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JANE BOWLER TURNS SCRAP INTO SUSTAINABLE, LUXURY CHIC

London Royal College of Art graduate Jane Bowler's innovative design approach is evident in the scrap materials - shower curtains, toilet seats - she transforms into sustainable chic; she hand dyes plastics and welds where others stitch. Her AW11 collection Fusion follows on these pages and her SS12 line - showing at this month's London Fashion Week - has the theme Icarus, she tells ISBN.

How wearable is this collection?

I would definitely call them clothes and some can be viewed as art pieces too. It's important to have a balance of showpieces and wearable items. My new collection has wearable knitwear and cute capes.

What about accessories?

I love making them, and hats in particular. I love to allow the materials to almost grow over the wearer and become part of them. I have begun to make shoes for my

new collection in September, and even sunglasses. I'm quite pleased so far ... I would definitely wear them. That's for sure! Accessories are also a great way to let people buy into my brand more easily.

Will plastic soon takeover fashion. Is its use on the increase?

I think that if plastics are used in a way that transforms a cheap and undesirable material into something luxurious and alluring, then I can imagine that the material's use would increase. People are always very complimentary about my "plastic fantastic" garments ... And often they say they would wear them if they had the chance. Making plastic garments desirable and fun will hopefully encourage the wearer to wear it for longer.

Item of clothing you last bought?

A pair of snazzy velour floral trousers! Which sound pretty ugly but can actually look rather lovely when styled the right way. They were a charity shop bargain.

An iconic fashion piece you wish you could have designed?

Hussein Chalayan's transforming mechanical dresses from his 2007 show; elegant and mesmerising, I love them.

Japanese straw raincoats are evident in this collection. How?

From working with plastics to making waterproof garments is a natural progression. I began to make raincoats using a new technique which involved heating plastics into moulds to create plastic strands which, when arranged in clusters, began to resemble traditional Japanese straw raincoats. I stumbled across one in the British Museum and realised my garments were mimicking these beautiful Japanese coats. So I began to tuft and layer the straw-like plastic strands in a similar way.

What's your SS12 theme?

I don't want to say too much other than a one-word clue, Icarus.

PHOTOGRAPHY: JOANNE WARREN





