BROOKLYN MUSEUM

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The Brooklyn Museum Presents North American Debut of *Iris van Herpen: Sculpting the Senses*

Opening May 16, 2026, the exhibition showcases over 140 haute couture creations alongside contemporary art, design, and scientific artifacts, inviting visitors to explore how Van Herpen merges craftsmanship with cutting-edge technology, sustainability, and pioneering aesthetics.



Iris van Herpen. *Morphogenesis* Dress, from the *Sensory Seas* collection, 2020. Laser-cut and screenprinted mesh, duchesse satin, and laser-cut Plexiglas. Collaborator: Philip Beesley. Model: Yue Han. (Photo: David Ụzọchukwu)

The groundbreaking exhibition *Iris van Herpen: Sculpting the Senses* pays tribute to one of today's most revolutionary fashion designers working at the intersection of art and science. A pioneer in her use of cutting-edge technologies, Iris van Herpen defies the limits of conventional fashion while embracing both traditional couture craftsmanship and innovative materials and techniques. Furthering the Brooklyn Museum's legacy of landmark fashion exhibitions and its commitment to championing trailblazing women in art and design, *Sculpting the Senses* marks Van Herpen's first major New York exhibition.

Debuting in 2023 at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris, the exhibition has since traveled to Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art (QAGOMA), Singapore's ArtScience Museum, and Kunsthal Rotterdam. It will make its North American debut at the Brooklyn Museum on May 16, 2026, timed with the Museum's annual Brooklyn Artists Ball, where Van Herpen will be honored. The exhibition is curated by Cloé Pitiot, Curator of Art Nouveau, Art Deco, and Contemporary Design, and Louise Curtis,

Assistant Curator, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris. The Brooklyn Museum presentation is supported by the Simons Foundation and is part of its "Infinite Sums" initiative. It is organized by Matthew Yokobosky, Senior Curator of Fashion and Material Culture, with Imani Williford, Curatorial Assistant, Photography, Fashion, and Material Culture.

Fascinated by the complexity of nature and the power of science, Van Herpen transforms scientific concepts into visionary fashion. Drawing from wide-ranging fields spanning mathematics, neuroscience, marine biology, paleontology, mycology, mineralogy, astronomy, and more, her haute couture designs seamlessly merge art, science, and technology—evoking the often unseen structures of nature, from coral reefs and branching systems of fungi to the vast patterns of planetary motion.

Taking visitors from the depths of the ocean to the outer reaches of the universe, *Sculpting the Senses* illuminates the core questions of the designer's practice—about the body in space, its relationship to fashion and the environment, and its future in a rapidly changing world. Featuring themes that explore the mystery and might of water, the architecture of the skeleton and anatomical systems, the physics of motion, the perception of sound and light, and the generative interconnectedness of nature, each section in the exhibition showcases Van Herpen's innovative approach to materials, movement, and technology. Her designs reflect the dynamic systems of the natural world, achieving the impossible with water-like sculptural gowns and air-like fabrics. *Sculpting the Senses* also includes an evocation of the designer's atelier, offering visitors a unique opportunity to engage firsthand with the handcraftsmanship and tactile nature of couture creation.

Over 140 of Van Herpen's avant-garde designs are placed in dialogue with works of contemporary art—by artists including Agostino Arrivabene, Philip Beesley, Lanny Bergner, Rogan Brown, the Japanese art collective 目 [Mé], Casey Curran, Wim Delvoye, Kim Keever, Nick Knight, Jacques Rougerie, David Spriggs, and Tim Walker. The exhibition also features design pieces by Ferruccio Laviani, Tomáš Libertíny, and Ren Ri alongside loans of scientific artifacts and natural history specimens, such as coral, fossils, and skeletons. The exhibition's interdisciplinary nature thus nods to the Museum's past as the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences, which held both fine art and scientific specimen collections.

Situating Van Herpen's work within a broad lineage of cross-disciplinary creativity, the Brooklyn presentation will feature new works drawn from its renowned collections in American art, Asian art, contemporary art, and feminist art as well as rare materials from the Museum's Libraries and Archives. Featured artists include Katsumata Chieko, Tara Donovan, Harold Edgerton, Senju Hiroshi, Fujikasa Satoko, and Rob Wynne. Together, this intricate and fantastical display offers an intimate glimpse into Van Herpen's artistic process, her expansive imagination, and her diverse sources of inspiration. The exhibition is complemented by a multisensory soundscape created by Dutch composer and music producer Salvador Breed.

