

CANVAS

Henrica Langh + Sirpa Särkijärvi

'Canvas' is an interdisciplinary collaboration bringing together clothing designer and Henrica Langh and painter Sirpa Särkijärvi. Henrica Langh created a collection of blank garments which were visually completed by the bold and expressive brushstrokes of Sirpa Särkijärvi. The understanding of a canvas as a blank, flat surface is reconceptualised in three-dimensional shapes. The dress as a canvas represents a dialogue between fashion design and fine art exploring the possibility of dress as a medium of expression in art.

Art and fashion have always had a relationship. Paintings have depicted people in the finest fashions and fashion designers have drawn inspiration from the art world. 'Canvas' takes this relationship to a different level by turning the dress into the artist's canvas to explore this relationship between fashion design and art.

The idea was born in 2011 when Henrica Langh was working on a project exploring alternative methods of creating patterns and prints on clothing. The idea of creating a dress to be enhanced by the paintings of an artist later developed into a separate concept from which a whole collection of painted dresses was born.

The word 'canvas' can refer to a type of weave, the blank surface a fine artist paints on, or to the metaphorical blank surfaces of the human body and mind on which images are formed by experiences, memories, fears, and reflections from society and surrounding cultures, as well as tangible things like clothes, jewellery, or body modifications.

The collection visually explores the theme of existence in a world of chaos, beauty, and pain. It is about nostalgia and memories, mortality, identity, and relationships to others and the Self. The paintings of female figures were inspired by themes provided by Henrica Langh and discussions between the designer and the painter.

Each dress has a name based on which Sirpa Särkijärvi created a unique painting. As the human figure has been the central theme of her career, it was a natural decision to depict the spiritual essence of the dresses' fictive wearers in the paintings.

Henrica Langh has a BA in clothing design from Novia University of Applied Sciences and a creative research MA from Central Saint Martins. Her love for both dress and art led her to explore the use of dress and clothing design for artistic purposes. Human anatomy and the fragile chaos of the psyche are reoccurring inspirations in her work.

Sirpa Särkijärvi has been active within the fine arts since the 90s and has participated in numerous exhibitions and projects. During the past few years she has become known for her unique style where the brush moves gracefully and quickly on the canvas with bold and precise strokes.

