

# RENATA BRENHA

Spring/Summer 24 *Press release*



Maureen Bisilliat - Festa de Iemanjá Praia Grande, Brazil 1964

Forever enthralled by the vibrant mix of cultures in her home country of Brazil, Renata Brenha's newest collection takes inspiration from the Festa de Iemanjá, a ceremony in honour of the Yoruba sea goddess celebrated in Brazil by people of the Candomblé religion. Here traditions from Nigeria combine with Roman Catholicism for a ritual that sees hundreds gather along the coastlines of Brazil to bring flowers to Iemanjá and bathe in her waters, like one mass baptism.

Brenha was particularly drawn to one photographer's documentation of the event. Maureen Bisilliat's photo essay from 1964 depicts worshipers dunking themselves underwater as their white lace dresses billow around them. In other photos, translucent blue fabrics drenched in water cling to bodies as the ritual proceeds. Interspersed amongst those more traditionally dressed, are by-standers observing in conventional swimwear; it is the epitome of a modern-day ritual. And, all the while, the silky Brazilian tide flows forwards and backwards.

With these influences floating, as it were, in Brenha's mind, she set out to create her new collection. As always, the process involved up-cycling and considered craftsmanship, techniques inspired by the brand ethos of Gambiarra, which entails changing the original function of an object through a process of improvisation. Brenha trawled through archives on eBay to find her second-hand fabrics. Then everything was cleaned and cut before, in true Gambiarra spirit, it could be given a new lease of life in the form of Brenha's clothes.

Vintage tablecloths and curtains become white, lacy garments, clearly influenced by the ceremonial dresses worn during the Festa de Iemanjá. They are effortlessly chic and inherently feminine. Determined not to waste offcuts from the up-cycled football jerseys used in previous collections, Brenha has, once again, subverted expectations of polyester by using it to make a series of garments with fru-fru trims. Fru-fru is a Brazilian craft technique popularly used to make kitchen rugs out of jersey offcuts, this collection takes it out of its domestic conventional context and places it into high fashion. The contrast of the frilly and highly decorative aesthetic with the fabric's original use by football fans - ritualistic in its own way - feels truly modern. Through the wonder of upcycling, these retro fabrics have become innovative creations.

Expanding upon Brenha's exploration of Brazilian national clichés, the Spring/Summer 2024 collection sees Brenha using vintage beach towels for her garments. With excellent craftsmanship, Brenha makes each piece look as though it has been fixed upon its wearer as one would fix a towel; a touch that gently reminds us of the fabrics previous use. The inside construction of the garment made in soft lycra holds the minimal structure and ensures the pieces are kind to the skin from the inside out. With demands for Renata Brenha increasing, the brand has been exploring alternative sustainable materials, other than second-hand. The new collection uses innovative fabrics made of entirely recycled raw materials, such as cupros and recycled metallic nylon. The silky texture of the recycled cupro seems to slip through your fingers. This, combined with its shimmery almost reflective surface, makes it reminiscent of the water that features so heavily in the designers references to Iemanjá. In the Safona Top, Brenha has used the recycled cupro in washed tones to create her iconic pleats; the piece appears to mould around the contours of its wearer's body, just like the water-drenched fabrics in Bisilliat's photos.

While ideas around Tropicália, rituals and Brazilian identity from previous seasons still pervade in Brenha's work, the Spring/Summer 2024 collection takes on different directions centred around the spirit of Iemanjá's healing waters. The designers commitment to sustainable design is continued through her use of up-cycled fabrics and expanded on through her incorporation of innovative fully recycled materials. A unique combination of vintage fabrics, inspired innovation and exquisite craftsmanship is what makes this collection so exciting.

*Words by journalist Meena Sears*

## Credits

Spring/Summer 24

Photography	Xavier Mas
Model	Martina Boaretto, Leah Gibby
Styling	Yeon Yon
Hair	Yoshitaka Miyazaki, Maiko Komori
Makeup	Rocío Cuenca
Graphics	Tyler Buon

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