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ERASMUS SCHOOL OF HISTORY, CULTURE AND COMMUNICATION

# Fashion Trend Revival – Fashionable cultural heritage

Master Thesis Cultural Economics and Cultural Entrepreneurship

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## Abstract

Fashion industry is characterized by fast changing trends, short product life-cycle and high demand uncertainty; therefore, the task of fashion designers to come up over and over within relatively short period of time with new designs by fulfilling the consumers' needs is quite challenging. Fashion has a different life cycle than other products or services; fashion trends appear cyclically; old designs can be also a great source of inspiration for designers. In Hungary the cultural heritage elements in the recent years again became a determining factor of the fashion trend. This thesis is focusing on researching the motivation behind the Hungarian fashion designers for using cultural heritage elements in their designs with qualitative research. 14 interviews, made with fashion designers who took part in the Re-button! Hungarian is in fashion competition, were analyzed with NVivo10 qualitative data analysis computer software package. The competition is a government initiative which in its announcement called designers for creating cultural heritage inspired collections. Cultural heritage as part of the national identity cannot be viewed only as another fashion trend feature. It has a deeper, underlying meaning than other inspirational sources, which is the reason why it could stay regardless on fashion trend, historical era constant inspirational source for fashion designers. The extent to which cultural heritage elements are applied and the motivation behind using them has several reasons which are discussed in the thesis. Certain economical, political, folk psychological changes can strengthen and make the cultural heritage elements visibly fashionable. The current trend can be also attributed to the economic changes; the development of the Hungarian creative industry.

*Keywords: motivation, fashion design, fashion trend, fashion cycle, cultural heritage, 'Re-button! Hungarian is in fashion'*

*“Fashion is not something what exists in dresses only. Fashion is in the sky, in the street;  
fashion has to do with ideas, the way we live, what is happening.”*

Coco Channel, 1883-1971

## Foreword

From my childhood the love and passion for cultural heritage and fashion were always part of my life. Working on my thesis was a great excursion for me to the world of fashion industry. I enjoyed gaining more knowledge about the industry, interviewing designers, being invited to designers' showrooms where I could take a look behind the scenes, organizing the collected data and conducting the process from which my results emerged. Although the topic is close to my heart and I was working hard, there are people without whom this thesis could not have been realized; therefore I would like to say thank you to everyone for helping me professionally, spiritually throughout the last nine months:

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Anna Vagasi-Kovacs

Rotterdam, 11 July, 2013

## Chapter 1. Introduction

Hungary is in its 23<sup>rd</sup> years after the regime change in the end of 1989. The reorganization of the country on its new base is a long run task for all the governments in power. The reform started from the fundamental policy sectors and only recently spread over the creative industry. Within the government initiative to make the creative industry competitive, in 2011 the Design Terminal was founded to be a central institution in the service of the Hungarian design and fashion culture; supporting and encouraging the Hungarian creative industry. This institution right in its first year organized a large scale fashion event during the Hungarian presidency of the Council of the European Union. The theme of the competition strengthened the evolving fashion trend: the application of the cultural heritage in the contemporary fashion design. Their mission today “*Building the strongest creative ecosystem in Central Europe*” shows the direction the Hungarian creative industry is striving for.

This fashion trend is not new in the Hungarian fashion history. From the beginning of the 1900s approximately in ten annual periods it emerged. The burst of this trend in contrast with other fashion trends cannot be attributed only to the cyclic change of fashion trends. Its revival could always be associated with a larger scale economic, political, folk psychological change. The reasons behind this trend revival can be very diverse. The purpose of this thesis is to discover, that in Hungary at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century with an extended European identity “*What motivates the fashion designers for applying cultural heritage in their design?*” In order to provide an academic answer to this question first it is important to overview the relevant academic literature. Firstly by understanding how a fashion gets introduced and over and over replaced by another fashion trend, by knowing about possible motivation and inspirational sources, and by knowing the historical background of the current fashion trend. Secondly by understanding the importance of cultural intermediaries and by comprehend the development of the current Hungarian creative policy initiative. This knowledge helps to understand the environment in which Hungarian contemporary designers are creating and the several impacts on their work. With this knowledge the information collected from the designers throughout the personal interviews can be analyzed and understood from a deeper insight.

In the second chapter the definition and concepts of fashion are presented from economical, sociological, psychological and political perspectives. The term of fashion

trend and fashion life cycle gets introduced with attention on the most beneficial situation of designers. Further, academic articles discovering the early phase of design process with focus on designers' motivation and inspirational sources are overviewed. This chapter is completed by the historical overview of the cyclic revival of the current fashion trend from the early 1900s and the general introduced developments by each trend revival on the garments created under the impact of this trend.

In the third chapter fashion fairs as important cultural intermediaries are introduced. The important features of the development of a fashion fair are presented through the example of *Pitti Immagine*<sup>1</sup> and later compared with the Hungarian fashion fair. Through the three years old history of *Re-button! Hungarian is in fashion/Central European Fashion Days* (from 2013) is analyzed in detail to detect the changes from which we can predict the direction of the fairs' development and better describe the current fashion trend. Finally, as important players of the fashion industry the Hungarian fashion designers' situation, the difficulties they have to deal with are presented.

In the fourth chapter the concept of intangible cultural heritage is presented with main focus on the Hungarian folkloric regions and their folk art.

In the fifth chapter the research method is introduced including the research question, the challenges of the research, the features of the sampling and the interview. The utilization of NVivo10<sup>2</sup> throughout the research is explained and the created categories of analysis are presented.

In the sixth chapter the interview analysis takes place. By following the structure of interview under each created nodes the features of the designer and brand, the brands' mission and vision, the participation on the competition and the competition's impacts, the competing collection with its folkloric elements, the designers' general interest in folk art and finally the current fashion trend from the designers' viewpoint is analyzed.

Finally the concluding chapter presents the research limitations and outcome of the thesis making me able to answer the main and sub-questions formulated at the beginning of the research with respect on the concepts presented in former chapters. Here the possible further utilization of the results are also described.

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<sup>1</sup> One of the world's most important fashion fairs and event organizer institute in Florence.

<sup>2</sup> Qualitative data analysis computer software package.



## **Impact of my research**

According to more trend research agencies in the coming 2-3 seasons Central and Eastern-Europe will be one of the most interesting inspirational sources in the fashion world (Design Terminal). In Hungary the creative industry and the fashion industry within is living a blooming period. More and more attention is paid on the Hungarian designers and the national designer items get more appreciation and high evaluation by the public. For many decades now the Hungarian design does not have a well defined distinct character in the international market, and there are also not many Hungarian examples to follow in front of the fresh designer generation. Due to the increasing attention and the number of young talents, currently and in the coming years the Hungarian fashion character will develop. In the evolving unique character of Hungarian fashion the current designers play a major role. Their beliefs, experiences, the environmental impacts – just like the three years of the *Re-button! Hungarian is in fashion event* – are shaping the Hungarian fashion character what in the coming years will mark the Hungarian fashion in the international market. Fashion plays a role in the country's evolved image.

The topic of my thesis is therefore very current. Knowing the designers' motivation for applying cultural heritage in their design helps to predict the evolving main Hungarian fashion features. With this information experts can better position themselves in the international markets, it can help to get a view about the nations' identity and redefine the country's image. Fashion designers have an influential power on the public taste. When their motivation to apply cultural heritage is reflecting constant interest in folk art it would mean that Hungarian designers 23 years after the regime change are slowly finding a way to process and reflect on their heritage transforming it to a contemporary context.

The extent to which designers apply cultural heritage in their design tells a lot about the future of the Hungarian fashion industry. In case the use of cultural heritage is mainly inspirational and designers are willing to find a good balance between their national identity and innovation in their design there is a better chance to become international brands.

## **Motivation**

Throughout the history we can find examples when Hungary was a dominant player in the European fashion. The recent tendencies show that the country is at the beginning of a long

way to get back its former status in fashion. The observation of the current fashion trend in Hungary, my homeland, and my interest towards fashion and cultural heritage led to the topic of my thesis. The redefinition of the cultural heritage tradition and its transformation into contemporary context is a very beautiful and valuable task that encircles consciously or unconsciously in the everyday work of the Hungarian designers. Through their work the centuries old knowledge and experience of our ancestors as part of our everyday life in our clothing and accessories can survive.

This Master Thesis has been a continuous attempt and a great challenge to capture the fashion designers' motivation for designing with respect on cultural heritage and to find between this yet not widely researched topic and the academic literature coherent relationship. It has been a great pleasure to meet the designers of the Hungarian emerging brands and get the chance to see and understand the contemporary design world with all of its difficulties and beauty.

## **Chapter 2. Literature review on fashion and history**

This chapter presents the literature about fashion and designers' motivation, inspiration including academic theories and concepts which grounded my research. The literature review starts with the concept of fashion from different academic approaches and the definition of fashion trend and fashion cycle. In order to understand the evolution of the current fashion trend the literature review continues with an overview on the revival of this trend throughout the Hungarian history and the development of the use of cultural heritage elements in fashion. The literature review ends with the presentation of academic findings about the possible designer motivations, inspirational sources.

### **2.1. Fashion approaches**

Fashion is a complex structure with different tendencies; it can certainly not be defined or described only from the viewpoint of one discipline. Although fashion is in some extent presented in many aspects of life; in politics, business, entertainment, academics, law, etc; until recently in academic circles it did not get the deserved attention. For a long time the majority admits the sociological, psychological nature of fashion but its artistic nature is not widely accepted and from economical, cultural-economical perspective fashion is by now examined only by relatively little percentage of the academics (Leibenstein, 1950).

Fashion as a trend is a central mechanism (Blumer, 1969) and as a product it is a creative, cultural good. As a mechanism it is creating order among the competing styles and helps in creating and maintaining social orders. As a product it is generally priced, it can be the expression of identity and social distinction, but beyond the economic and social values cultural value can be also attributed to fashion products. The dresses are the materialization of aesthetic, historical, spiritual, social, symbolic, and authenticity values (Klamer, 2003; Aage & Belussi, 2008). Although most designs serve a practical purpose and daily use, in high fashion apparel is produced for 'art for art's sake' (Bourdieu, 1993). In the followings I will present fashion from economical (Williams, 2011; Hauge, Malmberg & Power, 2011; Hemphill & Suk, 2009; Lavanga, 2012), sociological (Simmel, 1957; Thompson & Haytko, 1997; Coelho & McClure, 1993; Aage & Belussi, 2008), psychological (Thompson & Haytko, 1997; Simmel, 1957; Pesendorfer, 1995) and

political (Kunz, 1996) perspectives reviewing the significant fashion related theories of the academics.

### **2.1.1. Economic approach**

Today fashion as a sector of ‘cognitive cultural economy’ is among the world’s most important creative industries. It plays an important role in both economic development and urban policy (Williams, 2011). Fashion on the one hand is represented as conventional manufacturing industry which is producing material goods, logistics, distributions and commercial channels, and on the other hand as a design industry which plays an important role in the cities’ image while producing innovative ideas and brand value (Hauge, Malmberg & Power, 2011). Throughout the history it developed from being a merely economic sector with industrial orientation a cultural-economic sector with design orientation where design gets equal – if not higher – importance than the manufacturing process. In addition to its sectoral change, changes arise also from the volume of trade. Fashion had grown global in terms of the globalization of taste and also the global division of labor – the material production is always placed and replaced to the low cost regions (Hauge, Malmberg & Power, 2011).

The importance of fashion industry also lies in the basic fact that clothes satisfy both basic and social needs presented by Maslow’s pyramid of needs (Figure 1). At a certain extent everybody is involved in fashion; everyone has to wear clothes. Clothes are a basic psychological need; they give warmth and comfort to their wearers. Apparels also fulfill protective role; they protect their wearers from weather and environmental conditions. Due to their aesthetic values garments can give a sense of belonging to a social group and due to their novelty values are keys in gaining social appreciation. Fashion is also a great tool to satisfy the ones self esteem and self actualization needs. Next to social status clothing expresses the personality of its wearer fulfilling loftier needs like creativity, spontaneity, authenticity, vitality, etc.

The great, constant need for fashion is encouraging the fashion firms to come up with novel seeming goods by innovation and experimentation generating a higher rate of turnover. According to Hemphill & Suk (2009) fashion industry brings yearly more profit to the USA market than music, books, and movies all together.

**Figure 1 – Maslow’s hierarchy of needs**



Source: author’s elaboration.

Fashion industry is characterized by fast changing trend, short life-cycle of products and high demand uncertainty. These features urged the firms to develop several strategies like; the diversification of their products, agile supply chains, raising investments in communication, social media, marketing and strengthening their relationships with intermediaries. In the highly competitive both consumption and cultural oriented fashion industry the profitability and value creation mostly depends on the introduced innovation, semiotic production and network building and maintenance. The success of fashion firms requires good connections with the media, design institutes and dynamic network of intermediaries (Williams, 2011).

Intermediaries and within fashion fairs as specific intermediaries are important actors of the fashion industry; they are

- aiming to put the designers’ work within business context,
- shaping and regulating the fashion industry,
- and being connection between global and local (Lavanga, 2012).

In sub-paragraph 3.2. I will analyze more in detail the role of fashion fair as intermediary.

### 2.1.2. Sociological approach

Fashion as a social phenomenon is a tool for individuals, social groups, classes and nations to express their affiliation and social identity and at the same time to segregate and differentiate themselves from the others (Simmel, 1957; Thompson & Haytko, 1997). For instance the folk dresses are representing national, regional identity, cultural, folk area, social, financial, family status, age and further gives information about the personality and temporary mood of its wearer (Coelho & McClure, 1993).

Since fashion is a great mirror of social status it is capable to group people (Aage & Belussi, 2008). Due to people's desire to belong to a higher social class the majority is trying to reduce the external features of the class differences and imitate the style of a higher class; the elite. Therefore, it is not surprising that in classless societies fashion does not exist or is very stable. Fashion could not arise for instance at the Bushmen's egalitarian society or among the divergent male population of the late 1300 in Florence (Simmel, 1957).

Fashion studies can give a good quality cross section of the society. The history of garments reflects the social ideals, the culture, the social and economical life and development.

### 2.1.3. Psychological approach

Fashion choices have two paradoxical explanations from a psychological perspective. At the same time fashion can help individuals' desire for individual differentiation and social equalization (Thompson & Haytko, 1997). Researchers found that tribes living under the same conditions developed largely different fashion and within the same group both uniformity and individual differentiation was presented (Simmel, 1957).

In the modern globalized, relatively depersonalized world the desire for personal uniqueness is enlarging and also observable in the fashion choices. Customers like to buy clothes which represent who they are; their personal uniqueness, values and qualities (Pesendorfer, 1995). The chosen apparel is always a symbol of personal identity and a tool to gain the desired attention. Especially among young people the desire to become autonomous and interdependent can lead to the development of personal fashion. The personal fashion can become characterized in fashion and affect it in a higher scale. In case of personal fashion development the imitation of the self is replacing the desire for

imitating the masses (Simmel, 1957). The personal style is in constant change due to the continuous comparison between the self and others (Thompson & Haytko, 1997).

#### **2.1.4. Political approach**

Fashion also can be understood as a political tool. Throughout the history the governments were using this tool to realize their purposes whether it was nation building or economic driven. As the example of China's fashion industry shows the dynamics of fashion can be very different under different political ideologies. The political ideology has a great influence on the social norms and determines the economic structure. The social norms also form people's perceptions about fashion and aesthetics. Under the Maoism similarly to the Soviet era fashion was uniformed and the creativity was suppressed (Kunz, 1996). The economic growth and the democratic societies are supporting the creativity and give bigger freedom in fashion. Also in democratic societies fashion can be a good means of expression of national unity, identity for instance by government support for the innovative use of craftsmanship. Fashion can also be a great tool for strengthening the creative economy, for fostering the relationships with neighboring countries and for attracting the international market – as the Hungarian case will present in the following chapters.

Fashion is quickly changing; therefore, designers have to come up with novelty in every season with involving innovation in their collections while getting inspiration also from old dresses. A contemporary piece of dress is not only representing the culture of the present but also preserves the knowledge accumulated during the centuries. A big challenge for the fashion designers is to find a balance between the satisfactions of the needs of individuals, social culture and still remain economical. Although fashion is representing individual needs it is a product of social demands what evolves from the creative interaction of individuals, intermediaries and the socio-cultural context (Simmel, 1957; Csikszentmihaly, 1996).

## **2.2. Fashion trends**

Fashion trends are influenced and created both from the supply and from the demand side of the industry by fashion cities, multi-brand corporate giants, designers – from less experienced to star designers –, old and new fashion media (including art fairs), trend

forecasters, buyers, urban subcultures, etc. (Lavanga, 2012). A fashion trend is complex, multifactoral therefore it is more likely to evolve from the interaction between suppliers' offer and buyers' demand. Instead of thinking about fashion as dictated by one or some of the actors, we should look at it as the end product of a process involving many influences.

Both the sales and current trends are constantly monitored; there is a great demand for trend prediction. For the method by which the fashion trend is being decided – whether skinny or straight jeans will be in fashion – there is no expediency. Basically anything can become fashionable. There are two types of consumers' demand for goods and services which can be classified according to the motivation behind the consumption. The demand can be functional and non-functional. Non-functional demand can be further distinguished into external effects on utility and speculative and irrational demand. Within the external effect on utility according to Harvey Leibenstein's article (1950) we distinguish three different effects on consumers' demand; bandwagon effect, snob effect and Veblen effect.

#### **Bandwagon effect**

A product can become trendy and very much in demand because it becomes popular by many. People naturally have a desire to be a part of a group, be appreciated by the society, to join the crowd, therefore they would like to buy, wear, do, consume and behave like the others. In this case the consumer appears fashionable when he/she wears the same apparel like the others.

#### **Snob effect**

A product can go out of fashion because more and more people are consuming it. By knowing that a certain product is popular by others can decrease the value of the product in the costumer's eye. Here peoples' desire to be different from the others, be unique and exclusive overcomes on the desire to be a part of a bigger group.

#### **Veblen effect**

It was Veblen, who studied fashion and 'conspicuous consumption' and their relationship with human behavior and social status. In this case the demand for a product will increase due to its higher price (Pesendorfer, 1995). The consumer wants to express his/her status and prestige with the product (Gao, Norton, Zhang & To, 2009).

Herbert Blumer sociologist was the first who brought into fashion the idea of collective selection. According to this theory the fashion evolves from a collective process



where many people through their personal choices chose from the existing styles and form collective tastes which are manifested in fashion trends. “The themes of the trend are reflecting the spirit of the time in which we are living.” Although the trend is evolving through individual choices due to its collective character it is representing the society (Hemphill & Suk, 2009). The new trends always bring something new, slightly innovative to the fashion. The features of a trend are recognizable, shared design elements. People can easily recognize and adapt to a new fashion wave due to their metonymic thinking. Only one, easy, well understood feature is enough for the people to understand the complex concept of a fashion trend (Thompson & Haytko, 1997).

There is higher demand among the customers to prefer such items which are part of a trend. The desire to be fashionable manifests in a constant ambition to access the fashion of the people with higher social status. People examined in tribes were showing preference and attributed bigger value towards yet unknown, foreign fashions (Simmel, 1957). This ambition and the motivation of the elite to differ from the masses are keeping the fashion trends in continuous change. The conditions of the trend development from an economical perspective are the followings:

- Enough people should buy product with the same prevalent trend feature,
- The personal preferences of the customers should be satisfied by the product,
- The trend has to offer something sufficiently new (Hemphill & Suk, 2009).

When we talk about the trend of cultural heritage elements coming back into fashion there is something more added to this trend than the continuous cyclic trend rotation. Folk art is including national feelings, represents national identity. There is more to be explained about the revival of cultural heritage in fashion than the unconventional change of trends.

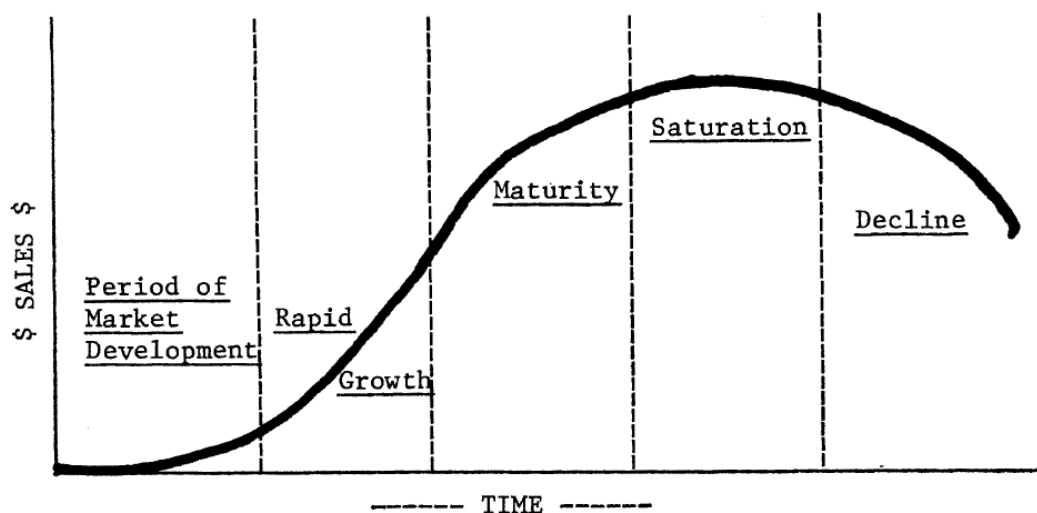
### **2.3. Fashion cycle**

In the early ages of fashion industry there were only two fashion seasons; Winter and Summer. Today the number of production seasons increased. The bid fashion brands launch nearly monthly new collections, capsule collections to the market (Lavanga, 2012). Today the trends are changing rapidly, the products have short life cycle. The customers only accept a fashion temporarily.

Fashion has a different life cycle than other products or services. Fashion trends appear cyclically. The fashion cycle can be best presented with bell shaped curves (Figure 2) (Kieser, 1997).

Figure 2 – Fashion product life cycle graph

THE THEORETICAL NORMAL LIFE CYCLE OF A FASHION OR OTHER NEW PRODUCT



Source: Graph in Wasson, 1968.

Wasson (1968) distinguished three product life cycles: life cycles of fashion products, fads and classics. They can be distinguished in terms of their market development period and the duration of their acceptance (Table 1).

Table 1 – Distinction of product life cycles

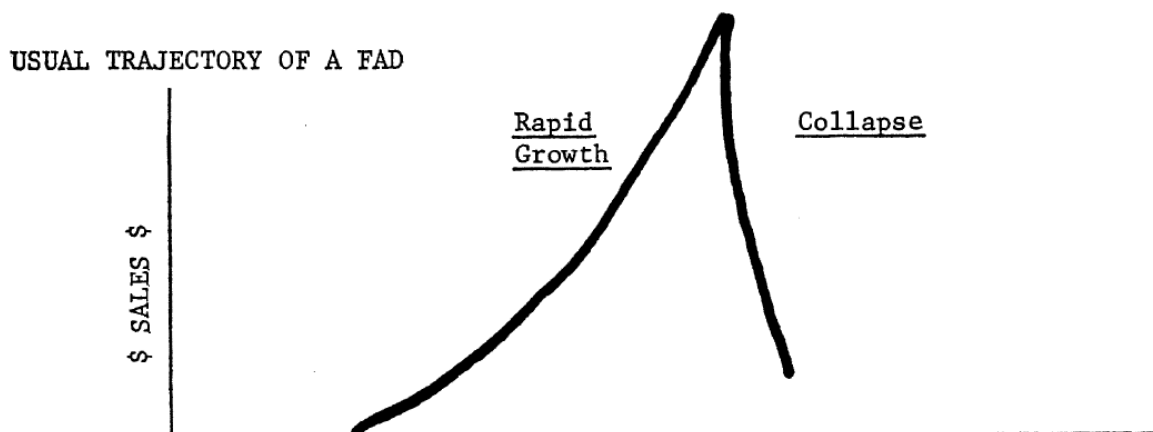
|                           | Fashion product       | Fad   | Classic                  |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Market development period | Slow                  | Unnecessary, it goes straight to popularity | Early market development |
| Acceptance                | Continuing popularity | Disappears at the peak of the market        | Remains in fashion       |

Source: author's elaboration.

The market development period of the new fashion products is slow and its popularity has a plateau before it declines. In case of fads market development period is not functional,

since the product becomes straight popular, but only for a short period of time (Figure 3). Under the term classic are products which never go out of fashion these do not need long market introduction (Figure 4).

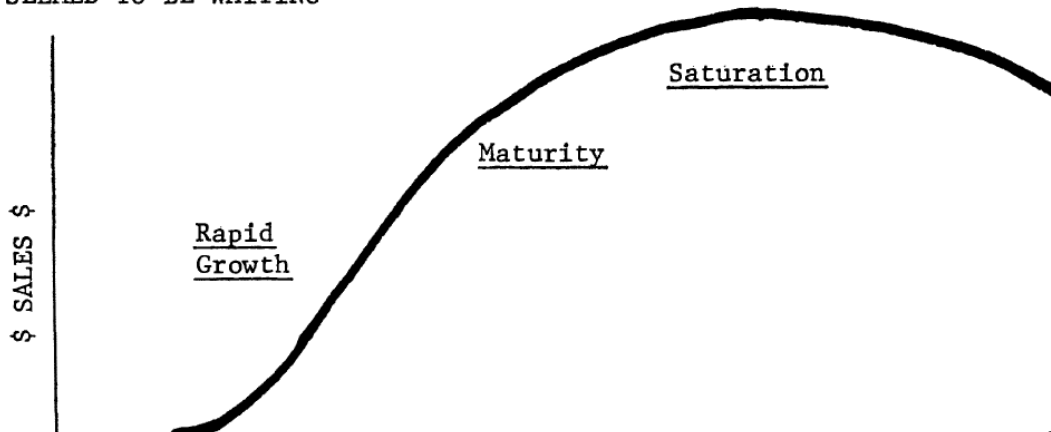
Figure 3 – Life cycle of fad graph



Source: Graph in Wasson, 1968.

Figure 4 – Life cycle of classic graph

APPARENT LIFE CYCLE PATTERN OF SOME NEW PRODUCTS FOR WHICH THE MARKET SEEMED TO BE WAITING



Source: Graph in Wasson, 1968.

At the beginning of a trend only few people gets excited about a style, method, idea or practice that gets high evaluation in the society. With time more and more people are willing to follow the same style until it gets outdated and new fashion appears. The

attributed values, qualities of fashionable apparel are automatically shifting to the novelty and another fashion trend takes shape (Hemphill & Suk, 2009). These cycles are getting shorter with the time but their peaks are getting higher (Kieser, 1997).

As the graph (Figure 2) shows, when a design is in its advanced stage and got popularity its value and price declines. When it is bought by many customers it is profitable for the monopolist to create a new design. The price of the new design can be put again high. The repetition of this cycle happens periodically (Pesendorfer, 1995). For the understanding of how the mechanism of fashion cycles works, Pesendorfer (1995) brought up the mechanism of fashion houses' diversification process. For instance Armani has three different line of fashion products; Armani Via Borgo Nuovo, Armani and Emporio Armani which only differ in the price and design but not in the type of products. The new design similarly to the introduction phase of the fashion trend is presented at a very high price at the highest level. With time the same design will be offered for a lower price at a lower line.

The changes of fashion trends have a unique rhythm. The innovations in fashion design appear in dynamic regularity. We can distinguish long and short run fashion cycles. At the short run cycle it takes only months or some years till another style appears (Sproles, 1981) and designers have the challenge to satisfy within short period of time the customers' desire for change and novelty (Mora, 2006). New long run trends are emerging in historical continuity of style changes which means in decades or centuries. The change is evolving from one extreme to another and within thirty-fifty years all the major styles appear once. This process goes slow, because the new fashion trend is always presenting relatively small changes – mainly appearing in the aesthetics – from the previous fashion trend, adjusting the pieces to the current culture and society and taking into consideration the importance of customers' desire for expressing individuality with fashion. These changes are in year to year, season to season frame mainly manifested in the color, fabric and pattern. The frequency of the introduction of newer products declines in a competitive environment where the recent design is sold only for high social class. Pesendorfer (1995) called this the elitist case of fashion cycles. A monopoly implies egalitarian cycles where the fashion, before a new innovation occurs, spreads over the population.

From an economic viewpoint there are further differences between short and long run cycles. Long run cycles have a high fixed cost in contrarily short run cycles have a low fixed cost. In a long run cycle the design has to stay in fashion for a long period of time

offering it for high price in order to cover the costs. When the fixed cost is small even during a short period of time people will buy enough from the product which will cover the expenses and bring profit. When the new designs are appearing very quickly after another in the market the fashion spreads quickly among the masses. In this case the designer's profit is not much more than zero (Pesendorfer, 1995).

The competitive environment, where the frequency of the cyclic changes is shorter, is the best situation for the designers. Lavanga (2012) described in her article, that the short life cycles of products are more advantageous for the designers, because the dynamic changes of the collections at the one hand keep enticing the customers back to the shop and on another hand the possibility of the customers' taste changes is smaller within a short period of time. In case of dynamically changing stocks even without revolutionary design innovations the customers' demand can also be better satisfied, therefore from the customers' viewpoint short trend changes are better.

The designers in order to adapt to the rapid changes in fashion should be up to date, involved in fashion research and have big knowledge about the past and current state of fashion. In case, sources of inspiration are provided to the designers they produce better quality, more creative and original design works (Mete, 2006).

## **2.4. Use of cultural heritage in fashion design throughout the history**

The historical continuity of fashion can be a guide in the prediction of fashion trends (Sproles, 1981). For the better understanding of the current fashion trend it is important to see its historical antecedents. The revival of the appearance of folkloric traditions in contemporary fashion and the development of the application of cultural heritage elements will be presented in the following historical review.

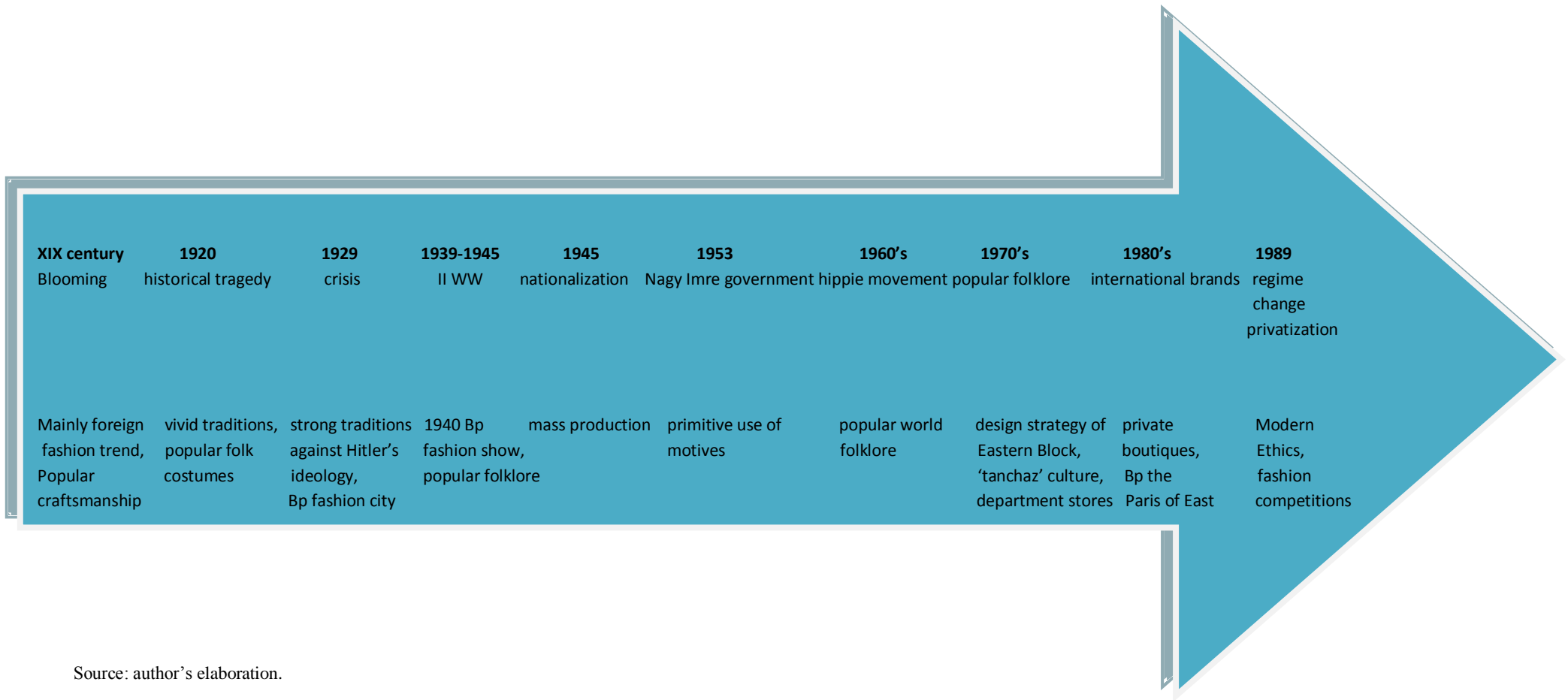
### **2.4.1. Revival of the trend**

The application of the Hungarian folkloric motives is not a new phenomenon in the Hungarian fashion history. They come back in the designs over time in long run product life cycles (Figure 5).

The Hungarian fashion was developing and changing on the basis of centuries-old tradition till the end of the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century. From the beginning of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century it

became common in the Hungarian fashion design to use Hungarian traditional clothes as inspirational sources. In 1830 Kostyal, a Hungarian tailor gained a great worldwide success. His XVI<sup>th</sup> - XVII<sup>th</sup> century's costumes inspired modern dresses were praised in the Ladies' Journal (*Journal des Dames*), and in the Viennese Theater Newspaper (*Wiener Theaterzeitung*). His success drew the designers' attention on the inherent possibilities in traditional costumes. The favorable economical and historical situation in Hungary helped the flowering of the national tailor and fashion industry where fashion magazines also got published. By the end of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century Budapest become one of Europe's big fashion centers. Despite of the growing success of the Hungarian tailor industry the Hungarian tailors were not further motivated to make their own traditional design instead they were following the Austrian, French and English fashion (F. Dozsa, 1997).

Figure 5 – Timeline of the revival of cultural heritage in the fashion throughout the history



Source: author's elaboration.

From the end of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century in Hungary there was a huge demand for the reform of women clothing design. At the same time the craftsmanship become more and more popular. During the World War the demand for individual Hungarian fashion design became bigger and bigger. For the needed reform in design the designers called the help of the traditions. “Women fashion can be renewed with the help of traditional costumes, especially with the Kalotaszeg motives” – was the suggestion of a painter in the early 1900’s (F. Dozsa, 1989). Hungarian fashion design was vivid again. Mariska Undi was the first fashion designer-craftswoman in Hungary who with her design gave new meaning to the traditional costumes. An ever growing demand appeared on the market for independent, unique Hungarian fashion design. In 1920 the National Women’s wear Alliance announced a designer competition putting the Hungarian embroidered costumes in focus (F. Dozsa, 1989, 1997).

The unfavorable political situation in which Hungary lost more than the 2/3 of its territory and more than the half of its population were not beneficial for the development of the Hungarian fashion industry. Most of the Hungarian textile factories together with the territories were detached from Hungary and a big percentage of the regular customers could not come anymore to their homeland without passport. The production got very difficult and the demand largely declined. Hungary could not comply even the 10% of its industrial needs for fabrics from domestic sources; it could not continue its work independently.

Due to the financial crisis in 1929 Hungarian designers could not afford to have the western – mostly French – fashion models; therefore, they had to go for other inspirational sources. Fashion designers were forced by the circumstances to create independent design from their western colleagues and therefore they started to use the traditions as their inspirational sources. From 1931 a journal, named *Muskatli*, was published focusing on the use of Hungarian fashion design, folkloric embroidery and tailoring motives in home- and fashion design. The designers were endeavoring to harmonize the daily fashion with the traditions. The biggest designer of that time was Klara Tudos who was promoting the use of folk textiles also from societal reasons helping the local craftsmen (F, Dozsa, 1989).

From 1933 design competitions were newly announced by the secretary of the Ministry of the Interior. The applicants were encouraged to create dresses full of life, stepped with the Hungarian spirit – inspired by embroidered blouses, traditional textile patterns, etc – with regard to the current fashion and customer needs (F. Dozsa, Simonovics, Szatmari & Szucs, 2012). The timing of the competition was a conscious step from the government. They wanted to highlight the Hungarian values against Hitler’s power and influence. Such



competitions were yearly announced till 1938 by the Hungarian Dress Movement National Committee. In Paris a fashion trend focused on folk art appeared and with it the Hungarian fashion industry received again a lot of interest. In 1935 in *Femina* (French fashion magazine) next to Paris and Rome Budapest was mentioned as Europe's biggest fashion center. As a result Hungary was exporting Hungarian blouses, clothes, bags to all over Europe and to the United States. In 1938 and 1940 due to the Vienna Awards Hungary got back some of its detached territories. For this festive occasion many Hungarian traditional style clothes were made, the national design got famous again due to sentimental reasons. In 1940 even a fashion show was organized with great success (F. Dozsa, 1998).

During the Second World War Hungary was the "island of piece" which favored the fashion industry but the loss turned the situation. All the factories, dressmaking and tailoring companies, salons and the fashion itself got nationalized during the socialism. The nationalized fashion was focused on the production of inexpensive, off-the-rack clothes. In the soviet planned economy the clothes had a maximized prize; therefore the unique, beautiful elements of design could not be realized. After 1945 the Hungarian dress got a right-wing meaning and became undesirable although the unity of the workers and peasants was still represented with folkloric elements in clothing. Only from 1953 with a change of government could the situation improve. At the same time with the improvement of the living standards the fashion industry was gradually shifted from mass production towards quality and uniqueness oriented production and the incorporation of folk art in casual clothing was again encouraged. As a result they often created copies of the traditional motives; it was a primitive use of design. The individual factories regained their strength by laying emphasis on knowledge about fashion trends, manufacturability and market research. The biggest high-tech apparel factory in Central Europe, the Elegant May 1 Clothes Factory mostly produced clothes for export (F. Dozsa, Simonovics, Szatmari & Szucs, 2012).

At the end of the 60's the hippie movement style appeared in the fashion design with the use of other nations' folkloric motives. From the second half of the 70's in the fashion the use of folkloric elements become very popular. The countries of the Eastern Block wanted to reach Western markets with the strategy of using cultural heritage elements in their design. In Hungary the traditional dresses of some landscapes – Kalocsa, Torocko, Sarkoz, Matyofold, Kalotaszeg and Kalocsa –, appliqué style, felt embroidery and blue dying with its patterns were particularly popular in the fashion industry. With the emerging trend – vivid these days

as well – of Hungarian folk dance events the so called tanchaz method<sup>3</sup> the authentic folk dresses got back in fashion. As an impact of this method a research wave started; many people went mainly to Transylvania to research – partly – traditional clothing items. Demand for traditional clothing appeared again. From the 70's the first department stores and from the 80's international brands appeared in Budapest. Although the fashion industry and salons were still controlled by the state the private boutiques became more and more popular. A women's magazine, the *Nok Lapja* (Hungarian Journal of Women) described this period with the following sentence: "Boutiques are growing in the courtyards, not sumac trees". (F. Dozsa, Simonovics, Szatmari & Szucs, 2012) Hungary became the "Paris of East"; a favored shopping destination for the Eastern Bloc citizens due to the offered cheap, fashionable clothes.

After the regime change in 1989 the state owned factories and companies were privatized, therefore by the mid 1990's the Hungarian clothing and textile industry and the large-scale commercial networks ceased. The small boutiques could not keep up the competition with the multinational companies. Small, exclusive boutiques were ready to support the talented, young fashion designers; here the Hungarian fashion could survive. In 1991 a new generation of sixteen applied artists making characteristic, unique pieces formed a unit called Modern Ethnics and went against the evolved situation. They presented their clothing exhibitions all over the world. They made characteristic, unique pieces which were promoted in Hungary as well as abroad. In their design the folk traditions were mixed with the elements of modern, international fashion. Without the sufficient background they could not launch their apparels in the market; the clothing they made is handcrafts therefore time-consuming to produce (Katona Szabo & Kozma, 2000; F. Dozsa, Simonovics, Szatmari & Szucs, 2012).

In 1995 the National Doctorandus Association announced a competition, whose aim was to get creation applying Hungarian traditional motifs, cuts and forms in an innovative way. Due to lack of subsidies the competition was a onetime event. Throughout the years there were always designers who used visibly or less visibly the Hungarian cultural heritage as inspirational source in their designs. In 2011 the Ministry of Public Administration and Justice launched a unique competition in European comparison; the "*Re-button! Hungarian is in Fashion!*". In 2013 the competition was held for the third time. With the aim to grow the

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<sup>3</sup> In 2011 Tánchááz method was inscribed by the UNESCO on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

event international, it is called now *Central European Fashion Days* (Dozsa, Simonovics, Szatmari & Szucs, 2012).

Throughout the history the revival of the designers' motivation for using cultural heritage motives is in accordance with the positive or negative political, economical changes effecting Hungary. A bigger change has to come in order to make the designers “awake and conscious” about their cultural heritage. In the time of crisis when the Hungarian designers could not rely on international trends or in the time of political changes when the national unity had to be emphasized or the government wanted to go against foreign idea folklore appeared in fashion. The folkloric elements were always part of the inspirational sources just sometimes represented in a smaller and sometimes represented at a bigger scale. The trend of folk art is slightly different from other fashion trends. Skinny jeans comes in and after some seasons goes out of fashion and takes a while till it is in fashion again. There are brands which are based on cultural heritage elements or name it as their continuous inspirational source. It is deeply coded in people; it is part of their identity what never goes completely out of fashion. Throughout the centuries when the designers' aim was to create something new and unique; different from the other big fashion centers like Paris, Vienna, Roma or London they went back to the folk art. The uniqueness of the Hungarian clothes always meant that the motives or the design or the material was reflecting the folkloric nature (F. Dozsa, 1997).

#### 2.4.2. The use of the cultural heritage elements

The folk art was mostly used by designers as a source of

inspiration; they used the traditional motives, techniques in an innovative way. Only in two cases are the traditional motives copied. In the first case the copies of the motives are made by traditionalists whose main aim is to preserve the motives as they are – even together with their mistakes – for the coming generations. Copying occurred also in the Soviet area, mainly due to the controlled and the drove back creativity. As it is presented in the following pictures 1-11 (Dozsa, Simonovics, Szatmari & Szucs, 2012), we can see that the design was always adjusted to the certain age

Picture 1 – Ilona Faradi, woman dress



Source: Dozsa, Simonovics, Szatmari & Szucs, 2012.

and the scale of the introduced innovation became bigger over time.

Ilona Farnadi designed a dress for the competition (Picture 1) announced by the Ministry of the Interior in 1936 which visibly contains cultural heritage elements. The designer got her inspiration from Mezokovesd folk ornamented overcoats and while keeping the original coat colors she applied the tradition on a modern women dress. Another discovered talent of the competition was Klara Tudos who became a significant designer in her time making the Hungarian fashion worldwide known. She defined the fundamental principles of fashion design: “a garment can be Hungarian in cut, fabric, or ornamentation but never all three at once!” (Dozsa, 1989). She preferred to use high quality folk fabric in her designs as we can see on the presented piece (Picture 2) where she was using Sarkozi folk motif on a black and white print crep-georgette evening gown.



**Picture 2 – Klara Tudos, evening gown**

Source: Dozsa, Simonovics, Szatmari & Szucs, 2012.

In politically sentimental times traditional dresses became fashionable. As it can be seen on the pieces which were worn in 1920 when the Treaty of Trianon was signed whereby Hungary lost more than the half of its territory and citizens become very tradition conscious (Picture 3). Just like in 1940 when Hungary’s mainland got back some parts of Transylvania and Felvidek the national awareness and feeling strengthened in the Hungarians. One mode of expressing the public sentiment was by the authentic clothing (Picture 4).

**Picture 3 – Debrecen, 1920**



Source: Dozsa, Simonovics, Szatmari & Szucs, 2012.

**Picture 4 – Transylvania, 1940**



Source: Dozsa, Simonovics, Szatmari & Szucs, 2012.

In the 70's the folkloric elements became very popular and visible in the clothing since the countries of the Eastern Bloc wanted to get export opportunities through their uniqueness. The dresses were explicitly presenting the cultural heritage elements like we can see on picture 5. The dress was adorned with Kalocsa folk embroidery in lilac shades (Dozsa, Simonovics, Szatmari & Szucs, 2012).

Picture 5 – 1970's Kalocsa style dress    Picture 6 – Judit Banyasz, jacket    Picture 7 – Katalin Goth, dress 1995



Source: Dozsa, Simonovics, Szatmari & Szucs, 2012; [www.artportal.hu](http://www.artportal.hu)

The next generation of designers in the 1990s interpreted the use of cultural heritage in a more innovative way than their ancestors. Modern Ethics was founded by 16 erudite Hungarian artists who are all committed towards using the treasury of the Hungarian folklore in their creative work and present it in a new, modern context. Their aim for applying cultural heritage in fashion design in an innovative way is also reflected in their designer motivation (Meszaros, 1992). Judit Banyasz defined her creative work in the following way: “Folk art is an inexhaustible source of inspiration for me. I am inspired by a beautiful motif, an interesting formal solution or just by the special technique. Transforming them for modern dressing and technique is an exciting task for me.” In one of her design pieces (Picture 6) she used the traditional ornamented overcoats, the so called ‘szür’ as inspirational source (Katona Sz. & Kozma, 2000). Similarly to Judit Banyasz, Marta Gobolyos was talking about her art in the



following way: “Respecting folk art, but not copy it, my objective is to achieve that our values should not only be preserved behind the museums’ protecting yet closed walls, but should become lively as part of our lives, thus destructing the monotony and obscuring of our gradually standardized world.” (Katona Sz. & Kozma, 2000).

In 1995 the *Ars Vestis Hungariae* further gave a boost to designers to think about folkloric heritage as inspirational source. Katalin Goth, the winner of the competition was using white machine lace which is evoking the world of Kalotaszeg, a cultural landscape in Transylvania (Picture 7).

In the end of the 1990s and beginning of the new century many designers including fresh faces in the design field created collections reflecting on cultural heritage. Young designers like Dalma Devenyi or Renata Gyongyosi made their diploma work (2005, 2010) based on the innovative use of the heritage techniques, motives and forms. There are designers for example Katalin Hampel, Szilvia Palffy & Terez Szucs who built their brand based on the innovative use of traditional Hungarian clothing. Their dominant design features are the recognizable heritage elements. More Hungarian brands, just like Aquanauta and USE Unused made Hungarian heritage inspired collections shortly after they founded their brands.

**Picture 8 – USE Unused, 2005**



Source: [www.kisfekete.blog.hu](http://www.kisfekete.blog.hu).

**Picture 9 – Aquanauta, 2006**



Source: [www.divat.hu](http://www.divat.hu).

In 2005 USE Unused made a Hungarian style collection following the example of Japanese designers who based on inspirational sources from their own culture reinvented European fashion (Picture 8). The designer of Aquanauta, Bernadett Pallai likes to use Hungarian motives in her design. In 2006 she with another five brand founders created the “Pure Source” collection (Picture 9) which got presented in the Hungarian History Museum (Dozsa, Simonovics, Szatmari & Szucs, 2012).

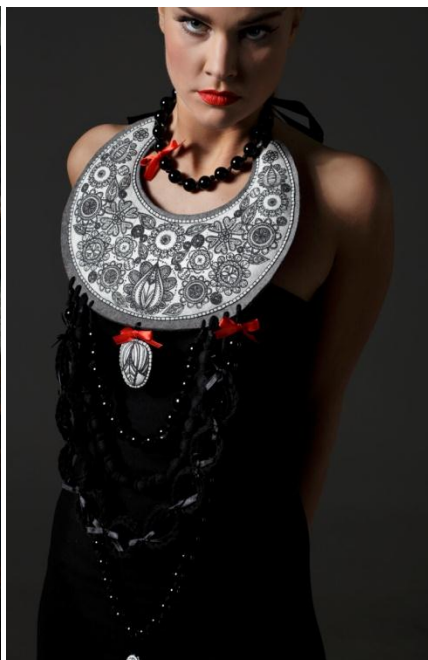
The competitors of the *Re-button!* competition are not only innovative in the use of sources but also in selecting the inspirational source. In the first year of the competition the inspirational sources were mainly based on tangible cultural heritage and already by the second year more and more intangible cultural heritage sources took form in the designer collections. By 2012, the second competition next to the folkloric handcraft, legends and by this year even the panel blocks of the soviet area appeared in the designs – partly due to the changed announcement. The designers are encouraged to use the traditional folk art elements more and more freely. On the pictures presented below are the designs of Renata Gyongyosi, the winner of the competition in 2011 and a piece of winner accessory collection of MIMM-textile design from 2012 (Dozsa, Simonovics, Szatmari & Szucs, 2012).

Picture 10 – Renata Gyongyosi, 2010



Source: INER web page.

Picture 11 – MIMM-textile design, 2012



Source: MIMM-textile design web page.

## 2.5. Designer motivation, fashion inspiration

It is important to lay emphasis on the designers' inspiration sources and designer motivation for several reasons:

1. As much as they can be influential in determining the direction of a company for a certain season they can influence the developed fashion and brand image and place in the international market of a country for the coming seasons. In case of lack of inspiration and big time pressure the innovation is limited what is not beneficial for the creative industry.
2. Knowing the sources of ideas makes the designers' communication and understanding easier and more concrete; which helps in their market entry.
3. Also from a managerial, governmental perspective it is important to understand how creativity and creativity renewal work. The cyclic relationship between learning and creativity should be kept in mind, therefore appropriate conditions, training opportunities, freedom and support should be given to designers to get high quality results (Eckert & Stacey, 1998).

The distinction of inspiration from motivation is challenging, because in many cases the inspiration source itself is the motivation for creating a design. I could not find former researches which specifically examined designers' motivation but in order to get to the best research method I studied four articles (Mougenot, Bouchard & Aoussat, 2008; Mete, 2006; Eckert & Stacey, 1998 and Cillo & Verona, 2008) which were concentrating on the early phases of the design process with focus on information, inspiration gathering activities. Eckert & Stacey (1998) were researching how designers use outside sources of inspiration in an academically neglected industry type; in the knitwear industry. Fatma Mete (2006) with her research wanted to emphasize the important role of sources of inspiration in the creative design. Mougenot, Bouchard & Aoussat (2008) conducted a research to figure out ways how to help the creative process while researching a vital part of the design process; the early phases of design. Cillo & Verona (2008) *inter alia* wanted to answer the question; how designers get inspirations for their new collection (Vagasi-Kovacs, 2013).

Motivation means the designers' desire to start creating; to start mentally visualizing and make sketches. The motivation is driven by inspiration source. In clothing design the inspiration of a new collection can come basically from everything; it can be tactile, visual or sensual which can be a film, museum, theater, exhibition, music, dance, travel, art show experience, historical and world happening, etc. (Cillo & Verona, 2008; Mete, 2006).



