



Subscribe

Sign In

Last chance to save 50%

Get the FT for less and navigate your world with confidence

EXPLORE OUR BEST OFFERS

Fashion

+ Add to myFT

Five designers who traded fashion for art careers

Sara Berman, founder, Sara Berman



Sara Berman © Ariel Pedatzur

Three things made the former fashion designer shelve early childhood aspirations to become an artist. The first was being randomly assaulted in a gallery when she was 18. Second, that her mother Helene Berman was a successful fashion designer and so fashion was a world she understood. And, third, that “Central Saint Martins was just a lot of fun in the '90s for a creative. It was less about the business of fashion and more to do with the making. And really, that is what I have always been drawn to.”

Despite setting up her own label in the late '90s, which was featured in *Vogue* and won the Marks and Spencer New Generation award three times, by 2014 Berman felt fashion had stopped being about storytelling and had become more about business. “So much changed in those 15 years. I had always been interested in the academics of dress and it had stopped being about that.”



'Afterglow' by Sara Berman (2023)

She completed an MFA at Slade UCL, graduating in 2016 to become a visual artist firmly rooted in paint but also working with clothes and textiles. “Really, I left an industry to be industrious. I make all day and I constantly push myself as a maker rather than for any other motivating reason. Not many are able to exist in a vacuum, but I can.”

Berman’s work examines the societal constructs of the female experience, and her figures are often defiant while her gentle, muted aesthetic is fraught with contrapuntal layers. Her work has been shown at Frieze, The Royal Academy of Art Summer Exhibition, Hauser & Wirth, Eye of the Collector and The Armory in New York.

Sara Berman’s No Visible Means of Support, Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery, West Palm Beach, October 28-December 2

This article has been amended to reflect that Sara Berman was not subjected to a random assault in the White Cube gallery, as was previously stated