was a success. Her design was fashionable more despite than because of being commercial. Berg became a role model with a strong craft identity for young designers trying to manoeuvre within the categories of art, design, and craft that was in play during this period. The way Sigrun Berg was mediated in the Norwegian press supported her position as a designer and led to a wide-spread understanding of how the textile designer was understood during this time.

Ehs' transformation from artisan to manufacturer of children's ready-to-wear clothing is presented as a coincidence rather than a calculated decision. In her own representation, she coincidentally discovered that there was a market for her designs, and then simply increased production to meet demand. The founding of her business is presented as motivated by her personal experience of becoming a mother, which led to the discovery of the less than satisfactory supply of goods. This type of reasoning is common in the children's wear industry, where companies are often presented as being founded on the personal experience of market deficiency rather than by the prospects of pecuniary reward (Petersen 2015, 2020).

Trained in the arts and crafts, Ehs had strong opinions on what constituted good design and she used this training to develop her collection for children. This included a preference for simple, functional garments, which never made themselves heard above the person wearing them. Based on this fundamentally functionalistic ethos, Ehs strongly distanced herself from any fashion trends, opting instead for



*Figure 12.4* Workers pressing suit jackets at Jonas Øglænd clothing factory in Sandnes, Norway, 1966–1967. Photographer: Knudsens Fotosenter/Dextra Photo, Norwegian Museum of Science and Technology.

worked-through garments in durable materials. This professional ethos limited her commercial agility, restricting the options for cost-cutting measures and for staying in front of the market through the adoption of fashion trends. As the demand waned in the late 1970s, Ehs did not strive to save her company by developing new products or business areas, but simply phased out the production, turning to other professional pursuits such as teaching. Although Ehs did collaborate with textile factories to increase output, the garments remained founded in arts and crafts thinking, which prioritised the material and aesthetic unity of the product above cost-cutting measures, which could have increased their competitiveness. The prioritising of what was deemed artistic quality over commercial success was typical for many of the textile artisans of the period, who preferred the satisfaction of producing quality garments by hand to the potential economic reward of mass-produced ready-to-wear clothing (Toftegaard 2011).

Both Sigrun Berg and Grete Ehs Østergaard focused first and foremost on craftsmanship and aesthetics rather than the industry's need for efficient production methods and rapid turnover (Figure 12.4). They viewed their products as instruments of change focusing particularly on promoting a more informal lifestyle and opposing the built-in obsolescence of fashion. Although neither had been trained in mass-production processes, they managed to apply their training as artisans to the factory production of ready-to-wear garments and other textile products. Sigrun Berg managed to establish a collaboration with the industry over several years, while Grete Ehs Østergaard took advantage of the production apparatus to increase the scale of her children's garments but remained thoroughly founded in craft thinking.

### **The designer's different roles**

The possibilities of cooperation between crafts and industrial production seem to have been a recurring experience among artisans of the time, and the period saw considerable debate on the relationship between craft thinking and industrial methods of production. This can be illustrated through an example of a lecture the Norwegian textile designer Liv Noreng Hansen Rjukan delivered at the National College of Arts and Crafts in October 1974 at a meeting arranged by NTTF, which was later published in the trade journal *Norsk tekstil tidende* (Rjukan 1975). Rjukan started the lecture by explaining her education as a weaver with a high knowledge of different textile techniques, useful for the broad spectrum of fabrics produced at the mill. However, most of her presentation was on the designer's role as a translator from the market to the factory, finding and developing the forthcoming trends into actual designs. The trend information came from different sources. The sellers at the factory could bring back demands from the customer to the designers, the yarn suppliers presented new trends during their visits, and the designers themselves participated in European textile fairs both for home textiles and fashion. The designer needed to have a flair for fashion to be ahead of the trends, as processing a design from idea to ready-made product took about a year (Rjukan 1975, 9). Rjukan claimed that the designer working with textiles for interiors needed to follow fashion. In that way, the role of the industrial designer as she explained it, combined different roles. The negotiations between the designer's professional competence and the market had been going on for decades but became more significant in the 1970s as the textile industry got into economic trouble, and there was an increasing focus on the market. The relationship

between craftsmanship and an understanding of the adjustment of consumer's preferences was still under discussion. The role of the textile designer was in transformation during these years, and Rjukan expressed clearly this changed understanding of being a textile designer. The question is, if her experience corresponded with the ongoing trends among most textile designers towards crafts?

