

BULLETT

Fashion

Speeding BULLETTs: Slashed By Tia Reinvents Romance with Renaissance-Inspired Ruffles

October 24, 2017 5:35 pm *By Amber Nicole Alston*



+

The term ‘renaissance fashion’ rarely sounds good—cue images of stiff paintings, and those weird festivals in the park. But *Slashed by Tia* is ready to change that. The two-year-old clothing line by New York designer, Tia Adeola, blends 16th century Spanish fashion, ‘90s street style and contemporary sex appeal into a line that is as whimsical as it is provocative. With a soft spot for ball sleeves, large ruffles and bold colors, the 20-year-old designer channels her love of art history into a range of delicate streetwear that’s both technically impressive and authentically cool.

For her latest collection, Raina reshapes tulle and silk into subtle and romantic silhouettes that highlight the feminine form. In pinks, orange and lilac, the garments reflect the Parsons sophomore’s continued elevation and a newfound confidence in her brand. Pointed leather bralettes and metal accents nod to Madonna and a campy kind sexuality, while sheer button-ups with elaborate sleeves balance out the edge. It’s that perfect harmony, between soft and slutty that *Slashed by Tia* always gets right.

BULLETT caught up with the *FASHUN TWEEK* designer to talk badass women, finding the perfect top and designing in the internet age. Read our interview, below.

Tell us a little about yourself. How’d you become a designer?

I am originally from Nigeria and went to high school in London. In Nigeria, we have loads of fabrics and vibrant, interesting materials to play with. I can remember my mom getting dressed up for weddings in traditional outfits—she had so many, and I would go into her wardrobe and take the fabric I liked and hand-stitch really extravagant dresses for my Barbies. I didn’t grow into wanting to be a designer—since I was five or six-years-old, I just knew I loved clothes and that’s what I was going to be.

Why did you decide on the name ‘Slashed by Tia?’ The collection is feminine and soft—I wouldn’t immediately associate it with a word like ‘slashed.’

I started the line about a year-and-a-half ago. I was making these backless silk tops because I always wanted to go backless, but I was uncomfortable with my boobs—I was worried that they would look saggy or too big. So, I tried to come up with something that took the attention away from my chest area. The tops ended up having a cross-back so I said, 'I can just call this Slash.' My best friend back home said, 'slash' is my personal touch on the garments.

How has the brand evolved since then?

In my final two years of high school, I studied art history and chose to write my final paper on garments portrayed in 16th century Spanish paintings. I did so much research, I learned so much about it, and the ruffles that the nobles wore really stuck with me. Only princesses and knights would wear them and they were particularly expensive to make—I just wanted to find a way to incorporate that into today's trends without making them too feminine. My clothes are pretty feminine, but I feel like an androgynous girl could wear something of mine, and it would still look right. So school, art history and paintings.

A lot of the models you use are Instagram It-girls or your personal friends. Is casting important to you?

Honestly, I just pick girls that I feel will look good in the clothes. I also go for people that like my clothes and are excited to wear them. I try to choose a lot of influencers—it's more diplomatic. If you get a model that is signed to Next, who only has a thousand followers, that's not going to help the brand. But if you pick a random girl that's doing nothing with 70K, you're probably going to get 20 or more followers when she posts it. That has significantly helped my brand.

You shoot around Union Square pretty frequently. Does the location have significance for you?

I live on Union Square and I go to school at Parsons, just down the road. So it's just easier to have my models come to me. As crazy and smelly as it is, I do really love Union Square—there's just something free about the area. I have gone to other locations, but I always find myself coming back to Union Square.

You use a lot of models of color. For some designers, that's a conscious political act, or an act of resistance, and for others, it's just because diversity is on trend. What is it for you?

With my own background, coming from Nigeria and then growing up in London, I wouldn't say I wasn't racially aware, because I was. But I feel like in America, you are made to be a lot more aware of your race. In the two years that I've lived here, I've learned a lot—I've noticed a lot of the little things. But that being said, I feel like my clothes are for every girl. I've had black models, Asian models, all types. Don't get me wrong, I love girls that are my color—they're so beautiful and they look so striking in my clothes. But I would never want to limit casting to a particular race. If you look good in it, you should wear it.

So, who do you see as the Slashed By Tia girl?

The Slashed by Tia girl is a bold, 'I'm going to wear sheer crop

tops and you're not going to say anything to me' type of girl. A lot of my clothes are slightly risqué. I hope to make clothes for more reserved girls, but for right now—I think I've said 'badass' five times during this interview, but it fits!

You have 12k followers on Instagram, but you're not following anyone. What's that about? Has social media played a big role in shaping your brand?

I feel like I got 12,000 followers overnight. I don't follow anyone because I don't want to see anything—I don't want to be distracted. As much as we pretend that we can look at things and not be influenced, it's almost inevitable. In 2017, originality is extremely rare. So honestly, I do it to stay in my own lane.

Do you think the internet has made artists vulnerable to copycats?

The Internet is a gift and a curse. We're living in a time that is lacking in originality. But we're also in a time where you can't just take someone's idea and run with it anymore. You will definitely be on the ShadeRoom or one of those blogs. Honestly, I think it's good for young creatives and designers who work so hard—a lot of thought goes into what we do. I went through this intense anger when I first started with the ruffles—I'd get really hot-headed about it, and get so annoyed that I'd call my mom crying because someone copied me and would threaten to delete my page. It can be very de-motivating sometimes.

Let's talk about the new collection. What inspired it?

My inspiration comes from that same place—my art history studies. I try to make my clothes elegant without ever being tacky. I know that they're sheer and some people may consider that tacky—I've had people comment on the page saying, 'This is nice, but it would be nicer if she wore a bandeau underneath.' I get things like that all the time. But this time, there are a lot of ball sleeves and a lot of ruffles, more sheer and bright colors for the summer. Recently, I've been looking at my favorite painters, like Alonso Sánchez Coello, and putting their paintings next to my clothes. I steal all my inspiration from their concepts. If I could study art history in college I would, but at least I get to put it into my clothes.

What do you want people to take away from your work?

That you can be carefree and slightly revealing, but still a badass.

Photography: Sophia Wilson

Stylist: Sophia Ulrich

Makeup: Rhythm & Michaela Bosch

Models: Amanda Baez & Lex Troutman