Designers are working even when no one would think that they are in work progress. The major types of idea sources according to Eckert & Stacey (1998) are garments, photographs of garments, artifacts, images of artifacts and natural objects, phenomena and their images. A good quality design research is a necessary part of the designers' job, because

1. It provides source of inspiration and design possibilities,
2. It makes possible to relate the design to a fashion context,
3. It can result quality design,
4. It makes possible to designers to be up to date about developments, and
5. It gives information about the target market (Mete, 2006).

Throughout the design process relevant ideas should be recognized, selected, abstracted and finally adapted. In the creative apparel there are two basic design approaches; one is the material inspired clothing design process the other one is the conceptual clothing design process (Mete, 2006). Designers use inspiration sources to gain ideas and to understand the design task they have to perform. Sometimes the inspiration comes quickly and sometimes it takes long research till the idea born. Aesthetic apparel design is made with awareness on the cultural context. "The fashions of the past are also rich sources of design inspiration to fashion designers" (Mete, 2006). Fashion designers are at the same time aware of the new trends and working on reinventing and using old design in innovative ways. Designers can best accomplish to reflect to the social environment when they are experiencing and researching it while going for holydays, going for a walk, cycling, visiting museums or looking at people on the street. They study the features of the fashion seasons, examine the current fashion trends from magazines, catwalks, shop visits, etc. (Eckert & Stacey, 1998; Mete, 2006; Cillio & Verona, 2008).

Effort should be invested in intellectual renewal in the design driven industries. It is an important recognition that the previous designs are important sources of inspiration. The creative professionals in order to generate creative ideas are depending on their prior knowledge and ability to recognize the idea in need of refreshment (Eckert & Stacey, 1991, 1998).

## Chapter 3. Fashion fairs

There are thousands of fairs in the world; almost every capital city has its own fair, which can be characterized according to the distinction features defined by Skov: the type of clothing, the place in the values chain, the market segment and the geographical dispersion of the fashion industry (Lavanga, 2012).

Fashion fairs can be best viewed as social setting where different encounters take place: buyers – products, buyers – suppliers, buyers – consumers who meet for different purposes like trade, knowledge attainment or network building, maintenance (Entwistle, 2006; Skov, 2006). In this chapter the importance of fashion fairs as intermediaries will be presented. Afterwards with the help of the *Pitti Imagine* case study (Lavanga, 2012) some development features of successful fashion fairs will be highlighted. At the end of the chapter the three years of the Hungarian *Re-button! Hungarian is in fashion/Central European Fashion Days* fashion fair will be described in detail. Finally parallels will be drawn between the features of the decades old Italian Pitti and the Hungarian fair.

### 3.1. Fashion designers in Hungary

Due to the government initiatives, the information-communication revolution, the widespread use of internet, the creation and dissemination of art works became much simpler and more and more designers got visible in the market (Inkei, 2011). Tibor Kiss, one of the designers of *Je suis belle* stated, that “the number of fashion designers in Hungary since the last one-two years is growing exponentially. Currently the market started to fill up, by now there were some ‘bigger balls’ and now ‘small balls’ started to fill it up. Can happen that some of them will get bigger, some of them smaller. Mainly the Hungarian designers are going to be interested in what can they achieve and where can they place themselves in the market. Designers who start brand building these days have a much difficult situation than we had some years ago and designers had before us – that time there were less designers – and now I think the designers are primarily interested in where can they place themselves in the market and only afterwards will think about their actual values. I feel that everybody who starts his carrier now is very homogeneous.” (Kiss, interview, 7-05-2013).

In Hungary there is no Design Chamber which would represent the designers; therefore, it is difficult to get information about their number. The 2011<sup>th</sup> population census

could give relevant data about the population rate of freelancer's – and the designers within – in the population, but the processing of data is currently underway.<sup>4</sup>

The majority of fashion designers have difficult financial situation in Hungary. The majority of the population cannot afford to buy designer pieces. The economic situation of the designers allows them only a small-scale growth and the production of small unit pieces. Since the regime change in Hungary the textile and clothing manufacturing companies are continuously closing down. Due to the lack of capital the companies cannot cope with the market in need of new innovative technologies. This makes it more difficult for the designers to get the needed materials. “Unfortunately in Hungary there is no fabric production, if there is, it is very poor quality.” – stated Tibor Kiss. Financially it is very difficult for the fresh designers to get prepared for a competition for which they have to make a collection consisting of 3 to 5 pieces, although this can be their big chance to start their carrier and gain media publicity. Zsuzsanna Fabri was also raising this problem: “I think it is a problem, that the competition has two stages. In the first stage fifty design plans are selected and these designers have to make their collections from their own money. Only the 20-25 designers selected for the second round will get some financial support. This is obstructing the creativity, because you don't know whether you are spending your own 100.000 Forint<sup>5</sup> – what you could spend on something else – or should you really spend 100.000 Forint, because with a more spectacular collection you have more chances to win, but what if you will not make it to the final; then you were spending unnecessarily. Therefore, I think everyone is careful during the creative process and try to keep it cheap.” (Zsuzsanna Fabri, interview, 8-05-2013).

Due to the difficulties a lot of designers are trying to get to international markets. What stops them mostly from getting there is their lack of knowledge in business. Tibor Kiss finds this a part of the natural selection process; the more practical, resourceful designers will be able to survive and be more successful than the others. In spite of the financial difficulties the talents find their ways to be presented in international levels. More Hungarian brands inter alia Nanushka, Je suis belle, USE Unused, Anh Tuan, Abodi Dora, Dora Mojzes, Konsanszky Dora and ANDA gained also international reputation.

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<sup>4</sup> The relevant data will be available on <http://www.ksh.hu/nepszamlalas/> most probably in November 2013.

<sup>5</sup> 340 Euros according to the exchange rate of Budapest Bank on 22-07-2013 at 12:00 a.m. where 1 Forint=294.36 Euros.

Distinction can be made among Hungarian designers also according to their designer intentions; whether they are aiming to create according to international fashion requirements and design fashionable garments or not taking into consideration what is fashionable and aim to design timeless, inheritable pieces. Designers with the former attitude are more successful both in national and international markets.

### 3.2. Fashion fairs as intermediaries

The role of intermediaries in the last decade became very important in the fashion industry. The success of a designer largely depends on the intermediaries, since they keep contact between local and global industry, the business world and the designer world. Like for instance the *BIFF&BILL*<sup>6</sup> in Bangkok, the *JFW International Fashion Fair* in Tokyo, *TRANOÏ FEMME* or the *Who's Next?* international fashion fairs in Paris provide a great networking and trading place for a broad visitors' group including representatives of the trading world – trading companies, importers, manufacturers, retailers, distributors, wholesalers, department stores, boutiques, fashion showrooms, buying agents, designers – and representatives of the public like trade visitors, tourists and consumers (*BIFF&BILL*).

Designers these days can barely sustain themselves merely from selling in one market which is mostly the national market; therefore, they are seeking for international opportunities. Intermediaries can help designers to start their international career, not only due to their big network in the fashion field but as experts also due to their influence on the consumers.

In the fashion industry there is a wide range of intermediaries who can influence the trends, consumers and designers by determining the content what reaches the public. We can distinguish old intermediaries and new intermediaries (Lavanga, 2012). Old intermediaries are photographers, magazine editors, journalists, models, sales agents, fashion forecasters, PR agents, stylists, fashion institutions, fashion weeks and fashion fairs which can have a word in deciding about creative goods and due to their 'power' influence the consumers' opinion and the fashion industry as a whole (Towse, 2003). Among the new intermediaries are the fashion bloggers, social networking websites, and marketing and consumption websites. Showrooms, fashion fairs, stylists and buyers can be distinguished from the other intermediaries due to their place in the product selection process (Lavanga, 2012). Showrooms and fashion fairs

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<sup>6</sup> Bangkok International Fashion Fair & Bangkok International Leather Fair.

have big influence on determining which collections are going to be available for the public and in addition also give place to other intermediaries like buyers or stylists to meet the designers and make their choices for the next season. The role of fashion fairs and showrooms in the dynamic tempo of the fashion industry increased.

The question could arise: why do consumers need intermediaries when they could also make their own choices by themselves? Making our own choices about cultural goods would not be so easy without professional guidance. The quality of cultural goods is challenging to measure and according to Caves (2000) it is uncertain because the consumers' opinion about the product is not easily predictable or understood. The consumers need an "appropriate expert" opinion to judge and validate a cultural good and integrate it to the business world (Csikszentmihaly, 1996). On the one hand the given value by the intermediaries is effecting the personal evaluation of a cultural good. And on the other hand the experts' guidance can be useful for the designers who do not know the entire market and are not aware of the consumers needs.

The fashion fairs adjusting to the changing environment and the changing fashion needs become global, multifunctional "intermediary fairs" from "expert fairs". Since today the places where the production and distribution can meet are not only restricted on fashion fairs, the fairs apart to be a trading place started to become an important economic networking place where next to the buyers the media, government representatives, PR agencies, other designers and people interested in fashion are all present. The fairs became very important places for network building; almost the only place where contact can be made with the hard to reach buyers (Skov, 2006). The well organized, well differentiated fashion fairs can attract a lot of interested experts and laics what can lead the city towards becoming a fashion capital. Perhaps that is what Budapest is also aiming for; to become a global intermediary with expansion and the introduction of new functions and services.

### **3.3. Development of fashion fairs**

Lavanga (2012) analyzed the case of *Pitti Imagine* in Florence, one of the world's most important fashion fairs and event organizer institute what helped the city to become a new

fashion capital.<sup>7</sup> The history of Pitti goes back to the 1950s. I have found several similarities between the early years of this fashion fair and the Hungarian case:

1. The fashion show was primarily organized for Italian creative, innovative, high quality fashion garments.
2. The type of collection and the way they were presented was systematically chosen.
3. The presented fashion houses had autonomy from the French fashion.
4. Limited number of pieces could be presented.
5. The fair was supposed to present a picture about Italy as modern and creative.
6. The main aim was to create and promote an identity and image; the fashion was a tool for city and country marketing.
7. The choice of location was also strategic; historical buildings were hosting the fashion shows.
8. These days few big designers are presented, but the fair is mostly helping designers who need commercial and promotional platform.
9. High selection of participants is characterizing the fair.
10. Pitti started new fairs, projects and events (Lavanga, 2012).

Pitti from being a local fashion event with the aim of being the representative of distinctive Italian fashion became a global institution organizing several fairs. The *Re-button! Hungarian is in fashion/Central European Fashion Days* is only a 3 years old fair but its early features are very similar to the one of Pitti's. The Hungarian fair in today's dynamic fashion world does not have time for slow development; in order to be competitive it has to adjust to the global trends of fashion fairs.

### **3.3. Re-button! Hungarian is in fashion/Central European fashion days**

The European Union membership facilitates broader market presence for the Hungarian cultural goods; therefore, the Hungarian culture from its minority position can get a European dimension due to the highly valued role of regions by the European Union. The presentation of the Hungarian cultural heritage to the European public can bring the country closer to its national policy goals and be viewed as cultural and not political nation – including Hungarians living by necessity across the borders. Cultural policy can be a tool for realizing the national interest abroad (Prohle, 2007) and for developing the country's creative industry

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<sup>7</sup> Ildiko Kele, one of the interviewed designers presented her 2013 Spring-Summer collection at Pitti Uomo.

with competitive knowledge and education increase and social cohesion strengthening. Creative and innovative human basis has to be established and the nation's collective knowledge has to be strengthened with respect on the traditions.

In 2011 *Re-button! Hungarian is in fashion* competition was announced as a government initiative by the Ministry of Public Administration and Justice. The Ministry together with one of its background institutes, the Design Terminal Non-Profit Ltd. and in partnership with the Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design organized this unique event. The Design Terminal is responsible for the development of the Hungarian creative industry therefore it lays big emphasis on supporting the young talents and drawing the attention of international investors on the possibilities in these talents. Due to the great success, the competition was announced also in 2012 and by this year it became a three day fashion event targeting a broader, international audience. Even the name of the event changed; today it is called *Central European Fashion Days*.

### 3.3.1. Current fashion trend in Hungary

The creative industry in Hungary is getting stronger and stronger. In the fashion industry nothing proves it better than the increased attention towards Hungarian design, the increasing number of new stores (Ourstyle Boutique, WAMP pop-up store, LAONI pop-up store, 4.ROOM, BP Shop, MONO Fashion, Black Box Concept Store, wonderLAB, etc) representing young designers and international fairs like *Budapest International Fair* what is presenting a wide range of products not only focusing on fashion, *Toni & Guy Fashion Week Budapest* presenting collections of five well known, established brands (Anh Tuan, Je suis belle, Nanushka, USE Unused, Anda) mainly for buyers and the press and the fashion event, competition open for the public, *Re-button! Hungarian is in fashion/Central European Fashion Days* which is growing professional and international. In the recent years there is an increased interest in Hungary towards the local fashion designers and the appearing cultural heritage elements in fashion. It is again in fashion among national celebrities and the public to wear Hungarian design. The revival of this trend can have several reasons; political, economical, international demand driven, and social psychological reasons.

Due to the Hungarian political, historical situation the Hungarian culture often gets political overtone (Prohle, 2007). This can traced back to the political ambitions for gaining back the cultural autonomy of Hungarians living beyond the borders since 1920. Most of the

Hungarian designers to keep their brand away from political interpretations were careful to apply cultural heritage elements in their design. The initiative of *Re-button!* achieved to put cultural heritage in a different perspective; it is now mainly seen as a source of inspiration without any underlying nationalistic meaning.

In order to get to the evolvement of the current trend a lot of small initiatives had to come together. In the art universities cultural heritage was always a massive part of the education system, young designers' attention is drawn on the use of the traditional techniques as inspirational sources. The cultural heritage and folk art within – even if unconsciously – is a part of the creative work of the designers for centuries. Recently the traditional motives, forms appeared spectacularly in the fashion design and long existing brands based on tradition got more media and customer attention. Sensing the changes in customer demand more and more boutiques, pop-up stores are opening which represent the fresh faces in the Hungarian fashion design. There are events, forums (WAMP, fashion blogs) where the new designer collections can be presented to the public and the talented designers are quickly selected from the mass. With the help of the internet and the media attention on the Hungarian design and the competition the designers get quick feedback about their products from which they can draw conclusions and can get enough encouragement for starting their own brand. The designer of the MIMM- textile design was happily talking about the social networking sites which do great market research job for them for free. With the help of these forums and the *Re-button!* competition designers can become generally known and the right target audience will find them. Although the competition drew the attention of the designers and the public on the fact that with the right interpretations cultural heritage can also be fashionable, the majority of the designers are trying to satisfy the international trends with their design. Being unable for quick and cheap trending the Hungarian designers' option is to apply international trend features in accordance with the own personality and build a brand with the unique features of Hungarian traditions and ambiance (Mengyan, 2010).

### **3.3.2. First year of the competition – 2011**

The Ministry of Public Administration and Justice, the Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design Budapest and the Design Terminal together organized for the first time in 2011 the *Re-button! Hungarian is in Fashion* action what consisted of creative applications, communication campaign and a fashion show held in the patinant building of the Museum of Fine Arts. The main aims of the project were threefold.



1. The demonstration of the compatibility of Hungarian motives and contemporary design.
2. Make known the outstanding talented young designers.
3. Strengthen the relation between the government and the creative sector.

The target audience of the event was the 18-39 years old active culture consumers of the middle class with special attention on woman consumers. The secondary target audience was 14-49 years old groups who have commercially outstanding importance. Thirdly the whole domestic population was in the focus of the event. The additional target group was the national and – since the event was a side event of the Hungarian Presidency of the European Union – international media.

The competition was announced in two categories.

1. Public application for apparel and accessories design (collection of 3-5 pieces)
  - a. Costume like dress category,
  - b. Wearable, everyday clothing category,
  - c. Accessories category,
2. “Doll dress up” competition.

The second competition category was announced for high school age group and the first category was announced for every age categories. Among the participants there were 18 invited designers, designer groups in order to guarantee the high standard of the event. Out of the 400 received applications 63 were selected for the second round and 35 were presented in the final, in the Museum of Fine Arts.

The museum could only host 450 people to the show while the other visitors could see the show on big projectors.

All the finalists got 150.000 Forint<sup>8</sup> refund. Further first, second, third prizes, 2 special awards and one audience awards were nominated. The first prize was 450.000 Forint<sup>9</sup>, Samsung Mini mobile phone, study trip to London, traineeship at Kati Zoób designer and presence in the Glamour magazine. The second prize was 350.000 Forint<sup>10</sup>, Samsung Mini

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<sup>8</sup> 510 Euros according to the exchange rate of Budapest Bank on 22-07-2013 at 12:00 a.m. where 1 Forint=294.36 Euros.

<sup>9</sup> 1529 Euros according to the exchange rate of Budapest Bank on 22-07-2013 at 12:00 a.m. where 1 Forint=294.36 Euros.

<sup>10</sup> 1189 Euros according to the exchange rate of Budapest Bank on 22-07-2013 at 12:00 a.m. where 1 Forint=294.36 Euros.

phone and traineeship at Kati Zoób designer. The third prize was 250.000 Forint<sup>11</sup> Samsung Mini phone and traineeship at Kati Zoób designer. The two special prizes were given by the WAMP<sup>12</sup> and Fashion Issue<sup>13</sup>; presence at the design fair and in the magazine. The audience prize was 200.000 Forint<sup>14</sup> and a Samsung Mini phone.

The jury consisted of a plan jury and a final jury. The pre-judging of the applications was made by acknowledged experts of universities and museum. The members of the final jury consisted of people representing the message of the event. They were representatives of the fashion scene, cultural life and country branding; artists, designer, museum and university directors, editor in chief and government representative.

The event communication had two parts; from the announcement till the marketing campaign the communication was addressed to the designers, and two weeks before the fashion show the communication was addressed to the audience. The media partners were the TV2<sup>15</sup>, Glamour magazine and Ourfashion Blog. In the Glamour and Ourfashion Blog the event was promoted 16 times and 7 times in the television. The campaign tools were outdoor tools like billboard, posters, television adverts, direct marketing through the networks of the MOME<sup>16</sup> and Design Terminal, and the webpage of the event. 220 billboards were placed all around Budapest and the TV2 presented the TV spot of the event 61 times. The event website was downloaded 47.157 times. The platforms of the interactive online marketing were the Facebook social networking site, Videa and YouTube video sharing sites and two Flickr picture sharing sites. 4 videos were sharing with the audience generation 3584 viewings. Further other 200 online news portals, 54 fashion blogs, 17 commercial and public service televisions, 13 national daily and weekly papers reported about the event. On the fashion show 70 journalists could participate. International journals like Wall Street Journal, The Globe and Mail and The International Herald Tribune also wrought about the event (Bendsak & Molnar, 2011).

The evaluation of the event reflected on four aspects in which the competition could improve. Firstly, the place of the event could only host a very little percentage of the

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<sup>11</sup> 849 Euros according to the exchange rate of Budapest Bank on 22-07-2013 at 12:00 a.m. where 1 Forint=294.36 Euros.

<sup>12</sup> A community event taking place once or twice a month in Budapest in order to showcase the works of Hungarian designers.

<sup>13</sup> Bilingual fashion magazine.

<sup>14</sup> 679 Euros according to the exchange rate of Budapest Bank on 22-07-2013 at 12:00 a.m. where 1 Forint=294.36 Euros.

<sup>15</sup> Commercial television.

<sup>16</sup> Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design Budapest.

interested audience. Secondly, in the competition the evaluation was not divided into accessories and clothing categories. Thirdly, in the international media the event was not sufficiently presented. Fourthly, the competition could not significantly support the talents in their career start (Bendsak & Molnar, 2011).

The event was good to make the relation between the government and the creative industry closer and call attention on the potential in the Hungarian fashion industry and the creativity of Hungarian designers. In itself the competition did not bring positive economic change. The organizers described it as a great starting point towards a long term positive change in the creative industry.

### 3.3.3. Second year of the competition – 2012

The event was announced for the second time in 2011. The Ministry of Public Administration and Justice next to the Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design Budapest and the Design Terminal was helped by the Hungarian Heritage House<sup>17</sup> and the Federation of Folk Art Associations<sup>18</sup>. The fashion show was held in the B Hall of the Millenáris<sup>19</sup>. The big capacity of the hall allowed 3000 people to watch the fashion show live in the hall. The event was complemented by a fashion show presenting the current collections of 11 established young Hungarian designers, WAMP fashion fair and a conference named “Dress code: Business”. The aims of the *Re-button! Hungarian is in fashion 2.0* project evolved in response to the first event’s shortcomings.

1. Supporting the successful candidate young designers in entering the market.
2. Promoting the contact between the young designers and craftsmen.
3. Presenting the diversity of Hungarian fashion through an all-day event for a much broader audience than the year before.

The target audience of the first event did not change only more attention was given to folk artists and craftsmen.

Fulfilling the need for applicants’ categorization the two competition tasks were announced separate in clothing and accessories and the established designers were not

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<sup>17</sup> National institution founded by the Secretary of State for the Ministry for Cultural Heritage with the mission to preserve and promote Hungarian folk tradition.

<sup>18</sup> NGO in support of craftsmen and the Hungarian craftsmanship values.

<sup>19</sup> Nonprofit limited Liability Company, a national and cultural event center owned by the Hungarian State.

competing with the younger generations. The two aims and possible tasks were the followings:

1. Processing the values and traditions of traditional Hungarian clothing and fashion history with a modern approach. Here the designers were asked to create trend following and at the same time Hungarian-inspired wearable clothing and accessories.
2. Encouraging the cooperation between the national designers and Hungarian craftsmen making traditional costumes applying traditional techniques and materials. Here the task was the complementation of Hungarian designer fashion garments with traditional craft techniques.

The number of registered applicants was more than 1000. The plan jury selected 56 design works (43 clothing and 13 accessories collections) in the first part of the selection process. 24 design collections were presented in the final show. Out of the design work completing the second task 11 were presented in the final fashion show.

All the finalists got refund, introduction video, publication possibility in the brand magazine of Vodafone and could present themselves in the Festival of Folk Arts<sup>20</sup>. In total the financial award of the winners was 250.000 Forint more than the year before. The winners of the first task were presented in the Marie Claire magazine and on the Marie Claire Fashion Days, they could sell their products for one month at the Design Terminal, they got Samsung camera and marketing communication package worth 1.000.000 Forint<sup>21</sup>. The winners of the second task got the same opportunity from the Design Terminal, and gift from Samsung and further traineeship from Katti Zoób and Attitude brands. The number of special prizes rose; Budapest Transportation Center, Vodafone Smart Store, Fashion Issue, WAMP, OurStyle Boutique and also Black Box Concept Store offered special prizes. These prizes were sales opportunities, work orders, and self presentation. The audience prize was a foreign study trip.

The jury consisted of plan jury and final jury. In the plan jury acknowledged experts – folk artists, designers, experts from university and museum – made the pre-selection of the design plans. The members of the final jury were chosen according to the same features as in the first year; it consisted of fashion editor, stylist, editor in chief, designer, singer, rector, curator, and creative director. The only difference was that the president of the jury was not Hungarian. She is the fashion editor of *Marie Claire International*.

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<sup>20</sup> Four-day festival organized by the Federation of Folk Art Associations.

<sup>21</sup> 3397 Euros according to the exchange rate of Budapest Bank on 22-07-2013 at 12:00 a.m. where 1 Forint=294.36 Euros.

Both the number of the partners and the media partners doubled in comparison to the first year; including televisions, radios, newspapers, magazines, multimedia companies and blogs. The event was promoted also in the Spring Festival in Pecs. The outdoor campaign was organized more than twice as large scale as in 2010-2011. 480 billboards were placed across the country what is more than the double of the billboards used in the first year. The television spot of the event was played in 4 TV channels 311 times, more than 5 times more than the year before. In addition to the TV spots radio spots were also presented 36 times in two radios. The final show of the event was promoted 4 week in advance, the promoters of the event apart from the television and radio reports could present the event in televisions and radios 22 times. The event website was downloaded 126.947 times; more than twice as many times as the year before. In the direct marketing two schools also joined the organizers and offered their help to promote the event throughout their networks. The Facebook and YouTube channels of the event remained active since the first Re-button! The Facebook communication became active on daily basis between the audience and the event organizers. Less videos, in total 2, were shared in YouTube than during the first Re-button! but they generated twice as much interest than the 4 videos in 2011. The event offered two backstage tours for bloggers and media representatives and they received 93 media registrations. The winners and their collections generated big media interest. The MTV television channel made a 52 minutes long television program about the Re-button! initiative which presented the whole implementation process of the event. *The Re-button! Hungarian is in fashion 2.0* reached much broader audience than in 2011 (Bendsak, Ferencz & Kovacs, 2012).

The event could develop broader relation with the media. The second competition was a good initiative to make the event tempting for investors and due to the increased value of awards to support the career start of the young designers. The competition and fashion show due to its great success is aiming to develop a social brand and continue the event in the coming years.

The shortcomings of the event were that still the capacity of the place was not satisfactory. The presented collections were not in all cases satisfying the wearability criteria. The event could again not reach sufficiently the foreign media. Attention was not paid on the importance of the potential investors; buyers were not invited to the event (Bendsak, Ferencz & Kovacs, 2012).

### 3.3.4. Third year of the competition – 2013

The campaign evaluation of the *Central European Fashion Days* will be prepared foreseeably in August 2013; therefore there are no official evaluation and statistics about the media presence available.

By 2013 the event became a three-day fashion event giving place to a fashion fair, conference, fashion show of the Autumn-Winter collection of established designers and the competition. The ratio of Hungarian and foreign invited designers was 7:7. As a side event the Stylewalker Promotion creative cultural agency organized a Stylewalker Night where in the night of the fashion show in the heart of Budapest all the fashion and design stores were open till midnight. The aim of the organizers was in response to the prior events' experiences to internationalize the event not only in its topic to apply Central-European cultural values in the design work but also in its mission. The organizers of the event believe:

1. The creative intellectual values of the region should have international standing.
2. The rich culture and traditions of the region can be brought into a modern context with the help of fashion.
3. The economic and intellectual potential of the region can be enlarged with providing market presence for the young talents.
4. The collaboration of the four Visegrad countries can help the region in the efficient communication and network building on the international markets.
5. Budapest is able to represent the talented designers of Central-Europe (Design Terminal).

In the recent event buyers, showrooms, concept store managers were invited to see the collections of Hungarian designers and other invited designers of the region. 25 Hungarian, Czech, Polish and Slovak designers got the opportunity to present their clothing and accessories to the buyers. The selection of these designers was independent from the competition. In a medium term the internationalization of the event would help Budapest to become the hub of the region's creative industry.

The announcement of the application drew the designers' attention on the Central-European intellectual and material values. The applicants had to create high quality collection what corresponds to the current trends. The competition was separately announced for the newcomers and old hands and further divided into clothing and accessory categories. The prizes for the newcomers were corporate identity design, image pictures and look book

creation, 6 months traineeship at a well established Hungarian brand, and free presence on the region's most important trade fairs on the STYLE and STYLE-KABO. The prizes of the old hands category were the presence on the Paris Fashion Week in the ZipZone showroom, 1 million Forint gift card at the Premiere Vision for the needed material of the sample collection, and free manufacturing of the sample collection by the Kezmu Nonprofit Kft. Further fashion materials are made by the Marquard Media. 10 special prizes were offered for the competitors from stores, brands, and fashion academy. The prizes included sales opportunities, trainings and collaborations (Design Terminal).

The number of applicants halved in comparison with the data from the previous year. The Design Terminal received 500 applications. The jury was again divided into plan jury and final jury. This time the ratio of Hungarian and foreign (Czech, Polish, Slovak) designers was 9:7. The head of the final jury was the editor in chief of the British *InStyle*, member of the British Fashion Council. There were no government representatives in the jury, the designers, artists and university representatives made the majority of the jury. The jury selected 4 old hands and 17 newcomer collections for the final show.

The number of the sponsors, professional, media and creative partners increased to 30 since the prior competition. The featured media partner of the event was the *InStyle* magazine (Design Terminal).

### 3.3.5. Conclusion

Similarly to the early years of *Pitti Imagine* the first *Re-button!* fashion event was organized for national creative, innovative, quality fashion apparels and the presented designers have autonomy from foreign fashion influence. The type of the presented collections was systematically chosen by the expert jury. From the second year of the competition the number of pieces in a collection was limited. Just like in Italy, the *Re-button!* was supposed to present an image about Hungary as innovative and creative country and help the city and country marketing. The choice of location was a strategic choice. In the first year it was the historical building of the Museum of Fine Arts and in the years after the creative, cultural center, the Millenaris. Just like the *Pitti Imagine*, the Budapest based fashion event is also mostly helping designers in need of commercial, promotional platform. The participants take part in a three round selection process till the winners are announced. Similarly to *Pitti*, the *Re-button!* is also yearly growing in terms of organized additional events and projects.

The concept and the organization of the event became year by year more and more conscious and focused. The theme of the competition is becoming more and more general giving freedom of creativity to the designers and allowing them to create collections which fit better in the international trends with attention on the unique regional features. The campaign period starts always earlier than the year before, and becomes more systematic and well thought. The success of the competition can be seen in the increasing number of applicants and the increasing number of followers, visitors. By 2013 there was a huge decline in the number of applications which can be explained with the changed nature of the awards. The winners are in every year better supported in their career building, they get help in brand building and international presence; in 2013 the awards became more appealing for designers who want to build a fashion designer career with the establishment of their own brand. Using the advantage of the gained reputation the event is aiming to grow international concentrating on the international media, audience and buyers.

The Hungarian government understood the importance of the need for proactive management of inspiration gathering activity. The successful innovation depends on the awareness on design innovations and cultural changes (Eckert & Stacey, 1998). The initiative for giving space to research and encouraging the collection of inspirational sources will have a positive impact on the creative industry.



## Chapter 4: Hungarian cultural heritage

“The cultural heritage is the spiritual tradition preserved from a nation’s past for the next generations. Many components of this heritage are unique and unrepeatable; therefore to preserve these is a priority task for the cultural government.” – can be read on the website of the Hungarian government. With this definition the government initiative for organizing a fashion competition where the cultural heritage is in focus is absolutely compatible. The aim of the government next to the heritage preservation is to maintain the cohesion in the nation and build a strong national identity. “Respect the past in order to understand the present and to be able to work on the future.” – said Istvan Szechenyi (1791-1860) Hungarian politician, writer. This note refers to the fact that gaining knowledge from the past and build upon it the future is the right way towards the success and development. Throughout the centuries a great knowledge of folk communities was accumulated. Luu Anh Tuan designer finds this knowledge very valuable, quality source especially in the accelerated tempo of the fashion industry. The folk art had many centuries to develop in contrast with the present where designers have less time to create something completely new.

The *Central European Fashion Days!* this year, in 2013, motivated the designers to apply physical, natural and intellectual cultural heritage inspirational sources in their design. This announcement allowed the applicants to choose freely among tangible and intangible cultural heritage. This raises the question; what can we consider as cultural heritage?

During the last decades the term ‘cultural heritage’ got a broader meaning. Next to the landscapes and natural sites traditions and living expressions passed on from the ancestors to the new generations became equally important and worldwide recognized cultural heritage. The UNESCO, thirty-one years after the World Heritage Convention was made in 1972, in 2003 created a convention which defines five domains in which intangible cultural heritage can be manifested:

- Oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage;
- Performing arts;
- Social practices, rituals and festive events;
- Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe;

- Traditional craftsmanship (UNESCO).

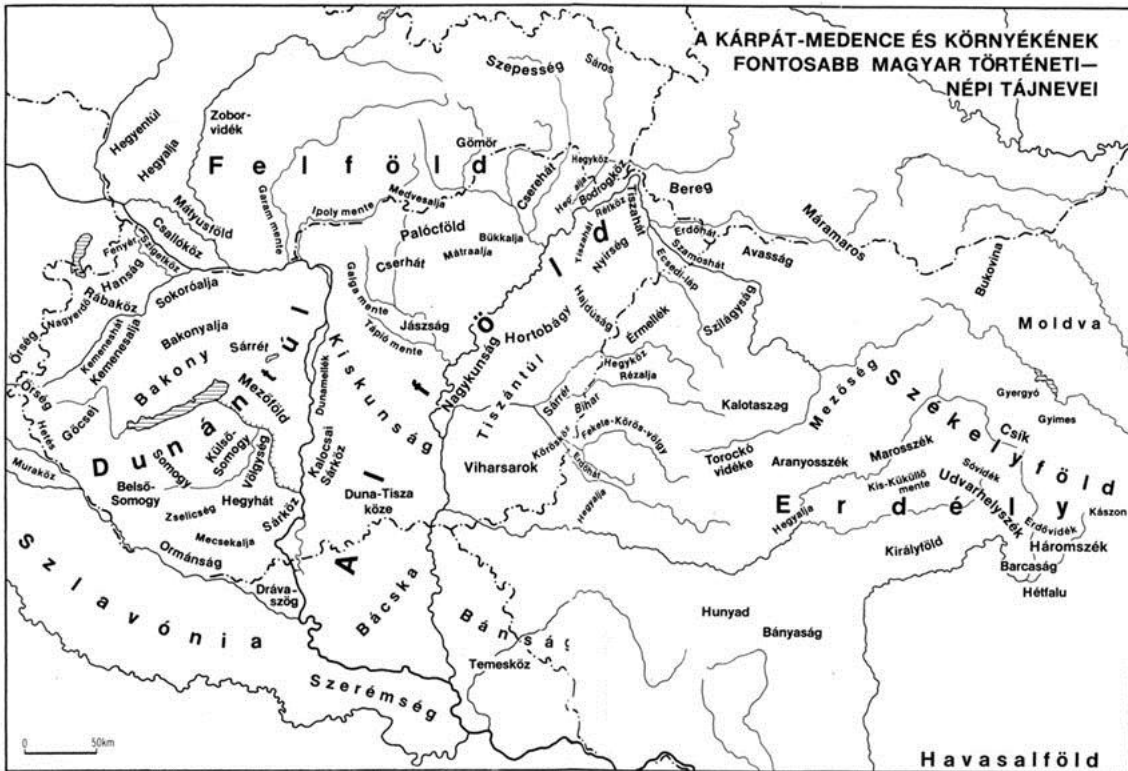
According to the UNESCO World Heritage List Hungary has eight heritage sites including landscapes and natural sites. On the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity there are four elements out of which three are very relevant to the concept of Re-button!

1. Busó festivities at Mohács: masked end-of-winter carnival custom;
2. Táncház method: a Hungarian model for the transmission of intangible cultural heritage;
3. Folk art of the Matyó, embroidery of a traditional community.

These intangible cultural heritages have the main features of being representative, inclusive, traditional, contemporary and living at the same time, and community based (UNESCO).

All the country regions of Hungary have their own folkloric motives, traditional dresses what offers a great source of inspiration for the fashion designers. Next to Matyófold cultural area – also recognized by the UNESCO – Hungary has another 147 folk areas all of which have their own traditions, unique folk art. Hungary has four big geographical regions: Dunantul, Alföld, Felföld and Transylvania. These are further divided into so called folk areas, counties and all these folk areas have further cultural regions and ethnic, ethnographic groups with their own traditional dresses (Picture 12). Dunantul consist of Western folk area (7 cultural regions), Central folk area (11 cultural regions), Pannonian block (16 cultural regions), Dunamelléki plains (13 cultural regions). Alföld consist of Felsőtiszai block (9 cultural regions), Középtiszai block [Duna-Tisza köze (7 cultural regions), Tiszantul (7 cultural regions)] and Alsótiszai block (8 cultural regions). Felföld called the Northern Hungarian folk area (19 cultural regions). Transylvania consists of 51 cultural regions. The folkloric traditions of these cultural areas are part of the national identity (Palady-Kovacs, 2011; Mohay, 2011).

Picture 12 – The most important Hungarian historical and folkloric regions of the Carpathian Basin



Source: Bethlen Gabor Alapítvány, [www.nemzetismeret.hu](http://www.nemzetismeret.hu).

## Chapter 5: Research

### 5.1. Research question

The main question of my research was: What motivates the fashion designers in Hungary for applying cultural heritage in their design?

As my topic further developed I was hoping to get answers also for the following two sub-questions:

What can be the reasons behind the revival of this fashion trend?

Is the trend of applying cultural heritage in fashion design going to be long lasting?

### 5.2. Challenges

It was a challenging task to plan how to research the designers' motivations, because

1. motivation can develop unconsciously,
2. the roots of motivation are hard to be remembered,
3. it can be difficult to put into words an inspiration, a feeling, an ambiance, since external inputs are also used indirectly in order to understand the fashion context (Eckert & Stacey, 1998), and
4. the interview setting can bias the designers' answers, because for instance it does not sound nice to admit the lack of interest in cultural heritage or the award of the competition as the main motivation.

Another challenge was to distinguish inspiration from motivation, because in many cases the inspiration source itself can be the motivation for creating a design. The prior researches (Mougenot, Bouchard & Aoussat, 2008; Mete, 2006; Eckert & Stacey, 1998 and Cillo & Verona, 2008) focusing on the early phases of the design process were conducted with qualitative and mixed methods, using structured interviews, semi-structured interviews, semi-constrained design task and experimental protocol. For a better result the researchers had time and resources for conducting follow-up interviews, empirical research and could use ethnographic observation methods. Currently there is no sufficient data for conducting a quantitative research in this field (Vagasi-Kovacs, 2013). Taking into consideration the prior researches and my time constraints I planned to conduct semi-

structured interviews with fashion designers who participated in the *Re-button! Hungarian is in fashion* fashion fair and competition in 2011 or 2012 in Hungary.

### 5.3. Sampling

My sampling had two stages. First of all I wanted to get an overview on the design scene of Hungary to know the list of designers who use or in the past used cultural heritage elements in their collections. Since there are no any databases containing actual information concerning the designers' number in Hungary, in February 2013 I went to Hungary to a study trip. I visited Eszter Tiszavari, the librarian of Art Documentation and Research Department and Special Library of the Hungarian Academy of Arts and Rita Halasi, the director of Ponton Gallery and curator of the Budapest Design Week. In lack of representative data about the Hungarian fashion industry I decided to concentrate my sampling on the finalist designers of the *Re-button! Hungarian is in fashion* competition.

My sampling is based on the finalists of the first two years of the competition. In the first year 35 designers, in the second year 34 designers could present their collections in the final show. The Table 2 below lists the finalists of the competition both in 2011 and 2012. All the colored columns show the interviewees. The green columns show the invited designers for the competition, the pink color shows the designers being in the final in both years and the orange color shows interviewees who do not have brand.

While creating the sample I had to take into consideration the followings:

1. The time constraints for making and analyzing the interviews.
2. Not all the finalists could be found on the internet.
3. Not all the finalists replied for my interview request.
4. Not all the designers were situated in Budapest and its surrounding area.

Keeping in mind these constraints I wanted my sample to be representative. While finalizing the list of interviewees I gave attention on the following selection criteria:

1. Freelancer – employee,
2. National – international market orientation,
3. Brand foundation date,
4. Reputation.

According to these features and my possibilities I made a sample what is representing the designer scene in Hungary, so it includes established brands, young brands and young designers/students who do not have a brand.

Table 2 – List of the finalists of Re-button! In 2011 and 2012 Source: author's elaboration.

| FINALIST IN 2011   | FINALIST IN 2012   |
|--|--|
| Anh Tuan – Luu Anh Tuan  | Vinkler Zsuzsanna, Horváth Kata                                  |
| Artista  | Fazekas Endre  |
| Berecz Vanda   | Illés Vanda  |
| Blue Paprika – Palfy Szilvia, Szucs Terez  | Somogyi Alett  |
| Csabai Zita, Farkas Zsófia   | Révész Márta, Pigler Katalin                                     |
| Csegöldi Erika   | Czirják Ágnes  |
| Dresscode  |  |
| Esztány István   | Fóris Barbara, Soós Andrea                                       |
| Fábrí Zsuzsanna  | Szentmihályi Dóra, Tihanyi Réka                                  |
| Gallatz Rita   | Kalácska Zsanett   |
| Gyöngyösi Renáta   | Söptei Eszter  |
| Ille-Olla Illéssy Lenke  | Wakabayashi Noémi  |
| Je Suis Belle – Devenyi Dalma, Kiss Tibor  | Henter Apor  |
| Juhász Lilla Eszter  | Demeter Lilla, Szabó Zsuzsanna                                   |
| Kamchatka  | Gál Barbara, Pusztai Judit                                       |
| Karácsony Ilona  | Domokos Mihály   |
| Kárpáti Judit Eszter   | Somody Beáta   |
| Kele Ildikó  | Piroshka – Hegedűs Anna  |
| Kocsis Anna  | Farkas Anett   |
| Kormos Anna Zsófia, Gálvölgyi Anett Evelin,<br>Baranyi Ádám, Miovac Márton Zsolt | Ebergényi Éva  |
| Kovács Mónika  | Bakos Boglárka   |
| Kutasi Beáta   | Keszei Borbála, Hatházi Fanni                                    |
| Mán Renáta   | Huszár Diána   |
| Márton Rózsa, Végső Gizella  | Cséfalvay Lilla és Cséfalvay Fanni                               |
| MIMM - Hendzsel Ilona, Nagy Moni   | Erdei Gergely  |
| Náfrádi Márta  | Molnár-Madarász Melinda  |
| Nati 100% Pure Idea – Gyulai Nalattia  | MIMM - Hendzsel Ilona, Nagy Moni                                 |
| Patent Csoport   | Vitányi Anna   |
| Pusztai Judit  | Véssey Anna, Simon Judit   |
| Stoffán Linda  | Bálint Sára  |
| Surányi Szilárd  | Szűcs Ágnes  |
| TheBetaVersion – Rainer Zsófia, Varga Cecilia                                    | Igezo – Bárczi Erika, Hargitay-Nagy Zsuzsa                       |
| Tihanyi Ildikó   | Fabics Karolin   |
| Tóth Melinda, Lajos Attila   | Járádi Judit   |
| Véssey Anna, Simon Judit   | Kovács Mónika, Németh Ninetta, Veszprémi Gabriella, Lévai Zsófia |

I could manage to get appointments from 12 designers and 2 designers sent me their answers per e-mail. In two cases both owners of the brand were presented in the interviews, in the other cases I made the interview with only one designer (Table 3).

**Table 3 – List of interviewees in the order of the date of interviews**

| INTERVIEWEE                         | BRAND NAME            | DATE OF INTERVIEW         |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Tibor Kiss                          | Je suis belle         | 7 <sup>th</sup> May 2013  |
| Erika Barczy & Zsuzsa Hargitay-Nagy | Igezo                 | 8 <sup>th</sup> May 2013  |
| Zsuzsanna Fabri                     | -                     | 8 <sup>th</sup> May 2013  |
| Renata Gyongyosi                    | INER                  | 9 <sup>th</sup> May 2013  |
| Ilona Hendzsel                      | MIMM-textile design   | 9 <sup>th</sup> May 2012  |
| Szilvia Palffy                      | Blue Paprika          | 10 <sup>th</sup> May 2013 |
| Lenke Illessy                       | Ille-Olla             | 10 <sup>th</sup> May 2013 |
| Sara Balint                         | Balint Sara Knit/Wear | 10 <sup>th</sup> May 2013 |
| Luu Anh Tuan                        | Anh Tuan              | 14 <sup>th</sup> May 2013 |
| Vanda Berecz                        | Berecz Vanda          | 14 <sup>th</sup> May 2013 |
| Zsofia Rainer & Varga Cecilia       | TheBetaVersion        | 14 <sup>th</sup> May 2013 |
| Anna Hegedus                        | Piroshka              | 14 <sup>th</sup> May 2013 |
| Ildiko Kele                         | Kele clothing         | e-mail                    |
| Judit Eszter Karpati                | -                     | e-mail                    |

Source: author's elaboration.

## 5.4. Interviews

Twelve out of the fourteen interviews were face to face interviews held in Budapest and its surrounding areas. Although I was very flexible with rescheduling the meetings according to the designers' availability, from two designers I got answers in e-mail because they were not in the capital during the week when the interviews were made. I got permission from all the designers to record the conversations – lasted 30 to 60 minutes – what helped me at the end in analyzing the collected data. The length of interviews depended on the clarity and the complexity of the design needed to be explained, the number of interviewees at one interview and the number of competitions the designers applied for. After the first some couple of interviews I got familiar with the basic designer definitions and additional explanations did not extend the interview time.



#### 5.4.1. Structure of the interview

The aim of the semi-structured interviews was to collect in-depth information from the designers' perspectives about their motivation for creating collections using Hungarian cultural heritage as their inspirational source.

At the beginning of the interviews I gave a short introduction of myself and the topic to gain trust, to base the conversation and to provoke their thoughts – some designers already commented on some aspects of the topic during the introduction –.

I choose to conduct semi-structured interviews since I wanted to get information about a very subjective, mostly unconsciously developing topic; the designers' motivation and inspirational sources. I could personalize the questions according to the designers' specific collections and I could gain a better understanding of the designer world from many different perspectives. Furthermore, the semi-structured interview format gave me the opportunity to ask questions which further developed my knowledge about the design techniques, processes. With my open questions I gave space for new topic to evolve in my structure. I have to mention that since it is a unique opportunity to talk with fashion designers I also used the interview to conduct more interesting conversations with them fulfilling my personal interest.

The questions were structured in six sections. In the first section information was collected about the brand building and stage of career. In the second section the questions were directed on the vision and mission of the brand and designer work. In the third section information was collected about the reason and condition of application, the representativeness of the competition and the effect of the competition on the design work and fashion trends. The questions of the fourth section collected information about the inspirational sources, design process, way of application of the chosen heritage element, relationship of the own style and the cultural heritage element, and the innovativeness of the design. In the fifth section information was collected about the general interest of designers for cultural heritage as inspirational source and whether the competition changed the designer attitude. In the last section the questions were directed on the possible reasons behind the revival of the current fashion trend and the possible effects of this trend on the Hungarian fashion design.

## 5.5. Research methods

The interviews were recorded with Dictaphone and transcript manually. The data was processed from the beginning of the analysis with NVivo10 qualitative data analysis computer software package. As a first step I imported the transcripts of the fourteen interviews to the program. Secondly, I created the nodes, sub-nodes and node classifications under which in the third step I organized the selected information. After aggregating the codes I used visual tools to understand and analyze the data. During the process tree maps, charts, graphs and models were generated. Finally according to the established structure and the visualized data I analyzed the interviews.

As a first step of my analysis six nodes were generated:

| Name  |
|---|
| Person  |
| Mission & Vision                                  |
| Competition                                       |
| Collection designed for Re-button!                |
| General presence of folk art in the creative work |
| Current fashion trend                             |

### 5.5.1. Nodes

#### Person

The node Person was added to the ‘node classifications’ in order to capture details of the designers about their work status, brand foundation date, brand name, market of presence, used additional help and the number of official employees (Table 4). The node classifications helped me in the analysis to compare the designers’ responses based on these basic attributes.

Table 4 – Classification Sheet – Person

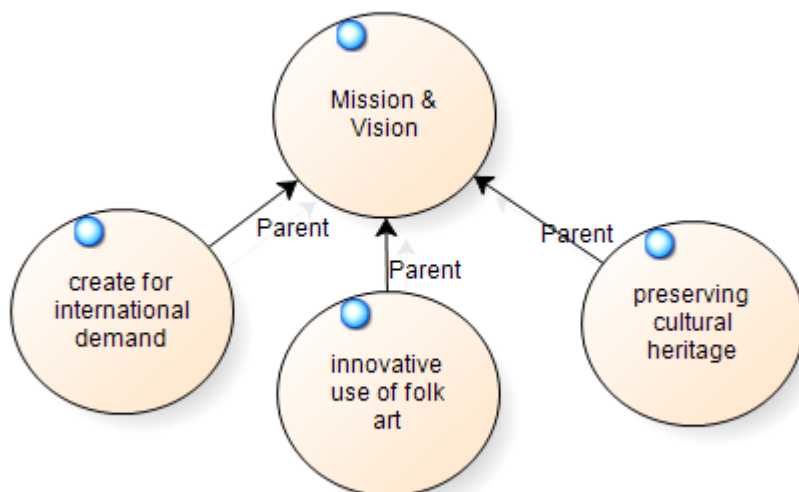
| Nodes//Person                       | additional help   | foundation date | brand name               | market of presence                            | number of official employees | work status                            |
|-------------------------------------|---|-----------------|--------------------------|---|------------------------------|--|
| Balint Sara                         | project based   | 2010            | Balint Sara<br>Knit/Wear | National                                      | Not Applicable               | freelancer                             |
| Barczi Erika & Hargitay-N<br>Zsuzsa | employee  | 2008            | Igezo                    | National                                      | 1                            | freelancer                             |
| Berecz Vanda                        | project based   | 2012            | Berecz Vanda             | National<br>National &<br>international       | Not Applicable               | freelancer                             |
| Devenyi Dalma & Kiss Tibor          | employees & wageworkers                                       | 2005-2006       | Je suis belle            | international                                 | 1                            | freelancer                             |
| Fabri Zsuzsanna                     | Not Applicable  | Not Applicable  | Not Applicable           | Not Applicable                                | Not Applicable               | employee                               |
| Gyongyosi Renata & Debreceni<br>D.  | tailoring company   | 2012            | INER                     | National                                      | Not Applicable               | freelancer                             |
| Hegedus Anna                        | project based   | 2012            | Piroshka                 | National                                      | Not Applicable               | freelancer<br>freelancer &<br>employee |
| Hendzsel Ilona & Nagy Moni          | project based   | 2010-2011       | MIMM-textile design      | National<br>National &<br>international       | Not Applicable               | freelancer                             |
| Illessy Lenke                       | wageworkers   | 2009            | Ille-Olla                | international                                 | Not Applicable               | student                                |
| Karpati Judit                       | Not Applicable  | Not Applicable  | Not Applicable           | Not Applicable<br>National &<br>international | Not Applicable               | freelancer                             |
| Kele Ildiko                         | tailoring & knitting company                                  | 2012            | Kele clothing            | National &<br>international                   | Not Applicable               | freelancer                             |
| Luu Anh Tuan                        | employees & wageworkers<br>wageworkers & tailoring<br>company | 2006            | Anh Tuan                 | National &<br>international                   | 4                            | freelancer<br>freelancer &<br>employee |
| Palfy Szilvia & Szucs Terez         | company   | 2005            | Blue Paprika             | international<br>National &<br>international  | Not Applicable               | freelancer                             |
| Rainer Zsofia & Varga Cecilia       | Wageworkers   | 2010            | TheBetaVersion           | international                                 | Not Applicable               | freelancer                             |

Source: author's elaboration.

## Mission & Vision

In the second node I wanted to categorize the designers according to the main aim of their creative work (Figure 6).

