



LONDON FASHION WEEK

MUSE.



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Editor's Note

It was always going to be difficult trying to narrow down the myriad of captivating catwalks across London Fashion Week to include in this supplement. We attempt to convey the drama, beauty and sheer magnificence of the most innovative presentations, from Ashley Isham's ornamental headwear to Gareth Pugh's ten year anniversary catwalk show.

We spent five days chasing down the best presentations and scouting the most stylish on the streets. There was barely a moment to stop for food and drink except for the somewhat unsatisfying free coconut water and peculiarly flavoured popcorn provided by Somerset House.

The whirlwind of fashion-chasing was addictive.

A backstage visit to Topshop UNIQUE's catwalk show was a high point for the team, shedding light on the rock-and-roll lifestyle of celebrities and designers.

In contrast, ordinary fashion bloggers brushed shoulders with Vogue's elite camera crew. As well as this, street style juxtaposed designer labels with upcycled vintage pieces. This illustrates that perhaps the fashion world is more integrated than it appears on the surface.

Next season, I'm sure that designers will once again go beyond expectations in shaking up the fashion industry. Let's just hope that the British Fashion Council's choice of refreshments improves by then.

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GARETH PUGH

The highly anticipated ten-year anniversary show focuses on female empowerment and a British revolution that goes far beyond fashion

Words and photography by JAMES HOSTFORD

Gareth Pugh's return to London Fashion Week was dark, intense, and captivating. The critics' favourite designer sent an army of gothic warriors marching through the marble hallways of the capital's Victoria and Albert Museum.

Pugh broke from his trademark monochromatic colour palette by crudely smearing Saint George's Cross across the models' faces. The arrestingly stark makeup encapsulated the show's themes of passion, combat, and sacrifice.

The show was presented in a cavernous,

marble-floored hall in the eerily quiet V&A. The sound of heels clicking against the stone echoed as members of the audience took their seats. Lonely spotlights in the corners of the room provided scant relief from the hall's consuming darkness.

The show began with a short film directed by Ruth Hogben, depicting a young woman preparing herself for sacrifice. The actress cut off her long blonde hair, covered herself with red paint and then set herself alight, setting the scene for a collection of military silhouettes.

The flames from the video continued to cast a sinister glow over the catwalk as the first model marched forward.

The figure that emerged was clothed in a flowing skirt, a leather tabard, and a Roman helmet. The resemblance to Britannia served as an unambiguous reminder that this was a homecoming show.

Elsewhere in the collection, the military theme grew clearer. The rigidity of above the knee patent-leather boots forced the models to march with identical intensity. Jackets were fas-



-tened with neat rows of polished silver buttons. Helmets were secured with bright silver chains, swinging angrily in time with the march.

Pugh reminded us of the femininity of his warriors by juxtaposing the stiff textures of the military-wear with soft fur coats and inflated duvet-like dresses. The contrast between textures amplified their effect, embedding them in the memories of the audience.

The pattern of strong contrasts permeated throughout the show. One model wore tight black leggings below a stiff leather tabard, exhibiting the curves of her hips but hiding those of her chest. Another wore a luxurious long-haired busby hat alongside a dress with a stiff, high collar. Polar opposites were employed in the styling of the clothes as well as the textures. Waist-hugging dresses were fused with

high collars and broad shoulders. The effect was to stress the femininity of Pugh's warriors without deteriorating their strength. Just like the figure of Britannia, Pugh's soldiers were defined by their femininity, but they still proved incredibly powerful.

The final model in Pugh's breathtaking show embodied the feminine warrior theme with perfect clarity. She was bare-chested, wearing a Roman helmet and a flowing skirt, and carrying an immense scarlet-red flag. The audience's deafening applause affirmed that Pugh deserved the hype surrounding his catwalk presentation.

London was clearly glad to welcome back the designer, although it isn't clear if this feeling is mutual. Pugh recently confessed: "This city is where everything started for me, my entire creative family is here,

so it's in everything I do. It's my home." However, the brutality of this show suggests that the creativity inspired by living in London is not derived from a positive experience. The dominance of matte blacks, the roughly cut hair, and the smeared face paint suggests that London inspires pained creativity for Pugh. The intense football chants asking, "Who are you?" playing throughout the show hinted at the designer's bitter-sweet national identity.

The initial impression of the makeup was that it was a celebration of his nationalism. On reflection, it seems that Pugh used his show to applaud feminine warriors like Boudicca and Joan of Arc for standing up to oppression by using masculine strength. The flag carried by the final model of the catwalk resembled more the flag of revolution than that of England.

