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2024/2025 Menswear fall-winter  
FW  
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FASHION  
WEEK



FÉDÉRATION  
DE LA HAUTE COUTURE  
ET DE LA MODE

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Through A Feel For Fashion, Paris Fashion Week® invites you to see and read the analyses, observations and comments of experts in the sector and the fashion ecosystem. Give us the opportunity to see and think about the issues, challenges and horizons of fashion.



**Kurino Hirofumi** is a veritable Japanese fashion icon whose polished and timeless style invariably draws attention when he is attending international fashion weeks. Having co-founded the highly successful, multi-brand store, United Arrows, in 1989, he became a go-to expert on young designers and brands. More recently, he has shifted his focus to various projects that support local manufacturing and craftsmanship while engaging directly with young talents. He also takes an interest in environmental awareness as it relates to fashion.



**What excites you in fashion right now?**

Meeting nice people who have a heart and who put their energy into making excellent production across fashion. At the moment, I'm helping JQ (Japan Quality) team with their projects.

**What is one reason to be optimistic about the state of fashion going forward?**

We should change the negative cycle of overproduction that leads to an excess of sales. So if we can reduce production and minimise the sales, we can see a much more better future.

**In what ways do you think AI might benefit fashion?**

Combining this technology with human skills. My friend, who is a talented chef running a restaurant by herself, said that she will use AI to prepare a dish before she starts cooking it to reduce the preparation time.

This interview has been lightly edited.

**Who or what will drive the greatest change in fashion this year?**

Spiber, an innovative « brewed » protein fibre and its founder, Kazuhide Sekiyama.

**What impact might you hope to have on fashion through your work?**

To keep feeling the « Human/ Humanity » element through [my] work. I hope that this will help me to popularise the mindset that a « too-much-money-driven fashion » system is not healthy for our lives and planet.

**Can you suggest a fashion mantra for '24?**

Human and humanity.



Since 2019, **Yuji Machida** has been overseeing the iconic Japanese magazine, *Popeye*, and its online platform. Coming from *Brutus*, another well-known title, he brings a personable sensibility that comes through from his editor's letters to the fashion shoots. Machida has ensured that *Popeye* is a bible of men's style, culture, etiquette that speaks to Japanese city boys – and the wider world.

**What excites you in fashion right now?**

Compared to fashion with strong traditional elements like Ivy or Preppy styles from a decade ago, it appears that today people are enjoying choosing and wearing clothes that align with their own sensibilities, focusing on factors such as color coordination, size, and silhouette. This trend is particularly noticeable among younger generations, especially those in their 20s. In Japan, vintage clothing from the 1990s and 2000s, but also items like Japanese-made second-hand cars from that era, has become popular. It's quite intriguing to see how these younger generations are rediscovering value in items that the previous generation might have considered as having lost their worth. But while trends may cycle back, they do so in a different way than before.

**What is one reason to be optimistic about the state of fashion going forward?**

I believe there is still much that can be done when considering environmental issues. The fashion industry is at a significant generational turning point, and I am very interested in what the next generation will create during these challenging times.

**In what ways do you think AI might benefit fashion?**

I believe that if it used wisely, it could bring benefits to everything, and if misused, it could have negative impacts on everything. From design to materials, marketing, logistics, and even people's preferences for fashion, everything could undergo significant changes. It's very exciting to see what will emerge in the era of AI.

**Who or what will drive the greatest change in fashion this year?**

We are living in a time when the entertainment industry and the fashion industry are merging. I look forward to the moves of Pharrell Williams, the Creative Director for Louis Vuitton Men. I've seen his shows twice before, and he never fails to entertain. His music is fantastic, and it's truly a 'show,' isn't it? This time, I'm also excited about the Japanese brand Auralee's Ryohei Iwai, who is participating in Paris Fashion Week for the first time officially. At first glance, it may seem simple, but the use of colors and silhouettes is exceptional. In Japan, there is a popularity for brands that pay attention to subtle differences such as fabric texture, touch, and thickness, and develop excellent fabrics from scratch. Auralee is one of those brands.

This interview has been lightly edited.

**What impact might you hope to have on fashion through your work?**

I would be delighted if I could convey the fascination and fun of fashion and culture to young readers through Popeye Magazine and Popeye Web.

**Can you suggest a fashion mantra for '24?**

Not only in fashion but in general, the sensation of « lightness » feels like a significant theme of the times.

Whether fashion, architecture, industrial design or urbanism, **Ian Luna** is a prolific contributor to books that are not only read but collected. He is the author or co-author of *A Bathing Ape* (with Nigo); *Shigeru Ban: Paper in Architecture*, *Carhartt Work in Progress*, *Wedgwood*, *Louis Vuitton: Architecture & Interiors*, *Louis Vuitton: Art, Fashion & Architecture*. As editor, Luna has overseen monographs on Rick Owens, Maison Martin Margiela, Alber Elbaz at Lanvin, Giambattista Valli, Juergen Teller, KENZO, Ann Demeulemeester, Yohji Yamamoto, Manolo Blahnik, Sacai, Nike, OMA and KAWS among others. He was the general editor and contributing essayist for *Louis Vuitton City Bags* and has worked on three books for Pharrell Williams: *Carbon Pressure and Time*, *A Fish Doesn't Know It's Wet*, and *Places and Spaces I've Seen*, for which he was also a contributor.



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**What excites you in fashion right now?**

The continued integration of outerwear and outdoor performance wear in fashion, as I've always loved the interplay between ornament and function. The revival or resurgence of many dormant « heritage » brands from Europe and North America in the last three decades, and their enduring impact on the runway is satisfying to me personally.

**What is one reason to be optimistic about the state of fashion going forward?**

It's suffered from so much greenwashing especially in the last few years, but I've always believed that the revived ethic of reusing, adapting and mending clothing, and the desire to collect the past is one cause for optimism. It doesn't at all contradict the impulse for novelty.



**In what ways do you think AI might benefit fashion?**

In the margins, mostly for communication and merchandising, automating certain production processes? I am still convinced that the warp and weft of fabric, the materiality of it, its structural properties, its existential relationship with the human body is what has given garments and fashion meaning since the dawn of civilization. I work in books, and their bound form — the codex — has not changed for two millennia, so I have very old-timey notions about durability.

**Who or what will drive the greatest change in fashion this year?**

This is less a prediction and more affirmation, and I'm not an objective observer here, but Pharrell's appointment at Louis Vuitton is a culmination of many things. The luxury industry has been commodifying American streetwear and hip-hop tropes for three, four decades now. It's crucial to have someone that The Culture has genuinely admired, emulated and ripped-off for close to three decades be the one finally setting the pace. His name had been bandied around for a similar brief as early as 2007 or 2008, and it was more of a surprise that it took as long as it did.

**What impact might you hope to have on fashion through your work?**

I say it all the time, books are not about now, they are about forever. I have played a hand or have personally documented the complete work (so far) of many figures and brands in the industry and am always grateful to have had the opportunity to help build a canon of fashion and accessories books. I do have an agenda, and it isn't amplifying the modality of fashion culture — you have social media for that. It took a long time for fashion to secure its place in the applied arts in the last century. And it took the erudition of pioneering fashion historians — people I consider my mentors, Harold Koda and the late Richard Martin at the Costume Institute — to bring home the realisation that a Lanvin, McCardell or a Fortuny dress was as full an expression of modernity as any work by Walter Gropius. It sounds awfully grand to want to keep playing my small part in positioning fashion within the modern project.

