## THE SCULPTURAL DRESSES NOUREDDINE AMIR

musée YVES SAINT LAURENT marrakech

In 2014, at an exhibition of Noureddine Amir's work at the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris, Pierre Bergé discovered the artist's work for the first time, and immediately offered him an exhibition at the Parisbased Fondation Pierre Bergé – Yves Saint Laurent in 2016.

"I've always been careful to distinguish between those couturiers who benefit from women and those who benefit them. So my choice to display the work of Noureddine Amir might come as a surprise. I use the word 'work' and not 'clothing' because Noureddine is an artist who uses garments to create his body of work. As others create what are called 'installations', he displays sculpted dresses made from raw materials. His work is certainly different from that of Yves Saint Laurent. Yet don't artists, when they have talent, speak the same language?"

#### Pierre Bergé, 2016

Faithful to the promise made by Pierre Bergé to Noureddine Amir, the Fondation Jardin Majorelle is exhibiting the artist's work in Morocco at the musée YVES SAINT LAURENT marrakech.

Noureddine Amir has been invited by the Fédération de la Haute Couture et de la Mode to participate in their runway show during the upcoming Paris Fashion Week from 1-5 July 2018. He is the first Moroccan couturier to take part in this prestigious event.

# MATERIA PRIMA APPAREL/ ARCHITECTURE



Noureddine Amir's creations raise ambiguous questions. Are they fashion or architecture from another time? Are they apparel or abode? The textures, colours and shapes certainly remind us of Amazigh constructions found in towns in the southern regions of North Africa, from Morocco to Egypt.

Amir works on a garment as if he were working on an animal hide. Whether wool, raffia or silk, he submits them to a specific treatment. They are transformed in order to be adapted or readapted to life. Before reaching the public, they undergo an initiation process. They are dyed with henna, dried pomegranate peel or indigo. Sometimes they are treated with alum. Yet those who know these materials, and the many ways in which they are traditionally used, know that many women use them to tan animal hides and fortify their own skin.

Wool, silk, and raffia are patiently spun over the course of many days. Noureddine Amir caresses them, thread by thread; he braids and tames them; he incorporates and exudes them before designing or constructing a garment. He needs to render these materials - sourced from flora and fauna, from the depths of his native land - more supple, and compose a second skin from them, so that their innermost essence may receive a human body. This skin will generously house the body, contain it, and affirm it. Only those who know the secrets of these materials, those who are capable of listening to their vibrations, are able to give them a voice and turn them into works of art.

Noureddine Amir reveals the joy of manipulating materials such as jute, wool and silk muslin in their raw state. Indeed, he is a stylist, but above all a couture designer. His gestures are calculated, repetitive, and measured. He summons the childlike pleasure of manipulating materials, even those that are forbidden and dangerous (be they flammable, prickly, or sharp). Drawn to risk, and yearning to confront that which is prohibited, it assumes mythical proportions when accompanied by the creation of hitherto unseen forms. With unconcealed delight, Amir collects materials, appropriates them, gives free reign to his hands and body, all in order to make them not only express his dreams, fears, and fantasies, but especially to reveal their nobility...

He has the ability to awaken our instinctive drive to reconnect with nature and the Earth, our nourishing mother. But the material is rebellious and does not immediately reveal



itself. It must be seduced, loved, caressed, and artfully invited to confide its secrets. Yet, in our globalized culture, objects tend to be emptied of their 'poetic' nature. Indeed, once delocalized, materials and forms become vulgar, commercial clothing, assembled by machines that have no respect for them at all. In Amir's hands, materials are poised and at ease.

By reinvesting jute, wool, raffia, and cotton muslin, Noureddine Amir re-establishes a bond with the African land and its flora and fauna. In the beginning was matter. Since the dawn of mankind, experimenting with these elements has fed humanity's creative impulses. But man forgot his voluptuous relationship to matter. Tools and then machines came to stand between him and matter, the vital substance that was integral to his life.

Master magicians are needed to transform our relationship to the world and matter with their hands and their bodies. Noureddine Amir is one of them. I have always been fascinated by his relationship to materials. He always seeks out those materials that are rough, proud, and insolent. Like a child, he creates a personal history with the objects of his desire. In this carnal struggle, the artist knows not if he is the master. He lets his playful instincts roam free and allows himself to be guided, sometimes by the material, sometimes by the desire to touch it, rustle it, and caress it. You could say that, in this inanimate and formless *materia prima*, he is looking for a trace of what is hidden in the meanderings of its fibre. When he seizes it, he offers it to us. It is unique. It is apparel and abode at the same time.

There is certainly an explanation for all this. The return to matter - and the joy of being in direct contact with it - is accompanied by a return to a certain archaism, both in the images and the forms. The totems produced by Amir send us back to faraway forms we have inherited from so-called primitive societies: from a time when humans only listened to their senses and instincts, and lived with their bodies bound to nature: a time before dogmas and morality, before the birth of good and evil. The material's truth and the pleasure of the entranced body allow the artist to seduce us with a powerful work, one that is instinctive and knowledgeable. There is no need to guestion the metaphor behind the materials as we encounter the playful register and artistic force that, without artifact and discourse,



re-establishes contact with moments from a personal history and, from there, with the primitive childhood of humanity. Noureddine Amir has the ability to read in the folds of matter all the symbols, magic, and love his African ancestors left within it. So let's imagine his sculptural dresses transformed into works of architecture...