F E L D E R F E L D E R

Laser cut outs and fur bring a new twist to familiar silhouettes

Words by GRACE HOWARTH Photography by JAMES HOSTFORD



Set against the backdrop of the Freemasons' Hall on the Strand, the FELDER FELDER show was bustling. The marble flooring and arching gateways gave the show a sophisticated and palatial impression from the outset.

The show was highly anticipated, attracting prominent members of the British fashion industry. Vogue editors and members of the *Made in Chelsea* cast alike graced the front row.

The collection itself featured a range of

heavy, full-hooded, Inuit-inspired fur coats in outlandish colours, such as turquoise and purple, with a beautiful finale creation in red.

The evening wear collection was comprised of gothic leather dresses with sheer chiffon necklines decorated with black embroidery, chokers with low plunge-neck dresses and tops with luxurious sequined sleeves which were layered under slouchy black boyfriend blazers.

The collection was then given more

sparkle with rose gold coordinating skirts and jackets and laser cut out crop tops in red and black leathers, with the patterns designed to imitate tiger stripes. This concept was also used in the layout of the sequins on the tops.

The daywear collection comprised of lovely floaty blouses and full length dresses with chic, small ruffle sleeves, accessorized with delicate metal chain belts slung around the waist. This silver detailing was also used for the bands on the elegant, floppy head-

wear. The inspiring collection was finished off with sheer tops and skirts adorned with grid patterns of gold glitter.

The talented twin designers, Daniela and Annette, appeared during the finale to much applause, with Daniela carrying her baby son. By making an appearance on stage, the sibling team managed to create a personal connection between the FELDER FELDER label, their designs, and the audience viewing this impressive example of art and creativity.

Lucas Nascimento

Summer comes early with Autumn/Winter florals

Words by MELISSA TEMPLE Photography by JAMES HOSTFORD

Lucas Nascimento put a tropical spin on his trademark knitwear this season, bringing in splashes of vibrant purples and delicate floral patterns to his latest collection. The designer graduated from the London College of Fashion in 2008, and has since then been taking the world of fashion by storm, creating a range of classic and luxurious designs with a futuristic slant.

The show was short but sweet, however that's not to say that Nascimento didn't pack a punch in the time he had. The models were accompanied down the runway by a deep and disjointed baseline, creating an atmosphere of empowerment, while encompassing the otherworldliness of the collection. Sometimes the simple things are the most effective and Nascimento's set, or lack of it, was no exception; the white-washed room truly allowed his designs to 'pop' – if Nascimento was aiming to make a statement with this bold collection then he certainly succeeded.

The Brazilian designer is known for his 'knitwear that doesn't look like knitwear', and this collection was no different; the

models sported a range of garments from knee length skirts garnished with silver tinsel, to shimmering bronze spaghetti-strap vests. Nascimento doesn't just do knitwear though: his show also featured designs in brown and olive leather, bringing another on trend fabric to the collection, along with a warm yet modern feel. In contrast to his September 2014 show, that saw the models smouldering down the runway in a range of burnt orange designs with crew cut necklines, the sharp and elegant V neck plunge was a standout feature in this show. The boldness of the necklines perfectly complements the graceful silhouettes created by his unfitted trousers and jumpsuits.

Nascimento's choice of colour palette brought more warmth to the catwalk than his February 2014 collection. Instead of cool, frosty blues he turned up the heat with a range of rich yet comforting hues, from warm reds to bursts of orange, most frequently seen on his floral designs. If this incredible collection is anything to go by, then we'll be on the lookout for subtly shaded leather, bursts of vibrant colours, and plunging necklines this winter.



Central Saint Martins MA

The institution showcases its students specialising in the eccentric

Words by DEBORAH LAM Photography by JAMES HOSTFORD, BEKI ELMER

The Central Saint Martins MA 2015 showcase at London Fashion Week shook up all notions of fashion as 'wearable art'. While the 'art' part is undeniable, 'wearable' is dubious, as the designs ranged from outlandishly oversized outerwear and materials resembling confetti explosions, to pieces covered in phallic looking appendages. Alma mater of industry giants like Stella McCartney, Alexander McQueen and Gareth Pugh, Central Saint Martins promises a bright new generation of designers.

Starting with a bang, Matty Bovan opened the show with a whimsical collection packed with glitter streamers, large ornaments and chiffon covered wire frames, the last of which nostalgically resembled the fairy wings you wore as a child. Named as one of the two winners of the L'Oréal Professional Creative Award at the end of the night, Bovan's creations were a five-year-old girl's dream come true. Saying this, some of them were slightly haphazard, with his finale piece looking like giant, swinging dream-catchers draped over the model. Many of his designs had the potential to be beautifully sculpted, especially the ones with wing-like frames, but the disorderly structure made them seem chaotic.

