

M TX in the Born

For this fashion designer, her work is the art of transformation.

By Marta Wendlinger.

Mertxe Hernández, owner and sole designer of M TX on Carrer Rec in the Born, always knew what she wanted to do when she grew up, and now she's doing it. She designs individual items for the clients in her store and also does whole clothing lines for entities like Cirque de Soleil.

Like many girls, Hernández liked to play with dolls. The difference was that from the age of three or four years old, she was making dresses for them. For Spaniards of her generation (she's 38), under the Franco regime, no Zaras or Mangos existed, and most clothes were made by 'modistas' (dressmakers). She was fortunate: in her family, her mother and grandmother sewed, so the 'art of sewing' was entrenched in her from an early age.

After high school, she decided to study fashion design at Felicidad Dulce in Barcelona and then worked for various designers, including Margarita Nuñez (who designs Queen Sofia's wardrobe) and Purificación García, but soon realised she wanted to go out on her own. She presented her first collection at the 'Creadores Emergentes' of the now-defunct Salon Gaudí in the summer of 1998. It was her first contact with clients. After two years she opened her shop in the Born. Her unique collections are also sold in other 'multi-marca' stores in Barcelona, Valencia, Pontevedra, Sevilla and Lleida.


"People see my clothes and know right away that it's me," Hernández said. "Also, the techniques I use are somewhat different: from fabric manipulation to experimentation, I transform garments into something altogether different. Things that other designers throw away, I use to create other garments like collars made from wool and accessories from fabric remnants."

She also loves to mix silk-screening (which she does herself in her nearby studio) and textures, said Hernández, because it personalises

the pieces even more. Since she does small productions, almost everything she sells is unique. Her collection includes a formal and a casual line, composed of t-shirts, tops, skirts and dresses, but there are also hand-made bags with innovative materials and unique accessories like brooches made out of recycled materials.

Hernández is convinced that Barcelona's ascendancy in fashion circles over the past few years is a sign of what's to come. "Barcelona has been changing and evolving a lot as a city in the last five to seven years. Every day there's more and more of a culture of fashion. People nowadays look for individual 'piezas de autor' as in Paris and London. But it's just the beginning of the process."

Although she said she views the new Pasarela BCN as the same as the Salon Gaudí without all the public funds, she's pleased that the local government is now helping emerging designers with funds to set up shops in foreign countries, participate in fairs and showrooms, and show their collections on international catwalks—all in a move to propel 'BCN Fashion' beyond borders.

She is investigating opening another store in the city, maybe in Gràcia or in the Raval. But her goals don't end there. Hernández also teaches seminars about her design techniques at the Universitat de Belles Artes in Barcelona and she's appeared in various books, such as *Salmones en Barcelona*, which highlights various local artists who 'swim against the flow'. 

For more information:

M TX; Rec 32.
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