

One of a kind: Textile Designer Tamar Branitzky

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Textile designer Tamar Branitzky is certain that textile designers no longer have to hide behind fashion designers and dreams about cooperative ventures with commercial chains. In the meantime, her scarves say it all

Tags: scarves, Tamar Branitzky



Drawings that have been turned into scarves (photos: Roy Mizrahi and Bosmat Hareuveni Zilberstein)

“On the first day of school at Shenkar School of Engineering and Design I realized that they had done me a favor by not accepting me to fashion studies and that I had gained entry into a new and far more fascinating world,” says fashion designer Tamar Branitzky daringly, slightly shaking the sanctified taboo of Israel’s most desirable department of fashion design. “The beauty of textile is that it can be anything. It’s a fascinating raw material, from fashion to lampshades and upholstery. It’s a field that’s highly developed abroad, but less so in

Israel. “A textile designer’s studio provides services to interior decorators and fashion designers who want to create unique raw materials.”

Although throughout her 28 years of existence she knew she wanted to be a designer, Branitzky was exposed to textile design without any preliminary intentions. “I wanted to study fashion design, it was a childhood dream, and I didn’t get accepted. I spent years dancing, drawing, sculpting and taking pictures, and suddenly I found a field that combines all my loves. I somehow got into textile design, a field that I really entered by mistake.”

During her four years of study, Branitzky experimented with the transition from drawing and photography to their interpretation in textiles. During that period, she also did her internship in Stockholm, under Swedish fashion designer Diana Orving. This stimulated her appetite for the Scandinavian market. Although her hunger in this area has not yet been satisfied, it has encouraged Branitzky to jumpstart and forge local cooperative ventures, the latest of which is a cooperative venture with local fashion brand Comme il Faut. Using a digital printing technique, Branitzky has created an abstract print reminiscent of semi-transparent spots of watercolor, which has been used in three items in the collection.



This print is the direct continuation of the drawings that served as the starting point for Branitzky's personal collection of scarves, entitled Stains Journey. Scarves are the designer's flagship product. "For me, the fabric of the scarf is like an artist's canvas, and every print is one-of-a-kind. I don't produce more than five copies of a drawing, and each copy has its own unique variations. All the drawings are made by hand, without using PhotoShop. Next the drawings undergo a process of computerized scanning or preparation of printing blocks for silk-screening.

Branitzky produces the prints and scarves at her workshop in Tel Aviv's Gan Hahashmal neighborhood. She spends the rest of her time studying for an MA in industrial design at Betzalel Academy of Arts and Design. In addition, she teaches a course in leatherwork at The Guild School of Bag and Shoe Design in Tel Aviv.

While she would be happy to also design for men in the future, at the moment the designer has no intention of developing any additional fashion items. Nevertheless, she would be happy to design for the Mausner fashion house, designer Lolo Liam, designer Victor Balaish and designer Doreen Frankfurt, and is anxious to cooperate with commercial chains as well.



Tamar Branitzky for Comme il Faut (photo: Assaf Eini)

To what degree does working with a textile designer make the production process more expensive?

“It does make it more expensive. Not every designer can afford it, but the print doesn’t have to be spread out over the entire length of fabric, it can consist of small touches and combinations. If there’s a lot of emphasis on the print, then the cut will be simpler, and that lowers the cutting and patternmaking costs.”

And we still aren’t seeing much cooperation between fashion designers and textile designers.

“Today’s market is undergoing a major awakening, and designers are searching for their inner voice.” I work with designers from the planning stage to the manufacturing stage. For example the Israeli designers Keren Muallem, Zohara Tights and Alef Alef, and designers that I designed for but ultimately chose not to manufacture because of the sad state of the market. It’s an option that not many designers are aware of, and that’s a pity. We are the underdogs of the fashion world, and often people are completely unaware of our existence.”

But lots of fashion designers in Israel emerge from the same school that you textile designers do, so how is it possible that they are unaware of your existence?

“In academe there is no connection whatsoever between the departments, there is no connection with industry outside academe and there are no cooperative ventures within the system itself. Nevertheless, there are fashion houses in Israel that have textile designers on their staff, for example Castro. The aura surrounding textile design has been growing in recent years, in terms of both supply and demand in the market. I think that it’s a thriving department with a major emphasis on design art. I think that’s where today’s world is heading.”

So graduates of the Textile Department no longer have to leave the country?

When I studied textile design and when I talked with graduates, they always told us that there’s nothing to do with it, but that didn’t bother me one bit. Israel’s textile industry ended in the 1970s and 1980s and the prevailing opinion is that there’s nothing to do with it, but most of the graduates do find various design-related jobs, so this is a misconception. I acquired an amazing profession and I wouldn’t give it up just because people say it’s impossible.”