The show had a distinct lack of structured collections, with a lot of designers preferring to drape oversized pieces, such as swing dresses, rather than going for a more tailored finish. Some models looked

as though they had freshly laundered sheets hanging from them, while others appeared to be donning bin bags, with designs from Samuel Guidong Yang having an unfortunately uncanny resemblance to the household staple. The collection was, however, redeemed by a surprisingly stunning combination of quilted neon yellow trousers and loose blouses with minimalist silhouettes.

The second L'Oréal Professional Creative Award winner, Beth Postle, successfully paired bold, comic book-esque prints with well-draped shapes, giving the 2D pop art print some interesting dimensions.

Equally, the work put into the painstakingly structured and precisely sculpted collections of some designers was well-rewarded; Hayley Gundmann's intricate knitted work was unwieldy and impractical to wear, but would make any artist proud. But by far the most stunning display of architectural mastery was Krystyna Kozhoma's collection, which saw the models wearing simple silhouettes so as not to distract from the giant, metal braided rope structures that were wrapped around them, transforming the models into living sculptures.

Some of these wearable sculptures strayed a little too far from 'fashion': Xinyuan Xu's womenswear collection featured tentacle-like features that looked suspiciously phallic. Deliberate or not, the cactus-like



attachments were not very integrated into the body of the piece.

Despite the tenuous wearability of the clothing, there were a few trend take-aways. While some features of the show, such as heels for men, stranded-on-a-desert-island rags and books strapped to crotches will (hopefully) never take off, interesting textures, particularly furry and fuzzy fabrics, seemed to be a running theme with all the designers. Yushan Li's felt-like pieces were covered in sufficient lint to make anyone feel itchy, but similar fuzzy textures added interesting twists to classic silhouettes.

Some more mainstream trends included swing dresses and blouses of the same silhouette; a popular choice for a lot of the womenswear designers, and ankle-baring deep trouser leg turn-ups the equivalent for menswear.

Many of the menswear fashion students, following the trend of androgyny, put their male models in crop tops, some even baring midriffs. Designer-to-watch, Charles Jeffrey, built upon this intriguing trend, implementing a combination of extremely highwaisted trousers with stiff, starched collars. Geek revival may be the trend but his ill-fitting bottoms with shirts tucked in all the way is a little too geek to be chic.



Marko Mitanski

A showcase spectacular with monochromatic Victorian styles

Words by BEKI ELMER Photography by JAMES HOSTFORD

Avant-garde elegance mixed with disturbing skeletal structures characterised Marko Mitanski's Autumn/Winter 2015 catwalk show.

Mitanski is a Serbian designer, who was educated at The College of Design in Belgrade. His work gained international attention after the success of his 'Lady Macbeth' collection, which incorporated his trademark antler headpieces and dramatic, sculptural, corseted jackets. With celebrities such as Lady Gaga and Paloma Faith sporting his unique statement pieces, he is well-known internationally for his designs which blend the boundaries of the gothic and the supernatural.

This collection was no different from his usual bizarre presentations; a collective gasp resounded from the audience as the first model graced the catwalk floor. Her face was veiled with a black-jewelled mask, her bodice equally as intricately adorned in a lacey, see-through all-in-one. Most strikingly, her arms were encased in a feathered shawl, heavily structured to look like the wings of a raven.

The striking impact of Mitanski's first design of the collection did not wear off. Models continued to walk stiffly and slowly down the catwalk to the sound of random, syncopated noises. Sewn into

black corsets and leather trousers, their movements eerily mirrored those of a zombie, with greased back, black spray-painted hair and red eyes resembling something out of your worst nightmare.

Mitanski's designs are inspired by the forms of nature, with a particular focus on the skeletal structure of birds and reptiles. Certain designs featured creepily realistic bones that appeared to be protruding out of the clothing, most notably the black spinal cord escaping out of a Victorian style jacket. By combining the historical and the natural, he demonstrates his creative and innovative achievements as a designer.

The finale created a perfect contrast to end the show. Instead of the gothic, black painted figures, a white model emerged. She wore a structured, corseted dress, with the neckline shaping around her face and resting just beneath her eyes, allowing the model to convey the mystery of the show through her intimidating stare.

What can be undisputedly appreciated is the laborious detail put into each of Mitanski's designs, and his entire collection. Many of the pieces resembled stunning costumes you would find in a blockbuster film, making his collection one of London Fashion Week's most memorable.



Soojin Lee

War and peace collide on a refreshingly warm winter runway

Words by BEKI ELMER Photography by FIONA HILL

Many of London Fashion Week's designers truly embraced the dark winter spirit this season. Pugh's gothic leather bodices, Mitanski's monochrome palette and Topshop UNIQUE's plush furs are typical examples of conventional approaches to the season. Soojin Lee, an emerging designer from South Korea, clearly had a different tactic. Much of her collection boasted an array of colour; a refreshing and welcome change to the more traditional winter scene that other designers have embraced.

