



## Balestra

**Balestra presented** its first ready-to-wear collection during Milan Fashion Week hinging on the color it has long been associated with: Blue Balestra.

Renato Balestra is known for his couture gowns, signature painterly embroidery, blend of different fabrics and transparencies, and is seeing his brand's heritage revisited by his family to update it for the times.

The brand, launched in 1959 and which now simply goes by the designer's last name, is deeply linked to the Italian capital, and introduced blue pantsuits embellished with fabrics printed with artist Giovanni Battista Piranesi's 18th-century etchings. "The panoramic views become dreamy motifs," said Sofia Bertolli Balestra, head of research, design and brand identity.

Silk shirts and dresses paid tribute to the house's heritage with the RB monogram – originally designed in 1971 by the founder, and expanded into a large-scale print, with a neon effect created by overlapping graphics.

Bertolli Balestra has been building the brand's impressive archive, which includes more than 40,000 sketches and drawings and hundreds of gowns, and the team she has assembled reworked some of the couturier's glittering motifs and sparkling patterns on silk evening dresses and youthful short tops and pants.

"We started from our roots. We drew inspiration from Balestra's legendary period between the late '70s and the '80s, referencing soft shapes, plunging necklines and oversize shoulders, allowing the body complete freedom," said Bertolli Balestra. It was an edited and carefully crafted collection that showed promise. – L.Z.