

Just like art, fashion usually has a story behind it, a message to transmit. Fashion designers tell the tale but an outside author can decode their story...

Fashion isn't always easy, sometimes it has to be interpreted. Sometimes it's necessary to understand the designer's language or code in order to fully appreciate their work. In these cases, a book by Taschen exploring the career and life of the designer in question is always a good starting point. Two such books featuring Asian designers Yohji Yamamoto and Rei Kawakubo have recently appeared, both edited by founder and creative director of i-D magazine, Terry Jones. Terry is a veteran of fashion journalism, having started his career in the Seventies with *Vanity Fair* and *Vogue UK*, and his experience gives him great insight into the international fashion scene - not only of "traditional" Western names such as Westwood, Armani and Ford but also exciting innovative designers from the East. And so now he presents these two bio-albums that start out with

the same time. During a career spanning more than three decades, Yamamoto has enjoyed notable commercial success due to his ability to identify the fashion needs and desires of all types of people - old, young, men, women, power dressers, minimalists, celebrities and "person-on-the-street" alike. The second book features Rei Kawakubo, founder of *Comme des Garçons*. No stranger to controversy, Rei found a kindred spirit in Yohji in their common preference for dark shades (particularly black). This, added to her quasi-wabisabi tendency for incomplete, asymmetrical garments led to her debut work being labelled as "Hiroshima Chic". She has continued to

Concept code



Rei Kawakubo, 1984 - back in the early days, courtesy of Leonard Koren.

Yohji Yamamoto, 1981 - beginning to hit international headlines; photo by Takeyoshi Tanuma.



archive photos held by i-D magazine of these two designers' work (close friends and collaborators in real life) and go on to explore the ideas and concepts behind them. Yohji Yamamoto is noted in the industry for his intellectually complex designs that are both eye-catching and thought-provoking. As a designer who loves women and the female body, Yamamoto has always focused on freedom and liberty, rejecting the limitations of fashion trends in favour of creations that are practical, avant-garde and elegant all at

provoke the more staid members of the fashion world ever since, opting for "anti-fashion" creations that invite debate and thought. It seems fitting that now her work should be explored through a photographic retrospective, considering how own profound interest in photography - she produced her own bi-annual magazine "Six" in the early Nineties. With beautiful pics from the likes of David Bailey, Nick Knight and Paolo Roversi as well as interviews with Jamie Huckbody, Josh Sims and the author himself, these two books provide a detailed presentation of these two designers.



Breaking (and making) all the fashion rules



Above: i-D, The Size Does Matter Issue, No. 275, April 2007, photo: Dan Jackson; right: China Machado, i-D, The Royalty Issue, No. 318, Spring 2012, photo: Daniele + Iango



Above: i-D, The Studio Issue, No. 241, March 2004; photo: Tesh
Right: i-D, The Royalty Issue, No. 318, Spring 2012; photo: Daniele + Iango