**Can you suggest a fashion mantra for '24?**

Oh no, with the world such as it is right now, I want to emphasise that whatever we do in fashion is explicitly secondary or tertiary. I love the aspiration explicit in the conception and making of fashion, it's intimation of a beautiful world, the way that it can suggest a prosperous future for as many people as possible, but we aren't saving the world here. It's important work, but so is being mindful of context.

A cursory survey of **Harry Nuriev**'s work confirms that he is constantly thinking outside the box. Whether a living room sectional upholstered entirely in denim, his home comforter of meticulously arranged boxer briefs, or an indoor gazebo covered in historical textiles for the Mobilier National, every creation reflects a mindset motivated by reimagining and recontextualising existing things. Based between New York and Paris, the founder and creative director of Crosby Studios is widely praised for an ever-shifting aesthetic that feels at once irreverent and substantive – always returning to the materiality of spaces and objects. This is why the artist, architect and furniture designer increasingly crosses over into collaborations with fashion brands – Balenciaga, Dover Street Market, Valentino to name a few. In 2023, Rizzoli published his first monograph, « How to Land in the Metaverse. »



This interview has been lightly edited.

**What excites you in fashion right now?**

The people who work behind brands. They are passionate and curious.

**What is one reason to be optimistic about the state of fashion going forward?**

The transformation of the approach to fashion retail.

**In what ways do you think AI might benefit fashion?**

It really depends on whose hands it's in.

**Who or what will drive the greatest change in fashion this year?**

I dream of an app where you can subscribe and land on any clothes or accessories you want and easily return them back after one use. That could be the change.

**Can you suggest a fashion mantra for '24?**

Less is back.

Originally from Dallas, Texas, **Julian Randall** is a fashion writer and scholar living in England. A doctoral award from the Arts & Humanities Research Council brought him to the other side of the pond. He's currently earning a PhD in Fashion and Clothing from the Manchester Fashion Institute, where he researches Black men's fashion consumption for his dissertation. Julian also works as an editorial fellow at The Business of Fashion, having received their third annual Next Generation Black Journalists Fellowship. In December, he contributed an incisive article to the platform that explored how fashion schools are preparing students to better understand the outcomes and implications of AI. With more stories in the pipeline, his voice will be one to follow as he brings our attention to relevant topics within the greater sphere of fashion.

**What excites you in fashion right now?**

All the up-and-coming designers carving out their spaces in the industry. The notions they're confronting and exaggerating, how they conceive of their customers, and the worlds they're building. I tend to think of designers (even if emerging) as not only makers of clothing, but of history. That said, I think their brands are positioned well to fulfill fashion's promises, which are always rooted in a sense of 'newness.' I've also been geeking out over what celebrities wear to the shows. I'm talking about Cardi B, Jerry Lorenzo, Erykah Badu, and of course, Tracee Ellis Ross! They strike the perfect balance between natural style and giving us something to look at, which is the best fashion to me.

**What is one reason to be optimistic about the state of fashion going forward?**

Thom Browne exists. He's making clothes people enjoy and putting on these brilliant shows everyone wants to watch. I'm not sure what else one could want from a brand. I hope this inspires more American designers to produce with a similar level of artistic genius. America is a big, vehemently consumerist place, but it has something to say. On a more micro-level, I'm hoping all the recent fashion newsletters on taste and 'personal style' talk encourage consumers to shop more intentionally.





### **What impact might you hope to have on fashion?**

I want to be the reason someone decides to read about clothes and take what they wear more seriously.

### **Who or what will drive the greatest change in fashion this year?**

Fashion labels that successfully craft and project a holistic brand image will drive change this year. And in a sea of algorithmic content, consumers want honesty from brands: real and persuasive narratives, genuine collaborations, and sincere storytelling (as sincere as the fantasy of fashion can be.) These are central to world-building, and any brand with endurance has found success in doing it. They also point to a greater cultural shift we're experiencing, wherein our tolerance for forced ideas has shrunk, and an appetite for originality has expanded. There's also potential for the bold, unconventional voices shaping discourse to be cemented within fashion's establishment. If it will have them, all the other changes we'll see will be amplified.

This interview has been lightly edited.

### **Can you suggest a fashion mantra for '24?**

'Dressing well is a kind of intelligence; you can think your way to it.'

### **In what ways do you think AI might benefit fashion?**

I recently learned that fashion students are using AI to make fashion films for marketing campaigns. That's really cool. At the moment, I think Telfar is making the most convincing case for artificial intelligence in fashion. It just opens up opportunities to see more novel and exciting things. It can also streamline a lot of operational processes, which, in addition to more creative uses of the technology, is how companies are using it. I think the challenge that fashion brands face when using AI is figuring out how to make it feel authentic – that's ultimately what wins consumers over. But it could be a real game changer for the industry if used when and where it makes the most sense.

Born in 1980 in Tottori, Japan, **Yoshikazu Yamagata** is a fashion designer and educator. After graduating from Central Saint Martins in 2005, he worked as a design assistant for John Galiano. He established his own brand, written afterwards, in 2007 and has been participating in the Tokyo Collections since Spring/Summer 2009. Notably, he was the first Japanese designer to be nominated for the LVMH Prize in 2015 and entered the BOF 500 list in 2019. Applying his interests in education and transmission, Yamagata founded the fashion expression school, Coconogacco, since 2008. In Japanese, « coco » means here but also individual while « gacco » means school. Its unique format lets students learn fashion while exploring the wider world around dressing themselves.



**What excites you in fashion right now?**

Meeting artisans in different parts of Japan and seeing all the different amazing techniques.

« I am not optimistic about the future state of fashion. However, I do see potential in the fundamental power of fashion expression: the care, cure and hospitality of the human spirit. »

**What is one reason to be optimistic about the state of fashion going forward?**

Unfortunately, I am not optimistic about the future state of fashion. However, I do see potential in the fundamental power of fashion expression: the care, cure and hospitality of the human spirit.

**In what ways do you think AI might benefit fashion?**

If AI technology is combined with traditional human techniques and sense of style, we will see new possibilities for fashion expression that we have not seen before.

This interview has been lightly edited.

**Who or what will drive the greatest change in fashion this year?**

I do not know. Maybe it's not someone in the fashion industry, maybe it's a politician. Or maybe it's not a specific person, but war or disaster.

**Can you suggest a fashion mantra for '24?**

This question is a particularly difficult one about 2024. If I had to guess, I would say « Unexpected. »



New York-born and based stylist Edward Bowleg has made significant inroads in the fashion game of late. For one, he put together Travis Kelce's viral Wall Street Journal Magazine cover last year. He has also styled shoots with other high profile athletes such as Carlos Alcaraz and Tom Brady. And, beyond that, he has generated serious sartorial clout with a portfolio including clients like Hermès, Valentino, Marc Jacobs, Prabal Gurung and many more. Thorough, sophisticated and just-a-little-bit-quirky, Bowleg's eye brings a fresh and polished perspective to the industry. Here, his Feel for Fashion.

This interview has been lightly edited.

**What is one reason to be optimistic about the state of fashion going forward?**

A new generation of creatives that are looking to make changes. I think a fresh set of eyes and dreams to challenge current systems is important.

**Who or what will drive the greatest change in fashion this year?**

Technology!

**Can you suggest a fashion mantra for 2024?**

My personal mantra for 2024, at the moment anyway, is « embrace the change. »

**How might AI impact fashion, going forward?**

It would be great to see AI used to help brands operate more sustainably and cut down on waste.

**What excites you in fashion right now?**

The next round of shows is exciting to me. The start of a new fashion week is always a bit like going « back to school. » I'm excited to see what's next.



