



Veronika Persché working in her Viennese knitting studio workshop producing fabrics for designers (fashion) and artists internationally

## CASE STUDY

# VERONIKA PERSCHÉ

Textile designer Veronika Persché was born in Klosterneuburg, Austria, and since 1999 has worked as a freelance designer, producing contemporary fabrics for international fashion designers and artists from her knit design studio in Vienna. Veronika trained in textile design, graduating from the College of Textile Design at the HTBLVA in Vienna. She is renowned for her exploration and fabric manipulation, resulting in innovative three-dimensional fabric structures that involve the techniques of tuck and jacquard, frequently produced using a computer-driven flatbed knitting machine. The techniques she applies to her work allow her to explore her love of colour, producing samples in a wide range of colourways. Yarns used in her work include viscose, which is renowned for its draping properties, and merino wool, cotton/viscose and wool/latex, all of which play an important role in developing the intricate three-dimensional surface structures for which she is recognized.

Veronika has worked on collaborative projects, exhibitions and freelance assignments with many artists and designers, including fashion labels Elfenkleid, Szidonia Szep, Elizaveta Fateeva and Eva Gronbach, and the jewellery designer Sonja Bischur. Her work has been shown at the International Trade Fair for the Skilled Trades in Munich and at several exhibitions, including 'Around 30' at Galerie Handwerk in Koblenz, 'Folge 02' in Vienna and 'Austrian Talents' at Galeria X in Bratislava. She has exhibited her ecological textiles at the Ethical Fashion Source Expo in London. She has guest lectured at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna, and led textile-design workshops at the Haute Ecole d'Art et de

Design (HEAD) in Geneva. Her work is regularly reviewed in international magazines and journals, including *Selvedge*, *Textile Forum* and *Fibre Arts*.

### What type of formal training did you have?

I attended a craft school and finished with an apprenticeship as a gold and pearl embroiderer. After that I completed a textile design programme at a college in Vienna.

### What inspires and influences your designs?

I am strongly influenced by people (and what they are wearing), and by architecture and old buildings with their ornamented facades, so Vienna with its architecture and people from Eastern Europe is an amazing source of inspiration. I also enjoy travelling to gather new impressions of other places.

### Can you describe your design process in a few sentences?

I collect images of ornamental detailing from a wide range of sources – plastered façades, decorative furniture, motifs I find on a headscarf. I then combine them to create new motifs. I convert these drawings into design files for my knitting machines. Most of my work is geometrical. The most amazing part of the process is when I try out the patterns on the machine, using and combining different techniques and materials; this is where the magic takes place. Very often I get the most beautiful and stunning surprises because of some accident!



**Left:** Close-up detailing of dramatic three-dimensional structured knit by Veronique Persché.

**Below:** Close up detailing of three-dimensional knit produced by manipulating the fabric using a tucking technique, a form of 'on-machine gathering' produced on a computer driven flatbed knitting machine by Veronika Persché.

### What types of machine are used in the production of your work?

I use three different models of computerized flatbed knitting machines.

### What techniques do you apply to your work?

All kinds actually, but less so hand-manipulation techniques. I prefer using my machines in an 'industrial' way so, for example, I almost always use the motor.

### What is the most difficult part of designing a collection?

The majority of my work involves freelance contracts and collaborating with fashion, costume and interior designers. I need a couple of weeks to get into the right mode to integrate all my ideas into new knitted fabric designs.

### Which international trade events do you show at?

There are a few business-to-business events I attend where designers and manufacturers meet, such as Source Expo in London.

### What is the most challenging part of your job?

The most challenging but also most satisfying part of my job is dealing with or pushing the boundaries of technical limitations. I like the moments when I have to concentrate on a solution to make a special design work on my knitting machines.

