

Summer Garments

And then all was different than expected . . .

. . . in the summer of 2020, not because of the corona virus but because of climate change. A bright, sunny month of April (no - not warm enough to unpack summer stuff) was followed by three months of persistently cold rain, which I spent - clothed head to toe - in the well worn black winter outfit. The end of June a sudden change. Heat and drought set in. At the end of August time has come for a first evaluation.

Even in August heat winter scarves have been useful. How? When - after unbearable temperatures - the weather finally breaks the occurring cooling often is accompanied by high level humidity. It heats up again quickly, but no longer nice and dry. Everything is damp. Once more the black outfit will do. However, instead of long trousers now a scarf wrapped around the hips. In addition a black short sleeve polo shirt. A scarf will protect shoulders and warm arms as needed.

One now has to deal with two scarfs. One around the shoulders is taken off and put on again, dependent on drafts, temperature and work requirements. The other around the hips is re-wrapped after each visit to the toilet. It is fastened to the soft waistband of a comfortable knee-length shorts. In addition, last winter's coal-coloured cardigan may complete the outfit.

When the air once more is dry and velvety, a beautiful piece of bright blue medium weight linen has proven its worth as a wrapped skirt, along with a collarless pinstripe top with small sleeves. This outfit makes for a good mood in such days, thanks to its reliability and the skirt's beautiful blue. The outfit does stand up to rising temperatures.

Finally, when the heat rises again to near unbearable levels, a blue stretch cotton denim skirt has proven its worth. In the morning worn with a bright orange Indian cotton vest. In the afternoon with dark blue straps top.

This brief text may illustrates the challenges, which midsummers now pose for clothing. Goal are simple: A few well fitting pieces. Simple and interchangeable. In keeping with social situations, work requirements, prevailing temperatures, levels of humidity and personal moods of the day.

The following items have proven to be useful this summer.

(1) Wraps and scarfs

. . . a long dark blue scarf for all occasions

. . . a beautifully woven wool scarf for cool nights

(2) The fluffy dog-tooth wrap from last winter converted into two. One around the hips, the other for the shoulders. Worn with black polos

(3) Cloths wrapped around the hips...

. . . former yellow-brown patterned wool scarf

. . . bright blue, medium weight linen cloth

. . . light grey, finely lined thin linen .

(4) Tops for day to day and for special occasions ... (*not resolved...*)

(5) Blue denim skirt, narrow and short

(6) V-neck sweaters (rust-red and charcoal)...

(7) Bright orange Indian cotton vest, with or without t-shirt...

Sandals or open shoes, flat.

Originally my plan was: No white polo shirts with collars (short nor long sleeves) in summer. But they did creep in again, adding to the already integrated black polo shirts. Reason is the unsolved issue with tops (short sleeves, without sleeves or straps only). The shape and form of these tops should match the upper body, thus fitting both normal and wrapped skirts. Tops thus really have become this summer's wardrobe challenge. While a piece of fabric - wrapped around the hips - easily turns into a skirt, tops seems to have completely different requirements. So far, the following pieces seem to work.

... the black polos in damp weather or when nothing else works

... the already mentioned small cotton top with short sleeves

... a white T-shirt shortened to hip length with round neckline and rolled up sleeves

... a white polo shirt, from which I have separated the collar because it was torn

I am now thinking of sewing up a dark blue top of medium weight cotton with pockets - modelled after this polo shirt. Useful for everyday life and work on hot days

A solution has yet to be found for strap tops, which are essential on hot summer afternoons. Doing trials with cotton jersey.

The question remains how to store things like change, notes/credit cards and keys during city visits for those who - like me - like to leave the house without a handbag.