

# THE CURIOUS CASE OF *Felicia Budi*

*Take a closer look to the heart of **fbudi**, a label which exhibits a new way of expression through the means of explorations, and meet the lady behind it all*

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For Felicia Budi, the brilliant mind behind fbudi, the idea of fashion means so much more than meets the eye. *“I find it intriguing how fashion can be a mean of communication,”* she says. The notion of fashion as a form of self-expression has long caught the inquisitive mind of little Felicia. It always makes her wonder how one can be perceived differently with just the things they choose to wear, but growing up, her perception towards fashion changes as the coming of the age. Felicia, who previously aspired to work at NASA, decided that this is the right path for her. *“I have come to realisation that fashion can be a medium to aspire new thoughts and provoke a series of dialogue that can contribute to a better society. It is not just some pretty thing or a mere form of self-expression anymore.”*

Her career starts right after she finished her formal education at London College of Fashion. After working for a number of fashion houses in the UK, one of it being ISSA London, Felicia decided to pack her bags and jumped on the next plane home to Jakarta. Upon her return, she started dipping her toes in the local industry by being a designer at BIN House. There, she says, is where her love and appreciation for fabrics set off. *“There is a difference between how the industry works in Jakarta and in Europe. When I was interning in the UK, I learned more about the business aspect of fashion because fashion is seen as a business. BIN House, on the other hand is different. While working at BIN House, I got the chance to meet up with a lot of artisans who make a living by making their own fabrics. There, I started to learn how to appreciate garments and fabrics because it is what BIN house is all about. It is a garment house. Even BIN herself would like to be called as a fabric master who makes some clothes instead of being known as a fashion designer. The process of designing at BIN House always starts with fabrics, I think that’s why my process of designing always starts with exploration of fabric. Old habit dies hard.”*

Felicia, who is wearing an all-white ensemble from her latest collection during the interview, then shares how she rarely starts a collection with sketches. *“I think when we started from sketches, we often forget about the materials and got stuck in our own judgement and imagination. Each materials has their own characters that is unique from one another and we won’t be able to figure that out if we are too fixated with pencil and papers.”*



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*“For me,” she adds, “A good fashion designer doesn’t mean that he/she is a good illustrator. Designing clothes is not the same as drawing it on a piece of paper. To design a good cloth, you need to think of how it functions, how it falls on human’s body and so on. But, I’m not saying that I’m against sketching. I still sketch, but often it is for range planning when I’m creating a collection.”*

When asked about how she comes to find the materials, she admits that the process of finding the fabric itself is never something that is intentional. Tyvek, for example, the paper-like material that she utilised for her prominent Persegi collection, was encountered by chance. *“Same thing goes for finding inspiration, I don’t go to a certain place saying I’m looking for an inspiration here. I believe that even the smallest things in life can be a source of inspiration, as long as we keep an eye open to what is going on with the world.”*

As we sat down in her studio that afternoon, surrounded by pieces from Tanah Air, fbudi’s Spring/Summer 2016 collection, it is easy to see why her brand

stands out from the crowd. Felicia brings forth a depth of knowledge in her every creation. There is an innate sense of virtue and intuition that reflects the depth of Felicia’s introverted soul. If media described her label as experimental, Felicia chose curiosity as the word that best describe fbudi. *“Aside from my vision and mission, curiosity is the driving force behind everything I do. Exploration always begins with questions whether something could be done differently and so on. I may not always find the answer but I enjoy the process of finding one.”*

Towards the end of our conversation, Felicia concludes, *“I’m not really much of a planner. I’m more of a go-with-the-flow kind of person. So, I can’t really answer how fbudi or me will be in the next couple of years. But my vision still guides me in every way. With that in mind, I want to keep on growing and contribute to build a better society. It doesn’t have to be something that is tangible, because sometimes it is the intangible that is more substantial.”* ■





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