

Masculina's Muses

Photographs by LANA OHRIMENKO Styling by ANNA GUNVOR HYTTEL, ALECTRA ROTHSCHILD

From left: MissAmy Assakaf, dj g2g, (in front) Maji Claire, Proxy Server, Cassandra Augusta Jørgensen, Kenneth Cockwhore, Alectra Rothschild, Sathya, Eleférios, Trixie

All clothes by Alectra Rothschild/Masculina.



A Masculina runway show is unlike anything else on the Copenhagen Fashion Week schedule – a raucous celebration of the Danish trans community that's never not serving. The success of the young brand is due as much to the chops of designer Alectra Rothschild as it is her to muses – the singular talents who bring the looks to life. We get to know Rothschild and her fabulous cast of more-than-models.

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Designer Alectra Rothschild, whose brand, Masculina, specifically lifts up trans women (always figuratively, sometimes literally).

Oversized zipper hoodie, €740, Embroidered t-shirt, worn underneath, €340, Boots. All Alectra Rothschild / Masculina.

“Alectra’s work is about uplifting every nuance of the trans umbrella in a world that does not”

IT’S COPENHAGEN FASHION Week and 2,000 people – industry, press, buyers and the wider public – have gathered in a remote parking lot to take in the second runway show from Alectra Rothschild’s Masculina. Sitting front row is the designer herself, who “planned it perfectly”, meticulously lining her models up a half hour early so she could sneak out from the blindness of backstage and experience the culmination of her work firsthand. “It was so fab,” she says. “I was just sitting and yelling for everyone with a cigarette in my hand.”

For the show, Rothschild aimed to do what her brand, which revels in latex, unapologetic sexiness and raw energy, always does: lift up the trans community and celebrate glamour in all its definitions. This time, however, she did so quite literally. “I wanted the models to be up and I wanted everyone to look up at them, because in today’s social-political landscape trans people are really just treated like the worst people alive. It was important for me to lift them up,” says Rothschild, who is a trans woman herself. “And the answer was scaffolding.” Drawing inspiration from The Pussycat Dolls’ scaffolding-heavy ‘When I Grow Up’ music video, the show, which was produced by longtime collaborator inter-agcy, found Alectra’s recurring cast of trans creatives and friendship circle dancing, climbing and hanging off the massive metal structure. These trans women aren’t simply models hired to walk (or in this case, perform) in a show – they’re Alectra’s muses and close core of collaborators, integral to every aspect of the Masculina universe.

Through Masculina, Rothschild presents a new vision of what fashion can encompass – a brand that goes beyond clothes to spread a vital message in a way that’s never dull or preachy, always vibrant and celebratory. She describes her practice as “an ongoing investigation of glamour in all its shapes and forms” and as “a medium to tell real stories from a trans perspective”. “I see and feel the need for our stories to be told by us,” she says.

Describing herself as “the stereotype of a fashion-indulgent kid who absolutely lived for Mugler and Galliano, Dior and McQueen”, Rothschild always pinned fashion as a fantasy. “A kind of escapism from reality that I could shape and form,” she says. For Rothschild, this line of thought rings true today, dovetailing with the realities of her own experiences as a trans woman. “I think my work used to be more fantasy-based; now it is more fantasy that meets reality – the intersection of both,” she says. “Because I am not oblivious to the world and the world really informs what I do, with the people that engage in my practice really shaping it as well.”

To understand the power of what Rothschild does, it’s best to ask her muses. “Alectra’s work is about uplifting every nuance of the trans umbrella in a world that does not,” says Kenneth Cockwhore, a DJ and party organiser who has made memorable appearances at both of Masculina’s runway shows. “At Alectra shows it’s all friends, so it’s like a big family gathering but in full glam, of course.” MissAmy Assakaf, a writer who’s currently studying at Forfatterskolen, agrees, adding that Rothschild always emphasises the singularity of her muses. “Alectra lets her models express themselves with everything that they are. Creating with her is much more like making a painting than simply walking or posing,” she says. “She embraces the models’ uniqueness like no other.” Each show look is designed with its specific wearer in mind.