Similar debates were taking place in Denmark. In the Arts and Crafts School's yearbook for 1966–1967, one of the themes was the relationship between textile education and the textile industry. The debate revolved around the craft school's ability to prepare the students for collaborating with the industry, thereby meeting the textile industry's need for skilled labour. Several textile artisans, teachers, and manufacturers were invited to comment on the relationship between the artistic artisan education and the needs of the industry. These statements confirmed the picture of an education which prepared the students to become artistic artisans rather than to work with industrial mass-production (Becker 1967). The textile designers' lacking knowledge of industrial production processes and their unwillingness to subject themselves to the technical and economic demands of the industry was a recurring theme of the debate. As a result of this, a new school was opened in 1968, the Danish Ready-to-Wear and Tricot School (Dansk Konfektions- og Trikotageskole, now called TEKO), which aimed specifically at preparing the students to work in the textile and clothing industry (Melchior 2013, 68). Since then, a certain division of labour has existed between the design schools, which educate textile and fashion students with a strong artistic profile, and the Danish Ready-to-Wear and Tricot School, which has remained more oriented toward the industry. In Norway, the division between industry and crafts was strengthened in 1975 with the restructure of the arts and crafts organisation to the Norwegian Association for Arts and Crafts (Norske Kunsthandverkere), which claimed that the artisan should be responsible for the complete process from concept to finished product. The process orientation broke with the industrial designer's work tasks (Veiteberg 2005, 21–24).

## Conclusion

The two cases demonstrate that the 1960s and 1970s was a time of radical change in the clothing industry. The textile industries in Denmark and Norway were affected in different ways. In Norway, oil was found in 1969 and it soon became clear that this demanded a restructuring of the whole industry, including the textile and clothing industry. The profit in the clothing industry was poor, and labour was needed in the new oil industry, which was far more profitable (An. 1974). It was politically decided to close this industry down. The result was a faster phasing out of the clothing industry in the latter half of the 1970s in Norway than in other European countries. In Denmark, production was outsourced to low-cost countries during the 1990s. The industry survived but became more focused on the symbolic aspects of fashion production such as design and branding (Jensen 2011; Melchior, 2013, 51).

A comparison between the Norwegian fashion design through Sigrun Berg and the Danish through the example of Grete Ehs Østergaard also shows differences in style between the two countries. The success of Sigrun Berg revealed a great interest in the traditional and the typical Norwegian, according to history and nature. A strong nationalism politically characterised Norway in the 20th century, and this was also, or maybe especially significant, within textiles with close connections to the national

costumes. But clearly, Norwegian designers like Sigrun Berg wanted to take traditions further through attempts to modernise those traditions according to both use and design. The Danish designers seemed more detached from the traditions, lacking the strong national connotations. Instead, Ehs was oriented toward the Danish arts and craft community and the international ideas about design, which flourished there.

Several systems of provision co-existed in the manufacture of clothes which combined handwork and machine production in varying degrees. The changing system of provision had severe consequences for the generation of textile artisans who were educated in the 1950s or earlier. Their training had prepared them for craft production of high-quality items for a small, but discerning audience. As trade was liberated and production outsourced to countries with lower wages, this market all but disappeared. The 1970s saw the emergence of new systems of provision offering more affordable, but also less durable clothing. The dedicated shops for arts and crafts products disappeared as the focus shifted from workmanship to branding and lifestyle. Garments have become fast consumer goods, focused on quick turnover rather than functional analysis, design, and durability. In this process, the designers have gone through a process of increasing specialisation, creating a divide between textile artisans and fashion designers, who collaborate with the industry to create collections with a high turnover.

This divide has been reproduced in the design historical narrative, where textiles and garments are rarely included, thus creating a fundamental divide between textile objects and other types of design. This chapter has demonstrated that the links between classic design history and the history of textiles and fashion are many and multi-faceted and deserves to be explored in more depth in future research. As such, both Sigrun Berg and Grete Ehs Østergaard can be viewed as transitional figures between an old system of production characterised by craftsmanship and durability, and an emerging system of global mass-production of fast fashion.

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