

## FASHION

# Melitta Baumeister

BY TIFFANY JOW

**PORTRAIT BY JULIAN UNGANO AND  
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New York-based German designer Melitta Baumeister has developed an ingenious process of reinventing classic clothing. The 28-year-old pours liquid silicone into the mold formed by a fabric garment, resulting in a rubbery, wearable sculpture. Baumeister's work, which earned her a Dean's Scholarship to Parsons The New School for Design, turned heads at the debut of her eponymous line at New York Fashion Week last September—just months after she'd graduated from the university's Fashion Design and Society MFA program. Oversized biker jackets, casted knit sweaters, tank tops, and sculptural dresses bounced like otherworldly

matter as they went down the runway. Other garments, made of spacer fabric, pleather, silk, or wool, displayed glossy, marbled silicone details cast from rectangular blocks. "The casted garments become a three-dimensional photograph, a still life that looks like something we know but is made from a foreign substance," Baumeister says. Her clothing speaks to the way reality is conflated with images of reality on the Internet; the cast acts as a frozen moment in the garment's lifetime—similar to a post on Instagram or Facebook. "The digital world imitates and provides visual experiences of reality," she says. "My work offers a reflection of those processes."

