

Adeline André

June 3 - July 15, 2024

For her exhibition at Can, Adeline André has chosen two dresses that represent her unique engagement with the sartorial body.

*La Robe Repliable* (2010) – The Foldable Dress – stems from a series of garments by André that are worn in layers. The vermillion colored silk georgette dress on view here is six meters long dress and can be folded back onto the body of the wearer. This process will be made visible during the opening evening as André stages a dress performance at Can. (Performer: Chiara Blattl / Stella Models)

The first foldable dress was shown at Adeline André's 1998 haute couture presentation in the Tipi of the Center Pompidou – a tent structure erected during the temporary closure of the institution for renovation. This piece was fashioned from ultralight, ecru-colored silk organza, cut on bias and folded at the neckline and hem several times: seven layers of fabric which prompted the name 'Epidermis', like the outermost layer of the human skin. It was presented by a single model and not unfolded. The second time, the design was shown as part of André's runway performance in 2010 at Galerie JTM in Paris. Seven individual dresses were worn on top of each other by André's long time model Charlotte Flossaut and were taken off one by one by André. These were subsequently put on seven additional models, each now wearing only one layer – one of them the vermillion colored *Robe Repliable*.

The second piece in the exhibition, *La Robe Book* (2018) – The Book Dress – is constructed like a jigsaw puzzle and can be taken apart entirely. Rectangles cut from super light, ecru-colored silk organza are fitted into each other using only flaps and buttonholes, without any need for additional trimmings. Each squared fabric piece consists of doubled fabric creating envelopes that contain print outs of Adeline André's press clippings. The dresses from this series are modular: they can be worn shorter by removing rows of rectangles or the rectangles can be inverted to form overall different designs, such as stripes or checkers. Other versions in the same collection were made from multicolored satin silk and black and white cotton satin.

Also on view are three accessory pieces from different collections revealing the artist's surrealist vocabulary. *Le Bonnet Perruque* (1983) is a knitted wool cap on top of which a blond synthetic wig is fastened, *Les Gants Siamois* (1998) are a pair of gloves stitched together permanently to be worn on either hand with the second glove hanging loose and *Sac Gant* (2000) is a small green silk purse with a glove shape stitched on top in which to insert one's hand to carry it.

Adeline André has staged "dress-performances" or "runway performances" throughout her career as a means to showcase her garments' technical construction, such as the bias cut, but also to explain her iconic patterns such as: the *La Robe Jambe Libre* (Free Leg Dress), in which one leg protrudes through a small round hole in a tubular dress to reveal its entire length; the famous pattern for *Le Trois Emmanchures* (Three Sleeve Holes), on which Adeline André holds a rare design patent and which is constructed from two sleeves and an additional sleeve hole to avoid fastenings such as buttons or zippers; or *La Robe Infinie* (The Infinity Dress)), which consists of dresses with a total of 21 sleeve holes stitched together at the side seams and

wrapped around the body. Aside from this explicative quality, the performances demonstrate a poetic and intimate understanding of dressing and undressing, including the gestures of helping someone pull off a garment over the head and rearranging it, like a sheath, on a different body. The Foldable Dress with its dual necklines symbolizes this exchange from person to person, wearer to wearer, personality to personality.

Adeline André was born in Bangui, French Equatorial Africa and studied at the Ecole de la Chambre Syndicale de la Couture Parisienne while taking fine art lessons with Salvador Dalí at the Hôtel le Meurice – a luxury hotel Dalí lived at when he was in Paris. In 1970, she started work at Christian Dior next to Marc Bohan as an assistant for the Haute Couture collections. In 1981, she founded Adeline André with her partner, Hungarian designer István Dohár. That same year André registered the original pattern of her first three-sleeve-holes garment at the National Institute of Industrial Property (INPI) in Paris and on February 26, 1982 at the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in Geneva, Switzerland. Her first ready-to-wear collection, Fall-Winter 83/84, was presented at Daniel Templon Gallery in Paris, March 16, 1983. Staged within a grand painting by Gérard Garouste, the guests, wearing the garments, posed for giant Polaroid shots. Up until March 1987, André continued to present her collections in places that had never before been used for fashion shows, such as the Cour Vitrée (glass roofed court) of the Ecole Nationale des Beaux Arts in Paris and the Grand Salon of the Centre des Conférences Internationales Avenue Kléber (where the Paris Peace Accords were signed in 1973). Then as now interested in non-conventional models, her designs were presented by notable Parisian personalities such as Dovanna, Anh Duong, Terry Toyé, Angela Wild, Eugénie Vincent, whom she asked to mingle among the guests rather than to “parade” the garments. In the years that followed, André focused on creating collections exclusively for her private clientèle, male and female, for whom she produced new bespoke designs, displayed for the first time at parties called “Topofwear” – touring private shows in galleries, ateliers or the salons of her friends in either Paris, London and New York. In 1994, Adeline André settled at 5 Rue Villehardouin in the Marais where she presented a collection named “Nouvelle Couture” each season since 1995. In 1997, Adeline André became an invited member of the Chambre Syndicale de la Haute Couture Parisienne and, officially part of the Haute Couture calendar, she presented her first Fall-Winter 97/98 couture collection at the Cartier Foundation for Contemporary Art.

