

FASHION REPORT

The Future is Genderless

Diverse fashion dominated the catwalks of New York & London, the question we all have is Ralph Lauren's ranch style still relevant?

By Colleen Considine

Sept. 05, 2018

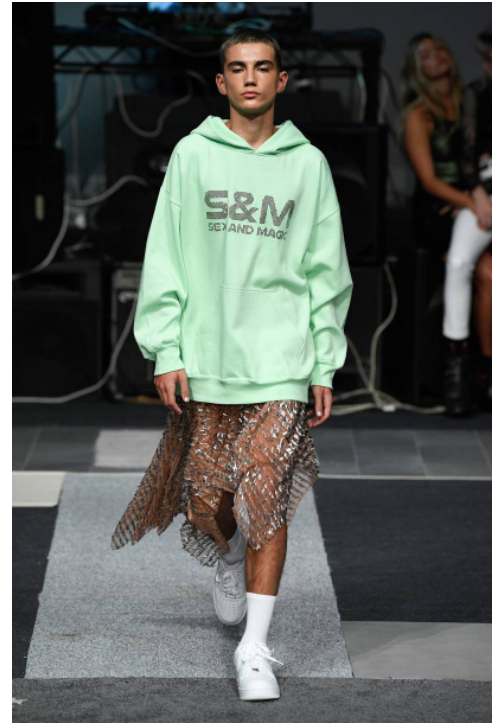


Figure 1. Yannis Vlamos, Vogue, INDIGITAL TV Figure 2. Yannis Vlamos, Vogue, INDIGITAL TV Figure 3. Yannis Vlamos, Vogue, INDIGITAL TV

As New York and London fashion week drew to a close we saw the growing power of gender fluidity as well as Americana on the runway. Big NY players, staple designers such as Ralph Lauren, Brock Collection and Coach opted for the wild west as a key influence, while smaller brands took a diverse direction on gender fluidity. Inclusive designers Vaquera, Telfar and Ashish believe fashion is for everyone, while Ralph Lauren seemed to show a total lack of equality and diversity, the question, is this something designers should represent within their collections in 2018?

A detention notice as an afterparty invite, Vaquera the genderless fashion brand revisited a rad 1980s high school, cafeteria setting with blue plastic chairs and the typical American hallway as the runway. Taking away old stereotypes of high school life, guys roamed the halls in their short, short mini-skirts showing off hairy legs, pairing a cropped white t-shirt with 'HIGH STANDARDS' scribbled on, paired with white socks in heels, certainly something that wasn't seen in The Breakfast Club. Designers, Claire Sully, Bryn Taubensee and designer-come-director, Patric DiCaprio who battle against classic stereotypes within the fashion industry took yearbook inspiration of, "most likely to succeed". Victor Vegas, who walked down the runway in a blue graduation gown told me, "Vaquera stands out because it's a fantasy. Like a video game character in a mystical world in their looks. It's not superficial and still owns its outrageous themes."

It's not a question of all designers adopting gender fluidity, can they carry on with past, traditional labels, and is it something they would do genuinely or could it be just a PR

EDITOR'S PICKS



Figure 4. Landon Nordeman The New York Times.

"Ralph Lauren's 50th Anniversary Show Was Eye-Popping. Then Came the Clothes."



Figure 5. Marthu Anderson NY Post.

"Is RuPaul's Drag Race the Most Radical show on TV?"

tactic?

An apocalyptic atmosphere, the place of a rusted dinosaur metal structure where models trailed around on a sandy textured floor was the setting for Coach SS19. Floaty prairie dresses, patchwork leather and tassel waistcoats roamed the catwalk, as it re-enforced the wild western feeling throughout the show. Stuart Vevers inspiration for the show of “Scavengers”, the possible relation of both UK & US politics, perhaps comparing to Teresa May the scavenger in the Brexit deal. The appeal of a younger customer going into the area of gender fluidity may not be off the books working with the idea of “codes of belonging” his sense of anti-establishment, with inspiration from cults and tribes.

However, as Ralph Lauren wanders back on his 50 years there are elements of contrast in the Brokeback Mountain look, for women with flowing, pretty velvet patchwork skirts paired with jumpers synched in at the waist. Then rustic, worn out brown trousers, paired with boxy black and white plaid jacket topping off with the classic cowboy hat for the men. But, with his ever-so timeless silhouettes do they hold a place in 2018 while others are seeking a diverse future? Fellow New Yorker Rick Owens told Refinery, “I don’t understand why this generation thinks they invented gender fluidity. They did it harder, stronger, and louder in the ’70s... and 16th-century Japan.” So, looking back creates a change to move forward.

