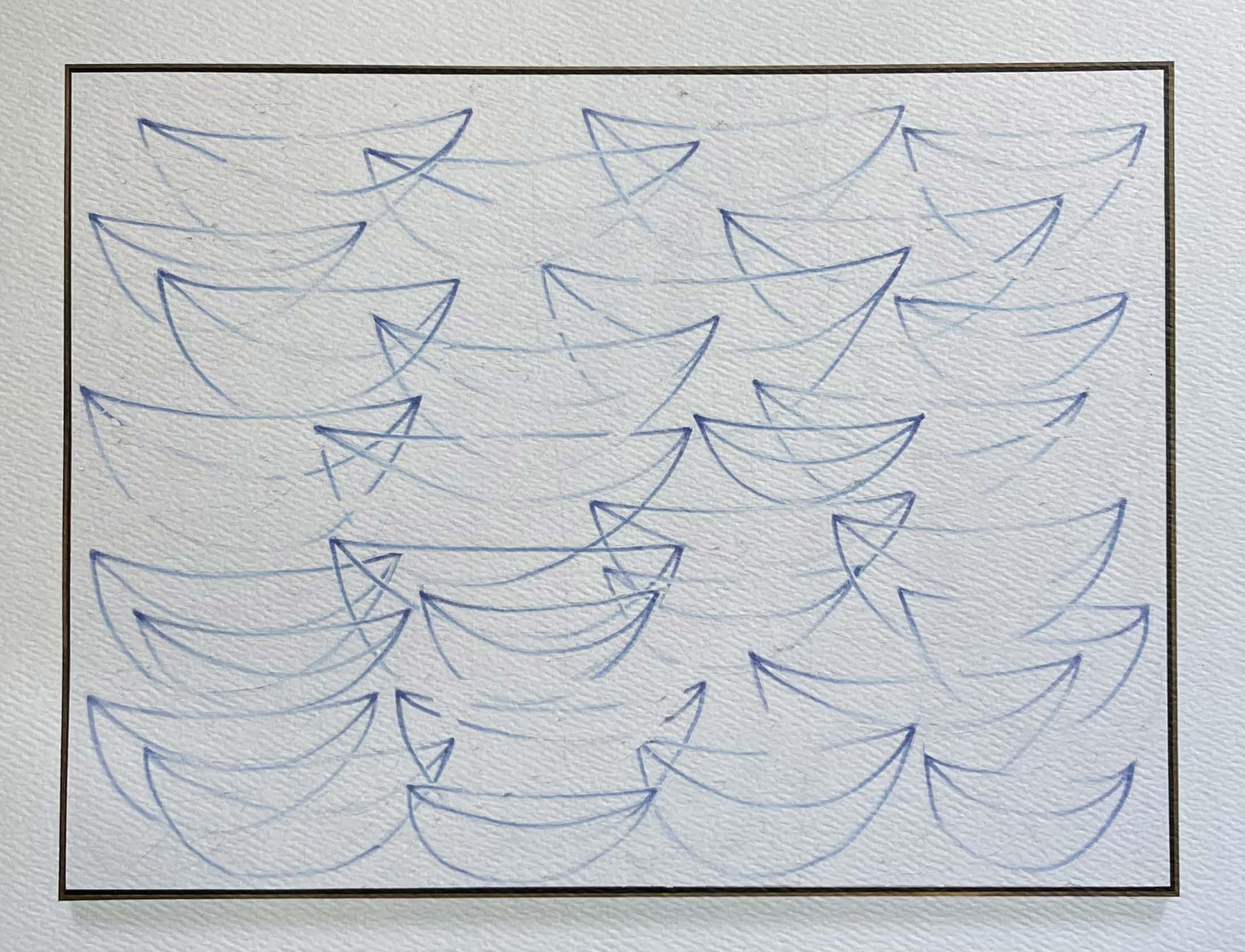
PAT ROLLIURE / DESIGN



RASHID JOHNSON TWO x TWO 2022 ARTIST HONOREE

Plus, Matthew Wong, Richard Prince, Sybille Szaggars Redford



A POWERFUL FORCE

Maxine Trowbridge and Samudra Hartanto come together to create Eve & Max, an art-driven fashion label.

INTERVIEW BY TERRI PROVENCAL

work by Dallas artist Zeke Williams. Here we caught up with co-creative directors Maxine Trowbridge and Samudra Hartanto on the release.

Terri Provencal (TP): Max, you've successfully blended your careers in fashion, media, art, and philanthropy. Why was it important to you to come back to your roots of fashion design, where, again, you've integrated an art component?

Maxine Trowbridge (MT): These past few years I've been soul searching for various reasons, and as I analyzed my career journey, I realized I really wanted to return to design. When I lived in London, I was a designer; when I moved to the States, that all changed. It finally feels right to get back to my career roots. Art has always been a personal passion, to learn and educate myself and to enjoy collecting. Fashion and art are symbiotic, so I wanted to emphasize this relationship within Eve & Max. While this is a new business, I've thought about this fashion-and-art concept for many years.

TP: Samudra, you've enjoyed a fruitful career as a designer with Louis Vuitton under Marc Jacobs, then as senior women's wear designer for Hermes, helmed by Jean Paul Gaultier, who ultimately took you with him to his own eponymous house. What insights did these rich experiences provide you with when developing Eve & Max?

