

GRAZIA

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HOT NEW COUPLE: Who's Gigi's new man?

HEIGHT OF THE HOLY MONTH

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BRAVE
NEW WORLD



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GRAZIA
EXCLUSIVE

Isa Arfen has earned her title as label-to-watch with her straight angles and overblown details—relaxed glamour at its best.



ISA ARFEN HOT SUMMER HIGHLIGHTS



WHEN A DESIGNER GETS THEIR REFERENCES JUST RIGHT, IT'S LIKE LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT; IT'S LIKE MAKING INSTANT FRIENDS WITH THE GIRL AT THE PARTY WHO'S

appeared in the same dress as you. So when Serafina Sama, the brains behind the young, but hotly discussed, London-based womenswear brand Isa Arfen – it's an anagram of her name – tells *Grazia* that her Spring/Summer 2015 inspiration came from Slim Aarons and his hyper-saturated photos of socialites in Acapulco in the 1960s, it's one of those moments. And when she tells us that her Jamaica Green linen mini skirt and blood orange button-down coat practically popped off a painting from David Hockney's pool series, well, it's all a bit too much.

"I was dreaming about holidays," Serafina said sweetly, "growing up in Italy, surrounded by some seriously glamorous, and irreverent women – my mother and aunts – I learnt all about great style, but also about eccentricity, about having an edge." Cue her latest collection: an array of boxy, Marni-worthy shapes – Sama cut her design teeth at the Milanese brand, as well as Lanvin, Marc Jacobs and, for the lion's share, Chloé – to name but a few. Fit for the chicest of the Italianate, those precise A-lines may be, they are offset by over-sized bow fastenings, over-zealous in their vinyl and Shantung finishes and gawkily overwhelmed by too-voluminous shoulders, goggle-like shades and so-straight-they're-almost-square-legged trousers. The eye-wateringly juicy palette



Italian-raised Serafina Sama at her London home

combined with Stylebop.com's largest offering of the brand to date – makes this a collection, quite fitting for our princely region.

With Ramadan around the corner, Arfen's floor-length, V-necked linen cape in a hot, sour red, or her boxy lightweight trench in cool stone might be just the ticket for fashionistas seeking a modern slant on modest dressing during Ramadan. Her off-key angles and school-girlish accents chime with today's fashion fan, always in search for that element of fun that will catch the fashion pack's eye – the wide-legged emerald green culottes from her previous season were an enormous street style hit.

It's no longer just London and Italy that can boast nurturing Sama's fashion background: after graduating from London's Central Saint Martins in 2006, launching her own label at LFW by 2011 – after training with some of the industry big boys – Isa Arfen was viewed as an

emerging London brand. So, in true character of her discreetly subversive nature, Sama's SS15 collection appeared – without warning to the sensitive fashion types – alongside the clean and often sporty wares of the New York Fashion Week scene. It made perfect sense too: watching the off-hand, relaxed glamour of recent emerging womenswear CFDA winner Rosie Assoulin take the fashion world by storm, from her home in New York.

When grilled on the subject, Sama makes it sound like an easy decision to make, "I just wanted to try it out. I travel so much and get so much inspiration from the States. With the brand in its infancy, I couldn't resist seeing what would happen." With New York's Opening Ceremony already jumping at the chance to stock the label, and with Sama's fresh, clean and relaxed aesthetic – she fits right in.

Though SS15 will hold its stead over here for a good while longer – there's heaps of hotly-hued, Palm Springs freshness to perk up any desert-bound daytime look – AW15 is primed and ready to get shoppers impatient come August. Teeming with hot metals, more over-sized edge but this time with a dash of early '90s grunge, there's miles more insouciant glamour to come from this designer. Naturally the references are en-pointe too, citing Luigi Ghirri's bleached-out and delicately kitsch seaside vistas as her moodboard for the new collection. "I just want to make clothes that women feel great in," Serafina told *Grazia*. And *that* Serafina, you do. **●**