

Colours at Work

Stefan Decker

What does workwear look like for a new generation of designers working with regional resources, biobased materials, and circular value chains? This question forms the basis of the Biofabrique Vienna Challenge “Colours at Work”. Fashion designer Stefan Decker develops a work jacket for the teams of Biofabrique Vienna and Vienna Design Week, translating the values of a bioregional design practice into a wearable garment.

At the heart of the project are the Wiener Farben (Vienna Colours), a palette of natural dyes derived from organic residual resources. For Decker, colour is not merely a design feature but the starting point of the entire concept. It makes material cycles visible and tells the story of the resources, production processes, and people behind a new regional material culture.

Building on his interest in reuse strategies, Decker develops the jackets from discarded T-shirts sourced via Caritas donations. Through redesign, new pattern cutting, and dyeing with the Wiener Farben, the garments are given a second life. The jackets demonstrate how existing materials can be transformed into high-quality products and how design can reveal the value of resources often considered waste. The work jacket is understood less as a finished product than as part of an ongoing research process. Throughout Vienna Design Week, it will be worn by the teams of Biofabrique Vienna and Vienna Design Week in their daily work. Light, movement, weather conditions, and everyday use thus become part of a practical test, generating new insights into the properties and potential applications of natural dyes.

In this way, workwear becomes a visible expression of a design practice that brings together design, material research, and circular economy. The project demonstrates how bioregional materials and circular production methods can generate not only new products, but also new ways of imagining work, design, and value creation.