



## Textile Performance

### The Knitting Academy

The Knitting Academy was initiated in 1998 as a cooperative project between the Swedish School at the University College of Borås and the Institution of Design and Crafts at Gothenburg University. The project is headed by the University College of Borås and is run as a pilot project financed during its first two years by the KK foundation, Förenings-sparbanken Sjuhärad, the region of Västra Götaland, the municipality of Mark and the En Hel Del project at the institution of Design and Crafts at Gothenburg University.

There has always been a demand from students and trained designers to have recourse to an experimental workshop in order to test and develop knitted fabric designs and to have the possibility to produce small collections.

The Swedish knitting industry consists of several smaller companies with limited resources in terms of product development and marketing. Cooperative efforts between the industry and academy gains both parties.

The project started out in the village Sättila, in a former knitting factory, where a knitting technician was at hand to develop ideas and further development. Some 60 projects were initiated during this period. In October 2001, the cooperation with the knitting companies of Gällstad, gathered in the Gällstad group, started out, resulting in considerable growth based on the richness of the groups' collected knowledge.

The Swedish School of Textiles disposes of highly advanced machinery within the knitting field and offers educational courses in cooperation with other design schools, such as the Institution of Design and Crafts at Gothenburg University, Konstfack and Beckmans School of Design in Stockholm. Applicants to the Knitting Academy should possess knowledge in knitting techniques. This means that the Knitting Academy is able to offer placements to students from the mentioned schools.

The projects is led by a group consisting of representatives from the Swedish School of Textiles, the Gällstad Group, Beckmans School of Design and the municipality of Ulricehamn.

Several projects have been Bachelors and Masters degree projects. Following graduation, students are able to go back and continue working on their ideas in order to find partners within the knitting industry.

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On June 12, 2003 the Knitting Academy presented a fashion performance in one of the large machine halls at the Royal School of Technology, Stockholm. The object of this performance was to put young textile knitting design in a border-breaking artistic context. Student projects from all Swedish design schools were represented: the Institution of Design and Crafts at Gothenburg University, Konstfack, Beckmans School of Design and the Swedish School of Textiles. Carin Bartosch-Edström is the composer of the music. The piece was originally performed at the student show by the Swedish School of Textiles at the opening of the Tutanchamon show at the Textile Museum in Borås in 1999. The music was composed for this event and supported by the Royal Academy of music.

For the Knitting Academy performance, the piece has been developed by Paulina Sundin, electro-acoustic composer. It was performed together with live music in the machine hall in an alternating sequence to voices by Carin Bartosch-Edström and double-flute by Claudia Müller. In order to obtain perfect sound reproduction, acoustic maestro Jamie Fawcus was called in.

The programme was directed by means of pre-planned video, shown in back projection at a screen of 5 x 6 metres. Dancers and models dressed in the students' creations were synchronised with video clips from knitting machine halls and industrial facilities. Through cooperation with two talented pupils at the the Viskatrand High School in Borås, Ida Johansson and Nina Ståhl, video filing and editing has been carried out. The pupils have spent long hours in the editing room in order to obtain the desired result.

With the video as a starting point, choreographer and dancer Claire Parson, together with a company of six, performed a piece of highly personal character where movements, bodies and clothes formed a unit. The dancers interpreted and expressed the clothes through their movements and offered the beholders a total experience. Young models from the ZAP agency relieved the dancers alternatively. A certain flexibility and variation were important elements in the performance, and the clothes were

shown in various ways. Theresia Schults, mask artist from Folkoperan in Stockholm and her assistant contributed with most personal make-ups. The object of this performance has been to create a scenic and acoustic experience, in which young designers are to gain the possibility to contribute on equal terms. By cooperation with young artists within music and dance in this way, working within a border-breaking artistic cultural context, place is given to new textile- and fashion design expressions.

The Knitting Academy was nominated to take part in the competition "Best collaboration in culture and trade/industry 2003" organised by The Association of Culture and Economic Industry in Stockholm, Sweden. On November 24, the Knitting Academy was awarded second prize and received an honourable mention. The motivation was: "An experimental workshop and meeting place to develop new Swedish knitting design composes an exciting example by a cross-border project to launch design in an innovative way using music, dance and art to reach new target groups."

