



MOOD BOARD

BIBHU MOHAPATRA

Rhapsody's monthly look at what's currently inspiring a top designer

Photography by A

"CALL this my altar," says Bibhu Mohapatra of his fairly sparse mood board for the Resort 2015 collection of his eponymous label. In an airy white studio in Manhattan's Garment District, ornamented with a large gilded mirror and a Persian rug, Mohapatra takes a reductionist approach to his inspiration wall. "I add things everyday," he says. "I take things away everyday. It evolves as I evolve my collection." Mohapatra's urge to subtract adds a cool modernity to his geometrically accented, ladylike silhouettes, which have earned the former J. Mendel design director the 2011 Ecco Domani Fashion Fund award and fans like Lupita Nyong'o and Lauren Santo Domingo. For Mohapatra's latest collection, the colorblind artist Neil Harbisson and socialite Mona Bismarck inspired him to experiment with hue and its absence. "As I work on a collection," he explains, "it becomes about a human quality, whether it's strength, confidence or pure courage to live your life in your way." —SAHAR KHAN



1 ON NEIL HARBISSON:

Neil has a disease where he cannot see colors. His whole world is monochromatic and grayscale. I thought, "What happens if my ability to see color is taken away? How would it affect my work?"

2 ON MONA BISMARCK:

Mona was an heiress known for her sense of style, but she also understood what being an artist was about. I wanted to bring [Harbisson] and this icon together; what they had in common was the drive to make something out of their lives.

3 ON COLOR PLAY:

My mother was interested in doing embroidery when she was a little girl, but she had limited colors and threads available, so she would twist them together to make different shades. [Similarly] I think about how colors interact with each other.

4 ON OPPOSING SIDES:

I developed this jacquard with the idea that one side is color and the other side is black and white. I used both sides. One is supposed to be grayscale and one is supposed to be color. It represents optimism vs. reality, nature vs. technology.

5 ON OMBRÉ:

This is an artwork or wall installation that shows the range of blue. I love how random it is. The gradation of colors is beautiful. This [look] could turn into a jacket or a little skirt.

6 ON PERCEPTION:

The same image exudes two different types of energy. You don't know what's going on here. [Black and white] is more reality driven, more truthful. [Color] is more playful and more optimistic.

7 ON A LITTLE BIT OF WHIMSY:

These are actually buttons. There's an "eye" button and an "eyelid" painted buttonhole. It becomes an eye when you button it. That's surrealism, which we are using as one of the driving factors for this collection.

8 ON NATURE AND TECHNOLOGY:

I love the melding of nature and the modern world here. This escalator stopped long ago. It is overgrown with moss. But even though it doesn't rotate anymore, people still use it as steps. So it still has meaning.