



**Maria Julkunen** - Designer - Dressmaker - Contemporary Textile Artist - Canvas Fabricator

It was a piece of moss green satin, with rows of gathers in one edge, that I found in the attic. It only took a few clumsy stitches and a snap button to complete my first design, worn by a doll. But it wasn't until I was a teenager that I started dressmaking for real, figuring out how to modify patterns in the sewing magazines I carried home from the library. I had an interest in anything visual, and through a process of elimination ended up studying fashion for 5 years in Kuopio Academy of Design in Finland. The idea of sustainability made me question the throwaway nature of the industry I was in and to write my exam work about the life cycle of clothing and textiles.

After producing my own clothing line for a while I took a break to focus on environmental issues and travel. Due to a sailing trip I ended up in New Zealand working as a sail maker and later working with canvas. Parallel to working with technical textiles I took a deep dive into fibre arts and learned felt making and studied eco dyeing with India Flint and Indigo and Boro techniques with Yoshiko Iwamoto Wada. I feel drawn to geometry, repetition and using symbols in my textile art that I've exhibited through Creative Fibre, Changing Threads and other group exhibitions.

In my dressmaking I am driven by the sense of touch and work from the kinesthetic body sensation towards the visual. I love using natural materials and I am passionate about sustainable design and preserving artisan skills.