

The New Formal

[Grace Howarth](#) looks at how fashion is moving away from the idea of traditional evening wear

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Sometimes fashion may seem impractical, but can you argue with the big names in the industry. Whatever Versace, Chanel or Vuitton feature on their catwalks goes, right? When the red carpets are being shared by the likes of Beyoncé and Taylor Swift, the pressure for celebrities and other lesser mortals to steal the spotlight and outdo one another is slightly impossible. Though fashion, in a sense, does give one the opportunity to try, it moves away from the classic and simple pastel coloured gowns and high heels, favoured by most celebrities at such events. Instead aspiring towards something more chic, original and innovative. In society these days almost anything goes, especially in regards to fashion, which thus provides us with more breadth and scope to do and wear what we want.

One of the latest evening wear trends, to hit the S/S 16 catwalks, is the slip dress. As seen in Burberry, Givenchy and Calvin Klein's collections, the wispy and lacy silk slip theme is always a risqué look. However as Rihanna proved in her near naked, Adam Selman dress made up of 210 000 Swarovski Crystals and Beyoncé at the 2015 Met Ball in a sheer Givenchy Ensemble, the sensual effect of the concealed put on display, which is a look that is hard to ignore and overshadow. As a look it definitely confronts the traditional idea of evening wear.

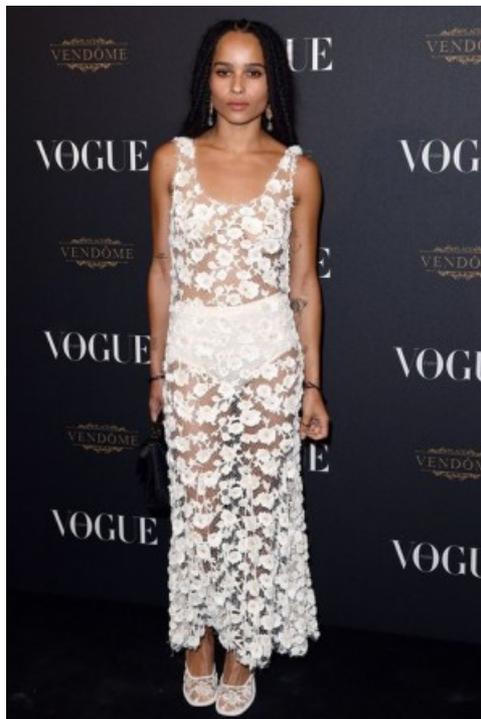


Image: Eugénie Trochu

More cutting edge and subversive footwear has changed the appearance of evening attire, the pivotal Karl Lagerfeld's Chanel S/S 2014 couture collection featured every single skirt, dress and yes evening gown

with trainers, which was marked change in the footwear department for formal occasions. Indeed at the Cannes film festival in 2015 their dress code came under fire as a group of women were denied entry as they dared to wear flat and comfortable shoes. The rather antiquated rule of such a style conscious event, of high heels for women is in decline.

On the subject of dress codes, last month, the red carpet was a light again, with shimmery metalized celebrities, for the Met Ball 2016. The theme this year was Manis x Machina which is a nod to the Metropolitan Museum's, costume institute exhibition on Fashion in the age of Technology. The theme's initiative was to highlight the contrast between the artistic techniques employed in Haute Couture and Ready to wear. From pleating and lacing in the former to more modern approaches such as laser cutting in the latter. The creative processes for these two disciplines have, more recently, become blurred and indistinct.



Image: Getty Images

The celebrity attendees, of the Met Ball this year, rather interpreted the man made vs machine made aspect varyingly. For some it meant man as machine, (Zayn Malik, Kim Kardashian) others took a more futuristic and celestial approach (Willow and Jayden Smith). The latter two successfully looking the most comfortable and at ease with their attire, a huge feat for the event, as Zayn Malik in Versace with arm 'armour' seemed literally quite hampering. However the silver, matte white and metallic aesthetic was a popular choice for the evening and leads to the question what does the future hold for the ball gown?



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