

everything in
HARMONY

Noted for her impeccably tailored minimalist designs and refined use of natural fabrics, San Francisco-based designer Lan Jaenicke looks to the golden ratio when creating pieces for her coveted collections.

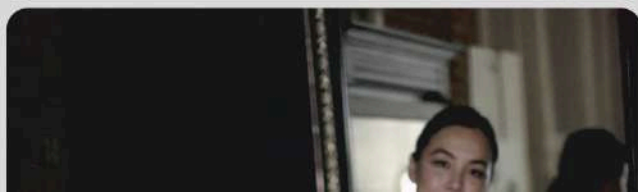
by keri bridgwater



Anthony Perlas (top and middle); Lan Jaenicke (bottom)



Designer Lan Jaenicke



Anthony Perillo (this page and opposite)



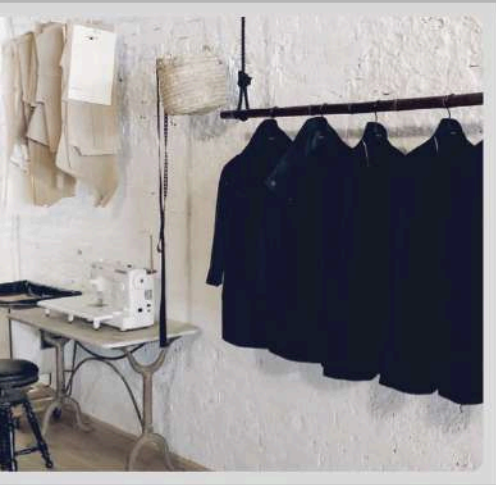
Not one to follow seasons or chase fashion show calendars, Lan Jaenicke does find endless inspiration in nature.

Cashmere and pure silks are signature fabrics, but lambswool, cotton and linen also feature across her coveted separates collection of thoughtfully executed timeless classics: sensuous wrap skirts, sculptural blouses and diaphanous slip dresses imbued with a graceful aesthetic for women who know what makes them look and feel good.

"As a designer, I like to create simple pieces that are flattering on the body, move well and travel well, but I see my line as more of a lifestyle choice, one that allows the personality of whoever is wearing it to shine," she says. Born in Beijing, Jaenicke moved to England for boarding school and university, but after working in New York, relocated to San Francisco, where — partly inspired by her ballerina-turned-fashion-designer mother

but already with an innate sense of aesthetics — she began creating clothing that captured her sense of beauty. In 2008, after graduating from the Academy of Art University with an MFA in fashion, merchandising and design, she launched a small line of cashmere jackets and coats — whose hallmark Stamford is still among her best sellers.

Trunk shows and pop-ups followed. As did an atelier in a historic brick-and-cast-iron building in Jackson Square. Once home to the original Ghirardelli chocolate factory, the space provides a behind-the-scenes glimpse of Jaenicke's design process — it's where she works with her team on new designs and meets clients for custom fittings and alterations — but also serves as custom boutique for her ready-to-wear "quiet luxury" cashmere and linen staples.



With a main client base in San Francisco, her work draws collectors on the East Coast too, plus a handful in Europe, thanks to a collaboration with iconic French footwear brand Repetto. Jaenicke created a navy-and-black toe box ballet slipper with the shoe company (the style has sold out, but another partnership is in the works), and with her Presidio Heights lifestyle store Maison, Lan Jaenicke is currently the only Repetto retailer on the West Coast.

"I appreciate anything to do with dance and have loved these shoes since my early 20s. I used to bring so many pairs back from Paris," she says. "They're elegant but extremely comfortable, and I don't want to wear anything else." Another treasure from Maison with ties to the French capital is her signature INK fragrance, an all-base natural oil perfume that "lingers beautifully." Developed with a Paris-based perfumer and inspired by Chinese ink, it evokes memories for her of growing up in Beijing. "The medium of ink and paper symbolizes creativity but there's a scholarly connection between old calligraphy paintings and my childhood, especially as my father is a writer, so the scent takes me back to those days of studying and research," she says.

Jaenicke's heritage also informs her zero-waste approach to design. Rather than traditional tailoring — which creates shape by cutting and stitching — she often uses ribbons and ties to sculpt silhouettes instead. "Many

"Geometry is all about proportions, but so are aesthetics and beauty."

Jaenicke's creations are inspired not only by her heritage, but also by her ballerina mother and writer father.

materials in China and Japan are handwoven, embroidered and hand-painted, so you never want to cut anything. It's an ancient way of making clothes that can be repurposed by unstitching and creating something else in the future," she explains. As she's a former math major who "loves numbers and logic," her designs are also premised on a belief in the beauty and power of the golden ratio. "Geometry is all about proportions, but so are aesthetics and beauty. How I decide to shape and construct a piece of clothing is always according to the golden ratio, a hemline in proportion to sleeve length, or the bigger picture of the silhouette."

Similarly, materials choices also adhere to a set of strict values — only the best natural fabrics — and having "bootstrapped from the ground up with no investors" she has

complete creative control of the line, so no one can demand she go against them. "I love Japanese grosgrain silk ribbon and Japanese fabrics generally, but source local materials too, including leather from The Hide House in Napo to make my obi belts." The cashmere is from Jaenicke's own vertical supply with fibers woven into fabrics and custom dyed. For capsule line ShanFeng (mountain/wind in Chinese, also, the characters comprise the name Lan) she used undyed cashmere, silk, lambswool and cotton to create tops, dresses and skirts in "beautiful pure whites and creams."

Despite working with a small team of dedicated seamstresses and tailors, Jaenicke says with fewer young people following the profession, these craftspeople are becoming harder to find, something she hopes to change with an internship. "I wanted to re-create the classical concept of an atelier — a space where apprentices can develop skills and understand the importance of creating things by hand," she says. "It makes us much more aware and in touch with ourselves. It is an art form I'm determined to help keep alive." 🧵

Maison Lan Jaenicke, 3307 Sacramento Street; Atelier Lan Jaenicke, 431 Jackson Street (by appointment). www.lanjaenicke.com



Carlin Fleming (this page)

Anthony Poulos (arrange)

