

THE FASHION GROUP FOUNDATION PRESENTS

RTW COLLECTIONS SPRING/SUMMER 2015

TREND OVERVIEW BY MARYLOU LUTHER

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OSCAR DE LA RENTA

So what do you do when you don't like today? You escape to yesterday or tomorrow. That's what many fashion designers are proposing for Spring/Summer 2015. First, you hide out in the past.

Hit the refresh button for the '70s. That's what Tommy Hilfiger did, rocking and rolling through his own archives, where fringe, suede, denim and flare-leg pants partied with Boho dresses, peasant blouses, psychedelia, wide-brimmed hats and crochets. Head for the streets where Yves Saint Laurent first took us in the '70s and where Hedi Slimane takes Saint Laurent now. Designers in all fashion capitals resurrected, reconstructed and renovated that decade, but Hilfiger and Saint Laurent left the biggest footprints. If the '70s are not your decade of choice...

Take a trip to the '60s. Join the Mods and Rockers. Wear Pop Art and Op Art prints, get all knotted up in tie-dyes, salute Sgt. Pepper and his Lonely Hearts Club Band and join the Woodstock love-in that Dries Van Noten commemorated on his runway.

Escape to the forest primeval, where you can listen to tweets from nature, not technology. And calm your angst by joining the fauns at Lanvin and the nymphs at Alberta Ferretti and Marchesa.

Go off the wall and wear the art gallery-worthy prints inspired by artists including Picasso, Braque, Klimt, Matisse, Whistler, Malevich, Koons, Twombly et al. Two special delights: Donna Karan's graffiti prints and Undercover's tribute to Hieronymus Bosch's triptych from The Garden of Earthly Delights.

Protect yourself, armed in militaria. Here, we salute Marc Jacobs' soldiers of style and the battle-ready at Sonia Rykiel and A.F. Vandervost. Go on safari with Ralph Lauren, who went wacky over khaki—and olive—and where those bellows pockets originally intended for shells and compasses are now gracing safari shirts paired with long, decorative evening skirts.

Get lost in the sexplay of lingerie. Outing the undies looked especially alluring at Altuzarra, Louis Vuitton, Karan, Givenchy and Dolce & Gabbana. And especially erotic at Tom Ford.

Be a sport. Get your game on in mesh. Score in biker shorts. Catch a wave in scuba gear. Run home in a baseball jacket. Jog to the gym in track pants. Intuit the Inuit in an anorak/hoodie.

Or escape the change-fraught world of technology **to the stability of wearability.** Noteworthy comfort zones included Chanel, Bottega Veneta, Haider Ackermann, Stella McCartney, Rag & Bone and Lanvin. From real to surreal, fashion's escape routes offer cultural, physical, even entertainment refuge from the eeriness of today. Example: Jean-Paul Gaultier and his burlesque-worthy send-off/send-up marking his final ready-to-wear collection as he switches focus to his haute couture designs.



CHANEL



ALEXANDER WANG



TOMMY HILFIGER



DIANE VON FURSTENBERG



J SONG



ALTUZARRA

Techni and techno color. White, black and white and black. They're all there, but the color story begins at sunrise (think dawn, cloudy, misty pales) and ends at sunset (pungent oranges to radiant reds). And the new neutrals are olive and khaki.

Line up for the stripe. The one visual that crossed all cultures, all fashion capitals is the stripe. Star the stripes at Altuzarra, Van Noten, Chanel, Yigal Azrouël, Diane von Furstenberg, Victoria Beckham, Yeohlee, Creatures of the Wind, Suno, Paul Smith, Antonio Marras, Balmain, DKNY and Naeem Khan.

Take gingham to the checkout counter. It's in fashion's crosshatch, a position it last attained in the '50s when Brigitte Bardot wore a pink gingham dress for her 1959 wedding to French actor Jacques Charier.

Check into plaids. Michael Kors did. And it's at least partially responsible for his perch as the-most-tweeted-about-designer during New York fashion week.

