



Society Square: London Fashion Week

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Didn't quite manage to catch everything at London Fashion Week? Fear not, we sent Yashmin Ismail to brave the hordes and

report on the latest trends and gossip.



Yashmin Ismail takes us into the elusive and exclusive world of celebrity lifestyle, glitz and glamour in the capital. She will be sampling London's top hot spots and covering all the major events in the English social calendar, so you don't miss a thing. Be it on the red carpet, along a cobblestoned street or a racecourse, she picks out the best and brings it into your Square. Backstage, front row, access all areas.

As the planets aligned for London Fashion Week, the titans of industry descended upon the capital for more autumn/winter inspiration, following suit after New York began proceedings.

The proverbial red ribbon was cut at 10 Downing Street where tastemakers, editors and buyers gathered to open the games. Guests in attendance included Anna Wintour, glamazon Donatella Versace, Stella McCartney, Victoria Beckham, François-Henri Pinault with his wife Salma Hayek, and the Duchess of Cambridge. Samantha Cameron and Natalie Massenet MBE, newly appointed Chairman of the British Fashion Council, paid homage to the most fashionable week of the year while guests enjoyed the politically correct hospitality. London Fashion Week has historically often been sidelined in the grand scheme, but given the turnout of the great, the good, and the spectacular this season, it continues to gain ground as a major contender in the Fashion Week World Series.

Zoe Jordan opened LFW at Somerset House with her fifth collection, *Foundations*. Inspired by her love of architecture, the former New York investment banker merges the postmodernist masters Robert Venturi and Frank Gehry with a penchant for the baroque cathedrals of Italy. Prints of the Duomo in Rome on oversized silk tees, with butter-soft nappa leather separates and heavy woollen cashmere knits in a largely monochrome palette whet the appetite for more.



Brit designers Amy Molyneaux and Percy Parker, aka PPQ, paid homage to Audrey, with an edge. Power dressing met breakfast at Tiffany's with 60s style bouffant hair; neons and colour blocks illuminated the catwalk. The strategically cut orange maxi dress with the bold yet subtle exposé was our favourite.



Irish-based Chinese designer and British fashion old guard John Rocha brought landscape artistry to the runway, inspired by the bold, bright palettes of English artist Gary Hume. Rocha continued his exploration of colour after its debut last spring/summer. Grounded in blacks, he boldly introduces meadow greens, olive and lime, sugar pinks, and warm reds, adding interest to 50s inspired silhouettes. Puffed out princess-style dresses and skirts, with tight waists offered an air of Wonderland, along with oversized A-line coats, taking you deeper into the rabbit hole. Crafted in rugged felts, tweed, mohair and Rocha's signature silks, the collection continues to perpetuate his theme of duality, beautifully balancing tenderness with strength.



In contrast, Julien Macdonald's ready-to-wear collection was inspired by his recent trip to Sin City. Silhouettes were long, lean and graphic, softened with feminine embellishment. Swarovski beads, well-placed feathers and graphic sequins created opulent sheets of armour. Dangerous red, ochre yellow and burnt orange radiated the colours of the desert sunset against the shimmery metallic, reflective of Las Vegas architecture. The grunge-deluxe party girl had tousled hair, on face, and heavy punky eyeliner. "This is the girl who is still walking around, looking fantastic at four in the morning," enthused Macdonald after the show, at the aptly chosen urban palazzo, Goldsmith's Hall in EC2.



Mulberry brought more rural landscape references to the runway with a rich colour palette and botanical inspired prints. Iconic check and bold prints were showcased by mouth-watering leather and modern tailoring. An installation of tangled wild flowers and a swarm of butterflies encased the entrance to Claridge's, while a floral and foliage structure imitating a wild hedgerow - interspersed with Mulberry fruits and leaves, butterflies, and a mixture of woodland flowers - framed the catwalk. Very English, very Mulberry.