Figure 6 – Mission & Vision Node



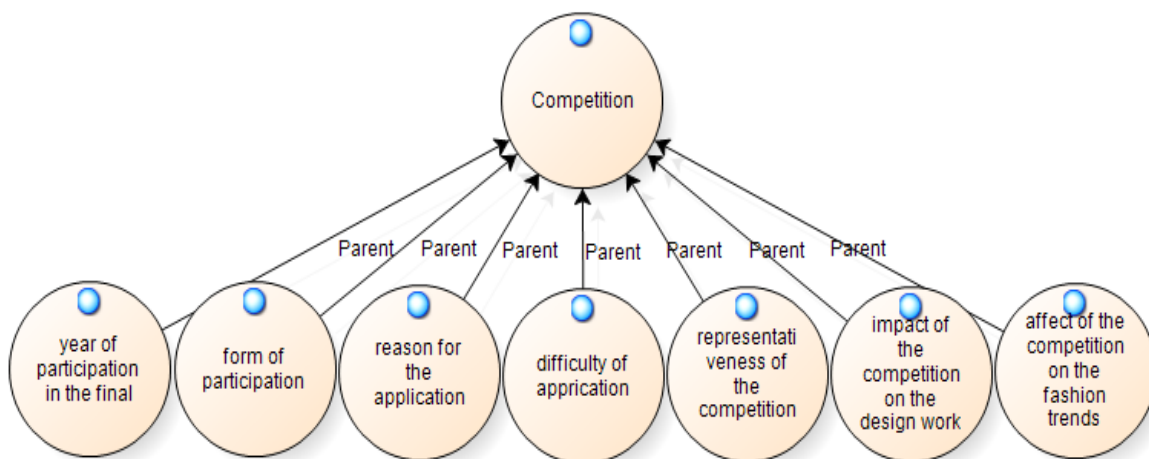
Source: author's elaboration.

The designers can be put in three categories; designers who follow international trends, designers who consciously use cultural heritage as inspirational source throughout their creative work and designers who built their brand on transplanting folk art in the current fashion.

## Competition

The third created node is Competition. Under this node I collected all the information concerning the participation (year of participation, form of participation), application (reason of application, difficulty of application, representativeness) and the impact of the competition on the own design work and on the fashion trends (Figure 7).

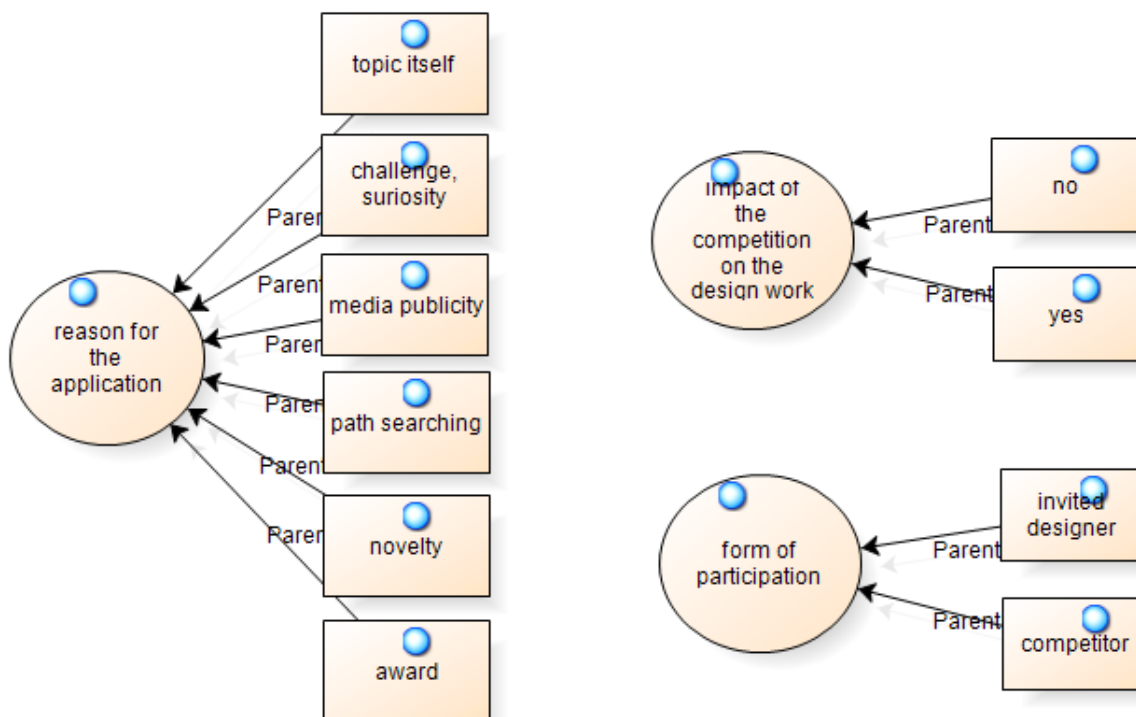
Figure 7 – Competition node



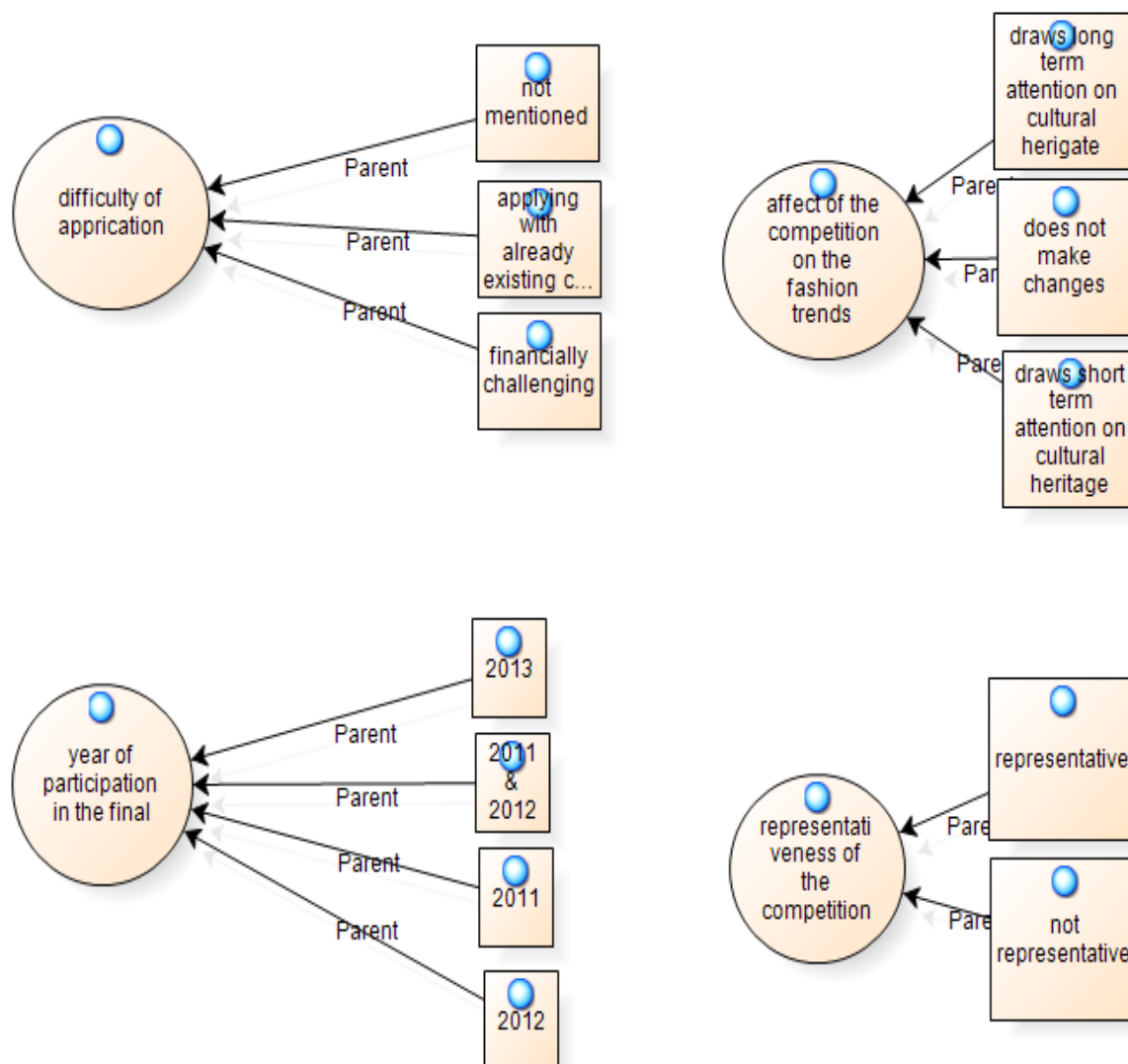
Source: author’s elaboration.

The subcategories were further divided into smaller categories according to the interviewees’ answers (Figure 8).

Figure 8 – Sub-categories of Competition node



Source: author’s elaboration.

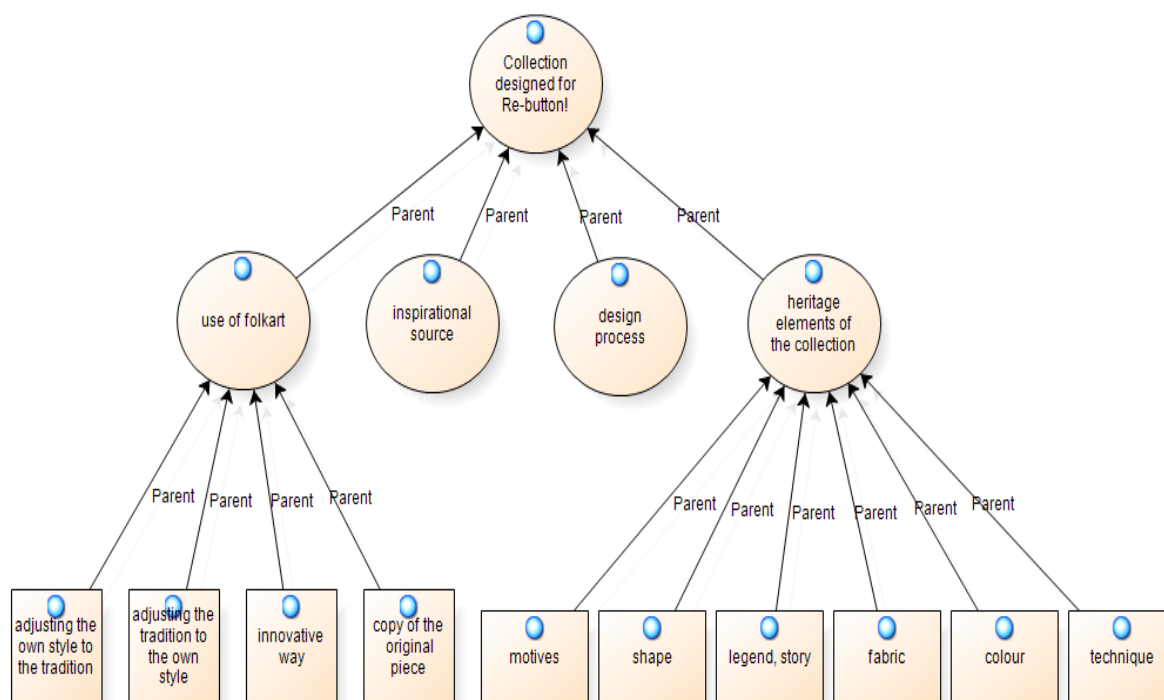


Source: author's elaboration.

### Collection designed for Re-button!

As fourth node I created Collection design for Re-button! Under this node I collected information about the designers' inspirational source, about the cultural heritage elements they were using in the design, about their design process and about the implementation of the concept on the garment. The 'heritage elements of the collection' I further specified into the used heritage elements. In the 'use of folk art' subcategory I was interested in whether the designers were using the heritage elements in an innovative way or they were rather concentrating on heritage preservation and whether they were adjusting they own style to the task or the task was built on their own style (Figure 9).

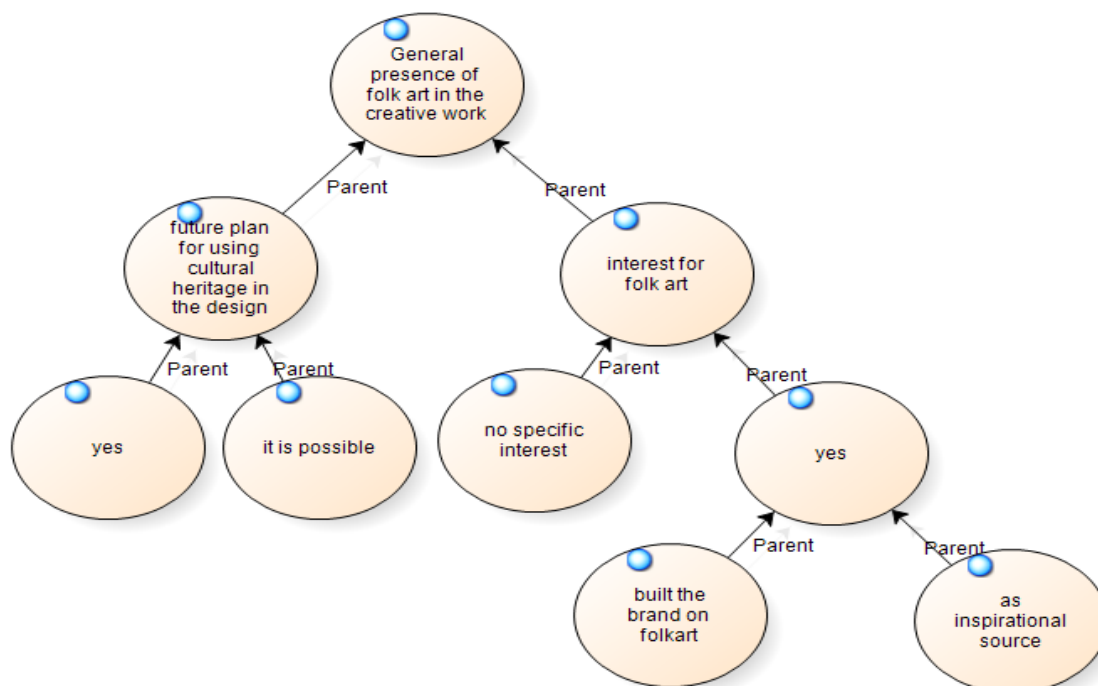
**Figure 9 – Collection designed for Re-button!**



Source: author's elaboration.

## General presence of folk art in the creative work

**Figure 10 – General presence of folk art in the creative work**



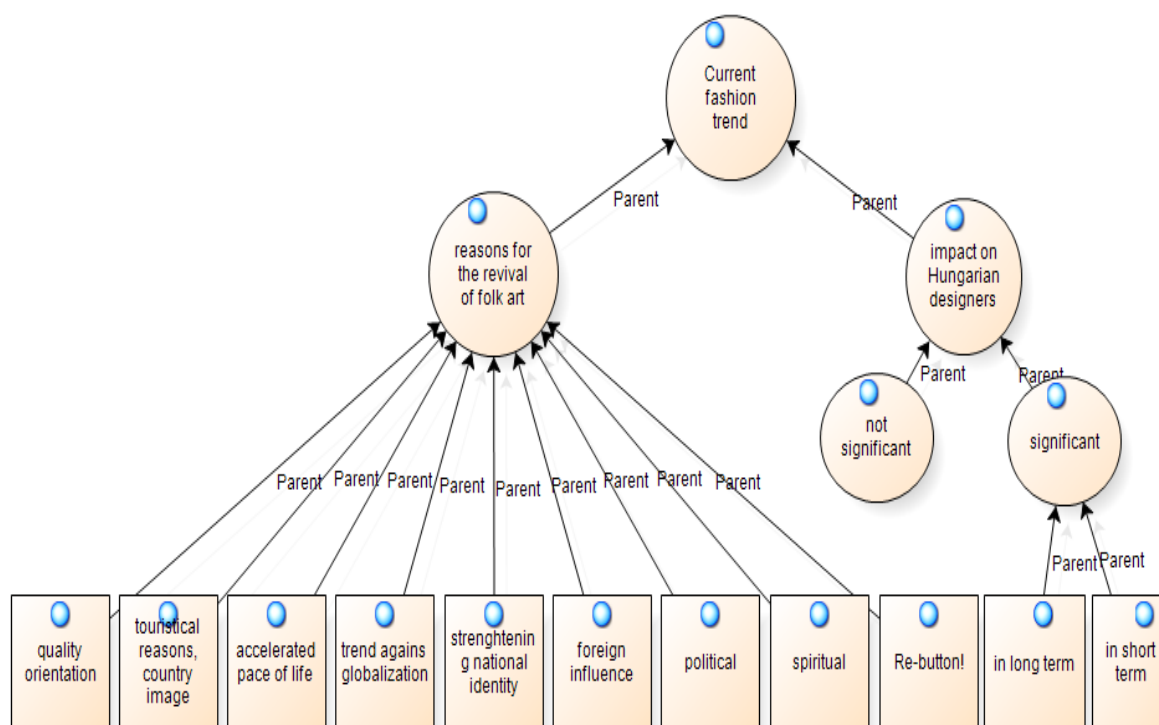
Source: author's elaboration.

In the fifth node I was interested in whether designers have a general interest for cultural heritage or they only applied cultural heritage elements in their design for the sake of the competition and whether the competition made changes on their perception or not (Figure 10).

### Current fashion trend

Under the last node I collected information about what designers think about the current trend; what are the reasons behind its revival and whether it has significant short or long term impact on Hungarian designers (Figure 11).

Figure 11 – Current fashion trend node



Source: author's elaboration.



## Chapter 6: Interview analysis

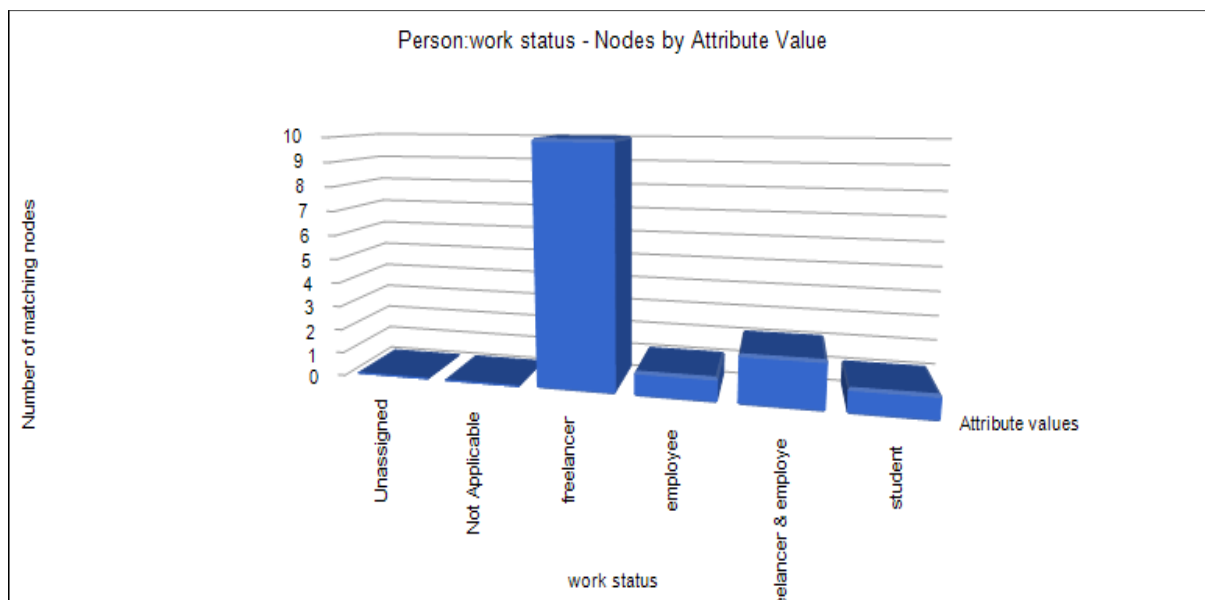
### 6.1. Person

In the first part of the interview as I mentioned above I collected information about the designers’

- work status,
- brand foundation date,
- brand name,
- market of presence,
- plans for brand development,
- additional help in design and implementation and
- number of official employees.

#### Work status

Figure 12 – Work statuses of the interviewees.<sup>22</sup>



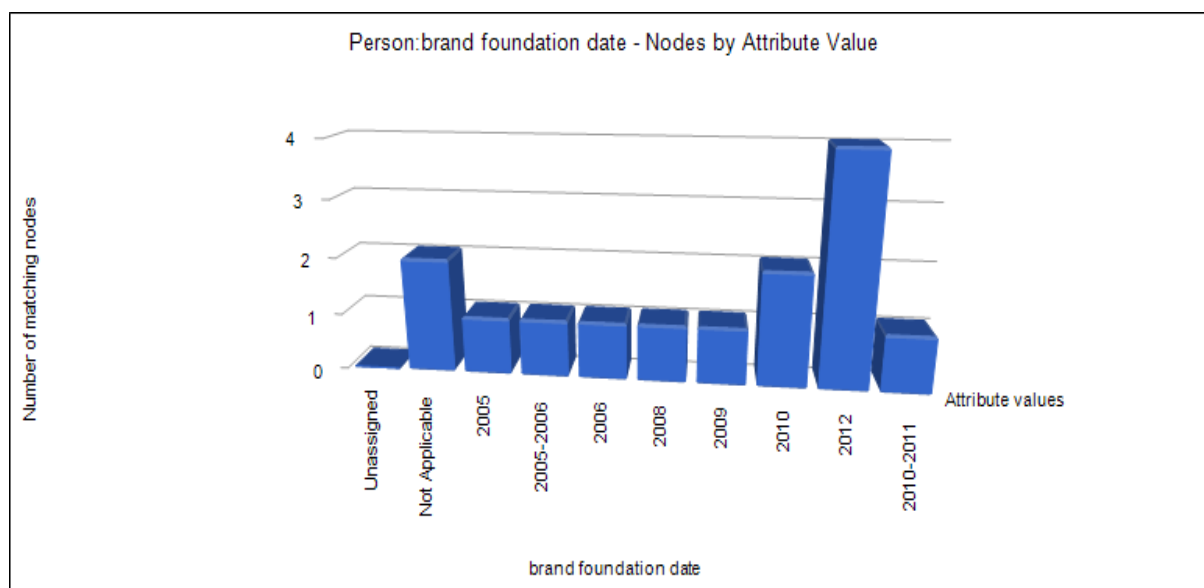
Source: author’s elaboration.

<sup>22</sup> Nvivo10 is automatically placing “Unassigned” and “Not Applicable” attribute value labels in the figures. Unassigned refers to the number of designers not put in any categories. Not Applicable refers to the number of designers the node was not applicable.

Most of the interviewees are freelancers managing their own brand. Two of the brand owners are both freelancers and employees by another bigger company and school. Interestingly both of these brands, MIMM-textile design and Blue Paprika, have designer couples who both choose to have another job next to brand building – although the decision was made from different reasons. Szilvia Palffy and Terez Szucs found a lot of advantages in working also for other big companies. They can broaden their social network, and they get always up to date information about design innovations without paying for it. For Ilona Hendzsel and Moni Nagy working at a company and in a school helps to find inspirational sources. Two designers do not have a brand. Zsuzsanna Fabri is working for a textile printing company and Judit Eszter Karpati is still a student (Figure 12).

### Brand foundation date

Figure 13 – Brand foundation dates<sup>23</sup>



Source: author's elaboration.

There are a lot of fresh brands, young designers in my sample what represents the current design scene in Hungary. The half of the brands in the sample was founded during the last 2.5 years (Table 5). The reason for it is twofold. Parallel with the development of the creative industry more and more designers appear with their own brands in the market (Figure 13).

Another reason why the young brands are overrepresented in the sample is due to the

<sup>23</sup> The figure shows that the node “brand foundation date” was not applicable for two designers since they don't have fashion brands.

fact that more young designers were applying for these competitions. Most of the established brands with established customer base are not interested in making a collection in a given theme for the competition and compete with the young generation. So to say; “there are many designers... who are well known, half Hungary know them, but I think could not cope with such competition. They know this about themselves; therefore also in fear from the media, facebook and bloggers they are not willing to acquire a bad experience so many are not applying for these reasons. And many also do not want to compete with young yet anonym designers.” – said the designer of Blue Paprika.

Thirdly, the competition was primarily advertised in schools, universities and the professors were encouraging the students to choose also for their school task a topic what they can utilize also in the competition.

The final reason behind the over-representation of the young brands in the competition is that first and foremost for these designers can the offered awards serve as milestones in their career. For the established brands the media publicity can be the most tempting in the participation.

**Table 5 – Brands in foundation date order**

| BRAND NAME            | FOUNDATION DATE |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Blue Paprika          | 2005            |
| Je suis belle         | 2005-2006       |
| Anh Tuan              | 2006            |
| Igezo                 | 2008            |
| Ille-Olla             | 2009            |
| Balint Sara Knit/Wear | 2010            |
| TheBetaVersion        | 2010            |
| MIMM-textile design   | 2010-2011       |
| Kele clothing         | 2012            |
| Berecz Vanda          | 2012            |
| INER                  | 2012            |
| Piroshka              | 2012            |

Source: author's elaboration.

## **Brand name**

From the origin, the meaning of the chosen brand name we can conclude the aim of the brand and the target market. Those designers who chose to use their own name as a brand name are mostly targeting international market and focusing on innovation in their design. The INER was inspired by the fashion designer's nickname; Reni. Sara Balint used her name and mainly the used technology for naming her brand. Vanda Berecz named her brand after herself. The brand Anh Tuan got the name of its designer and Kele clothing got its name after the designer, Ildiko Kele.

Another tendency in the choice of brand name is to give a foreign name or a name which sounds good internationally. In the name Ille-Olla we can find the name of the designer and the olla Finnish verb. The designer started her carrier with making maternity dresses in Finland and "olla raskaana" means being pregnant. For the fashion designer it was a priority to have a name which is easily pronounceable internationally. The name Je suis belle was inspired by a trip to Paris and a French song what Tibor Kiss was singing. TheBetaVersion also with its brand name is sending a message to the potential customers; the brand inspires people to find their own, personal style. TheBetaVersion accessories are becoming full valued by supporting their wearers to realize their own personality in fashion. The acronym chosen by the designers of MIMM is also easy to remember internationally. It is a mix of name initials from the two designers' family. The Blue Paprika brand name is referring to the main used material; the denim and identifies the Hungarian origin of the brand.

Another group according to naming is the traditionalist. The chosen name of Igezo goes back to the Hungarian traditions where the words have an underlying meaning. "Ige" means verb in Hungarian. One small unit in the cross stitch was also called "ige". "Igezni" at the same time means to charm, to enchant and to embroider with cross stitch. Our ancestors were enchanting with their embroideries; they were giving meaning to the clothes. Igezo is believing and laying big emphasis on the beneficial effect of the motives.

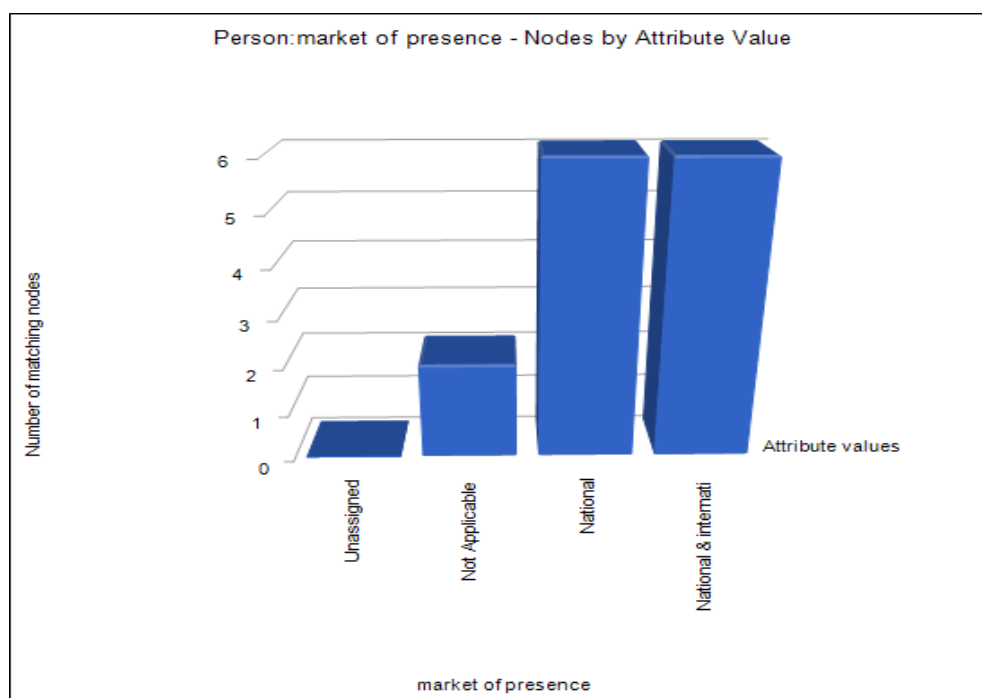
Half of the interviewees are selling their collections in national and another half in addition to the national also in the international market (Figure 14). Between the market of presence and the foundation date there is no consistent correlation. In general older brands are more established, have more connections with foreign retailers, buyers, as my example also shows it; all the older brands have foreign connections. But being a young brand does not exclude to be already presented in foreign market. Ille-Olla (2009) and Kele Clothing (2012) among the young brands are selling their collections abroad.

## **Market of presence**

Some of the interviewed brands are also represented abroad, some of them are in process of building relations with international buyers, and some of them have yet very little opportunities to be presented abroad so they mostly, temporarily, only concentrate on the national market and are trying to seek for opportunities for international presence (Figure 14).

Kele clothing, although it is a very young brand – is producing her clothes primarily for international markets; to Germany, Spain, the USA, Italy and Russia but it can be found also in small Hungarian stores. Ille-Olla clothing is sold both in national – own studio, fairs, and events – and in international market – Italy, Canada, Switzerland, and Czech Republic –. First Je suis belle wanted to gain a strong presence in the national market. With the time they got to other European markets, but due to the crisis in 2009-2010 they returned to the Hungarian market. From the last some couple of months they get a lot of requests from British, Asian distributors, therefore now they are again working also for international market. Next to the national market Blue Paprika is selling in Germany and Switzerland. Anh Tuan is presented both in national and international markets, since he is designing according to the international trends and demand. TheBetaVersion both in national and international market is presented, although it has a stronger presence in Hungary. They get a lot of requests from the international market mainly from smaller shops.

Figure 14 – market presences of the interviewees<sup>24</sup>



Source: author's elaboration.

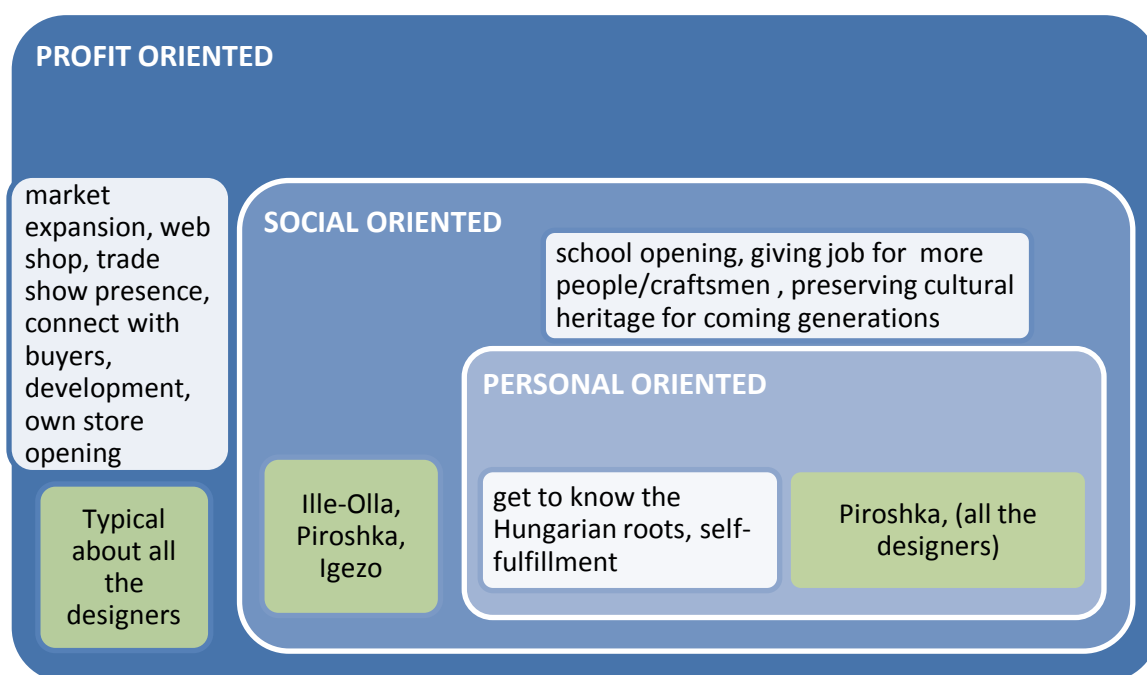
Anna Hegedus with her brand, Piroshka, is primarily targeting the Hungarian market. She, as a Hungarian-German dual citizen has lot of contacts abroad, but for personal reasons she chose Hungary for establishing her brand. The accessories of Vanda Berecz are sold on the Hungarian market, but at the same time the designer is trying to grab all the opportunities for international presence; she was on a fair in Poland and she is getting ready for the Czech Republic. The MIMM is at the moment only selling in Hungary, because it is the most economical for them. Although they have requests from abroad they only satisfy the individual orders. Igezo is mainly present in the national market. Due to their lack of experience and knowledge in business makes it very difficult to negotiate with foreign buyers. Temporarily the Balint Sara Knit/Wear dresses are available for sale only in the national market, but she is in negotiation with a British distributor. The INER is present in the national market but constantly seeking for international opportunities. Most recently Renata Gyongyosi got a request from M<sup>o</sup>BA (Fashion Biennale Arnhem) to exhibit some pieces of her former collection with what she won the Re-button! 2011.

<sup>24</sup> The figure shows that the node “market of presences” was not applicable for two designers since they don't have fashion brands.

## Plans for brand development

Between the future plans of the designers there are profit oriented – how can be the company more profitable, how can it reach more people – , societal – giving more people jobs, preserve folk art for younger generations – and personal – individual path searching – oriented plans (Figure 15). All the brands have profit oriented future plans; they want to expand their market presence and become more profitable. Only few brands defined social plans for their long-term future including the opening of a school, providing livelihood for more people and preserving the cultural treasures for the coming generations. Specifically only one designer, Anna Hegedus, talked about her personal oriented plan to discover her Hungarian roots as a dual citizen, but presumably among the future plans of designers stays also the self-fulfillment as a loftier aim to reach.

Figure 15 – Orientation of designer's future plans



Source: author's elaboration.

According to the financial possibilities, the exploited former potentials, the time and effort spent on brand building the brands are developing at different scale, not in correlation with the age of the brand. According to the brand foundation date three groups can be formed; brands founded in 2005-2006, brands founded in 2008-2010 and brands founded in 2012. Among the brands in the first group Blue Paprika has a different development path than the other brands, which can be due to the designers' multiple jobs. Blue Paprika is planning to

reach bigger market therefore they want to open a web shop and are trying to find new opportunities in the western market. Although Blue Paprika is one of the oldest brands in my sample they do not have a web shop. Je suis belle is getting stronger in the national market and these days they get more and more opportunities in international markets. Luu Anh Tuan wants to improve on his brand's reputation, since a lot of people from his target market did not hear about their brand yet. At the same time with strengthening the presence in the national market Anh Tuan is also expanding in international markets.

Brands with 2008-2010 foundation dates have different rate of developments. The future plan of Igezo is development; the designers are seeking for solutions on how can they be economical and how can they open towards the international markets without undertaking big risk. The aim of Ille-Olla is to become a big company, to be able to give job for more and more people and if the finances allow; the opening of a school. Ille-Olla has more and more foreign requests from retailers, it is expanding by small steps. Sara Balint is planning to open towards the Nord-European countries and Nord-America due to the seasonal specificity of her knitwear design. In the near future she will have the possibility to introduce her brand in London. In the future plans of TheBetaVersion is to go to international tradeshows and get in contact with more buyers. In the future MIMM designers would like to develop their brand, and in ideal situation open their own store.

Among the brands founded in 2012 Kele Clothing stand out, what can be due to its' early international successes. In the future Kele clothing would like to lay more emphasis on the European market and further strengthen its presence in Asia and in the United States. Due to the difficulties in selling in the national market INER is planning to open a web shop and open towards the international market. The ideal situation for them would be the opening of an own store, unfortunately they are not ready for it at the moment. Vanda Berecz would like to further develop her brand and grab all the opportunities which can help her in that. Anna Hegedus has plans for developing her brand, and through her designer activity in Hungary her aim is to get to know her Hungarian roots.

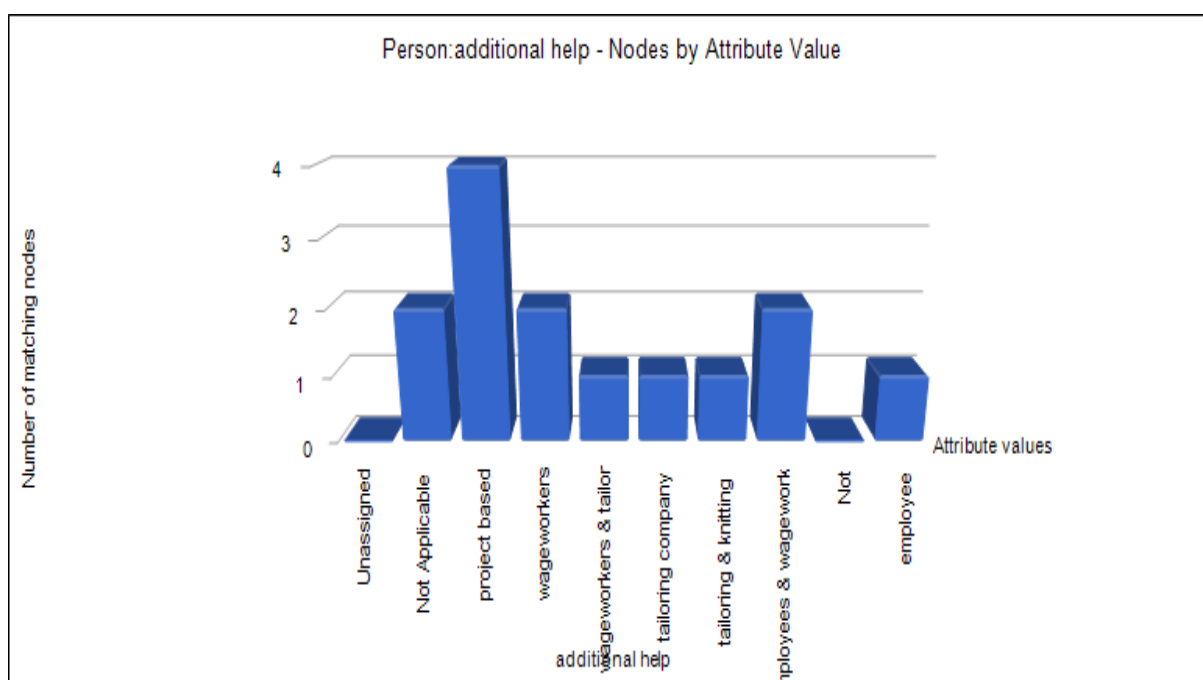
Zsuzsanna Fabri and Judit Eszter Karpati, the two designers without a brand, in the future would like to work as a designer, pattern designer both for national and international markets. These days they try to grab all the opportunities what the several competitions can offer.



### Additional help in design and implementation, number of official workers

There are designers who do mostly everything by themselves; they only ask for project based help from photographer, graphic designer, etc. These designers made the smaller part of my sample; four designers. There are designers who give subtasks out for wageworkers and some of them are working with tailoring, knitting firms. Five designers give tasks out for wageworkers and three designers work with tailoring/knitting companies. There are designers who have employees or take the help of both employees and wageworkers. Three designers have their own employees out of them two occasionally works with wageworkers too (Figure 16).

Figure 16 – Applied additional help in the design implementation<sup>25</sup>



Source: author's elaboration.

Some brands have more than one founder – mostly two designers –, therefore officially minimum two people in the company. Ille-Olla, INER and TheBetaVersion have two leaders and Kele clothing three founders in the company; one designer and one-two managers. Je suis belle, Blue Paprika, MIMM-textile design and Igezo have two designers in the company.

MIMM designers make everything on their own because each and every accessory is

<sup>25</sup> The figure shows that the node “additional help” was not applicable for two designers since they don't have fashion brands.

different and they themselves design them during the creation process. Only their apparel products – which were not presented at the competition – can be mass produced and made by tailoring firm. Vanda Berecz for the time being makes everything by herself. Anna Hegedus does not have any employees, besides the production of the fabric, she does everything alone. Sara Balint does not have official employees. She is asking project based help.

Lenke Illessy started her business alone, now she is helped out by her sister in her company. They are giving out work for three-five or even more wageworkers for certain projects. TheBetaVersion is usually taking part in the preparation process of the accessories, and occasionally are giving out the sewing for wageworkers. In the INER there are officially two people working; a designer and a fashion marketer. They work together with a tailoring firm. The Kele clothing was founded by three friends. Once the sample collection is ready the production work is given to knitting and tailoring factories. Blue Paprika does not have full time employees. The designers give out all the work parts to wageworkers, tailoring companies. Szilvia Palffy finds this the best solution because first of all one dressmaker does not know all the techniques, and second of all if they are not satisfied with the work of a tailoring company or wageworker she can easily switch to a better qualified worker. The two founders of Je suis belle are officially employing one dressmaker and temporarily they give work to approximately 10-15 wageworkers. Officially Luu Anh Tuan has four employees. The individual orders and the sample collections are made in his studio, but he is also giving out work to wageworkers. The Igezo is employing a dressmaker; they will stop their relation with the tailoring company, because – they said – in long term having a dressmaker always at hand is much economical and more comfortable.

## **Conclusion**

There is no explicit relationship between the brand foundation date and the market of presence. Although young brands are also represented in the international market, we can see that the older brands are able to sell on international market at a greater percentage than the young brands (Figure 18).

The younger brands mostly cannot afford to give out work to wageworkers or tailoring/knitting companies; therefore having a flexible structure they take additional help on the base of projects (Figure 17).

Figure 17 – Brand foundation date versus additional help at the company. Source: author’s elaboration.

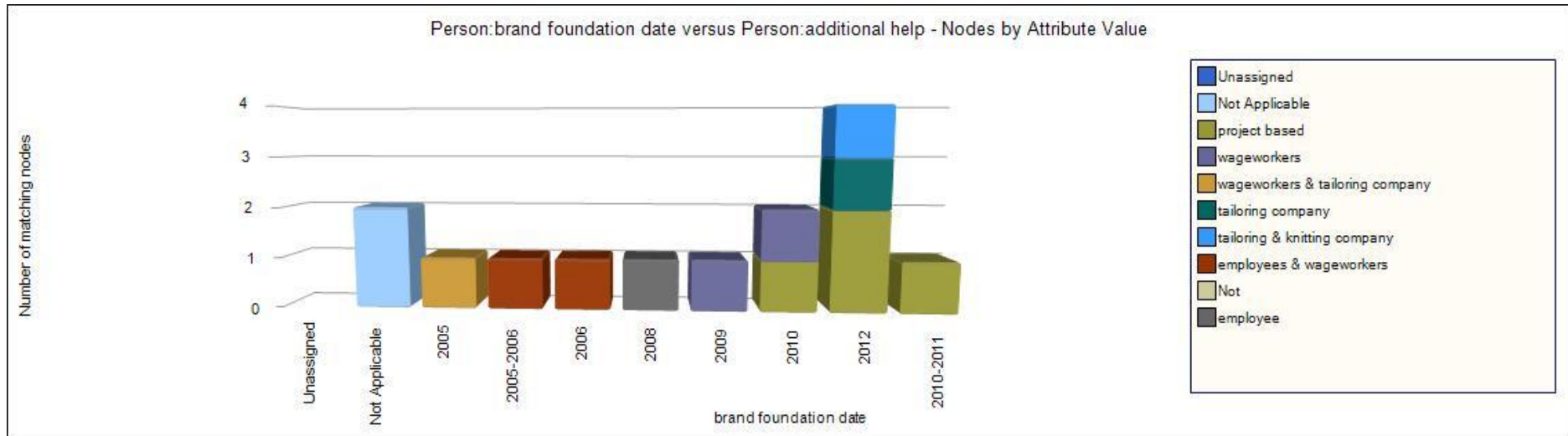


Figure 18 – Brand foundation date versus market of presence. Source: author’s elaboration.

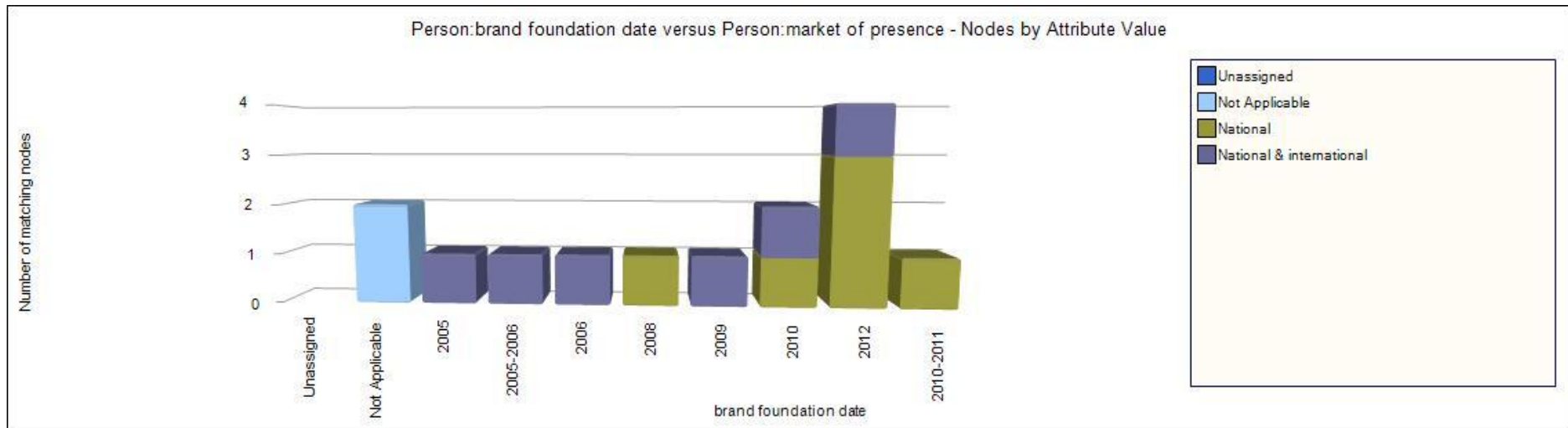
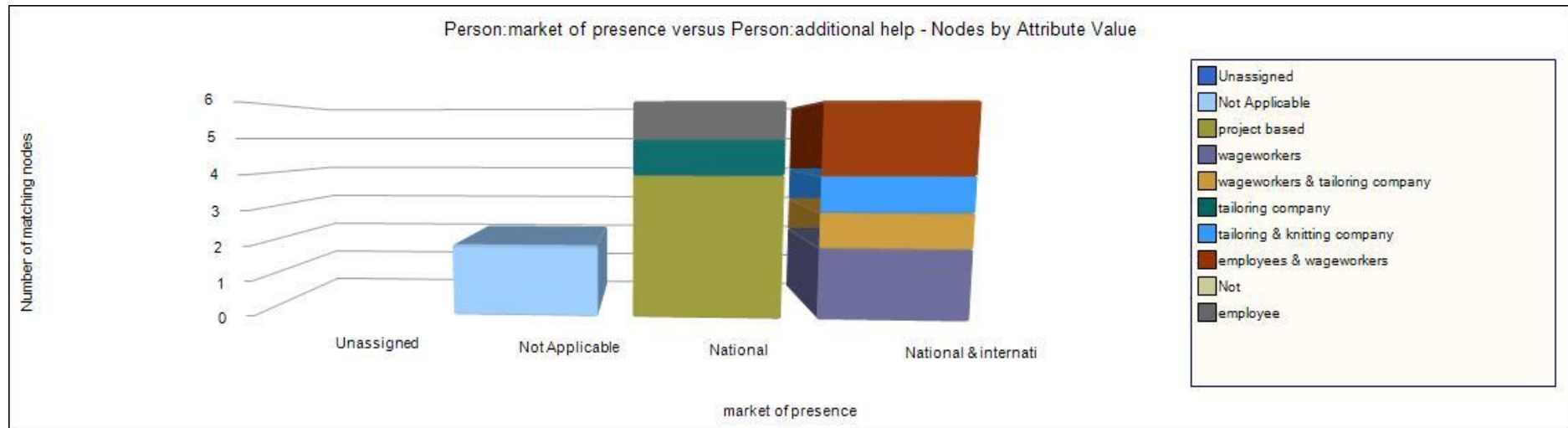


Figure 19 – Market of presence versus additional help at the company



Source: author's elaboration.

It is true in general about the interviewees that those who are already present on the international market and want to expand their company are hiring 1 or more employees. Designers who create primarily for national market are hiring people only on project base (Figure 19). The younger brands mostly cannot afford to give out work to wageworkers or tailoring/knitting companies; therefore they take additional help on the base of projects.

In my sample the number of designers selling their collections on national and both national and international markets is equal. Mostly due to financial reasons or personal preferences the sort of the additional help is mostly wageworkers who are hired for a certain project. In general younger brands are more likely to be only presented in national market.

## 6.2. Mission & Vision

Even after conducting the interviews it is difficult to answer what are the mission and vision of the studied brands. Several designers admitted that they were not thinking about it before and they are in lack of definition about what they are striving for. In the mind of many designers the mission and vision of a brand is evolving by itself throughout the years; therefore they did not see the necessity for creating such definition. My interviewees who were mostly fresh brand owners did not really know what to answer. Interestingly the designers, like Igezo, who place a loftier purpose behind the profit oriented aims of their brand, could better describe the brands' mission and vision.

As much as it was difficult for them to identify their brand's mission and vision it was difficult for me to create categories for this node. Before making real distinction among the designers aim and idea behind the brand I had to determine where they place themselves in a scale with modernity and innovation at the one end and heritage, folk art preservation at the other end. To see the distinction I created a table which shows in which of the three categories the designers belong to (Table 6). These categories were:

- a) Create for international demand/follow international trends,
- b) Innovative use of cultural heritage and folk art within,
- c) Preserving cultural heritage.

There are designers who could be the best placed in two sub-categories. In their case two columns are colored.