Born in 1984, Iris van Herpen grew up in the Dutch riverside village of Wamel, where she fostered her close connection to nature. From a young age, she was influenced creatively by her passion for the natural world and classical dance, both of which are central to her design ethos. In 2007 she founded the Maison Iris van Herpen in Amsterdam, where she combined the subtleties of couture craftsmanship with the spirit of innovation. She became the first designer to show a 3D-printed dress on the runway with her 2010 *Crystallization* collection. Her sculptural designs have been worn by luminaries worldwide, including Beyoncé, Björk, Jordan Roth, Lady Gaga, Miley Cyrus, Naomi Campbell, Rosalía, Sarah Jessica Parker, and Zoë Kravitz.

"We are thrilled to present *Iris van Herpen: Sculpting the Senses*, a global fashion phenomenon that has captivated audiences around the world," said Yokobosky. "Her work transforms fashion into living art, reshaping how we experience material, movement, and the body. By merging science and technology,

Van Herpen expands the narrative of fashion design through a process entirely her own. We're proud to showcase a pioneering female artist whose vision embodies the Museum's commitment to redefining art and design."

"I'm honored to present *Sculpting the Senses* at the Brooklyn Museum in New York City," said Van Herpen. "This city's energy, creativity, and openness to new ideas have long inspired me, and Brooklyn, with its vibrant community of artists and innovators, feels like the perfect place to share this exploration of transformation and possibility."

For nearly a century, dating back to its 1934 exhibition *The Story of Silk*, the Brooklyn Museum has been renowned for its sumptuous exhibitions on the history of fashion. *Sculpting the Senses* follows exhibitions honoring such trailblazing designers as Dorothy Wright Liebes (1942), Madame Grès (1982), Elsa Schiaparelli (1994), Jean Paul Gaultier (2013), Pierre Cardin (2019), Christian Dior (2021), Virgin Abloh (2022), and Thierry Mugler (2022). The exhibition also underscores the museum's long-held commitment to celebrating pioneering female artists, exemplified by the Brooklyn Museum's Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art—the only center of its kind devoted to showcasing feminist art.

OPENING WEEK PROGRAMMING

On May 14 from 7 to 8:30 PM, the Brooklyn Museum will host a Brooklyn Talks event with Iris van Herpen, joined by Vanessa Friedman, New York Times fashion director and chief fashion critic. The event will celebrate the opening of *Sculpting the Senses* with a conversation about van Herpen's process, inspiration, and visions for the future in the museum's Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Auditorium. Afterward, attendees will have the opportunity to be among the first to view the exhibition ahead of its opening to the public on May 16. Tickets are available for purchase online.

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View the press kit.

CREDITS

Iris van Herpen: Sculpting the Senses is organized by Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris. The Brooklyn Museum presentation is organized by Matthew Yokobosky, Senior Curator of Fashion and Material Culture, with Imani Williford, Curatorial Assistant, Photography, Fashion, and Material Culture.

Iris van Herpen: Sculpting the Senses is co-chaired by Sasha and Edward P. Bass, Sylvana and Adam Durrett, Jordan Roth, Lizzie and Jonathan Tisch, and Amanda and John Waldron.

This work is supported by the Simons Foundation and is part of its "Infinite Sums" initiative. For more information, visit infinitesums.simonsfoundation.org.

The Simons Foundation's Science, Society & Culture division seeks to provide opportunities for people to forge a connection to science—whether for the first time or a lifetime. Through our initiatives, we work to inspire a feeling of awe and wonder, foster connections between people and science, and support

environments that provide a sense of belonging. The Simons Foundation's mission is to advance the frontiers of research in mathematics and the basic sciences. Since its founding in 1994 by Jim and Marilyn Simons, the foundation has been a champion of basic science through grant funding, support for research, and public engagement. We believe in asking big questions and providing sustained support to researchers working to unravel the mysteries of the universe.

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ABOUT THE BROOKLYN MUSEUM

For 200 years, the Brooklyn Museum has been recognized as a trailblazer. Through a vast array of exhibitions, public programs, and community-centered initiatives, it continues to broaden the narratives of art, uplift a multitude of voices, and center creative expression within important dialogues of the day. Housed in a landmark building in the heart of Brooklyn, the Museum is home to an astounding encyclopedic collection of more than 140,000 objects representing cultures worldwide and over 6,000 years of history—from ancient Egyptian masterpieces to significant American works, to groundbreaking installations presented in the only feminist art center of its kind. As one of the oldest and largest art museums in the country, the Brooklyn Museum remains committed to innovation, creating compelling experiences for its communities and celebrating the power of art to inspire awe, conversation, and joy.