

GIOIA SEGHERS

gioiaseghers.com - @gioiaseghers
since 2012

When did you decide to start your own label? Gioia Seghers: "It was after my graduation from La Cambre in Brussels, where I received great feedback on my final-year collection, which was focused on contrasting fabrics inspired by North Pole icebergs, the front and nuns in convents. Between 2012 and 2015 I sharpened my style and image, and I also learnt about business management. By 2016 I'd built a solid team, which allowed me to embark on collaborations. In the contemporary dance scene I had the chance to work with Thierry De Mey, and I developed my first jewellery with Espèces for earrings." **What's the philosophy behind Gioia Seghers?** "I'm inspired by art, the body and movement, and my desire is to assemble a timeless wardrobe with a story that progresses over the seasons. The lines are clean, smooth and strong, with each piece seeking to explore and merge the styles of an era with a contemporary reality. With their unique silhouettes, my clothes intend to inspire elegance and fluidity, while preserving the aesthetic and function of the garment." **How would you describe your creative process?** "First I choose the emotions that I want to translate into a posture, an attitude. Once I've absorbed these feelings I search for the fabrics, which is when I find more inspiration thanks to the direct relationship I have with my suppliers in Italy."



WHERE TO BUY: HUNTING AND COLLECTING

Brussels - huntingandcollecting.com

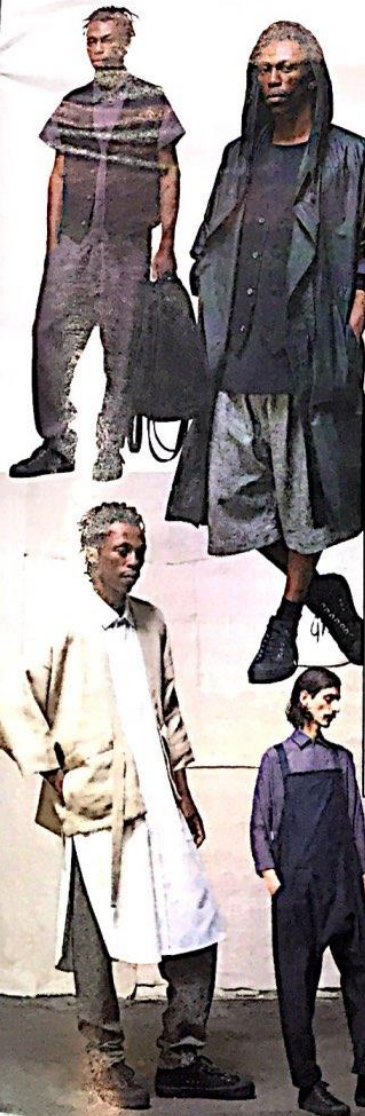
Hunting and Collecting is a Brussels-based boutique that opened in February 2010. It offers a constantly rotating selection of more than 30 exclusive brands for men, women and children. It also stocks footwear, accessories and design objects. On the store's lower level, a gallery space hosts regular exhibitions to showcase the latest works of artists and designers. Other shops in Belgium include Atelier Solarshop and Graanmarkt 13 in Antwerp, and Cachemire Coton Soie and Stijl in Brussels.



LÉO

leobyleo.com - @leobyleo_official
since 2015

What led you to start your own brand? Leonneke Derksen and I decided to set up our label after gaining experience in New York and Paris, working for fashion houses like Balenciaga and Carven. The first collection was our SS 2016, which we began in our flat in Paris, but we later moved to Brussels because we wanted to go back to our roots and felt up to a new adventure. Brussels is full of creative people and we think it's the perfect place to be inspired." **What's the philosophy behind your label?** "Léo's view on clothes is influenced by the empowerment of cinematic characters. But it's not merely based on outside aesthetics — it also plays on the story behind the person wearing the garment. Léo celebrates awkwardness and inspires people's understanding of youthfulness." **How would you describe your style?** "It lies between the imagery and the spirit of a generation, where the juxtaposition of elements from different periods results in an atypical, modern silhouette. Léo frames the unexpected, combining sportswear with classic clothing elements and innovative material experiments." **What's the concept behind your SS 2017?** "The Léo girl is enjoying the last weeks of her holiday, hanging out with her friends around their neighbourhood. Inspiration came from movies like 'Switchblade Sisters' and 'Mi Vida Loca', where girl gangs rule the streets and break the understanding of girlhood."



What were the beginnings of your brand?

Jan-Jan Van Essche: "I did my Collection#1 back in 2010. It was called Yukkuri, which means something like slowly or step by step in Japanese. It's still a very important idea to explain my working approach: taking time to grow and learn." **What's your philosophy?** "It's about respect for the product, the wearer, the materials I use and the people with whom I work. I try to make open shapes with intricate details in great materials, which will give the customer a sense of comfort and freedom. I produce one full collection a year and my wardrobe can be worn throughout the year by layering up and down to adapt to the seasons as they unfold. To these annual collections I also added the Projects, autonomous concepts that claim their own identity and simultaneously emphasise my philosophy." **What's your style in four words?** "Open, soothing, elegant and timeless." **What's the concept of your latest collection?** "The most recent, called Project#5 — Arise (FW 2017), was all about rectangular shapes and overlapping. I did extensive research on new ways to shape garments, constructing details and pattern-making." **What's your next step?** "I feel like going back to basics, revisiting the archive, further developing what I've started and working on details. I'd like to use the atelier as a laboratory to develop handwork, dyeing and other experiments."

JAN-JAN VAN ESSCHE

janjanvannessche.com
since 2010

NIELS PEERAER

nielspeeraer.com - @nielspeeraerofficial
since 2011

When did you set up your brand? Niels Peeraer: "I started my label in 2011 and now I'm celebrating my 10th collection anniversary. I launched my own line of leather accessories straight after graduating in fashion from the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp." **What's the philosophy behind Niels Peeraer?** "There's no limit to cuteness." **How would you define your style?** "A genderless contrast and play between the toughness of the material I use and the light-hearted design. Traditional leather craft meets Harajuku (Tokyo's most vibrant area for youth culture, ed.). Functional volumes and quality craftsmanship are combined with signature details." **How would you describe your creative process?** "It starts very vaguely with inspirational images that can come from all kinds of sources, mostly new media, traditional handcraft and architecture. Subsequently this evolves into a very technical approach in Autocad. While my FW 2016-17 was a story based on 'little evil', for SS 2017 I turned 180° and went for angelic iconic wings incorporated into a refined version of my signature 'bow buckle' design." **What are the next steps for your brand?** "I'm trying to take a close look at my bags and improve them technically and design-wise, while remaining coherent with my aesthetic and vision. Rather than following trends and shock values, I strive to tell a continuous story of beauty."