Her collection was intriguing owing to its severely contrasting elements. The beginning of the catwalk saw models wearing militaristic, camouflage jackets. The strong, tailored shape of the jacket lapels gave them a harsh, androgynous character. The designs were intimidating as they were decorated as though ammunition were stitched onto

them. A model emerged in a collared sleeveless dress, with an illuminated orange cartoon fighter jet printed onto it.

This section was followed by long, flowing backless dresses, gushing in succulent oranges and reds. These were complemented by sky blue blouses, effortlessly tucked into Moroccan style midi skirts. The designer used land-

this collection represented a transition. Speaking to the designer backstage after the show, she remarked: "I just wanted to give the people of the world a message. Peace is my whole theme, this is why I used a military look in the beginning and then it changed into flowery and pinky colours and feminine dresses - they mean peace for me." When questioned about where this idea came from, Lee answered, "I was reading a newspaper one day and found that many people have a lot of fear of the world. I want to change this world and try to convey doing so in my collection."

It's clear that, as an emerging designer, Lee's fresh ideas for Autumn/Winter are well received. Behind the scenes of the show, a significant queue of press and fans waited to hear her thoughts on the collection. Lee, in her own way, is beginning to make her mark on the world.

"I want to change this world"

scape backgrounds, such as a desert with a blue sky to decorate shirts, and natural prints like flowers to capture a more feminine tone in her dresses. Makeup consisted of a rush of red eye shadow, giving the models an incredibly striking look.

It is important to note that, for Lee,



Diamond Dogs and Demons

Sassy pirate meets eerie Red Riding Hood in Pam Hogg's theatrical London Fashion Week show

Words by BEKI ELMER Photography by DEBORAH LAM



Pam Hogg was clearly one of the most anticipated shows of the week. Queues snaked around London's Freemasons' Hall for an hour leading up to the presentation. We watched as celebrities such as Noel Fielding, Nick Cave and Stephen Jones took their seats on the front row. The designer was running fashionably late, the photography pit was heating up and tensions were rising as we caught fleeting glimpses of models rehearsing backstage.

Hogg is well-known for her controversial designs. In previous years, skimpy bodysuits with genitals on full display and wacky chained underwear have shocked catwalk audiences. The Glasgow College of Arts graduate shot to fame after her catwalk show with collection 'Hyper Hyper' in 1985, and since then her designs have been worn by Lady Gaga, Rhianna and Kylie Minogue, confirming her resounding international success. After a stint focusing on her music career, when she supported Debbie Harris and the Pogues, the Scottish designer, to our relief, returned to the London Fashion Week catwalk in 2009.

As the lights dimmed and the spotlight hit the exquisite archway in Freemasons' Hall, a wolf's howl marked the beginning of the runway's soundtrack. The show began with a petite Red Riding Hood adorned in a poofy silken red crop top, and matching flowing cape, with a bouquet of branches in her hand. She walked disconcertingly slowly, her long eyelashes and vacant expression making the atmosphere uncertain. After this initially tense scene, David Bowie's 'Diamond Dogs' began to blare from the speakers. This was followed by an eclectic mix of models taking to the catwalk in fierce rock-and-roll style.

The show was a warped, outlandish fairytale. The models and their walk differed depending on the character they were playing. Little Red Riding Hood was enchanting, her more cautious walk adding a haunted tone to the atmosphere. This entirely contrasted with the stag-headed female succeeding her, who strolled majestically down the catwalk. A striking chieftain donned a black feather headdress and

studded, strapped crop vest accompanied by brown suede shorts, adding another element to the story.

Bowie was a clear theme across the catwalk. His iconic, glam-rock look was replicated across several of the designs. A red-Mohicaned, pirate-patched male model epitomised the pale faced Bowie look. Strutting down the catwalk in six-inch heels with particular sassiness, the androgynous model was a clear favourite among the audience.

70s catsuits also made an appearance: the first was see-through and netted, modelled by a tall, dark haired model with a shocking, square-cut mullet. The two models flirted with the cameras tremendously, taking extra care to make sure those playful and rebellious looks were captured on camera. The show wasn't about shocking the audience, instead it played to a concept. It was flirtatious and more charming than ever before.

While the presentation represented a theatrical story, some key trends were prominent across the show. Both the red haired pirate and flower-adorned model were wearing structured, shiny, metallic capes; these may well be set to takeover from the current winter blanket look in the next season. Textures also played a large part in the show. Patent leather was a key trend across the board, whether this was strapped across the chest, or brown leather stitched onto black. The colour palette was daring, with splashes of patent shiny reds and blacks mirroring the dramatic theme of the catwalk.