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1) *La Robe Repliable*, 2010

Silk

Dimensions variable

2) *La Robe Book*, 2018

Silk and print outs on paper

120 x 40 cm

3) *Le Bonnet Perruque*, 1983

Wool, polyester

25 x 20 cm

4) *Les Gants Siamois*, 1998

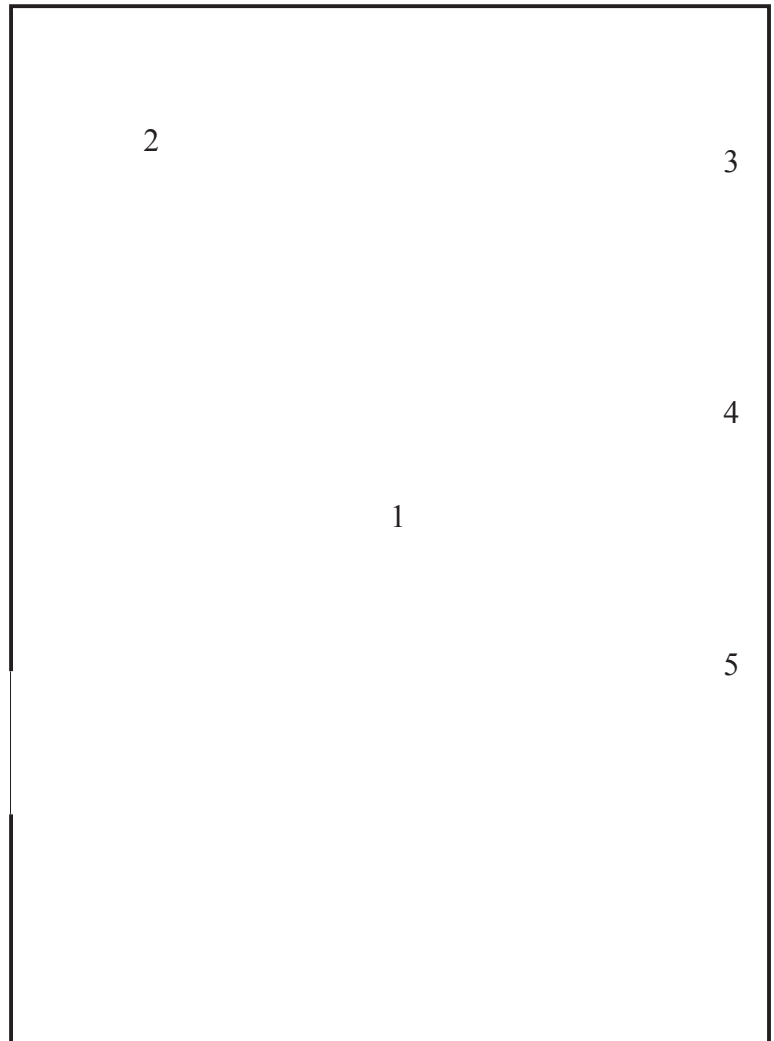
Lambskin leather

60 x 10 cm

5) *Sac Gant*, 2000

Silk

26 x 20 cm



Selected dress performances and runway shows on ipad:

Spring/Summer 2005. Hotel Liberal Bruont.

Fall/Winter 2009

Spring/Summer 2010

Fall/Winter 2011

Fall/Winter 09/10. JTM Gallery Paris.

Fall/Winter 17/18. Insitut du Monde Arabe Paris.