While designers find inspiration in the past, should they take on board older views? the



Figure 6. INDIGITAL TV, VOGUE



Figure 7. INDIGITAL TV, VOGUE



Figure 8. INDIGITAL TV, VOGUE

80s era contradicts this, the punk movement, anarchy and non-conformity rebelled against the previous generation. The modern age we live in, surely the new American political agenda is something we can all learn from. By looking to the past, designers are perhaps looking for a new type of ‘American Dream’ one that’s been obviously lost in the sight of recent Presidential elections.

Can a designer such as Ralph Lauren transition to genderless fashion? being so pigeonholed as a designer now this is another pressing question. There’s a certain pressure on brands to follow social trends, but whether that is tangible for the brand who knows!? Ralph Lauren, half a century in fashion and a clear idea of his customer, is this something that he can adapt his brand to successfully? Lia McGarrigle of Highsnobiety said, “It woul-

wouldn't be easy but they could do it. However, for the market of those brands, I don't envision a move to genderless fashion anytime soon." In comparison to Coach, Ralph Lauren may find it difficult to open up its doors to a younger market, whereas a more youthful approach with Coach may seem more obvious.

Living in a modern society where youth aren't dictated by fashion rules, expressing themselves with clothes. Can looking back to times where people have wanted change, and those lacking equality help society move forward? Designers always use past as an influence, something they all indeed have in common. The difference Ralph Lauren and Telfar, (Telfar Clemens) the genderless fashion brand, established in 2004, is that they aim for two different audiences, different aspirations, but one similarity, they are both drawn to history.

Ralph Lauren's style is about representing American culture, is something he lives and breathes, like Brock Collection, founded in 2014 by Laura & Kristopher Brock who focus on a classic Western romance, or Telfar who press to the future while bringing in American influence.

Down at the Blade Lounge East Heliport on East 34th Street, high fences contained the audience forcing everyone to be front row guests. The show was "dedicated to America"



Figure 9. Ashanti Jason, VRAI Magazine

with classic styles of the 70s, a Budweiser logo, torn up & placed on wide leg denim silhouette & the American flag reconfigured as the Telfar logo designed onto t-shirts. American classics ripped into graphics for the print, in the midst of President Trump, Telfar, a genderless fashion brand, celebrating the past while anticipating the future.

There's something nostalgic about looking back onto past styles while taking on board the notions of modern youth. Indian-born-British-designer Ashish Gupta for example, his collection came at a prominent time in history as India voted to decriminalise homosexuality. Although the collection didn't directly reference the event it was about looking to the club scene of the 1990s. Slinky silver and pink slip dresses, with silver diamante embroidery, bringing minimalism to sparkle and the main inspiration being "the normalisation of queerness". Not to mention, the DJ upfront created the setting of an underground club with girls, boys, everyone dancing and groping each other on boxes. While looking back onto the past it created a clearer, brighter image of a more inclusive future.

Fashion is a constant change, it is about looking forward, with a new market in mind while keeping on board older styles but wanting to change people's perspectives on them.

Bibliography:

- Anderson, S. (2018) 'THE EXTREME CONFIDENCE OF VAQUERA' In: *V Magazine* 12.09.2018 [online] At: <https://vmagazine.com/article/vaquera-ss19-nyfw-2018/> (accessed 01/10/2018)
- Bonacic, D. (2018) 'ASHISH READY-TO-WEAR SS19' In: *10 Magazine* 17.09.2018 [online] At: <http://www.10magazine.com/womenswear/ashish-ready-to-wear-ss19/> (accessed 01/10/2018) - Ashish quote 6
- Conlon, S. (2018) 'Rodarte and Telfar impress with exquisite shows in torrential rain' In: *The Guardian* 10.09.2018 [online] At: <https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/2018/sep/10/rodarte-and-telfar-impress-with-exquisite-shows-in-torrential-rain> (accessed 01/10/2018)
- Friedman, V. (2018) 'Ralph Lauren's 50th Anniversary Show Was Eye-Popping. Then Came the Clothes' In: *The Guardian* 08.09.2018 [online] At: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/08/fashion/ralph-lauren-50th-anniversary-show.html> (accessed 01/10/2018) -quote 3
- Friedman, V. (2018) 'Anti-Algorithm Fashion' In: *The New York Times* 10.09.2018 [online] At: https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/10/fashion/telfar-rodarte-new-york-fashion-week.html?rref=collection%2Fsectioncollection%2Ft-magazine&action=click&contentCollection=t-magazine®ion=stream&module=stream_unit&version=latest&contentPlacement=40&pgtype=sectionfront (accessed 01/10/2018)
- Madsen, C.A. (2018) 'SPRING/SUMMER 2019 READY-TO-WEAR Coach 1941' In: *Vogue* 11.09.2018 [online] At: <https://www.vogue.co.uk/shows/spring-summer-2019-ready-to-wear/coach-1941-pre> (accessed 01/10/2018) quotes 4/5
- McGarrigle, L. (2018) 'New York Fashion Week Is Moving Toward A Genderless Future' In: *Highsnobiety* 04.09.2018 [online] At: <https://www.highsnobiety.com/p/new-york-fashion-week-genderless-designers/> (accessed 01/10/2018) -Raf Simons quote
- @nytimesfashion. (2018) [online social media Instagram] At: <https://www.instagram.com/p/BnmbIfYhDHm/?taken-by=nytimesfashion> (accessed 01/10/2018) Vaquera quote
- Rogers, S. (2018) 'From Sketch To Catwalk: The Coach SS19 Collection' In: *Vogue* [online] At: <https://www.vogue.co.uk/article/coach-spring-summer-2019-stuart-vevers-interview> (accessed on 01/10/2018)
- Worthman, J. (2018) 'Is 'RuPaul's Drag Race' The Most Radical Show On TV?' In: *The New York Times* [online] At: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/24/magazine/is-rupauls-drag-race-the-most-radical-show-on-tv.html?mtrref=www.bing.com&gwh=E8A167A31AEBA7F52579896FD486B30E&gwt=pay> (accessed 01/10/2018)
- Young, S. (2018) 'LONDON FASHION WEEK SS19 DAY THREE BEST MOMENTS: ROLAND MOURET'S #METOO TRIBUTE AND PREEN'S TRAVELLER CELEBRATION' In: *The Independent* 16.09.2018 [online] At: <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/fashion/london-fashion-week-day-three-ss19-roland-mouret-preen-a8540636.html> (accessed 01/10/2018)

List of illustrations:

- Figure 1. Vlamos, Y. (2018) 'SPRING 2019 READY TO WEAR Vaquera' [image] At: <https://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/spring-2019-ready-to-wear/vaquera> (accessed 01/10/2018)
- Figure 2. Yannis Vlamos. (2018) 'SPRING 2019 READY-TO-WEAR Telfar' [image] At: <https://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/spring-2019-ready-to-wear/telfar> (accessed on 01/10/2018)
- Figure 3. Yannis Vlamos. (2018) 'SPRING/SUMMER READY-TO-WEAR Ashish' [image] At: <https://www.vogue.co.uk/shows/spring-summer-2019-ready-to-wear/ashish> (accessed 01/10/2018)
- Figure 4. Nordeman, L. (2018) 'Ralph Lauren's 50th Anniversary Show Was Eye-Popping. Then Came the Clothes' [image] At: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/08/fashion/ralph-lauren-50th-anniversary-show.html> (accessed 01/10/2018)
- Figure 5. Anderson, M. (2018) "'RuPauls Drag Race' back for 7th season' [image] At: <https://nypost.com/2014/02/17/rupauls-drag-race-back-for-7th-season/> (accessed 01/10/2018)

Figure 6. INDIGITAL TV. (2018) 'SPRING/SUMMER 2019 READY-TO-WEAR Coach 1941' [image] At: <https://www.vogue.co.uk/shows/spring-summer-2019-ready-to-wear/coach-1941-pre> (accessed 01/10/2018)

Figure 7. INDIGITAL TV. (2018) 'SPRING/SUMMER 2019 READY-TO-WEAR Ralph Lauren' [image] At: <https://www.vogue.co.uk/shows/spring-summer-2019-ready-to-wear/ralph-lauren> (accessed 01/10/2018)

Figure 8. INDIGITAL TV. (2018) 'SPRING 2019 READY-TO-WEAR Brock Collection' [image] At: <https://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/spring-2019-ready-to-wear/brock-collection> (accessed 01/10/2018)

Figure 9. Jason, A. (2018) 'Ashish Spring/Summer 2019' [image] At: <https://www.vraimagazine.com/lfw-ashish-spring-summer-2019/ashish-ss19-lfw-9/> (accessed 01/10/2018)