Prints leave their mark. Screen prints. Digital prints. Photo prints. Their impressions are impressive. Especially impressive at Chanel, where Karl Lagerfeld translated his painting onto a silk print coat and matching boots. At Theia, where Don O'Neill translated a friend's hand-painted canvas to a digital print on a duchess satin skirt. And at Ralph Rucci, who screened his painting onto duchess satin, combined it with an embroidered bra and printed chiffon skirt.

The flower flowers. From amaryllis to zinnia, the flower is fashion's most cultivated print motif. Even in black and white, as at Oscar de la Renta and Way Zen for JSong. For haute horticulture, check out the petals at Sarah Burton for Alexander McQueen and Rei Kawakubo for Comme des Garçons.

Fabrics, both real and designer-created. First, the case for lace, which first surfaced in the 16th Century. From Alençon to Venetian, Chantilly to Guipure and Cluny, lace is the openwork of the season. And that includes crochets.

With Miuccia Prada's imprimatur, **brocades are back**, both real and distressed. Arguably the first 3D fabric—its heritage dating to the 6th Century—this jacquard weave with raised surface has risen, often glistening with gold or silver threads.

Satin also shines for spring, and Perspex, vinyl and plastic are the see-throughs of note. Denim expands from jeans and jeans jackets to tunics, skirts of every length and look especially fresh as beaded or applied evening pants. The tennis sweater leaves the court—to play on fashion venues. So do intarsia knits, rib knits, argyles, tweed knits, mesh knits and crochets. Missoni's knits are a rainbow of flambeau. McCartney's cutouts are hottie hot.

Skin deep in leather. Whether patently patent, striped, latticed or color-coated, leather clothes are endorsed for spring and summer weather—or at least their delivery dates. Suede, too, makes a big comeback, leaving the outback for the urban sprawl. These are not your cowboy's chaps.

Getting crafty. It's a season about putting the art in crafts. Examples: Chanel's "cement dresses" (that's what Karl calls them), made from leather tiles painted to emulate the street; Alexander McQueen's "beading" made from tiny pompoms, individually threaded on transparent silk; Fendi's tattered organdy cut to look like feathers; Van Noten's fabrics that look as if they were pieced together from brocades but are actually jacquards woven in one piece; Prabal Gurung's silk organza, hand-embroidered with flat topographical ostrich feathers and Swarovski crystals.

The artisan's skills are also evident in the new fringe-work, especially in the extraordinary examples at Marco de Vincenzo and Proenza Schouler, and in the new intarsias at Bottega Veneta, Maison Martin Margiela and Prada.

Pleats please the fashion fold. From knife pleats to kilt pleats to box pleats to cartridge pleats to accordians to sunbursts, to umbrellas, fashion is replete with pleats. Thom Browne's pleatwork is the most exceptional.

Get ruffled. It's a frill a minute at Haider Ackermann—ruffles manipulated into shapes you've never seen before. There are also remarkable vertical ruffles at Valentino and horizontal plus vertical at Marchesa. The social gathering of the season? Betsey Johnson's gender-perfect pre-nup show featuring tiers and tiers of ballerina ruffles dancing to the altar of I-do.

Get in the game. Sports are major in the fashion league. For Alexander Wang, the sneaker and its many manifestations inspired his home run. Wang continued his sports theme at Balenciaga, where mesh scored net gains. Rick Owens, Kenzo and Versace also took mesh to new playing fields.



NORMA KAMALI



MICHAEL KORS



HAIDER ACKERMANN



RICK OWENS

Boxers (DSquared2), basketball shorts (John Patrick for Organic) and bikers (Carven) ranged from athletic to club-worthy, and track pants ran all over the place—the most competitive at Norma Kamali, who also showed track skirts, and at Opening Ceremony.

Tops from short to tunic. Riffs on midriffs take the crop top to new highs. Shirts tales are telling, notably at Ralph Lauren, who took the shirt on safari, and Michael Kors, who hit a trifecta by combining three trends of the season into one look: a crop top with a full skirt in gingham checks. The longest shirts, aka tunics, transmogrify at Yeohlee and Christophe Lemaire.

