



RawMaterials

Textile designer Tzuri Gueta was recently named winner of the prestigious Andy Prize thanks to his invention of an innovative technology that mixes silicon into natural fabrics – opening up a world of possibilities for designers / **Yael Efrati**



Expanding the possibilities: Tzuri Gueta

After decades of research, development and innovation in the field of textile design, Tzuri Gueta is hatching his newest project: a center for the design and manufacture of textiles in Israel. The focus of the center will be a fashion lab, where students and young textile designers can experiment with the textile technology Gueta invented. His new patented technology offers an unprecedented method of combining natural fibers with synthetic polymers – especially silicon, and expands the possibilities for textiles in the fields of fashion, jewelry, accessories and interior design.

Tzuri Gueta's innovations in the textile arts earned him the 2010 Andy Prize, awarded to outstanding Israeli artists in the fields of jewelry making, ceramics, textiles and glass. The committee that selected Gueta to receive the prize hailed his contributions to the field: "From the

research process through the meticulous implementation, Gueta demonstrates sensitivity to materials and familiarity with the textile tradition. His "organic" works are distinguished by their unique color and refinement, and excel in aesthetic value."

Gueta, 42, ended up in the field of textile design by chance. As a teenager, after leaving home to live in Kibbutz Shomrat, he was exposed to the kibbutz's fabric factory, and was enchanted by its weaving looms. After his military service, he enrolled in Shenkar College of Engineering and Design, and as a student traveled to professional exhibitions in Paris. Standing out due to his keen sense of design, it wasn't long before he received invitations from leading designers Thierry Mugler and Ted Lapidus. Since then, Gueta has cooperated with leading fashion houses such as Armani, Dior and Jean-Paul Gaultier, while also launching



ate new shapes and textures from them in ways that fascinate me”, Gueta says. “I grew up on the shore and spent a good deal of my childhood swimming and diving. I was always captivated by the richness of marine life. I was excited to discover that the images I create using the material I developed are applicable in many fields and apparently go well with environmental trends,” he says.



Bracelet designed by Gueta

“In my work, I seek to show the connection between science and design as a way to expand horizons and introduce new possibilities”, Gueta continues. “Over years of research, I discovered the value of ‘work accidents’ and learned that sometimes it is the mistakes that guide toward creative solutions. The material that roused my curiosity was a gel made partially from silicon, which was processed into a formless material using oils and centrifuges. That was the raw material I used to develop a completely new material, which didn’t previously exist, which can be used for silicon casts, dips or injections. Using silicon casts, designers can shape necklines and sleeves with volume. By injecting silicon into delicate silk, I can attain a lace-like texture.”

his own successful brand, ‘Silka Design’.

In recent years, his main focus has been on jewelry and accessory design, lamps and furniture, as well as interior design for private homes and restaurants. His works are sold in 250 stores around the world, including at the museum shops of the MoMA in New York, Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. Despite his international acclaim, Gueta admits that the decision to award him the Andy Prize was particularly flattering. “It is recognition of my research and the unique ‘handwriting’ I’ve developed. I am eagerly looking forward to revealing my work in Israel”, he says. In addition to the NIS 50,000 monetary reward, two of his pieces will be purchased for the permanent collection of both the Tel Aviv Museum of Art and the Israel Museum in Jerusalem.

His designs are inspired by the natural world, and many of his ideas come from his childhood memories of growing up near the beach in Givat Olga. “I’m drawn to nature’s raw forms and cre-

As a young designer, Gueta lived in Paris. “It is important for me to emphasize that I went to Paris there were many textile factories in Israel, and I had a good job. Still, I felt that in order to develop in the field I was most interested with, I needed to see what was going on in the rest of the world. When I observe the current situation in Israel, I have to admit that it’s not encouraging. Over the past few years, resources were invested in other fields and the textile industry has dwindled due to Israel’s priorities. Nowadays, most designs are imported from abroad. I am encouraged by the recent trend at Shenkar College of Engineering and Design and the Bezalel Academy of Art’s regard for textile design as a starting point for metal and glass design.”

Gueta wishes to open a design and manufacturing unit in Israel, stemming from his belief in young Israeli designers and students and in their mental and creative flexibility. “I’d like to give them an opportunity to try out my new development and take it to new territories,” he concludes. 📍

On May 13th Tzuri Gueta’s solo show, “Si 51”, opens at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art. Gueta will dress the gallery walls with curtains composed of thin, multi-colored strings, which he promises will tell lots of stories – and leave plenty of space for imagination.