Table 6 – Aim of the brand (Table continues on page 79)

|  | <b>Balint Sara Knit/Wear</b>  | <b>Berecz Vanda</b>   | <b>Ille-Olla</b>  | <b>Je suis belle</b>  | <b>Kele clothing</b>  | <b>Anh Tuan</b>  | <b>MIMM</b>   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|--|---|
| <b>Create for international demand</b>                         | My aim is to create dresses which in their feeling, material and design are very close to nature. Regardless of age and size I would like to make clothes what people like. | I would like to make specifically quality-oriented products. I like when innovative value is in my items. | Traditions are not specially included in the brand mission, values. The systematic approach and personalization of my design is important. I design clothes for creative, talented, brave people. | With our brand we are reflecting on the social, cultural environment. We increase the value of our clothes by limiting the produced number of pieces.                       | I reinterpret the cultural heritage motives, tailoring etc. and apply them in an innovative way. Comfort and wearability are important in my design.  | It is a complex issue, when I started this brand I was not thinking about mission/vision. Our mission is to make more people to love our brand. I like the wrought items and I take into consideration the merchantability and simplicity as well. | Each piece of accessories has unique design. The main feature of our products is that they all are different.   |
| <b>Innovative use of cultural heritage and folk art within</b> |   |   |   | We give folk art a contemporary frame. It is only implicitly manifested in the final pieces it is not visible. It can be detected only in the process of the creative work. | I get inspiration from cultural heritage; the motives, simple, traditional tailoring etc. but I don't apply them in a direct way. I find it important to make a part of everyday life the folkloric traditions. | I find important the preservation of the tradition by using traditional techniques.  | Our aim is not the preservation of the cultural heritage. We work with the sample set what I created which is Hungarian because I'm Hungarian. If I create something with honesty my Hungarian heritage will be presented in there. |
| <b>Preserving cultural heritage</b>                            |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |

Source: author's elaboration.

|  | TheBetaVersion  | INER  | Blue Paprika   | Piroshka  | Igezo  | Zsuzsanna Fabri  | Judit Eszter Karpati   |
|--|---|---|--|---|--|--|--|
| <b>Create for international demand</b>                         | We would like to create such everyday objects which are not necessarily fashionable, but timeless, quality items which stay together for a long time with their wearers and to which the wearer has emotional attachment. | We did not define our mission yet. I design special, extravagant, eye-catching, primarily feminine clothes.   |  |   |  | Fundamentally I'm not interested in cultural heritage. I have an average designer attitude; according to the task I can get inspiration from anything. | I was created more cultural heritage inspired collection, sample plan and I'm planning to continue this in the future. |
| <b>Innovative use of cultural heritage and folk art within</b> | The global traditional trends are similar to what we are doing.   | The tradition and modernity are combined in the design. Most probably also in the future the Hungarian traditional design in some extent will come back in my design. | In long term it can be dangerous to adapt to the international trends. It is important to distinguish ourselves from the international trends. Traditional is not a good word for our design because we are not reproducing the clothes. Our aim is to show the values of Hungarian folk art to those who doesn't know it; youngsters, tourists. To form their perceptions about folklore. | I would like to make clothes which aren't that fashionable, trendy but good quality, timeless pieces. I'm not preserving the traditions; I would like to reinterpret the tradition in a modern, innovative way. I'm a critic of globalization; I think somehow traditions have to be preserved. |  |  |  |
| <b>Preserving cultural heritage</b>                            |   |   |  |   | We want to show the treasury of the Hungarian folklore to many people. This is our labor of love. We want to make eternal, inheritable items. Our focus is the folk art, not fashion. We want to preserve the hundreds of years old accumulated knowledge of folk art. |  |  |

Ille-Olla and TheBetaVersion did not explicitly say that among their values is the innovative use of cultural heritage elements, in fact Lenke Illessy said the “traditions are not specially” among her brand values. Paradoxically both designers have a unique innovative idea of applying folk art in their design which became their “trade mark” by now and the used inspirational sources are preserved in their collection with respect of the folk areas’ unity.

MIMM-textile design is another interesting case. They only evaluate their design traditional Hungarian because “the motive set we are working with is my motive set, which is Hungarian because I’m Hungarian and therefore when I sit down to draw something and if I do it honestly than practically it will be readable that it was made by a Hungarian – at least for a foreign for sure.”

Je suis belle, Kele clothing, Anh Tuan and INER were all openly assuming that they use cultural heritage, folk art as an inspirational source in an innovative way. “It is absolutely normal for me to get inspired from our own traditions, since I live in it, I know this the best, with the biggest confidence I can get inspired from this. For many, this is so much not obvious enough that when it comes up, what am I getting inspiration from, they ask me; but what is Hungarian in this? However, that is the point... that these values should not appear obtrusively but rather moderately, with style; after all I design neither costume nor symbol.” – said Ildiko Kele. Her words explain the best the attitude of this group of designers.

Two brands, also coded under the innovative use of cultural heritage can be placed rather between heritage preservers and designers getting inspiration from folk art but seeking for innovation. The clothes of Piroshka and Blue Paprika are visibly containing cultural heritage elements, although their designers do not give up their designer’s freedom. They can be markedly distinguished from Igezo, since in their design they are not presenting motives, techniques... by folk regions – as a real tradition preserver would do – and they are not aware of the underlying meaning of the motives so they are not using folk art in a traditional way like Igezo does.

“We entirely started our designer career from a folk art focus, this is our labor of love; not the fashion... our aim primarily is not to create fashionable, merchandisable clothes, but to share values and preserve the tradition.” – stated Erika Barczi and Hargitay-Nagy Zsuzsa. The designers of Igezo are aware of the symbols of the embroidered motives and just like for many centuries the women were using them as communication tools, they design their collections with attention on this heritage.

Two young designers, Vanda Berecz and Sara Balint, at the top of the table do not devote considerable attention for cultural heritage in their brand.

The two designers marked with pink at the end of the table do not have a brand. In their case I asked them in general about their mission and values in design. Zsuzsanna Fabri has a very task oriented



designer attitude, not particularly interested in cultural heritage, but Judit Eszter Karpati is definitely interested in the innovative use of heritage.

### 6.2.1. Conclusion

Most of the interviewed designers are in the lack of a precise, concrete definition of their mission and vision. From the interviews I could collected that much information what made me able to determine what they are aiming for; preserving the cultural heritage, innovative, implicit use of cultural heritage elements or following international trends.

Most of the designers find important to base their brand on the innovative use of traditions and at the same time design for international demand.

## 6.3. Competition

### Year of participation

**Table 7 – The year and form of participation**

| Brand/Name               | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | Participation form              |
|--------------------------|------|------|------|---------------------------------|
| Balint Sara<br>Knit/Wear |      | X    |      | Contestant                      |
| Berecz Vanda             | X    |      | X    | Contestant                      |
| Ille-Olla                | X    |      |      | Contestant                      |
| Je suis belle            | X    |      |      | Invited designer                |
| Kele clothing            | X    |      |      | Contestant                      |
| Anh Tuan                 | X    |      |      | Invited designer                |
| MIMM                     | X    | X    |      | Contestant                      |
| TheBetaVersion           | X    |      |      | Contestant                      |
| INER                     | X    |      | X    | Contestant/<br>Invited designer |
| Blue Paprika             | X    |      |      | Invited designer                |
| Piroshka                 |      | X    |      | Contestant                      |
| Igezo                    |      | X    |      | Contestant                      |
| Zsuzsanna Fabri          | X    |      |      | Contestant                      |
| Judit Eszter Karpati     | X    |      |      | Contestant                      |

Source: author's elaboration.

In the table above (Table 7) I only marked the years when the designers got to the final with their collections. In the case of five young designers, brands – Zsuzsanna Fabri, Sara Balint, Lenke Illessy, Anna Hegedus, Rainer Zsofia – it happened that in 2012 or 2013 after the semi-final they were not selected to the final.

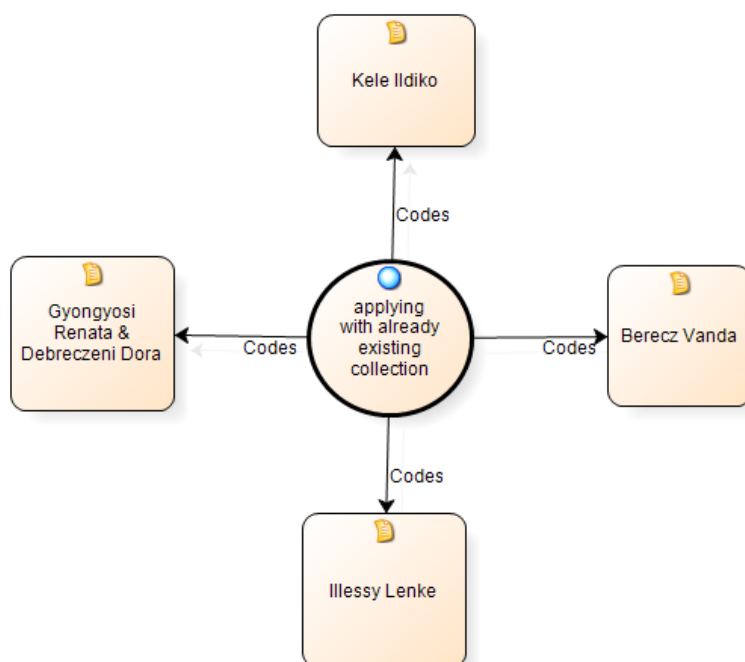
The MIMM designers in the second year of the competition which also meant the second application for them won the competition in accessories' category. Renata Gyongyosi after winning the competition in clothing category in 2011 founded her brand, INER, and in 2012 got invited to the show to present her new collection. This year the INER made it again to the final as contestant just like Vanda Berecz.

Tibor Kiss, the designer of Je suis belle was in the jury in 2012 and Luu Anh Tuan is in the final jury in this year's competition.

### **Difficulty of application**

The application and participation on the competition have been difficult for certain contestants for two reasons; due to the timeframe they got to create a new collection and due to the finances. Four designers did not have to deal with the timeframes since they were applying with an already existing collection (Figure 20). Both Zsuzsanna Fabri and Zsofia Rainer based their work on a former school task, so the topic was not absolutely new for them. Just like Luu Anh Tuan, who already knew and applied the chosen design technique long before the competition.

**Figure 20 – Designers applying with formerly made collections**



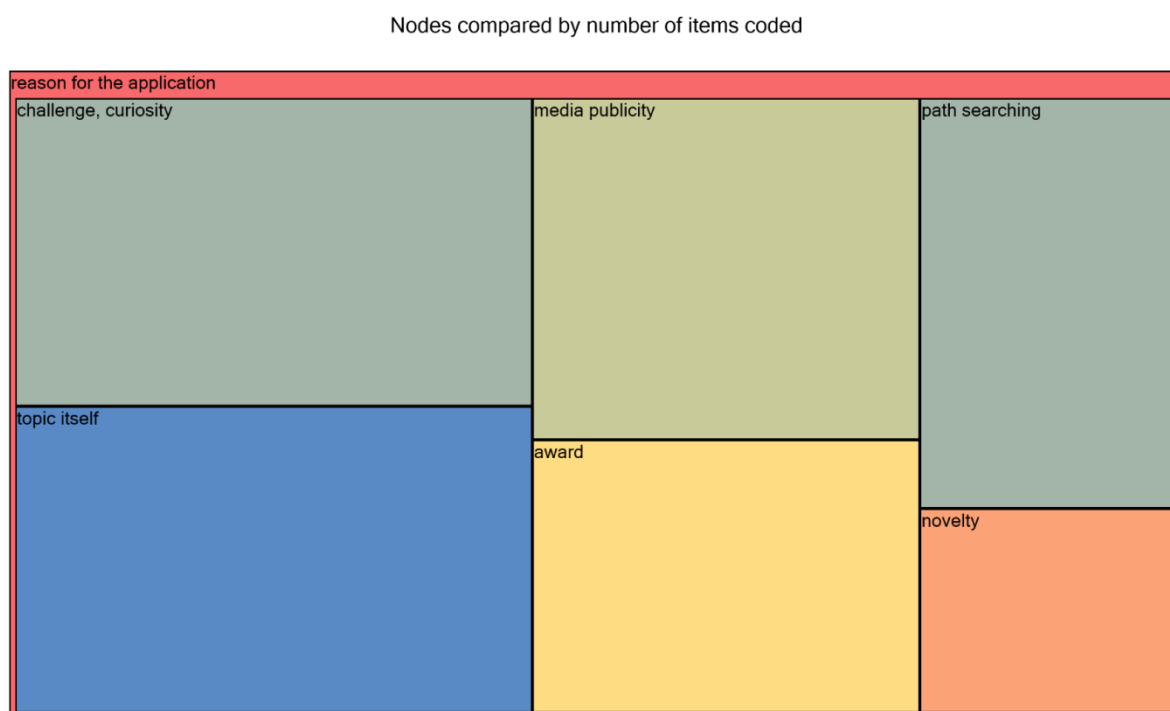
Source: author's elaboration.

The carrier starter individual designers had to deal also with the finances. They had to invest money in the collection before knowing whether it is going to be refunded. From the one hand investing more money in a design can result a higher quality, spectacular collection but from another hand a lot of designers due to the uncertainty of refund are very careful with the finances. Luu Anh Tuan also admits; “creating a collection is not the job of 1-2 people, but a whole team and it requires expenses. Not everyone can implement this.” Due to these limits the competition from its first year presents the collection of invited designers who can enrich the show.

### **Reason of application**

The tree map shows in what proportion was each reason of application in general responsible for the designers' willingness to participate (Figure 21). The main reasons behind the applications were the challenge of the contest and the designers' curiosity about whether they meet the expert jury's high expectations. The well established brands were rather curious about the success and the future of the competition, so they did not wanted to miss out the opportunity to be present.

Figure 21 – Tree map of Reason of the application<sup>26</sup>



**N:14** challenge, curiosity(6):topic itself(6):media publicity(5): path searching(4): award(4):novelty(2)

Source: author's elaboration.

The topic was definitely inspiring for designers who already had a collection what could be matched with the expectations of Re-button! and for those designers who have natural, constant interest towards folk art, like Judit Eszter Karpati, Blue Paprika, Piroshka and Igezo. “When I first heard about the competition I had the feeling that it is made for me. I really do what was in the competition’s announcement.” – said Anna Hegedus.

Media publicity was the second most popular motivation for application. “We want to be on the catwalk, we want people to hear our name again and to see us, and basically that is it.” – explained Renata Gyongyosi why is it after two successful years still important for INER to apply.

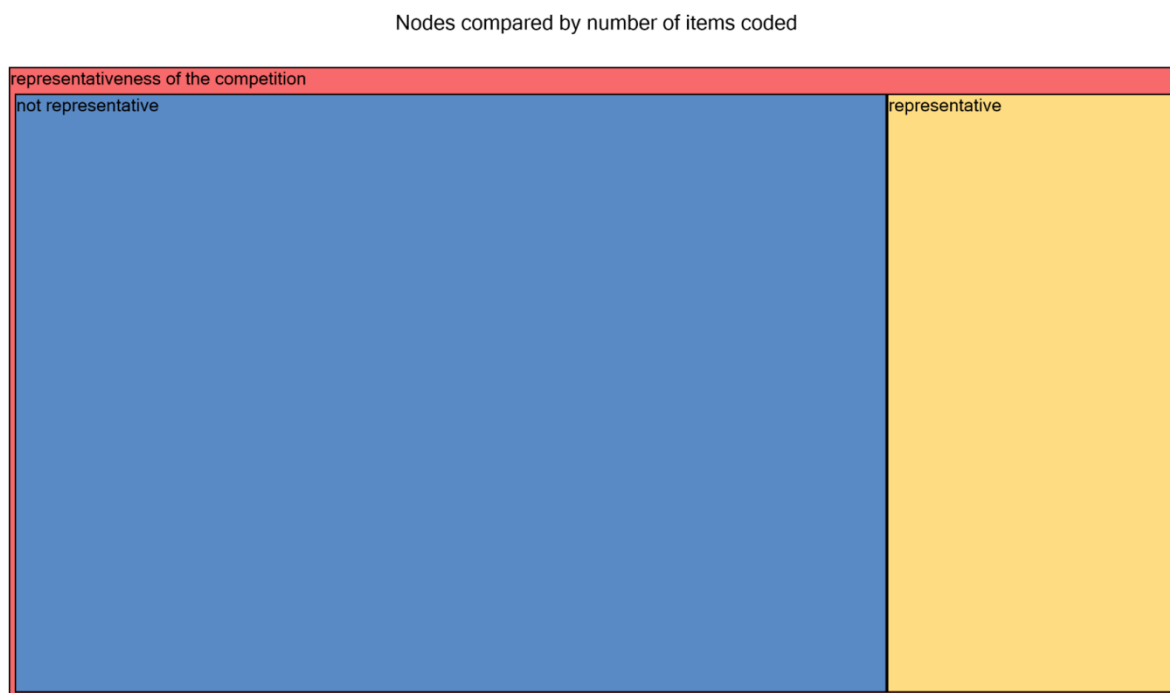
The potential award and the opportunity what lies within Re-button! for path searching designers tempt equal number of applicants to the competition. This is not surprising, since many career starters chose the competition to get the first serious evaluation about their

<sup>26</sup> Tree maps are representing the selected display items as nested rectangular boxes. The size of each box represents how many of the selected scope items are coded by the display item. The color of each box represents the number of coding references where the scope items are coded by the display item, on a spectrum from lowest to highest (NVivo10).

design. Explicitly two designers mentioned novelty of the Re-button! as reason behind their application, but since the competition is really young and 11 out of my interviewees applied right in the first year I think this was in some extent involved in everybody's motivation.

## Representativeness of the competition

Figure 22 – Tree map of the representativeness of the competition



**N:14 not representative(11):representative(3)**

Source: author's evaluation.

The majority of the applicants, 11 designers think that the competition does not or not entirely represents the Hungarian design scene (Figure 22). The general perception of the designers was that “it is not totally representative because mainly young designers participate. The young designer scene is in 95% represented by this competition.” (Luu Anh Tuan) “There are many designers who are not interested in applying because they want to position themselves in another setting.” – is the opinion of Cecilia Varga.

In addition, many designers see an evolution in the organization of the competition towards a more representative competition. Year by year the competition is striving for representing broader designer stratum; this year by announcing the competition in newcomer and old-hands categories and giving publicity for invited artists.

Still there were 3 interviewees who think that that Re-button! is representative; Zsuzsanna Fabri, Renata Gyongyosi and Ilona Hendzsel. They think that with the invited designers the competition accomplishes to be representative and having designers from amateurs to well known designers, from tradition preserver brands to innovative brands, entitles Re-button! to be called representative.

### **Impact of the competition on the fashion trends**

In general more designers think that the theme of competition does affect in some extent the Hungarian fashion trends (Figure 23).

**Figure 23 – Tree map of the impact of competition of the fashion trends**

Nodes compared by number of items coded



**N:14 long term attention(7):short term attention(5):no changes(5)**

Source: author's elaboration.

Only five designers said explicitly that the competition does not bring any changes in the Hungarian fashion trends. Their reasoning contained the following features:

- a) “The cultural tradition could be embedded in fashion and in everyday life in general if its’ manifestation would be more abstract.” – stated Zsuzsanna Fabri.
- b) Since the announcement of the competition is slightly changing year by year it can not affect the fashion trends – was the opinion of Szilvia Palffy.
- c) According to Anna Hegedus, the contemporary designers are mostly orienting themselves towards international trends; therefore the competition cannot introduce permanent change in fashion.
- d) Lenke Illessy has a striking opinion about folk art as influencing factor of Hungarian fashion: “Basically I no longer believe in handicraft and its value. Because today’s world and people have different attitudes. People are not wearing handicraft items, cannot afford to pay for these goods and now we can produce seasonally in factories. With the old generation these values die together.” She thinks that the competition cannot change in these tendencies.
- e) Finally Renata Gyongyosi thinks that the message of Re-Button! “fundamentally does not shake that Hungarian fashion.”

The opinion of Lenke Illessy is paradoxical with the fact that she also implicitly preserves one little segment of the Transylvanian folklore in her collection and it is well known that there are many craftsmen who concentrate their work on preserving folk art for long term.

Interestingly there are designers, like designers of Blue Paprika who consciously chose the application of cultural heritage in their design in order to be unique by that in the international markets and others, like the designer of Piroshka, think that as soon as designers wants to be presented in international market, they leave behind the use of cultural heritage. Others like Je suis belle does not think in such extremities. Tibor Kiss and Ildiko Kele with other designers are representing the idea that a designer can be internationally successful and at the same time implicitly carry the folk art in his/her design.

Further the designers who think that the competition affects the fashion in Hungary can be categorized in two groups; those who believe in short term changes and those who believe in long term changes. I have to admit that in several cases this distinction is difficult to make since Re-button! is a young competition and the interviewees cannot predict with certainty the possible long term effects. Therefore, three designers could not give concrete answer.

“It (the competition) definitely has such effect that everybody will have a Hungarian style collection for sure.” – completed her former answer Renata Gyongyosi. Designers who do not believe in the competition’s long term effect or due to the young age of the competition cannot predict whether it will bring long term changes, do think that the competition brings short term changes in Hungarian fashion trends. The competition drew the attention of designers on folk art; more and more designers are trying to or already applying in some extent heritage in their collections. The winner of this year’s competition can make his/her own collection; so it will be interesting to see whether in the collection apart from the competition the folk art will be detected or not – contemplates TheBetaVersion.

Since the competition shows the designers how can folk art innovatively incorporated in design, more designers like Sara Balint will use folk art elements in a much courageous way. The competition is definitely motivating people to think about the novel use of heritage and contribute to make it a part of the common cultural knowledge. Several designers raised the problem, that in Hungary due to historical reasons the national sentiment and with it the folkloric clothes are associated with the political extreme right-wing therefore many designers are careful with applying folkloric elements. This competition in long term can help to change this perception and allow to have “liberated relation between the theme and the designer just like in Scandinavia or Japan.” (Ildiko Kele)

### **Impact of the competition on the design work**

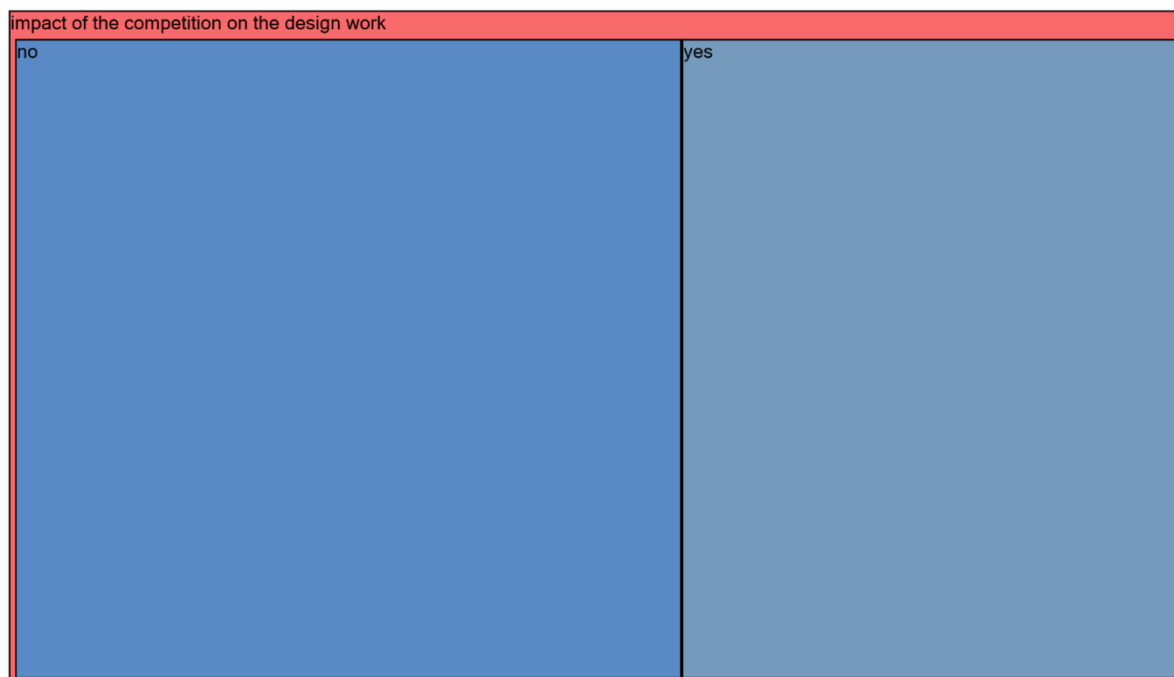
The designers who said that the competition did not have any influence on their designer work were in majority (Figure 24). They referred to the following reasons:

- a) They want to remain true to their ideas (Igezo).
- b) The designer attitude remained the same; completing a task, so the theme of the competition was not influential on the designer attitude (Vanda Berecz, Zsuzsanna Fabri).
- c) “The fact that we are growing older and that we are changing and how we live our life, what are the important things for us are rather changing our brand than a competition – at least from my experience.” (Tibor Kiss). The Kele clothing, Anh Tuan and INER also do not see the competition as influential on their work.
- d) The expectations of the competition were covering the own style (Piroshka, Blue Paprika).



**Figure 24 – Tree map of the impact of the competition on the design work**

Nodes compared by number of items coded



**N:14 no(8):yes(6)**

Source: author's elaboration.

In the case of six interviewees can be the effects of the competition detected in their creative or inspirational process due to the following reasons:

- a) A piece inspired by cultural heritage and encouraged by the competition became an important feature, style of the brand. ("I further developed a trouser what is collared, which basically became due to this competition a style of my brand. Everything is collared up." – Lenke Illessy.)
- b) The competition drew the attention of the designers on the opportunities lying in cultural heritage as an inspirational source. "Before the lot of existing, clichéd interpretations of folk art frightened me away from applying it myself... the competition was good for me. Now I'm looking for inspiration in folk art in a much easier, relaxed way." (Sara Balint).
- c) The competition encouraged designers to implement their folklore related design ideas (Judit Eszter Karpati, TheBetaVersion, MIMM).

- d) The information collected throughout the preparation process will come back – even if unconsciously – in the future designs (Zsuzsanna Fabri, Sara Balint).
- e) The competition helped designers to be more conscious in their design process (MIMM, Sara Balint).

## **Conclusion**

The competition seems to be a very good opportunity for designers because a lot of them are applying each year with their new collections. The interviewees were mostly selected from the finalists of the first year; 11 designers. Out of them 7 applied in the coming years again.

Most of the designers think that in the early ages of the Re-button! it could not manage to represent entirely the Hungarian design scene. Mostly young brands, designers applied at the beginning of their career. The time constrains and the finances of executing the collection were the main difficulties of some applicants.

The designers were mainly applying for three reasons:

- they were curious how can they deal with such challenging task and curious about this new initiative,
- the topic was tempting for designers who already had a collection or design in the similar topic,
- and the competition gave a good opportunity for media publicity.

Most of the designers think that the competition has impact on the fashion trends, although due to the young age of this initiative they do not know whether it will bring short or long term change. Interestingly not completely the same group of designers said that the competition bring changes also in their design work. Most of the designers' attitude was influenced by the competition; they started to think about folk art more freely and innovatively as inspirational source and the competition gave place for them to develop and realize their design ideas.

## 6.4. Collection designed for Re-button!

### Inspirational source

afrikában alakul alkotoi általában amiken **amikor** annyira anyagot azonban befolyasolja csináljak **csinálni** dolgokat dolgoztam dologgal egyebkent **egyszer** egyszeru egyszerű eljegyzett elkezdünk **előtte** elsonel emlékszem **erdekes ezeket** feeling fejben fejemben felületi fogjuk **fontos** formája formákat gondolom gondoltam gondoltuk hagyományok hagyományos hangulatot hasonló **hogyan** hordható **igazából** indiából **inkább** inspirációm inspirációs inspirációt inspirált inspiráltak ismertem jelentek jellemző jelmez keleten kicsit kollektív kollektionak kollektiót konkrétan **könyvek között** különböző kulturák kutatómunka lattam legjobban **legyen** lenyeg **magyar** magyarországon magyaros megfogtak mennyire milyen minden mindenhol **mindig** minták motívum motívumok motívumok

**nagyon** például ruhákat somogy székely

szeretnek szerintem **technika** tényleg vagyok valahogy **valami** valamilyen valamit választottam **vannak** voltak

Before analyzing the inspirational sources of the designers I ran a world frequency query program looking for the 100 most frequently used 6 plus character words and I displayed the results in a tag cloud. Since I was analyzing the interviews in Hungarian, the words in the cloud are displayed in the original interview language. The most frequently used, topic relevant words in the order of occurrence are the followings: Hungarian, technique, books, motives and clothes. This partially helped me also in defining categories for the ‘used heritage elements’ sub-category’.

Table 8 – Inspirational source, used heritage elements and innovation vs. copying

| Brand/Designer Name   | Inspirational source  | Used heritage elements   | Innovation vs. copying |
|-----------------------|---|--|------------------------|
| Balint Sara Knit/Wear | Folkloric tradition, underlying meaning of heart motif  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“I used white and red; prevalent <i>color</i> combination in folklore.”</li> <li>Folkloric <i>interpretation</i> of heart motif</li> <li>heart <i>motif</i></li> <li>classic slim waist full skirt <i>shape</i></li> <li>(hand-knitting)</li> </ul> | Innovation             |
| Igezo                 | Equestrian traditions, feeling and the folks wear, ethnographic research work   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Basic <i>colors</i> of folklore</li> <li>all the clothes get underlying folkloric <i>meaning</i></li> <li>Torocko, Kalotaszeg style <i>motives</i></li> <li>caftan style man dress, classis woman dress <i>shape</i></li> </ul>                     | Partially innovative   |
| Berecz Vanda          | mood, feeling, origami technique  |  | Innovation             |
| Je suis belle         | Literary work ( <i>Vörösmarty: Csongor és Tünde</i> ), excursions, certain folk region, technical books   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <i>color</i> scheme was the only entirely copied element.</li> <li><i>Story of Csongor és Tünde technique of a folk region</i></li> </ul>   | Innovation             |
| Zsuzsanna Fabri       | Surface decoration of jeans saw in a boutique’s window in London, cavalryman’s wear and the clothes of the ‘80s   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I used the <i>color</i> scheme of cavalryman’s clothing.</li> <li><i>Shape</i>: narrow from the waist and over-sized on top</li> <li>braiding <i>technique</i></li> </ul>   | Innovation             |
| Renata Gyongyosi      | Somogy county’s folks wear  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Redesigned <i>motives</i></li> <li>classic slim waist full skirt <i>shape</i></li> </ul>  | Innovation             |
| Piroshka              | Textile print archive, blue dye, the designer’s dual identity, dress patterns   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Traditional <i>colors</i></li> <li>durable, natural blue dye <i>material</i></li> <li><i>motives</i> of blue dye</li> <li>traditional dress patterns</li> </ul>   | Innovation             |
| MIMM                  | Hungarian gingerbreads, own idea  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bird, heart, flower, leaf <i>motives</i>, floral ornaments</li> <li>gingerbread <i>shape</i>, symmetry</li> <li>crocheting <i>technique</i></li> </ul>  | Innovation             |
| Ille-Olla             | Transylvanian pure, simple folks wear, traditional tailoring, research work in Csikszereda, cooperation with another designer   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Traditional <i>colors</i>; white, red, black.</li> <li>The <i>shape</i> of the folks wear.</li> <li>Traditional dress <i>patterns</i></li> </ul>  | Innovation             |
| Judit Eszter Karpati  | Matyo motives, motive design, quality renewal, research work, dynamic folkloric colors and shapes   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using the <i>color</i> scheme of Matyo motives</li> <li>Matyo <i>motives</i></li> </ul>   | Partially copying      |
| Kele clothing         | Hungarian Folk Tales series specific visual world and ambiance, symbols of folk tales, visit in the cartoon studio, lace motif from a Hungarian handicrafts book (1920) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Symbols</i> in folks tales</li> <li>crocheted lace <i>motif</i></li> </ul>   | Innovation             |
| Anh Tuan              | Technical traditions of fibres, prior research works  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Traditional decorating <i>technique</i></li> </ul>  | Innovation             |
| Blue Paprika          | Motives, flower shape, 3D visualization, research fieldworks  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Motives</i></li> </ul>   | Innovation             |
| TheBetaVersion        | Somogy, Sarkoz, Paloc regions’ folks wear   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Colors</i> of homespun</li> <li><i>motives</i> of traditional homespun</li> <li>weaving <i>technique</i>, dress patterns</li> </ul>  | Innovation             |

Source: author’s elaboration

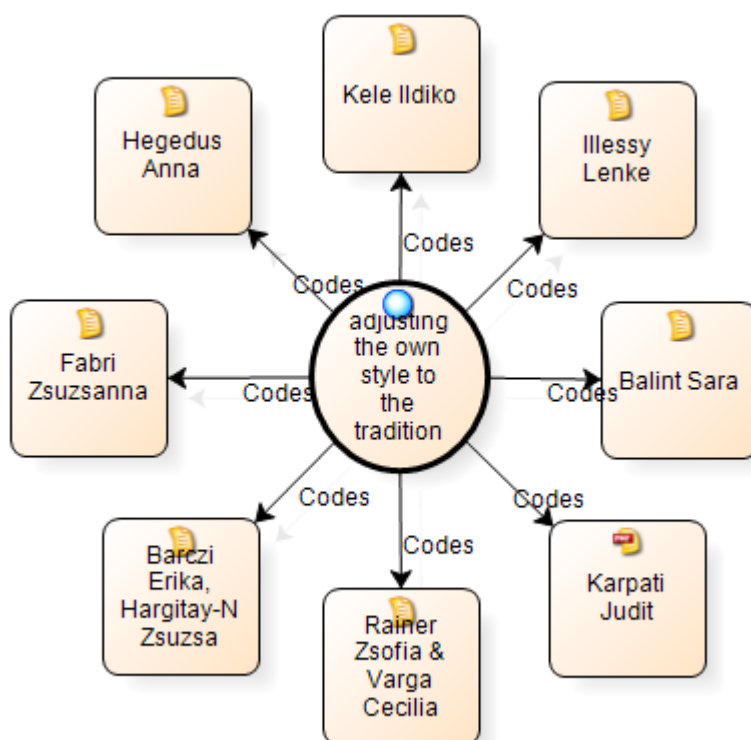
The inspirational source of the designers was very diverse as Table 8 shows. I can detect two tendencies:

- a) The design work was literally based on cultural heritage; folk art, traditions.
  - a. The design idea can be deduced from a tangible cultural heritage (Igezo, TheBetaVersion, Blue Paprika, Anh Tuan, Judit Eszter Karpati, Ille-Olla, Renata Gyongyosi, Piroshka, Zsuzsanna Fabri).
  - b. The design idea can be deduced from an intangible cultural heritage (Kele clothing).
  - c. The design idea was based both on tangible and intangible cultural heritage (Balint Sara Knit/Wear, Je suis belle).
- b) The design could also be interpreted and explained from a folkloric perspective – although during the design process it did not come up consciously (MIMM, Berecz Vanda).

Although most of the designers find it important to introduce innovation in their design and present cultural heritage in a not obvious, hidden way; mostly their inspirational sources were the most obvious, visible form of cultural heritage; the tangible cultural heritage. Only few designers gave to their collection a deeper meaning by applying – maybe less obvious – intangible cultural heritage in their design.

Igezo, Blue Paprika and Piroshka built their brand on the application of cultural heritage in their design, so although they introduced some innovations their aim was not to avoid the visibility of the cultural heritage elements. TheBetaVersion, Judit Eszter Karpati, Renata Gyongyosi and Zsuzsanna Fabri used such motives, shapes with what they made clear the origin of their idea (Figure 25). One the pieces of Anh Tuan and Ille-Olla the laics could not determine the inspirational source. From the collection of Sara Balint the folkloric effect was visible but the concept evolved around the deeper, underlying folkloric meaning of a motif. The collection of Je suis belle and Kele clothing was alloying sources from both tangible and intangible heritage in a non explicit way. During the design process of the accessories of MIMM and Berecz Vanda the cultural heritage did not come up as inspiration source, but later they could be corresponded with the theme of the competition. Basically the motivation for creating in cultural heritage topic was generated by the competition in the case of only two designers; Zsuzsanna Fabri and Sara Balint. As the graph shows they also adjusted their own style to the topic of the task.

Figure 25 – Graph of designers who adjusted their style to the traditions in the competition task



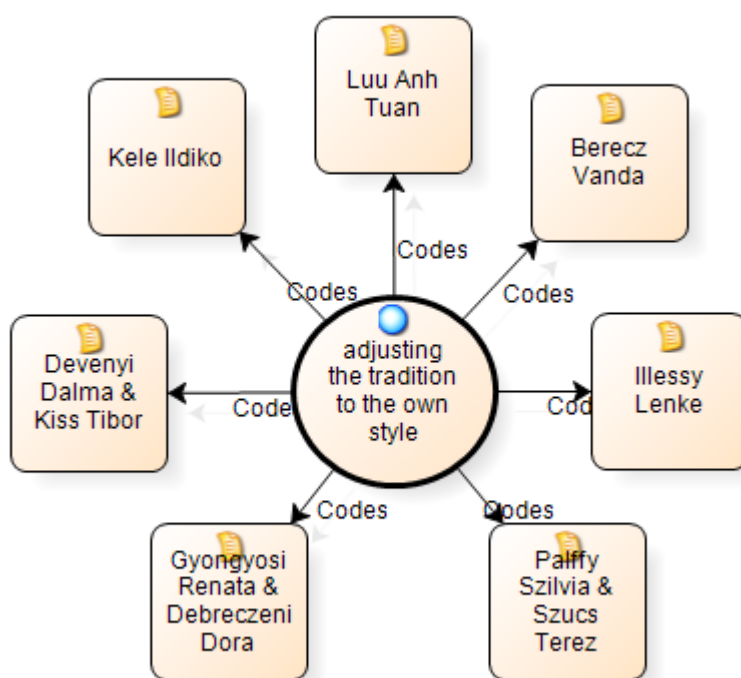
Source: author's elaboration.

The Igezo and Piroshka built their brand on using continuously traditional cultural heritage in their design; therefore their style is in more or less extent adjusted to folk art. The designers of Blue Paprika rather identify themselves in a way that the cultural heritage is adjusted to their own style, since they apply folkloric motives in the denim style. These three brands' motivation for applying heritage folk art in their design is more personality driven. The existence of the competition did not change on their design work; these brands would have evolved even without the competition. The designers of Blue Paprika and Piroshka since their childhood have emotional attachment to Hungarian folk art and Igezo was founded on the basis of personal love and interest towards folk traditions.

Judit Eszter Karpati and TheBetaVersion have been formerly interested in cultural heritage and folk art within and Re-button! gave them the encouragement and the challenge to realize their design. Their motivation to get inspiration from folklore already existed before the competition. Both of them being young designers their own image was developing together with the competition which slightly orientated them. Their style developed in purpose to create a collection with heritage folkloric elements.

Renata Gyongyosi and Ildiko Kele both have personal interest towards cultural heritage but they are not aiming to explicitly present it under their brand (Figure 26). The manifestation of their personal interest was their diploma work with what they applied for the competition. By their diploma work their own style was adjusted to the used traditional shapes, motives, techniques, but under their brands the emphasis is on their own style instead of letting the cultural heritage shining through their collections.

Figure 26 – Graph of designers who adjusted the tradition to their own style



Source: author's elaboration.

In the case of Lenke Illesy, the competition gave a great possibility to further develop her own style and the trade mark of her brand. The idea of using Transylvanian origin ideas was not born due to Re-button! but it helped the design development. Although some elements of the Ille-Olla style emerged from folk art, the tradition can be well fit to the designer's systematic approach style in design.

Both Anh Tuan and Je suis belle are more mature, sophisticated brands which continuously draw inspiration from folk art. For the announcement of the competition they both answered in their own, characteristic way without making obvious references on cultural heritage.

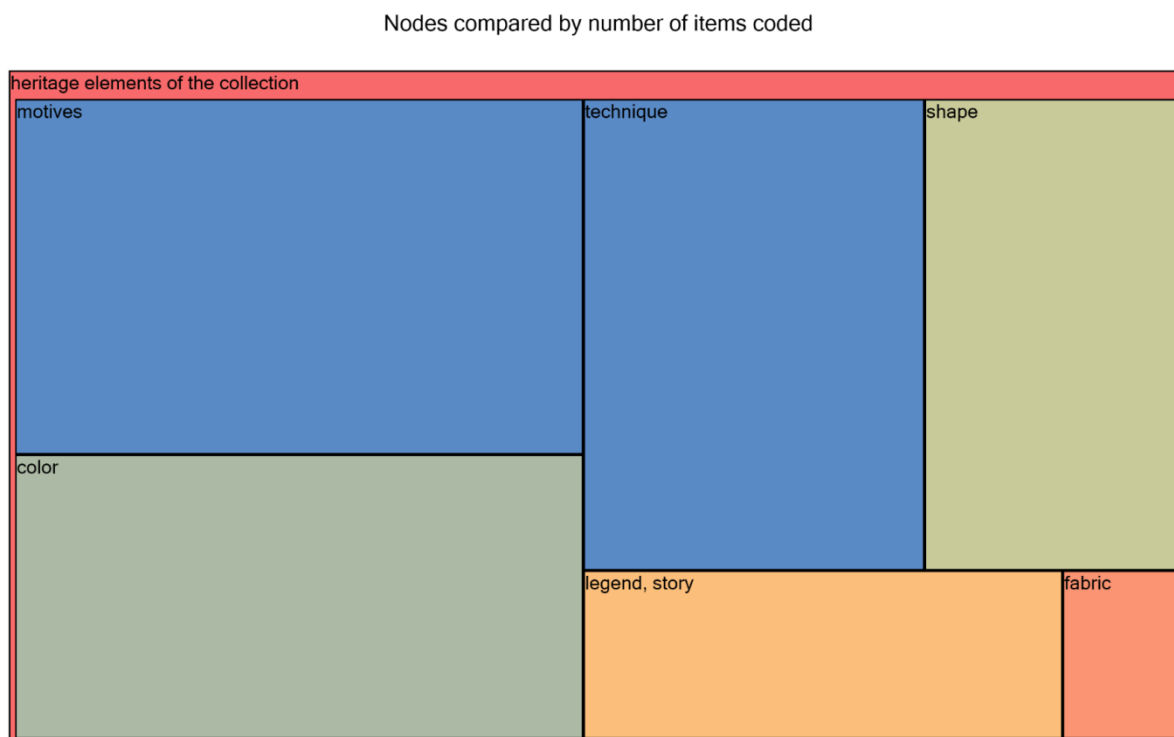
The MIMM-textile design and Vanda Berecz developed their ideas before the first competition was announced. They both describe their inspiration as led by sudden idea, mood, feeling. Once the competition was announced they thought about the integrability of their design in the context of Re-button! In the case of MIMM the collection maybe would not have been executed without Re-button! but Vanda Berecz only had to design some more pieces to the already existing designs. In their cases the topic got adjusted to their original ideas.

### **Heritage elements of the collection**

The applied heritage elements named by the designers can be placed in the following categories: motives, technique, color, shape, legend, story and fabric (Table 8). The tree map of the heritage elements of the collection shows that the most popular among the designers was the use of motives, after that the colors and techniques, on the third place the traditional shapes, than the legend, stories and finally the fabric (Figure 27). In general designers who rather adjusted the traditions to their own style choose to use less and not apparent traditional elements in their design. About designers who adjusted their own style to cultural heritage the accumulation of folkloric elements is typical. Only two designers ‘took the advice’ of Klara Tudos to only use one feature on a dress at a time (F. Dozsa, Simonovics, Szatmari & Szucs, 2012). Only one designer, Vanda Berecz could not trace her design back to a specific folkloric element.



**Figure 27 – Tree map of the used heritage elements**



**N:14 motives(10):color(8):technique(8):shape(6):legend, story(4):fabric(1)**

Source: author's elaboration.

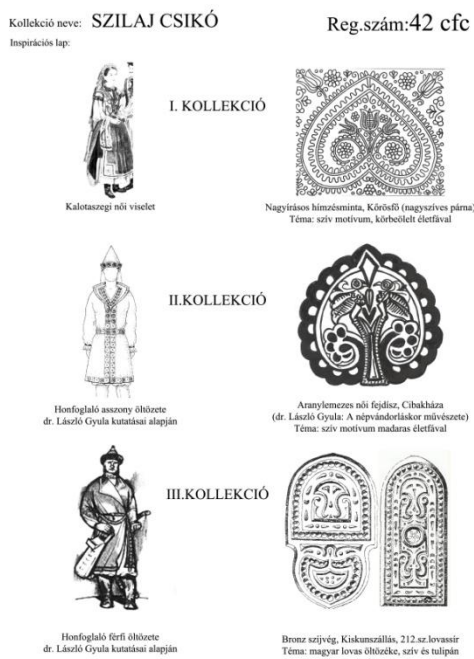
### Use of cultural heritage

It is not easy to define whether a design is innovative or not. “In the competition we were considered traditionalists, but quite simply the truth is that the real traditionalists consider our clothes as too modern.” – are saying the Igezo designers. Only two brands/designers, Igezo and Judit Eszter Karpati, said during the interviews that they kept the motives in their original form, therefore I put them in a different category than the others, but it does not mean that they are not introducing innovations. The difference between the designers is in the extent of innovation. The extent of innovation is also hard to define, we cannot measure it. A laic distinction among the designers could be made about the visibility of the inspirational source on the executed design. In the followings I will present some collections of the interviewees to better understand the different extent of innovation; what do I mean by visibility of the inspirational source. I present the pictures, drawings what I got from the designers in groups prior created when I described the used heritage elements. (Additional pictures about the work of other designers are presented in the Appendix 2 – Additional pictures.)

### Explicit use of cultural heritage

From the inspirational sheet and the drawing of Igezo their traditionalist features can be concluded (Picture 13, 14). They not only find it important to authentically preserve the patterns – together with its possible faults – but in the design they pay attention also on the original colors and shapes by presenting them in their authentic folkloric context.

Picture 13 – Igezo, inspirational sheet



Source: Picture from the designers.

Picture 14 – Igezo, design plan



Source: Picture from the designers.

The inspirational sources of Judit Eszter Karpati were the Matyo embroidery motives. In her collection she wanted to present accurately to the tradition the richness of Matyo motives and colors with their transformation into pixel patterns. The dresses have a simple cut for the proper highlight of the traditional patterns and colors (Picture 15, 16).

Picture 15 – Juidt Eszter Karpati, design plan



Source: Picture from the designer.

Picture 16 – Judit Eszter Karpati, ‘Ha en rozsa volnek’



Source: Picture from the designer.

On the design of Sara Balint the applied heritage elements – motives, colors, and shapes – can be explicitly seen (Picture 19, 20). Through the research preceded her design work (Picture 17, 18) she chose to work with heart pattern due to its symbolic meaning in the folklore; married woman.

Picture 17 – Sara Balint, inspirational sheet 1



Source: Picture from the designer.

Picture 18 – inspirational sheet 2



Source: Picture from the designer.



Picture 19 – Sara Balint, design plan



Source: Pictures from the designer.

Picture 20 – ‘Szerelem, szerelem’ collection



Source: Pictures from the designer.

Implicit use of cultural heritage

Picture 21 – MIMM-textile design, 2011



Source: Picture from the designers.

Picture 22 – MIMM-textile design, 2012



Source: Pictures from the designers.

Interestingly, although MIMM-textile design is not using inspirational sources directly, from their work its Hungarian origin can be suggested. On pictures 21, 22 are one of the designed pieces of MIMM from 2011 and 2012. The difference between the two design perceptions is

striking. As Ilona Hendzsel said during the interview, the designers got adjusted to the expectations of the competition and made accessories not for everyday wear but spectacular design for the stage. Their considered approach paid off since with their costume like, theatrical accessories they won the competition in 2012.

Ildiko Kele in her design used Hungarian Folk Tales series as her inspirational source (Picture 23, 24). Looking at the design a laic could not identify the origin of the design idea. The designer got her inspiration source from the backgrounds of the film frames and the symbols of the folk tales.

Picture 23 – Ildiko Kele, inspirational sheet



Source: Picture from the designer.

Picture 24 – Ildiko Kele, design plan



Source: Picture from the designer.

The folk art element of the Je suis belle design was a technique of embroidering with thick red thread specific of a certain folkloric region. The traditional knowledge was used in an innovative way; the red widening ribbon gave a sculptural look to the apparel (Picture 25, 26).

Picture 25 – Je suis belle, work in progress



Picture 26 – Dalma Devenyi & ready apparel



Sources: Picture from the designers.

Sources: Picture from the designers.

Lenke Illessy, the designer of Ille-Olla, was carefully researching the Transylvanian traditional costumes and throughout her research process came up with a unique design which by today became the trademark of the brand; “everything is collared up.” The design plans show it nicely that the colors, the shapes, and the patterns were preserved and transformed into a contemporary design (Picture 27, 28). For a laic it is not striking from the Ille-Olla clothes that they were inspired by folk art.

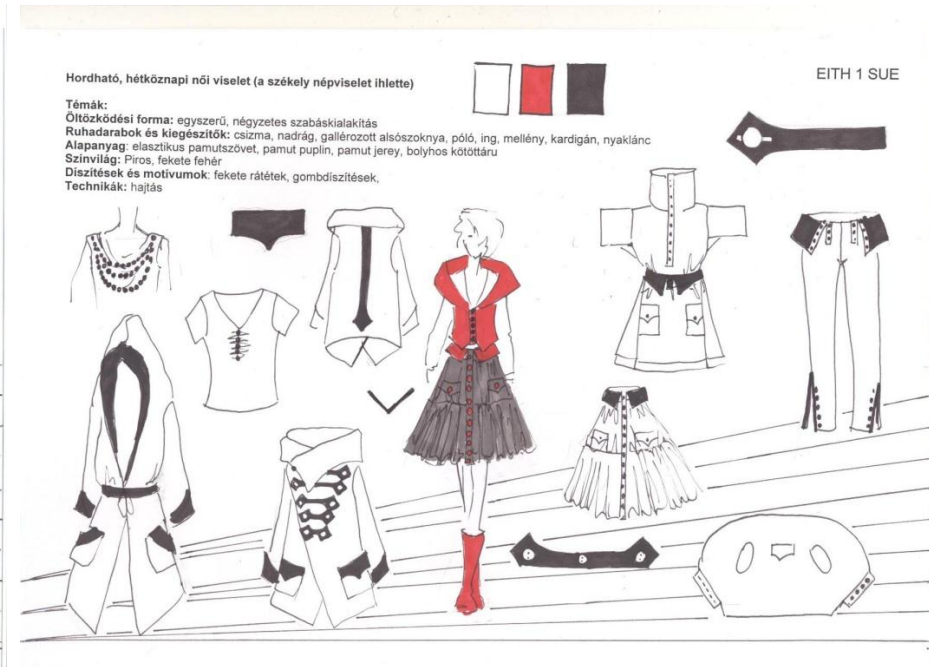


Picture 27 – Result of the research work, Ille-Olla



Source: Picture from the designer.

Picture 28 – Introduced innovations, Ille-Olla



Source: Picture from the designer.

