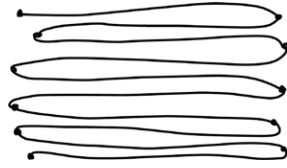


# RENÉ SCHEIBENBAUER



Fashion designer René Scheibenbauer's studio sits tucked away in the annex of his house in Lewisham. A pokey room, clad in pine with corrugated plastic roofing and an inconspicuous door that leads to a garden. Not an inch of the room is empty – sewing machines, a huge rail laden with toile, a half-eaten packet of Oreo's, a bag plump with sample materials and fastidious sketches held up by pins. We begin to talk about Phase II (Capsule), the second iteration of last season's collection Phase II: Empathy, Reconnection, Play performed by a community group he works with. All of a sudden, the studio is pelted by winds that sound like the tornado scene from The Wizard Of Oz. A poly sheet mechanism stapled to the ceiling bulges with rain water like a blister while René nervously manoeuvres his endless piles of material, just in case.

Come rain or shine, René believes fashion should reflect the present – meaning this very moment. Phase II (Capsule) is a reflection of his curiosity for documenting sunsets from the regular pilgrimages he takes to Hilly Fields and Telegraph Hill in South East London. Perfectly composed photographs reveal deep shades of apricot, umber and indigo that fade into serenity, digitally printed on to large sheets of lingerie mesh and cotton. The mesh, which is cut and made into a series of shirts, skirts and t-shirts, is like delicate chainmail with small holes that reveal the skin beneath. Juxtaposed against the rigid trouser and jacket, the printed sunsets are like motifs for the boundlessness of the world beyond.

Being attentive to ethically and ecologically sourced fabrics is an imperative for René. He reaches for a bag brimming offcuts of mesh and cotton and explains that, to him, up-cycling is an integral part of making – these scraps are the traces of mass production which he memorialises into accessories.

René's studio, prone to the occasional leakage, has understandably inspired a fascination with water-repellent fabrics – specifically GOTS certified organic beeswax cotton with a strong scent of honey. Showerproof and subtly translucent, a vest and trousers reflect his desire for functional, mutable clothing that changes with the seasons. A removable hood on the vest with hidden pockets. Or fasteners on the trousers below the knee that double as shorts. Both revealing glimpses of skin and the digital sunset beneath – the fasteners acting as a curtain to the outside world.

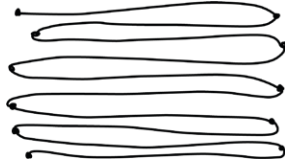
René's models are an intriguing gathering of artists, designers and performers who are photographed outside their houses in London, almost as hard to pin down as clouds in a sunset. This enduring community of collaborators and friends, who also work in therapy workshops together, quite often his community reappear season after season. As do the clothes: the grey blazer from a previous collection is now in a new colourway and equipped with a labelling guide that informs its wearer about its variety of uses – as a sling, perhaps, or as a shrug.

Scheibenbauer is classically trained in tailoring and dressmaking from Fashion Institute Vienna – graduating in Womenswear at Central St Martins, and Phase II (Capsule) encompasses a merging of meticulous rigour and his enchantment with the movement of the body. Like uniforms for day-dreamers and the curious.

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# RENÉ SCHEIBENBAUER



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## SHOES

Atelier Bâba

## WORDS

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