

# Sustainable Fashion

AN ERSTWHILE FORGE REBUILT AS A SEWING STUDIO IS NOW THE PLACE TO WHICH PEOPLE COME AND FASHION THEIR OWN CLOTHES, TO THEIR DIMENSIONS, FROM THEIR OWN FABRICS.



## Eva Karlsson

lives in Teda near Enköping, where she runs her own business as the *Teda Art Project*. She offers one-day courses in “dress-forging”, courses lasting several days for pattern construction and making clothes. As well as curating exhibitions on vintage themes and giving talks on different ways of creating your own garments.

[teda-art-project.se](http://teda-art-project.se)

CLOTHES have been her abiding interest. Eva Karlsson told us how when she was little her mother would give her specially made items of clothing, such as her gaudy disco dress in orange and purple. Colours that have remained her favourites. It was clear from early on she wanted to work with fashion.

At the age of twenty, Eva travelled to Florence to do a fashion illustration course. It was there she got her portfolio ready to apply for the fashion course at Beckmans College of Design. She got in and after graduating travelled back to Italy, for a year’s sabbatical. One year evolved into several: Italy turned out to be the country where she wanted to stay. Naples became her adopted home town for a number of years and it was there she embarked on her career in the Italian fashion world. The first step was through her collaboration with the company Orma, where she and the proprietress introduced a retail concept for customers to purchase whole outfits: shoes, bags and garments for a complete wardrobe. Formerly the shop range had been split up, so customers would buy shoes in one place, bags in another and clothes in a third. Now it was all in one place. Eva designed parts of the range. A friend from the technical course for apparel, which Eva had done earlier, came over to Italy and did the making up. One shop was soon joined by others; stock grew. Garments from Paris and London were included in the range.

Eva’s skills were in demand and she got commissions from several quarters. Her last post was with a large company, where one of the company clients was H&M. But work on this large scale and material consumption tired her out. Instead, she began working with Giosue’ di Giorgio’s company, *Siri de*

*Mantree*, whose production and distribution were based in Italy. The company orientation was towards quality women’s clothing, including skirts with bustles, corsets, jackets and dresses. One of the corsets was shown on TV in a kind of docusoap. Making it a great retail success. Everything was on a roll until euros came in. Switching to a new currency put a strain on private economy for many people, food became more expensive and any consumer items over and above the essentials had a hard time keeping afloat. The company had twenty employees plus overheads. The demands of the economic situation meant that business had to cease; Eva then invested in her own production line.

A couple of years ago she moved back home to Sweden and set up the company she works with today as her own brand, *Teda Art Project*. She lives and works in her childhood home, where her great grandfather ran his smithy. Great grandfather worked at Målhammar Works as an estate blacksmith, her grandfather worked in the forge on the estate and her father in the same workshop. Now it has a row of sewing machines and is the venue for courses in “dress-forging”. People can come for a day, create their own pattern to their own measurements and then sew up their garment in their own fabric. A wider selection of courses now includes longer courses in conjunction with other players in the neighbourhood. Their aim is to offer a beautiful setting to work in, good food and nice places to stay in nearby B&Bs.

Eva also teaches on the foundation year for the The Academy for Cutting and Tailoring in Stockholm, as well as curating a few

**From the left** Eva Karlsson with some of the handwoven fabrics in the *Handwoven Couture* collection. The black party dress Eva created when working with the *Siri de Mantree'* company. Eva offers sewing courses where you make your own pattern and sew up a dress in your own fabric. Eva Karlsson's favourite dress. This model was Eva's design with inspiration drawn from Pia&Paula.



shows. The latter are joint efforts with Margareta Backström, whose shop and business, *Lata Pigan* (Lazy Maid), is very close by. She has moreover a huge collection of vintage clothes. Last year they did a show at Målhammar Gallery.

– We wanted to show the quality of older garments, both in their materials and design. They have lasted to now and I am convinced that we need to look back so as to find a way forward, says Eva, also a big fan of textiles and vintage garments.

Clothes should be chosen with care and preferably have something exclusive about them that means we keep wearing them for many years.

– If we pay more for our clothes, we are by definition more likely to take care of them and keep them for longer. From the sustainability aspect, this is important. If you weave your own cloth as well, it's an amazing opportunity to have something you really want, she concluded.

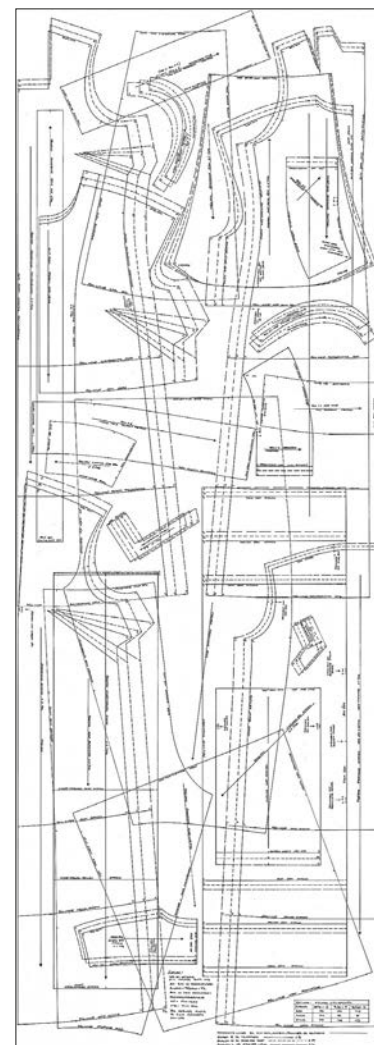
Eva, in partnership with Gunnel Andersson and Vävmagasinet, produced the *Handwoven Couture* collection presented in this issue. The idea behind her models is that they should be easy to wear. They are designed to fit people of different ages and body shapes.

The sewing directions accompanying the pattern contain clear instructions and many tips for achieving good results.

This close collaboration has involved a lot of sampling and discussion as to how the various fabrics should look. Fabrics that should last with time and be lovely to wear. Most of the models in the collection can be made up in any of the fabrics and combined in many different ways.



The *Handwoven Couture*: kimono inspired garments in three lengths, a top, a short dress, a long dress, trousers, skirt and a jacket. All in one pattern. Pattern and sewing instructions: 290 SEK, to order on page 69.



All the models are given in one pattern, 1:1 scale.