

Brand Spotlight: Lâcher Prise by Marine Delmau

“*L*âcher prise.”

That’s the French phrase for “to let go”, referring to the physical movement of relinquishing one’s grasp on some sort of object, but is even more often used to convey the idea of easing one’s so-human desire to control. Put more simply, it’s about relaxing -- freeing oneself from high expectations and standards, and instead moving as water does: smooth; adaptable; peaceful; consistent.

It’s also the name of the ready-to-wear label launched by French-born and New York City-based designer Marine Delmau in 2016, as well as the philosophy at the heart of not only her artistic approach, but also her lifestyle. This notion of “letting go” is what Delmau sees as the ideal way of tackling our hectic modern lives -- “not holding onto grudges or taking things too personally” -- as she explains, that in turn allows us to maximize enjoyment and minimize stress. A meditator, yogi, and practitioner of music healing and tarot, just to name a few of the creative’s mindful habits, Delmau’s spiritual perspective, coupled with her long-time love of fashion, fueled her to make her own mark in the industry.

Born into an entrepreneurial-spirited family and inspired by her mother, an accomplished businesswoman, Delmau always knew that she, too, wished to create a brand of her own one day. Like many young French girls, she found that she had a natural, if not traditional, appreciation for fashion and the creativity that comes with how we dress ourselves. She spent a lot of her time as a child playing dress up, mixing and matching pieces in front of her mirror. The designer concedes that her upbringing in France undeniably impacted her creative sensibility -- it being the well-known “fashion capital of the world” -- and cites her homeland as a major reason for her love affair with fashion. This passion eventually led her to cross the Pond to New York City to pursue an Associate’s Degree in Fashion Marketing at the esteemed Parsons School of Design in 2011, which allowed her to marry her interests in both the quantitative and qualitative sides of garment design.

Upon her graduation, the Parsons alumna further built upon her design cred at various respected fashion houses, where she served as an emerging designer. Delmau quickly became well-acquainted with all aspects of what it takes to create a clothing collection, from start to finish, as well as how to get it into the closets of today’s choosy customers. Yet, one aspect of the business never sat right with her: the all-too-common superficiality of it all. While fashion design of course prioritizes aesthetics, Delmau noticed a void in the market with regard to the emphasis on the spiritual power of dressing -- how a piece of clothing makes us feel as soon as we put it on -- and why we choose our garments in the first place. For Delmau, an easygoing soul drawn to that effortlessly elegant look synonymous with French women, this lack led to her aha moment: a versatile ready-to-wear line meant to evoke the feeling of comfort and liberty, while remaining easily chic and suitable for a variety of activities. Hence, Lâcher Prise was born.

The Lâcher Prise concept draws its aesthetic from Delmau’s original “Liberté” design, which adheres to the four pillars of her approach: freedom, simplicity, comfort, and style. This minimalist silhouette can be worn in a multitude of ways -- as an infinity scarf on an unexpectedly chilly day; a luxe take on a hoodie; a cocktail dress for an elegant date night; or even a wrap skirt while traveling on a summer getaway. How we wear it is up to us, and that’s really the core intention of her collection -- dynamic, genderless designs that adapt to the lifestyle of the wearer. The line’s pieces are meant to “feel good on the skin,” and function like “a protective layer,” as she puts it, so the wearer can look good and *feel* good, at the same time.

Textile selection is, for this reason, of paramount importance in





the designer's process, because not all fabrics are created equally, or are able to achieve the same tangible and visual effect. Known for her softly-draped, body-skimming styles, Delmau's preferred medium is stretchy jersey, composed of botanical fibers such as MicroModal® and TENCEL® lyocell. These fibers are employed for their unparalleled softness, but also due to their eco-friendly nature, nodding to another one of the brand's critical core values: sustainability.

Hand-in-hand with her spirituality comes Delmau's fervent connection with nature and its elements, and unsurprisingly, this has guided her to join many other modern designers in their quest to purify fashion manufacturing and create chic clothing while remaining kind to Mother Earth. Delmau similarly believes in the necessity of reinvigorating New York's fashion economy in the name of keeping production local and prioritizing quality over cutting costs, partnering with local manufacturers to create her pieces in place of outsourcing production as many companies do. This way, the company's carbon footprint is kept as small as possible.

This deep bond with the natural world largely influenced her most recent collection, as did her own Mediterranean roots. With her family history rooted in the ruggedly beautiful lands of Southern France and sandy expanses of Northern Africa, Delmau selected one special landscape to inspire her Spring/Summer designs: the desert. At once stark and mysteriously gorgeous, the desert setting functions as the perfect vehicle for the contrasts she explores in her line. Photographed by the masterful Duncan Mellor against the stunning backdrop of the California desert, the brand's latest lookbook illus-

trates the effortless elegance that defines the designer's collection.

Softly-draped jackets romantically cloak the body, accented with shawl lapels and elongated straps dangling at the sleeves and hem. Breezy button-front blouses offer a comfortable yet polished staple essential to any classic wardrobe. Lusty, semi-sheer versions of the designer's iconic Liberté tops expose some skin for a more daring look while still retaining sophistication. Paired with the model's sensual smoky eye, this series of styles whispers quiet danger, the kind that comes disguised in breathtaking beauty -- reminiscent of her muse: the Sahara.

The particularly fickle nature of today's fad-driven fashion landscape makes another facet of Delmau's designs especially worth noting: their timelessness. In an era obsessed with constant change and shock value -- think of those neon hues, the "logo mania" craze, and the extreme shredding detailing almost anything these days -- Delmau's easy silhouettes reflect on a necessary return to the kind of clothing that truly never fades from favor: soft, simply-chic pieces meant to be worn anytime, anywhere. In other words, clothes that make us glow from *within*.

BY ALI GAY