His long time observation of past and new generations as Director of consumer culture at Nike for 10 years makes French entrepreneur **Pascal Monfort** a key figure for decoding contemporary fashion. Founder of the firm REC, he studies marketing trends and the ever increasing connection between luxury, sports and youth. His experience spans also from 4 years as Creative Director at Equipe Sport & Style magazine, to Art Directing for Issey Miyake to History of Fashion and teaching.

This interview has been lightly edited.

### **What excites you in fashion right now?**

What excites me immensely is to observe that at a time when artificial intelligence is on everyone's lips and at the heart of all debates, young adults passionate about fashion harbor a fascination and express a great interest in printed materials: avant-garde niche magazines, fashion books, posters, and printed lookbooks. This phenomenon is nearly global. The finest independent bookstores on the planet are witnessing the enthusiasm of a new generation of young and informed consumers. We are experiencing the dawn of a new golden age of print, provided that it maintains high editorial and/or artistic quality.

### **What is one reason to be optimistic about the state of fashion going forward?**

Being of an inherently enthusiastic, optimistic, and curious nature, I am inclined to request a response spanning at least ten chapters. To be succinct, let it be known that I am captivated by the level of interest in fashion that I observe among the 18-24 demographic with whom we engage in studies conducted across the globe: in India, Asia, the Middle East, throughout Europe, and in the United States, we make the same observation. Proficiency in style and creativity is immense.



**In what ways do you think AI might benefit fashion?**

I harbor no certainties despite my relentless pursuit of information on the matter. What is certain, however, is that it is primarily the extraordinarily curious and uniquely individual minds that will harness AI for the better. AI is poised to make life challenging for mediocrity

**Who or what will drive the greatest change in fashion this year?**

I hope it heralds the opening of EPHEMERA, the mini fashion documentation center that we are launching on February 26 in Paris for a duration of three months. I invite you to stay tuned for further information on the matter.

This interview has been lightly edited.

**Can you suggest a fashion mantra for '24?**

My mantra remains unchanged, year after year: Be as curious as possible.

**What impact might you hope to have on fashion through your work?**

Striving to ensure that the younger generation discovers in fashion a fantastic source of joy and open-mindedness, rather than it becoming a trap or a path towards perilous banality. We aspire to continue aiding iconic brands in effecting the most judicious transformations to avoid any forms of superfluity and inconsistency. To refrain from squandering energy and resources in vain.



**What is one reason to be optimistic about the state of fashion going forward?**

Fashion is at its best when it evokes conversation and reflects the world around us. This budding generation of fashion creatives (designers, editors, stylists, etc.) has a lot to say about the state of the industry and the way fashion works today, and I remain optimistic about the fact that many of our current frustrations can and will result in positive change.

I'm also optimistic about the fashion itself. Customers seem to be increasingly more daring when it comes to the way they engage with fashion, thanks in part to the way talking about fashion has become once again as popular as discussing film, music, or sports. Fashion is certainly overexposed in the media, but I think this can have a positive effect when it comes to expanding the definition of what constitutes fashion and style for the people outside of the bubble of the industry. We're seeing it with the way the entertainment industry is currently engaging with fashion, progressively leaning into the more niche and bizarre versus the mainstream and generic.

**What excites you in fashion right now?**

I'm most excited about new ideas and designers who are committed to finding novel ways of communicating with the industry and their customers. I recently spoke to Luca Magliano ahead of his turn as guest designer at Pitti Uomo, and he said that maybe the new way of doing things should be going back to the old ways, but with new principles and with today's freedom. That idea has resonated with me, and I'm looking forward to seeing how independent designers can challenge convention and give the big guns a run for their money — literally.

I'm also excited about finding new ways of communicating about fashion myself. I feel like we reached a new level of saturation in 2023 when it comes to discussing fashion, and this will challenge both publications and independent voices to be more nimble and imaginative in the way they can reach audiences moving forward. It would also be great for all of us to be more discerning. Not everyone needs to tell every story.

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**José Criales-Unzueta**, the La Paz, Bolivia-born journalist and Vogue's fashion news writer, has become one of the industry's most exciting and engaging voices. His impressions are consistently insightful, freshly considered and equal parts fashion-technical and contextualised within broader cultural pillars. Plus, he's funny (follow him on Instagram, @eljo-secriales). Although he's in New York during this week of menswear, he'll be back at the shows "with the girls" soon enough.

This interview has been lightly edited.



**Who or what will drive the greatest change in fashion this year?**

My mindset here is twofold. On one hand, I think that the greatest change in fashion will come from the saturation of conversations around fashion. There's a ton of content out there, and I think that we will see a consumer-led fracture when it comes to algorithm-driven trends and style. Barbie and Quiet Luxury in 2023 felt like a peak in this regard, and I expect. Or at least hope, that in 2024 we'll reach an exhaustion point of this kind of Internet-centric trend-cycle and start looking elsewhere. Add on to this the many conversations around personal style we've been having online.

On the other hand, I think that the state of multi-brand retailing will drive significant change this year when it comes to which brands stay relevant and in circulation, particularly when it comes to independent designers who have built their businesses around wholesale. Many of the smaller designers I've spoken to over the last six months are anxious about what's next as their buys become reduced in scale or accounts close. This feels like an inside-baseball conversation, but will impact how insiders engage with fashion, what we wear, and therefore what everyone else wears and has access to.

**What impact might you hope to have on fashion (can be broad or specific)?**

My only hope would be to impact how we talk about fashion in a positive way. I've always hoped to share the access I'm lucky enough to have through my work with my community, and it's been a priority of mine since I started at Vogue to share the access I have through work on my own platforms when possible. I also think that fashion says so much about culture and society, and it's always been important for me in my work to find bridges between culture — pop culture, Internet culture, queer culture, or else — and fashion by telling stories that may sometimes feel niche but are nonetheless important.

**Can you suggest a fashion mantra for 2024?**

This was the hardest question to answer for some reason. I think that we could all use a little more elegance in our lives, in the way we communicate, dress, and address the world around us, but one must never confuse elegance with snobbery (I think that's a Yves Saint Laurent quote?). But also, I find myself in a defiant mood this year, so make of that what you will. My personal fashion mantra, however, is Diana Vreeland's «the eye has to travel.» I think that we could all use some time looking outside of fashion in order to make things inside of it a little more exciting. Too many redux collections and reissues; let's look outwards and forward.

This interview has been lightly edited.

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**Rachna Shah** is the newly-appointed CEO of the global fashion and lifestyle PR powerhouse KCD. Over her long career at the prestigious firm, Shah has helped produce for and promote some of the industry's starriest entities including Hermès, Cartier and the Met Gala. Decisive, thorough and cool under pressure, Shah is among public relations' most influential and recognised figures.

This interview has been lightly edited.

#### **What excites you in fashion right now?**

Menswear is so exciting right now — there is so much experimentation, innovation and glamour in menswear. The recent red carpet season is the perfect example with lots of risk-taking silhouettes, bold choices in jewellery and accessories, and of course the incredible menswear-as-womenswear statement looks.

#### **What is one reason to be optimistic about the state of fashion going forward?**

There are very talented but also thoughtful designers who are growing their businesses and impacts. Grace Wales Bonner, Emily Bode, Marine Serre, Colm Dillane, Aurora James, just to name a few, are using their choices and their platforms to drive the industry forward.

#### **Who or what will drive the greatest change in fashion this year?**

Creativity is the fuel of this industry. With all of the challenges of the retail environment, political unrest and economic uncertainty, it is important allow creativity to bloom and break through barriers.

