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THE FABRIC OF YOUR LIFE

TEXTILES IN FASHION, ART, CRAFT, DESIGN, INTERIORS, TRAVEL AND SHOPPING

There's no doubt that cloth, scent and memory are closely linked. And fine fragrance firm Illuminum London have made those links tangible in an installation created by revered Italian architect, Antonino Cardillo. "Colour as a Narrative" is neither colourful nor driven by a storyline; instead it is a serene grey space, a grotto, which explores the relationship between, scent, colour and texture. Much of what you find there will have been brought with you. What Cardillo and Illuminum London's Creative Director, Asakala Geraghty, have provided are triggers in the form of evocative materials – soft carpet underfoot, wall roughly covered in pozzolanic ash and irregular, hand-blown glass vessels. The latter are suspended in an arc and enclose 37 individual "colours" – fragrances that increase in intensity toward the centre and are designed to be "revealed by the nose" – colours to experience, not see. **Colour as a Narrative, Until mid-September, 1 Dover Street, London W1S 4NS, www.illuminumfragrance.com**

UNRAVELLING CLOTH: NO.1 NEOPRENE TYPE

WHAT IS IT? 'Neoprene Type' is a fashion version of Du Pont's Neoprene, which was first introduced in 1931 and is famous for its use as wetsuit fabric. It is a soft, bonded fabric, sometimes known as 'Scuba'. It has a springy, pliable feel, so you can create plenty of volume with folds, large pleats and by using curves and shaping in your dress pattern.

HOW IS IT MADE? A smooth polyamide/elastane knit is bonded to a cotton/polyester mix jersey backing. The thickness can vary slightly depending on the bonding agent used, but it's approximately 2mm thick.

WHAT IS IT USED FOR? Neoprene Type and other bonded fabrics have been widely used in clothing recently, with designers searching for more unconventional 'technical' fabric choices. It works well in bold, vibrant colours and is often featured in sports and performance wear. It has crossed over and is now used for dresses and evening wear too, creating interesting, sculptural and voluminous pieces. Its soft, spongy properties mean it's great for bags and protective accessories. Neoprene can also be used in textile art. It takes printing well, either digitally, screen printed, or by heat transfer. You can emboss or embroider it and laser cutting produces clean, sharp lines.

SEWING WITH IT: 'Neoprene Type' should be kept flat or hung up as creases are quite difficult to get out. It's machine washable, which comes as a surprise to many people. Sew it with a strong nylon thread and a ballpoint needle. Use a medium to long stitch and a loose tension to stop the thread knotting underneath. You can get a neat raw edge too; just stitch the layers together and trim back the excess fabric from the seam allowance. ••• **The Cloth House stocks Neoprene Type in 20 colours, visit 47 Berwick Street Market, London W1F 8SJ or shop online at www.clothhouse.com**

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LONDON