The headpieces were works of art. Ranging from vibrant bouquets of flowers, to black structural spheres, headwear completed the overall theatrics of the catwalk. Most prominent of them all were the tall branches attached to a model adorned in a high-necked ruffled cape, with a raven nestled and arched over the model's face. From a distance she looked majestic and stag-like, however, up close the image is much more morbid.

What seemed most potent about the show, and what made Hogg's presentation stand out among others at London Fashion Week, was her choice of models. Compared to the archetypal tall, slim physique and chiselled facial features of catwalk models, 'Diamonds Dogs and Demons' incorporated an array of unconventional personalities.

'It girl' Alice Dellal was juxtaposed with a shorter, petite Red Riding Hood, who again was a stark contrast to the more mature model sporting an eye patch and shaved



“I thought they were quite a lot like the costumes in *Lucifer Rising*, the Kenneth Anger film. It had that demonic quality to it”

- Noel Fielding

head. Although on the surface the catwalk seemed to demonstrate an array of misfits, underneath, it exemplified the need to diversify what we see as a typical model.

As Hogg herself walked alongside the models during the show's finale, a standing ovation welcomed her, illustrating a deep and resounding respect for the designer. Noel Fielding remarked after the show, “I've been to quite a few of Pam's shows. I really liked the all-in-ones that she used, but I thought the overall collection was amazing, the green trousers were absolutely stunning. I loved the capes as well; I thought they were quite a lot like the costumes in *Lucifer Rising*, the Kenneth Anger film. It had that demonic quality to it.”

It is clear that Hogg has successfully united her musical past with Bowie's unique concept album and transformed it into a theatrical catwalk phenomenon, while also conveying the message that it's not always fashionable to be conventional. This reflects a less-exclusive side to London Fashion Week



Ashley Isham

A stunning showcase of oriental and classical influences

Words by CHRIS OWEN Photography by JAMES HOSTFORD

With their flowing lines, striking ornamentation and geometric headwear, the designs of Ashley Isham balance drama and elegance. Isham brings this talent for effortlessly majestic designs to his Autumn/Winter collection, which was showcased at the Freemasons' Hall on the opening day of London Fashion Week.

As the exquisite hall begins to fill with an eager audience, 20s swing is interwoven with swelling, futuristic synths. No one quite knows what to expect from the man who, in Spring/Summer 2014, offered an extensive range of low hanging bucket hats with eye level cut-out designs.

Isham's designs are often distinguishable by their oriental and classical influences, so, as the distinctive tones of a guzheng silence the audience, and a soft, yellow lighting is raised on the runway, we are prepared for the flowing wraps and embossed geisha-inspired forms that begin to grace the room.

However, as a trap beat penetrates the composition and the first model emerges into full view, a tasselled veil, cascading from the model's fanned head piece, waterfall-like, to her feet, sets the tone for this collection. Striking exaggerations and elegant embellishments to loose, free-falling designs are

the order of the day.

It's a refreshingly long show that propounds full immersion in Isham's creations. Asymmetrical silken wrapping and panelling are the predominant features of the collection's first phase, with loosely tailored floor length pieces accessorised with subtle belting. Diagonal trims introduce more tasselling, reminiscent of the ornamentation of everyday drapery. Plush, dramatic turquoises and reds and intricate embossing punctuate heavy blacks and greys for a regal, mystical feel.

A curious rope effect is introduced, encasing the model's neckline like an industrial scarf. It becomes apparent that cords of varying thickness are a theme of the collection. The fine tasselling becomes progressively more severe, culminating in this heavy-duty, nautical binding.

As items become more purposefully tailored and textures more diverse, there is a sense of passage through time; corduroy and quilting are incorporated as outfit staples, and bombers and biker jackets are subjected to brutal fur treatment. Isham plays with everyday forms and outlandish fabrics, and seems to have plenty of fun in the process. As silken capes and monochrome gingham come into play, it's entirely impossible to pin down any cohesive themes span-



ning across the collection – it's a case of absorbing, rather than observing.

Yet, the most arresting consistency is observed through Isham's headpieces. Fixed, curvaceous panels, in every sense at odds with the smoothness and intricacy of the models' features, are adorned with LEDs and placed like fascinators atop scalps. They make for jarring additions, yet bring an ethereal fluidity to the collection itself. As a body of artistic work, it's hard to pin down.

There are so many elements at work and in conflict.

Yet Isham succeeds in creating something beautiful from an uneasy blend of substances and styles. Monochrome meets purple furs and adorned helmets collide with shimmering cloaks, yet a sense of Isham's vision seeps through without restriction. The collection is a hall of mirrors and the fascination stems from its inconsistency.