#### **Can you suggest a fashion mantra for '24?**

Push the boundaries. In design, marketing, events, store activation — we need to challenge ourselves to do better.

*IN THE EYES OF*

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In the eyes of, personal testimonies from key figures  
in the ecosystem who think and make fashion.

# IN THE EYES OF PIERRE BANCHEREAU



Pierre Banchereau, founder of Debeaulieu, takes nature by storm in a bouquet of unconventional inspirations, by Laurence Benaïm.

The famed Parisian florist recently passed his 10-year milestone. How can anyone conceive that, in another life, he was a headhunter? The seeds he has sown over the last decade have grown to become a leading company in the world of art and fashion. His emblem of style involves banishing round, monochrome bouquets from the shelves of good taste. Through his eye, old-fashioned flowers have regained the aura that lilies and roses (too facelessly perfect) had taken from them. Gladioli, ranunculus, dalhias, carnations (his favourite flower) – all this colour blossoms into pictorial notes through his reinterpreted country scenes.

The bouquets are on rue Henri Monnier. The plants and vases on rue Victor Massé. And now he's added a third location to his world: a design studio on rue Duhesme, in the 18th arrondissement of Paris. « Our DNA is to reconcile timelessness and modernity with new combinations of plants and colours, » says this former office worker, who has been fascinated by decorative art, gardens and flowers since his childhood in the Vendée region of western France.

All of this informs his twists – and how he rejects « strict, tasteless bouquets » with asymmetrical, polychrome compositions. He owes his passion to Dries Van Noten and Yves Saint Laurent (« an inspiration of colour, femininity and madness »), as much as to Flemish painting, Mediterranean Baroque and purity. I like to combine Ercuis silverware with Murano glassware and contemporary crockery, asserts Banchereau, essentially a sculptor of transience, who has restored a sense of time and imperfection to his work. « Taste is like an imbalance. I like to create accidents. » This year, he is supporting Sidaction by composing all the bouquets – some 2,000 flowers – for the event on January 25th in a tribute to Niki de Saint Phalle. Art and flowers meet again through a commitment that coincides with responsible choices. As he says, « To raise public awareness of seasonality; to look within ourselves as in nature; to discover the roots of a passion. » A passion that this season is tinged with the colours of fashion: purple, orange, old roses and burgundy.



# IN THE EYES OF NATHALIE OURS

Nathalie Ours is the Paris-based partner of PR Consulting Paris, the international public relations, communications and digital agency set up by Pierre Rougier and Sylvie Picquet-Damesme. She brings a unique perspective to fashion, having worked with Yohji Yamamoto in Tokyo and then in Paris as the Japanese designer's communications director. Her clients include young talents, established designers and LVMH Prize winners. This season's line-up includes Auralee, a Japanese brand appearing on the Paris catwalk calendar for the first time, AMIRI, Juun.j, Kolor created by designer Junichi Abe, Officine Générale and Sean Suen. By Laurence Benaïm.

## **What excites you in fashion right now?**

Creation above all. I have a carnal relationship with clothes. I love working with shapes and I owe this passion to Yohji Yamamoto. Attending his fittings at the studio in Tokyo was a kind of revelation for me. I fell in love with this drive to find the perfect balance between creativity and mastery of construction, imagination and line. When you follow the whole creative process, when you see things coming together, it's fascinating. I keep my childlike eye on things. Fashion shows are living moments. Sometimes a magical feeling is created between the colours, the shapes, the models, the light and the music.

## **What is one reason to be optimistic about the state of fashion going forward?**

The energy shown by all the designers, including the younger generation, who have won the LVMH prize represented by the agency. I'm fascinated by the emotions they transmit, by their own optimism, and that's what gives a positive dimension to the whole creative process. A whole new generation has emerged and is nurturing fashion. The crisis has perhaps given a new impetus to this emerging creativity. In an era of standardisation and conformity, we're seeing a desire for freedom and singularity that is awakening fashion.



### **In what ways do you think AI might benefit fashion?**

What's interesting about artificial intelligence is what it can bring to light in complete contrast. I'm thinking, of course, of craftsmanship, of working by hand, of that sense of imperfection that makes things so human, so moving.

### **Who or what will drive the greatest change in fashion this year?**

What would be beneficial? It's a complex question, because for a brand to grow, it has to sell. And at the same time, I wonder how the market will be able to absorb so many proposals. I think excellence should come first, through apprenticeships, training and quality. There are far too many disposable products. The world of Instagram and Tik Tok, where everything is consumed in a second, can only lead to disaster. At some point, like the market, the brain will no longer be able to absorb so much information. The most beneficial change would be for us to buy less, but better.

### **What should change?**

I would like the City of Paris to provide better support for fashion. For example, making public spaces, museums and institutions available to independent designers at reasonable rates. Everything is becoming increasingly difficult. The situation is worsened by the Olympic Games. It will be almost impossible to get around the centre of Paris from June onwards.

### **How does Asia continue to play a decisive role in your life?**

Asia gives me a different way of looking at things, a different relationship with time, with things, with places, with beauty in general, an open-mindedness.

### **Can you suggest a fashion mantra for 2024?**

Creation must be at the heart of everything. It's what allows us to dream, to make others dream, to feed ourselves intellectually and emotionally.

The creative process, the development of a collection. Focus gives a voice to the designers of Paris Fashion Week®.



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OF  
LOVE

Burç Akyol speaks to Laurence Benaïm about his references and his headspace ahead of his show on the opening day of Paris Fashion Week®. « Seventh collection, 4th show, and the 2nd during Fashion Week. It's not a return to our roots; there are too many of them. It's about honing the pillars. Taking an honest look at them. Talking about what's beautiful to offer. Putting my guts on the line, everything that's closest to my heart. There are a lot of constructed silhouettes, but with a draped element that rounds out the movement. The Orient feels real, more intrinsic.

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### Why the focus on Dreux [in the Loire Valley]?

Because that's where I'm from, having grown up in all sorts of communities, from Turkish to Moroccan to Pakistani. In the suburbs, we always helped each other, there was a sense of shared history. As it happens, the Berçot school closed down, and I met a student who was also born in Dreux, and who was left without an internship agreement. She had all the dreams, but none of the codes. Every Monday evening, I try to guide her. I'd take her on as an intern so that she can move forward. I can see how much we have in common. We both come with an open wound, but we're ready to take on anything.

**« Made in Dreux » is for my tailor father. This adversity has created beauty, and even more enthusiasm. I'm very resilient.**

As for my pillar references? I call them Best of Love, a compilation of the best love songs: Simon and Garfunkel, Maria Carey, W Houston, Elton John, Billy Joel. It's like a stroll down memory lane. I wanted to soak up the emotions I felt [when listening to] my Walkman. It's the preview soundtrack for the show. For the show, I'm working with the group Legacy. There are thirty looks. The black is illuminated by touches of colour, starting with bougainvillea pink. The sophistication is still there, but I'm trying to bring it into the day-to-day, through exclusive day wear: a warmer jacket cut from an unexpected material, or cargo trousers but in a magnificent powder grain.



This interview has been lightly edited.

I'm a French designer, my identity is Parisian. We accept that there are going to be more facets. The important thing is to hold your craft in your hands. Embroidering the sky for those who look at it. Adding poetry to discipline. Reclaiming the cedilla in my first name. It's all there, just like the message inscribed on these yoga trousers: 'I know you are tired; but come, this is the way.' It is about sending a message of hope, to stay strong through adversity. »

RYOTA  
IWAI  
- AURALEE

Bunka Fashion College graduate and Kobe-born Ryota Iwai is the founder of Auralee. While he fell into fashion almost by chance, his training as a pattern designer led to work with several brands and this gradually evolved to designing. He launched his brand in 2015 and ever since, he has held true to a DNA that entails delicate and soft shapes, high quality fabrics and an ever-shifting colour palette.