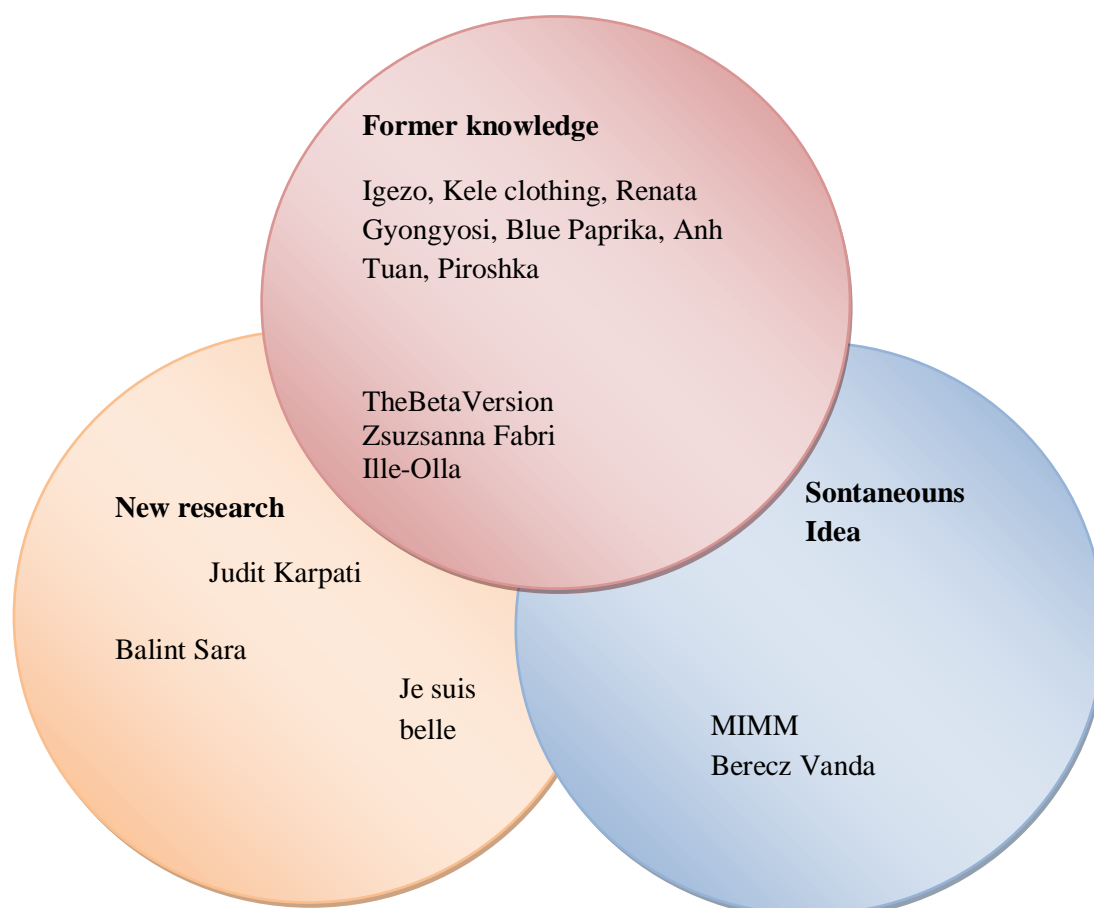
## Design process

Getting knowledge about the design process, especially about the beginning; knowing from which angle the designer approached the task could help in identifying the designers' real interest, inspirational sources and the ways the inspirational resources are used. Many scholars wrote about the use of exploring the early phases of design and the difficulty of reconstructing the design process in a research (Eckert & Stacey, 1998, Mete, 2006, Mougenot, Bouchard & Aoussat, 2008). In my case I only had the chance to take some questions about their creative process; I could not conduct fieldwork or design a task for the interviewees. About the designer processes I did not get absolutely satisfying answers, because

- a) the design process by each designer and by each design task can be very different and
- b) it is an intuitive process, therefore it is difficult to remember about its steps precisely.

I can make approximate distinction about designers according the starting point of their design process – concentrating the design process on the competing collection –. The idea could come from a former knowledge; it can come spontaneously from a feeling, mood, or can be that the designer made research during her preparation for the competition (Figure 28).

Figure 28 – Model of design process



Source: author's elaboration.



The model was made with consideration on the designers' preparation process only for the Re-button! Sara Balint, Judit Karpati and the Devenyi-Kiss duo executed a design based on a formerly not known technique or a new topic. For Sara Balint in contrast with the other three designers the world of folk art before the competition was a yet unresearched area. She started her design process from the desire that she wants to create something patterned and spectacular and therefore she started to explore the folkloric motives and the classic, obvious dress shapes. For the other three designers the cultural heritage elements were not completely unknown, but for the competition they worked on a new technique or motive. Tibor Kiss also got inspired by a movie what become part of the inspiration sources rather spontaneously.

MIMM and Vanda Berecz without former research in the topic got the idea of the collection. "I was trying to be concrete about what am I folding (from paper), and then I was looking at some motive books. And in there were some simplified motives and then I got the idea to fold those, but the end product was not looking good, therefore I had to make it more simple. This was a linear process. I was doing a little bit of this, a little bit of that..." – was explaining Vanda the beginning of her design process. The designers of MIMM were not searching for inspiration sources; "Once I made the motives we set down together and both of us were saying our own ideas; it is the result of common thoughts."

TheBetaVersion, Zsuzsanna Fabri and Ille-Olla started to design with a lot of research work in mind but the final design developed throughout the design process. "I already had my dress patterns I had to change only on the material in the collection because finally I used a different fabric..." – said the designer of Ille-Olla. Zsofia Rainer and Zsuzsanna Fabri got their idea from a prior school task and with that in mind "first I started to make small drawings and I tried to put on a sketch the little details which are in my mind figuring out their place. At the end when I had a lot of ideas I figured out that I want to use two things..." – remembered Zsuzsanna Fabri about her design process. On the sketches, drawings and inspirational sheets of Zsuzsanna Fabri her design process, what started from the thought of using braiding technique and surface decoration on a design inspired by cavalryman's wear and evolved into a design what reminds us about the dress shapes of the '80s, can be nicely followed (Picture 29).

Renata Gyongyosi and Ildiko Kele applied with an already existing collection what was based on a long research work. "I watched all the episodes of the Hungarian Folk Tales, the favorites more time, I examined the backgrounds, I read after the symbols in folk tales, I

visited the cartoon studio where the series were made, I got to know its producers...” – explained Ildiko Kele her long and precise research work.

Igezo, Piroshka, Blue Paprika and Anh Tuan were working on the basis of their existing style and knowledge in the field of heritage elements. “The plans were effectively created within a short period of time, because we quickly put together the topic from our inspirations.” – remembered the designers of Igezo. Piroshka did not have to do long preparation for the competition because she already had the idea prepared before “I started to draw, get inspirations, looking at some books, items, than the drawings took a lot of directions. I had very different ideas, on my plans the different folk areas could be detected, than something decided that I will go to this direction. I was trying to make a collection around one, integrated idea. The idea of the fabric came relatively spontaneously.” In Anh Tuan’s design the trimming technique was not newly discovered in 2011. He knew and applied this technique already long before the competition announcement.

Picture 29 – Zsuzsanna Fabri, sketches, drawings, inspirational sheet, ‘Huszarvagas’ Source: Pictures from the designer.



It needs to be underlined that these features are true about the concrete collections made for Re-Button! Of course design process is a creative process therefore cannot be in lack of spontaneous ideas. Igezo is mostly working from a collection of motives but define their general design process as instinctive: “For us the design process is not a conscious and complicated thing. Rather instinctive and easy.”

Another distinction of the design process can be whether a designer keeps in mind the merchantability of the designed product during the creative process or not. There are designers like Igezo for whom the profit is not primarily important but even they are trying to get to the point what is well formulated by Luu Anh Tuan: “In design I find it important to create products which are spectacular, wearable, salable and easily acceptable. According to my possibilities this logic works in Hungary.” Many designers are experimenting these days how can they make their company profitable and whether this change would require also a different approach in design. An analogy can be made between this feature and the presence in international markets. Designers who are able to think about their design from a customer’s point of view and in a more business oriented way are more likely to get to the international markets. Luu Anh Tuan was the only designer – next to Ildiko Kele who mentioned the type of collection needed for bigger markets – who actually brought up during the interview the importance of salability. He being one of the most successful designers among my interviewees it is worth to think about this result.

## **Conclusion**

Most of the designers are generally interested in cultural heritage, it is not far from their style to use folk art as inspirational source, and therefore they started their creative process with choosing a folkloric element from their former collections, research works or with looking for a new inspiring element. The use of cultural heritage elements is by the majority of the designers innovative and implicit. The theme of the competition – especially in the first year – led the designers to the utilization of an approach explicitly referring to cultural heritage, although this approach is far from their general style. This effect of the competition’s announcement can be detected in the applied heritage elements which were mostly tangible heritage elements; motives, colors, techniques. In general, the designers like to adjust the traditions to their own style but again due to the wording of the announcement almost as much works adjusted to the cultural heritage as innovative works were made. In the third year of the Re-button! due to the changed competition focus and learned lessons from the

competition's first two years more designs were born with the implicit use of the inspiration sources. Designers, who apart from the competition used folk art also in their prior design, from personal conviction, interest were the majority of my sample: 10 designers. They choose to get inspiration from cultural heritage because of labor of love, because as Hungarian designers it is self-evident to draw ideas from the own traditions, and because it is an existing, high quality knowledgebase.

## 6.5. General presence of folk art in the creative work

### General interest in cultural heritage; folk art, traditions

**Table 9 – Interest for cultural heritage; folk art, tradition**

| Brand/Designer name   | Interest in cultural heritage; folk art, tradition  |
|-----------------------|---|
| Zsuzsanna Fabri       | “I would like to stress right at the beginning that I’m fundamentally not interested in folk art, I’m not a traditionalist person, but if there is such competition, now it is namely the Re-button!, but if they would tell me to create car design, that would also inspire me, but I think this is a general designer attitude.” “Folk art is a good starting point in design, I will apply it implicitly.”  |
| Igezo                 | “For us fashion is like a stage where we can show the folk art. Fashion was not our starting point.”  |
| MIMM-textile design   | “It was a completely farfetched idea. I was not seeking for inspiration anywhere. I felt a very strong inner urge to start doing this. No one asked me to do it, but I felt that something want to ‘come out from me’; I did not had particular aim with this.”   |
| Piroshka              | “Already at school I was interested and inspired by folks wears. I’m not a modernist designer but rather a costume maker. I knew I can do something with this topic, and then why should I choose Chinese when I have Hungarian heritage...” “In the future I would like to include more craftsmen in my work.”   |
| Balint Sara Knit/Wear | “I live in Hungary and I’m interested in the Hungarian cultural heritage, I could not even avoid it but I also don’t want to... the most comfortable is to do research in Hungary and folk art it should be used in an innovative way.”   |
| Berecz Vanda          | “After all I come from the countryside, my grandmother was teaching me how to embroider, I was part of folk songs singing study circles... but no way that I would use folk art in a direct way in my design.”  |
| Je suis belle         | “I think a reason why we have this in our philosophy is because I helps us a lot in making the collection richer and put a layer in it which makes it more difficult to figure out what is it about. I think that in this profession it can bring a very high quality because these techniques are mostly handmade, it is difficult to mechanize them therefore it only looks good when it is made on a high standard.” “We try to introduce innovation in these things.” |
| Ille-Olla             | “I wanted to design maternity dresses and I wanted to research the maternity dress design in folk art – this was in 2007. In 2010 I had the cooperation with Istvan and the competition was already actual.”  |
| Judit Eszter Karpati  | “Before my Ha én rózsa volnék collection I got already inspired by folk-rooted motives. I designed more collections in which Hungarian national costume elements appeared.”   |
| Kele clothing         | “The folk art, folk music, folk songs and folk tales were always close to my heart, because they were part of my life.”   |
| Anh Tuan              | “Maybe I consider the heritage and traditions as important because as an immigrant I know exactly its values. That how is it when those things do not exist anymore or gone by.”  |
| Blue Paprika          | “My partner is from Karcag, she grew up in this in some extent... my mother was an accountant at a tailoring company what made authentic clothes for export... as a child I was a model there... This was not conscious, only later on I realized that I was wearing such clothes also 30 years ago... obviously these things are deep inside us...” “We wanted to let people know folk art in Hungary and also abroad. This was a completely conscious decision.”        |
| TheBetaVersion        | “Yes, it was already decided at the university that I’m interested in folk art.”  |
| INER                  | “The Hungarian folk art in some extent comes back in our collections... In the future it will be constantly presented in a smaller or in a bigger extent, but in some extent for sure.”   |

Source: author’s elaboration.



The designers' general interest can be best presented by quotes. The table presents in detail the designers' deeper, general interest in cultural heritage elements (Table 9) and the tree map shows the division of the designers' general interest in folk art (Figure 31).

Clearly most of the designers are interested in the innovative use of cultural heritage – even designers, who are not specifically interested in folk art, can imagine to use it as an inspirational source in the future –. Only MIMM cannot imagine using cultural heritage consciously, since the trade mark of their brand are their unique, handmade motives. Igezo has only designers who are not seeking consciously for any innovation in their design, although they have to make alterations on the traditional dresses keeping the wearability expectations of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in mind. Piroshka and Blue Paprika, two brands who based their brands on the use of cultural heritage elements find the innovations important, necessary part of their designer work. Many designers have personal, emotional attachment to cultural heritage; therefore they are not averse to apply folk art in their collections.

**Figure 29 – Tree map of interest for folk art in the design**

Nodes compared by number of items coded



**N:14 as inspirational source(12):built a brand on it(3):no specific interest(2)**

Source: author's elaboration.

### Future plan for using cultural heritage in the design

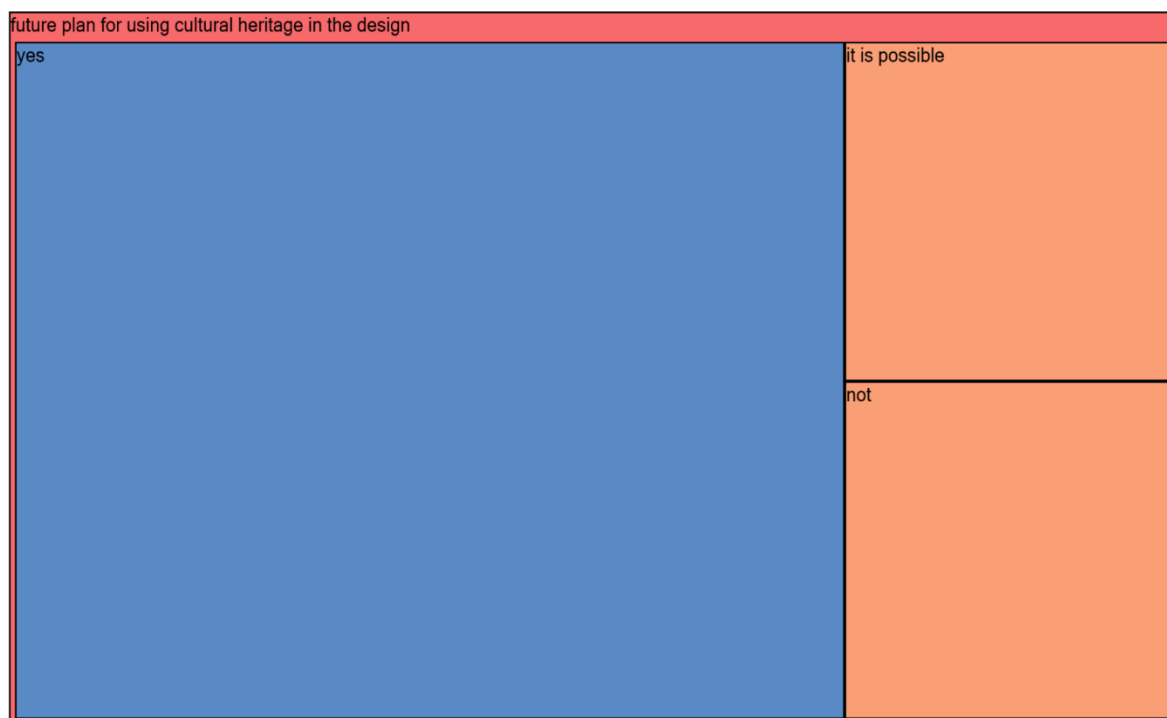
Ten designers out of fourteen are certain that they will use cultural heritage in their design in the future (Figure 32). Zsuzsanna Fabri in spite of the fact that she is not interested in cultural heritage in general would like to go back to her cavalryman inspired design and work on it. Designers who in general did not have interest in cultural heritage before the competition due to the effect of the competition are willing to work on and further innovate their heritage related design ideas. Seems like Re-button! could draw the attention on folk art for a long term.

Among the interviewees only Lenke Illessy and Ilona Hendzsel are not considering applying cultural heritage elements in their design. “Specifically with folk motives, elements I would not like to work anymore.” – stated the designer of Ille-Olla.

Berecz Vanda and the INER although do not have short term plans for the application of cultural heritage they are open to use it in the future.

**Figure 30 – Tree map of future plan for using cultural heritage in the design**

Nodes compared by number of items coded



**N:14    yes(10):it is possible(2):not(2)**

Source: author's elaboration



Designers who have future plans with cultural heritage can be put in three categories:

- a) using cultural heritage in the design continuously,

“I take inspiration continuously from the cultural heritage. It can be folkloric motif, landscape, technology, traditional activity and the related equipments.” (Ildiko Kele)

- b) willingness to work on the last design prepared for Re-button!

“Lately it comes up quite often that I should upgrade the collection with hearts in a way that it is also available for the public...” (Sara Balint)

- c) using cultural heritage in future designs (Table 10).

“Also in the future I will take inspiration from cultural heritage which I will happily use in my pattern plans.” (Judit Eszter Karpati).

**Table 10 – Future plan for using cultural heritage in the future**

| Brand/Designer name  | Future plan for using cultural heritage in the design |
|----------------------|---|
| Zsuzsanna Fabri      | YES (inventing the last design)                       |
| Igezo                | YES (conscious decision)                              |
| MIMM-textile design  | NOT   |
| Piroshka             | YES (continuously)                                    |
| Balint Sara          | YES (inventing the last design)                       |
| Berecz Vanda         | IT IS POSSIBLE  |
| Je suis belle        | YES (continuously)                                    |
| Ille-Olla            | NOT   |
| Judit Eszter Karpati | YES (in the future)                                   |
| Kele clothing        | YES (continuously)                                    |
| Anh Tuan             | YES (continuously)                                    |
| Blue Paprika         | YES (conscious decision)                              |
| TheBetaVersion       | YES (in the future)                                   |
| INER                 | IT IS POSSIBLE  |

Source: author's elaboration.

Designers with general interest in cultural heritage are not excluding the possibility to apply them in their fashion design in the future. Although, designers during their design process and at the choice of inspirational sources have to take into consideration that their collection is made for the markets and have to satisfy the customers' needs. This can be a reason for Lenke Illessy's opinion: "Basically I no longer believe in handicraft and its value, because today's world and people have different attitudes. People are not wearing handicraft items, cannot afford to pay for these goods and now we can produce seasonally in factories."

Most of the designers believe that the Re-button! drew long term attention on cultural heritage. Their opinion seems to be proven by the fact that the majority of the designers are willing to use cultural heritage in their future design.

## **Conclusion**

Most of the designers have general interest in cultural heritage and most of them are willing to or can imagine that in the future they will apply it in their design. Re-button! impacted designers who were not interested before in the application of cultural heritage in seeing it as inspirational source in a long term perspective, because it is a infinite knowledgebase.

## **6.6. Current fashion trend**

At the moment it is difficult to separate the impact of the competition itself and the impact of the fashion trend. Maybe the competition just further strengthened the upcoming fashion trend of cultural heritage. For a lot of designers and for the public the trend of applying cultural heritage in contemporary design became visible only with the first competition. Without the competition most probably the trend would still exist just would get less intensive attention.

For these reasons a lot of designers in their answers did not distinguish the impact of the fashion trend from the impact of the competition. It is also difficult to make predictions about the impact of this trend since it is still an existing trend. "I think it can have a stimulating effect, but it is difficult to answer this question (What are the impacts of this fashion trend on the Hungarian designers?)." – said Tibor Kiss. More and more designers appear in the Hungarian design scene, it takes time till it will be settled how they are going to position themselves in the market.

For sure, with the appearance of the competition the trend of the contemporary use of cultural heritage strengthened but the effect of the developed fashion trend will be seen only

in the coming years. The designers' opinion about this is also very diverse. Many think, that the effect of this fashion trend even unconsciously will affect the collections in long term. Igezo and Piroshka think that the effect will not be significant; it is only temporary. According to them, designers are more international trend oriented than heritage oriented.

### **Reasons behind the revival of folk art**

Behind the revival of the fashion trend most of the designers see political reason, since the competition was a government initiative. In addition four designers think that the trend emerged to strengthen the national identity. Five designers think about this trend as a trend going against globalization. "...these days there is a great amount of information in the world, there is a fast tempo; people desire to get out from this 'rat race' and find tactile, understandable part of the culture. These little things give nostalgic, secured feeling to the people. If something is natural, and I know where is it coming from (also food) if I see it and I can understand how it was made... if I know who made it, it gives the feeling of a human scale world." – thinks Zsofia Rainer.

Three-three designers think that the revival is due to spiritual and country image building reasons. Under the spiritual reasons I understand the message value of traditional motives, colors. The innovative use of cultural heritage can be a communication tool for a country to express their origin and who they are as a nation.

One-one designer brought up as reason behind the revival the competition itself, the pursuit towards quality orientation, the foreign influence and the accelerated pace of fashion industry (Figure 33). Under the last reason Anh Tuan understands, that in the quickly changing, always innovation and novelty seeking fashion industry it is more evident for the designers to get inspired from the traditions since there is no time for the development of a revolutionary design. Designers together with Judit Eszter Karpati in general agree that the application of heritage folkloric, traditional elements make the design richer, and valuable.

**Figure 31 – Tree map of reasons behind the revival of folk art**

Nodes compared by number of items coded



**N:14** political(6):trend against globalization(5):strengthening national identity(4):spiritual(3):touristic(3):accelerated pace of life(1):foreign influence(1):quality orientation(1):Re-button!(1)

Source: author's elaboration.

## Conclusion

The actuality of the fashion trend and the youth of the competition makes it difficult to answer whether this fashion trend will have impact on the Hungarian designers or not and if it has, whether it is going to be short or long term. Most of the designers believe in the long term effect of this trend mainly because the currently accumulated knowledge and the gained experiences become a part of the designers' creative thinking and this will be manifested in their future designs.

Interestingly most of the designers named the political interest and decisions as the main reason of the trend revival. This answer suggests the opinion that without the competition as political initiative cultural heritage elements would not come back in fashion again. This is paradoxical with the fact that the majority of designers have general interest in folk art. Can be that the political interest only strengthened, made this implicit trend visible. Again a lot of designers think that this current Hungarian fashion trend just fits into the

international trend of making initiatives against globalization. The traditions in many industries similarly to food and fashion industry will get higher importance.

Most probably the majority of the designers would also apart from the competition create with interest towards cultural heritage. The current fashion trend and competition only gave them place to show this interest to the public.

## Chapter 7. Conclusions

This chapter will give comprehensive conclusions of this research by presenting the gained results from the interview analysis linking them to the relevant concepts of the academic background.

Through 14 interviews, made with designers about their creative work, detailed information revealed about the mission and vision of their design work, the general features of their design, the features of their collection made for the Re-button! Hungarian is in fashion competition and their perceptions about the competition and the current fashion trend. These information helped in drawing conclusions about the designers' motivation and answer the question:

*What motivates the fashion designers in Hungary for applying cultural heritage in their design?*

First of all the conclusion should start by mentioning that some factors made it difficult – although not impossible – to do theoretical research on the chosen topic and to get relevant answer about the designer's motivation of using folk art as inspirational source. And further to answer the two sub-questions concerning the reasons behind the revival of this fashion trend and the possible future of “folk art remaining fashionable”. These difficulties were the following:

1. The designers' motivation is a largely unresearched topic by the academics.
2. The designers' inspiration, motivation mainly evolves through an unconscious process; therefore it is hard to identify it.
3. The thesis is focusing on a current fashion trend therefore it is difficult to get a non biased comprehensive view on it.

Further the results should be seen with attention paid on the limitation of my research. Due to the limited time and resources the research could not undertake to examine a broader, more representative Hungarian design scene. The complete overview of the design scene is limited due to the lack of processed census data and relevant Hungarian design institution data about the number of Hungarian designers, brands and their ratio in applying cultural heritage in their design. Since the third, internationalized competition, the *Central European Fashion Event* was held in 22. 06. 2013, the evaluation of the campaign is yet not available which does not allow to draw further conclusions about the development of the campaign.

In conclusion, a main distinction among designers can be made in terms of whether they realized the operation of the contemporary fashion industry or not. The mechanisms of the fashion industry largely changed since the time when the folkloric dresses were made and worn; the fashion trends are changing fast, and the product life cycles are short. By today the folk art designs loosed their functionality. People are barely buying clothes bearing in mind that it will be inherited to their children. Customers are following quickly changing trends; they are changing their wardrobe more often than people did 50-100 years ago. These days the companies are filling their stores, showrooms seasonally with new stock whereas in the past people were wearing the same clothes till it needed to be changed or some timeless items were worn by more generations. People did not have such huge demand for radical innovations and novelty. With the urbanization more and more people left their village, small town and with it they left behind also their traditional rituals, costumes. In the city the folk dresses together with their symbolic meaning lost their functionality, since the lifestyle of their wearers also changed. Designers should understand these changes and the current industry mechanism. If their aim is not necessarily to lead to success the company but to create timeless, inheritable items they have to face a more difficult path to success and even then apart from their clientele the design will hardly be popular among broader customer segments. Even the designers highly motivated in cultural heritage preservation need to take into consideration the customers' current need and garment expectations and the accelerated market because only then can the attention of broader audience be called on cultural heritage and preserved in fashion for a long time. Just like the example of Halas lace shows, which started by creating lace with creeper motives in Art Nouveau style and also created tractor motives in the communism (Balint, interview, 10-05-2013), cultural heritage can be preserved in fashion for a long period of time when the designers are motivated in its innovative use which according to this research most of the designers are.

In the first two years the competition awaked the interest mostly of those designers who are in general more susceptible to cultural heritage or are at the very beginning of their career; therefore are very flexible about their source of inspiration. The main motivations of the designers to apply for the competition were topic related or career related. Designers who already created in a topic similar to the aims of *Re-button! Hungarian is in fashion* or just started to create in it found the competition a good place for media publicity and a good challenge where their work gets evaluated. The young designers and young brands in their path searching process got also tempted by the offered unique opportunity, since the winner

gets a big impetus to the career start. The number of applicants year by year proves the fact that the role of fashion fair as intermediary is becoming more important and appreciated by the designers. The majority of the designers are not traditionalists; they would like to introduce innovation in their collections and satisfy not only national but international demand. The cultural heritage as part of the designers' identity explicitly or implicitly, consciously or unconsciously is influencing their design. Nothing proves this better than the high number of designers having topic related collections – applying folk art – already before the competition announcement. The current – in a lot of sense – poor conditions of the national fashion industry force designers to be inventive and work with the given resources – like the national inspirational sources –, since there is no possibility in any sense for large scale production and international trend copying. The brand concept should reflect and be in accordance with the designers' personality which is rooted in the identity; therefore the unique, not international trend copying designs partly – visibly or not visibly – always reflect the Hungarian traditions or ambiance.

Recently with the development of the creative industry more and more designers and brands are appearing on the market. Young brands are in the process to define their values, mission. The actual environment and current fashion trend have most probably determinant influence on the contemporary design and designers but its actual effect will be detectable only in future manifestations.

Since throughout the history the transformation of fashion from folk art to modern clothing could not undisturbed develop; the competition gave a good experimenter field for designers to find novel interpretations, unique solutions for the transition of tradition. Most of the designers are motivated in the use of cultural heritage, because a lot of innovations can be introduced in the folkloric techniques, motives, shapes in a long scale of features from high degree of similarity, visibility to the complete unrecongizability.

The use of cultural heritage as an inspirational source was always present throughout the history; there were times when its application as in a Soviet area was less appreciated and as after the regime change more appreciated. Throughout the history there are uncountable types of motivation behind the application of cultural heritage elements. At the current fashion trend the motivation is also several; gives uniqueness to the brand, it is a given, quality inspiration source and above all it is part of the designers' identity. The current revival of this fashion trend can predict the changes in the creative industry; it can be one of the first steps towards finding the established Hungarian fashion. Cultural heritage will always be a



part of the designers' inspiration sources; the question is whether cultural heritage will visibly stay in fashion for a long period of time? Supposedly, in a long term cultural heritage will only implicitly remain part of designers' work.

The interviewed young brands are already dominant players of the Hungarian design scene and most probably in the future they are going to play an even more important role in the Hungarian design. The better understanding of the designers' motivations in applying cultural heritage in their design in general and for a design task like *Re-button! Hungarian is in fashion* competition can be used to predict the upcoming fashion trends and the direction of the Hungarian fashion design. The results of this thesis can be helpful for institutions working on the prosperity of the creative economy. Since they get insights to the designers' motivations they get intuitions about the type of task which would awake the designers' interest. This thesis can be helpful in future researches in the topic of designer inspiration, motivation and fashion trend revival. The collected data allows conducting longitudinal research which examines the changing motivation of designers for applying cultural heritage in the design work as well as applying for the competition.

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## Appendix 1 – Interviews

### Interview with TheBetaVersion

- I'm a cultural economics student at the Erasmus University in Rotterdam. For my final thesis topic I choose the relationship between cultural heritage and fashion. I'm primarily interested in what is the motivation of Hungarian designers for applying Hungarian cultural heritage motives/ techniques in their collections. What can be the reasons behind this these days spectacularly alive trend and whether it is going to be alive for a long term or not. You founded your brand in 2010, if I know it right; you made 5 collections by now.
- Yes, I think 4-5. One was collaboration with another designer.
- Can you please talk about it, in which phase of your career are you now and where are you in brand building?
- After 2.5 years we are still a fresh brand, we are at a starter phase of our enterprise which means that we are trying to introduce the brand in Hungary and also abroad. In Hungary we are somewhat more forward in this because we are also physically present and obviously it is a smaller market. But we already have abroad relationships with resellers, with the media, so in fact we also made there the starting steps as much as we had the capacity for that at this stage.
- Are you yourself making the products or do you give work out for others?
- This is very variable. Almost by each product we take part in the preparation phase and the tailoring is what we give out for workers.
- Are you searching for opportunities in foreign markets or you get requests?
- We get a lot of requests, thanks God they also find us and we are also trying to find different relations so it is also variable.
- Yes, and now our new plan would be to go abroad to tradeshows and like that go directly to the buyers and then gain more and more place on the international market. So now we can only cooperate with such smaller shops.
- Did you already formulated the mission of your brand and the values around which you are building your brand?

- Yes, we formulated it. In fact basically we approached what we are doing from the everyday objects. Basically we want to make such everyday objects which are durable and timeless, so they can be together with their wearers for a long time, emotional relation can develop to these objects and besides this the details are very important for us; so both the function both the decoration should be meticulously elaborated. And they should contain such details which we make with careful attention.
- The quality is important and our mission is to use those materials or colors which – let's say – we have to because we follow the trends, instead basically to figure out something what works as an everyday object.
- First you applied for the Re-button competition in 2011. What do you think does it represents the Hungarian designer scene?
- It was very different than and now.
- Back then it looked like that there were invited designers who already had more collections and I think they were also competing. There were a lot of students also such who were still at the beginning of their career. Now they laid big emphasis on involving more career starts; promoted the competition is different schools, also in the countryside everywhere in order to mobilize the people and therefore now they separate the two categories from each other; there is new comer and old-hand categories. I don't know in what extent can a such a competition be representative...
- If the question is whether it is representative or not that I think it is not, because there are a lot of designers who do not fit in either of the categories. There are many designers who would not apply for such competition because they want to position themselves somewhere else and the other thing is that also completely amateurs are also applying, who are not even professionals.
- And what do you think; does this bring any changes in the designer trends? Does this competition maybe call the attention on cultural heritage which would reflect in the design or this is restricted only to the competition?
- This is going to be interesting only this year for the first time, because among the awards in to produce a collection for the winners and with it to start a trade show. But it is not obligatory to go on the tradeshow with the collection made for the competition. The fact that the winner in what extent will build their collection on heritage motives is going to be interesting...

- Your collection from 2011 got the name Pixelfolk. Apparently there you were concentrating on the motives. Was there any other cultural heritage elements what you used?
- This came from the patterns of different homespun. These bags consist of one piece just like in the case of the homespun, one bolt fabric or one edge fabric was used and the leather at the edge was tailored in a way that they could bound together, so the edges were not fixed with needlework but they were bound and fixed with buttons and this bounding is actually an enlarged, overwritten version of weaving. This evokes the starting point and of course the patters were dominating.
- Both the folkloric homespun and its patters were inspirational sources for you. On what basis did you choose this topic, technique?
- I knew these patterns from earlier. I had to research due to a school task and I already liked them very much than. But then nothing was created from it. I liked in these motives that I felt that they are so contemporary. We can lift them over to a contemporary item into a contemporary setting. Their similarity to a pixel world was very obvious. It seemed fresh. Something more than only the reverie evocation of the past can be design form it what is absolute contemporary and useable which fits today's environment.
- This competition had impact on you to start dealing with this?
- Yes
- How was your design process?
- Quick, relatively intuitive; after a short brainstorming the final direction was figured out. Than the details had to be figured out; the form of realization was obvious.
- Did you change anything on the applied patterns?
- Yes, I changed, since I made the motives with punching holes, which means the pixels cannot be put next to each other; there is space between them. Therefore – this seems to be a matter of detail – but the proportions had to be modified in order to keep the patterns but at the same time it became feasible. I emphasized the patters which are tempting to me; the bird pattern with the heart and the little figures which are holding each others' hands and the geometrical framing patterns. Actually I selected and a little overwrote the patterns adjusting them to the proportions of the bags.
- Was there a specific landscape of which you applied the patterns?

- There were three landscapes; Somogy, Sarkoz and Paloc regions. These are quite far from each other. The common point in these was the feeling that in what extent can I imagine these on a contemporary item.
- And were they mingled during the design process and in the implementation?
- Not totally. The bird motives are typical to Somogy and Sarkoz, and the little figures to Paloc. These were presented in two separate bags. On the third were geometrical flower/star patterns what is typical to every regions, this is not really specific on one landscape. I did not mixed together the regions, they were presented in separate bags.
- Did you implement it also in colors?
- The original was dark blue, black and red. The inside of the bags. These were the typical colors also of the homespun.
- The novelty was the use of material, the transformation of patterns and the re-thinking of the technique.
- Yes
- Was this your first collection?
- There was one, the development of my diploma work. There I was using different knots, different closings which I created with the different knotting of the ropes.
- Is this also traditional technique?
- Yes, mainly the sailor knots were used, but in making the items the Japanese ornamental objects were also inspirational; simple, small, detailed. At that collection the inspiration came from more places, but there was tradition it that too.
- Were you trying to adjust the homespun to your own style or the task was forming your style?
- Both of them are typical. My style was formed by the task. I realized it mainly after the task was completed. There I could find such a balance which seemed to be successful and I continued similar way in design.
- Are you planning to get inspiration from folk art also in the future?
- Yes, it interests me for a long time and there are a lot of possibilities in it; not only in the Hungarian, but everywhere in the world. Yes, I think it is possible that I will use it in the future.
- In foreign, international market this is what differentiates you from the others; that you are getting inspiration from folk art?

- Yes, I perceive that this differentiates us. Basically there is an increased attention towards the central-eastern European design and in Hungary this design scene is getting stronger, I think this raises awareness.
- I think also that there is a such a trend in Europe that traditional and go back to the roots and what we do is connected to this.
- And do you think that this is always in the public awareness or it came newly?
- This came in the last some couple of years.
- Yes, maybe in the last some years it is well detected. In food or in interior design trends it can be seen as well, just like in terms of clothing and accessories.
- When you get request than they are primarily interested in the collections made for Re-button? This was raising awareness?
- The most important benefit of this competition was that through the PR the collection got to a lot of places. It cannot be detected whether this collection is popular due to the competition or not, because it was in a lot of places where it provoked attention, but this is a fact that usually because of the Pixelfolk the requests find us.
- There I see two different techniques.
- That is the new, which consist of different pieces. It is the new collection; the Blokk. These are separate elements but they are appended to each other. The aim was to build something from these elements. The inspirational source is panel block. We differed here from the folklore, but it continues our interest in that extent that the history of items is important. The theme of the competition was expanded to Central Europe so I was searching for similarity in these countries history what can be translated into the language of visuals and therefore I arrived to the urban architecture of the socialism what is a yet still alive memento of an era what is yet still unprocessed and still brings up a lot of questions and not necessarily such an inspirational source what easily gives itself, because these are not nice things, but still bring up interesting and useful questions.
- Here you got inspired from homespun, how was here the design process?
- Here two things came together. I was interested for a longer time about what kind of graphic pattern are the surfaces next to each other in the city form and the way I could utilize the leather scrap pieces. This was the first surface I made which this technique; from the cut-out elements I created an interesting material. The topic developed like this.

- Lot of people say that it is onerous to put together an application. In what extent does it pull back the designers' freedom that they have a certain frame?
- Here the difficulty was that there was no any frame in terms of the theme. Central Europe is a big framework. Short period of time is given to make the new collection. How the material behaves, how the colors are matching... it is a little difficult.
- The short period of time is the difficulty. Also by the own collection we give ourselves a framework otherwise we would totally run out of time, but not this much quick and fixed. I rather like to make my design first from paper, I don't design so much in drawing. If I have to draw first and realize that later, that limits me a little.
- And the purchase of material, how do you choose which leather to make your collection from?
- We start to find material afterwards which makes the task more difficult.
- Is the uncertainty of the financial refund restricts the design of the new collection?
- This is only posterior. We implement from our own expenses and afterwards they refund the money. There is a certain financial framework and we think within that.
- Did the preparation for the competition change your design style? Did it change something on your attitude?
- Yes, this came out rather in the university, that I'm interested in these things. We also had such classes where from the decoration of the saddle we learned a lot of things. We also had to reconstruct folk art objects. This took me to a direction that it is worth to deal with folk art.
- What else are you designing besides the bags?
- Smaller cases, belts, watch straps, basically I'm interested in everything what can be made from leather.
- Fashion repeats itself, what do you think, what can be the reasons behind this revival?
- Basically that we turn back to the old traditions because we see that there is a tremendous amount of information in the world, the tempo is quick, a lot of people have desire for getting out of this and find a visible, tactile and understandable part of the culture which give them a little bit nostalgic, safe feeling. So if something is natural and I know where is it coming from, also food, if I see and I can understand how was it made because it is not made with laser... it is not the end product of a great process, if I know who made it, these all evoke a more human scale world.

- Do you find it important to reflect with your products on the current social, cultural changes?
- I think it happens also unconsciously, you cannot avoid these effects. This comes through also unconsciously. It can be seen in the people work and then it is worth to emphasize or keep going in that direction.
- What do you think, does it has any effect and if any what is the effect of this trend on the Hungarian design and designers?
- It determines more what the designers design and the folk art is not only visible in one collection
- This is absolutely typical about us, because the collections after that – the kasita – was inspired by the surface of braided objects. There in the same way the geometric patterns come back. That collection was further thought about. In long term it can have such effect that the designers will use these more in their work just not so obviously. Less literally... in the competition there were a lot of works which formulated too many the things selected from the inspirational sources too much literally. When someone want to deal with it also in the future and use it in his/her coming collections than it is more successful If it is not too much costume like; not obvious that the inspirational source was folk art. But rather it is at the border; it reminds about folk art, but it should be a contemporary dress for contemporary people therefore it is important to be wearable and insertable into an average wardrobe.
- Yes, it is successful when you look at a subject and it is not folk art what comes in your mind at once.

### Interview with Je suis belle

- I'm a cultural economics student at the Erasmus University in Rotterdam. For my final thesis topic I choose the relationship between cultural heritage and fashion. I'm primarily interested in what is the motivation of Hungarian designers for applying Hungarian cultural heritage motives/ techniques in their collections. What can be the reasons behind this these days spectacularly alive trend and whether it is going to be alive for a long term of not. You founded your brand, Je suis belle, at the end of 2005 beginning of 2006. At which stage of brand building are you now? Which markets are in your focus?

- This has an evolution by us. When we started it no one knew anything about how this works, we did not have examples in front of us, so we started to learn it by ourselves. At the very beginning we targeted the Hungarian market and from this we developed an expansion to other European markets. And then on 2009-2010 there was a change, at the time of the crisis... first we felt it in Europe and afterwards also in Hungary. Then we returned to the Hungarian market and we started to become stronger here. And this – that we took a step back that time – turned out so good in our life that now we get requests from the markets and it is not necessarily us who have to look for market opportunities. This is very strange, and it started in the last 4 months. Now we are in negotiation with a British distributor and also with an Asian distributor and both of them came into picture that we weren't looking for it. So now we are working both for national and international markets.
- And how many employees do you have?
- Officially 1
- And temporarily for projects?
- Yes, approximately 10-15 people are working for us
- Exactly at the time of change you participated in the Re-button!
- Yes
- At what stage of your career were you at that time?
- Those times were much diversified. Everything became very unstable and also the Re-button seemed to be such unstable happening. We did not know how is this going to turn out.
- Path searching?
- Yes, we did not know whether it will bring positive or negative vibe for the national fashion but we participated because from one hand we did not wanted to be left out and on other hand we were curious hoe is it going to be, where is it going to develop?
- The fact that you did not wanted to be left out means that this competition represents the Hungarian design life?
- That time for sure not. The first was not representative. That was a very big rehearsal with a lot of sicknesses, and with a lot of positive things, but we felt that we want to be a part of it, try it, that what is it really all about. I don't regret that we took part in it, because I like very much the design work we prepared for the competition, but it



bothers me that the competition was not appropriately organized and it did not give that time the right message.

- Do you think that this competition affects the Hungarian designers that it tries to guide them to one direction? What is its impact?
- Very mixed. Almost in every year it has different impact, because I think that the competition announcement this year was relatively better made. It is more sympathetic to me that the inspirational sources, the topic are not restricted only to the Hungarian heritage, but it still raises a lot of question marks. The announcement last year and the year before contained many things which were not going to the right direction and our – the generation where I design – aim is to make fashion the part of the every days, to make it a such a consumer product like food or sports products or technical products. But the first two competitions did not really help us in this, because it was better focused on the creation of such collections which are all about spectacle, attraction and less about wearability not even talking about ergonomics...
- Under this you also understand that – I was talking with Rita Halasi and she said that – certain works were primitive in a sense that they apply the exact same motives in the design. I don't know whether this is going to be presented also in the future competitions.
- This remains a question. Two years ago we participated, last year I was in the jury. It is very difficult, also difficult in the jury, because not matter that I know, that there is a limit on how many people can go to the second round, I did not reach the half of the given number. I could say no, but doesn't matter if the others said yes to it. So it has many factors which designs make it to the final.
- In your website I read about your mission and the values you build around your brand and it was there that you consider traditional techniques and want to give contemporary frame to folk art. This is absolutely matching with the values of Re-button competition but how is it realized in the collections which you are not making for the Re-button?
- This is much hidden; I think it cannot be seen at first sight. It has a place during the design process and we used them mainly in the winter collections, when we are directly looking for such traditional techniques for the different surfaces, connections which were developed long time ago in the practical peasant culture. We finely apply these and sometimes it cannot even be recognized, because it is just used during the

technical process. Sometimes we visibly enlarge it, but then due to the change of scale it loses its traditional character. We use it in more steps, what for a laic not sure to appear for the first sight. We don't use it for classical motive generation, but rather at the structure and at the process.

- And these are taught or you are researching after it?
- No, we find these. We go a lot to do shopping on markets and we go a lot for excursion in the whole country. I like travelling, when the weather is better than we go somewhere in Hungary and when we find something interesting we make its photo, we see how is it made...
- Do you think that this competition helps in giving continuous importance for cultural heritage in fashion?
- It would be good, because a lot of values can be brought up in an application which not sure that everybody knows. I think, that the announcement this year is good, because it calls the attention on so many things. Not only the Matyo embroidery is out tradition but our traditiona can also be the object culture of the 80s, the ambiance of the panel flats from the 80s what is forgotten by today, because it transformed completely, mainly the intellectual elite, but it is still part of our tradition.
- Or it is less obvious to apply it in design.
- Yes, because it seems too close in time
- You gave the name Tunde for your collection for the Re-button.I read that you like to get inspiration from the literature.
- Yes, from everywhere
- Apart from this what else was cultural heritage element in your collection?
- Good question, I will not be able to answer that, because Dalma brought the inspiration from the folk art, and I know there is a landscape from where she collected these clothing embroidered with thick red thread. We applied it in a way that we embroidered our own name in the apparels and what my favorite cloth from that collection is a white dress which is embroidered with red ribbons. The same motive what is embroidered with the thick thread. I like it very much because from the one hand there is a material change in it which makes the motive sculptural and the ribbon makes the motive interesting rampant. And in addition also in the ribbon there is a change of scale; at the top it begins very thin and at the bottom it ends in a very thick ribbon which changes the silhouette and the shape.

- So also in the shape, in the technique and in the colors the folkloric elements are presented.
- Yes, the colors were only what we applied without changes.
- So, the main inspirational source was the landscape and...
- The technique of the landscape was the inspirational source of the technique, the inspiration source of the spectacle and the underlying story of the collection was the Csongor and Tünde. Mainly the television movie that was made in the 70s. I think I saw it one week before we started to work on the idea and I told Dalma that this is such a funny and sarcastic literary work, because I read it for the last time in high school, but then it was obligatory reading, and now when I watched the movie I realized the joke, the tease of Vorosmarty for his problem that bothered him. I liked it very much.
- It got a different meaning?
- Yes, different, all the time
- How was your creation process? How long it was, what kind of help you got for it?
- We have to do it always relatively quickly.
- According to the deadlines
- But for that we had around about... I know that at the first application it was strange, it was difficult that it was announced too late and we had to submit it very early. All of its phase was very quick. The design plans were made very quickly. We put the topic together quickly from the different inspirations. The drawing almost showed what we wanted to realize and at the implementation we made refinements at the choice of material, the proportions, the trials of techniques... as far as I remember we had a month to put it together. But of course we put it together within 3 days.
- It was a crash course
- Yes, because till then that one month was all about figuring out the concept and then the implementation in the fine work, but in that we only take part in that extent that we coordinate the people who work on it. Then we try it and finalize things.
- And when did you grow so big that you hire people?
- Right after the diploma. We had to. We were very less then, maybe together with Dalma we were only 5-6. But we knew that we have to hire a dress maker who is with us 8 hours a day. And yes, half year after the diploma we hired someone.
- So you had help at this task

- Yes
- Was this only the research of Dalma?
- At this project it was.
- When you are working with old techniques that you see how old ladies do it...
- Yes, also
- Or you conclude from an apparel how was it made...
- Yes, also
- And in what other ways?
- From books. There are books from which it is more difficult because they are not so well organized. But there are really good international books mainly in English, or Japanese books – also in English – where are a lot of techniques collected. The different English, Japanese, American, Central-European, etc traditional techniques are nicely described, illustrated, showing what should be stitched and where, where the hole should put... and then we start experiment with it.
- On an international market does the fact that you are researching and applying Hungarian techniques makes your brand unique? Do you think that the Hungarian technique is unique or in every country the same techniques are present?
- All in all yes, they are present. The fact is, that we (Hungarians) are very proud at it, and we like to say it like this, but is it present in every countries; they are used in every countries by everyone from the small designers to the bigger designers.
- This is an open knowledge base. When you go to conduct a research you will not find anything what was not found, applied before?
- I don't say that, because everything can be transformed into garments. In the focus of the current trends and the current design philosophies is that you can apply anything or you create new traditions, such traditions which come from a totally different environment, therefore any time something completely new can be created not to talk about the lot of different materials made these days. The innovative materials, the materials made with nanotechnology or the materials invented in hyper super laboratories are creating a lot of new possibilities in design. Therefore I think this is not a closed chapter, but rather a continuously open one and I think the consumers also expect from the designers to be up-to-date in this and always bring novelty.
- I think, throughout the years at a certain extent your style also changes. Is it possible that the experience gained during the competition, the research work is changing...

- No, I don't think that, rather that we are aging and that we are changing and how we live life, what are the important things for us. I think these things are changing our brand – at least I this is my experience.
- How do you like to experience being a Hungarian designer? Would you like to emphasize also abroad that you are Hungarian designer, so therefore different from others or you would like to...
- Be globalized designers? I have to say both. Both have their negative and positive sights, but I don't say that at any price beat our breast that we are Hungarian designers, but there are such situations when it is good to. There are situations when we emphasize it less, because than that is the appropriate. But even if we don't emphasize it, I think in all or almost all Hungarian designers collections the Eastern-European origin can be felt. If not the Hungarian origin, the Easter-European origin for sure. I think that cannot be bolt out.
- What is its manifestation?
- I think in more things. From the one hand this region is very ironic, and here the culture of Northern and Southern nations makes a mix. More and more I observe that Hungary is like an intersection between the two styles. Many like here that Scandinavian minimalism and the folklore oriented style but at the same time the same people are dying for the Italian luxury products and the Italian brands. Even if they are not saying it. I think this double interest can only be found here, elsewhere in Europe it does not exist.
- So the Hungarian designers are differentiated by their versatility?
- I think so and also that a Hungarian designer has to learn how to survive. It is not so difficult to give out stitching work, but purchasing material is very difficult... very difficult.
- From abroad?
- Yes, even if it is from Hungary they also order it from abroad. In Hungary sadly there is not textile production, if there is it is very poor quality.
- I read that it is also your goal to produce clothing in a small quantity.
- We don't really like to and would like to produce more than 100 pieces from one clothing. We don't really want to change this in the future.
- More order requests means more collection?

- No, we could like to keep this routine up. Our brand is producing small unit number and also with this we want to increase our value. Although I don't think, that this can be realized, but a limited unit number yes – even if it is not 100 units but it will definitely be a limited number.
- Everyone should not wear Je suis belle.
- I'm not afraid of that. But it has a lot of reasons why we don't want this. With the construction we are working now we could not even realize more 10.000 unit numbers.
- And are you thinking of changing the construction in the future?
- That happens continuously. But we are quite young company and it is difficult to advance, because we are trying to develop what we want very slowly. I don't think that it is impossible to realize or there is going to be any problems, but there is still a long way to go.
- Slowly but safely
- Yes, or I don't know. The good thing is that we don't have bigger loans what would obstruct us in doing what we want. With Dalma this is now our biggest aim; not to be dependent from an external factor and be able to do what we like; such collections what we want and not which are dictated by someone. We have time to do that in the future.
- In 2011 you took part in the competition and in 2012 you were already sitting in the jury. How did you get this request?
- I teach at the MOME for 5 years now. And one of the advisor of the competition in the university which delegated me for this position.
- To go back to the design work; do you introduce novelty in the technique or you apply it as it is?
- No, we introduce changes. For example in the last year's Winter collection there was a material, what if you look at on the internet, is a salmon color dress and it looks like that there is a fan integrated in it; it is clipped together at certain points, it is very similar to 'darazsolás' technique which is a very old technique but it gives the same result; certain wideness of the material can be narrowed or joined. I didn't know that this does not exist or I did not do research about whether it was made before or not but it turned out that no one knew how this was made. Even experts not. Also in the university none of my colleagues knew how it was made, everyone was asking what

that is. And I told them that I can't believe that you don't know it, it is so simple, you should fold it like this, ironed, sewed, and it is done. So simple it is, but seems like that it was not so self-evident. And because so many people did not know it, I think, this should have contained some innovation, but it was not conscious, although we are trying to introduce innovations in these things.

