



SAMIAN  
AMEL  
TAILORED  
TASTE

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The world of Saman Amel revolves around the atelier. Today, the process of visiting a physical space and having a garment custom made for you is at odds with the shopping habits or indeed even culture in the larger sense. In a world of speed, digitization and experiences steered by algorithms, the atelier experience emphasizes the personal encounter, physical touch and craftsmanship which is inherently slow. In the atelier experience, the fitting is the most intimate; shared by client and maker.

For this tenth issue of *Neptune*, we invite you to our newly opened Stockholm atelier for a very special fitting.

Being part of this edition feels particularly fitting, given that Atelier Saman Amel is running on its tenth year in business. My name is Dag Granath and together with Saman I founded the company that we had started experimenting with in high school. After almost twenty-five years of being best friends and ten years as business partners, our roles overlap: Saman is a creative by nature with high energy, so by nature my



Left: Ceramic bird by Frank Larsen.  
Right: A 1920s lamp by Simon Gate by Orrefors hangs above an Alvar Andersson for Hyresgästernas Möbelaffär 1930s table and a set of Tulip chairs by Eero Saarinen (circa 1965).



In the entrance of the atelier, a large red painting by Ann Edholm (*Terror II* 2014) and a 1940s Tomaso Buzzi stool.

role is to balance that with pragmatism and direction. The core of what we do is largely the same today as when we started; we are a tailoring house that helps clients build their wardrobes out of our ateliers in Stockholm and London or during trunk shows in New York, Los Angeles and Zürich. Today we just do it on a slightly larger scale (and hopefully slightly better) and the collection now includes a wider range of product categories beyond tailoring that also exist in exclusive ready to wear drops for selected wholesalers and our own e-commerce. The main arena for the brand, however, is the atelier.

Before there was an atelier to talk about, however, there was Saman Amel. We met at the age of ten playing football and while Saman was by nature a bit of a trickster – always laughing and making jokes – he was dead serious about his ambition to become a *fashion designer*. While this concept seemed hard to grasp, it was crystal clear for Saman. His idea of the designer was that of the couturier, a maker of clothes that works directly with the client by appointment. There was an echo there from the great tailors of couture: Azzedine Alaïa and Cristóbal Balenciaga. Two individuals who had a hard time compromising on their craft to deliver what the market needed.

Years later, Saman studied at The Academy for Cutting and Pattern Making in Stockholm – a high school offering preparatory studies for designers and tailors. During this time he fell out of love with extravagant and complex dressmaking and started exploring men's tailoring. Building on an existing craft – the attachment of a sleeve head, the basting of the canvas or the perfecting of the buttonhole – became a greater fascination than creating something new and avant-garde. Saman was the only boy in his class so as he moved to menswear Saman had no one to use for fittings. My high school was nearby and when Saman texted me one day *“Can I use you as a fitting model?”* I had little suspicion that I was being lured into a lifetime commitment to tailoring.

Atelier Saman Amel started with a fitting and the fitting remains a central part of what our world is about. Meeting a client and working together on garments to build a wardrobe is an intimate process of mutual respect. If there is no respect, there is no understanding and the result will be a compromise – neither meat nor fish.

Ben Gorham is a person who does not seek your attention nor your respect, yet he gets both. Ben is a longtime client, friend and a person we admire for his integrity, generosity and uniquely personal sense of style. Like any great mentor or client, he is a great supporter and critic at the same time. Always looking carefully and always making choices with intent. On occasions, we sit with fifteen fabric swatches on the table; all charcoal, all woolen fabric. For most people the sheer number of options becomes too much to handle (the burden of free will that lies heavy on the shoulders of men ever since Adam first bit the apple in the Garden of Eden seems particularly hefty when faced with cloth books, it seems). Here, Ben trusts his taste.

Taste – what a peculiar concept it is. So much weight is put into the word. It's so serious. And its big business to have *“good taste”*. Many years ago, during one of our first meetings with Ben we touched on the topic of taste. He said that us that *“In the age of social media, good taste is a commodity available to anyone. The challenge is not to have taste that is good, but to truly develop your own taste”*.

