



Style

Artist Renata Petersen Brings Her ‘Punk Pottery’ Aesthetic to a Daring New Collaboration With Celine

The sculptor and multimedia artist's aesthetic transgressions—subtle and blatant—pack a porcelain punch.

William Van Meter, April 17, 2023



Auction live
until August 24

[Bid Now](#)



It's clear why Renata Petersen's punk pottery appeals to Celine's rock purist creative director Hedi Slimane. She stylishly imbues her ceramic vases with gnarly comic book characters, dripping blood fonts, gruesome tabloid tales, and other fabulously unseemly fodder. One can picture the phantom of teenage boy malcontent punk rocker guiding her hands at the pottery wheel like Patrick Swayze's limbo-locked spirt in *Ghost*.

The Guadalajara, Mexico-based artist collaborated on some pieces for the men's Summer '23 show which explored rock tropes ranging from glam to post-punk. In a seeming nod more to the pioneering goth band than to the German design and architectural movement, the collection was dubbed 'Dysfunctional Bauhaus.'



Renata Petersen's comic goth script can be found in some items in Celine's Summer 2023 menswear collection. Courtesy of Celine.

The slogan and font for 'Dysfunctional Bauhaus' were actually sourced from one of Petersen's ceramic plates (other items in her NSFW dish set are emblazoned with "Cocaine" and Charles Manson's intense visage). Slimane riffed on a variety of Petersen's past artworks, and translated them to fashion.

The results, which include T-Shirts, hoodies, and a skateboard deck, are now on sale online and at the luxury brand's boutiques. The 29-year-old multimedia artist watched the runway show online and was deservedly jazzed.



Renata's Petersen's vases can easily be misconstrued as punk rock urns. Courtesy of the artist.

“There are artists that you feel it in their work that it’s really fashionable and you just know they’ll collaborate with a fashion brand,” Petersen says. “I *never* thought of my work like that. It made me feel really good to know I’m reaching an audience that never would have seen my work.”

Yes, Petersen’s work appeals to the demographic of vinyl junkies who dig The Cramps and The Misfits, but her repertoire is more expansive. She thrives on dichotomy. Her scope was on full display in her 2022 solo exhibition “Teópolis” at Pequod Co. in Mexico City.



Renata Petersen,
Jim Jones, ceramic vase (2022). Courtesy of the artist.

Counterbalancing the graphic-laden vases and dishes, was a selection of pale jade-colored ceramic sculptures that are less bombastic, but all-the-more compelling.

“I like that it looks like another person did them,” Petersen says. “These are both parts of my imagination.” There are similar dark themes within the vessels, however. The more ‘mature’ direction evokes the Zen calm of a Utopian city, and it is in a sense. Each piece mimics a house of worship for a variety of cults. “I call them ‘new religions,’” Petersen interjects. “I don’t wanna use the word ‘cult.’ It’s very harsh.”



Petersen adds, “I love the ones who say they have a direct line to God or have found the new Messiah!” The temples she renders date from the early 1900s to the present day. “The ones you see that look like they’re from Thailand, they’re actually from Brazil,” she says excitedly. “That’s the Vale do Amanhecer sect, and it’s kind of a Disneyland of different religions that mixes Hinduism, shamanism, and a lot of different stuff. They wear capes and eat a lot of lentils.”

She adds, “A lot of the religions seem the same, but the architecture differs. The end result looks really kitsch.” The cobalt blue and amber metropolises Petersen made in 2021 are in actuality, “cities made out of unusable blown glass dildos and plugs,” she says.



A detail of Renata Petersen's ceramic metropolis of cult temples. Courtesy of the artist.

Petersen's rebellious pagan element stems from a genuine interest of religion rather than the macabre, seeking surface shock value. It's in her blood. “Let me tell you my life story a why I’m interested in this,” she says. “I’m the daughter of an anthropologist and a newspaper writer. My mom was working on her first book when she had me in 1993.”

Its subject was the controversial La Luz del Mundo sect. “She started doing her field work when she was pregnant with me,” Petersen explains, “and when I was born, she took me to this city inside a city where they lived. We had to move because they started threatening her and were pretty dangerous.” Petersen's mother, Renée de la Torre, PhD, is a research professor and has a broad spectrum of published work. Both mother and daughter specialize in exploring religion, but they use divergent mediums.



Petersen says she's now experimenting with making creepy, modern dollhouses. In June she has a duo show with Martin Soto Climent at Lighthouse in Zurich called "La noche Bolaña," followed by a booth in the upcoming Armory Show in September.

Petersen finds Mexico to be a continuing inspiration. "It's a very religious place," she says. "We have a mixture of shamanism and Catholicism. It's very obtuse."