**What is one reason to be optimistic about the state of fashion going forward?**

I would like to think that there is always a reason to be optimistic about clothing. Even if the world has changed and will change, clothes will always be a necessary – just as this was a hundreds years ago and will be in the future. Clothes will forever have the power of changing people's mood, protecting them from the elements, or being a form of self-expression.

**In what ways do you think AI might benefit fashion?**

Although I am sure that AI will have an impact, inevitably both positive and negative, I am definitely much more an analog person.

This interview has been lightly edited.

**What impact might you hope to have on fashion?**

It has been neither my personal goal nor the goal of the brand to push for some huge impact or change, I think I'm more drawn to the smaller things in life. But I hope for the people who choose us that we might provide a small joy, elevate their mood, feel a little bit more comfortable and confident, and feel like they can express themselves.

**How do you see the evolution of a men's wardrobe?**

Compared to the past, the rules are less conventional, strict and limited. Men's wardrobes have become wider in scope, a bit more free, individualistic, open and less defined. I hope it continues in this direction. I always aim for our work to not define the wearer or push an aesthetic, but to provide an outer layer of themselves, to hopefully elevate and project a more comfortable and naturally confident representation of themselves.

**Are there any other fields you would like to explore apart from fashion?**

Although I have interest in a lot of different things, my most important and favourite hobby is passing time and relaxing at onsen public baths or saunas. It would be great to make some sort of Auralee-related spa, resort, public bath, or something. But for now, it's just a dream.

# SPHERE PARIS FASHION WEEK® SHOWROOM



Jeanne Friot



Lagos Space Programme



OUEST Paris



Rolf Ekroth



Steven Passaro



Valette Studio

From January 17-21, SPHERE Paris Fashion Week Showroom brings together Jeanne Friot, Lago Space Programme, Ouest Paris, Rolf Ekroth, Steven Passaro and Valette Studio. By Laurence Benaïm.

It's a not-to-be-missed event, a Parisian ritual, the Right Bank haven where design is on show. Since January 2020, the FHCM has been holding the Sphere Paris Fashion Week® Showroom, with the support of DEFI and L'Oréal Paris.

Sphere is part of its mandate to support emerging creation and brings together a range of award-winning brands invited to the Official Calendar, selected for their creativity and development potential.

« This is the sixth and final season, » declares Pierre-François Valette. « This experience has enabled us to fine-tune our presentations in a very beautiful space in the heart of Paris, to get press exposure, distribution, and the chance to have a whole organisation planned for us. Soon we'll have to fly the nest, » says the designer and artistic director of Valette Studio. The Winter 2024 collection expresses all the facets of this maturity in a gender-neutral way: « I wanted to pay homage to the golden age of haute couture, so we worked in silhouettes with stripes, tartans, oversized houndstooth with a V of three colours. There's a lot of research into materials. And we're asserting more of an identity. The fabrics and their finishes (silk, virgin wool, organza, technical jersey) also evoke an evening of sophistication and the house's attachment to 'manual' craftsmanship, which has never been more relevant. »

And so it is with these new storytellers who are committed to defending a history, as much as the spirit of their times, whose contours they are redrawing, like Steven Passaro, who is rethinking the men's wardrobe by combining traditional tailoring and 3D virtual prototyping technology. « This season, I tackled the theme of change. I feel an emergency in the air. We feel a greater sense of meaning and connection with the environment. We miss the past, but we want to move forward. » It's a tandem.

Menswear remains the place for all kinds of experimentation, for all kinds of stylistic exercises combining the tailor's hand with deconstruction. What do Parisian Jeanne Friot and her « Coming out » collection have in common with Lagos Space Programme, a design concept based in Lagos around artistic collaborations?

Between Ouest Paris, which revisits the archetypes of urban dressing, and Rolf Ekroth, who draws his inspiration from Nordic sportswear? The answer is undoubtedly the awareness that fashion has to be approached responsibly, integrating streetwear and the tailoring heritage into a multidisciplinary vision. This is how Rolf Ekroth interprets his personal memories of winter sports against a backdrop of polar darkness in 1980s Finland. « The collection's meticulously knitted ski jump suits, leather shorts similar to those worn by ice hockey goalkeepers, bags that mimic racing bibs and reinvented childhood sofas all tell a story of athleticism observed in the comfort of home. » As with Jeanne Friot, personal experience becomes a theme of inspiration, relayed here by evocations. Utility meets autofiction. Between worksite overalls and cross-country ski outfits, the garment reintroduces its protective dimension, like a cocoon to confront not only the cold, but also a world under high tension.



# JEANNE FRIOT - CRAZY IN LOVE



She has a confident stance, her red lipstick expertly drawn. Keep going against all odds, create your own story, get up an hour earlier every day to enjoy reading. By Laurence Benaïm

Somewhere between an essay and a piece of autofiction, her collection unfolds in a narrative akin to Maggie Nelson, author of *(The Argonauts)*. « Making reality your own. » The collection reflects Friot's own image – or rather that of her loved one, and takes the form of a 56-piece inspired declaration. The wardrobe is dedicated to Delphine Rafferty, her other half, who after being Kristelle Koché's muse, dancing for La Horde, designing sets for Desigual, and learning electricity and plumbing, created « Les femmes du bâtiment » just a year ago. Delphine is even part of the totally genderless cast who correspond to the designer's motto for the season: Coming out. She describes it as « a wardrobe that is both real and imaginary, and that explores our lack of references, apart from fantasized images of the *garçonne*. »

« I took up the palimpsest of paint stains and used powerful symbols, like the key hanging from a snap hook. One of the most beautiful gestures in love is to hand over your keys, » she continues. A surreal dress embroidered with almost 50 keys is the masterpiece of this collection, made entirely from recycled Nona Source fabrics. The mastery of the cut is enhanced by an intense palette of yellows, blacks and violets that sound like the notes of a woven score. And from Sonia Rykiel to Vivienne Westwood, the influence of fashion's female masters shines through – without parody, but with a solid rethink.

Tartan coats, “trashy” denim sweaters, second-skin dresses printed with belts (a nod to the couture piece created in one night for Madonna), overalls – their strength lies in the structure and the eye that sets it in motion. As for the seven-league boots, they reflect a more-than-responsible approach: « They were already made from recycled leather. They were red, so we repainted them black. The factory shut down. »



# FIGURE MATERIALISE AT RAINS

For Fall-Winter 2024, Rains continues to make its mark on Paris Fashion Week by spinning a new narrative out of its humble beginnings: the humble rain jacket. With projections to become a €200 million business in the next five years, the Danish outerwear lifestyle brand pared things back with their presentation to allow its audience to look closer at the craftsmanship and detail that goes into one of its special runway creations. The slower-paced immersive experience witnessed models snaking through the show space before they were scanned and 3-D printed into smaller figures.

Co-founders Philip Lotko and Daniel Brix Hesselager considered uniforms and how they have the possibility to allow the wearer to interpret them through their own lens. Individualism, they asserted, is more important than ever. It manifested in the ensuing looks, which spanned a palette nodding to retrofuturism. Mainly, some recalled slick flight suits while others could resemble dressing gowns or house coats. Models wore 3-D printed slides, a continuation of their collaboration with Zellerfeld, the German footwear company. There were pieces that suggested tarpaulins used as protection from the elements. Ultimately, the endless interpretations of the rain jacket felt modern and desirable, even if the garment isn't inherently sexy. « Our ambition is to leave a big mark on Paris, » said Lotko, in a Zoom call, alongside his co-founder, Brix Hesselager. By Paul McLauchlan.



