



Half-time shows report: Focus and tantalise

Our catwalk editor gives her verdict on the New York and London shows

London 27. February 2009. Sit up and be more focused – that’s how WGSN’s Catwalk Editor Sue Evans described the impact the recession had on designers for autumn/winter 2009/10. WGSN, the world’s leading creative intelligence service, has just published its comprehensive Stylefile for London. The invaluable 15-minute video presentations are produced by Sue immediately after each city’s shows conclude and offer a creative and commercial overview of what was on the runways.

For this season, the 80’s remains the overriding theme, but designers have to be pitch perfect to entice the customer. “Designers are realising they need to offer more than their signatures look to make people want to buy. Consumers will want quality but also something that tantalises – a must-have-can’t-live-without piece” comments Sue.

These are the five key trends to emerge from New York and London:

Locked in the 80s

Designers on both sides of the Atlantic continued their love affair with the decade. While New York went for a full-on flamboyance of Dynasty-style dressing, showing power shoulders (Marc Jacobs, Karen Walker, Miss Sixty), body-con dresses (Alexander Wang, Preen, Rag & Bone) and mini-crinis (Philip Li, Marc Jacobs, Jason Wu), Londoners played with punky rockabilly (Nathan Jenden, Julien Macdonald) or the layered looks reminding of Comme des

Garçons (Armand Basi One, Topshop Unique). “It’s fun and tongue-in-cheek, and will probably be a huge influence on the vintage-loving junior market” says Sue.

Pretty in Pink

The stinging Schiaparelli pink that made a surprise appearance on the New York runways had evolved to bubblegum and orchid shades in London. The Big Apple saw the colour working perfectly with the 80s look, but also looking newly luxurious in plush wool as a new outerwear colour (Marc Jacobs, Tommy Hilfiger), while in London Roksanda Ilincic and Nicole Farhi were its champions.

Biker girls

The black leather biker jacket got a new lease of life this season referencing Madonna’s ‘Desperately Seeking Susan’ outfit. “It’s been reworked for the Noughties with cropped and abbreviated silhouettes, deep ribbed welts and biker-jacket derivatives in the shape of dresses and skirt’, comments Evans, adding the best in New York was at Phi (also seen at Alexander Wang, Rodarte and Proenza Schouler). London incorporated the jacket into a punk silhouette for the 80s clubland theme, teaming it with metallics or distressed acid-wash denim (Twenyt8Twelve, Charles Anastase).

Luxe sport

Eminently wearable and perfect for the mood of the moment, the cocooning comfort of elegant luxe sports dressing with easy casual layers creates an effortlessly relaxed silhouette. Sue comments: “In the current economic climate who wouldn’t want the luxury of layered cashmere, jersey and plush wool?” In New York Lacoste, Carolina Herrera and Matthew Ames showed outstanding examples, while London’s designers concentrated on the oversized cocooning coat (Ann-Sofie Back, Betty Jackson).

A plush touch

“It seems in troubled times we all want the feel good factor and seductive qualities of plush-touch velvet to cushion us against the cold winds of the economic chills.” says Sue. “Styling is eminently simple – soft draped dresses, batwing shifts – in rich saturated winter darks or intense golden yellow.” Every weight – from cotton to coat weight – worked and became major themes at Marc Jacobs, Diane von Furstenberg, Christopher Kane, Betty Jackson and Kinder Agguini.

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