

# BLESS No.67

PHOTOGRAPHER: JEN CAREY  
STYLIST: GEORGIA ILLINGWORTH  
TALENT: LILY MC MENAMY AT NEXT MODELS

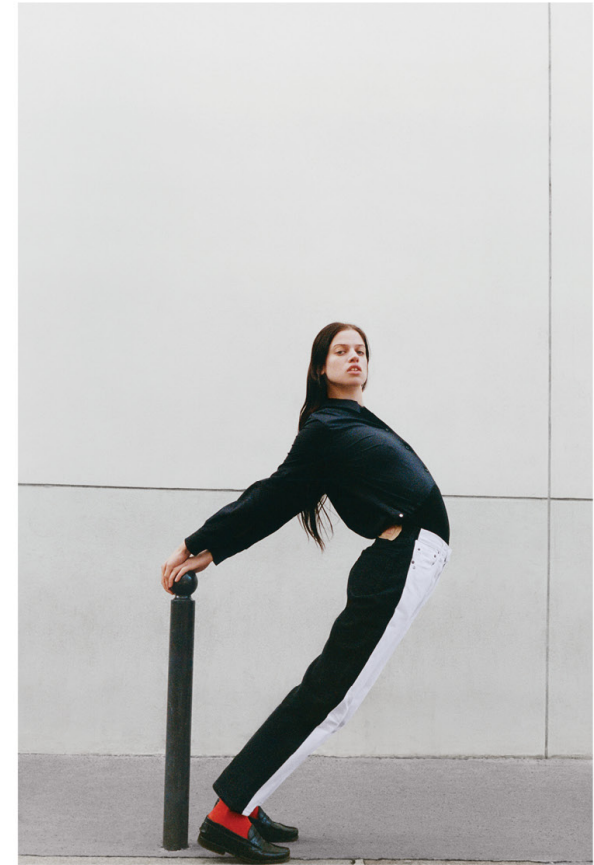
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*Lily wears top, jeans,  
and trainers by BLESS  
Socks, stylist's own*

Shirt and jeans by BLESS  
Tights by F-ALKE  
Loafers, model's own





*Top, jeans, and trainers by BLESS  
Socks, stylist's own*



*Carpet hoodie and jagged jeans by BLESS  
Tights by FALKE  
Ballet shoes, stylist's own*





*Jumper and swimsuit by BLESS  
Tights by WOLFORD  
Sliders by BLESS*



TOP  
Shirt with cap and sliders by BLESS  
Body suit by Wolford  
Tights by Falke

BELOW AND OPPOSITE  
Denim carigan jacket, T-shirt,  
and silk boxers by BLESS  
Tights by F-ALKE  
Ballet shoes, stylist's own







WORDS: GEORGIA ILLINGWORTH

Sustainability in fashion can all too often feel like a contradiction. Even if a collection is made using sustainable practices and fabrics, the bottom line is that the world simply doesn't need more clothes. So how about a radical re-envisioning of the entire system? Enter designers Ines Kaag and Desiree Heiss of the brand BLESS, which they co-founded in the early '90s. In spite of producing clothing, BLESS exists almost completely outside of the fashion industry. Their collections are given numbers and themes rather than seasons and presented via one-off collaborations, retail events, or exhibitions rather than runway shows.

Their design and production process is very small-scale and transparent – since the very beginning, the brand has produced almost no dead stock. “BLESS articles never go on sale,” the pair explain, “instead we do very personal private sales in Paris and Berlin where we sell even our very first prototypes or production mistakes.” They also perpetually rework their stock: Levi's jeans and Nike jogging bottoms are each split in half and then sewn together, or dead-stock fabrics from other brands are used to make scarves, creating a constant dialogue between the old and the new.

More of an experimental design studio than a traditional fashion label, BLESS not only produces clothing but also furniture, accessories, and objects as varied and bizarre as hairbrushes and seat covers. BLESS is slippery and hard to define, which is exactly how Ines and Desiree like it: “We invented our own category to play within.” Their way of working has provided them with complete freedom to create on their own terms. For BLESS N°40, they gave their pieces to the people who provided the best reasons for owning them rather than for money. And for BLESS N°46, they designed no new pieces but responded only to wishes from their clients.

The pair presented their BLESS N°67 collection early this November as part of the Dance New Air 2020 festival in Tokyo in collaboration with the Japanese performance artist Saori Hala. Hala suggested a conference room designed in 1951 by the sculptor Isamu Noguchi as the venue for the project, and Ines and Desiree were instantly seduced. The project is titled “No Room,” a reflection on Noguchi's own resistance to categorisation as an artist: his oeuvre is vast and varied, spanning architecture, sculpture, furniture design, and ceramics. This fluid, interdisciplinary approach underpins much of Ines and Desiree's work as designers. They seek to establish connections between clothing and objects, questioning how humans interact with their physical surroundings. They design clothes as a means to create a timeless wardrobe, consisting of “spectacular or humorous pieces that draw their reason for being from the love of their owner beyond time – they become companions over the years.” And what a radical proposal: clothes and objects to complement and enrich your life like a friend.

How do they see the future of fashion? “We hope that the fashion industry might find an appropriate way to adapt to the challenges of the times we live in.”