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Art protis

Czech traditional and unique textile technique in hands of young fashion designer

by Alice Klouzková

Deep back in communist era in former Czechoslovakia, in 1964, the team of three scientists from the Wool Research Institute in Brno was inventing new techniques for producing nonwovens. The result of their searching for new method for producing apparel fabrics was called Art protis. Although it was originally developed for clothing it was used mostly for tapestries, paintings or wallpapers in the interiors then. At the beginning was this new technique artistically processed by famous czech artists Jiří Trnka or Antonín Kybal, the works created by this technique were also awarded a gold medal at EXPO 67 in Montreal and EXPO 73 in Osaka. Art protis was very favorite until the end of the eighties, many artists from around the world were coming to work here, but all the studios devoted to Art protis already disappeared now. Fortunately this unique textile technique is today being revived thanks to young fashion designer Karolina Juříková and her graduate collection showcased in Mercedes Prague Fashion Week this September.

Karolina has learnt this “painting with wool fibers” from textile designer Světlana Kulíšková. Světlana was born in Czech Republic and now is based in Italy and is working with Art protis for more than twenty years. In collaboration with Studio Dyloan, fashion design studio in Milan, she has developed many new innovative materials. One of her designs was chosen even for Calvin Klein fashion F/W collection 2011/12. "In my opinion this technique offered something more than traditional painting. It's the warmth that transmits, there is something magical in the colors. It's just the material, the wool, when it's still in its pure state - in flocks or carded already - touching transmits the purity..." says Světlana Kulíšková. And how does this technique actually work? The whole thing is based on the stitching of the wool fleece. The crude pure wool is manually overlapped and layered by artist. Finally, the whole surface, made by these layers, is fixed on a especially constructed machine by stitching on the textile background. This process is protected by patent and there is only one functional machine left at a textile school in Brno today.

Karolina Juříková followed up on history of Art protis without prejudices and with fresh new approach and enthusiasm. She was caught by picturesque beauty of this unique technique and the whole process of creating was one big experiment for her. She went through various material experiments inspired by the technique itself - some motives were used for specific patterns, another time she created the whole textiles. She wanted her collection to be contemporary with certain impression and specific mood. The whole process took her nearly one year and the result was fresh and innovative collection. Karolina Juříková's work proves that this unique artistic approach for producing nonwovens “made in Czech Republic” can still be used in contemporary fashion. Built on a long tradition, with strong potential in ecology, local and unique technique of Art protis is definitely worth to innovate and preserve.





