

RENÉ SCHEIBENBAUER

16:16

Autumn Winter 2021

16:16 was a lesson in acquiescence for René Scheibenbauer. When London locked down in March 2020 René found himself alienated from his main research resource: the artists and performers he works with each season to understand the emotional and physical needs of a living, moving body. Distance from community, both physically and mentally, made working on a collection to be ready for September 2020 too much of a stretch.

But as humans so proficiently do, René eventually adapted to his situation. He accepted the limitations presented to him and moved the research process online, launching an improvisational dance and art therapy workshop on Instagram May 2020 where he invited a wider community to choreograph movements which felt right for their physical situation.

Understanding the now is an essential part of René's creative process. Sensory exploration of the body and movement from the workshops he does with performers inform the design of his clothing. What is wanted and needed now is what René will construct. So when he realised that participants were no longer experimenting with their clothing, being confined to the four walls of a lonely room without the gaze of another to stimulate inspiration, he realised he had to submit to the constraints presented by his situation. Stimulation was limited but this lack became the subject itself. It was unavoidable. If one is to make clothing for now, for a year spent predominantly indoors and a world turned inside out, it would have to reflect this predicament.

Although René keeps his signature silhouettes and workwear references for 16:16, he decided to forgo any elements of play within this collection. For Empathy, Connection, Play (2018) René developed garments which had multiple uses: a jacket could be draped on the body multiple different ways adaptable to the wearer's mood or a scarf could become a top, and vice versa. For his preceding collections these elements have been repeated.

But this collection presents garments which are as they come. Aside from small delightful details - a secret pocket in the front of a skirt or a packable hood on a tailored jacket - René does not wish to complicate matters any further. These are straightforward garments for a time in which nothing is straightforward.

A tailored jacket encases the chest and arms, rigid and constructed. Hoods become a prominent feature in 16:16, a yield to the comfort needed now: a floor-length coat is topped with a hood so consuming it feels like a balaclava - restriction or a reassuring caress? Heat responsive panels evoke abstract images from the wearer's body heat, a melancholy reminder that we are not able to feel the warmth of another.

The title 16:16 adheres to the time of day at which René's studio is flooded with a deep blue light - a colour used throughout the collection. Prints were produced by the artist Anya Gorkova. Their colours, patterns and shapes are created with the fluids and chemical reactions of photographic materials, creating spontaneous bursts of acidic colour against a palette of greys, pastel greens and black.

Text by Eilidh Duffy

Designer and Art Direction	René Scheibenbauer
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Movement Director	Owen RD
Set	Clara Boulard
Hair	Blake Henderson
DOP	Evie Shandilya
Editor and Grader	Luke Gooden
Print	Anya Gorkova
Shoes	Marsèll
Music	Museum Of No Art
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