### Could you tell us more about this season's theme?

Daniel Brix Hesselager: 'Figures' is the basis of our theme. We wanted to explore the idea of repetition which is very much reflecting what is going on in the world right now; it's about going back to normal and things happening again and again. At the show, we'll be scanning each look which will then be replicated in small 3-D print figures.

Philip Lotko: Our tendency is to create uniforms but it's how you create a uniform that still allows you to be an individual and embrace your own personality. For me, it's about being yourself despite everything that is happening in the world. There's something true about sticking to your DNA, both as a brand and as a person.

### What would you like us to know about the presentation format?

PL: We're doing a presentation this season to challenge ourselves to think outside the traditional runway format. We wanted to create a more immersive experience for our guests but we didn't want to approach it like a smaller runway. This will give people an opportunity to delve further into our universe. We feel like this collection is even closer to our DNA within outerwear. We're leaning into those shapes to stimulate the idea that you can have a uniform but also [maintain a sense of individualism]. We've added some layers to our classic silhouettes. Our strength remains that we've been so good at keeping our focus on what's already within our universe and staying true to that. It also allows us to be more innovative when it comes to how we interpret the PU-coated fabrics in more interesting shapes, playful and expressive silhouettes.

### How important is the use of technology in what Rains produces?

DBH: Over the last three to five years, one of the biggest extensions we've done is insulated outerwear. We've transformed the brand from a 'rainwear' label to an outerwear label. The whole technical aspect of pulling that dimension closer to our product has been really challenging. This season, we're focusing on light-padded jackets and light-padded products. We're becoming a very clean Scandinavian brand and we're moving towards being bolder. We're also adding a layer of more sophisticated thin insulation which is dominating the looks in the collection. Technology has the power to challenge the creative process and the perception of creativity. In 2024, I don't think it's going to change the industry but it's going to challenge the creative minds behind the brands and it could become a source of inspiration. It's quite significant for technology to go from being used as a tool to an inspiration.

This interview has been lightly edited.

# WALTER VAN BEIRENDONCK - CHEERFUL APOCALYPSE

He flips the pages of his own history while re-composing it in a whole new way as paper collages, cadavres exquis drawings, silhouettes suddenly speaking aloud. Walter Van Beirendonck turns an amused eye on the eighties and the W&LT era, when his collection inspired by the artist Orlan led him to conceive facial prostheses, found in this dada and pop winter themed « BananaWinkBoom. » By Laurence Benaïm.



A smorgasbord of silhouettes combining '80s trousers and inner tube sleeves, tapestry leather masks, panther and camouflage, bowl hats (among the finest designed at the time by Stephen Jones), handbags with legs, coats with porthole loops that recall, in a fluorescent clash, the space flights of Pierre Cardin in the era of survivalism.

Walter Van Beirendonck's strength lies in the way he plays with all the codes, the whole military wardrobe, which he hijacks with the verve of a comic strip artist and the mastery of a Flemish cutting master. The poetry is there, escaping from a poppy feather chapka over a khaki woolen bonnet unearthed from a couture overstock, a jacket with quilted crab claws. « It's like automatic writing, » says the man whose knitwear is in itself a knitted painting. « Finding beauty, even in chaos » is the mantra of a particularly inspired Walter Van Beirendonck: « I played a Frankensteinian art game with my own mind... I found new holes and loops, and hooked in tubes to the deeply Belgian DNA of surrealism. » Says fashion's answer to Magritte: « Freedom is the possibility of being, not the obligation to be. »

Hats off!



# LAGOS SPACE PROGRAMME BRIDGES FASHION WORLDS

For Fall-Winter 2024, the Lagos Space Programme story opens with a fictional British-Nigerian immigrant at the apex of his professional life, invested in his career and their philanthropy, who never loses sight of his African roots. Invited by the oba ('ruler' in Yoruba), to attend a festival in his homeland, the character embarks on a sartorial homecoming journey. Designer Adeju Thompson's latest outing amounts to a collection that deconstructs gentlemanly dress codes refracted through a queer lens and grounded in the nexus of British and African influences.



From *A Life in Fashion: The Wardrobe of Cecil Beaton to Ovation* (a Nigerian magazine he compares to *Hello!*, the British title that publishes stories about high society), Thompson has bridged the two cultures and explored the many ways they interact.

He arrives at this true melding of cultures in an act he calls « decolonizing fashion. » On one hand, there are musings on Britishisms through rigorous tailoring and dramatic coats. On the other, traditional West African garments become modern through the use of contemporary fabrics like wool and silk. Elsewhere, one can find an ancient indigo dyeing technique called *àdìrẹ*, which is employed to emulate the Prince of Wales check. Other styles are painstakingly hand-painted, resembling hand-woven fabrics in their meticulous finish. Quintessentially British Mackintosh outerwear is enriched with elaborate baroque patterns. « I want to celebrate the fact that we live in a global world where people can take from anywhere – so not to see one culture as more important than the other, » the designer explained over the phone from Lagos ahead of arriving in Paris for fashion week. By Paul McLauchlan.

**How did you take the initial inspiration of this fictional character and channel it into the clothing?**

The collection [explores] how he presents himself and the clothing he wears. It starts from his day-to-day life in the UK to the finale of him being the guest of the king at a festival in Nigeria. It's a world-building exercise, so there's a sense of this wealthy person in London who most likely wears Savile Row tailoring. It's like a marriage of Eurocentric dress codes with traditional Yoruba dress codes. It's also a study on good taste. Western perspective often sees itself as the superior culture. I think we're showing how there have been many great contributions from the continent. Of course, there are many sad things happening [in Africa] today, but there are great institutions, high cultures, accomplishments, and amazing stories – and this collection is about celebrating that.

**What techniques did you use in the collection?**

Alongside the tailoring elements of the collection, you have *àdìrẹ*, which is a natural indigo dyeing technique that's been in Nigeria for centuries. In Nigeria, it's very much an art form in a traditional dress context. It's all about storytelling for members of the community. To me, it was quite exciting to take traditional crafts and textiles and put them into a modern context.



### How much does your heritage play into what you do?

Growing up, we read Ovation, which is like Hello! Magazine, and were transported to the lives of amazing Nigerians and Africans doing amazing things internationally. It was fascinating to see these people exist and how they presented themselves at the intersection of where they originally came from and where they are now. The older I get, I find myself referring back to this in my research. But it's not about a historical person, [rather] a person who could exist right now.



This interview has been lightly edited.

### How does your work fit into contemporary African fashion?

People construct expectations about what African design is; but when they see Lagos Space Programme, they realise it might not conform with that idea. It's very much in tune with the Belgian design language. These are codes that inform my practice; I enjoy the work of Martin Margiela and Raf Simons. Also, I love John Galiano and how, in his work, he transports you to entirely different spaces connected to world-building and storytelling. Throughout the collection, we were constantly thinking about how and where he would wear each look. As a designer from somewhere [without] a winter, it pushed us as a studio to make pieces that really work for winter climates because this is a Fall-Winter collection presented in a Western context. It's allowed us to tap into new ideas and make clothing that is very desirable and creative with visuals that are fresh and modern.





