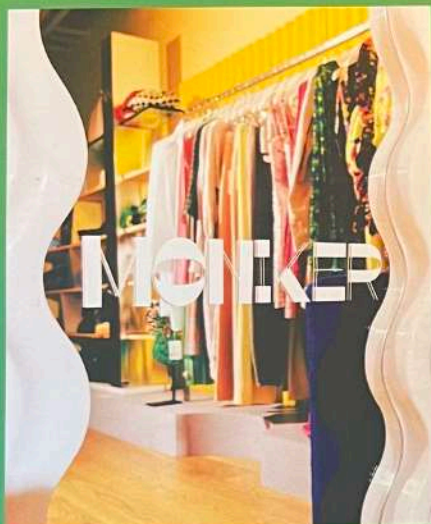


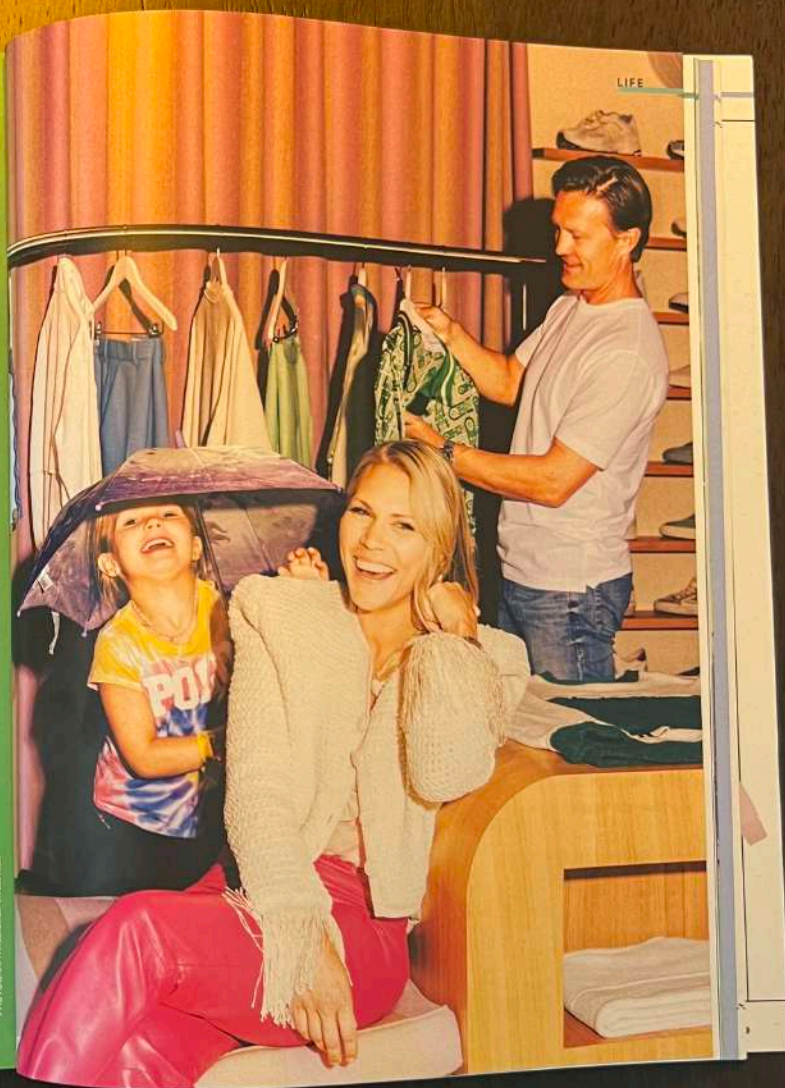
IN THE NAME OF FASHION



Monker is a three-story clothing store in Oslo's Vulkanen shopping center; its founders, Anett Ringstad and Jørgen Jelland, used their fashion and retail experience to create the multi-brand concept.