- When you are choosing colors to a collection is it affected by an external effect?
- This happens on the basis of emotions – I think. We have an idea about the colors what we would like, than we put it together, apply it. I think it is purely emotional.
- And to return to the technique... the technique can be sewing, or the application of the material
- We don't do that so much
- When we talk about technique what does it contain in your work?
- I think mainly the sewing techniques, but also different spinning, weaving, stitching techniques, lace or net making, the different coloring techniques; batik – the different reserved batik originated from Indonesia or the blue dye – the different motive generation, painting, printing and alike, and the different leather techniques, clips, punching holes, so there are many things, but in our case it is mainly the different sewing techniques.
- And these are mainly taught in the university?
- No, rather the designing process is taught in the university and its steps, methods. The techniques to be used are found and selected by the students.
- It is part of the own research work. So there isn't any subject teaching the motives, techniques or the cultural heritage?
- No, it is rather a task. There are tasks which not directly but indirectly suggest the students to research such techniques. If they don't realize it, I tell them that they should research cultural heritage. I give a task to the students for three years now, one of my favorites, which is based on this. The first task for the first year students is for example to make plate ('nyomó dúc') manually; they need to carve it out. They need to research how it needs to be made and used; with which paint does it work, on what they need to pay attention. These plates are very beautiful woodcarvings. After this task they have another which is to research the structure formation; the traditional techniques like weaving, spinning which can be adapted to their task from folkloric techniques.

- This is Hungarian national technique?
- I want them to apply Hungarian technique, because they live here, from this region they can get most of the knowledge. Here they can try the techniques with a craftsman, it can be showed how the technique is utilized. I don't like when they chose something what cannot be experienced right away. Therefore I encourage them to look for local techniques and not something coming from a hidden spot of another continent. But mostly Hungarian...
- This is encouraging them to apply...
- Yes, because it is easily available and in Hungary many people apply, preserve these traditions. Even if no consciously, maybe only from hobby, or maybe because they got used to of doing it during the last 80 years.
- Not only in open air museums
- No, a lot of students are from the countryside and therefore they can develop such systems that even with a group they can go to see how it works. And in higher grades it is only up to them whether they apply anything from these or not.
- And by you it is a conscious choice or even an unconsciously followed path to apply folkloric elements in your design.
- I think it is part of our philosophy because it helps us a lot in making our collection richer and with this it is more difficult to figure out what is the collection about. I think in this profession it can bring a very high quality, because these techniques are mainly handmade, it is difficult to mechanize them, which implies that they only look good when they were made with high standards. If it is made otherwise that can be seen at first sight. So therefore I think that this brings high quality when someone makes them with high attention, sufficient quality execution, because it adds high value to it. I think for people it is still important that something is made by hand. It can be seen that it was made by hand which gives a good feeling to it.
- Already before the competition you applied these elements.
- For example the diploma work of Dalma was all about 'darazsolas' technique. She found this technique for the first time then and in all pieces of her diploma work it had its own place. She used it to generate shapes and not to decorate the clothing. And at our 2009 Autumn-Winter collection we used a different 'darazsolas' technique. The idea was generated by a very beautiful, modern, and very innovative material made with chain knitting and looped in a way that a weaving motive is seen on the surface.



We found a 'darazsolas' motif of American origin which is imitating weaving. The contrast of the two materials was very beautiful.

- Usually it is Dalma who brings the technical idea and you the concept?
- This is changing always. For example last year in a collection it was in the other way around. There I figured out the technique and Dalma also applied it. Sometimes in a collection we try out 3-4 things and finally none of them stay in the final collection, because only the best ideas remain.
- At the beginning of a design process you bring up ideas and then how is the picture starting to get clearer?
- Usually when we start the execution process. We approximately design a collection
- This means that you draw it?
- We draw it and approximately adjust the materials to it. Then we start to sew it from maketts. At the end of the first round when almost everything is ready we look through the whole collection and we are looking for the missing pieces, or pieces from which we feel there is too much. From this we have approximately 3 rounds, when we look through it again and again and we continuously change on it. It takes 203 months till we end a design process.
- How many pieces does a collection have?
- We don't have collections with big unit number. For example the current Spring-Summer collection is a very small collection. From the one hand it has a digital printed part where if I remember right we have 7 outfits which means approximately 9-10 pieces and to this we made another part of the collection which is 12 more outfit with 25-30 pieces. In the winter collection we had 30-35 pieces which means 24-25 outfits.
- Do you get specific orders from customers?
- Yes, we get, but we don't really satisfy them. We usually say, when someone has a unique request that we make anything what we already made by now. And if it is good like this we start talking with the customer whether she wants to have a bit longer, shorter or with another cut, but from zero we never start to create for an order if it is a personal order. And we also don't have time capacity to do it. Last year for example we did not have wedding gown request – I did not regretted – but this year for example we already got the fourth request, who know how we work and they want to have our design.

- And when you are looking for literature around which you build your collection are you looking for Hungarian literature, or it does not matter?
- In fact I'm never looking for it. It finds me once, something touches me, because its train of thoughts is similar to what I'm thinking at the moment. What important is that something should inspire me to think of a design on which I can go on. This can be a movie or anything else. Once cycling in the forest inspired me. Very strange.
- Usually the idea of the next collection comes from your experiences, but when there is a such competition a lot of designers adjust their style to the topic itself.
- We were trying to give such an answer what is the Je suis belle's answer to the competition.
- In your case we can't even say that the competition changed anything on your designer attitude.
- Throughout the history fashion trends come back to fashion again and again. We are in a period when folklore came back in fashion.
- Yes, and not only in a close circle, but at every level of the population.
- What do you think, what are the reasons behind this?
- I never really thought about it. Because when it came back to fashion for the first time I thought about it as a political tool. But since then I experienced many things which goes beyond its political perspective. Even such social classes which are not very interested in politics started to follow this fashion, those classes which are more focused on other things then politics, for example their own sustainment. I think people liked it because it is colorful and happy which has a lot of positive messages – not only being Hungarian –, but also that it is a very rich culture, very happy culture.
- It was not popular to wear folkloric clothes and now it got a different meaning.
- I think it got a new meaning now, because, I remember, that some years ago wearing a folkloric clothing meant straight radical views and now this message is not so much obvious, why did somebody do that. Of course there are always such pieces which will always represent radical views when people look at it, but this is not the most important aspect.
- I read that your clothes are always reflecting on the current social, cultural environment. On what are you reflecting these days?
- The Autumn-Winter collection was the first such collection where we openly stated things even for ourselves. One of these is that it is absolutely positive message what

we want to bring with our clothing and I think this is a big reflection to that that whatever happens, what really matters is that you feel good, be happy, smile and this help you through everything. This was partially reflection to the designers, who create in Hungary and represent a forceful, aggressive style. I don't really like this style which estranging from people; is not available, it is not wearable; those are not comfortable, wearable pieces. So from the one hand this is a reflection to that. The current Autumn-Winter collection also has this message; it is not necessary to dress someone into black and put on it huge angles and whatever in order to be stylish and fashionable. Our main message these days is to look at the difficulties which can arise anywhere which maximal optimism.

- You stated before that the crisis brings the attitude of following traditions, is this reflecting that the values...
- Yes also that, mainly the values as you say. One of the very strange affect of the crisis was that the role of traditional clothing elements which were becoming forgot or becoming the privilege of a certain social class strengthened just like the role of the good quality materials; leather or the different cottons, the long lasting materials. I thought of this when I made that statement. Everything which can be connected to traditions will come to the fore and in which lies a lot of values, but I don't only mean it about dressing but also about anything else.
- What do you think what kind of affect does this competition this trend has on the Hungarian fashion?
- Till now it does not really has any.
- And on the designers?
- It is difficult to say
- And what could be?
- This can even have a stimulatory affect, but it is difficult to answer, because during the last one-two years the number of fashion designers in Hungary since the last one-two years is growing exponentially. Currently the market started to fill up, by now there were some 'bigger balls' and now 'small balls' started to fill it up. Can happen that some of them will get bigger, some of them smaller. Mainly the Hungarian designers are going to be interested in what can they achieve and where can they place themselves in the market. Designers who start brand building these days have a much difficult situation than we had some years ago and designers had before us – that time

there were less designers – and now I think the designers are primarily interested in where can they place themselves in the market and only afterwards will think about their actual values. I feel that everybody who starts his carrier now is very homogeneous. When I talk about our design medium – with whom we started 5-6 years ago: USE, Tuan, Nanushka... This is a difficult question. We four who started that time and also Dora Konsanszky and those who followed us after, but I think we four who started the career building that time found very good positions in order to not fall back later. But these days we are also not representing such unity like 5-6 years ago. Everybody choose unique financial ways. The problem is that we did not have examples in front of us what we could have follow therefore everybody's way is a experimentation and everybody started to experiment in different directions. These are such easily changeable processes in Hungary.

- So whether the folkloric element will remain in fashion is to be seen in the future.
- Or, this is the less important concern not.

### Interview with INER

- I'm a cultural economics student at the Erasmus University in Rotterdam. For my final thesis topic I choose the relationship between cultural heritage and fashion. I'm primarily interested in what is the motivation of Hungarian designers for applying Hungarian cultural heritage motives/ techniques in their collections. What can be the reasons behind this these days spectacularly alive trend and whether it is going to be alive for a long term of not. I know that you founded your brand right after you got your diploma.
- Not really right after.
- In 2010?
- I graduated in 2010 and... the brand exists for 1 year now, because we debuted on the second Re-button! With the new collection as INER. So 1 year ago, but it was never a question for me whether I will have a brand and maybe even the name was not a question. Due to my partner that time the question of the brand name arise, because it only comes from my name, but I did not give it up because this was always my desire.
- And now at which stadium of the brand building are you?
- In fact I have another partner now; Dora Debreceni. She is a model. Sadly for some time now we did not updated our website... She is a fashion marketer, we absolutely

complete each other. INER is now a company, we are only two in it. We don't have employee yet, because we could not afford it now and we don't want from anyone to work for us for free until unless he/she feels such dedication and enthusiasm. In a lot of cases we would need a third person who helps us but we don't have anyone like that yet.

- And occasionally do you give out work?
- There is a tailoring company with whom we work together in Pest. They work with very good professionals, they are very flexible which is very important these days in terms of payments and they make very good quality, we are very satisfied to work with them also in the future.
- Are you only designing for national market or do you have requests from abroad?
- We definitely would like to open towards abroad. For the time being we want to become strong in Hungary and once we realize that we want to open towards international markets. It is more and more obvious for us since the Spring-Summer collection is in the shops for a month now that the selling is very difficult in Hungary although comparing to other national designers we have good prices, the affordable category in spite of this due to some reasons it does not work in a way we want it. A solution could be the webshop which is available from everywhere. The best would be to have an own store, but we are not at that stage yet.
- Your partner is doing the international marketing?
- Yes, basically she. Once we can grow that big that we can work together with a foreign expert or with a Hungarian expert living, working abroad that of course. But till now Dore is making all these.
- You applied in 2011 and in 2012 you presented your first collection with your brand and now you again applied.
- True
- When you first applied you were right after your diploma at the very beginning of your career...
- Yes, basically I graduated a year before the competition. One year after the graduation went by mainly path searching. I'm from Somogy county and after finishing my studies I went home, but sadly at home the possibilities are equal to zero. I had to realize that I don't have future there; I had to come to Budapest. That time I applied to the Fashion creator television talent show and in between Re-button! also came. When

the announcement became clear and I knew the topic, it was obvious for me to apply with my diploma work. I asked whether it is possible to apply with an already existing collection and when they said of course I applied. I would have been crazy to miss out such a great opportunity. And it turned out very lucky for me. Thank God.

- In your website I did not really find anything about your brand's vision, mission. What I found is that you design special, awareness raising, extravagant, elegant clothes and that in your products tradition is mixed with modernity. How is this manifested?
- Sadly... I also talk about our weakness; the definition of our mission is still missing. We did not define in some sentences yet that from what are we who we are. We feel big necessity for that, and I should have done it at the beginning of our foundation; what we are and what are we aiming to achieve. But what you are saying is correct. This is manifested in such a way that the Hungarian heritage; motive and shapes in some extent came back in our design also in the second collection – in the first collection of INER which manifested in ruffles, and tailoring patterns. In the future it is most probably will be always present. In bigger or in smaller extent, but in some extent for sure. What is also a characteristic of our brand; the strength of INER is that we will always be feminine. This is our main aspect next to being extravagant we are a little...
- Unconventional?
- This is a very good word, thank you, next to this we always want to remain feminine, so that is it. Once we will make a definition I will share it with you, with everyone, because this is really a big mistake.
- So for the first competition you applied because you had stagnation in your career, you were in path searching process and you had this opportunity to apply.
- Absolutely.
- At the second one you were invited.
- Right
- To show your collection and this year why did you apply?
- Basically the reason is that we want to get to the catwalk, we want people to hear our name, to see us, basically that is why. Of course to win an award is also not negligible, but that is not the first aim but rather to be on the catwalk. But we are very honored

that we got invited as brand and we can present our Spring-Summer collection on the catwalk of Re-button!

- And you are also in competition
- Yes. We hope that we can be on the catwalk two times that day.
- What do you think; does this competition represent the Hungarian design sphere? Who count in this field is present, or...
- Absolutely. Specially at the third time, because now the applications are put in two categories. There are the starts and the established designers or those who already showed success. We applied in the starter category because it is a criterion of the old hands to have already 4 collections and we only have 3 yet. We did not want to generate misunderstanding from it or any problems. But among the big designers are those who count in the field, the real big brands; USE, Dora Konsanszky...
- And what do you think; does this competition bring changes in the design trend? I am thinking here about the survival of the traditional elements in future collections.
- Yes, I definitely think so. I think, this is valuable thing for us and we can any time get inspiration from it because it is inexhaustible source and obviously everybody is applying, understanding it differently, therefore it is worth to get inspiration from it. Really novel, innovative and at the same time something which is old therefore good things can be created like this.
- Your collection made for Re-button! got the name Metallic folklore and in this year the Loyalty name. What I see at the first as a laic is the use of traditional shape. I don't know whether you had other cultural heritage elements in it? The colors not...
- Not
- In the technique?
- I absolutely concentrated on the shape as you show it; feminine, hourglass silhouette, wide on the top, the waist is narrow, and the hip is big from the skirt. And I was working with rivets with which I was trying to replace the embroidery, the appliqué, but of course with the rivets I could not work in the same way as I could have with the embroidery. I had to adjust the motives accordingly. This was the design all about.
- And this year?
- This year also the Central-European, Hungarian is the topic and I thought – I'm big dog-fancier, I love dogs – and why not, there are more dog types which are ancient Hungarian... firstly I thought to work with 5 dog types; puli, komondor, agar, mudi...

- Vizsla
- Vizsla, yes it was also among, but then the collection could not have been unified; 5 dog types in 5 clothes, I don't think it would have work well together, therefore we reduced it into two. And maybe there is a little gimmick in it, because everyone loves dogs and so it attracts people, I think. But how the result will be and how it will look at the catwalk and how much will it represent what I wanted it to represent, that is a different question, but I hope it will.
- And in this apart from the given topic is there any other hidden element?
- I think not, I did not over thought it.
- At the first design your inspirational source was Somogy County. You are from there, therefore I think you did not had to think too much about the topic, it was self-evident.
- Right
- And now the topic came from your love of dogs
- I get inspirations from myself. I'm a very instinctive person, I act instinctively, and I think this was also like that. I was thinking a lot about this task; what should I get inspiration from, what should be the starting point and once it came; the dogs, this is so obvious, there was no sense to further think about it, because it is so much given; I love them. I hope we can bring dog to the catwalk too; a real one.
- How was our design process? How long it last, did you have help in it? Mainly at the one inspired by your county.
- That was a longer process because that was my diploma work. That was preceded by a big research work, I was collecting.
- You went to the research field, or...
- Yes, I was, I was researching, making pictures, which were really preceded by a research work. According to that I narrowed it down, designed, and shaped the whole. But I usually design by myself, I don't have help. I'm also not such type who would bear it. So I like to be on my own in this. And at this task it was quicker. I reduced the topic to dogs, puli and komondor and afterwards I started to collect materials about it and so the design process started. This time I wanted to design wearable clothes, not only concentrating on the spectacle.
- To prepare for a competition like this requires big resources. Do you have possibility to model the clothes and from that you are making selection?



- The Design Terminal is sending some money as a refund for the finalists what is covering the expenses, but such a collection requires a lot of money, especially when you want to work with a tailoring company – since there is not enough time to prepare for such a competition. Luckily there is a tailoring company who this time undertook to make the collection for free which is a great help.
- Pre-empting the success
- Yes, but almost the cost of materials is more than what we will get back after the final
- And surely if you don't invest enough into materials the result will not be so good
- Right
- Especially at the first collection how did you choose the features of the collection? You wanted to preserve the shape, but what were the innovations, changes?
- The rivets, metal accessories, I think, the color – black and white – and I adjusted the form to it. Like this I think we got a really novel think but at the same time when you look at it its connection to cultural heritage reveals at first sight. The collection is made in Hungarian style but the used fabric, accessories made it novel. For a lot of time many people asked this collection from me and put it in another context which gave it a new meaning.
- And how did the idea develop; you had by that time a developed style to which you adjusted the folklore of Somogy or you adjusted your style to the folklore?
- That time I was really interested in Hungarian heritage 1.5 year before I made that actual collection. First I researched the motives, that time I made printed T-shirts then I mixed it with street art and then my diploma work came. So I think that I already had the style and I just adjusted the folklore to it; the shapes of the folkloric dresses.
- Are there such motives, technique what you discovered during the preparation process for the competition and you want apply it also in the future?
- Despite of the fact that I like this topic, I will not use it throughout my career, but I don't know...
- Are you researching technologies?
- Not at the moment, but that time I researched it, I experienced, tried things. At that collection I was working totally different, because I was working with accessories, so I was not using handcraft techniques. I put every element by hands on the clothes, therefore it has big value and we can call it haute couture, because it was made by hand. I put the elements one by one on the clothes with glue or hammer.

- And where is that collection now?
- It is at my place... not at the nobles place, cannot even say it, in my bed frame. But imagine; now two pieces from the collection will be sent to the Netherlands for a huge exhibition and fashion event, which put fetishism in its focus, to exhibit them. It is very honoring. The Dutch Vogue is for example one of their main sponsors; this event will be a large scale event.
- So this collection is still attracting attention
- Absolutely and now I am continuously in touch with the organizers and they said that they searched for such designers like also me all over the world for this exhibition. This is very honoring, so it still has *raison d'être*.
- It is also interesting that what is it what differentiates the Hungarian designers in the international design scene from the other designers. Not necessarily the use of cultural heritage motives, but I think this is a big differentiation point, because the others don't know it so well, it is not yet discovered
- Surely they were selecting people according to their topic and chose designers who are the best in that topic.
- Are you going to participate on the event?
- I really would like to
- Are you planning in the future to design in similar topic?
- It is possible, now concretely I don't have such design plan in mind but it cannot be excluded. Basically I'm open to it; there are a lot of possibilities in it.
- And what rather inspire you are the motives and the shapes, right?
- Yes, I always consider first the shapes, forms. I think this is always doing to be a main feature of mine and also of INER.
- And when you are working on motives what do you consider in it; how it could be transformed or how could it be put on a modern dress?
- Rather how can it be put on a modern dress; what form I should give to the motive in order to be adjustable to the environment. When I was making the screen printing then it wasn't like that I put a motive as it was on a T-shirt but I mixed it, I added to it. I draw it manually with using a lot of sources, I made it playful and I put that on a T-shirt.

- Why do you like using cultural heritage in your design? As Hungarian designer you feel the necessity to get inspiration from it or you see extra value in it because it is worth to use it?
- It is worth to use it because there are a lot of possibilities in it.
- Fashion repeats itself; what do you think what can be the reasons behind folklore becoming fashionable again?
- I think the Re-button also. I see that since the first Re-button! it became very popular. That time many designers in many different ways used it, many people see possibilities in it and I think this is in focus since the first competition.
- What do you think, what is its affect on the Hungarian fashion and fashion designers? Does it have any affect?
- That much for sure that everybody will have a Hungarian style collection. I think basically this will not shake the Hungarian fashion.

### Interview with the Ille-Olla

- I'm a cultural economics student at the Erasmus University in Rotterdam. For my final thesis topic I choose the relationship between cultural heritage and fashion. I'm primarily interested in what is the motivation of Hungarian designers for applying Hungarian cultural heritage motives/ techniques in their collections; the trend what is very spectacular these days.
- Really? You see people in such clothes?
- Yes, you don't?
- No, but these days I don't really go out much.
- And that what can be the reasons behind this these days spectacularly alive trend and whether it is going to be alive for a long term of not. You are leading the Ille-Olla brand. I frankly did not find many information about its foundation.
- I founded the company, the Ille-Olla brand in 2009. This is an own brand, first it was only me in the company, I started like that, but now I work together with my sister and there are tasks what we give to wameworkers; for projects, when I need photographer...
- Are you also giving out sewing work?
- Yes, that is what I give to wameworkers.

- How many people are involved in it throughout the preparation of a new collection?
- At the moment 3 but there was also 5 before. It is varying. Now it is going to be an enlargement, so most probably more people are going to be involved. We also need to prepare the basis for that.
- At what stage of brand building are you now?
- Almost at the beginning, the image is still to be critically created. The orientation and the style is created but image pictures still need to be made, we did not have much time to make them. And now this will be.
- To which markets are you designing at first place?
- National and international; I have national partners and also foreign partners from the middleclass people who are open for design.
- And where do you sell in Hungary?
- In our own studio, in Eger we have a partner, in the WAMP, at different events, but mainly in the own studio. Abroad we have partners in Italy, Canada, and Switzerland and in the Czech Republic.
- They found you?
- Yes, and mostly they are Hungarians – only the Canadian not – but the others are emigrated Hungarians. They see that the creative industry is getting stronger in Hungary. So these are also products to choose from.
- And from where did they hear from you?
- I'm there in a lot of places, on many blogs, design fairs the Ille-Olla is present, we made more partners at the WAMP, or I don't even know how they found us. Now it is now even me but rather my sister who manages this. Luckily I figured out a style what is sellable, has a good price, but it is something extra then general clothing but still wearable. And the feedback for the quality is also very good. We had such partner who found us in the WAMP or through our partners.
- Many designers which whom I was talking had difficulties in the expansion because they were not courage enough to invest so much of money in clothing giving for consignment.
- With foreigners we rather agree on buying the clothing, if they want it in consignment we send the first some pieces to them and when it sells they order further pieces. We have such a agreement with our Italian partner. The Czech partner is paying 30% in advance and the rest after the sell.

- When you applied for the Re-button you were at which stage of your career?
- At the beginning. Since then many things happened. I was making maternity dresses for 3 years and this was my first collection which was not maternity dress.
- And what motivated you in applying?
- The presence definitely, the challenge; I like to apply for competitions very much, I live with all the possibilities – except these days next to Doma (her baby). The challenge is very good and these competitions are possibilities for finishing a project within deadline. For me it is important to have a deadline. What also motivated me in applying was the use of Hungarian motives, because in 2011 I made a Transylvanian folkloric collection not only for women but also for men and children.
- And this was before the competition?
- Yes it was before the application, but I applied the exact same things what I applied for the competition. I worked on the Transylvanian folkloric costumes because I was in collaboration with a bag designer boy who is Transylvanian.
- Esztany...
- Yes, with him we formed a designer couple, we were partners because we did not give up our brands, but we opened a studio and that time he already had this topic and for me it was just right because I like the stripes, and we had a very similar way of thinking.
- I saw your video
- Oh yes, that also and in addition we had 1000 kilometers between us. After a while it was not good, because he was not here and I had to rule the studio alone, but the collaboration was very good with him.
- I saw that on your website there is possibility for interactive design what you could develop within your own style in order to avoid the extra wishes which would be irrelevant to your brand.
- This came concretely that the coat system I developed... I launched one jacket style to the market in more colors; 4 colors, 5 sizes, and then I got the individual requests; to have it in different color, with zips instead of buttons and after a while it felt very bad to get all these requests so I developed this system. I give them possibility while I show them my system, I give different possibilities. Every year there is an offered collection the customers can choose from, but if they say that they want to have a little

shorter, longer, with smaller collar, button instead of zips, red button instead of golden that they can make their choice.

- And around what values did you build your brand?
- The tradition is not specially, but the systematic approach for sure. Apart from this who is the women I vision; she is a talented, adventurous, not boring person who is lively who had her own ideas, and is creative enough to decide what she wants for example on a coat. Because a lot of times it is even difficult to decide about the color, size... so basically also the variability is a big value and the adventurous nature. Concretely if you tell me such things then maybe I can say add some more things to it.
- What is the aim you are striving for with this brand?
- The personalized feature, within a certain style the own, appropriate design can be selected.
- It is not mass product.
- Yes, and its uniqueness also a feature. Our products are differentiated products. I had more customers who show the coat on the tram on another woman and read the label at the back of the coat and searched us on the internet. Rather the uniqueness and the unique quality can be mentioned concerning the brand not the quantity.
- And where is your name coming from?
- Ille comes from my name, from Lenke Illessy, and the Olla is... I was in Finland with a scholarship during my university years where I started to design maternity dresses and olla raskana means being pregnant and the olla from in means 'to be'. First was the name olla but then I wanted to enlarge the collection. Now I don't produce maternity dresses anymore but the Ille-Olla name remained. People like it very much. I designed it to be an international name, being pleasant, the foreign sound was also an important aspect and that it does not have only my name... because a lot of designers just use their name. I would like to build a bigger company, so my future plan – if it is going to be a question – is the continuous growth of the company, the bigger coverage of the market, the expansion and to give always more people employment because this is very important. I'm already a happy person because I started all this, but always more people should be part of the company, should get livelihood, social appreciation, etc. and when the company will be very profitable I'm thinking about the opening of a school. For this some years need to pass by. It is interesting that I only grabbed the opportunities, but I was never looking after it. When I would look for it I would have

more opportunities, but the capacity, the lack of capital; in the fashion industry you need a lot of money. After some time a lot of money will return but we are just like little ants, we go step by step. There are marketing models... I'm rather like a considerably moving ant.

- Lot of designers also can't afford to take big risk.
- For us it was like that that – the coats are our main products – first I made 3, I show it to my sister and she said to make more, ok then 6, that also sold out, then 12 and we always doubled the amount. And this was always a reinvested profit. Now we need to invest more capital. Now it can be seen that the design is good, people like it, they buy it and not we can move forward with bigger steps.
- I show that you are not only making coats but also dresses, cardigans,...
- Yes, but we mainly sell coats.
- And you are thinking, designing in terms of collections or you have this standard package which can change in color...
- I'm developing products. There are these coats from one sort of material and its variations. The next will be the jeans and skirt and dress and these things. I always chose the material first and I build my system around it. I wanted to show you my system on the website, but due to Doma I cannot continue now with the development. Due to this system my design will be most probably different than the others.
- Your design made for Re-button got the name collared up where you utilized the elements of the Transylvanian folks wear elements, colors, motives, and what else from the cultural heritage?
- Specific motives are not in the collection. The colors are very dominant, the white, black, red and apart from that the trimming style, the traditional coat or a vest appears, so the clothing pieces are redrawn, rewritten and motives are not displayed in the design but in the tailoring patter for example the trouser is developed from the Transylvanian folks wear.
- So the form itself
- Yes, the form, it does not have middle sewing, at the hips there are two cuttings. I will send you some photos where it can be nicely seen, a plan sheet which shows from what I started to create and how did I change it. Basically the tailoring patterns and the systematic thinking, because in folklore the systematic thinking is also very important. Just there what interesting is that everything had its own sign, everything can built in a

concrete context. For example the red color, it was for a reason why you had red skirt and your grandmother a little more brownish red and it is for a reason why you had blue ribbon in your hair and another girl yellow. These all symbolized mainly social classes or mood or status.

- Both the motives both the colors have meanings
- Yes, if we would understand this language in the certain context then we could read everything from it, but I don't like to use these meaning for the reason that we don't understand this way of communication. We cannot distinguish the folkloric costumes only appreciate its beauty.
- From the beginning of your design work you were interested in the geometric forms; you started to build your design on it.
- Yes, and this also evolved from the inspiration of folklore, because there they could not clearly tailor the fabric, they were tailoring the dresses, shirts from rectangle shaped fabric
- So you started your design from the folklore, you got inspiration from it and later your own style evolved from it which is now difficult to trace back to folklore
- Rather it should be told that there are things I applied from folklore into my system and there were such elements which were part of my system and I applied it in the folklore. I further developed the trouser which is collared, this evolved as the trade mark of my brand due to this competition. Everything is collared up.
- And you apply it in the future
- Yes, I developed it that time, during the preparation process of the competition in parallel with my brand development. I had to go to Csikszereda to the museum, read and research after the folks wear; this was very important, to design dresses on which it can be seen that is was inspired from folklore.
- For some reason it was important for you to gain inspiration from this. Or is it a given as being Hungarian...
- You mean identity?
- I don't know what motivated you...
- Then I will go back more in time. When I graduated in 2007 I won a scholarship with my maternity dresses, this was a three years long scholarship and we had to apply yearly. I said that I would like to design maternity dresses during those three years and in the last year I would like to research who in folklore pregnancy was expressed; with



what sort of clothes, motives or so. This was in 2007 and in 2010 when the competition was announced and I also meet Istvan, the other designer, it was already actual. So I had this interest and topic in advance and everything came so well together that it is continuously developing.

- Might be it was not even conscious to bring up the folkloric motives, you were primarily not interested in the motives but their use and meanings
- Yes and I was thinking that I would like to start the design from folks wear but concretely the Transylvanian design idea came from Istvan. And otherwise this is also my personal favorite among the folks wears of the Hungarian folk regions because it is the simplest and clearest.
- It was an innovation from you in terms of the form and the fabric
- That tile I was using felt for the coats and the tops were T-shirts. That was very simple, everyday wear cotton T-shirts. The trousers were not made from wool and weaved fabric what is used in folks wear but brushed canvas similar to denim. So we used modern materials.
- It was also important for you to create wearable clothes
- Absolutely
- How was your design process? You mentioned that you were doing research work, you consulted with Istvan...
- He also had his own system
- And how was your design process?
- There is always a problem for which we have to find answers. First we need to made research work and then different answers are given to the question, from the answers the right path should be chosen and different versions are made which for me concretely was the Transylvanian folks wear. I went to collect materials, I read about it, made pictures and afterwards came the design work during which the collection evolved.
- Are you planning in the future to make design inspired by folks wear?
- I don't think about such design ideas these days. This year I again applied for the Re-button but it was not successful.
- What was your topic this year?
- This year was the Visegrad four's cultural heritage. Most probably I did not choose the right topic, because I chose a religious topic because I thought in these four countries

there are every religion, but they were thinking about something more specific. So explicitly I don't want to deal with folk art anymore.

- Yes, because even at this collection you chose a rather abstract topic.
- Yes, yes
- And how did you work this out?
- The religion topic?
- Yes
- The Visegrad four was the topic and in my life the different churches are determining because I was christened as Calvinist, my grandfather was Calvinist, my grandmother is catholic, I went to catholic school and these churches were always in contrast in my life also in my attitude toward them. Nowadays I always design in a way that my own style is shining through the design.
- This strengthens your brand
- Yes. And again I show such opportunity in this, an opportunity to develop my own style
- How long it took to prepare for your first Re-button competition? You had a lot of time because you prepared the collection in advance.
- I don't know exactly, but I already had my tailoring patterns, I only had to change on the material and on the collection, because I used different material, so that was not a huge problem. Now they got only one month, which is very less. Better that I did not made through, but it was a good challenge anyways.
- You did not really started to create for the Re-button, because you already had your collection ready.
- Yes
- You mentioned that the design work is a continuous development, people get change. But concretely the creation of the Transylvanian collection did change on your designer attitude?
- Surely. I don't exactly know. The systematic approach what I found in it is also a feature of mine that was rather similarity. The fact that I need to focus more on folks wears, the information what I learned. I learned what are the features what can contain messages.
- How do you mean it?
- How you dress tells what kind...

- In the folks wear this is present even stronger
- But this feature you did not use at the Re-button
- Cannot, because you create something like that, you transform a folks wear, let's say it shows an identity; I think not many people would wear such clothing.
- More and more people not with professional background are producing in this topic clothing and more people are wearing it.
- Surely also due to political reasons, because Re-button is a political initiative.
- Do you think that this trend was brought alive only by the Re-button?
- No, also abroad the fashion companies like it. But the fashion companies take it as inspirational source and not identity.
- And now that you are presented also abroad do you feel that something is distinguishing the Hungarian designers from the foreigners?
- I think so, usually Hungarians are very creative and courage in design. Of course I don't agree with all of them. They are pushing the boundaries.
- Do you think that this competition and this trend has any effect of the Hungarian fashion and designers?
- Yes, surely.
- Do you think that this builds folklore in the public sense?
- Surely a lot of people applied for it because it is a very good opportunity and year by year better opportunities are offered. I'm in contact with the Chamber of Commerce where there are three different textile departments; the manufacturing department, the craftsmen who find tradition preservation and identity very important and there is the department where the design approach is in majority where they view it rather as inspirational source and they don't want to use 100-200 years ago used techniques, craftsmanship but they are aiming to produce producible, wearable collections which overwrite and don't really use the traditional motives, colors, materials.
- Do you think that this gives an extra value to the clothes?
- For me that extra value is not really value. Doesn't matter that it is values and now it is pushed in the media, when you look at the people no one is wearing handmade clothes. Basically I believe no more in the values of craftsmanship, because the current world is not set for this also the people don't. Just like that generation will pass away the values will die with them. In Hungary people also don't appreciate it money wise. We cannot afford it. Long time ago the clothing were made by hand because there

were not any other opportunities, they could not produce in a manufactory. Another thing is that the clothes were not only made for one season but for the whole life and even the children inherited the same clothes.

### Interview with Igezo

- So I just presented you what am I researching. I read that you started to deal with fashion design in 2008, before that you were doing interior and textile design. Can you please talk about the stage of your career, brand building at the moment?
- We have an enterprise, and Ltd. This started to be a private enterprise and now we got there that – obviously it can be considered as a development – we are working together in an Ltd. The truth is that brand building is not our strength, when we started this whole brand some years ago we did not had a conscious brand building plan in mind. The primary importance for us, the reason why we started this brand was a labor of love; to be able to show the treasure of Hungarian folk art to the public. For this presentation we wanted to chose such a frame what is compatible to the current world, so we wanted to create wearable clothing adjusted to the current needs. So this enterprise started as a labor of love and we see its continuous development, but we don't lay big emphasis on the business side maybe that is why it is not working well enough. We already participated on some couple of fashion shows which can be considered as success and we are trying to keep pace with the technology, because according to our experiences we see where the good path would take us so therefore we are trying to operate more and more in such a way that it is profitable also financially. From labor of love we are trying to shift to a business what is also working economically. Since we are not such type of people this is quite difficult for us.
- I know that you were present on more national fashion shows but are you only concentrating on the national market or also on foreign markets?
- We are thinking very much about going abroad, but the fact is that since for us these are not experienced ways, thoughts, we don't know precisely where we should start building networks and how should we utilize the existing networks in order to have something workable. We get many requests, we get orders from abroad, but for example with the American orders it is quite difficult to deal with – even with the orders. We had for example such a problem that someone wanted to open a shop, but we don't have any experience in it. For this they should buy from us a stock what we

can't even imagine how could work from such distance. Sadly in Hungary a lot of stores only take our products in consignment, this is the practice in Hungary, therefore we don't have experience how is it when someone buys stock, how big it should be, how can that be started... therefore these initiatives usually after the first three steps stop. In Basel also a woman wanted to open a shop to sell there our products, she was even making a fashion show for us for a circle of friends who were potential clients, but at last we could not agree. With such high financial value of the clothes and in such distance we think about is 100 times before we agree on something and are investing and giving it in consignment. We simply could not agree. But this comes also from our mistake, because we are not experienced and also not educated in this.

- So your experience in that there would be demand abroad for clothing having the features of Hungarian cultural heritage.
- We have a lot of requests. In America, in Washington on the Independence Day there will be a festival where there will also be a Hungarian week. It is a great honor that our clothes will also be there on this show. Everything will be about the Hungarian culture, folk art, craftsmen are going there for that one week, etc. We are curious, because also over there we gave a high value stock and now we are curious how is the demand for it will be, whether they are willing to pay for it. We don't know it yet.
- These are big investments.
- These are millions worth investments. It is very difficult because it is uncertain. We need to put together a collection from nothing and then give it in consignment in today's financial situation it is really difficult.
- Are you having employees? Dress maker, representative...
- For a very long time we were trying to do everything on our own. For more than 10 years we started to work together as interior designers and we could always manage everything together, but the interior design is a different genre. We are not dress makers, for this a professional is needed who can make our products, imaginations at a high quality level; therefore from the beginnings we are giving work to wageworkers. Now we employ an own dress maker who is also helping us in craftsmanship but for the time being we can only do this occasionally. With the tailoring company with whom we were working together we are trying to end the relationship and continue the work with our own employee, because from a lot of perspectives this is more economical and comfortable to have always a professional dressmaker with us.

- Are you preparing collections?
- In such concrete way it does not exist by us. We try to design according to the seasons, but we get inspirations from elsewhere. Mostly it is not primarily important for us to put into strict frames our design process. We are trying to make timeless pieces which is good not only for one season, what for example would not be worn next summer because it goes out of fashion. We design in such a way that we have manually embroidered, manually made products what we hope will inherited from mother to daughter.
- We don't approach design from the side of fashion. We did not study in fashion school, this is just an instinct what came out in interior design (we have textile craftswoman and interior designer qualifications); we could work together as decorator and interior designer and fashion is a stage , carrier for us to be able to show folk art. Because we did not started to design from fashion perspective these rules are not binding out hands. This is a little freedom but also difficulty, because we feel a lot that...
- Obviously people are waiting for the arrival of the new collection
- Yes, because they think that everybody is working like that, but we are a little more complicated than that. We design absolutely from the perspective of folk art; this was the labor of love, not the fashion. This is a serious standard of our work, because primarily our aim is not to make fashionable, sellable clothes, but to convey the values and preserve the tradition.
- In 2012 you applied for the Re-button and in 2008 you started the clothing design. You did not apply in 2011 because that would have been too early?
- We knew about it, we followed it
- We thought that it is not our world.
- And what interesting is that when we started it in 2008 this was not a fashion trend, in us folk art was always vivid and we applied folkloric motives already in fashion design and that time it was a strengthening wave for us to see that this interests also others. We waited for the competition with curiosity, how others are trying to apply in their design the Hungarian tradition in a forum like Re-button. That time we were already designing according to this fashion trend, of course that time it was not such a trendy, popular thing and now we are looking with a smile at this trend that how many more designers are dealing with this topic comparing to how many were interested in

it in 2008. But for the next Re-button our design got so much developed and we felt that we can be prepared for this and we were curious about the challenge.

- And more people were telling us to apply. Maybe by ourselves we would not even have applied for the second time. But in our environment serious people were saying that we need to try this. I think this was the final push due to which we decided to apply. We were looking at it but the first time we thought we won't apply and it was also not known what this is going to be. At the second time with encouragements we decided to compete.
- Did this bring any changes in your design, attitude or only that much that more people know now about your brand?
- It definitely gave a big experience; this is undeniable. But we just let things to happen around us. This is true that many people got to know us through the competition but only because of it we did not start to design otherwise. This is by the way also a problem, because designers get inspirations and instructions there about how the design should be, but we are too free to fulfill these advices.
- The truth is that at the competition we are considered as traditionalists and at other forums we are considered as too modern. The real traditionalist women think about us as too modern, but in this setting they told us that our design is too traditionalist. We will not change in this; we stay true to our visions.
- In your website I read about your design aims, values. The main aim and mission is really the tradition preservation. You used the expression that our clothes work. How do you mean this?
- We believe that these motives have such a wisdom which also have message for the current time and that these are really inside us. I think, that the environment is effecting the people, whatever we eat, see have an impact on us and why would then this be an exception? We believe that this works beneficially. Even consciously, because we can have knowledge about these secrets what someone does research in it; it can have consciously an impact but also unconsciously only by admirably looking at it or by just liking it. By us the term it works means this.
- It is very important that in these motives such knowledge is accumulated what is not the knowledge of 1-2 years, but more 100, even 1000 years of knowledge can be in the motives. And for me it is not a question whether these symbols have an effect of not. And in this case this is manifested on a carrier like clothing with what people have

daily direct relationship. The term 'it works' we need to put between quotation marks, because sadly this word can become funny, but at the same time we have to say that not only those things exist in the world that we can see with our physical eyes, but also impacts and we believe in the function of this impact.

- Are you designing also for individual orders or you always put your concepts first?
- This is varying. At a certain extent people order from us but only inside our boundaries. We don't make design what would deny us. In shape, color or even in motives customers can make personal wishes but we will say the final word on it.
- This is a very thin line and we have to draw our boundaries. Sadly we made such dress for a request about which we said when we show the result that we did not make it with pleasure. But we have to experience this in order to know the boundaries. And it also happened that we forced a design too much on a customer and at the end she was not feeling good in it – although this does not happen often, since we would like to satisfy the customers so the fault that we let the customer too much free in making personal requests and lead the design occurs more often.
- We need to learn this. From the one hand this makes the execution more difficult because the costumers figure out all kinds of tricks about where the motives should be and from where could the motif be applied. This is why we should put ourselves in this term into boundaries although we like to satisfy the individual orders.
- If I understand it well, the main motivation for applying for the competition was that you got encouragement from your environment and you also wanted to try yourselves. Do you think that this competition is representing the Hungarian design scene?
- Surely not. This is only a cross-section. There are designers like us, who do only such sort of design and there are designers who only tried it for the competition. It is a very heterogenic group of designers it was not a authentic filter, selection.
- And does it bring changes into the design trends? What do you think; does it help in keeping the traditions alive and calling many people's attention on it?
- We are afraid that this is just a wave now.
- Because what we really consider as tradition preservation we don't think is equivalent to the competition. A lot of really beautiful handcrafts are not presented there.
- That is a different level. We don't say that it is wrong, only we want to emphasis its difference.



- For us other things mean value than what at the competition is considered as value, which is not a problem, only this is a different point of view; we consider different things as valuable in the world.
- In your collection what you prepared for the competition the motives, colors, shapes come back as cultural heritage elements. Are there other cultural heritage elements too?
- You mentioned the basics, the colors; red, blue, black, white are colors which are basic colors in folk art; this was one of the basic feature of our design. The other was that we wanted to give a bigger cross-section of the tradition although it is difficult with a three piece collection. Our man dress was trying to go back to the ancient Hungarian kaftan, East style wear underlying the Eastern feature. In the women dresses we used younger motives from the Torocko and Kalotaszeg folkloric motives. We also used appliqué motives and there was not embroidery in this collection.
- In the collection for the competition we did not use manual embroidery.
- What were your main inspirational sources?
- Due to the equestrian traditions the kaftan and in the whole collection the equestrian feeling. The collection had the name Wild Foal; we imagined also the girls in boots and militantly; also on the drawings we presented them with long hair. This feeling was a very big inspirational source that is why we gave this name to the collection. And of course the folks wear are also inspirational sources.
- You worked by now on 6+1 folk regions, and
- Since then even more, but we started with that number
- And mainly you apply the ancient Hungarian motives on modern clothing and unique design. In what extent doe modernity, innovation manifests in your collection?
- Also in the shapes. We have such traditional pieces but we also have modern shape dresses and also in the use of material. We are not using the old, hand weaved materials; the materials are made with modern technology.
- The screen printing was also not the tradition of our ancestors, but we say that every era had their own novelty. When we go to a folkloric museum and we see there the authentic dresses, we see on them the plastic buttons which were novel that time but for us it is authentic. It is a question what will in the future become tradition, this is a process of which we are also a part of. We believe that this is a process what will be inherited through people. The modernity is that we are trying to make clothes which

are compatible with today's world, because if someone wears a traditional costume today in a shopping mall – we also tried it once – is not a general thing to do; everyone will look at that person, it is not compatible, costume like. Also among our clothes there can be found pieces which are in between wearable and costume like dresses but we try to achieve to create absolutely wearable dresses. In this sense we are modern.

- How do you choose a certain topic, technique, motives?
- This is also matter of love. The motives what we like primarily.
- Are you making research work, field work, are you traveling a lot?
- Our preparation for this was a long process. We started it from the side of folk art and not fashion, because we already had relation with folk art, not only with folks wear but with the folk art in general.
- Yes, when we started to create clothes we already had the result of research works. We were that time not thinking about it as a research work, but we were really in different folkloric regions. It did not have a research feeling, frame.
- We didn't know that once we will also put them if clothes, but we were only following folk art and once this thing was there.
- You already have a collection from which you can work.
- Yes
- And how is the design process by you? How was it during the preparation for the competition? Also in time and in implementation
- We are a really well adjusted team, so we understand each other very well and can make agreements. In this there is nothing conscious. Creation is a process. Something starts what inspires people, that gives an idea in the fabric and shape – also very little things – and what if we... and then one idea is build on the other and at the end something will born. Usually it is not like that that we sit down and start to design something... this is a little bit when a customer comes with a specific idea and then we really need to sit down and think through the design, we are consulting with the modeling about the outlook of the dress, but the creation by us is not a conscious and difficult task. It is rather instinctive and easy.
- One of you brings an idea...
- The other ads something to it and it starts growing.
- And also at the ready wear sometimes we make changes.
- Is it take a long time till a design plan in made?

- This cannot really be told, because there are certainly things which need more time to figure them out and some things are just spontaneously coming in our mind; it is there suddenly and you know that it became very good and at the end we say that we should forget it, it is not good.
- The help is only that someone stitches the dresses?
- Yes, and also the orders.
- We can maximum stitch at a hobby level; at home I can stitch my clothes, but it is not sellable, it is not quality stitching when at home I make it with my sewing machine. In case we make a prototype, that has to be modeled, we need to discuss it and make a sample piece
- We have a clothing technician who is making the modeling
- Makes a sample piece, we are making changes on it. The help is rather this; we definitely need help in stitching
- How do you apply the chosen motives, techniques? Are you applying it as it is or are you changing on it?
- We preserve the traditional motif without making any changes on it, not even in size. All the motives can be even embroidered; when someone wants it to be embroidered we can also make that. We start by looking at the collection albums in which we collected and draw the motives. We see whether it will be look good as a print. Maybe we need to make one line stronger; what we do is only technical re-drawing, we don't change on its content.
- We also don't change the asymmetry. What the tradition found important we don't sterilize it. There are many examples among people who use folkloric motives that they sterilize them; they make sterile computer motives. We keep it very rustic, antiqued; therefore the print is not sterile, with defined, precise contours. It should have life in it.
- As it was made by hand
- You adjusted your style to the tradition. Are there techniques or motives what you discovered during the preparation for the competition...
- No, we were designing on our habitual way. We applied the screen printing together with bead embroidery. Before also we did the same mixing it with metal appliqué. So we gave ourselves also on the competition. We did not come up with... we only come up with something they were forcing us to do. What is in a design plan, on a drawing,

an ambiance is not sure that in life and on stage will look the same. We were brought into such a situation that we needed to reconstruct our exact plan where we presented the woman models as fairy with ankle-length hair and crown. For our sadness the jury insisted to this plan. It is a big challenge also financial challenge to make an ankle-length wig what is harmonic and beautiful to our eyes. I experienced the two wigs as absolute failure. It is always that the spectacle what matters and no one asked why the end result was like that; only the jury and we know it. When we went to the first consultation and we show them a waist long hair they said that it is not enough. We got some ideas from what we should make it and at last we decided to use hair extension, but it was a disaster for us.

- Do you mix together the folklore of different landscapes on one clothing?
- No, and we rather advise to the customers – because usually they are not only buying one piece of dress but a set what she can vary – to stay within one folkloric region. It should not be a mix because that would not harmonize.
- Here also due to its working factor it is important to us. There is also an underlying meaning to this so the motives would not mix. Our aim is the clearness, the preservation of the tradition despite of varying on the design.
- When you process a folkloric region how does that go? What do you take as a ground? All the motives?
- There are a lot of collection albums. We apply the motives. Sometimes we also try to preserve the colors and the shape also but we are insisting on the motives. Therefore the starting point is a lot of collection samples.
- And from that you make the dress.
- Yes, the button to the coat
- What are your plans for the future?
- There is such a financial situation that sadly we are desperate. We don't know how we can further develop and build our brand – I have to say without proper knowledge, because we don't have any education for this – without knowledge to make it work. This is difficult, even to write an application is a challenge – I don't know to how much application writer companies are we going for help, because we need to get along.
- Recently we moved to a beautiful, new showroom which is on the one hand is very good because it is beautiful and our own dress making room got place in it but on the

other hand it has big costs. The former was a smaller showroom. You need to strive for the daily survival. In order to make quality, to make an environment to the customers what is worthy for the represented values you need to invest a lot. Today this is difficult in Hungary.

- We are always looking people who have business instinct with jealousy, because he/she knows how to approach the banks, which application can bring better results and it looks like he/she is making easily such steps which are very difficult for us. How can we make commerce from it? We found it a big things that we have this company where we work 8 hours a day, because a lot of people can do this only as a second job, he/she needs to do something for the livelihood. A lot of craftsmen are suffering from not to be able to do freely their creative work. We managed to open this Ltd but we can't go further, we got into a spiral where we are just turning around us. We feel the necessity to move forward, but for example surely you show our website which is full with unfilled menu points, our mind is full with ideas about making new website, refresh it, and make new photos but all these would require such activities which go beyond our resources, power. And hiring someone is also not the solution because we also need to pay him/her. And we don't want to give up our creative freedom. There are such shops on the Vaci Street which would like to sell our products, but we did not bring our products there. We took our products to the Museum of Ethnography, to the Open Air Museum, to the airport and to the Memories of Hungary to the Basilica, because we felt that those are worthy mediums for our work but not enough.
- The experience is that throughout the history certain trends, motives came back from time to time in fashion, and now it is the time of the fashion of Hungarian cultural heritage. What do you think, what are the main reasons behind this?
- Also in the past, in the 70s and also later a lot of time these traditions were brought back in fashion. It is like an invisible baton which is going further in the evolution and it comes back again and again. An intellectual impulse raises in people and even independently from each other they start to deal with the same thing. This is a real living impulse which has not a blooming period which touches many people who are more susceptible to folk art.
- Now this is political and societal... this is a complex thing what started this trend again. In our heart it is for a long time now, but now there is a bigger platform to this.

- Surely there is also a political reason behind it. When we started our brand it was not like this. And this is not only a matter of intellect but also a matter of money, because surely this business can generate money. We cannot value this from this perspective but those who see money in this trend now and has some talent to arts can make profit from it.
- Do you feel that what you are doing gets appreciation? Or will it pay off in long term period?
- We get a lot of positive feedbacks.
- Which motivates us; and where we started this creative process the main question is not to get appreciation, because what really appreciation is that we can deal with this daily. It is like when someone finds his/her task, purpose in life. We do our job and everything else comes with it. Maybe in long term it will have... but we are not aiming for it.
- The small appreciations keep us moving forward
- We are not success oriented, especially not in short term. The short term success for us means that the customers are satisfied and get an e-mail from her that she felt fantastic in the dress, it exceeded her expectations and she is happy to have a dress like that, she feels honored, she is proudly wearing the dress. We get a lot of appreciations due to which we are not unsatisfied in this sense.
- I'm sure that there will be people who will continue our job. The tradition will survive because it always had tradition. Forever the knowledge of our ancestors will be in the national consciousness; an indelible value; it is not like that at once from tomorrow we don't have tradition. We always had and will have history. I can't imagine not having tradition.
- What do you think, does this trend have any impact on the Hungarian fashion and designers?
- Nowadays surely more designs are made with focus on the Hungarian folk art then otherwise. More people are dealing with this the more likely an attenuation will be detected. It has a good side that more people get to these values but it also had a side that it is not sure that the values reach the customers and then it makes more harm than benefit. Surely because this is not a developing fashion, I think, more designers are dealing with this topic than otherwise would.