# YOHJI YAMAMOTO - INKED WITH FEELINGS

« Emerging from the game that blended them.  
Like fingers on the same hand. »

Immediately, black becomes ink, so that each of Yohji Yamamoto's silhouettes seems both to extend the chapter of a story, and to hold back the time it takes to finish the book. A book in which his contemporaries find inspiration in absences, sprung from an urban western whose ambiguity lies in the Stetsons laced up like corsets. By Laurence Benaïm.

There's that allure, that carelessly knotted lavalère, those supple chignons held up by Odile Gilbert, the indefinable verdigris, those silhouettes both familiar and fresh, expressing another, even more romantic, side of the designer. It's a genuine piece of urban poetry, like the « Tale of the unexpected » or « La Bohème » embroidered in capital letters that stretch out like teffilin. Like madness taking over the world, the colour spreads in red patches over the white shirts, looking like poplin snow in the flames.

Tuxedo Jackets, tuxedo pants, black bow ties: this is the kind of inventory that the master deconstructs by splitting it apart, so as to show couples, partners like Wim Wenders, beyond the shadows that seem to have rubbed off on the day. From Norman Reedus to Warren Ellis, from Max Vadukul to dancer Hannah O'Neill, the cast is impressive, and most of those who parade are artists. They only share their singularity. Stenciled pin-ups adorn the backs of these anti-heroes wearing flannel tennis overcoats with their distinctive phlegm. From herringbone jackets to deconstructed widths, and suits coloured like palisades or asphalt, Yohji Yamamoto's style remains faithful to these women and men as Éluard chose to unite them.

# OPTIMISTIC REBELLION AT ERNEST W. BAKER

Ernest W. Baker's muse is feeling rebellious for Fall-Winter 2024. Following from last season's exploration of childhood memories of summer vacations, Reid Baker and Ines Amorim turned to the idea of raiding a grandfather's closet in search of inspiration. Within that, they studied the juncture of young and old in fashion, how youths perceive elders and vice versa. By juxtaposing the contrary elements, they arrived at a rebellious punk streak which contrasted their signature black and reds with pinstripes, mustard yellows and tartan patterns.



Tailoring, trousers, and ties are accented with studs and spikes; reworked tailoring boasts large gold embellishments. Maintaining the illusion of elegance, so synonymous with the brand, remained crucial to their objectives. How they played with that drove them forward.

The designers also turned their lens to the pomp and circumstance that surrounds cinema: awards season. As the pair gain greater visibility in Hollywood, attracting the gaze of sartorial mavericks like A\$AP Rocky, Emma Corrin, and Moses, amongst others, they channelled a more robust feeling of confidence and conviction into these latest looks. « With the garments, we're taking this classic style and breaking it, » shared Baker, on a Zoom call from the studio in Porto, Portugal. By Paul McLauchlan.

**Ernest W. Baker is very connected to the world of cinema. What direction did you take that in this season?**

We were looking at this concept of awards ceremonies and what they really mean or represent to us and culture at large. We played around with this idea in our video and lookbook. We're always developing the collections with a character in mind and, this season, in both the lookbook and collection video, we created our own characters taking place in this made up awards ceremony. The video reflects this feeling as it is very moody and emotional. We shot at a bingo hall built in the 70s in Porto, which helped build this grandiose feeling that is portrayed in awards ceremonies.

**What was your starting point for this collection?**

The foundation of Ernest W. Baker is taking classic garments and reinterpreting them. That very simple element is usually how we start the collection. This season, we looked at adding some youthful rebellion. It's also about maintaining that very elegant, chic approach to how we put it together. It's fun to take a high-low approach to each collection. We love pushing the boundaries of what chic means to us and Ernest W. Baker. While trying to find the highest level of chic, we're always interested in inserting these very contrary elements.

**What are you optimistic about in fashion in 2024?**

It's an exciting but unpredictable time [for fashion]. For the longest period of time, fashion has been in this cycle where the wheel has been moving at a constant pace. As we're heading into 2024, the traditional fashion wheel is starting to break down and I feel like I'm optimistic about how, when something begins to break down, there will be the birth of something new. There are many young, independent labels who are able to adapt as the industry changes, so I'm keeping an eye on this and seeing how new ideas integrate themselves into our working processes and continue to push what it means to [be a fashion designer]. We're [also] continuing to expand and develop our ideas of what it means to put together a collection and how we present this. Our primary intention every season is to focus on the garments, making sure that they are made to the highest level.



# HERMÈS: PARADOX AS A GUIDING PRINCIPLE

« Paradox as a guiding principle. » The theme of the Hermès Autumn-Winter show sets the tone. Here, in the minimalist clarity of the Palais d'Iena, a major masterpiece designed by the architect Auguste Perret, the lines and materials interact in what Véronique Nichanian describes as an « interplay of shapes and counter-shapes, cuts and cut-outs. » A graphic spirit, shrouded in « sharp volumes » that provide these pea coats, water-repellent cashmere jackets and cocoon coats with the impression that luxury is a manifesto: protection without weight.



Extending tradition through innovation – the details are what set these designs apart, whether a slanted « saddle pocket » or a shirt with a « surprise fold. » In a masterful fade-in of khakis, basalt, petroleum anise, heather, crocus pumpkin, flint, brown and peat, black emerges a subtle palette of its own. Double-breasted coats, reversible teddy parka jackets and high-collared zip-up sweatshirts seem to move from outside to inside with chameleon-like fluidity; the 'flannel stag' demonstrates how skin is crafted like fabric and how fabric – Prince of Wales wool, compact cotton poplin – fuses with each silhouette to convey a sense of comfort, a sense of travel, a sense of the cross-over between the office and the countryside. Through both rigour and suppleness, the functional and the beautiful merge. Once night falls, there is no protocol, and the tailored trousers worn with neo-silks soften the very idea of an invitation, drastically dismantling whatever remotely betrays movement for the sake of duty. A prodigious lesson in allure.



# ÉTUDES BREAKING THE WAVES

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Études is a Paris-based brand that expresses itself through different types of media, from menswear to book publishing. By collaborating with talents from diverse artistic backgrounds, Études acts as both a driver and a reflection of the contemporary landscape. Its vision is the result of a constantly evolving union of cultures, methods, and references. This is how the trio, comprised of Jeremie Egry, Aurelien Arbet, and José Lamali define their brand: « Études is more than a fashion brand. It represents dialogue between art and fashion. It is a global experience of visual culture. » This season, they decided to make a temporary break.

You founded your brand in 2012, and as well as opening numerous pop stores, from Paris to Tokyo and London, you have multiplied collaborations, with Adidas, The New York Times, Keith Haring; you have launched 'Etudes Books' (catalogues on Tim Barber, Alessio Bolzoni, Llya Lipkin); and even published your own book with Rizzoli in 2018. By Laurence Benaïm.

## Why have you decided not to hold a fashion show this season?

We decided to take a break this season. In fact, the beat never stops. We thought it would be interesting because 2024 marks the end of a cycle, the beginning of a new day, to take a step back. We certainly do not intend to stop, but to gather our thoughts so that we can bounce back better next June. From the Palais Royal to Porte Maillot, we've organised fashion shows in so many different places! After 12 years of experience, we've gained more control: what's interesting is the idea of initiating something new, without having to endure anything. With 280 pieces (instead of the usual 320), the collection is being shown to buyers in a gallery, and we'll be inviting journalists and the public next season. We like to create these moments of rupture. In 2020 the collection covered a single year. We think it's legitimate today to question the format—the way we create and present. Undoubtedly because the way we consume is evolving. Should the idea of the season still dictate everything?



