



VANESSA GOUNDEN

ARTIVISM FOR BREAST CANCER

Spring/Summer 2016

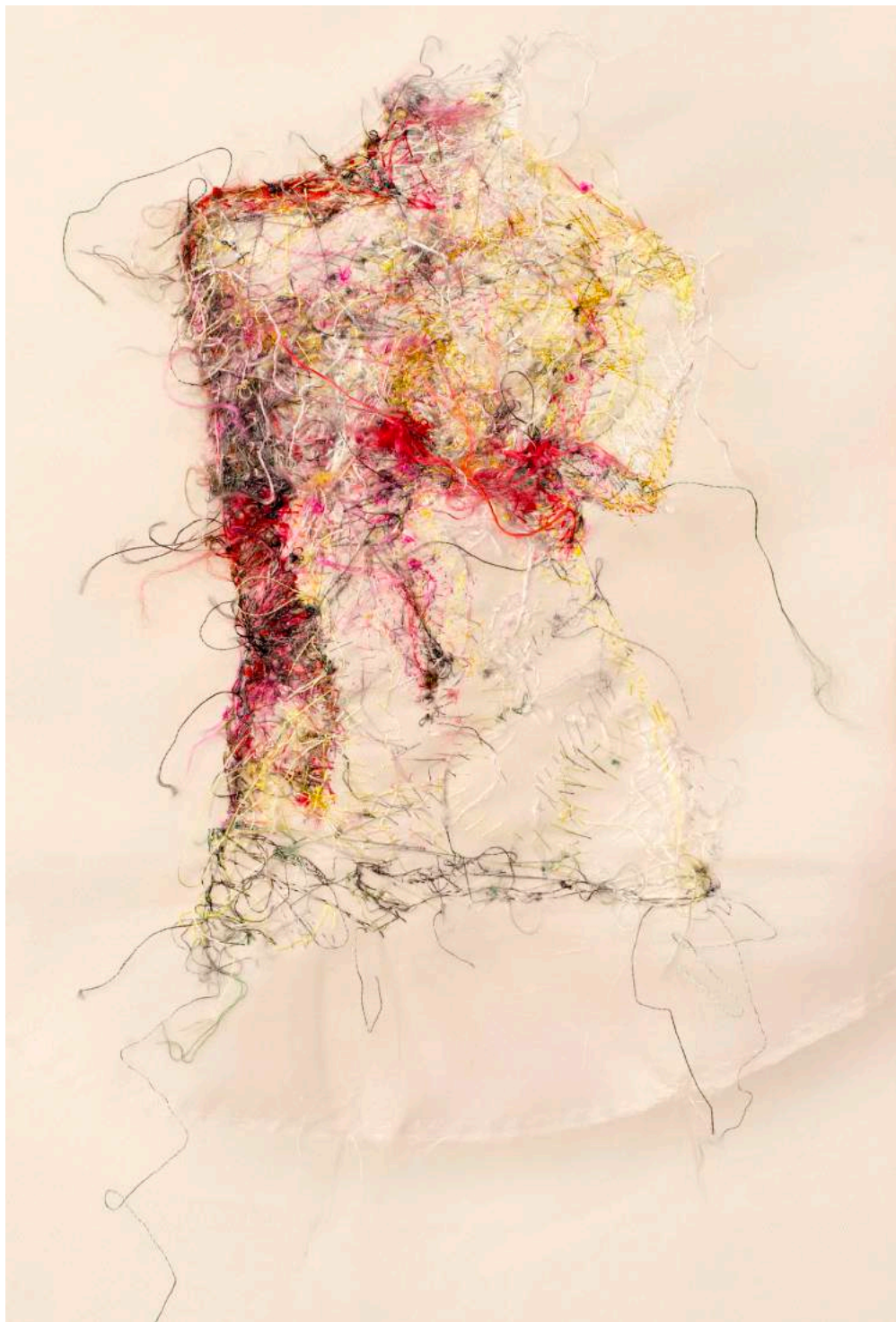
ARTIVISM FOR BREAST CANCER

Artivism for Breast Cancer is a collaboration between designer Vanessa Gounden, artist Amita Makan and Reach for Recovery, a vital breast cancer support group. These are three very different sectors – fashion, visual arts and care – and their partnership establishes a model that sees these three international practitioners work together to bring about positive, meaningful and proactive change.

For the collaboration, Makan produced a series of artworks in fabric, a decision she writes is based on the fact that “Fabric is reminiscent of skin – sensual, porous, and vulnerable to time,” and further that “The art-making process combined with the repetitive act of cutting threads, fabrics, and obsessive stitching have strong associations to the disease of breast cancer.”

Her use of cotton gauze and silk threads provide further association with surgical suturing.

Makan’s artworks form three groups: Waiting, Ravaged Butterflies and Links and Chains. Together these provide a narrative, which in many ways becomes the account of all women who experience this form of pain. Makan’s chronicle provides the conceptual inspiration and visual reference for Vanessa Gounden’s new range of garment designs. Using digital tools, Gounden reinterprets Makan’s works as prints on garments and, in this way, these narratives literally become wearable art.



In the same way that the breast is the bodily symbol for the feminine, the dress is its material signifier. It is these two symbols – the breast and the dress – that Gounden combines to create a series of garments that tell of the anxiety, anguish and fear of waiting, followed by stories of pain and loss, and finally emblems of hope, recovery, strength and survival.

In the sector of fashion, this is often where the narrative would end, but Gounden increases the agency of her work by collaborating with Reach for Recovery. This organisation provides the stimulus for Gounden's work and, in return, Gounden's work provides the means by which Reach for Recovery increases its efficacy, to render real and significant support to women who experience the trauma of breast cancer.

The advocacy of the project is taken even further when the wearers of the garments become involved, providing not only material support for survivors of breast cancer, but also by becoming advocates to raise awareness, and thereby increase the chances of early detection and effective treatment. This provides a full circle for Gounden's use of the tools of collaboration to champion for real and significant change.

The designer has dedicated 2016 in celebration of the launch of Artivism for Breast Cancer. Part I is presented as the spring collection. In February 2016, Gounden unveils her fall collection in Part II. Here, a curated exhibition, will demonstrate the continuation of her intriguingly complex and strikingly layered journey. These details will be announced soon.





Look #1



Look #2



Look #3



Look #4



Look #5



Look #6



Look #7



Look #8



Look #9



Look #10



Look #11



Look #12



Look #13



Look #14



Look #15



Look #16



Look #17



Look #18



Look #19

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