



As a perception or a dream. Not everything has to be worn to be sensually female.

# Exhibitions Reviews

Since 1992, Annie Andréasson works as a journalist at the Communications Office at the University of Borås, specializing in covering the areas of textiles and design.

Photos in the article by Jan Berg, The Museum in Textile History

## Nordic Award in Textiles 2008

October 24<sup>th</sup> 2008 – February 15<sup>th</sup> 2009

The Museum in Textile History, Borås, Sweden

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Making something complicated look simple and natural is not only among the most difficult tasks ever, it is also very time-consuming. This is shown in the creations by textile artist Anne Damgaard. She is the receiver of the 2008 Nordic Award in Textiles, the most prestigious textile award the Nordic countries offer. For a few months her sensual creations were exhibited at the Museum in Textile History, Borås.

It flows, shimmers, a circular shape is suddenly discernible on the skirt of the dress, it continues up past the waistline and onto the bodice. It is ingeniously devised, every detail is carefully planned. There is nothing superfluous; every part comes with a purpose. The female body is ever the focal point. No visitor ever goes untouched by the exquisitely sensual creations of Anne Damgaard. Is it haute couture or art? And do we have to decide which it is?

– I create something that is in between and try to combine the best of two worlds, the fashion creator's and the textile artist's. My creations do not conform to a specific whim of fashion; they are to last for years and years. They should be no less visually interesting in ten, or even twenty years time. The kind of time I spend making clothes simply does not exist in commercial fashion shows, she explains resolutely.

# DANNE DAMGAARD

24 okt 2008 – 15 feb 2009

The Copenhagen Fashion Week  
presented by the Copenhagen Fashion Institute  
in cooperation with the Copenhagen Fashion Institute  
and the Copenhagen Fashion Institute  
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and the Copenhagen Fashion Institute

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Her way of working is appreciated, something that is evident from the fine award she recently received. Winner of the most prestigious textile award in the Nordic countries, the Nordic Award in Textiles of 250.000 SEK. Together we walk through the exhibition, which was opened the day after she received the award. Two weeks from now, the light creations will be taken down and moved to the Röhsska Museum of Design and Decorative Arts in Gothenburg.

- Receiving the award was amazing, it was the greatest experience of my life, she says and her voice is warm with emotion; one can tell she means every word.

This time, her work caught the attention of the jury of the foundation Fokus, Borås. However, her artistic clothes were noticed already when she graduated from the Danish Design School. Two items are shown at the Borås exhibition.

It was 1997 and already then she was torn over what to concentrate on. She had always been interested in art, while at the same time she liked industrial design. It was the teacher in industrial design, Jan Machenhauer, who made her decide area of specialization.

- He was so good and inspiring and his guidance has meant a lot to me.

Inspired by the Antique sculptures of Greece and how moisture and steam make clothes stick to the body, she developed a draping system where she lets the fabric shape itself tightly around the body. In order to make the fabric feel as if it were wet she chose muslin and nylon fabric that fit tightly and accentuate the torso. To give the dress the right feeling she used water for the design and tied and sowed some parts of it while the material flowed freely from the waistline, but it is not in the least ladylike. That is something Anne Damgaard avoids very carefully. The creation is to feel direct and to be a modern interpretation.

- I still like the clothes in my graduation project, she says proudly.

In Late Autumn Dress Grey made in 1998 she developed her draping system and now she works with a concept. Several layers of bobbinet are shaped like ovals and rectangles which she combines artistically on a pompous skirt, where the bobbinet is allowed space. The multiple layers of bobbinet contrast sharply to the delicate wasteline.

- The exhibition would open in November, hence the dark colors. It is the darkest month of the entire year and on top of that the clothes would be exhibited in a show. I wanted them to be striking on the catwalk and for the audience to have a complete experience, Anne Damgaard explains.

This time, her inspiration was, among other things, 50's fashion and fashion creators such as Christian Dior. As a contrast to various industrial depictions. It is dramatic but also very elegant. The colors shift from greyish brown to turquoise grey. And the result appetizing and appreciated. She sold several creations to shops and one was even sold as a wedding dress.

- The creative process is never easy for me. There lies much hard work behind every detail. I experiment with materials, perform tests over and over again. I am often frustrated when things do not turn out the way I expected, although sometimes difficulties subside and it all just flows smoothly, Anne Damgaard explains.

She explains how she is inspired by widely different things. It may be art, architecture, an epoch, or details from nature, an archetype. Constantly photographing, she is always on the lookout for new expressions. She collects her ideas as pictures and she uses them to make on-the-spot sketches for a new topic.

