



Catwalk Edit, Caterina Stratan; Ana Gely A Photography



Catwalk Edit, Kiss Me Deadly; Ana Gely A Photography



When technology meets *style*

London Fashion Week (LFW) – an interesting, almost surreal experience where in many ways I don't feel I belong. My legs aren't long enough, nor am I so creatively fashionable that I'm stopped by paparazzi (thank God). Indeed at times during September's SS15 showcase I felt like I needed to be reprimanded in true Meryl Streep *The Devil Wears Prada* style on the economic and cultural importance of such affairs. In short, the fashions of Fashion Week are a little on the wild side for me.

LFW is part of the big four (alongside New York, Paris and Milan) international fashion festivals held twice yearly. It hosts a stage where fresh trends emerge and drip down into luxury world-city boutiques, to the wardrobes of A-listers, then eventually into the grasp of those responsible for the edits we purchase at street level. Don't get me wrong, it is exciting: pumping catwalk-appropriate house music sets the mood as photogs carting cameras the size of coffee tables seek their next lucrative shot; countless black Mercedes Benz LFW-branded vehicles constantly circle the venue, and exquisitely (or "interestingly") dressed fashionistas, editors, bloggers and designers loiter with champagne waiting for the next show to commence. Then there's Somerset House, an elegant neo-classical landmark overlooking the Thames, and home to this prestigious international event. There was even sun!

I of course was in attendance with the geeks, at home in the media centre where all manner of technology was on offer to enable live Tweeting, streaming, podcasting... As it turns out, I wasn't too far off the on-trend mark, because this year's event has been

hailed as the most technologically advanced Fashion Week to date, reflecting the city's status as a leading tech capital of the world.

Technology is becoming ever more important at not only Fashion Week but to the industry as a whole. The digital world is helping designers build global brands, while social media and bloggers generate huge sales and promotion for new and renowned labels alike.

In fact, there was much buzz about how fashion bloggers now direct trends because of their ability to relate to consumers on a "real" level. This shift towards accessibility too, has seen a spike in new fashion apps like ASAP54 being promoted to coincide with the world's big four fashion events. Contemporary fashion apps out of Australia and the UK are aiming to make all content we encounter "shopable." That is, they (will) allow alluring fashion content to be emotively shared, and the moment we desire something viewed on Instagram, a catwalk, in a magazine or on television, we are able to source and buy it. Instant gratification – and an important commercial opportunity for the fashion industry.

Once we could only ever see Fashion Week images post-event on the pages of a magazine like *Vogue*, but not only are the majority of sets live-streamed now, but fashion houses are devising social media strategy as part of a new collection's launch. House of Holland, for example, developed technology for their website (tryonhouseofholland.com) which enabled users to virtually try on the garments literally as they emerged on the LFW catwalk, customised to the user's own body measurements! Very cool - very *Clueless*.

Topshop got in on the social action by inviting influential Instagrammers to present their views on new season's collections, which were then showcased in Oxford Circus to thousands of engaged shoppers.

Wearable technology was also top of mind. It's been spoken about for a long time, but we're yet to see anything very fashionable surface. Experts at a talk on the topic during LFW agreed it is only in its infancy. Interestingly, during LFW news broke that Burberry chief executive, Angela Ahrendts, is leaving the luxury brand for a prestigious position at Apple. This just three months after Paul Deneve, former chief executive of Yves Saint Laurent also joined Apple. Speculation is now rife that the wearable tech in development at Apple will not only be special, but stylish too.

For those keen to know about the fashion, I did do some homework for you. Unsurprisingly, technology is key in upcoming designs you'll spot this spring/summer. Brights are brighter, punctuated by cool citrus hues as well as striking shades of orange, aqua and hot pink. Vivid graphic botanical and Balinese bloom-inspired prints digitally translated onto soft and sensual fabrics like silk will be popular, and a '70s "flower power" theme will thrive once again. Metallic laminated cotton was seen throughout the showcase; the fabric creates sleek and structured lines with elegant translucent fluidity. Optical illusions are on the way too, in tops and skirts featuring geometric patterns on light coloured fabric, covered by mesh to achieve the look. Clashing colours and outrageous designs will be a feature of soon-to-be-released garments, as will sequins, ruffles and feathers. Your job now is to wear it; Instagramming optional.