

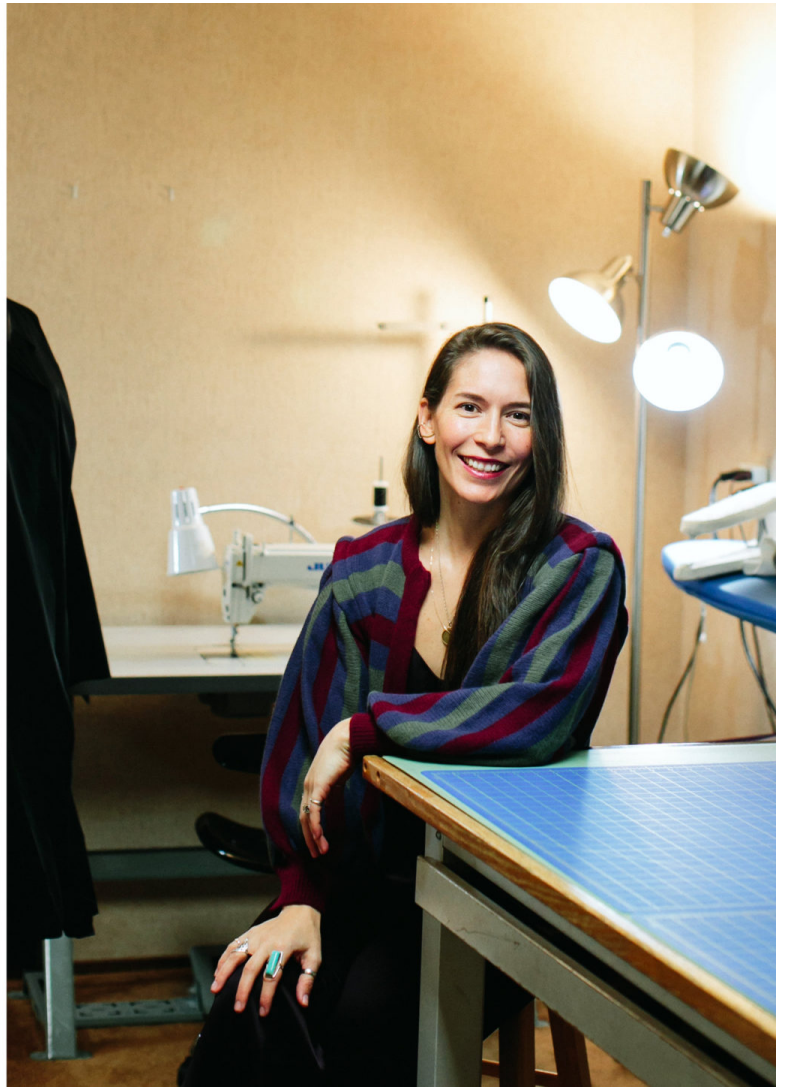
DESIGN PORTLAND

INTERVIEW

Marcela Dyer

Myriam Marcela Founder + Designer

By Allyson Marrs • November 2019



Photography by Ashley Courter.

Known especially for custom orders, as well as revitalizing vintage clothing, Marcela Dyer is a fashion designer devoted to the fee of fabric. She starts when fabric catches her attention and from there, ideas are unlocked and constructed. Her first full collection shown in Portland, won her the title of FashionNXT's Emerging Designer in 2014. But she first began designing in Mexico, her hometown, when at age ten, she reconstructed a newly bought dress from her mom.

Marcela would go on to study at the "Instituto de Moda y Diseño" in Guadalajara, Mexico, before moving to Portland, though her biggest lesson didn't take place in a classroom. Rather than follow a fashion calendar, she learned to make forever fashion. It doesn't expire with a season. Or fall out with a new year. Pieces are timeless. And her upcoming collection, Wild Woman, is focused on a message rather than solely the event that inspired it: the 2017 Women's March. Celebrating unity and empowerment, Wild Woman is a collaboration with textile artist Laura Renée Maier. We spoke with Marcela about its creation and where she finds inspiration for all of her work.



Photo by Jeff Wong.

How does your identity as a Mexican designer living in the United States affect your visual voice?

As a Mexican designer living in the U.S.—and more specifically, here in Portland, where supporting local markets is emphasized—my idea of local is shared between both the U.S. and Mexico. When I think of what my fashion and art represents, it's an influence of two countries that have the opportunity to enrich one another. This eye of no borders and diversity enriches my creativity and expands it even further. When I think of women, I think of the diversity, not only of where they may be from, but also of what a woman is in general.

Visually, making clothing for women of all shapes, sizes, and ethnicities is influenced by my own Mexican heritage, and now that I live in the U.S. I embrace the opportunity to visually enhance the positive traits of every woman. This can be seen, not only in my fashion, but also in the collaborative process and end result of my other artistic endeavors, including Wild Woman.

Where do you find inspiration, and how do you then turn that into an initial idea?

I would say 90% of the time, my inspiration comes from fabric. I think it's my natural process and how my brain works. Fabric speaks to me—whether it's the texture, the pattern, the weight, the drape, or the color. My nature as a fashion designer can envision what the fabric may become. The other 10% of my creative process begins with a specific idea, and in these cases, I look for a specific fabric that can bring my idea to life.



In what ways do you think art and fashion influence the other?

I believe art and fashion are one. Each of my pieces is made by hand, and in working with my hands, I see what I do as art—similar to a painter or sculptor. The attention to details and the creative process is never trendy or dictated by rules. Art is a way of expression, and so is the work I create.

What's your creative process for renewing vintage clothing?

It comes down to fabric. I can walk into a vintage store and go through a whole rack of clothing in minutes, if there isn't a fabric that speaks to me. Once I find a fabric, the creative process really begins. I'm excited by the challenge of working with vintage clothing, knowing I have a limited amount of material. It pushes me to think outside of the box and explore all options to bring my idea to life.

I then undo every single seam, lay it flat on my cutting table, and create the pattern of what I can see for this fabric. I always end up adapting the pattern to fit the existing material, and I believe it always ends up being what it was meant to be. I love the idea of knowing this old piece gets an opportunity to be transformed into a new piece of art and live a new life.

What's been most rewarding about working on the 2020 Wild Woman collection?

There have been so many rewarding experiences. One is creating art with meaning and message. It's given me the opportunity to give to and empower others, especially other women who don't have such opportunities readily available to them. I'm proud of and passionate about that. The Wild Woman journey has pushed me, and it's been rewarding to overcome obstacles and develop, not only as an artist, but also as an entrepreneur and as a woman.

I do most of the work for my Myriam Marcela line alone in my studio, but Wild Woman has allowed me to collaborate with others in artistic expression. So many people have contributed their time, talents, and resources to this avenue of caring, giving, and loving others. It all comes down to a full cycle of giving back to those in need, and this is rewarding to me.

