



# Drawn Together

**COTE FUSES STYLE AND A SENSE OF SECURITY INTO ITS LATEST UNDERTAKING.**

PHOTOS ALEX ANTITCH  
STYLING GREGORY WEIN

The theme of "cote," a rarely used English word meaning refuge, runs through the seams of Tomaso Afonssi and Francesco Ferrari's womenswear label. The Milan-based designers' liberal application of fabrics like extra-fine cupro, cashmere, mélange cotton, and tulle transmits a sense of emotional protection on its customers and empowers them to indulge fearlessly in fashion. This romanticized view of their craft fuels Afonssi, 25, and Ferrari, 28, who both claim a life-long passion for making clothes. After studying at Istituto Marangoni in Milan, the duo launched Cote in January 2010 and revealed their genius at the Fashion Week in Milan that September with a self-made installation. Composed of the collection's garments, hung from a whitewashed room's ceiling via transparent thread and illuminated with spotlights, the showcase displayed models propped up on platforms, exemplifying the wearability of each piece.

This season, the pair devised a series of plunging backlines, wide-leg trousers, floor-length frocks, and two-tone skirts over a boxy silhouette, making for innovative armor true to Cote's founding philosophy. Accessories of red, gray, and black lizard leather add a finishing touch to each look, while stand-alone collars, like their trademark "cut-shirt," can be mixed with everything from T-shirts to evening dresses. The collection also marks Afonssi and Ferrari's inaugural venture into prêt-à-porter and outerwear, where coats and jackets speak to both Cote's credo and protect against the cold with layers of cashmere and outer shells of fur. "For us, fashion is an outlet that allows us to be ourselves," says Afonssi. "With that confidence, we are able to achieve great things with our work."—TIFFANY JOW



*Crepe top with nude sheer backing and crepe-silk skirt, both COTE. Metal bracelet, LIA SOPHIA. Nylon sheer back-seam pantyhose.*

*SPANX. Cotton neckpiece, cotton-nylon pullover, and wool trousers, all COTE. OPPOSITE: Cotton long-sleeve sheer button-down, waxed-cotton*

*skirt, and leather skinny-belt, all COTE. Leather Yumi Mary Jane heels, CASTANER. Nylon tight-end tights, SPANX.*



THIS PAGE: *Wool snap duffel with shearling hood and nylon/Lycra vulture tights, both TIM COPPENS. Leather-rubber Romain Kremer*

*derby shoes, CAMPER TOGETHER. Nylon/Lycra vulture turtleneck and wool cu ed hybrid trousers, both TIM COPPENS. Leather Clopton mid-top*

*sneaker, WESC. OPPOSITE: Cavalry twill-color block-snap jacket and Merino wool-leather long-sleeve crew-neck with zips, both TIM COPPENS.*



**TIM COPPENS BRINGS  
HIS PERFORMANCE-WEAR  
PAST INTO A LINE OF  
THE PRESENT.**

Before launching his eponymous label this year, Belgium-born, New York-based Tim Coppens worked behind the scenes at top men's performance brands. A graduate of Antwerp's Royal Academy of Fine Arts, he spearheaded conceptual development of sportswear at Bogner, Adidas, and Ralph Lauren's RLX, where he discovered new ways to create a world of his own around clothing. "Generally it's about a certain rebelliousness, whether it's manifested in a controlled, rational way or totally random," says Coppens, who was born to a pair of artists. "There's always an edge."

In April, without the aid of a proper studio or employees, the 36-year-old designer single-handedly financed and showed his 45-piece fall/winter 2011 collection exclusively to Barneys New York, which immediately signed on to launch the line. "My past helped set me apart from the typical route a fashion designer takes," says Coppens. "The research, innovation, possibility, capability, and resources to try new things were really interesting for me."

Coppens's technical, construction-focused background is apparent in his collection's classic pieces, which exude a subtle sense of functionality in a complex mixture of Merino knits, virgin wool, baby camel, lamb leather, suede, and nylon. "I always knew I wanted to start my own collection," he says, noting a current interest in industrial electronics and the work of L.A.-based artist Mike Kelley. "Formerly, I'd immersed myself into an established brand and worked around that world. My own label is different. The world I create around my clothes is a mix of architecture, art, and music," he says. "I spend a lot of time on construction and maintain an overview from the very first to the last step of production." —T.J.

HAIR: DEYCKE HEIDORN using *Shu Uemura Art of Hair at See Management*. MAKE-UP: NATASHA SMEE using *Christian Dior at The Wall Group*. MODELS: BRIAN and JASON at *New York Models* and JUDITH and MALU at *Muse*. PHOTO ASSISTANT: ZORAN JELENIC.