Samudra Hartanto (SH): The rich experiences of those years taught me about embracing tradition and updating it for today's lifestyle. Both of my masters, Marc Jacobs and Jean Paul Gaultier, have great knowledge about art and fashion history and craftsmanship, and at the same time they are fully aware of street style. These opposite dialogues and open-minded spirits influence me enormously. For Eve & Max, we love timelessness, playfulness, ease—always conscious of quality and sustainability.

IP: The two of you met at the Royal College of Art in the '90s, and both flourished in your individual careers in fashion as well as in the art community. Eve & Max was introduced with the mindset that fashion should be ethical, beautiful, and artful, all while navigating a historically tragic time in history. How did you persevere? SH: Maxine and I started the conversation about Eve & Max before this historically tragic time. Maxine's vision for fashion that is more caring and her passion for art really resonated with me. I must admit that it was very hard to work on the first collection in between lockdowns while the reality around the world was so devastating, but what we were working towards helped me to stay creative and look forward to brighter days.

TP: Max, the Eve & Max Collection Twenty Three is informed by Zeke Williams' digital painting Blue Inferno, in which this Dallas artist embodies the beauty yet fragility of nature, which transcends as a powerful force. Tell us about this collaboration with Zeke Williams for your second collection and why you selected him and this work.

MT: For the second collection, I wanted to work with a local artist, and Erin Cluley at Erin Cluley Gallery, whom I've known since our time together at Dallas Contemporary, made the introduction to Zeke Williams. I've watched Zeke's work over the years, with his ongoing interest in fashion and using digital tools in his artistic practice. We looked through his library of work, and specifically, Samudra and I gravitated towards his work during 2015–2016, which I remembered

well, with Zeke's use of stenciled forms, spray paint, and abstract florals. Given Zeke's interest in digital, the selected work, originally an acrylic painting on canvas, underwent a digital metamorphosis, creating *Blue Inferno*. Referencing the floral abstraction and emphasis of spray paint as a symbolic oceanic print, *Blue Inferno* represents the fragility of nature as a powerful force.

TP: Silk has a mixed record on sustainability and environmental impact. Though it is natural, biodegradable, and reusable, the production of silk requires a lot of energy, water, and sometimes harsh chemicals. How do you navigate these aspects of sustainability in your collections?

SH: Less silk for the future. We realize that silk has a mixed record on sustainability and environmental impact. Cotton, which we all love, has a very mixed environmental and social record too. We are considering and constantly searching for other materials, better alternatives for the future, like linen, since it requires far less water than cotton. Why silk? Zeke Williams' *Blue Inferno* on silk illustrates the perfect contrast between the force and fragility of nature. The spray-paint digital effect on a natural delicate fabric is like luxurious graffiti.

TP: Your run cycle is slowed and pared down, with twelve looks this season, which does wonders for negating the excesses that fast-fashion produces. How does scale play into your business practice? In other words, is there a cap on the number of garments you can produce sustainably?

SH: We believe in growing steadily, building a solid foundation with our suppliers and our clients.

It's a big challenge between the desire to offer a larger collection for all women and respecting sustainability issues. Hopefully the twelve-look season we offer is short and sweet, confident, and caring. TP: A portion of Eve & Max sales will benefit Mission Blue, founded by the distinguished oceanographer Dr. Sylvia Earle. How did you become interested in Mission Blue's message?

MT: After watching the Netflix documentary Mission Blue, I discovered Dr Sylvia Earle; I couldn't believe I did not know about this fascinating and inspiring soul. While I was researching environmentally focused nonprofits for the second collection, Mission Blue appeared again, and I knew this organization made perfect sense. Earle has spent her life and career focused on the ocean; she is a legendary environmentalist, marine biologist, and oceanographer, and is absolutely inspiring. Through the work of Mission Blue, a global network of protected marine areas known as Hope Spots have been saved to help restore the ocean and ultimately protect the planet.

TP: Garments can be produced sustainably, ethically, and empower the many hands that take a flat sketch to full-scale production. We know that the environmentally conscious buyer knows that it not sustainable if the clothing is only worn by the buyer once. How do you manage versatility in your designs that make people want to wear garments over and over again?

MT: Versatility comes with timeless creativity. We think style is like collecting art. Much like collecting and curating an art collection, selecting a garment is like curating your wardrobe: each design should complement existing pieces and should be carefully considered to last far longer than a season. Our silhouettes are timeless and seasonless and not about trends; instead, it's about longevity and quality and collecting styles that will remain in your wardrobe. The design concept flirts between minimalist and maximalist; conceptually, Samudra and I are drawn towards opposites. We love a clean, minimalist look, all navy and all black, but we love a splash of vibrant color and an inspiring print too.

IP: What are your favorite silhouettes? We love how you pair solids with prints. SH: This collection is also about the new twinset: tailored jacket and bustier (instead of jacket and waistcoat), kimono and bustier, printed shirt with a matching triangle bikini top; lace shirt and a matching triangle bikini top. I love the black bustier silhouette. I love the printed lounge suit silhouette and matching bikini top. **P**