Zeynep Kartal

Taking inspiration from the magical realm of Narnia, Kartal's smooth and sophisticated pieces come to life

Words by CHARLOTTE WAINWRIGHT Photography by JAMES HOSTFORD

Zeynep Kartal's Autumn/Winter catwalk show transported its audience into a wonderful world of the mystical and the enchanted. Influenced by the magical realm of C.S. Lewis' Narnia, the collection presented a battle between light and dark, and good and evil, as Kartal's fantasy world spilled through into reality.

The sense of battle was reflected through restrictive and severe silhouettes with clean, tunic effect necklines, excessively long sleeves, and elongated column dresses. Texturised leather gowns and chainmail-effect bodices added a military element to the designs, with many of the pieces reminiscent of body armour.

A touch of femininity was apparent in the collection through sheer, silk panelling, fish-tail detailing and ostrich feather hems. Fitted, full length dresses celebrated the sensual aspects of the female form, as did the daring bodysuits and barely-there embellishments, carried through from her previous collections. Taking references from traditional Turkish embroidery from her

hometown, Konya, Kartal's collection was saturated with beautiful, delicate adornments, a key trend this A/W.

Using lurex silk threads, the designer gave her embellishments a modern twist, through innovative placements on translucent, wide leg, organza jumpsuits and wool capes to take you from day to night.

The colour palette consisted of muted tones set against darker hues and metallic shades, including warm neutrals and soft whites. The mystical element of the collection was reflected in icy seafoam greens, deep midnight blues, and flashes of metallic khaki bronze.

Kartal's signature style of smooth and sophisticated elegance was certainly not lost in her offering for AW15. Sleek, high necklines gave the pieces a sense of class, while the bold embellishments and metallic waistbands allowed the collection to retain a contemporary feel.

Adding a mystic yet military element to her signature designs, this was an enchanting offering from an assured designer who never fails to bring a touch of opulence to the catwalks of LFW.



Xiao Li

The world of consumerism hits the AW15 catwalk

Words by GRACE HOWARTH Photography by FIONA HILL

The gallery room of Freemasons' Hall boasts imposing 18th century portraits that line the walls, providing the perfect setting for Xiao Li's much anticipated new winter catwalk collection. Chinese born Xiao graduated from the London College of Fashion and went on to receive her masters from the Royal College of Art.

Based predominantly in London, Xiao Li's work displays a bold clash of colours, materials and shapes, wildly contrasting with the history of the location. Her collection was heavily influenced by the themes of 'mass consumerism' and 'genetically modified foods'; the Press Release of her show was innovatively captioned: 'Keep healthy, Avoid Fashion!'. No doubt her aim was to cause a stir, and that's exactly what this bold winter collection achieved.

Models showed off oversized, cowl neck, knitted jumpers and coats, plastered with prints of tomatoes and giant perfume bottles. There were ponchos with artsy patterns of roads and tracks

jumping out at the audience in neon shades of orange and yellow, over backgrounds of cerulean blue, maroons and purples.

Some of the designs were reminiscent of the computer animation of 90s game consoles, while some coats had stencil cut outs of trench coats stitched over them, creating a bizarre look. The pieces were then accessorised with silicone shoes and tiny bags. The bags themselves were box-like with an almost wooden finish, coloured in primary reds and blues, resembling children's toys, which added to the fun and comic element of the collection.

In contrast, the hair and makeup was harsh. The models sported black, blunt bob cuts with thick fringes. Before the show, we ventured backstage to capture the atmosphere of the preparation and work that goes into pulling off a catwalk show of this scale. We were able to see the models in their more natural element, which made for a refreshing change.



Somerset House, Designer Showrooms



"Yes, there is a theme of negativity this time. Last year I wanted to save the world, this year I just want to fuck the world"

- Larry Tee, from London based clothing label Tzuji

Topshop UNIQUE

Luxe furs, earthy tones and nostalgic prints dominate Topshop's latest collection

Words by CHRIS OWEN Photography by JAMES HOSTFORD, CHRIS OWEN



Topshop UNIQUE's 2015 Autumn/Winter collection thoroughly encompasses the brand's talent for engineering a perfect balance between designer ambition and high street pragmatism. Amid the avant-garde storm conjured by a cocktail of Gareth Pugh's gothic architectural collection, and Pam Hogg's demonic creations, Topshop's collection brought fashion back to reality. The subtle yet distinctive colour scheme, and sharp, attentive cuts of the now seminal British brand were London Fashion Week's cup and saucer of English tea – a refined comfort in a sea of the surreal.

The sweeping, cavernous halls of the Tate Britain were converted into a runway of breathtaking scale and grandeur for the highly anticipated show. With one of the most crowded photographers' pits of the week and an array of well-known faces in the front row, including Topshop's own Cara Delevingne and brand chairman Sir Phillip Green, the label's firmly established reputation was evident.

