

EPHYRA

Critical text by Giulia Domeniconi

“One should be a work of art, or wear one” wrote Oscar Wilde in the *Philosophy of Dress*, blaming that fashion slave to the ephemeral whim of taste and devoid of identity, to underline how instead it must become one with art.

In the Milanese gallery *Amy d Arte Spazio*, for the first time, the clothes from the Ephyra collection made by the young Sofia Masciotta are exhibited as real sculpture-installations, together with paper patterns and photographs of her project. The inspiring muse of the collection is the ephyra, or the first stage of the jellyfish, whose transparent sinuous shapes are skillfully reformulated through the choice of fabrics and colors in Sofia's clothes.

The boundaries between art, fashion and science are getting thinner, until they get confused and merged. Static is not in the DNA of the contemporary and this is positive. However, the ephemeral fluidity and without an identity of movement is cloying, banal and destabilizing. It is found in all commercial fields, especially in the fashion system, where everything flows so rapidly that it passes by without permeating us. Here the noble philosophy of change, champion of our time, becomes the glossy tyrant of the consumerist system.

A dress is not just a dress, but a way of being. Fast fashion focuses entirely on numbers, it does not build any identity because this has already been discarded to make room for a new one. In this mechanism, clothes, like our ways of being, are only ephemeral signs that leave no trace. In this regard, if it is true that human beings tend to reflect themselves in what they wear, what is our identity today?

The young Sofia Masciotta takes a counter-current position with respect to fast fashion, undertaking a sustainable and innovative research that starts from the experimentation of biomaterials. Working primarily on the material, she touches and renews the primordial aspect behind the creation of the dress.

The peculiarity of her collection, Ephyra, lies precisely in the strength of her identity character, despite everything about her aesthetics that speaks of movement and fluidity. To serve these requirements, tulle is the perfect candidate on which to imprint a water-soluble reticular texture. The glossy transparency effect combined with a light and dynamic elegance seem to want to explore the possible forms of water. The same aesthetic poetry permeates the shots by photographer Zena Halloway, who inspires Masciotta. In these, the draperies, moved by the currents, undertake a silent dance with the bodies that inhabit them. The underwater world is another reality, where noise is canceled and everything seems to be suspended in a continuous fluctuation that allows you to explore all dimensions of space. Sofia's sculpture-dresses become ways of inhabiting space.

“When I entered the Lisbon Oceanarium for the first time, I was enchanted by the metaphysical lightness with which the jellyfish moved in the water, and the way in which the latter sculpted their changing forms” says the young stylist.

The water has unleashed in her a primordial instinct of mystery and belonging, a remote starting point from which to create works of art to be worn like a "second skin". Thanks to the body nude technique, the tulle is almost sewn onto the body, like an extension of it. A game of visual metaphors is created in which the dress ceases to exist as an external and foreign object to the human organism, to become truly complementary to the person who wears it, with body and soul. Life originated in water, it is there that a rebirth is possible.

For Sofia, Ephyra is just that, a symbol of rebirth to face sustainability in a conscious way, creating biomaterials whose disposal has no impact on the planet. The jellyfish is the oldest animal still living on Earth; when its body organism dies, it does not cease to exist, but is transformed, regenerating its nutrients within its life cycle. The concept of eternity thus resides in the art of metamorphosis.

It is interesting to note how the very young artist-stylist appropriates a traditional material, tulle, as well as an ancient survival technique from the animal world, to build an innovative and avant-garde project, in a circular fashion perspective.

Once again nature knows how to reveal precious secrets to those who know how to listen to it, proving to be a constant and primordial resource which, thanks to the tenacity of young creatives, is reactivated in a contemporary key and with a view to the future.