

Quo vadis:

## COMFORT ZONE

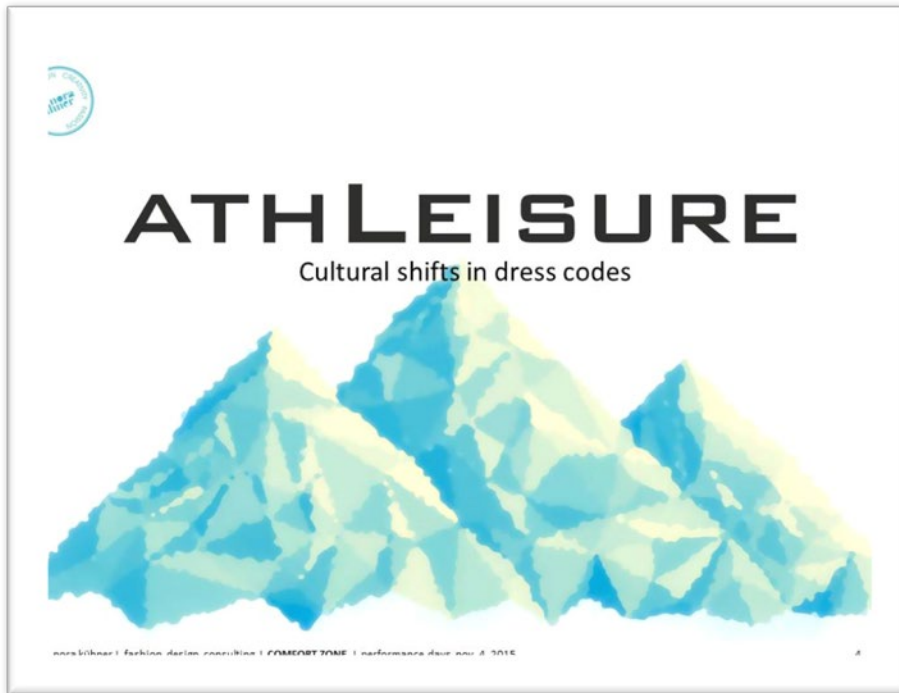
### From Casual Friday to Athleisure

Presentation at Performance Days Show  
Munich/Germany, November 4, 2015



Times are changing and so are dress codes. For decades there was a common understanding of what is appropriate to wear. Different rules for different settings: Stay at home, go to work or hang out with friends (to name just a few circumstances and occasions) influenced the choice of clothes. Yet lifestyle changes have an effect on clothing as well. Modern societies favour a mobile and active lifestyle. Boundaries between private sphere and working life are blurring – no wonder that also the rules for appropriate clothing get adapted to this new freedom. A first step towards a more relaxed dress code for business offices had been initiated in the late 1950ies, the so-called Casual Friday. Nevertheless there was still given clear advice on how to dress: Don't go too casual and avoid athletic as well as sloppy looking pieces.

Within the last years we have reached a peak in this sense: We don't have to change clothes twice or three times a day to be properly dressed – we just have it all in one. Or, at least we try to. A strong reflection of this trend focusing on an all-day wardrobe is Athleisure, the buzzword of the last seasons.



The lately created term athleisure combines “athletic” and “leisure” – first used by the media and the fashion industry to describe a cool and relaxed look strongly influenced by performance wear. Athleisure combines sports and fashion – in style as well as by using fabrics and accessories deriving from the sports sector.

The look has been started by women who love their yoga and pilates clothes which proved to be perfect companions in everyday life. Irresistible as the clothes fulfil the wish to feel good and comfortable all day. Leggings have become an indispensable part of the wardrobe and replace trousers. Leggings and sweatpants are main drivers of the athleisure trend – competing with jeans. Denim sales face already a downturn as young customers favour leggings (women only) and sweatpants (both men & woman). One effect of this downturn is the use of more stretch in denim fabric developments. Even male customers have discovered the comfort and easiness of trousers with a decent percentage of stretch fibres.



Athleisure is a perfect visualization of urban people's requests concerning their everyday wardrobe: An individual blend of comfort and style. This means that there is a move towards more basic pieces which can easily be uplifted and twisted - with stylish accessories, a real fashion piece and ... and ... There is no limit to the individual fantasy. A perfect example for endless opportunities is the sneaker. Sneakers can take you everywhere – from the gym to the opera house, from functionality to luxury. Long before yoga pants left the gym, the sneaker was already in the streets. And has been developed into a stylish versatile high-end product. Fitting perfectly contemporary ideas of what to wear.

Another buzzword of our days which helps to understand the athleisure trend: Versatility. The modern nomadic societies share a preference for all-in-one products –best example ever: Smartphones. This preference takes product development in general to an ever more sophisticated level.



In regard to sports clothing this is truly necessary. For a long time mainly women have felt somehow neglected by an industry which focused on functionality and high-performance. There has been (and still is very often) a lack of stylish clothes in the sports market. A look at statistics about women's expenses for sports clothing shows that women spend only little money. Sports clothing is definitely not a favourite item for women.



The trend athleisure will not vanish, it will develop and adapt to the changing requirements of people on the move. For sports brands this trend shows what people have been missing in performance collection – feel inspired by the many facets of athleisure and catch the spirit. Think about the fact that most people buy sports clothes but they don't wear them in a sports-related context. They like the comfort and functionality these clothes are offering, but at least women clearly ask for more style. And they ask for a wider variety of marketing stories and imagery.

You want to know to know more? Please don't hesitate to contact me!  
Get your individually shaped interpretation and consulting in the field of sports apparel trends and developments.

Munich, November 18, 2015

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