

TALKING TEXTILES



ISSUE 6

**fruits of
the loom**



Like something out of a fable, Adriana Meunié emerges as the perfect muse: her hair is the colour of the fibres she works with to create artistic pieces that move freely amidst the realm of art, textiles, sculpture and installation. Their presence is strong and determined; there's nothing subtle about these expressions of landscape and raw poetry. The Majorcan countryside is her rough canvas, one that she tries to understand one fibre at a time, along with her boyfriend the ceramic artist Jaume Roig, a cat, a dog and a goat.

She is young, she is beautiful, she is resolute, she is on a mission. Adriana lives with sheep as her neighbours and fields of wild fibres that change with the seasons. Adriana uses wool, esparto, carritx and raffia always in their natural colours. Her shapes are generous, with subtle hints to traditional rural life. She sources wool from sheep she helps shear herself and with it she creates the most contemporary of coats.

Adriana defines herself as a studio person: someone interested in the everyday process of her craft, in that unpredictable unveiling of solutions that emerge from sitting at the same place each day and drinking from the same cup. "I love to work, and it's through doing that I learn. For me, home and studio are essential, I couldn't function without them." Adriana's technique is part tapestry, part sculpture, part fashion, all filtered through a deep respect for rural life, tradition and everything Majorcan and Mediterranean. "I love weaving because it's the primary form of textiles that's been a human activity since the beginning. I find this concept of creating something from zero, and line by line, so beautiful. This works well with my personality since I love to make things from scratch."

Her first take on her natural surroundings consists of appreciating raw materials for their beauty beyond their function. This is why she always leaves them



FARMING AND FIBRE

creation **Adriana Meunié**
photos **Jean Marie del Moral**
text **Marcella Echavarria**



in their natural colours. "The fibres need to speak for themselves so they can release their secrets." Her art pieces then become textile-based storytelling instruments relating to humble daily activities such as working with the land.

Adriana deals with pertinent subjects such as the importance of a local economy, the need to review economic models (Majorca needs to think beyond its tourism boom), the relevance of tradition and legacy. Her raw materials speak of opportunities such as the development of a wool industry, the possibilities around basket weaving and other explorations with fibres for new generations.

"Majorca is a whole world. With so much traveling around I think we have lost the feeling of belonging to a place, that's why we don't really care where we are or where we go; we are simply passengers. The only way to be able to contribute positively to a place is by getting to know it, asking questions, spending time, respecting the local habitants and their ways of living. That is why I am happy to be here, where I was lucky enough to be born. I try to reclaim raw materials as the basis for developing future craft, design or industry projects."

For Adriana, her choice of materials is directly linked to her consciousness as a responsible artist who is firmly grounded in the place where she comes from on a very deep level. It is through her material explorations that she is unravelling many ancient stories that carry with them messages and cues into a possible future. A future well rooted in the rich rural past of Majorca.

Marcella Echavarria is the co-founder of XTANT, a nomadic heritage textile festival that empowers artisans and weavers to present and sell their work while maintaining timeworn crafts and traditions.



I love to work, and it's through doing that I learn. For me, home and studio are essential, I couldn't function without them

Adriana Meunié





creation **Rosa Esteva**
photos **Barbara Vidal**
text **Marcella Echavarria**

MAJORCAN ROOTS

Majorca has a very long and interesting textile history. The mystical island stretching over 3,600 square kilometres and with over a million inhabitants was one of the main places for the production of flax and hemp in the Mediterranean, although tourism offered new opportunities and agriculture took a back seat.

The island is also home to the *Telas de Lenguas*, a hand-dyed type of ikat with a smudged, discontinuous pattern and featuring the lively irregular colours often present in many local homes. Because of its strategic location, Majorca was once the central mooring site of ships transiting the commercial routes between Asia and Europe. This and similarities with oriental ikats trace this weaving tradition to the Far East, with blue remaining a favourite colour today. At Majorcan flea markets, it is still possible to find remnants of the locally woven antique cloth used for sheets and wedding blankets. This is a heavy rustic linen, traditionally made of hemp, flax and cotton, originally grown in the island but no longer produced.

When XTANT - the heritage textile event created by Kavita Parmar and Marcella Echavarria - chose the Balearian island as its 2021 location, Rosa Esteva, the Majorcan designer behind the label Cortana, responded to the invitation with enthusiasm. "When Cortana launched 20 years ago, I had a very clear intention of creating a sustainable brand and always insisted, against all odds, to produce locally in Spain using natural fibres sourced in Europe. Now we'd like to take our philosophy a step further and are working on creating fabrics with locally grown fibres from Mallorca. We are happy to see a growing interest in reclaiming local materials and more brands embracing smaller artisanal collections" affirms Rosa.

With boutiques in Palma, Barcelona and Madrid, and a cult following in Asia, Cortana is known for its signature style of feminine







silhouettes which are printed on natural fibres from Rosa's own watercolours that depict her take on the Mediterranean and on Mallorca specifically as a land of contrasts, textures and richness all round. Her style is characterized by feminine relaxed silhouettes that recall her passion for contemporary dance. Her collections represent interests in art, architecture, food and all aspects related to womanhood; they distil a personal Mediterranean aesthetic that will very soon be made again on the island following artisanal processes and hopefully using native materials.

Rosa's proposal for XTANT was both an art piece and a performance; consisting of a large-format tapestry on a horizontal wooden loom that occupied a large area of the patio at Can Balaquer, one of the two locations of the event, and one of the most emblematic buildings in Palma dating back to 1450. Rosa's performance gave life to the patio amidst palm trees and gothic arches. During one week, she sat there weaving and sharing stories with locals and foreigners alike who also wove their part. The materials selected were locally grown hemp, palm fibre, corn, linen, ramie and wool. The art piece that resulted from the experience paid homage to these local materials, honouring the process of weaving as a reflection and exploration of new possibilities. Rosa explains how "The idea was that each participant could reflect on our impact on our island. In the same way that we're all trying to reinvent our planet for it to be a more sustainable place, we wanted to make this a combined effort of creating something unique and timeless". Rosa's tapestry, its process and the end result formulate a textile "text" and source of information; it contains codes and signs that speak of roots, continuity and strength; a way to look back to move forward, woven thread by thread by many hands.



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NEW YORK TEXTILE MONTH 6

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CONCEPT & FOUNDER
Lidewij Edelkoort

PARTNER INSTITUTION
Parsons / The New School

FESTIVAL DIRECTOR
Ragna Froda

ASSISTED BY
Asger Carlsen, Layla Klinger,
Jeremy Ripley, Sanya Sharma
& Nina Starace

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PUBLISHER & CREATIVE DIRECTOR
Lidewij Edelkoort

TEXT & EDITING
Lidewij Edelkoort, Philip Fimmano
& Sagarika Sundaram

INTERNS
Sabrina Diaz
& Sreeraghavi Mani

FINANCE
Thierry Guillemot

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Saiid & Smale, Amsterdam
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