What makes Masculina so damn major is that Rothschild has the design chops to back up her message. Having studied at the Royal Danish Academy for her BA and at Central Saint Martins for her MA, Rothschild trained with Iris Van Herpen and Anne Sofie Madsen before being headhunted for Mugler under the creative direction of Casey Cadwallader. She’s freelanced with Alexander McQueen and collaborated with Birkenstock. She’s dressed the likes of Arca, Earthsteater, Zara Larsson and Michelle Lamy. When it came to launching her own brand, the defining moment was realising there was no escap-

ing pouring her own experience into it. “I realised at some point that the only real originality any of us have is our lived experience because everything exists and has been done,” she says. “The only way any of us can have something original is by inserting yourself and that is where the point of view is unique.”

Another key element of the Masculina experience is the music. For this, she turns to one of her muses, dj g2g, who could be found behind the decks at both Masculina shows. For the most recent outing, the soundtrack captured the full-frontal verve of the designer herself. “It’s created from the idea of leaving the club on a motorbike and being on your way to the afterparty with your girls only,” says Rothschild, noting that the music included audio of phone calls, inviting friends to join in the soiree. Fittingly, the first models arrived on a motorcycle. “We both work in a way with the deconstructing of fixed ideas about how things should be,” says g2g, who met Rothschild via Instagram. “Our visions are a great match because of the level of chaos we both tap into and the references we both pull from are different but they complement each other.”

Rothschild has had an incredible trajectory to date, but she is only getting started. The unwavering support her community and friendship circle have shown her only underscores her role as a beacon of creative spirit to those she touches. “I’m so lucky to have all these people in my life. I think that we have grown so much together as people that I see them much more as family than just muses,” she says. “In many ways I don’t like the idea of a muse because that is specifically about what I would project onto them. They are so much more than that. They are my mirrors, they bring so much of themselves into what I create. They inspire me with what they do in their practices as artists, musicians, writers, performers. I think we have attracted each other because of the people we are at heart, which is a bunch of punks who had nowhere else to turn other than to each other.” *



In addition to being a model and muse, dj g2g also provides the soundtrack to the Masculina universe, performing live behind the decks at both runway shows so far.

Ruched hooded dress, €1,900,
Ruched bolero jacket, worn on top, €1,500.
Both *Alectra Rothschild/Masculina*.



Berlin-based dancer and artist Cassandra Augusta Jørgensen and DJ and nightlife fixture Kenneth Cockwhore are regulars on the Masculina runway.

From left to right

Ruffles jacket, Embroidered t-shirt, €340,
Denim shorts, €540. All *Alectra Rothschild/Masculina*.
Lace stockings, Heels. Both *Stylist's own*.

Shirt, €350, Night gown. Both *Alectra Rothschild/Masculina*.
Fishnet stockings. *Stylist's own*. Boots. *Alectra Rothschild/Masculina*.

Photographer : LANA OHRIMENKO

Stylists : ANNA GUNVOR HYTTEL, ALECTRA ROTHSCHILD

Makeup Artist : MARIE DAUSELL *Hair Stylist* : KASPER ANDERSEN

Models : DJ G2G, MISS MADAMY, KENNETH COCKWHORE, PROXY SERVER, ELEFTERIOS BALLATSAS,
SATHYA, TRIXIE DALMATIAN, MAJI CLAIRE, CASSANDRA AUGUSTA JØRGENSEN

Movement Direction : THEA CARLA SCHÖTT *Photographer Assistant* : LASSE SKOVGAARD

Makeup Artist Assistants : TEKLA KRISTJÁNSDÓTTIR, PROXY SERVER

Hair Stylist Assistant : AIDEN RODRIGO *Production* : JONAS PERSSON

Production Assistant : BERNHARD MARTENSEN-LARSEN *Art Direction* : ANNA GUNVOR HYTTEL