## What has been the biggest change in menswear in recent years?

Ten years ago, the market wasn't as dynamic. You can feel that the collections have broadened and that the genders are blending further. There are fewer barriers.

## What is the DNA of ÉTUDES?

Our style is influenced by streetwear and subcultures. Each collection is rooted in a dialogue with art. We talk about our « audience » more than our customers, even if the distribution network is established, with 120 retailers around the world. In addition to our clothes, we offer a cross-disciplinary approach, involving art, publishing and photography, which flows around the brand.

## How do you keep working together?

We get together and talk a lot. We each draw on our respective skills, collection planning, graphic design, collaborations and image. We define ourselves as a collective. We've always worked on the principle that by multiplying our skills, we'd be more agile in expressing ourselves on different media. Depending on each person's area of expertise, everything balances out naturally. A brand has to be consistent at every level; there's no hierarchy. Between the three of us, there are no boundaries. We're often compared to a music group. In fashion, we may seem to be UFOs.

# PARIS - JUKEBOX OF MASCULINITIES

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From 16 to 21 January, leading fashion houses and young designers presented their vision of the men's wardrobe for Autumn-Winter 2024-25 in Paris. From extravagance to simplicity, experimentation to the construction of basics, couture to functional pieces, the range was eclectic, sometimes hybrid, painting a masculine picture with multiple angles. By Manon Renault.

A neon lavallière collar shirt, a jacquard jumper worn with jogging trousers, and jeans with a trompe-l'œil double waistband: these twisty, heterogeneous basics meet and merge on the catwalk at Loewe, where artistic director Jonathan Anderson questions the impact of social media on visual culture, and by extension sartorial desire in the post-Instagram era of style supermarkets.

Inventive and deadpan, the collection explored the idea of collage head-on, multiplying 2-in-1 pieces like white socks fused with mauve tennis shoes. Here, the sense of humour and reflection shows the power of creation, and challenges the algorithm at a time when the fantasy of AI as a creative force floods the discourse. But AI is only a tool.

Anderson's fashion game raises a broader question: is it possible to sum up the masculinities presented in the Paris Fashion Week collections in an algorithm? Does the diversity of approaches, profiles and houses guarantee a much-needed shake-up?

The answer lies in the creations of Louis Gabriel Nouchi, Jeanne Friot, Burc Akyol and Adeju Thompson from Lagos Space Programme. The vision of a young scene with post-genre wardrobes, each in their own way offering reflections on innovation, upcycling, textile development and the promotion of Parisian and non-European crafts.

## Rewriting patriarchal narratives

A suit with XXL shoulders and a muffled waist: since 2017, the silhouette designed by Louis Gabriel Nouchi has become an established part of menswear visual culture, and this season it is being extended to womenswear. « I'm developing my brand based on the feedback and needs of our community, and the womenswear line was increasingly sought after, » explains the designer, winner of the ANDAM 2023 Grand Prize, adding, « It was a challenge! We had to adapt the proportions of the trench coats and the tailoring without it becoming a gimmick. » As with his menswear shows, Nouchi built an inclusive cast, with plural silhouettes wrapped up in large shiny leather coats, midnight blue tailoring suits or tops made of jacquard in cut threads giving a furry look. On the runway, the pieces adapted for women are linked to those for men in a broader questioning of success and power, inspired by Guy de Maupassant's novel *Bel-Ami* (1855).

A show collection fused with a literary encounter, Georges Duroy's social climbing can be seen in the gold tie clips, or the bracelets adorned with coins, giving the impression of having a pocketful of money. « It's a reflection on the status of men in society, and the notion of success and the power associated with it. In the 19th-century men's wardrobe, the suit was a rented item, as if to rent a social status. It was also a way of thinking about the place of women in success narratives, » explains the designer whose collections can be read as queer re-readings that repair patriarchal narratives. Nouchi's formula of combining textile innovation with a questioning of past masculinity to write a queer narrative transposed into an affordable wardrobe has guaranteed the success of his highly acclaimed collection.

## Absence of narratives

Last season, the designer Jeanne Friot also questioned the writing of the great classics, taking an interest in Andersen's *The Little Mermaid*, re-read with a genderfluid collection composed of wide denim skirts and basics such as bombers, which Friot keeps changing throughout the seasons. This season, the young designer, one of the few female names in the menswear calendar chose to combine intimacy and creation by talking about her love affair with Delphine. The collection focuses on the fusion of wardrobes in a couple's everyday life, with a rich mix of workwear, evening dresses, experimental pieces and basics. Between black and purple – a colour that symbolises lesbianism – the collection embodies the questioning that Friot has been pursuing since 2020: « Proposing a different vision of what men's fashion could be. While women have often been shown taking over men's wardrobes, it's time to do the same on the other side, so that everyone can be free to choose, » explained Friot.

This freedom of choice for men is also at the core of the work of queer Lagos-born designer Adeju Thompson. This season, his label, Lagos Space Programme, founded in 2018, aims to build bridges between British and Nigerian culture, reflecting on the tension between global homogenisation and local reception.

This gesture is part of the decolonisation of fashion advocated by the designer. Here, the garment is inspired by those worn in south-west Nigeria during the Ojude Oba festival, fused with British codes. « I imagined the story of a young British dandy who goes to the festival. There's tailoring but also lace and floral jacquards: it's both queer and decolonial. » While Friot explores the merging of a couple's wardrobe, this is the fusion of a multi-cultural wardrobe. This hybrid approach is also the driving force behind the work of Jamaican-born Briton, Grace Wales Bonner, who presented a reinterpretation of the American preppy wardrobe at the Conservatoire national des arts, inspired by her time at Howard University, the first university to educate black Americans.



Human and cultural flows forge the richness of wardrobes, and in particular the myth of the Parisian wardrobe, as Burç Akyol reminds us. The Franco-Turkish designer, who hails from Dreux in France, recalls his teenage years here: « The visual culture of the 1990s was mixed, and that undoubtedly forged the creative approach of the new generation, » says Akyol, whose high-end eveningwear has been deconstructing orientalist stereotypes since 2019. This season, he is taking things a step further with a daytime and night-time wardrobe that ranges from jeans to red carpet dresses. For instance, he took a pink blouse from Demi Moore's wardrobe in *Ghost*, explaining, « For me, this American image is also about Parisian chic. For several decades the Parisian scene has been plural, and today that's also reflected in the fashion designers. There's a young generation coming through, which is exciting and shows that the face of Paris is multifaceted, » he concludes.



### **A variety of scenes serving menswear**

Paris draws its wealth and attractiveness from the articulation of its fashion scenes. Pierre Bourdieu and Yvette Delsaut were already highlighting this feature in 1975 in their article « The couturier and his brand: a contribution to a theory of magic », investigating the rise of ready-to-wear in Paris and the reconfiguration of the scene.

Paris is constantly changing, as if in a palimpsest, with cumulative and articulated scenes. The experimental fashion of Rei Kawakubo with Comme des Garçons in the 1980s, followed by the Antwerp 6 with Walter Van Bereindonck and Dries Van Noten in the 1990s, persists. Each presented their own collection, as did the historic Parisian fashion houses that have gradually developed a menswear wardrobe over the last two decades. The androgynous Dior gentleman, designed by Hedi Slimane in 2000, becomes a dandy ballet dancer with Kim Jones in 2023, while the Louis Vuitton gentleman invented by Marc Jacobs in 1997 turns into a medium for exploring the American identity with Pharrell Williams, as the American presidential election looms.

It's impossible to sum up this rich scene in a single formula, or series of speeches. It's evolving with multiple social movements, brought together in one rich week.

# PARIS FASHION WEEK

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