Emerging French designer Marine Serre is busy working on her first major catwalk show, having launched on 26th January her collaboration with department store chain Galeries Lafayette, a prize winner at the Hyères Fashion Festival. Serre, who also bagged the LVMH Prize in 2017, will make her official debut on the Paris Fashion Week's calendar on 27th February, showcasing the thirty or so looks that make up her fourth women's collection.

Meanwhile, at the end of January, she unveiled the 17-item capsule collection created in collaboration with Galeries Lafayette. It features the 'Radical Call for Love' motif, the hallmark of her winning collection at the Hyères Fashion Festival and the LVMH emerging designer prize, and it affords Serre a remarkable visibility opportunity.

The collection will be available at the end of April at the Galeries Lafayette Haussmann flagship and the BHV Marais department store in Paris, at 17 other Galeries Lafayette branches, as well as at villa Noailles, the Hyères Festival venue, and the Galeries Lafayette Foundation in Paris. It consists of striped shirt dresses, jersey tops, printed suits, and a t-shirt and skin-tight leggings combination, inscribed with Marine Serre's urgent appeal for love in capital letters: a 'Radical Call for Love', by a designer who studied at La Cambre, Brussels' school of art and design, in response to the terrorist attacks which shook the French and Belgian capitals in 2015 and 2016.

The collection is democratic and accessible, with prices ranging between €49 and €149 for the main item, a sheer
The collection is democratic and accessible, with prices ranging between €49 and €149 for the main item, a sheer raincoat with multiple fastenings. The looks are less edgy than those from Serre's eponymous label, and less expensive too (a Marine Serre zipped blouse sells for €500, and a silk and jersey top for €400), and they are targeted to consumers who are less directional than those who shop for Marine Serre's creations at Parisian store The Broken Arm or on ssense.com.

The collaboration with Galeries Lafayette brings real exposure to a broader audience, and has taught Marine Serre to work in a different way. Accustomed to being in total control of her own label, Serre has had to work together with a production team, which meant being constrained in the choice of materials and sourcing solutions, in order to be able to launch a collection retailing at the Galeries Lafayette brand's pricepoints.

Serre regards the experience as a positive one, and is definitely thinking of repeating it, even though Galeries Lafayette doesn't have branches in London or New York, where Serre sells most of her creations. "In general, I'm open to all offers of collaboration, because I think it is important to democratise clothes," said the designer.

For the time being, Marine Serre is chiefly distributed in Anglo-Saxon countries and in Asia, notably at Dover Street Market and Nordstrom, and among the label's projects there is the opening of a monobrand store, though it is not yet a priority. "You need funds to create your own stock, and the €300,000 of the LVMH Prize did not go into that. The prize money allowed me to advance more quickly, to grow the team from three to ten people, to design clothes the way I wanted, in the conditions I wanted, manufacturing them how I wanted," said Marine Serre. "The prize gave me the chance not to be inhibited by lack of resources, and to be creative," and, soon, to stage her first Parisian catwalk show.