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Open House in the Federal Chancellery

Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel Thanks the Stiftung der Deutschen Bekleidungsindustrie (German Apparel Industry Foundation) for Its Work

German Chancellor Dr. Angela Merkel visited the booth of the Stiftung der Deutschen Bekleidungsindustrie (German Apparel Industry Foundation) – SDBI – while touring the exhibition "Innovation in Germany" during the "Open House" in the Federal Chancellery. The non-profit foundation promotes gifted and needy designers of the next generation in the fashion industry. As representative for all prize winners, SDBI presented the work of Bianca Koczan to the 38,000 visitors. Her collection "Clothing Factory" won first prize of the European Fashion Awards of SDBI from among 165 submissions in 2006.

"Clothing Factory" is her Master's thesis at Burg Giebichenstein University of Art and Design, Halle, Germany. The work deals with the topic of men in blue as the "uniform of the socialist worker milieu" (Koczan). In addition to a collection for men and women, she created a business model with production and interdisciplinary work structures in Germany. The authentic ready-to-wear collection is divided into "Gray" (basics, which leave room for individual changes), "Print" (as fanciful and eye-catching counterpoint) and a bag and bandana collection. The clothing is characterized by a comprehensive concept, which examines the system of fashion in the form of a newspaper.

The German chancellor was clearly impressed that Bianca Koczan not only won the first prize of the SDBI, but also the first prize of the German Study Prize of the Körber Foundation. "Very, very good," Angela Merkel said as she warmly congratulated the young fashion designer from Erfurt. "Thank you for your work," the German chancellor said when she left to the representatives of the foundation, Anja Ulrich and Joachim Schirmacher.

After the visit of the German chancellor, the SDBI presented its work on a stage in the park of Federal Chancellery to visitors. "Innovations not only take place in large research institutes, companies and associations in Germany, but also in creative industries to a great extent, where individual designers and small teams contribute to shaping our future, as is the

case in Bianca Koczan's Label 'vwork'," Project Manager Joachim Schirmmacher stated, "and they do it mainly without subsidies."

Moderator Ingo Hoppe and the visitors were very surprised by the strength of German fashion. "Germany is not only the second largest fashion market in the world. Approximately half of all those studying fashion in Europe receive their education and training in Germany. And Germans work in almost all international fashion companies in leading positions," Anja Ulrich from the SBDI Executive Board stated. The conclusion was clear for moderator Ingo Hoppe: "Our self-assurance with regard to fashion has increased this afternoon."

The German Apparel Industry Foundation

The non-profit "German Apparel Industry Foundation for the Promotion and Training of Up-and-Coming Designers in the Fashion Industry" (the official name in English) was founded by the fashion entrepreneur Klaus Steilmann 30 years ago. Its sole purpose is future-oriented promotion of gifted and needy designers of the next generation, and it plays a pioneering role for design and industry thanks to its European Fashion Award "Fash", communication as well as via its industry network. The prize is offered to students from more than 400 schools in 20 countries with a topic, which changes annually. Conceptual work is supported and promoted, because pure craftsmanship or formal-aesthetic product design is no longer sufficient today. It is increasingly more a question of the sense than of the shape. The shaping of entrepreneurial processes is also part of these processes, in addition to the conception of products that gives them their sense. "Integrated product development, i.e., the simultaneous development of products, communication and distribution, is decisive today for continual success on the market," Project Manager Joachim Schirmmacher stated.

The topic of the European Fashion Awards "Fash" for 2008 is called "Attitude". The task is to design clothing in tune with the environment and social conditions, which provide expression to both aesthetic and ethical attitudes.

From the reasons stated by the Jury of the SDBI:

The work of Bianca Koczan is practical and innovative, interdisciplinary, extremely varied and powerful on a high international level. Ms. Koczan does not understand design as superficial change as is so often the case, but instead as an expression of ethics and strategy. With that, she demonstrates an intricate and very modern understanding of fashion.

Jury Member Joachim Schirmmacher, Journalist and Design Manager

From the laudatory speech of the Deutscher Studienpreis (German Thesis Award):

The work of Bianca Koczan shows an ideal connection between theory and practice concerning the contest topic of the compatibility between work and life. "Clothing Factory" is an exemplary work of how science and design can be linked intelligently and consequently sets a standard, including for the specific viewpoint and approach of design in research.

Julian Nida-Rümelin, Federal Minister (retired) and Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of the Deutscher Studienpreis (German Thesis Award)

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