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# RAINBOW COALITION

AUSSIE LABEL INSIGHT MAKES SURFWEAR  
THAT LOOKS JUST AS FRESH ON THE CITY  
SIDEWALKS. BY MARISSA PATLINGRAO COOLEY.  
PHOTOGRAPHED BY JORDAN BENNETT

It's no accident that the beachwear by Australian surf-and-skate company Insight seems way too stylish to only be worn while building sandcastles by the shore. "We're a surf company, but that doesn't mean that we just make board shorts," explains senior womenswear designer Annie Wright, who, with the rest of the label's Sydney-based design team, makes quarterly people-watching pilgrimages to Tokyo to fish for ideas. "Our inspiration comes more from the runways or from the kids on the street in Shibuya and Harajuku than from the beach."

Launched as a surfboard outfit in the early '80s by ex-pro Andrew Down, Insight branched into clothing in 1999 via a line of logo tees and trucker caps designed to promote the boards. They were a hit, and Down soon recruited fellow surfers George Gorrow and Mark Byers to help develop the fledgling clothing line. Gorrow, who still helms Insight's menswear design team, went on to co-create cult denim line Ksubi—no surprise, given the two labels' similar vibes.

While the company—which still produces boards and sponsors a team of World Championship Tour riders—has a solid presence in Australia, it has remained fairly under-the-radar on American soil since debuting here in 2005. But if the fashion-forward silhouettes are any indication, land-locked urbanites will soon be tapping into the line, whose womenswear collection is co-designed by Wright (who grew up on Sydney's Northern Beaches with her brother, pro surfer Ozzie Wright) and creative director Natalie Wood (a Melbourne native who cut her teeth at L.A. skate label FUCT, among other places).

Perhaps it's because neither Wright nor Wood (unlike the men's design crew) spends much of their leisure time paddling out in the swells, but sea-worthiness seems like an afterthought in this summer's lineup: cuffed pantaloons, cheeky pinafores, high-waisted shorts, and fluorescent-hued tees and tanks with prints that evoke bulletin-board fliers (hence the collection's title: "Heroes of Xerox").

The company's swimwear, which debuts as a separate collection this season, is perfectly functional for surfing but just



as ideal après-beach: "The clothes are low-cut, with dropped armholes and cutaways, so your cossie"—that's Australian for swimming costume, or bikini—"peeks out from underneath your clothing," says Wright. You can also wear the one-pieces with jeans or shorts, like a bodysuit." It's a zany Technicolor parade of skin-baring silhouettes in dizzying prints that recall Atari game graphics. An '80s-style triangle motif covers a keyhole halter bikini, while pinafores and short shorts in delicate calico prints are trimmed with graphic striped piping. Strapless rompers reminiscent of Rollergirl and deep-V, bandeau-style one-piece suits are festooned with a rainbow-bright, zig-zag-checkered-stripe explosion. More than any other label we've seen lately, it gives you the feeling that summer can't come soon enough.

INSIGHT: MARGARET MASON; BUNNETT: JORDAN BENNETT; COOLEY: MARISSA PATLINGRAO