- Rita Halasi said that it is more and more the quality which matters and when someone wants to create a good quality design has to go back to the roots; because what is handmade has usually good quality.
- I would say that there are two weaves, one is presenting quality but the majority not. There is a big stream against the majority what wants quality, uniqueness, and handmade products.
- I would be still interested in your design work about the meanings of your motives. Do you research these meanings?
- Yes
- Are you putting the collection together to give it a bigger meaningful content? Those people who don't research it don't really know about these meanings.
- Absolutely. We always wait politely till they ask about it; we don't like to bring it up first because we are afraid that those who are not interested in it and we talk too much about it... you know it is a mystic word. You surely read that primarily we were working on life trees.
- The first 7 folkloric region researches were about life tree motives which connects the heaven with the earth. This was a conscious choice for us to preserve a quality which is not only in physical sphere but it is a life tree, a channel connecting the earth sphere with higher spheres.
- Like in the folk tales
- This was a conscious choice that time. We know the meanings, we took classes from an art historian and like this we got familiar with folk art and its significance. It is a flexible knowledge; the motives cannot be read like the books. Behind these motives there are much more knowledge and meaning than the words.
- And then you realize what are in this motives and it is immediately becomes you task to share this knowledge with others, and bring it back in the common knowledge, because this is a living knowledge; it cannot stay in the museums. This cannot be learned, this is something which is always developing in us, we always get a new information to the existing knowledge.
- And what are these meanings all about? Family, love...?
- Right, the relationship between human and God. The relationship between our ancestors, God and the world. Like the folk tale, it is so simple when the smallest prince goes to find his luck and basically his whole life and wisdoms are present in the

folk tale. It is like the Eastern wisdoms. The Hungarian nation defined these things in its folk tales and embroidery. The whole picture about the world is in it. Thank God many people are researching this but it does not reach broader audience. Sadly this is a taboo topic. A lot of time when we say the word, Hungarian has nationalist overtone. In this country a malformed picture developed concerning this which is why a traditional dress became also strange, although in the neighbor countries it is part of the everyday routine to preserve the heritage; to wear folk dresses is almost obligatory on the celebration days. By us this is an extreme right wing manifestation.

- Maybe now they started to wear it more courageously.
- Yes, the motives and the dresses are slowly accepted, but what they really are still not, this will be the next step.
- You wanted to ask about the Igezes, our name of choice. There is a word; igezes. We heard it from a nation psychology researcher and we were amazed. Cross stitching called igezni. This word had so many meanings. Ige (verb) was a small basic unit in embroidery.
- With the embroidery they are 'igez'/making verb/embroider through what the motives have impact.

### **Interview with Vanda Berecz**

- I'm a cultural economics student at the Erasmus University in Rotterdam. For my final thesis topic I choose the relationship between cultural heritage and fashion. I'm primarily interested in what is the motivation of Hungarian designers for applying Hungarian cultural heritage motives/ techniques in their collections. These days we see a lot of people wearing clothes decorated with folkloric elements.
- I'm trying to avoid this
- Yes, this trend is spectacularly presented. And I am interested in what can be the reasons behind this these days spectacularly alive trend and whether it is going to be alive for a long term or not. In which phase of your career are you? Do you have brand?
- Yes, in fact I have, I live from it now. I graduated last year, so this is still very fresh.
- So now is the path searching process.



- I have clear ideas, but it is developing slowly primarily due to financial reasons.
- Are you doing everything on your own?
- Yes, for the time being
- For the time being are you focusing on national market?
- Yes, although now I am getting prepared for a fair to the Czech Republic and last year we were in Poland, so I would like to go abroad, but for now this is the situation
- You allied for the Re-button! in 2011
- I was graduation from the BA that time. I applied with my diploma work what I was making with another girl together. She made the apparel and I made the accessories and in addition I also applied with a design task from the previous semester and we made it to the final with both designs.
- Did you define already your designer mission, around which values are you building your brand?
- Primarily I would like to make especially quality goods. I also develop myself continuously in order to avoid implementation mistakes. Apart from this I design rather conceptually. When I have a plan I stick to it throughout the whole design process, therefore it is a little slow. I like to have in my items an innovative value, but it also should be manageable to prepare manually; industrial base is not necessary for their preparation. But it should also be feasible with industrial production. Under craftsmanship I don't necessarily mean manual embroidery, what cannot be replaced, but this is just a temporary solution, but I try to turn it to my advantage.
- Primarily why did you apply?
- For the money. That time I was going to school and then the teachers were saying in advance that this competition will be held, so we can chose a topic for our design tasks what suits the competition.
- How difficult, overloaded it is to prepare for such a application?
- It is, especially in this year, because now I'm making shoes and not I invester already a "hat of money". It would be very good to get it back.
- Do you think this competition represents the Hungarian design scene?
- No
- Rather the young designers?

- Yes, and it can also not call the attention of all of them. Although this year relatively successful, starter brands also applied, what I think is very good, but it cannot call everybody's attention.
- And what do you think, does it has any effect on the design trends?
- This competition? I don't think so.
- You do something because that is the task?
- Yes, but usually this is the feature of the designer attitude. Fashion design is not only about making something, but it is fulfilling a certain task.
- With your prior collection, which got the Rethinking folkswear name, where did you get the idea from?
- The diploma task was that students with leather specialization and students with apparel specialization had to choose a pair and they had to prepare a mini collection. The task was to prepare three clothing and three accessories (bag or shoes like I want). The choice of topic was free. But since the teachers were saying that we will have this competition, we thought with the girl that we go for a Hungarian style topic. We did not wanted traditional folkloric costumes, so we used clothing from the time of Conquest. We applied the motives in less direct way. And which the use of fabric we also wanted to refer to that era. We used fur...
- Your own collection made for the competition got the Motiva name and in this year the Metro. At the first as a laic it looks like you enlarged motives, it seems like to take the motive to a larger shape. Apart from this were in there other traditional elements?
- Origamis like techniques, but usually I like to design such things. But that in which extent did this design came from the motives... I don't know which was earlier.
- What was your inspirational source?
- Most probably an ambiance. I don't remember about the beginning, but I remember that I was folding papers a lot. At the end there was this much of paper trash... a lot.
- And from the folding...
- I was trying to find some starting points that I'm folding but what. I looked at a motives book. And there were some simplified motives, and then I started to fold

them from paper. But it was not looking good and therefore I had to simplify it.

This was not a linear process. I was doing a little bit of this, a little bit of that.

- You had these bags before the competition or you made them for the competition?
- No, I already had them.
- And afterwards you thought that it looks actually like a flower motif.
- Yes, and in some extent it was included in the design, but not in a way, that I concretely set down for creating something from a Matyo motif, but during the time it got involved in the design. Till the end of the year three items were ready and then the Re-button! came and then I thought that I will make some technological changes in the three subjects or I make some more to it and then I prepared more bags in the same style. So the fixed five model collection was created.
- Apart from the competition when you want to gain some inspiration or when you want to develop a technique from where do you get inspiration?
- Certain things were taught to us; the basics. But this is experimentation, I usually don't do research. There are certain parts of the design what you figure out by yourself, or it is up to the own standards how much you try to professionalize the implementation.
- But then it comes rather from you yourself than applying something already existing element
- Yes, rather this is the case
- How was your design process like?
- First I made it from paper, the design I wanted, and then I took it to the workshop, I asked them, what they think, how I could implement this design. And then they gave me some advices that I should laminate under it a strong material, plastic. I was also making before a similar object, so I had some ideas about how to make it, but working on the details took a lot of time; to find that plastic what is enough flexible, but also enough strong, and it is not breakable. I was trying a lot of things. I was trying from paper, from PVC, but that had to be smoothened, because the glue was not sticking to it, that that was a lot of work. Then I discarded this idea. I was also trying to laminate paper and fiber leather imitation, but that was also very tricky and it was also breaking, and then I did it from polypropylene.
- How long was your design process?

- Till it became final, sellable product was 1.5 year.
- And at your second application how the idea of metro did come?
- Every day I travel at least 2 hours on the metro 3.
- And in what form do you apply it on the shoes?
- First I made picture about all the metro stations and what I liked in them, even details. I was trying to make pictures about surfaces, shapes and spatial structures, wall panels, different connections, such solutions and then I had to figure out the type of shoes I want to make. I bought shoehorn for that, I designers the soles, I made soles makettes, and on this the lace. After that I started to design the bottom of the shoes. I was trying to design such contoured objects which reflect the world of metro; everything is rounded, the stitching ways remind about the connction points which I observed. It has a little bit of retro feeling, I underlined this with the colors, the used material – so I bought lack leather which is specifically shiny, plastic-like. In the metro stations there are a lot of plastic furnishings.
- The origami technique is present throughout your design process, this is your style. Is the inspirational source always adjusted to this?
- We can say that these days this is in my mind, I want to adjust things to this.
- Are there techniques what you learned during the preparation for the competition and you would like to used it in the future?
- Yes, at the recent task I made the soles, and that looked like, that I had to make first a plaster sample, that from that I took silicon negative and afterwards in the negative I poured resin. This became the soles. I did not use this technology before, I did not know it, it can be seen a little on the end product, but I learned a lot from it. I know now how am I going to make it next time, I see the mistakes, and I know how can I correct it.
- It is not really typical of you to search for inspiration in the cultural heritage. In the future do you think it is possible to gain inspiration from it?
- Can be, it is not that far from me, but as a designer I don't really utilize it. It can be that I will in the future. After all I come from the countryside, in my childhood my grandmother was always teaching me how to embroider, I was going to folk singing extra classes, so I feel it closer to me then a youth in Budapest who does not have personal experience with folklore. In a direct way I definitely don't want to use folk art in my design.

- Did the preparation for the competition change something on your designer attitude?
- What I'm doing now is a really different style, because I know, this does not have real stake. This is rather a pleasure design. The result became a bit funny, and I really enjoy this task. It was released.
- And apart from this, what are you designing? What you designed for the first competition you have orders from that?
- Yes
- And did the competition bring any changes in your life?
- The competition was very good after the BA diploma because that time I started to think about making a small working place for myself, I did not wanted to bring outside work to the workshop of the school; there is no any capacity for that. So most probably I would have start this even without the competition. Now I can make the bags for sell through the interned, at the WAMP, and other fairs.
- What do you think, what are the reasons behind the trend that the folklore became again fashionable?
- I think this has political background just like the Re-button! Nowadays from the energy drinks everything is Matyo. But the problem is that this remained at the level of non quality products almost in all cases. I can't even say a brand what started from this and had high standards. The folkloric motives should not be made invisible, but reevaluate because it is outdated, outmoded. These garments had functions that time, but it is funny to out such a dress on someone.
- In fashion the collections change continuously, the designer who wants to stay on top has to work quickly. To design clothes which were inherited from mother to daughter does not have any relevance?
- No it doesn't.
- Because you are a Hungarian designer maybe even unconsciously Hungarian culture also inspires you... What do you think, what is the effect of this trend on the Hungarian design? Does this leads or orientates the designers?
- Maybe in another direction. Maybe it orientates only the less educated designers, because they see that this is fashionable not, it is sellable and therefore they manufacture 5 million canvas bags with Matyo motif and this is selling for 1-2 years. Although I think even now not that much. So in such levels it might be

influential, but... These are valuable things, we can get inspiration from the,, but I don't think it is conscious.

### Interview with Anh Tuan

- I'm a cultural economics student at the Erasmus University in Rotterdam. For my final thesis topic I choose the relationship between cultural heritage and fashion. I'm primarily interested in what is the motivation of Hungarian designers for applying Hungarian cultural heritage motives/ techniques in their collections. What can be the reasons behind this these days spectacularly alive trend and whether it is going to be alive for a long term or not. I know that you founded your brand in 2006, and in the coming two years and in the following two years you won the young designer of the year prize. In what phase of your career are you now and how is the brand building going?
- Now it is our 7th year since the brand foundation. The first five years is all about building the brand in Hungary, letting it be known by many, gain experiences in different fields of the designer profession; the manufacturing, networking... now roughly the brand is known, but still not completely. There are still people, who do not know the brand, and now I'm not thinking about the teenagers or the 60's but rather the 30-50 years old. I don't know why it is like this. Can be that they are not interested, can be that they are snobs, but apart from this a lot of people know it. I emphasize that a lot of people does not know it, because this market is small and therefore it is interesting that people still don't know about it. This is such a paradox thing; there are people who are more susceptible for arts, for beauty, those people almost all know the brand.
- Primarily are you designing for national or international market?
- I design according to international trends and demands.
- How many employees do you have?
- 4 apart from me
- Are you giving out work for others?
- Yes, here in the studio we make the collections and individual orders. In the last two years we tried to open towards abroad with more or less success. I have to say, that now it is worst for us to open, at least I think so, due to the crisis, since the traders do not want to have any risk factors. Even with the certain brands – because they are

looking for brands, not like before the crisis that they like something and they buy it, not it is not like that.

- Around what values did you built your brand and what is its mission? I know, that you are seeking for preserving the tradition in a modern design. Apart this what are the features of your brand?
- This is a complex thing, when you start a brand than you don't think about the mission at once, but according the experiences of the last years we can say that the mission what we represent is that more and more people begin to like and wear our products. The message and the inspiration is that I find it important to preserve the tradition, especially now due to the globalization different cultures, values disappear. From the other hand the tradition – when we talk about traditional techniques, because the design is connected to techniques – there are a lot of traditional techniques which are experimented, tested. The modernity, the modern age comparing to that only exist for a short period of time, approximately from the 20th century. Before the Second World War the rhythm of life was less quick, they had time to create. We also have to make differences between Europe and other continents. In Europe the modernity is since the industrial revolution. In a village or smaller town the tempo of life is slower; almost everything is made by hand; that is slow, artistic and beautiful.
- And it has value because it is made by hand?
- It has tradition, and that is the values, not necessarily that it is handmade. Obviously with hand because... but it is more important that it has tradition; because also modern things have values which are not necessarily traditional.
- You get inspiration from both Hungarian folklore and traditions of nations from all around the world...
- A lot of time when I'm looking for inspiration, its deepness, that how far I go back in tradition during the research always depends on the budget – if you are interested. How many time a designer has to make a collection. Because that is also not good if we do a very long research due to the time, money, there is a deadline, there is a frame, we cannot do one design for ever doesn't matter how chiseled we want to be and want to combine the craft with modernity. A lot of time this determines the design, we try to make the best out of it.

- And in your design work specifically in the collection made for the Re-button what you preserve, what is traditional and what is the modern in it? How do you mix the two?
- The tradition from one hand is the decoration technique what I used, the braid, decorated with a specific technology. This can be seen on the clothes. What is modern the shape itself, the tailoring pattern and the use of material.
- What motivated you in 2011 to take part in the competition?
- I did not apply, they invited me because it is a competition and also a fashion show, there are competitors and invited designers. Otherwise among the applicant not sure that there are designers who could make x pieces in the collection and so they want to make it more colorful, because doesn't matter how good a design idea is, how interesting it is, among the applicants many does not have such experience – to make a collection is not the task of 1-2 people, rather a whole team and it requires expenses. Not everybody can manage to execute it.
- Do you think that the competition represents the Hungarian design scene?
- Not entirely because here are mainly young designers. It is representative among the young designers in 95%. There are applicants and the designers and among the designers the young generation and the older generation and they differ in style, taste, and way of thinking due to the history.
- And does it effect the designer trends here in Hungary?
- It can be seen only after long period of time. It definitely starts something, it makes the young designers work; they can prepare, design, work for a concrete event and hope because they are nervous and hoping to win.
- Do you think that due to this more people will apply cultural heritage? Is it going to become more a part of public awareness?
- In Hungary people these days are very skeptic. Maybe the designers' attitude here was always like that, that a lot of times they don't see the good side, but only the bad side. Maybe they are skeptic because they see and hear this every day. In general those who are skeptic are also small-minded. In the current political situation the parties are also not cohesive.
- Among the designers we often see that the traditional elements are not used as inspirational sources but they apply the exact same motives, they copy motives, maybe presenting them on a different tailoring pattern.



- This is due to their lack of experience and lack of knowledge. The message of the Re-button is the preservation of values in some form; innovate, create by using the tradition. The newest event this June is not only organized for Hungarians, but it became a regional event. The name became Central European Fashion Days. The best designers of Poland, Slovakia, and Czech Republic are going to be presented. The Design Terminal organized the event and invited the designers. In long term the competition is going to be open also for designers from these countries.
- You gained inspiration from tradition from the beginning of your career? Did your style evolved from this or you already had a style in which you tried to apply the traditional elements?
- People have a personality, it can be the starting point, but from where the style evolved... the changes develop it. It changes every day, the person changes. Traditions also inspired me, formed me a lot. The research works during the university years were also determining and this develops by each task, and by each collection. And every profession has a history which should be learned; this is affecting the work even unintentionally during the learning process. Because the values exist, we study them for a purpose and there are influential.
- How does it evolve and what affects the concept of a collection and the used techniques? For example by your competing collection
- Due to the announcement of the competition, because it said that it should be Hungarian. I used the braid as material also earlier, I knew this material. This was logical, simple to use this. I knew the techniques and tradition of this technique.
- How is your design process?
- I always differs, it is uncountable, the whole process is so open, because we can get inspiration from everything. The fact that which material do I use always depends on a mood, situation.
- You already had knowledge about the braid and different knotting techniques. When the competition was announced that you decided at once to use this technique and you already have a ready collection to use for this occasion?
- It was not new, I knew it. When I was going to university and we learned clothing history it could be seen there. We learned and researched world clothing history. Those who research this see how the different cultures connect to each other. The

Hungarian braids are also from the Far East. It is not only known in the Middle East but also in the Far East. In the techniques there are similar and also very different.

- And did you change on the motives of the braids? You designed the motives?
- Yes
- At the beginning of your design work you represented the haute couture, I don't know, did your design change in a way that now you are more focused on prêt à porter pieces?
- I always design in a way, I don't know whether consciously or not, but I think for me this is easier – every designer has different process, difficulties, simplicity –. For me what in terms of communication is connected with the design work that what is what I want to communicate. The design work is very complex task, it consist not only from designing something and selling it, but we need to take also into consideration that how can I communicate that collection and how can I sell it. Difference should be made between the work processes of a developed, sophisticated fashion house and the work process, collections of a young designer because this has also financial reasons what affects the execution and the selling. I think while designing attention has to be paid on making spectacular, wearable, sellable, acceptable products. There is no point in creating creative pieces which cannot be worn and sold. From financial point of view that does not worth it. For me according to my possibilities this logic works.
- And you adjust the choice of material also to this...
- Yes, and the design and the technology, and also therefore I find it important, because I like also the artistic pieces but the sellability and simplicity is also important. Therefore I try to mix these two things.
- Throughout your career you are gaining experience from cultural heritage
- Maybe I also find cultural heritage and traditions important because I'm an immigrant. Not only because I'm researching my own culture, but I know precisely what are its values; that what it is when the things do not exist anymore or they are gone.
- What do you think, what are the main reasons behind the revival of the cultural heritage in a fashion trend?
- The reason behind this revival is the accelerated life rhythm. People have less time for themselves, for the family, for the community. When a community's life is accelerated, certain things, like tradition will be forgotten, the traditions can pass away. Another thing is the migration, which is also due to the globalization. The wars,

the modern equipments make travelling easier. The tradition of a region during war will be destroyed. Another fact is that the fashion also became accelerated. Before certain styles existed for a longer period; for 10-20 years. Now it is much quicker, fashion changes according to the international trends in each on a quarterly basis. The life tempo is quicker. Before the life tempo was slower, there was not demand for continuous change in fashion.

- The designer also needs to stay up-to-date.
- Yes, not only due to the globalization is it important for the designers to apply folk art, but really what you also understand, what I said; the tradition is given, we can always go back to it. It is much more difficult to figure out something revolutionary new. What is revolutionary new for me is not about getting inspiration from cultural heritage, which is rather geniality.
- What you figured out; the fabric appliqué, that was also an innovation
- Yes, innovation but not a completely new thing. We need to make difference. Neither of them is worst or better. It is relative. Matter of who undertakes what, who creates and represents what.

### Interview with Kele Clothing

- I'm a cultural economics student at the Erasmus University in Rotterdam. For my final thesis topic I choose the relationship between cultural heritage and fashion. I'm primarily interested in what is the motivation of Hungarian designers for applying Hungarian cultural heritage motives/ techniques in their collections. What can be the reasons behind this these days spectacularly alive trend and whether it is going to be alive for a long term or not. Can you please talk about in which phase are you in your career?
- Currently in all my time I'm busy with my own brand, KELE Clothing what I make together with my partner and one of our friends. Next to this I study at the MOME Doctor of Liberal Art in Applied Arts faculty and I also teach at the university.
- How is your brand building so far?
- When we founded this brand we chose an unusual way of brand building. Usually the young designers try first to gain reputation in their own country. They create a webshop, a showroom, they go to the WAMP and they try to get as much feedback from the customers as possible. And as soon as the brand is established, or maybe they

get a sudden foreign request, only then they start to think about going to other countries. We approached this in a totally different way. At first with all our energy we wanted to be present abroad, we planned a long term strategy and we planned each sections of the brand introduction. We accepted that it is not going to be an easy process, it requires a lot of work and time, we need to gain a lot of experiences while we knew in advance that this investment will not pay off in just one year. At the same time we believe, that this is something it is worth to deal with and it is not unimaginable to make a living out of what we really like to do.

- When did you start the design work?
- I got my diploma in 2010 at the textile designer faculty in the MOME. In 2011 at the Apolda European Design Award I won the third prize with my diploma work inspired by the Hungarian Folk Tales animated television series' visual world. This international positive feedback gave me enough self-confidence, encouragement to start my own brand. In 2012 with two friends of mine we founded the Kele Clothing. The first collection, the spring/summer 2012 has been released in Budapest, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Barcelona, London, and also in Singapore. The next collection for the 2012/2013 autumn/winter season the collection of Kele clothing was extended with men wear and it became accessible in further stores in Italy and Germany. Since then we participated on a lot of international exhibitions, trade fairs; the actual 2013 spring/summer collection was presented at the Pitti Uomo in Florence. The 2014 autumn/winter collection was presented at the Berliner SEEK and in the Parisian Who's next? In the future we would like to lay bigger emphasis on the European market and further strengthen our presence in the USA and in Asia.
- How many employees do you have in the company?
- I don't have any, we three are the owners. The tailored products are made by a tailoring company and the knitted products with a knitting company. I make the sample pieced by myself and they do the manufacturing by themselves.
- In which markets are you selling?
- Primarily international; Germany, Spain, USA, Italy, Russia, in Hungary we sell in the Retrock, and in different pop-up stores.
- In which stage of your career were you in 2011 when you applied for the Re-button?
- That time I was after the diploma and before the Kele Clothing. In parallel with the Re-button the MOME Textile Faculty nominated the best two diploma works to a

European designer competition; the Apolda European Design Award, where I won the third prize.

- Are you designing also for individual orders?
- Maximum for friends, once the Wedding Fashion Magazine asked me to design wedding clothes for them and on this basis one bride asked me to make one of the designs for her.
- Why did you apply for the competition?
- I wanted to know how they will evaluate my work.
- What do you think, does this competition represents the Hungarian design scene?
- I think, at least till now the competition was not especially representing the Hungarian design scene. On the one hand mainly students were applying or designers at the beginning of their career. This year for the first time such category as old hands exists.
- Does this competition bring changes in the Hungarian design trends? Does it helps in keeping alive the cultural heritage in fashion design?
- Also in Hungary more and more people realize the possibilities which lie within the creative industry, its potential economic power. I think this is the aim also for this initiative. In my opinion the aim of this competition is to encourage the presentation, application of cultural heritage on everyday wearable clothing matching with the contemporary taste.
- What were your main inspirational sources?
- My main inspirational source was the unique visual world, the ambiance and the motives of the Hungarian Folk Tales series. I did not highlight one-two motives; I wanted to vitalize its ambiance. Therefore I watched all the episodes, the favorites more times, I studied the backgrounds (these were the most inspirational), I read about the symbols which lie within the folk tales, I went to the cartoon studio, where the series were made, I meet the creators... all these were very inspirational.
- How did you choose the applied topic, technique and motives?
- Folk art, folk music, folk songs and the folk tales were always close to my heart, because they were part of my life. In my childhood I regularly went to folk tales telling, folk singing competitions and from the age of 4 I was playing zither. Although I don't do these activities anymore, the memories are still fresh in my mind and folk tales to the present day are very dear to me. Might be it sounds cliché, but I not only find important the preservation of the traditions but also their utilization. I think it can

be the best achieved when the folk art treasures, traditions from the cabinets of museums and books become again the part of people life. Already three years before the diploma I decided that the inspirational source for my diploma is going to be the Hungarian Folk Tales series. The technique (knitting) was given, since I graduated at the knitting faculty. I also found it interesting to combine the machine knitting, machine felting and machine embroidery with manual techniques.

- How was your design process? How long it took?
- The concrete design and implementation process took half year. But in the diploma collection also the experiences of prior years was shown.
- How did you apply the chosen motif, technique?
- I choose a crochet lace motif from a Hungarian handicrafts book from 1920, I transposed it into knitted fabrics, I added the shapes to this motif and I worked on it with different fabric manipulation techniques.
- Did you adjust your own style to the chosen cultural heritage or the you adjusted the motives, techniques to your own style?
- At the diploma work I still wanted to show a lot of things, since its aim is to present what I learned during the university years. And I learned many exciting things. Actually during the university years you have to chance to soar, try everything and experiment. After that balance has to be found between the expression of the own style, taste and the customers' needs. So the own brand, the products designed for sell have to be much more refined.
- Did you introduce novelty, innovation in the technique and motives or you preserved them in their original form?
- I worked on and introduced changes in the details of the original motif.
- Are there any techniques, motives which your learned during the preparation for the competition and you use it which pleasure in the future?
- Most of the techniques I applied at the diploma work are unique, for one occasion only. Absolutely not manufacturable and it would only allow the small series production of the products. From those clothes other pieces were not made, apart from a vest what my supervisor ordered, so I only made it for her.
- Are you planning to get inspiration also in the future from cultural heritage?
- Since then I get inspiration constantly from cultural heritage. It can be folkloric motif, landscape, technique or traditional activity and the complementary equipments.

- Before the competition were you interested in applying cultural heritage motives, techniques, legend in your design work?
- I was always interested in this, since I grown up in this.
- Throughout the history the Hungarian cultural heritage came back into fashion from time to time. Some years ago this trend again came back to fashion. What do you think, what are the main reasons behind this revival?
- In Hungary Zsindelyné Tüdős Klára, fashion and costum designer was the first who wanted to revive the national fashion. She primarily based her design on the dresses of aristocrats and not the peasants. In 1928 she opened a fashion salon, Pántlika, representing the Hungarian decorative art. Today more Hungarian fashion designers find it important to preserve, renew the old, folkloric traditions. In today's globalized world we find it more and more important to discover our roots, to get to know where we are coming from and where are we going. As we know, this is also good for the country's image. At the millennium more and more, by today well known, Hungarian designers got inspiration from the cultural heritage, folkloric treasures: Nanushka, USE, Aquanauta, Molnar-Madarasz Melinda. For some reason from time to time it became popular, although if we look at it in other countries it is fundamental to build a brand, collection on the traditions. There it is also well appreciated, since it is also good for the country's image.
- What do you think, what is its effect on the Hungarian fashion and the designers?
- The national emotion (what is in a lot of Western and Eastern societies absolutely normal) got a sort of political meaning. The exaggeration, overreaction of the nationalism became today hampering for many designers. For example I also get inspired from our national heritage, I use its motives, the traditional, simple tailoring patterns, etc. but I don't do it in a direct way; I rethink, reinterpret them. And I also don't emphasize, underline it concerning the brand, because I don't make Hungarian style clothes. It is absolutely normal for me to get inspired from our own traditions, since I live in it, I know this the best, with the biggest confidence I can get inspired from this. For many, this is so much not obvious enough that when it comes up, what am I getting inspiration from, they ask me; but what is Hungarian in this? However, that is the point... that these values should not appear obtrusively but rather moderately, with style; after all I design neither costume nor symbol. Other designers due to the above mentioned issue are afraid to apply this topic and when they want to

use traditional elements they prefer to use the once of other cultures, because they don't want to be "put in a box".

### Interview with MIMM-textile design

- I'm a cultural economics student at the Erasmus University in Rotterdam. For my final thesis topic I choose the relationship between cultural heritage and fashion. I'm primarily interested in what is the motivation of Hungarian designers for applying Hungarian cultural heritage motives/ techniques in their collections. What can be the reasons behind this these days spectacularly alive trend and whether it is going to be alive for a long term or not. I read since 1994 you were participating on several competitions. Since when does your brand exist?
- We graduated in 1994 and almost at the same time we both got accepted to the University of Applied Arts. We worked a lot together but it was always random, occasional. We did not have common brand. We started the MIMM brand in the end of 2010, beginning of 2011 absolute spontaneously. We started it randomly which later turned into a conscious business. Apart from the competition I designed these motives. That time the Re-button was not announced, but 2-3 months before I got the inspiration that I would like to do something – that time for some time I was at home with my baby – because my creative energies were not used. I was thinking to make an own motive collection. When Moni show this, the idea came that we can use this for something totally different that what I was planning; and she made for the first time this textile jewelry. She borrowed from me the screen printer and after some weeks she made a necklace out of it. After I show this the first Re-button competition was announced. I thought that we can apply together with this design. The mixture of my and Moni's creative work was interesting. So with the first collection we applied and made it to the final at the competition which made us very happy. We thought about it as a satisfying result, since we could present it to a broad audience.
- Is it only you two how are making the jewelries?
- Yes
- Are you outsourcing the work?
- No, due to several reasons; one reason is that everything is handmade, also the screen printing is handmade – at the university I got my diploma on the textile printing faculty. The other reason is that when we put together the jewelries, that we never



make two same pieces; this is also a characteristic of our products. They can be maximum very similar, but never the same. Therefore it would be difficult to give out the work, because the design changes in between the process; what are we combining with what. We cannot delegate this task to someone else.

- You don't draw the design in advance?
- No, because we rather just put it together. There are tasks during the implementation which with time we can give out; for example the stitching of smaller earrings or the filling. But this is not true about the necklaces, because we have to stitch the different elements on the necklace during the process; we cannot put them together in advance. Or sorry, we have such a part of our collection what is apparel and those are manufactured. We have upper apparel products. The tailoring pattern was designed by Moni, but made by a tailoring company. We have this part of the collection what is serial production, we could say mass production.
- And where do you sell your products?
- At the WAMP and in different design shops; many would like to sell out products but we are selective.
- And for the time being in Hungary
- Yes, we had request from Vienna, but we could not take this opportunity. For us the most beneficial is when we are selling our products, otherwise there is such a margin – obviously it should also be worth for the shop. We need to think about it that the product should have a sellable price.
- Is the cost of materials effect the further expansion?
- The shops take our products in a way that they pay us only after they made a sell; till then it is my money, working hours, cost of materials in the stock. Since we are not working with gold and silver, I can say, that the cost of material is not that considerable... but it is absolutely unbelievable how much the unit piece of a good quality, nicely polished plastic pearl cost...
- You applied in 2011 and also in 2012.
- Yes, the MIMM was founded for this purpose
- Why did you apply?
- For the one hand when the first necklace was made by Moni I had the feeling about the competition that it was made for us. It is very good when you have a task to do. Here we could challenge ourselves and get evaluated. A lot of times the creativity is

pulled back by the fact that you don't want to "work for the drawer". Mainly people who graduated at the University of Applied Arts – maybe I'm wrong –, but I'm such type of person who likes to design when it has a purpose, they ordered it or it was made for a competition.

- What are the mission, values of your brand?
- I never thought about it. Besides that we love to do it and it has big success; that is why we did not stop doing it. I can also not say that the preservation of the Hungarian culture is our mission. We work with the sample set what I created which is Hungarian because I'm Hungarian. If I create something with honesty my Hungarian heritage will be presented in there and for a foreigner this will be readable. Can be that we don't even realize it, but someone else from the world recognizes that this design is European, Central-European. Among our motives we don't have copied motives, motives sets. My aim was when I was drawing these that I imagined that I'm a ginger bread decorator or painted egg maker and I put myself back to that time, to that craft and I draw these motives myself and that is why it became Hungarian.
- When you get a request with individual desires, than do you accept to do it or you say that they can only choose from the already existing works?
- This is very diverse, it depends on whether it is matching with our concept or not. There was such situation where the customer wanted a design in blue-white because that would have match with her dress, and then we said explicitly no because our brand is red, white and black, maximum grey. At this moment we don't change in this. For such requests we have to say no. We can satisfy an order when the request is about making something shorter, longer, with different pearl. We have several these kinds of orders. To abroad, to London we sold a piece from our collection made for the second Re-button. We did not give the original, we never going to sell that, but we made it again.
- What do you think, does this competition represents the design scene in Hungary?
- I think it does and especially with the fact that invited designers are also presented, and whith this they invite to them such designers, brand who would maybe not apply otherwise. I think this is a huge opportunity now in Hungary, because in both years they made a fantastic show which was a lot of money to make, required big organization, special people needed to hire to make it in a high standard.

- Does it make any changes in the design trends? Does it call the attention in long term on the folk art?
- These trends are ephemeral, such trend existed also earlier in Hungary and I think this will come back again and again than we will be bored of it a little, because it is going to be too much and then we will forget it for a while, than we will not use it. Indirectly if not directly it does affect the design trends, because it is challenging also for those people who will think about it and will make a collection only for the competition. The collections will exist in the future; the trend will be preserved in the common cultural knowledge. So, this is very important.
- In your collection, especially in the second one, made for the competition the bird motif got a significant role. Was there any other element what could be associated with the cultural heritage?
- At the first collection the bird and the heart motives, at the second next to the bird and heart the leaf, flower, and floral ornaments. What I could mention as parallel with the folk art is absolute the contours, I was trying to follow the contours of the ginger breads. I was following the same structure. The symmetry by the heart and so on...
- Primarily you got your inspiration from the ginger breads, the shapes and the Hungarian motives. How did this thought come before the announcement of the competition?
- It was totally a sudden idea, concretely I was not getting inspiration from anything. I had a strong inner urge that I have to do this now. No one asked me to do it, but I felt that something wants to come out of me, and I did not have any specific aim with that. I was thinking that I want to make such shapes which are patterned, from which I can stitch something and the shape is simple. At first this started my creative process.
- What changed between the first and the second collection?
- Obviously the consciousness; we were waiting for the announcement, what should be prepare, and then it was not questionable that we will try it again. Of course the first application was also made consciously; the collection was made consciously only the basic idea was spontaneous. At the second what interested us the most was to make accessories which are almost clothes. We thought about making them huge, a lot, and wild. At the first we took the wearability criteria seriously. I think it became wearable, but a modest necklace is undoubtedly less spectacular on the catwalk than a show

dress. For the second time we did not make accessories for everyday wear. It is close to costume; it can be worn only occasionally or for very courageous people.

- How was your design process?
- We were sure, that we don't want to change in the style of motives. I made a new motive set for the second collection. The birds were flying in this...
- The motives are absolutely from your imagination, you did not research folkloric landscapes...
- Obviously I know the Hungarian folk art, also because I'm Hungarian, but it was not like that I likes something and I transformed it. I is only Hungarian in its definition.
- You were at the point that you drew new motives...
- Yes, this was the first step, than we talked about it; we should include bird, hears, Moni had the idea that the motives should make a bigger heart motif. We agreed on it, I set down, drew it with paying attention of the basic motives which are similar but inside very detailed. Once we had the motives we set together and we started to brainstorm about how we should make it. This was created by both of us.
- The use of material remained the same?
- Yes, the material remained the same. That was Moni's idea. I was thinking about something else, but what she figured out was much better. It was strange for me to print such fine motives on felt material. At the second we also used thinly sliced cotton material and we crocheted with that. We used crocheted circles.
- How long are you preparing for such a design?
- Last year we had little time from the announcement till the submission. 1-2 months.
- What you are creating now resembles to which collection?
- Both, but we are selling pieces for everyday use.
- Do you feel positive changes after the Re-button?
- Yes, absolute; especially after the first, because before that the brand did not even exist.
- Are the motives made in all cases with screen printing?
- Yes, and the stitching is hand made
- To go back to your prior question; after the first Re-button we got requests from the WAMP and several others
- In the future are you planning any changes in the motives, development?

- I always introduce some small changes. Now we are also making a new screen printer. The difference now is that our motives were big and very small, and now we are making middle sized one. There is difference between what we sell in the summer time and in the winter time. We have houses, horses in the collection. The color is also a trademark of the brand. It is possible that we will change on it in the future, but for the time being not.
- In what extent is the market influencing you?
- In a big extent; the heart is chosen by most of the people. We always know that we need to make more from that. The design of the motives is always my part from the task.
- Fashion trends come back from time to time; this trend with the focus on folkloric motives came back again very spectacularly. What do you think, what can be the reasons behind this?
- This works a little at the base of the principle of mass hysteria; more people are wearing it, it matters who wears it for the first time... This initiative is the result of the revival of this trend. The organizers felt that they can strengthen this trend. It is strange what is becoming valuable; because it is handmade or because the idea behind it. This becomes a self generated process. This will get quite and then in some years it will come back again. The designers who take part in this can be that they apply folk art now because the market is not big or as a pastime. And can be that they have other collection next to this.
- What do you think what are the affect of the Re-button on the Hungarian fashion and designers?
- It has absolutely a big influence, because such collections are made which would not be made without this competition. There are a lot of designers, who are making new collection as a result of the competition. The MIMM is a bottom-up brand which started with minimal expenses. We started from a small scale and we reinvested all our profit.

### Interview with Piroshka

- I'm a cultural economics student at the Erasmus University in Rotterdam. For my final thesis topic I choose the relationship between cultural heritage and fashion. I'm primarily interested in what is the motivation of Hungarian designers for applying

Hungarian cultural heritage motives/ techniques in their collections. What can be the reasons behind this these days spectacularly alive trend and whether it is going to be alive for a long term or not. You founded your brand in 2010, if I know it right; you made 5 collections by now. Can you please talk about that in which phase your career is at the moment and how far are you with brand building?

- I'm at the beginning, during brand building. My first collection what I made in the style of Piroshka was made for the Re-button last year. Since then I made children clothing, I thought it is also worth to do mainly in this style – tradition and folkloric patterns – and now I'm making my second collection again in the framework of Re-button, what I also develop for myself. I again work with blue dye , but last year I only worked with it in an extent that I was using the fabric, and not I took a step forward, I made my own motives with blue dye technique – although it was made with screen printing – but in the same way with reserve procedure and a blue dyer painted it. The technique is not completely traditional because it was not made with struts, and these struts can not be separately made for each of these little animal figures. There are no people who are making these struts.
- Besides the fact that the fabric is made by someone else and you giving out work ?
- Till now I had a dressmaker who I hired for the children clothing... oh yes, and to add to the phase of my career, I don't live from this yet because I don't sell. Maybe I sold here and there one-two children clothes, but this brand cannot be found anywhere.
- First of all, because I know that you were also in Berlin...
- Oh yes, I lived there, I was born there, I have German nationality. My mother in German but in my childhood I lived here for 3-4 years with my father and then I was going in the first three years to Hungarian secondary school, that is why I speak Hungarian, but afterwards I was again in Berlin. And this period obviously influenced me, because I came back. Might be there are a lot of mix children, but they don't know the language of both of their parents or they are not interested, they don't have such bonding.
- Are you designing primarily for the Hungarian market?
- Not that much... at this moment yes, but as we know it also depends on financial things, there are a lot of young very good designers, but there are less people who are susceptible for this and willing to give money out for these products of the novel designers – I don't count myself as an avantgard designer –. Everybody is trying to go

in some ways abroad, but I would like to speak to the Hungarians with my new specific way I try to mix the tradition with the modern and maybe call the attention of such people on folk art who are not very interested in it. All in all it is not traditional folk art what I try to do.

- On your website I read about your mission and vision. You say that you are mixing the renewal with tradition, you are insisting on the tradition but you want to implement it is a modern, deliberated way
- This topic is very complex
- You said about yourself that you are an innovative traditionalist
- That is one thing that I wrote something on my webpage, somehow I try to define my mission and values, but otherwise I could write about this topic pages; that in today's globalized world, in the capitalism, mass production, urbanization the values... this is so much complex, that it would be stupid and an illusion to try to bring back the folk art. Might be there are such people in Transylvania who do it authentically, but it was not brought back, but as cultural heritage somehow we have to preserve it. There are traditionalists, who do it very precisely but that stays in isolation. I try to mix it with modernity so it can be preserved, because like this it is going to be interesting also to such people who do not know or are interested in traditional folk art, folk culture. Another thing is that I did not want to copy the folk dresses as they are, because they are beautiful, wonderful and elaborated as they are, nearly haute-couture and we have to appreciate that, we should not copy it, that does not have any sense, and that it would also not be fashion anymore. Fashion is always about some kind of interpretation, it puts something in a new context, it gives a new viewpoint to the things.
- You applied first in 2012 and this year again. Why did you apply for the competition?
- That time I was living in Hungary only for some months and when I decided that I will come to Hungary, to Budapest I did not have the idea of Piroshka in mind, but I was after graduation, from one hand it was a low point that where should I orientate, what should I do with my diploma and this was a such a night vision – or how should I say – it was some kind of a vision that I want to go to Budapest and experience, enjoy also my Hungarian nationality, get to know Budapest, the artistic, cultural, designer life there – because till then I was coming to Hungary only for vacation, and so I could not be in the artistic life of the city – and then I quickly got the idea of Piroshka, that I

would like to make such fashion in which I involve inspiration from Hungarian folk dresses, folk art. But this can also be broadened, because there are a lot of influences in it – can be that I start with this, but can be that around the ethnics topic I will involve Turkish than African folk art ... but somewhere there is always will be a little bit of Piroshka. Even at the beginning of the school I was very inspired by the different cultures' folk dresses. I'm not a modernist Bauhaus designer, but rather costume focused. This topic is what I knew I could do something with. And then why should I choose Chinese when I have my Hungarian heritage which is also a personal thing, and...

- Your first collection got the name Piroshka and this year is called 'In the blue woods'.
- From that the blue is the blue dye, the woods is Piroshka in the folk tale and the motives what I copied from art books are small animals found in ceramics, textiles,...
- Piroshka is a Grimm tale
- Yes, Grimm, but the name is Hungarian, my grandmother was also Piroshka... I don't know, and also the red color, I like red, and it is also present in the Hungarian folk dresses... Yes, it is Grimm tale, but that is also a little girl in the village.
- What visibly were presented in your first collection are the shapes themselves, the fabric, and the colors. Besides these did you apply other cultural heritage elements in your design?
- The dress patterns were also inspiring me, these shirts which are also used now, and I felt that since the last year's collection I did not exhaust the topic and I'm still interested in it. These baggy shirts, the lot of materials and these 'raffolas' are also in folk art. The way the shirt sleeves are made, the linen shirts, the linen clothes interested me also last year; it can be seen in the tailoring pattern. At that shirt the abundance of material was very inspiring; the lot of fabric. Then I was also making a leather jacket; the 'ködmön' (frock) inspired me. It was rather the tailoring and that I was using the blue dye.
- Did you focus on one specific landscape?
- No, I was thinking about this a lot, I was thinking whether it is a problem or not, but from the other hand I'm a fashion designer and not a traditionalist or traditional dress maker. I also made a video and there were people who told me that the used music did not match with the dance steps. But now this is not about that. I respect, that there are



people who take it serious, because folk art should be preserved, that is historic part of this thing, it cannot survive; it is in the museum, there you can see it but it died out.

- How did you choose the used elements? Because at last you built your brand upon this idea; this first collection. How did you get to the design idea?
- I started do draw, looking for inspiration, I was looking at books, items, and then the drawings do to a lot of directions. I had very different plans where the different folkloric landscapes could be detected and then something decided in which direction am I going with the design. I try to make collection following this idea which is unified. The fabric was also given within relatively short period of time, spontaneously. When I got to know that this competition will be organized I did not have much time for preparation and like this I already had an idea about my design plan. In a long term I would like to involve much more craftsmen. I usually go to craftsmen's festival. Last year when I was there I collected a lot of addresses, telephone numbers, and I made pictures, in case at a future collection we could collaborate – they could decorate or so –. I don't only want to make fashion, but I would like to use more and more textile craftsmen, techniques. There are a lot of people who do these kind of things, but they are in Kolozsvár or somewhere across the border.
- In both of your collections the blue dye was dominant; is it possible that you will leave it out from your design?
- It is possible, when I will feel that I exhausted the topic; because even in blue dye the patterns are limited. I'm in contact with craftsmen from Tiszakecske, I was there twice. There are a lot of textile printing strut what I like, but they are not using them because the biggest demand is for the floral motives. They will not make for me 5 meters with another motive. There are such things but I was thinking that I would like to have other motives with this technique.
- Something you designed?
- I also designed these in a way that I copied these figures from folkloric books from different items, textiles, and ceramics from different folkloric landscapes and like this I created a folkloric zoo. This is a unique composition since they are not all coming from the same folkloric region.
- The motives you like you copy it and the craftsmen put it on the fabric?

- Yes, the digitalization, rapport creation I underestimated these works at the beginning. I was working a lot on motive production what was otherwise the task of a textile designer, because he/she learned it. I was making the fabric with screen printing and then I took it to the blue dyer, he colored the fabric blue and these parts remained white. It is like printing wax on a white fabric and when I color it it remains white. This was made with such technique; I printed it.
- So, even the fabric was designed by you.
- Yes, because no matter how much I would like to work with a textile designer if I could not find suitable partner.
- Did you start using blue dye technique at this particular design?
- Yes
- Did you know it in advance?
- Blue dye also existed in Germany, it spread in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It came from India with the sailors, traders and then the technique was also invented in Europe, it expanded just like the textile printing technique itself. This is not only a Hungarian thing. The technique itself comes from India with the name; batik. It exists also in Africa in a more primitive way. Here the printing is made with big machines. In Africa they still do it with hand and draw with wax. It exists also in China and in India. This is also a beautiful thing; can be that this is associated with the Hungarian folk garment but it also has its history. I spread the world. The same technique can be varied in many ways.
- Does your inspirational source affect your style or are you trying to adjust everything to your own style?
- I would not go that far that I would say that I have my own existing style, but finally a style comes out from me by itself. Doesn't matter how much I see other designers' works and I plan that I would like to do also something similar, but when I'm designing something else comes out of it. I think this is like that by every brand, that you figure out a style and the next collection will be built on it. More a brand is built the more stable the clientele is; therefore you cannot differ very much from the basic style because that would chase away the customers.
- What motivates you in this is the technique and the knowledge accumulated in folk art and you like to research in this topic. And then you also have a personal interest towards...

- I'm not really a researcher type; I don't have persistence for that. I did not stop the blue dye. Last year I found the works of Iren Bodi. One of my friends showed me the textile prints of Irene Bodi in an archive which was not the traditional peacock motif and generally what we know figures. She is also one of my role models; she is also experimenting with one technique not in a traditional way. She inspired me in experimenting with the blue dye technique. Another thing I experienced is that it is very difficult to work in cooperation with traditional craftsmen as a fashion designer. They keep distance. My experience is that in order to cooperate we need to create trust. I was by them twice, I was calling them several times, they were nice, they show the result – I took to them 30 m fabric, although there were faults in it which can always happen, but I tried a new technique – they liked it very much, they show that I'm serious about it. It is not always good to change the already learned technique. I try to learn the technique, experiment, so it could even be manufacturable – because here were some problems. I need to develop it. I need to think about it technically.
- You introduced an innovation in the technique. What else is innovative in your design?
- The motives, the fabric; I use also denim – I was very interested in also trying denim – . The cotton canvas is traditional. I would like to use 100% quality materials. By the thick denim material it was experienced that the contrast is much smaller; it is not easily printable. I need to develop it.
- You also apply the motives partially, for example the baggy sleeves. In the clothes at the right end only the blue dye reminds about folk art.
- I show the material abundance, shirring, 'raffolas' only in the sleeves. The fabric is shirred. The tailoring those times was not highly developed. They could not make complex tailoring pattern. The shape was created by shirring technique. The amount of fabric showed the wealth and social status of peasants.
- This time you mixed the denim with blue dye, are you using still leather?
- No, but I would like to. I work with cotton; natural, good, durable materials. The frock was also a hereditary piece, they were wearing it for a lifetime. I also would like to make clothing which are not so fashionable, not so trendy but good quality, timeless pieces.
- Your aim is not to follow the trends.

- I live my freedom in fashion design. Maybe in the future it will be also developed what is sellable.
- Were you interested before the competition in cultural heritage?
- I knew before the competition that I would like to make Piroshka. When I heard about the competition for the first time it was such a feeling that this competition was made for me. I really do what was in the announcement of Re-button. Luckily I made it to the final. It was a good start.
- Did Re-button give you reputation?
- Not so much. There were a lot of people from the MOME. I did not know anyone and no one knew me. Compared to that, I could make myself more known. The difficulty is that I don't know many people in the design scene in Hungary. This inspired more here than in Germany. This is personally a big learning path.
- The fact that you are dealing with this topic does differentiate you from your fellow designers? Is there any difference between Hungarian and foreign designer?
- Today's generation got there that they are not differing. I'm happy for the Hungarians that they are catching up, they can make high standard design, but this could be changed with anything; it does not have its uniqueness. This is globalization it is all about it.
- You find it important to differ from it
- Obviously that is why I do this. It is important to have a cultural uniqueness – not in a political way. I'm a tolerant person. I was afraid that they will think, I'm sympathizing with a political party. I'm a globalization critic. I have an example in my head. When we see a documentary about Bhutan; there it is romanticized that how good it is that there they preserve their culture, but when a country does this in Europe it becomes at once nationalist. The development of folk art cannot be associated with nation idea. Those were little villages with not connection to politics.
- What do you think, what can be the main reasons behind the revival of folk art in fashion?
- From the one hand this is a global phenomenon just like the capitalism critic, mass production critic, the rethinking of the cheap items and values. Also bio movement exists; these are all connected. The acceleration of the world, the lot of existing problems concerning environment, society, finances... there is a regression. Just like what you know in a family. This is a trend. From the other hand maybe in Hungary

this also suits to the politics, but this trend should be saved from getting political identity. And the 'tanchaz' movement is also a big influential factor. They called the attention on the whole folk art. It became strong in the 80's. The folk dance is again a discovery. This was not like this in the 20's, 50's. The people from the city and the people from the village did not have much to do with each other. The bourgeois were speaking in German; the society of the city had a different culture from the peasants. With the 'tanshaz' movement people again have interest in the folkloric culture, they are going to dance folkdance. Young people in their teenage age decide to go to the Liszt Ferenc University to learn folk music and folk dance. This is fantastic in a western country. And it is not an old generation who dance folk dance. The folk dance nights are very wild.

