



Noir Motions

by Silvia Bombardini

There is some kind of lingering suspense, an impalpable thrill in Lena Lumelsky's silhouettes, as if shadows were sewn like layers of silk at the hem of her dresses. You could imagine them walking towards the camera, stark against a car's foglamps in the misty night and tailed by a film-noir smoky voiceover. Their seduction is monochrome, *"Black is very inspiring colour"* Lumelsky observes *"Black is mysterious because it is like all colours together an no colour in particular, a blank you can fill in every time with new meaning"*.

And so she did, with great results: back in 2010, Lumelsky was one of the young designers called by the MoMu fashion museum in Antwerp to be part of their Black Exhibition, illustrated her "Black Theatre" shadow puppet book co-produced with Ra in Antwerp, and set up her own "Blackout" performance, involving dancers and choreographers from the Ballet van Vlaanderen and ultraviolet lights. She probed into the curious wonders of black like a classy private detective, intuitive and careful to every texture or shade.

Lumelsky's "Dark" collection was closely followed by her "Light" one, inspired by the overlapping personalities and dizzy sunlight of Hitchcock's Vertigo. *"I am a big fan of cinema"* she admits, and her favourite films include Tarkovsky's Andrei Rublev and Cronenberg's Naked Lunch. She reveals that she would like perhaps one day to design costumes for an historical movie, *"to learn how to perfect the time, and feel the atmosphere"* but at the same time *"working on a new Blade Runner version must be something great for a costume designer!"*

A certain, finely futuristic vibe could be felt as well in her new collection, elegantly tailored and blended with the delicate folkloric appeal of her Russian roots. Clean lines of leather and controlled, lean cuts; soft and voluminous layered skirts, powerful and feminine, fluttering valiantly. Lena Lumelsky's looks fit the ambivalence of female wishes: *"I believe in power of clothes: they can change the attitude of a person"* she states, *"clothes can help women to play with their attitude: being strong when it's needed and being soft and beautiful with when they feel like it"*.

She works on a mannequin to create her patterns, and her fabrics of choice include leather, wool, silk and cashmere in perfectly balanced tone on tone combinations. *"I still dream to have more access to modern high tech fabrics, because I see the future of fashion in a smart mixture of old craft techniques, tailoring and super new technologies"*, she adds. This summer in fact, Lena Lumelsky will be one of the selected contributing designers to the project *High Fashion, Low Countries*, initiated by the Dutch Embassy in Brussels and focusing on the themes of sustainability and slow fashion. With a travelling exhibition hitting Amsterdam and Antwerp as well as the recently opened Centre for Fashion and Design in Brussels, the project aims to promote the use of alternative materials, innovative approaches to traditional crafts and a less-seasonal view on fashion. To fight consumerism, and let the suspense build up.

www.lenalumelsky.com