Addressing the dress. The shirtdress stays in the picture. Shifts ease into new comfort zones. Trapezes fly in. Print dresses leave their mark. And the kimono-cum-wrap dress enfolds the body. Happy Anniversary, Diane. A lot of designers celebrated your 40 years of wrap dresses.

Skirting the news. All lengths go: Mini, above the knee, below the knee, midi, maxi. Many designers offered several lengths. The latest incarnation from the '50s, the full skirt, fans out, especially at Dior, where it first got its biggest boost. Asymmetric skirts are strong, diving diagonally from waist or thigh to hem. Special kudos to Lyn Devon for her new takes on the pareo, and Jill Stuart for her snap-on skirts.

It's all about the leg. The new short circuit, from Jamaica to Bermuda. The shorts of the season: Rick Owens' ingenious wonders with scarf-leg side extensions. The pantleg widens, from skinny to palazzo. Decorated pants show off in prints, patterns and beading. And the pantsuit looks fresh for evening.

Jacketry and coaterie. Cropped, sleeveless, wrapped or gently blazered, the jacket looks strong and vroom-inspiring as the bomber/moto/athletic jacket. Coats range from minimalistic and knee hovering to street-sweeping maxi, from wrap to trench from patterns to prints. Score Ackermann and Balenciaga with the maxis to long for.

Nights out, nights in. The caftan looks unbeatable for at-home entertaining. Jumpsuits are red carpet-ready. Grecian draperies are goddess-worthy. Ballgown skirts team with shirts. Carolina Herrera scores with new back interest. (She scores period.)

We close our evening report with a salute to Oscar de la Renta and his forever-after contribution to fashion romance, beauty and elegance. His designs give women the confidence to do as he once said: “walk like you have three men walking behind you.”

Fashion gets smart. Enter the new wearable technology. Chain mail knits made on a 3D printer from nylon powder amaze at Pringle of Scotland. Raised surfaces are programmed into fabric by steam at Issey Miyake. At Undercover, coats and jackets are appliqued with mirror frames that play cartoon videos. At Diesel Black Gold, a computer, phone and fitness tracker inform the wrist. At Opening Ceremony, smart bracelets keep you in touch with the Internet—and more. At Rebecca Minkoff, “notification bracelets” alert the wearer to calls and texts.

Accessories. Belts are a new focus as diy waist-markers—wrapping, sashing, knotting and tie-ing. The obi emerges as part of the Asian overtures.

Yesterday’s it bag is tomorrow’s bit bag—small but mighty. Mini add-ons are part of the new dualities. Cross-bodies and buckets are on everyone’s list. Backpacks get new sites (Vionnet puts them in front). The oversized pocket is a bag at Marc Jacobs. Message bags are new communicators at Chanel and Anya Hindmarch. Crocodile, python and leather are favored media, and colored bags soar. Wittiest bag of the season: Browne’s bag as hat.

Gladiators gladden the legs. Flats look sharp, especially the ankle ties and Burberry Prorsum’s Birkenstock sandals. Sneakers are still in the running and ankle straps continue. Chanel’s tuxedo shoe looks black-tie bound. Platforms and platforms rise up, booties get heels, and real boots,



CHLOÉ



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SIMONE ROCHA

hair scene. So are wigs. See Tom Ford's tribute to Debbie Harry, and Marc Jacobs' homage to the bowl cuts of Joey Ramone. Braids are runway-major, intertwined in colored extensions at Marco de Vincenzo or messed at Michael Kors.

Makeup goes from Saint Laurent's heavily-lined cat eyes to Vuitton's eyes rimmed in black and lashes drawn with sharp points.

Message of the season: Lagerfeld's Chanel dictum that "Catwalk clones are out. Individuality is in." In the show, each model had her own look

BEST BETS:

Color: Sunrise to sunset • The '70s: Flareleg pant • The '60s: The Mod mini

Fabrics: Lace, brocade, denim • Sport: Track pants, athletic jackets

The Dress: Stripe kimono wrap, Gingham check shirtdress

Floral prints • The smaller bag • The suede bucket • The new flats • The spring boot

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