Fashion's favourite political activist Vivienne Westwood showcased this season's Red Label at the Saatchi Gallery in Chelsea. The unafraid grande dame of fashion pushed the boundaries deeper into the *woods* by exploring myth and fantasy, bringing us fashion theatre at its best with her signature clashing prints, textures and colours. Drawing inspiration from mythical nature, the collection covered the gender spectrum from androgynous oversized boxy, loose coats and minimal clean lines in Jersey knitwear, to feminine cape details in coats, fluid draping in tops and dresses, short jackets and bolero styles in leather and sequins, and feminine voluminous knitwear.

Clownish tribal make-up screamed warrior for climate revolution – in this case. Signature eccentricity with charm and wearability.



Matthew Williamson's epic AW13 showcase at the Royal Opera House imagined a spirited English rose seeking adventures new. This multidimensional collection of opulent colour and print was inspired by the Northern Lights.

The concept of surprise illumination highlighted sequined floor-skimming evening gowns in degrade pewter, gunmetal and sulphur yellow. Below-the-knee knife-pleated skirts erupted into fluted shapes, inspired by the traditional dress of Nordic natives. Wildly colourful fox and raccoon stoles added new verve to clean line tailoring and evening wear.



Big-ticket Burberry Prorsum's custom built venue in Hyde Park welcomed over 1500 guests for this season's *Trench Kisses*, a collection inspired by Burberry classics, sixties beauty Christine Keeler, and featuring an iconic Burberry colour palette.



The runway opened up to reveal a stage with Tom Odell, 2013 Critics' Choice BRIT award winner, accompanied by a choir of concert backing singers. The performance of the forthcoming single 'Hold Me' served as the backdrop for the show finale, concluding soundtracks by Paloma Faith and Misty Miller.



Guests in attendance included *Les Misérables* director Tom Hooper, actors Kate Beckinsale, Freida Pinto, and Rosie Huntington-Whiteley.

From the runway to the dance floor, the glamouratti continued the party well into the night - in most cases - given the gamut of after-show parties on offer. We had to be quite selective in an attempt to keep the candle burning at both ends until the end of Fashion Week.



PPQ's after-show bash on opening night was held at the plush Playboy club in Mayfair, where VV Brown

gave an epic performance as did Kate Nash on the decks.

Diesel collaborated with Fashion Scout to throw a party for Pam Hogg at the new Diesel Village pop-up store in Regents Street. Bespoke cocktails were flowing all evening as well as the Vita Coco and delish canapés, fuelling a high octane night.



Coco de Mer and Victoria Grant hosted a provocative soiree at Tonteria in Belgravia, aptly named 'Undress to Impress'. And last but not least, Harper's Bazaar threw a very exclusive closing party at Mark's Club, Mayfair, for the fashion elite - just before the mass exodus to Milan for more of the same.

The who's who of the capital F club came to indulge and celebrate with gin fizz cocktails, whisky sours, and of course the mandatory Moët. Smoked-salmon blinis, soft-boiled quail's eggs, Welsh rarebit, Dorset-crab toasts and Scottish langoustines lined the stomach for those largely on their last night in London.



Model of the moment and new catwalk queen Cara Delevingne appeared at eight of the 56 shows, opening Issa and Topshop Unique, and closing Mulberry, Peter Pilotto, and Matthew Williamson; winning our most notable clotheshorse spot. Relative newcomer Christopher Kane, 30, is our one to watch, having already earned his stripes under Donatella Versace's Versus label. He just sold a 51% stake in his label to PPR, parent company of Gucci. Chairman and CEO Pinault came to support his latest investment along with wife Hayek. Kane is the first from his generation of London-based designers to have ascended to the big-time in relatively no time.



An imaginative mix of venues outside of the Somerset box, combined with the delish colours and textures showcased by fashion Olympians worldwide, took this season's mouth-watering crème de la crop from pret-a-porter to pret-a-manger, with cherry on top. Lucky number AW13 was wearable fashion theatre at its very best.

Photography by: Mel Bagshaw, Enzo Peccinotti, Christopher Dadey, and Michael Bowles.

Daisy Lowe, Sir Phillip Green and Yasmin Le Bon were photographed at the [Harper's Bazaar](#) closing party. Guests were served Tanqueray Gin and Johnnie Walker Gold Label.