Topshop has spent many a season proving its worth alongside the likes of designer powerhouses such as Burberry and Vivienne Westwood. Now, its own sizeable niche, carved with deliberation and diligence over the last decade, affords the brand the kind of freedom and nonchalance formerly reserved only for Britain's most prestigious houses. This assuredness permeates through the indifferent delay of the showing, and the claim made on the issued document about the brand's 'far-reaching hold on forward-thinking fashion'.

As the lights are brought down and tension builds to the sound of synthesised strings, the silhouette of a model appears on the runway, commencing the first phase of the collection - daywear. Beiges and speckled grey faux-furs prevail, worked into duffel coats and shift dresses creating a clean, textured finish. Flashes of dark brown leather are introduced, first in the form of streamlined hunting boots and later as a high waisted, figure hugging trouser. A distinctive, sparse thistle pattern runs throughout the collection, first in purples and greens over a white day dress, and then in yellows over an autumnal ochre on a similar garment. Three striking tartan numbers follow the thistle prints, juxtaposing brown and clay tones with more heavy fur detailing, setting this phase of the collection firmly in the realms of rural and pastoral chic.

Some subtle structural shifts move the collection into its second phase: formal or office daywear. Fresh colour palattes are introduced via a short, sky blue skirt and blazer combination, set over the same tone of ochre, this time worked into a loose fitting, v-neck shirt. Skin tone wax-effect leathers are next, appearing as a flared knee length skirt and a precisely tailored, minimally ornamented overcoat. Sky blue cottons and wools transform to glossy vinyl in austere phthalo green as the collection begins its transition from purposeful chic to energetic eveningwear.

It is here that the collection breathes most freely and flexes its muscles of showmanship. The thistle pattern returns, now in silver and gold ornamentation over a black velvet skirt and bodycon keyhole dress. Some flashes of lace and a striking bronze vel-



vet manifest as a leggy, slimming dungaree and single button blazer, drawing a flurry of camera flashes from the crowd. The collection concludes with a looser, exaggerated take on earlier fur trims, with black ostrich feather panelling incorporated into a classic black cocktail dress.

The collection is adventurous yet purposeful, exacting yet instinctive – it pinpoints the kind of ideals that we don't recognise as our own until we see them paraded before us with such finesse. It's a show of confidence and contentedness from a label with ideas to match its faith in heritage. This extends backstage, where the atmosphere is not of relief, but of congratulations. Alexa Chung and Pixie Geldof pose with the design team as models mill about indifferently. For all the surrealism and celebrity, this is simply another work environment – a day at the office, where champagne substitutes for coffee and couture is a pair of sensible heels.



Huishan Zhang

Cigarette trousers and champagne service in The Rosewood Hotel

Words by ANDREW ANG Photography by JAMES HOSTFORD



Ever since captivating the hearts of critics at London Fashion Week in 2012, Huishan Zhang has been a regular name on the LFW schedule, proving to be a hot favourite, even among the captious few.

Handpicked by Delphine Arnault (daughter of LVMH's Bernard Arnault), Zhang spent a year refining his craft at the House of Dior in Paris before establishing himself in London. The Central Saint Martins graduate has since seen his dresses – with their alluring, delicate and feminine details – donned by the likes of Kiera Knightley and Gwyneth Paltrow.

Held in the visually stunning Mirror Room at The Rosewood Hotel, where guests were served scones and champagne (think 1920s Great Gatsby opulence), Huishan Zhang's AW15 show enthralled the audience by showcasing a fusion of the sophistication and romance of both eastern and western heritage.

Set to an eclectic mix of gospel and indie rock music, Zhang's breathtaking collection was anything but prosaic. Taking inspiration from traditional Chinese looks, his dresses were striking in colour. The embroidered floral pieces had intricate detailing, while his lace designs were embellished with crystals that glistened perfectly under the dim lights.

Zhang's coats also incorporated these exotic themes, with tiger stripes and subtle golden streaks supposedly paying homage to ancient Chinese dynasties. Zhang explained his inspiration for the show: "A lot of the things I got from old books of China." He went on to expand: "Like the emperors and their hunting jackets – lots of rich texture."



Strong lines and geometric designs – key features in Zhang's signature look – were also pervasive in his show. Such patterns were seen in a rainbow colour palette of crop tops, skirts and dresses. These were brilliantly contrasted with cigarette trousers of unassuming colour and black tights, drawing attention to the top. Through Zhang's artful placement of whimsical patterns, vivid texture was tangible even for pieces presented in the most neutral of colours.