**Moulim El Aroussi** Philosopher and art critic



SPIRAL AND PAINTED SILK MUSLIN TUBES

SPIRAL AND PAINTED SILK MUSLIN TUBES

2017

SPIRAL SILK ORGANZA TUBES TRIMMED WITH RAFFIA





SILK MUSLIN LINED WITH SABRA (CACTUS SILK)

twisted sabra (cactus silk)

2009

SILK ORGANZA LINED WITH COLOURED SILK ORGANZA





FIA ORGANZA



BURLAP (JUTE) BORDERED WITH SILK MUSLIN TUBES



SILK MUSLIN TRIMMED WITH SILK MUSLIN TUBES AND METALLIC THREAD

HENNA-DYED RAFFIA WITH FOREST WOOD NECKLACE

2003

SILK ORGANZA TUBES TRIMMED WITH SABRA (CACTUS SILK) AND METALLIC THREAD



SILK MUSLIN TUBES LINED WITH SILVER THREAD



TWISTED SILK MUSLIN TUBES APPLIQUÉD TO CRINKLED SILK

2010

PAINTED SILK MUSLIN TUBES TRIMMED WITH SABRA (CACTUS SILK)



## NOUREDDINE AMIR

Born in 1967 in Rabat. Noureddine Amir lives and works in Marrakech. He graduated from the École Supérieure des Arts et Techniques de la Mode (ESMOD) in 1996. Shortly after his studies, he worked with the Iranian artist Shirin Neshat, for whom he designed numerous costumes. Beginning in 2001, Noureddine Amir worked mostly on Moroccan runway shows, most notably one held in Casablanca devoted to caftans, during which his collection of haïks was held in high esteem. Since 2003, his work has been shown at the Musée de la Mode d'Anvers (MoMu), at the Palais des Beaux-Arts de Lille in 2004, and at the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris (2014-2015). The most recent exhibition of his work, Noureddine Amir's Sculpted Dresses, was held at the Fondation Pierre Bergé - Yves Saint Laurent in Paris in 2016.

**FASHION SHOWS.** <u>2016</u> La Mamounia Hotel, Marrakech – <u>2015</u> Royal Mansour Hotel, Marrakech – <u>2010</u> Fashion show for the European Union, Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels – <u>2010</u> La Mamounia Hotel, Marrakech – <u>2007</u> - <u>2012</u> Festimode, Casablanca – <u>2004</u> Lille, Capitale Européenne de la Culture - Marrakech, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lille – <u>2003</u> Group show with Soumaya Jalal and Amina Agueznay, Galerie Alchimies, Rabat – <u>2003</u>, May Fair Hotel, London – <u>2001</u> Institut français, Marrakech <u>2001</u>, <u>2002</u>, 2003 and 2006 Caftan-Marrakech, Marrakech.

**EXHIBITIONS.** 2016 Noureddine Amir's Sculpted Dresses, Fondation Pierre Bergé - Yves Saint Laurent, Paris – 2015 Le Maroc Contemporain, Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris – 2011 Art Fair, El Maaden, Marrakech – 2010 Briser la glace, Galerie LOFT, Casablanca – 2010 Corps et figures du corps, Société Générale, Casablanca – 2009 Biennale, Palais Bahia, Marrakech – 2008 Maghreb, nouveau design, Musée public national d'art moderne et contemporain (MAMA), Alger – 2005 - 2006 Marokko: Kunst & Design, Wereldmuseum, Rotterdam – 2004 Lille, Capitale Européenne de la Culture - Marrakech, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lille – 2003 Le Couturier Dévoilé, Musée de la mode (MoMu), Anvers.

**COSTUMES.** Films by Shirin Neshat. <u>2004</u> Mahdokht <u>2001</u> Pulse, Possessed and Passage – <u>2000</u> Fervor – <u>1999</u> Rapture, First Prize at the Venice Biennale, and Soliloguy.

**THEATRE.** <u>2001</u> *Logic of the Birds*, after Attar, for the performances by Sussan Deyhim and Shirin Neshat, The Kitchen and The Metropolitan Opera, New York.

**WORKSHOPS.** <u>2011</u> Conference and workshop at the symposium *Moroccan Textiles*, University College, London – <u>2011</u> Creative workshop at *Inspiring Morocco*, Harrods, London.



## EXHIBITION 23 FEBRUARY -22 APRIL 2018

Hamid Fardjad

EXHIBITION DESIGNER **Christophe Martin** 

**Richard Horowitz** 

Direction El Mehdi Azzam Editing Walid Ayoub Music Sussan Deyhim

WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE MARRAKECH SCHOOL

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TEMPORARY EXHIBITION musée YVES SAINT LAURENT marrakech Rue Yves Saint Laurent, 40090 Marrakech

OPEN EVERY DAY FROM 10 AM TO 6 PM EXCEPT WEDNESDAYS LAST ADMISSION AT 5:30 PM











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