- The digital camera has made my work easier, nowadays I don't have to develop all my photos and instead I can take lots of them. I always carry this or my phone, she says and holds out her tiny pocket camera.





She shows her latest photos, taken while on a winter walk with her family. There are straws of reed protruding from a surface of water, as smooth as a mirror. The icy pattern is graphically clean.

- I am looking to visually capture an atmosphere. Sometimes my mind becomes too full of ideas and that is frustrating, she smiles and shows a movie clip where one can hear her children in the background:

- Mommy, that's enough!

Anne Damgaard always carries her sketchbook where she draws what she refers to as "scribble", on-the-spot images she may return to later in the creative process.

- I photograph my draping experiments on the dummy several times just to have them registered. The photographs are my sketches and I use them to make decisions later on. I often have interesting coincidents along the way before I arrive on my final idea.

Frize Dress of 2001 resembles a flowing rain of pastels. So light, simple and poetic. Or really not only being seen but also perceived, felt.

- Here, I was clearly inspired by a painting by Bernard Frize.

- What is most important to me is probably the aesthetics and to excite emotions in the beholder, Anne Damgaard says.

In 2006 Anne Damgaard was introduced into the world of modern classical music. She was invited to do an exhibition with new works in the foyer of Oksnehallen, Copenhagen. There she met a female electrical string quartet, who introduced her to new classical works by George Crumb. Her dresses were exhibited there so as to give an experience of the interplay between sound, light and video projections.

- Listening to George Crumb's music, which is very rich in contrasts, left me inspired in an entirely new way, a new experience for me.

The contrast between light and dark elements is very clear. A new dimension is present in Black Angel Brown, one of the thirteen creations she created when inspired by the classical pieces. Seven of them are exhibited in Borås.

- I wanted to transform a shape and began to paint, instinctively choosing ink. The images came clearly to me through the music and it felt among other things like a spiral shape, Anne Damgaard explains.

The spiral shape is easily noticeable. Sometimes as a circle that winds like a shell between the dress and the world around it. It all begins as a wide bicolored dress, on which the circular application winds its way, it feels almost three-dimensional. The video recording that was produced for the exhibition shows the women in the string quartet wearing four variants of Black Angel – one red, one pink, one blue, and one green – to match the colors of their instruments. The recording is also displayed in Borås. It is an entirely different experience to watch the creations worn on a female body while hearing the music that inspired Anne Damgaard. All of a sudden, the wheel has come full circle.



In Ann Damgaard's latest works created for the Borås exhibition a more intrusive working style is visible. These creations are found at the very back of the exhibition and the visitor has to see all the earlier creations to reach them. There is most likely an idea behind this. Nothing Anne Damgaard does lacks purpose. One characteristic is that they are all about abstract body-shaped sculptures.

- I have tried to move from something concrete and massive to something diffuse. The materials are the same for them all, as is the groundwork. Today, I am probably more occupied by nature than I was before, she confesses in a musing tone and runs her hand along one of the creations.

It is tube-shaped bobbinet lace. The introduction to the exhibition states that it was a quill from a porcupine that inspired Anne Damgaard to use the pointed straws that make up the shape of the creations. They may however appear entirely different if they are woven to form a pattern or are given flowing shapes almost like a corset. Sometimes one is not certain if one is seeing the item from the right or the wrong side.

Anne Damgaard is not afraid to try the classic and remake them. It does not matter to her if it is about the boundaries of the classical dress or modern art. It is something entirely new – something in-between - that we do not have a word for, because we have not seen it before.







The jury of the most prestigious textile award in the Nordic countries had long been eyeing Anne Damgaard's work. In 2008 she received the much desired award. Her work of more than ten years is shown very effectively at the Museum of Textile History, Borås. The creations are exhibited on female torsos suspended from the ceiling; by that Anne Damgaard shows that they are not fashion garments but artistic creations.

#### **Facts:**

Anne Damgaard  
Born: 1968 in Silkeborg, Denmark. Lives in Copenhagen.  
Education: 1992-1997, the Danish Design School.  
Last award: 2008 Nordic Award in Textiles, Foundation Fokus, Borås, Sweden.

#### **Voices on Anne Damgaard**

Margaretha Persson, chairperson of the jury of the Nordic Award in textiles and assistant director at the Museum in Textile History:

Anne Damgaard's creations are characterized by a sensual elegance and great craftsmanship with many complicated constructions and time-consuming drapings.

Excerpt from Erik Steffensen's description of Anne Damgaard's 2004 exhibition:  
Anne Damgaards design opens for a dialogue with the world of dreams. But the dresses are real. You don't notice if you don't happen to know – but princesses are also a kind of people.