- What do you think, whether it effects the Hungarian design and designers?
- Today's' young designers are trying to orientate themselves towards the international trends. They want to get out there; therefore they don't really care about folk art. For the MOME students it is obligatory to apply, they are also tempted by the financial award.
- Can be that the source of inspiration, the Hungarian heritage will change with time?
- I have such idea that 'Piroshka travels to', because I also like traveling. Piroshka is my wraith. She is travelling, getting inspirations from materials, colors, but also involves her own style.
- Your brand is built on the world of folk tales
- Yes, to find the way in the jungle of the big world, searching for identity; this is absolutely about me. The dual identity is also such a jungle. That is also why I came to Hungary.

### Interview with Zsuzsanna Fabri

- I'm a cultural economics student at the Erasmus University in Rotterdam. For my final thesis topic I choose the relationship between cultural heritage and fashion. I'm primarily interested in what is the motivation of Hungarian designers for applying Hungarian cultural heritage motives/ techniques in their collections. What can be the reasons behind this these days spectacularly alive trend and whether it is going to be alive for a long term or not. Can you please talk about what you are doing for a living?

- Last year I graduated and since then the director of a digital textile printing company asked me whether I would like to work with them, because he knew how I work. He would like to design jerseys, different sport jerseys; football, basketball, handball and so on and he wants to use the facilities of the company therefore he needed someone who can design the jerseys so he can print in at his company, that is why he hired me. But next to this I do several other things, for example with his son we are now developing swimming costumes at a company which is making clothes made with digital printing.
- So you have the possibility to continue the design work
- Yes, absolutely, also as a hobby I design, draw, because the hobby which is closest to my heart is drawing
- And how do you plan long term? You grab the upcoming opportunities?
- In long term I'm planning to go abroad. Already when I started the university I knew I want to work abroad.
- Both in 2011 and in 2012 you applied for the Re-button competition. That time you were a student, what motivated you in applying?
- When the first Re-button was announced it was unique; there was nothing like that before. I seemed to be a very good opportunity, because the organizing was very professional and everything was clearly determined; the prices were also very good, the timings, financial award and funding. It was obviously a good opportunity. As students we were informed about it on time, many applied from the MOME. I was also thinking for some time a topic what there I tried to realize. I was thinking that this is a very good opportunity to realize my topic I had in mind.
- Was the application difficult due to the resources? Is it a big investment?
- This is a good question. I think it is a problem, that the competition has two stages. In the first stage approximately fifty design plans are selected and these designers have to make their collections from their own money. Only the 20-25 designers selected for the second round will get some financial support. This is obstructing the creativity, because you don't know whether you are spending your own 100.000 Forint – what you could spend on something else – or should you really spend 100.000 Forint, because with a more spectacular collection you have more chances to win, but what if you will not make it to the final; then you were spending unnecessarily. Therefore I think everyone is careful during the creative process and try to keep it cheap.

- What do you think; does this competition represent the Hungarian design scene?
- I think it does, because the Hungarian design scene is full with talents, but there are among them weaker designers or such traditionalists who are not innovative, so the design scene like this is absolutely represented. In the Re-button designers who are not representing the design point of view of the MOME can also make it to the final. I'm always surprised at some designers who make it to the final – I wonder why. There are much more creative designers than who are presented in the Re-button.
- Do you think that this competition brings changes to the design trends?
- I think, this competition made many people thinking about this topic and might be they found something in cultural heritage what they want to use also in their future designs. I was also like this with it. When I was still at the first Re-button I already started to think about the next competition and I made a lot of planning. This motivates people because it is a good introduction possibility, it is a high quality competition and they also offer money award. From my experience during the 1 year, half year till you are waiting from the results till the new announcement it comes back again and again in my mind what and how can I use in next year's competition.
- This is building the preservation of cultural heritage in common knowledge?
- Yes, I think it reaches its goal. I think it is motivation people to think about the traditions, look at it from a different point of view not only as a Matyo embroidery on a T-shirt or a swimming costume but it should be thought about in a more abstract way. I think this is a good thing, and also that the university students are also doing it – for the encouragement of the teachers – and when till they finish university they will see how to use these things.
- Your collection which got the Huszarvagas name it seems like you were concentration more on the shapes. Was there any other cultural heritage element in it?
- I would like to make it clear right at the beginning that I'm not a traditionalist type of person, but if there is such a competition which was in this case the Re-button, I apply. But if they cas me to design about the cars shapes, then I would even do that, but I think this is a general designer attitude. So basically I'm not interested in this, but when there was this competition I started to think about it and it came in my mind how much I like the braiding techniques. My designer technique is that I start the design from the details and I cannot think in big concepts. I just easily adjusted the shapes to it in a simple, symbolic way. The collection not exactly became the way I wanted it to

be, because I did not have enough time for it. I made it during some couple of days. I between there was the Fashion Creator TV show and there also I almost got eliminated, I had to write assignment and all these within 2 weeks. And this time I also had to prepare the design for the competition.

- And you did not have any help?
- No, from the search for material, to the tailoring, stitching, modeling, I made everything alone only at the end I asked the help of a dress maker to help me stitch it because I was running out of time. I think I was lucky to be among the final 20. And what I wanted to do with this topic I started there and it would be so good to bring this topic back a little bit but now with the corrections of my former mistakes. I should have use different materials. The topic of the braiding and the drawn motives were good but I could not show it there nicely.
- So what you added to it was the technical part and the colors
- I used the colors of the original hussar wear. Maybe I should have use rather monochrome colors or a more every day wear denim with white jersey combination or something like that. I shouldn't make the design so obviously reflective on the heritage source.
- Your concept was the rethinking of the hussar wear?
- Yes, that was also my inspiration, when before that I was in London for a half year, I remember that there was a store where I saw dresses which had very interesting surface decorations. Such jeans which had small straps appliqué, twisted; it could make the material very interesting. And somehow this was my first thought to use the braids in a similar way. This was one of my inspiration and the other was the hussar wear.
- So what you saw in London and what you researched
- Usually it is like this by all the design work. First you see a contemporary example what starts your imagination and then you see something traditional and those two somehow meet in your mind. The modern and the tradition are inspirational at the same time. I think it is not possible to only get inspiration from the tradition, because if you only consider that, it is not sure that a good design will be made until unless you are a genius and you can feel it by heart.
- You did not only apply a traditional element in your design but you used the braids in an innovative way.



- I did not wanted to apply the braids in the same way as it is on the traditional dresses
- There are different braiding techniques or this is the only one what you used? Are there more hussar wears you could chose from?
- First I had such a class which was dealing with the Hungarian heritage and I wrote my assignment at the end of the year about hussars, so my choice had a background. I show that they were using very different colors, different binding techniques, but it is still a complex design and I don't know, there was not a specific dress, but in order to determine the used colors I decided to go for the color what first comes in my mind when I think about hussars and that was red. But there are many different.
- In this you adjusted your collection to the heritage elements and not your own...
- I wanted to make it recognizable; I wanted to make the topic obvious, because otherwise the source of inspiration might not have been so obvious if I would have chosen a random color. But now I think that it was not necessarily important because that could also be more abstract.
- How was your design process? How long it took?
- For the design I had time, when I had to send my design plan I was not so busy. First I started to make small drawings and I tried to put on a sketch the little details which are in my mind figuring out their place. At the end when I had a lot of ideas I figured out that I want to use two things; one was the decoration of the surface and the other was the print. Also for the print I made small motives those were hussar style curls from which horses came out. When I had my motives I figured out the hussar wear with the skinny trousers and the strengthened shoulders and chest area reminds me about the style of the 80s; everything is narrow from the hips and on top it is oversized. Afterwards I emphasized this feature, that is why I made leggings, and overall and jacket with epaulettes. When I was choosing the colors I thought that it is quite obvious that I use red. When I had this and I started to draw the final plan I show that this could be perfectly completed with a really cool sport shoe and I handed in my plans with Tisza shoes. I wanted to give to the models golden accessories, because that is also a feature of the 80's just like of the hussar wears. My concept was a better executed plan than the final result, but it was a good idea. I can talk to you with pleasure also about my design for last year.
- I could not make it with that design to the final. Since then I took apart some clothes or corrected it, and remade it, but at last I did not finish all. My topic was the ginger

bread. I really like it, because it is simple, happy, and nice motif and it is strongly present in the Hungarian tradition – of course not only in the Hungarian. The basis of the design was that the ginger breads' motives are very interesting, many hearts, many decorations, ruffles, flowers and in the middle is a mirror. I was designing printed motives. There were hearts which I multiplied, enlarged, made smaller, there was a playfulness in the motives. To figure out the shape I started to draw, and the markets came in my mind. What if they had kerchief on their head, with sunglasses and swimming costumes. Although this feeling is cool and happy – the market feeling – a little beach like, I also added the style of the 50s, 60s to the design. I designed ruffled skirts, a little bit in beach style, T-shirt, mini trouser, small top. I used silver, pink, beige and white colors. First I wanted to use more shapes in the motives, but at last I decided to use the heart shape. There were photos which I took as basic inspirational sources. All the motives were hand drawn; I improvised a lot.

- Are there books from which you get your inspiration or you get sudden ideas?
- I always get inspired by the details or the technique, color combination, motif, surface development. It can come from recently seen things for example I look at catwalks on the internet. I try to build them in my mind. I have a lot of things in mind, but there is not time and money to make everything.
- In the university techniques are not taught but rather you have to research it?
- The education in Hungary is not really experimental. In London the emphasis was on experimenting. It is much releasing not to sit in front of an empty paper and keep on thinking of an idea. They let us there to experiment. This mentality is much releasing, I liked this very much.
- When you are searching for a technique are you going back to craftsmanship, to tradition?
- Almost all the techniques are experimented for us. We only have to give it a new frame. It is good that these techniques exist; it is not bad to copy a technique, if you are using it on your own way it becomes yours. If you approach it in a different way it becomes tradition preservation and not copying. There is such a direction in fashion that everything is very much rich in details and handmade but the richness of details can also be made with machines. But certainly there is an aim for quality which is representing rich details.
- Are you planning in the future to deal with similar topic?

- I will surely not be specified on this fashion direction, but if I will see fantasy in similar topic, I will make it. For this year's Re-button for example at first I wanted to create design based on the Matyo elements enlarging them into 3D elements, but I did not know how to implement this, so then I searched for a topic which was the Corvina, king Mathias, decorated letters. I wanted to make a detailed design.
- Is there something you learned during the preparation for the first competition and you apply it in the future too?
- I think, that when you used something once and if you are not satisfied with it you will come back to it to make it better. After some years the designer can come back to the same thing, because he/she realizes that he/she did not utilize all the possibilities in it. I think it is possible that I will revisit the prior mentioned design topics.
- Before the competition were you interested in applying cultural heritage in your design?
- Only the obligatory tasks in the university. But there I was working with the Estonian folks wear.
- Fashion is repeating itself, cultural heritage came back to fashion again, what do you think, what can be the reasons behind this?
- I could say that this had also political reason. Now there is the upsurge of such political parties who are dealing with heritage preservation, Hungarian identity. Lot of people not definitely in quality, designer products but start to wear clothes which reflect on classic folkloric traditions. This is one reason of the popularity, the other one is that Hungary is looking for its identity, the government is trying to make Hungary appealing for foreigners with the conscious development of clothing, souvenir items; sellable items. Hungary should have a good communication towards abroad and one of the results of this ambition is the Re-Button. They started to organize this competition with investing a lot of money in it; it is promoted abroad, made international. These all are such initiatives which at last all come from politics and business. For the country, the economy it is beneficial to have foreign visitors. It is a good tool for image building.
- What do you think, is there anything what distinguishes the Hungarian designers from the foreign designers?
- This is hard to say. The Hungarian design environment is familiar for me. Maybe that it is not that conscious and not big brands are leading the fashion, the opportunities are

less, the customer base is smaller; therefore they design rather sellable clothing.

Abroad I saw many times designs which are more spectacular but there people are wearing these. In Western Europe people also have more money to spend on designer pieces. Rather this is what puts the design between boundaries and this is what gives a specific ambiance to the Hungarian fashion design, because it cannot soar like this. It would be very good, but it has a lot of boundaries.

- What do you think, does this trend have any impact on the Hungarian fashion and designers?
- I don't think that it will be part of the constant fashion; it could only be part of the general fashion if it is not so concrete in the design. Traditions should be preserved in a way that in between we don't know that we are preserving tradition at the moment, but something in reminding us about it. So I think the more we can prescind from the actual inspirational source the longer the tradition can be preserved.
- You think that it does not have long term perspective apart from designers who built their brands on cultural heritage?
- The majority of the contemporary designers are applying for the competition, so it is going to be a part of their creative thinking, maybe even their brand will be build in a Hungarian conscious way; emphasizing a little that they also preserve the Hungarian heritage. And they will not forget this and it can even be that bigger brands grow from them. In long term it is a good investment, because now they are calling attention on this topic which can generate interest towards this also in the future. I'm happy that this competition exist because it is a very good opportunity and I hope it will last long. This leaded my designer attention; a lot of times I try to reflect my inspirational sources on this topic. I will turn back to these things but not necessarily in a recognizable way. As a starting point folk art is very good. These traditions already have initiated a lot of new thoughts already.

### **Interview with Blue Paprika**

- I'm a cultural economics student at the Erasmus University in Rotterdam. For my final thesis topic I choose the relationship between cultural heritage and fashion. I'm primarily interested in what is the motivation of Hungarian designers for applying Hungarian cultural heritage motives/ techniques in their collections. What can be the reasons behind this these days spectacularly alive trend and whether it is going to be

alive for a long term or not. I could not find an exact date of your brand foundation I both read 2004, 2006.

- In 2005
- Could you please talk about the phase your brand building and career is at the moment?
- This is a good question, truly we are not so much conscious in this, because – I'm making the brand with Terez Szucs – we both were always working also for other companies, so this is obstructing the straight development what would otherwise be expected from the company. But from the other hand the development is much more secured like this because we get to such technologies, new, fresh information through the factories to which another designer could not get access in his/her small studio. So this should be imagined in a way that through our works we travel a lot to abroad, we get to know such technologies, fabrics which don't even exist in Hungary. So therefore this sacrifice is worth to make, because we get at first hand such information to which a designer who is only building his/her own brand could get only for a big amount of money, which of course a Hungarian designer does not have. So we are not concentrating with 100 percent only on the brand so we can get always this freshness, this new point of view. At the same time this is double energy, work for us because we have to prove in two places, but luckily till now we could do it.
- And through these relationships the brand also gets bigger reputation
- Of course, these all bring new opportunities.
- Next to designing and selling for the national market are you targeting foreign markets as well?
- Yes, we sell also abroad, there is a small shop in Switzerland which is selling our products, we sell to Germany, recently our opportunity in Vienna terminated, but we are trying to find something else instead. Now we are in working progress to create our own web shop. We also transport abroad, so when someone finds us on facebook than of course, but that is a much complicated process than a web shop.
- How many employees do you have?
- We don't have full time employees, because we also work elsewhere; it would not be possible to look after someone from 8 till 6 daily. We work with wagers and give out everything from the embroidery till the stitches, printing, etc. by the way I think this is much economical but the young designers usually don't see this. Exactly

because they don't have experience in production. They think that it is cheaper to employ an own dress maker who solves everything, but the fact is that one dress maker does not know all the techniques, so therefore the possibilities are restricted. No talking about that, that if I'm not satisfied with the work it is really difficult to change the employee. If I don't like the work of a tailoring company, in the next week I will not give them any more jobs, but I go to the other one. We have a lot of relations. We have connection with embroider, tailor, so we always give work to people who are available, who are the best in quality and price.

- When you applied in 2011 for the Re-button, Blue Paprika was already a known name.
- Yes
- What motivated you in applying?
- We were invited. It was very strange, because approximately on the day of the competition we realized what we did not know throughout the process that we are also competing. We were not very interested in this because the main goal was to be present, because we knew that it is going to be a big thing to be present there, and we were right. We got a lot of publicity through the Re-button and because we were invited designers it did not have big risk. Like this we also avoided to compete with the generation of my students. I don't remember exactly but maybe 8-10 designers were invited, and of course later there was a problem from it, but until now the more experienced and the starting designers got nicely separated in the competition. This year we did not apply, but we were thinking about it, due to lack of time we did not apply. We could have applied without any problem since the two designer categories are separated. I would be a bad feeling to compete with my own students.
- What are the mission, values of your brand? Did it start from tradition preservation?
- Traditionalist is not a good definition about us because we are not reproducing the clothing – that is being traditionalist – and a lot of people do this luckily in Hungary. I think this is also very important. What we do is to a certain extent also traditionalism but rather value preservation, making people know about the values of folk art. Mostly preserve it for the young generation who don't know it nicely, and to show it to foreigners from a different point of view to maybe as a result they will be looking at a tablecloth with different eyes... opening their eyes about what can be found in Hungarian tradition.
- What do you think, does this competition representing the Hungarian design scene?

- No, because a lot of people did not apply, but I think it should also not be representative. I think everybody can decide by themselves whether they want to take part of a competition like this or not, it is appealing to them or not. I think there are many designers... who are well known, half Hungary know them, but I think could not cope with such competition. They know this about themselves; therefore also in fear from the media, facebook and bloggers they are not willing to acquire a bad experience so many are not applying for these reasons. And many also do not want to compete with young yet anonym designers.
- And does it bring changes in the design trends?
- I don't think so. This is a very good possibility for the Hungarian designers, a very big thing, I certainly stand up for this initiative, because a lot of people were attacking it from many different angles, but I think this is a huge help for the designers. It does not matter who won and how, because maybe I also don't agree with that, but this whole event is a very good initiative. So I think it is positive.
- So you think that apart from the fact that this competition is calls the attention of the Hungarian designers on the cultural heritage doesn't mean that they will use these elements also in the future.
- No, absolutely not. And it can also be that like this year the topic of the competition is not closely related to the Hungarian folk art but the different cultures of the whole Carpathian Basin – and they could chose architecture, or anything else which is I think very good. If they would constantly only concentrate on Hungarian folk art then I think in some years everybody would be fed up with it.
- You collection made for the competition got the name Ethnic Geometric, because your were concentration the shapes and the motives. The colors and the fabric were innovative in the design. And apart from this were there any other cultural heritage elements?
- No, only the transposition of the motives into a 3D technique. Here the aim was not to use embroidery; we wanted to make something very contemporary and new.
- It got a totally new meaning. And what you got your inspiration from...
- Originally that was the motif; we transformed the flower motif.
- What was your concept at this collection?
- The aim was to present the motives in a very new format, not in the usual embroidery, stapling and folding styles. The 3D presentation was the main aim.

- And from what kind of motives did you get your inspiration from?
- We never chose only one folk region but rather a motif what we like, so it doesn't really matter from which region it is from. So we rather work with a motif what we like at first sight. This is a 3D technique. These stripes were stitched in it, these were not folded but it was cut apart and in between these edges were put. These were separate pieces and it was stitched together one by one.
- I also read on your website that creating harmony between the denim and the traditional wears in the basis of the brand. The brand and the inspirational source is continuously developed. How can that be imagined?
- In a way that when we start a new collection then we start to look at new motives or new forms which can even be a furniture just like the print of the T-shirts which were inspired by woodcarving. I think that the Hungarian motive treasure is so big that even if we make this brand for 50 years we will have enough inspirational sources. So we always find new things in museums, library, country house on the countryside, so it is impossible to not to find some inspirational sources.
- And the processing of the motif is with print technique?
- Or it is embroidered, or appliqué; it depends what we would like to do. So we don't have rules for this.
- How are you usually choosing the motives for the next collection? Are you doing research before?
- Yes and we chose what we like at that moment
- Does the choice of color have any significance?
- On the one hand we are looking at the colors of the season, but on the other hand we use what we like. It does not have any significance, because no one understands anymore the meanings of color, maximum the folklore researchers, so the color is not important because it is not meaningful for the customers.
- I show on your website three collections plus the jewelries. From what are these jewelries made?
- From plexi.
- Your model choice for the shooting surprised me. Was it conscious to choose an Asian woman?
- I really liked the character of the girl – I show her on a show – and when I show her to my partner she also liked her and so we chose her.



- The collections for me are largely different from each other. What were phases of this development, what guided your development?
- It is not so much conscious, our taste is just evolving by itself. Of course it is also formed by the customers so of course we are not designing for ourselves but for sell, so it is also formed by externalities. This process is not conscious by us especially because we are not controlled by an owner or buyer. According to our mood and taste we go to a direction what we like.
- And also for the competition you applied in a way that you presented your own style.
- Right
- A customer was chose only from the existing collection or can have personal wishes?
- We also design for order so it is also likely to have a customer with not a really concrete idea about a wedding dress and then we make it of course. So she likes the style and we make different designs for her and she can choose what she likes.
- How is the design process? How long is it?
- It is totally unpredictable. It can take 5 minutes or 5 days. There is not rule for this.
- First you make sketches and then... you choose the material, the motif and then you make the design plans and you make selection?
- Yes, usually we make more plans and we choose from it what we both like the most and we start to model it. We make one sample from a design, we look at it, sometimes we even wear it for a while, we see how does it work and then we make changes, corrections on it and then we make it in sizes and put it in the shop.
- Is novelty introduced also in the technical part of design? Or there is a collection with what you work?
- Of course we have a certain collection but we are trying to always renew it. Now we starte to make these metal like earrings which is a really big novelty in the market because they look like metal but it is plastic so it is very light and does not cause allergy. We always try to come up with novelty but this is also a matter of finances. Because if you always just innovate you cannot sell it. Only very big companies can allow this for themselves... of course we are using the existing, good technologies, but we are always trying in every year introduce something new.
- A collection is made in how many pieces?

- It always depends on the given period. When we get a bigger order from somewhere then we make also 30 pieces at once but if not then only a small size series, S,M,L, XL and we put it in the shop, we are testing it.
- And is the collection differing in the market you are making it for?
- Yes, there are of course differences what we need to take into consideration both in body type both in taste. We experienced that mainly the German and the citizens of Northern countries like our design. Mostly Germans, then Danish, Belgian, Swedish customers like our collections.
- And what do you think what is differentiating a Hungarian designer internationally?
- It is very difficult to say, because I see that most of the successful Hungarian designers are adjusted to the international trends but does not add anything extra to his/her design. I think in long term this can also be dangerous. Also abroad is a serious competition among the designers for a shop presence and everything else. So I think that these designers lost a little bit their unique plus due to what they can be different but at the same time they represent international standard which is very good because 10-20 years ago there were barely such Hungarian designers. Today there are a lot of Hungarian designers who can also in design and in quality compete internationally. It is very difficult to add this plus value, uniqueness to the design due to which it is going to be different then the international trends.
- By you to be unique is also one of the motivations for using tradition as inspirational source.
- Yes, that is very conscious choice. We think that with this we can be distinguished from the lot of similar other designs.
- Are you buying your materials from abroad?
- Yes, through Hungarian companies. As a small company we cannot order in big quantity. We are buying from companies who bring the fabric from abroad.
- Are you planning in the future the use of the same or maybe different motives?
- It is possible. It is rather due to the lack of money and time that we are using the same embroidery motif, screen print for longer period of time, because we don't have money to make new, although we would really like to make new once. We are planning to build different motives, technologies in our collection.
- Apart from the woodcarving and the embroidered material what else can be...

- For example a shape, form under which I mean for example that this coat is the redesign of a traditional blouse. And this coat is the redesign of the Debrecen style pelisse. So sometimes we also start the design on the basis of the form.
- The use of denim is present in all the collections. Did this evolve already before the brand foundation?
- Yes, my profession is denim designer and since I'm really good at this technology, I like this material very much and so I thought this is a very good combination. I did not see something like this before. And this is a relatively new thing.
- When did you first put the jewelries in the collection?
- Approximately one year after the brand foundation. I felt like we don't find anything what would complement our clothes and also from a market point of view it is better to launch also something smaller, cheaper what can be sold more easily because it should not be tried on, it was also be gifted.
- And those are rather inspired from embroidered motives.
- Right
- And in addition you also have the bags.
- Yes
- Since you had your own established style already before the competition, the application process did not change in your work
- No, the competition was absolutely in line with our brand
- Throughout the history the same fashion trends are coming back again and again. What do you think why folk art came back to fashion this time?
- This has a lot of reasons. I think on the one hand it has a nationalist underlying meaning. On the other hand there is a pursuit to find something what we can be proud of, because whole Europe is criticizing us. This comes from people instinctively to show what we worth. In gastronomy in the past 10 years there was a huge development. We presented such products abroad which became successful in the international market. I think also in fashion there is such initiative to show our unique art treasure.
- But in 2005 there was not such trend and still you choose this style. What is the reason for it? In order to make unique design you could have chose also something else to apply in it.

- Yes, we could get inspiration also from the Japanese folk art; a designer has completely free choice in terms of inspirational sources. But yes, it was totally conscious choice to use the Hungarian folk art, because we wanted to make it known also abroad.
- Due to personal reasons?
- Yes, due to personal reasons. My partner is from Karcag, she grew up in this in some extent. In the home there were items what the parents were collecting. My mother was an accountant at a tailoring company what made authentic clothes in line with the current fashion for export. It was so authentic that the clothes were tailored in Budapest and then sent to the countryside where the women embroidered it. They stitched the clothes together in Budapest again and sent the clothes abroad; this was the process. As a child I was a model there. It was absolutely normal, those who worked there took their children to fashion shows, photo shoots, so I show these clothes, I wore them so it was not unique or strange for me. This was not conscious, only later on I realized that I was wearing such clothes also 30 years ago... obviously these things are deep inside us and once they came up.
- Does the revival of this trend have impact on the Hungarian designers and fashion?
- Of course, we see that even in the cheapest boutiques and such brands that normally produce disco dresses are producing it. Even they come up with such a collection which copies the traditional motives. But I think that the taste of the target market of these shops and companies are not in line, therefore it becomes a strained trial. As far as I see this is not even successful so obviously now it has a pick which already started to turn into recession.
- Do you apply the chosen motives as they are or...
- We completely overdraw them. Sometimes we also change its dimensions, and we take away or add something to it. We don't use it as they originally are, that is the rarest. At the jewelries it is also completely simplified and lengthened. We don't copy motives.

### **Interview with Judit Eszter Karpati**

- I'm a cultural economics student at the Erasmus University in Rotterdam. For my final thesis topic I choose the relationship between cultural heritage and fashion. I'm primarily interested in what is the motivation of Hungarian designers for applying

Hungarian cultural heritage motives/ techniques in their collections. What can be the reasons behind this these days spectacularly alive trend and whether it is going to be alive for a long term or not. Can you please talk about in which phase are you in your career?

- I graduated in the MOME at the Fashion and textile design master's degree program in 2013. Before that at the same university I completed the BA program in printed material design. I'm really at the beginning of my career. I started the design work from the beginning of my studies. I don't work yet, because I'm finished my studies this year. I don't have company and employees and I am not even planning to have it. I would like to work as a freelancer. In the future primarily I would like to deal with pattern design both on national and international market. I can't name now a concrete foreign country. I am striving for taking part in as many competitions as possible. In the future I don't want to design collections, but rather I would like to connect my pattern designs with other mediums. I'm really interested in intelligent textiles, the relationship between the textile and the digital world. I'm interested in the interoperability between different fields, where special fields can be coordinated, harmonized: textile, electronics, and informatics.
- At what stage of your career were you in 2011 when you applied for the Re-button?
- In 2011 I applied for the Re-button! Hungarian is in fashion clothing competition during my university studies. I was at the end of my BA studies.
- Could you please talk about the main aims of you design work?
- Mainly I was interested in pattern design. I think that in the textile culture the pursuit for quality renewal, standard development is very important. At the same time we should not forget about the preservation of the traditions. I created this clothing collection in a way that I was searching for unique, contemporary solutions. In these the folkloric elements of the folk traditions with creative design could be perfectly integrated. Such a tradition is for example the Matyo embroidery. Its colors and forms can be really nicely applied in the contemporary clothing. I designed this collection especially with Matyo motives. At the moment I am not planning to create new designs with other Matyo motives, but in the future it can be possible. I accept orders only for my already existing collection.

- Why did you apply for this competition? What do you think; does this competition represent the Hungarian design scene?
- I was happy that this competition opened a way to the folk traditions. It gave opportunity to create unique, contemporary clothing design targeting the young generation. The competition and the presentation of the collection had and still has big motivational role. I think, this competition is representing the Hungarian design sphere only partially, because not all the designers and companies submitted application. A lot of designers did not require the application of cultural heritage traditions in their designs or they had aversions towards it. At the same time this competition had to be individually financed and it required considerable financial background. Here primarily I think about the career starter individual designers.
- Does this competition bring changes to the Hungarian design trends?
- This competition I think introduced changes in the Hungarian design trends and helped a lot in giving constant presence for cultural heritage in fashion design which hopefully will remain like that. The fact that in what extent are the designers rethinking the traditions and how much the costumers are appreciating, sense it is a different question. I think the evaluation and depth understanding of folk traditions does not only depend on the fashion designer but also on the wearers.
- Your collection made for the competition was mainly focused on the motives. Was the design including any other cultural heritage elements too?
- When I was preparing the 'Ha én rózsá volnék' (If I was a rose) collection primarily I was interested in the patterns of the Matyo motives, and the form of the collection was secondary important. This comes from the fact that I graduated as printed textile designer. A lot of designers like to chose the minimal style not only in tailoring but also in colors. There are a lot of black, gray, white collections. I wanted to make something very colorful, happy, what also the young generation would wear with pleasure. In the dresses only the motives of the Matyo embroidery was applied with pixel technique. I did not use other elements referring to cultural heritage. I think, in this collection the really rich Matyo motif and colors themselves were enough. The collection was inspired by Matyo embroidery what I converted with my own creativity into pixel motives. My concept was the highlight and reinterpretation of Matyo motives into something contemporary. I transformed the original, traditional motives

into pixel motives while preserving their colors. At the preparation of the collection I found it an important ambition to reinterpret and integrate to the contemporary design the elements of the traditional Matyo embroidery in a way that it includes reference on the Matyo culture but at the other hand it is strongly 21<sup>st</sup> Century like. Before preparing the collection in advance I made a depth collection work for the inspirational source of the motive designs. In my motives design I applied the dynamic colors and forms or folklore and I also used these in the clothing design. The clothes were designed to have simple tailoring pattern in order to make the motives properly prevailing.

- What were you main inspirational sources? How did you choose the applied heritage elements?
- Why did I choose the Matyo motif? One of the reasons is that I live relatively close to Mezőkövesd, I went a lot there I was researching enough the folklore there. I liked these distinctive, characteristic motives which are considered as Hungaricum. Why did I choose the Ha én rózsá volnék name to the collection? I wanted the name to include a concrete reference but the main reason maybe was the rose. In the Matyo embroidery the three-petalled rose is the most typical. The researchers attributed different meanings to the petals leaning on each other and also to the colors have different meanings. For the realization of the collection I used digital printing technique and computer technique. The digital printing technique required the existence of special composite material. The screen printing of the motives on textile was not possible. For the collection I choose among the motives the richest both from colors and motives. Already before I was interested in Matyo embroidery and the competition gave a good opportunity for the reinterpretation and implementation. The aim of the Re-button! Hungarian is in fashion competition are the processing of traditional Hungarian clothing and fashion historical values and traditions with modern approach and their integration into the field of view of the national and international fashion industry and the interested audience and further its multilateral visual artistic processing.
- How was your design process?
- I made my application on my own; my help were only the research work and the literature. To prepare the application both from the designing and implementation side took more months. The application material included the concept with inspiration

images, design sheets with technical features, and contact image. The competition had three rounds: design phase, implementation phase, presentation and result announcement.

- How did you apply the chosen motives, techniques?
- I applied first the chosen Matyo motives on sketches and afterwards on the tailoring patterns with digital printing technique. I adjusted my design style to the chosen motives for the sufficient prevalence of the motives. I like the simple, clean lines. I preserved the Matyo motives in their original forms. The innovation was the transformation of the motives into pixels what I use with pleasure also in the future. Between my future plans is to get inspiration from cultural heritage also in the future and use them in my pattern design.
- Before the competition were you interested in applying cultural heritage motives, techniques in your design?
- Before the 'Ha én rózsá volnék' collection I also got inspired by folklore rooted motives. I designed more collections in which the Hungarian folkloric elements appear. These are still waiting for implementation. There are such inspired by gingerbread craftsmanship, but I also have plan build of Kalocsa motives. I also designed and implemented a collection built on Gypsy traditional costumes and also blue dye pattern design.
- Did the preparation for the competition change on your designer attitude?
- The preparation for the competition deepened, enriched and made exciting my design work, my pattern design world. It is an uplifting feeling and also a challenge and responsibility to deal with the cultural values, traditions in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century in a way that we can integrate from these something in our clothing culture.
- What do you think, what are the reasons behind the revival of cultural heritage in fashion design?
- I see the main reasons behind the revival of the cultural heritage that among the designers many find the ambition for quality renewal and standard raising important in the textile culture and more and more people are searching for the contemporary, unique solutions. They go back in design to the deeper roots of traditions in order to make richer, more colorful their form and pattern world.



- What do you think does this trend have impact on the Hungarian fashion and designers?
- I think that the aim of the Re-button competition has future, I found it a good initiative, and it moved the fantasy and creativity of the designers. In general the designers are categorically refusing to apply folkloric motives, maybe because it is a dangerous act. Maybe if this competition would not exist than I also don't implement this Matyo pixel patterned collection and most probably also the other designers feel similarly about it. If this competition would not have existed from my university years the topic of Hungarian folks wear would have been missed out.

### Interview with Balint Sara Knit/Wear

- I'm a cultural economics student at the Erasmus University in Rotterdam. For my final thesis topic I choose the relationship between cultural heritage and fashion. I'm primarily interested in what is the motivation of Hungarian designers for applying Hungarian cultural heritage motives/ techniques in their collections. What can be the reasons behind this these days spectacularly alive trend and whether it is going to be alive for a long term or not. I read that you founded your brand in 2010, I would like to know at what phase of your brand building you are now.
- I founded this brand in 2010 because I wanted to create for myself a personal playground, something with what I can do whatever I like. And in approximately two years time the ambiance of my brand crystallized in terms of how do I want to do this, how do I want to visualize it. And not I started to build it from a business perspective. Of course the last two years did not pass by without any results; some couple things happened which helped me to develop the brand. Really in the last half year, eight months I started to think about this as a business. At the moment I'm trying to make it profitable.
- Do you have employees?
- Employees who are constantly working for me I don't have, but usually I ask project based help from relatively the same people. For the time bring I to this business on my own but I would need a manager. I try to educate myself, although you can only do one thing at the time.
- Are you designing for the national market?

- At the moment the situation is that I'm present on the national market, but in the near future I'm planning as the next step of brand building to go abroad. I have some foreign relations which slowly start to become profitable. In the near future in London there will be a store where my collections also can be sold. I definitely want to go abroad not only because the selling is easier like that, but rather because what I do it rather specific.
- So also to design for foreigners in international level and not only remain a Hungarian designer designing for national market?
- I did not necessarily mean to say that. I mean that since my profile is the knit wear and obviously it has a seasonal limitation it is a good question how can it be kept also in the summer time. Since I have this seasonal limitation I have to think about whether to keep this up or not. Whether it is worth to make summer knit wear and in what form. This seasonal limitation is due to which it would be better to concentrate on North-Europe or North-America. So there is nothing like I don't fit in the national design scene; obviously everyone has they own specific style.
- You are selling in showrooms...
- Yes, this is one, and I'm also present in more stores at the moment. Currently I'm not present in the Ourstyle Boutique but this is just a matter of time, this is an open possibility. I finished recently a new collection, I'm selling in three stores and in pop-up stores.
- How many collections do you have?
- If I count it together with this 5-6 together with the wedding collections. I also made more smaller jewelry collections, accessories collections, so it can be seen that during 3 years I could not manage to make 6 collections because there is the winter collection and the rest are rather small capsule collections.
- When you applied for the Re-button the brand was very much in a starting phase. What motivated you in applying?
- On the one hand that I exactly knew on what could I spend the award, so I did not only want to gain publicity but I was going for the first prize to spend it on manufacturing, collections, photo shoots. This was one reason, and the other is of course that it has big advertising value. The fact that we have to use the Hungarian cultural heritage was less motivational for me but it made the design work easier because it determined the starting point.

- What do you think, does the competition representing the Hungarian design scene?
- No
- And do you think that it makes changes in the design trends?
- In the national trends for sure not, it can be seen. Young designers who cannot design yet in collections, cannot present themselves on the market can show themselves, their talent and can start their career.
- Around which values, mission did you build up your brand?
- There are more things in parallel. On the one hand the closeness to nature is very important, this is rather present in my collections that I try to capture and display in my collection the ambiance, design, clothing culture of the primitive nations, tribes and apply it in everyday, wearable clothing. The natural materials would also be important and everything what is healthy, so for example the bio materials, but it is really difficult to get them. I hope that after a while I can change in this. I would like to make clothes for people what they like and wear with pleasure, so I would like to make them in more sizes and more varieties.
- Your collection made for Re-button got the name Love, love. This year you again applied with the Syrian collection. At the first the cultural heritage element was the heart motif, the knitting and what else?
- The heart motif is an interesting thing, because this motif can be found almost everywhere and its underlying meaning is not well known. This motif among the other traditional motives what people put on their clothes had a special meaning; it was the symbol of masculinity just like the tulip was the symbol of femininity. The women who wears heart motif on herself is engaged or committed to someone. So the essence of this Love, love collection comes from this meaning; this is the wardrobe of an engaged woman. This had more meaning to it then only being in love with someone; this is commitment what is not so obvious. This does not come through the collection. And another thing apart from this was the form of the design. I kept the classic narrow waist, full skirt, from the colors I kept the white background, red motives, which is a relatively common color combination. And also in its ambiance...
- And did you apply the forms as it is in folk art?
- No, I did not copy anything, and I could not even do that. I overwrote a little bit everything but only in an extent to keep the old style look but with contemporary design

- Did you use machine knitting?
- Yes, although there were also manually knitted parts of the design what I could not have done with machine – or I could have done it, but that would have been very complicated. So it was easier by hand and it became also more rustic. So this was the end result of a serious design process.
- At the current design you are using Halas lace.
- Yes, that is one of my motivations
- And you had more motivations?
- Yes, it is very interesting, because I work together with a band called Adori Office which is making Hungarian electro music. They have a song called Song of the mute Syrian which inspired me very much. We made a photo shot to this and I heard it a lot of times and we were talking a lot about it, about its meanings and somehow the two came together. And when some things come together like this after a while you cannot distinguish them therefore the lace motives and this song melted together. Till the competition was announced I already had this vision in mind.
- And how did you apply this in your design?
- I applied the lyrics in the knitting. I highlighted from the lyrics parts which can be presented apart from the whole lyrics. I'm knitting these texts in the clothing – I'm still not ready with it. I use the manually written, calligraphic version of the lyrics and its variations in a form of lace form the readable, concrete presence till the unrecognizable lace motives.
- You use very beautiful fabric, are you buying them from abroad or from Hungary?
- Partially yes and partially not. For the time being I cannot order in such big quantities which would be worth for the big companies, so I try to solve everything within Hungary. It is really difficult to get bio cotton or even normal cotton, but there are solutions.
- How was your design process for the first competition? How long it took how was it built up?
- By the Love, love I don't even know what was first the chicken or the egg. What is interesting that for me the Hungarian folks wear and its culture was not much inspirational. So when the competition was announced I don't say that I had to start everything from zero but I had to get a lot of information. I started to research the topic, I knew that I want to make something patterned because I can display that

beautifully and that is spectacular. The motives were my main inspirational sources but I definitely wanted to avoid the clichés of the classic Matyo and other motives so I did not want to use Kalocsa or Matyo style motives. I did not see its sense because a lot of people are already doing it. This very relatively quickly because I found those motives that I wanted to use and the name and the visuals of the collection came together within 1-2 days. I collected the classic forms which were the most appealing and the basic clothing pieces, I thought through what I will realize, what I can realize, for what I have material, how the design process will be and within 1.5-2 weeks the collection came together. It took 3 weeks till I got to the ready collection. From the application till the ready product it was approximately 6 weeks during which I was only concentrated on it and I could experience how can I put together the different materials.

- Did you rather adjust your style to the collection or the concept to your own style?
- This is a very good question, because the fact is that the Love, love collection basically is far from my style, because it is very colorful, decorated which is far from my design attitude. It was difficult to simplify it and still keep the motif, to make something spectacular but also preserve my style in it. And I think this is not me in that collection. I made something that is not sure it is me, but I'm satisfied with the result.
- This second application is better representing your style.
- Yes, this is rather representing me. I say now that if I get to the final with this collection people will rather see how my style is, what I am.
- And you applied in the professional category, right?
- Yes
- We talked about it how you applied the motif and the technique
- I would add to the technique the knitting in a craft technique, but the technique itself was a given for me because I was studying knitting design. This is not very much in folk art, this was not the main line of the design.
- With the full skirt design the form roughly was preserved but the design where only the puffy sleeves were applied was innovative
- Yes, there I was only trying to reflect on the traditional sleeves
- Seems like the world of cultural heritage is not close to your design, but would you think it is possible that you apply it in the future?

- Yes, I have to say that lately it comes back quite often that I should refresh the Love, love collection in such a form that it is reachable for the customers. I would like to do it more and more so for sure I will return to that design and will create a wearable collection. By the way I think that since I live in Hungary and I'm interested in cultural heritage I could not even avoid it or exclude it from my design, which I don't even want to. I think that cultural heritage is permeated in all the Hungarian designers work. It cannot be ignored or avoided.
- If you want to use another technique than it is definitely the most convenient when we do research in Hungary. And apply it not by an explicit way.
- Little tricks
- Yes. Before the competition were you interested in processing the cultural heritage?
- No so much. The reason behind it is that there are a lot of cliché like, bad application which is rather scaring me away from this topic. There are designers who react in a way that they will show how it can be made in a good way, but I rather thought that it is awkward to use cultural heritage elements. But it is possible to make good designs from it which is not embarrassing; there are a lot of good examples, USE also had a collection which was a very good interpretation. Also in the 2 years old history of Re-button we see 1-2 good designs so it shows that heritage can be used in a good way. I think it is very good that people are working on this because in this way the bad interpretations, clichés can be forgotten. We should be dealing with this; it also had a good influence on me. I have a different attitude towards cultural heritage as inspirational source now; an easier, relaxed attitude.
- Is there any technique, knowledge what you gained during the preparation for the competition and you will use it also in the future?
- I don't really know. In technique maybe not because the knitting technique remains my main technique. Maybe that the research works from which I could learn a lot for example the Halas lace was familiar for me from the university, but the more I read about it, researched it, it became more interesting. I got to know more and more interesting things and this knowledge is what I can also use in the future not only in the recent design but in everything. I think this is a bigger result of this competition not only for us but in general not 1-2 technique will bring change in the design but the lot of information what was learned.

- Throughout the competition when you submitted your plans did you get any critics, advices? Because the first one was really spectacular, scenical...
- The second collection is basically all white. I like very much the monochrome things
- And this represents the Northern, clarified style
- Yes absolutely this design style. In terms of shape, form I did not get any advices. In its form it is more an Eastern design, it is absolutely not Hungarian style. For what I got advice was the transcript itself. I send them a hand written design and they told me to better make it with a graphic designer and I did it. A friend of mine; Zoltan Nemeth who is a graphic designer, who also made my logo helped me in this.
- And that is also white?
- Yes, white on the white. Since the structure is different the text will be readable. When someone is designing a knit wear always starts the design from the material. It has a step more in knit wear design than in normal fashion design because you have a material from which a shaped product is prepared which has edges with what you can play. There are much more variation possibilities in knitting design and you can get lost at much more stages which is really requires technical knowledge which is different than to prepare a woven product collection.
- There are things which cannot be knitted with machine, right? How much it is increasing the value of a dress when it is handmade?
- Of course in time to make a handmade pullover would cost so much that it will not sell. I have a lot of hand knitted caps and 1-2 scarfs. These can be sold for the right price but the bigger pieces not. Whether something can be produced only with hand or with machine is depending on the machine. Yes, the value is increasing when the product is made by hand.
- Did this competition change something on your design attitude?
- In that extent that I became more conscious. These competitions are always good for collecting a lot of information, knowledge, broader viewpoint, which will remain also in the future. This is also good for me because you have to go through a structure which is comfortable to keep in the future. So if you get used to of something than it would be difficult not to apply it in other designs. What I researched once will affect my work even unconsciously.
- This trend again came back very spectacularly; you can see more people wearing such designs. What do you think, what can be the reasons behind this?

- I think a lot of things. On the one hand maybe we are starting to become more self-conscious as a nation. We are trying to preserve more consciously our heritage, values and use them not avoid them. Obviously there was a time in history when this was not acceptable. But I think that these are such values which should be preserved and take care of. I think it is very good to deal with it so much these days because a lot of things are getting well known in a broader context. It is interesting to draw an analogy between the American flag what is printed basically on everything and its meanings and the Hungarian case. Would be so good to have in Hungary also something like this. Transforming the puli dog or a classic motif till it becomes a strong symbol which is worldwide attributed to the Hungarians. We need to deal with this and apply it in a courageous, innovative way. We should not be stuck by a simple, primitive interpretation but really very courageously till the unrecognizability varies these things.
- At the same time that knowledge what we have we should not let disappear.
- Just think about it, there is the Halas lace. It is a special stitched lace it is as complicated as the Viennese lace but it is a totally different technique. It is very time-consuming, very fine work. Beautiful things can be made with it. This is one thing what we should not let disappear. The other big value of the Halas lace is that they were always reflecting on the actual changes, societal changes. So in the communism they were making lace with tractor motifs, they made genres, inscriptions, flower motifs and we should not forget that they started from art nouveau. The first motifs were art nouveau creeper motifs. But I really like that they have a fantastic technique and from this technique even the television bear could be stitched. I think somehow this should be followed.
- What do you think; does this trend and competition have an impact on the Hungarian fashion and fashion designers?
- Definitely. I think that maybe the designers who already have a developed clientele and have a well defined style are less influenced by this trend. This year also established designers applied. The 9-10 designers were selected from a bigger scene. I think what is instructive that it requires a special knowledge to submit an application it also has to be learned. It surely has an impact because we are dealing with this, for the young generation it can be a very good stepping stone this is why they will deal with this topic. They make a design with more courage and less inhibition than I had. I really enjoy seeing the design ideas of the young talents. It can be so much innovative



and fresh. Maybe it can be applied on a wearable dress but at some designs that is not even missing.

## Appendix 2 – Additional pictures

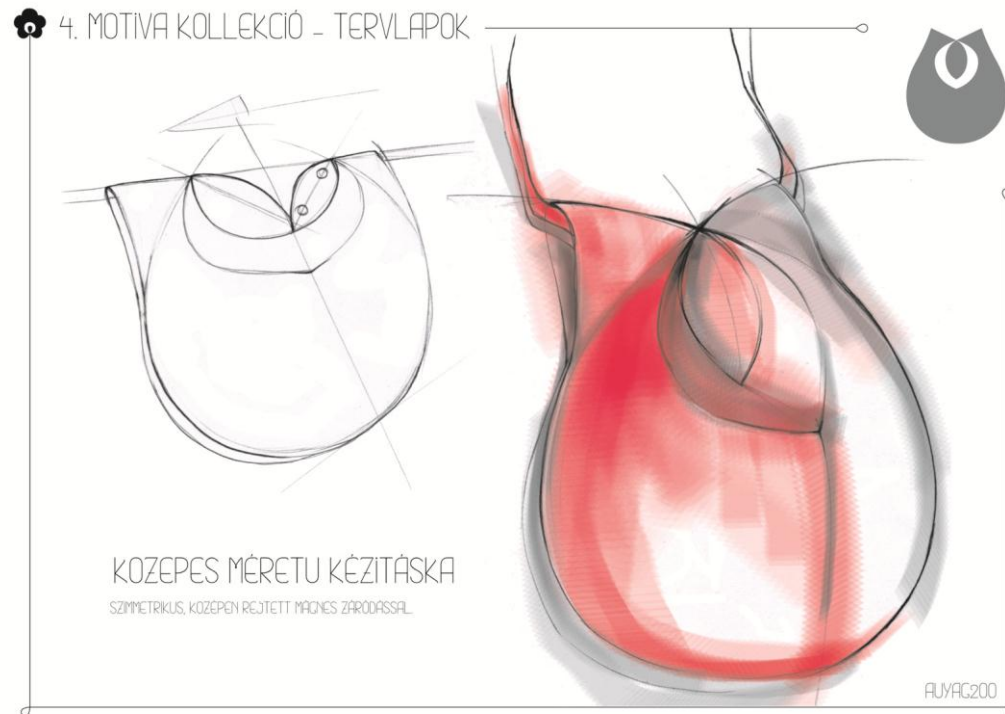
### Anh Tuan – Paszomany (Trimmings) 2011



Source: [www.anh-tuan.com](http://www.anh-tuan.com).



Source: Design Terminal.

**Berecz Vanda – Motiva 2011**

Source: Design Terminal.



Source: [www.wamp.hu](http://www.wamp.hu).

## Blue Paprika – Ethnic Geometric 2011



Source: Design Terminal.



Source: Design Terminal.



Piroshka – Piroshka 2012

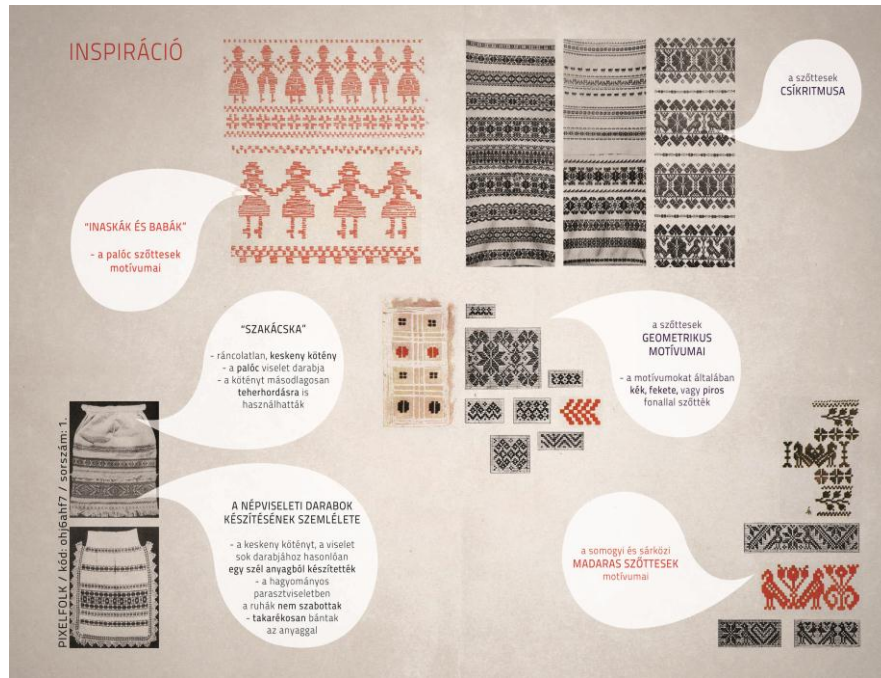


Source: Design Terminal.



Source: Design Terminal.

## TheBetaVersion – Pixel Folk 2011



Source: Picture from the designer.



Source: [www.ourstyleblog.hu](http://www.ourstyleblog.hu).