If anything, I believe that things of quality have no fear of time. Whether it's building a personal wardrobe or building a multi-billion dollar company that revolutionized the scent industry forever (Byredo), Ben will do it with care and with intent.

When you play not with the ambition to win, but with the ambition to keep on playing, who you play with becomes incredibly important. When building our ateliers, we play with some of our best friends who have all been instrumental in shaping not only our physical spaces but also our taste in the wider sense.

The Stockholm atelier on Kommendörsgatan 14 is our fourth project together with Christian and Ruxandra Halleröd (Halleroed) and our most recent since the opening of our London atelier on 17 Albemarle Street in June 2024. The pair combines a unique understanding and sense for materiality with a sharp analytic eye on shaping a space that follows the interaction with the client, not vice versa. While it may have been their professional abilities that brought us to them almost a decade ago in the first place, it is their kindness, integrity and generosity that has cemented the relationship. We are of the firm opinion



Left: A set of 1917 chairs designed by Eliel Saarinen for the Munksjö Hotel compliment custom woodwork.



that being a good person is good for business and we only work with people who we know share this approach. This is equally true for our close partners in Stockholm who have played a key role in shaping the new atelier as well as our personal interests and tastes over time.

Jacksons Design has a gallery space not far from our initial previously mentioned space. While ours was tiny and unassuming, theirs was anything but. The collection is like a cabinet of curiosities ñ layered and always with something new to explore. We have always been attracted to people who are deeply knowledgeable ñ and may I say nerdy ñ about their trade and Paul Jackson and Adam Trunoske of Jacksons Design are not only knowledgeable but also very generous with sharing this knowledge. Even more attractively, they are the fi st to acknowledge their lack on knowledge and eagerness to learn.

When working together in the shaping of our London atelier in 2024, we focused a great deal on Swedish design classics from the Swedish Grace era of the 1930. Often referred to as a Swedish *Vagom* (i.e. not too much, not too little) take on art deco, Swedish Grace was also a time of great societal debate. With functionalism and the machine made object entering and dominating design discourse, what function does the handmade object play in the future of design and indeed in people's lives? If the machine can do it all, what is the role of humanity? This debate rings true today where arti fi al intelligence forces us to ask similar, yet more alarming questions.

The Stockholm atelier is more eclectic in terms of design and features a wider variety of references. Finnish classics from Saarinen and Aalto, Italian elusiveness from Giordani and some cheeky elements of Scandinavian arts and craft. Objects of great character and history that sit side by side artworks of equal greatness yet more recent history. Claes Nordenhake ñ founder of Galerie Nordenhake ñ told us once that the work of the gallerist is equal parts travelling salesman and elementary school teacher. The experience of art starts as a feeling and the work exists only in its own right. Yet, the work is an entry point into a conversation that gives the experience body and context. The more time you spend with the works, the more they become of the fl sh and you sense the effect they have on you. We are surrounded by images

ñ most of them digital ñ that only exist in front of you for a short time. It is all very ephemeral while living with art is the exact opposite. If you see something every day and you still cannot stop looking at it ñ much like your favorite jacket you want to wear almost every day ñ you know if it is truly great.

We like to think of the ateliers as *gesamtkunstwerks* in the sense that they are inherently unscalable concepts where every detail is of vital importance. Historically, however, the creator of a "total work of art" is that of the auteur where one individual "genius" realizes his (usually a heÖ) vision. As this text aims to emphasize, the work is never done in solitude but in meaningful dialogue and collaboration with people around you.

We get by with a little help of our friends, don't we?



*Left:* A painting by Torsten Andersson hangs above a pair of leather "Enzo Gutzeit" Alvar Aalto armchairs (1962). *Right:* Gorham sits in a 1950 Pierluigi Giordani armchair. The side table is by Piero Fornasetti, the ram sculpture is by Dimitri Omersa and the artwork is "The Leaf Drummer" by Christine Olund. Contributing creative director: Victor Melchior Olsson.