Orla Kiely

Printmaker turned designer shows off her 'geek chic' collection

Words by GRACE HOWARTH Photography by DEBORAH LAM



Kiely's innovative AW15 collection was clean, simple and designed to please. The 70s mid-length swing skirts were reminiscent of schoolgirl fashion, with collars overlaying neat suits, pinafores and cardigans. Subtle patterns and prints, which the Irish designer is renowned for, were dominant in her designs. They came in the form of gridding and a mix of circles and squares in orderly rows, adding another dimension to everyday forms of dress.

Upon arrival, the setting hinted at the designer's subtle humour; a library complete with a reception room was set out, with signs for 'silence' and labelled bookshelves.

Quiet, plaintive music played as the models either perused the shelves in pairs, or sat separately, glancing at the pages. As the scene unfolded, the audience were able to admire the muted hues of pink and cream, olive greens and greys, as well as neat accessories like t-bar shoes and boxy satchels. The models were styled with hair in soft French braids and simple, natural makeup, in keeping

with the theme of the collection.

Chatting to the designer backstage, she spoke of the inspiration behind her collection: Arthur Hiller's 1970 romantic drama, *Love Story*. She informs us that Hiller's work sparked the whole idea of being back at university with "a little bit of geek chic" and "being immersed in maths and science".

Kiely tells us, "We looked at geometrics and mathematics for the print inspiration, and from that we had a lot of fun making my initials out of circles and triangles."

When asked how she went about creating the colour palette, she informed us, "We worked with pastels and chalky brights with greys, blacks and charcoal. There are lots of subtle textures brought out through the mohair too."

The clear display of period influences in terms of cuts and tailoring was intentional, and Kiely further explained that, "We drew from the 50s, 60s and 70s – I love all of those periods, and it's great to play around with them".



Street Style

Fiona Hill and Chris Owen speak to some of the most stylish attendees of LFW about their own unique styles and clothing inspirations

Diana Gavrilina, blogger and stylist

Diana's striking look caught our eye from across the street. We loved the bold stripes and complementary bag, so stopped for a quick chat. This girl is walking proof that high fashion can be both stylish and playful. She wears a candy striped Anna K dress, Stella McCartney shoes, and models a Dolce & Gabbana bag. Not forgetting her tribute to the high street - Topshop earrings! "My inspiration for this outfit came from my mother; she loves bold, bright prints. This Prada coat is actually hers!"



Marsha Campbell, fashion blogger

Marsha combines the colours, textures of this outfit immaculately while also fusing high street and designer brands for maximum receptiveness. "I'm wearing a Topshop jacket and shirt, an L.K. Bennett bag, Topshop shoes and a Chanel brooch. I always go for a 60s look, with a retro take on the modern," she tells us. We ask her what she thinks it is that makes London Fashion Week such a vibrant, stand-out date in the fashion calendar. "I love the shows. I love the eclectic mix. London's the place to be."



Adriana Krawcewicz, artist and fashion illustrator

Adriana has a passion for the kitsch and avant-garde. "I like to dress the way I'd like to portray someone - I like to make an outfit interesting and eclectic," she tells us in regard to her playful composition which incorporates a Prada dress, vibrant faux-fur and leopard print. "I like to collage things, so elements that you'd think wouldn't match at first, once brought together, realise a vision. I like to make clutter coherent." Adriana's use of clashing garments is an easily achievable and striking style.



Nick, medical student from Queen's University Belfast

Nick is aiming for something distinctive yet versatile with his striking red Topman scarf and defined lines of his lightweight hooded coat. "I wanted to create something that is everyday wearable, but at the same time, still has an edge to it," he tells us. "My outfit is basically something that I could put a tie on and go to the hospital in. At the same time I've put on a coat and scarf, and it's London Fashion Week-ready. It's something that you can adapt that has an edge to it, and will stand throughout the day."



York Alumnus, Film and Television Production

This smartly tailored piece exhibits the heritage revolution that is ongoing in the world of suiting and formal wear. This fine twill-tweed, three-piece check suit is from Topman, which is fast becoming the staple label for sharp high street tailoring with a classical inflection. "The tie is Levan, the shoes are Russell & Bromley and the bag is Esquire," this gentleman tells us. We get talking and discover that he is in fact a York alumni, who studied Film and Television Production. We congratulate him on his excellent taste in suits and universities.



Chidera Eggerue, Fashion Design student at the London College of Fashion

The design student's quirky, geomtric earrings and John Lennon sunglasses make for a unique look. Chidera tells us about her punchy, pop-art composition: "My bag is Vivienne Westwood, my earrings are from H&M, my dress is my own design, and my shoes are from eBay." We ask what she has identified as upcoming trends on the catwalk this season. "I feel like the baggy, loose fit is definitely coming back into style. Yesterday, I wore all menswear, but I was able to pull it off as womenswear. There's been a lot of fur on show too."





MUSE.