

Photographer Florence Montmare had the chance to reconnect with and photograph Swedish fashion designer Diana Orving on her recent visit to New York City.

Florence Montmare: *I met you the first time at your family's country house on the island of Gotland off the coast of Sweden. You were only 14 years old and you were sitting in a shed sewing patches of tulle on a dress. It seemed to me you were in a trance.*

Diana Orving: Yes, I remember. You were the first adult who took my work seriously and talked to me as an artist. We improvised a photo shoot right there and then, with me wearing my dresses in a field that light summer night. We have had many collaborations since that day.

FM: *How did you start your career as a designer?*

DO: I started to make clothes for myself and my friends when I was 12 years old. My mother is a textile artist, so I worked on her sewing machine and used her beautiful fabrics. When I was 15, I started to sell clothes in small shops in Stockholm. I learned by doing and developed my own techniques of construction, very much based on draping fabrics on my own body.

FM: *Tell me a little bit about your brand.*

DO: The brand consists of two lines of work: Collections and Atelier. Collections is women's wear, and runs by season (spring/summer and autumn/winter). I have presented Collections work since 2007 at fashion shows and exhibitions both in Sweden and internationally. Atelier focuses more on experimental artistic work.

FM: *How would you describe your style?*

DO: My style is quite variable and multi-faceted. I try to create an organic feel and I am interested in movement through layers, volume, texture and material. Also, I constantly explore different draping techniques to create intricate silhouettes throughout the collection. I want to make playful and stylish garments that work dynamically with the person who is wearing them. Movement is always important, and the pieces I create encourage the movement of the body and also within the garment itself.

FM: *Is the Atelier where the all the artistic experimentation happens?*

DO: With the Atelier I am trying to create more of a space for contemplative and explorative crafting and research. The emphasis is definitely on artistic experimentation in terms of different shapes & ideas. I have created sculptural showpieces, installations, as well as costumes for the Royal Opera in Stockholm. I also have done specific commissions and it has allowed me to pursue collaborations with other artists across disciplines.



TEXTURE AND
TRANSFORMATION

photography & interview by FLORENCE MONTMARE



FM: *What inspired you to collaborate with me on the shoot for Spirit and Flesh?*

DO: When I decided to go to New York, it felt like a great opportunity to work with you again and I decided to focus on the showpieces from the Mandala collection. The model was perfect and location of the shoot was beautiful and inspiring...but very cold!

FM: *For this issue of Spirit & Flesh we focused on pieces from the Mandala and Flowing Origami collections. What were your inspirations behind these?*

DO: Mandala is inspired by a series of encounters with the complex and beautiful Mandala pattern. Again, I wanted to find this movement and flow between the person and the garment. So I experimented with the material by hand and the result became these flowerlike Mandala pieces. The other collection, Flowing Origami, departs from the pure beauty and simplicity of the rectangle, the square or the circle. I transferred these shapes into fabrics such as silk, jersey, crepe and satin. Then, I altered the shapes by simple means — cutting, folding, draping and twisting. They were also painted on plissé fabric by hand.

FM: *Are you ever inspired by film or literature?*

DO: Yes. I made an entire collection called Orlando which was inspired by Virginia Woolf's novel with the same name. I created a limited edition collection, which was a continuous play with transformation. One and the same garment could be worn upside down, or folded in yet another way. The ever so changeable garments had references to different time periods and its clothing fashion, aesthetics and gender codes.

FM: *Do you have a favorite quote?*

DO: I like this quote by William Shakespeare: "All the world is a stage and all the men and women merely players". I also like this one by Walter Benjamin: "I am unpacking my library. Yes I am. The books are not yet on the shelves, not yet touched by the mild boredom of order."

FM: *Do you have any obsessions?*

DO: Right now I am obsessed by vintage silk saris. I collected many through my travels to India. At the moment I am working on an Atelier collection crafted from sari fabric mixed with tulle and silk. Also, I will show my Autumn/Winter 2014 collection during Stockholm Fashion Week, then start my next collection...

starring designer **DIANA ORVING**
and model **EVE LIU** at **MAJOR**

makeup & hair by **JESSICA PADILLA**

Location **GEMINI & SCORPIO LOFT**