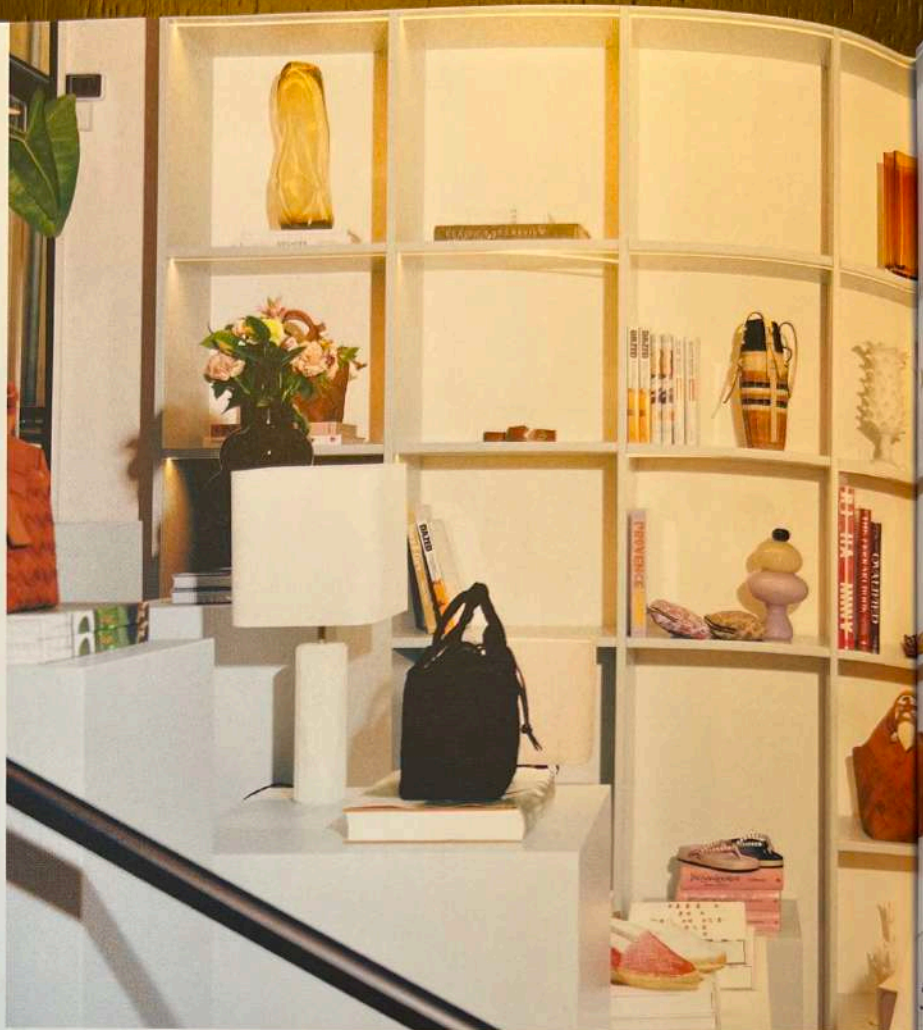
MONKER

This concept clothing store in Oslo is inspired by iconic women throughout history. We chat to the husband-and-wife founders who are bringing bold looks to the streets of Norway's capital.



Off a busy street in Oslo, there's an experiential space designed to inspire you to take risks with your wardrobe. As you move through the pastel- and fluorescent-hued rooms, where shoes and handbags are placed on plinths and pedestals, you'll see that Moniker isn't your standard concept store. In April 2020, Moniker opened its doors on the west side of the Norwegian capital and sells a curated collection of brands from around the world. The creators of this 800-square-meter space, designed by architecture firm Snøhetta, are Anett Ringstad and Jørgen Jalland.

The husband-and-wife duo were already experienced in the world of fashion retail, having previously opened and been in charge of six GANNI stores for seven years. Prior to working with GANNI, Jørgen spent a decade playing professional football and Anett worked in the fashion industry, and the pair found early on that their different experiences and skill sets made them a good match—both in and outside work. The thought of opening a multi-brand concept store had been on their mind for many years before they finally decided to go through with it. While they're in Paris on a buying trip, we chat to them about how and why they built Moniker.



Meeting

JJ: 'We're both from the same little town in Norway called Horten. But we didn't know each other, since I was nine years senior to Anett.'

AR: 'One year, just before Christmas, Jørgen was home for the holidays while playing football in Russia, and I was in town to celebrate with my family. A bunch of us were at a bar, and Jørgen and I got talking. I was 19 at the time and, shortly after, I flew to Russia to see him again.'

The GANNI years

JJ: 'In 2012, Anett and I took the lead on GANNI's first retail venture in Norway. She had them as clients through the agency she started when she was 21, Colina Agency.'

AR: 'To begin with, it was pretty DIY. We built the furniture and cast the floors ourselves, which was a disaster.'

JJ: 'In the years that followed, we opened several more. We had six in total before the company bought all the stores back from us in 2019.'

AR: 'That's when we started working on Moniker.'

Concept

AR: 'We felt a gap in the Scandinavian market for a multi-brand womenswear store where you could walk around, explore and discover something completely new every time you went. We initially signed for 300 square meters, but later expanded to 800.'

JJ: 'Then we got the architecture and design agency Snøhetta on board to draw and design the space.'

AR: 'The idea was to create a so-called *passage ouvert*—a classic French passage where you have an opening at the end and stores on each side. It would comprise five rooms, each inspired by a different strong woman: [model, singer and actress] Grace Jones, [actor and inventor] Hedy Lamarr, [singer and actor] Jane Birkin, [art collector] Peggy Guggenheim and [explorer] Isabella Bird, with products that went along with that feeling. Then

came the name Moniker, which is rooted in personas and nicknames and how they can change.'

Challenges

JJ: 'To some extent, fashion has an expiration date. During the pandemic, this posed a challenge, since we'd already done the buying long before and then found we had to close time and time again. Without running several stores in the past, though, I think it would've been much harder to do this.'

AR: 'Even through these challenging times, we've reached our goals in terms of profit and building a loyal customer base. Honestly, I didn't feel nervous even for a second. My belief in the concept was so strong.'

Expanding

JJ: 'While collaborating with Snøhetta, we noticed a lot of natural synergies, which led to us opening Moniker Sport on the second floor of the space. A few months later, after several requests from customers regarding menswear, we expanded

DISCOVERING SOMETHING TOTALLY NEW



into that field with Moniker Man. And, with everyone suddenly wanting activewear during the lockdowns and then party clothes when everything opened up, it's been fortunate that we could provide garments for every mood.'

Working together

JJ: 'Anett is incredible when it comes to fashion, curation, buying, the feel of the stores [and] customer service. Strategy, the daily running of things and HR are more of my fields. Unless it's super urgent, we try to wait until the morning instead of bringing something up around the dinner table. It's crucial to shut off.'

AR: 'Through the years, we've found our roles. We're both opinionated, but we're good at compromising.'

Next steps

AR: 'Norwegian and Scandinavian women want to stand out and dress up. Our dream is for Moniker to be an internationally acclaimed store – one that people have heard of outside of Norway.'

By Caroline Krager



Anett and Jørgen work with a range of different designers and brands to stock Moniker with clothing and accessories for any occasion, from luxury womenswear by Isabel Marant to leisurewear by Sporty & Rich. The store also offers homeware and some furniture.