

trends

The Magazine

for Canadian Fashion Retailers

Sustainability

Gathering Momentum



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Trends Report

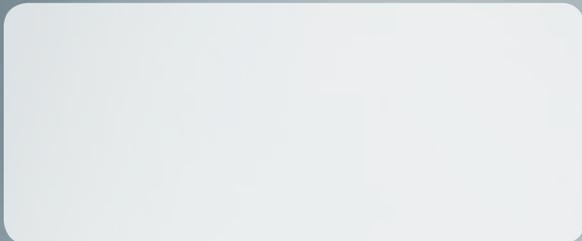
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Canada Post Agreement #41957515

January - June 2019



SEEKING FASHION WEEK FORMULAS

by Kirsten Mogg



Le Défilé L'Oréal Paris
Photo : Getty Images

EXCESS & ALL ACCESS

Out of fiscal necessity, Canadian fashion weeks and independent designers are trending away from excess and towards a true luxury experience. The difference in scale was in high contrast this season.

Canadian supermodel **Winnie Harlow** stood out in a bright red dress at **Le Défilé L'Oréal Paris**, an extravagant runway event held on a barge on the river Seine. About 200,000 spectators lined the riverbank to see the 'open-access' show featuring **Balmain**, **Isabel Marant**, the **House of Sonia Rykiel**, and others. The brand strategy was plain to see as celebrities **Elle Fanning** in **MiuMiu**, **Eva Longoria** in **Giambattista Valli**, and longtime **L'Oréal** face, **Andie MacDowell** at age 60 wearing a glittery **Elie Saab** gown represented the company's image of ageless beauty.

UNSUSTAINABLE LUXURY

Karl Lagerfeld's SS/19 indoor show for **Chanel** had a white sandy beach, a lifeguard and waves for models to splash in. Logos were everywhere: on swimwear, signature bags, and tweed jackets. Oversized 80s style bling was on display as **Pamela Anderson** and **Pharrell Williams** watched from the front row.

Such excessive international shows are deemed necessary to protect the value of global brands. Astonishing then were the expensive mistakes made by high-profile designers: **Dolce & Gabbana's** cultural debacle in China and **Prada's** racially insensitive monkey business. Ominously, **Goldman Sachs** predicts that the luxury industry's growth will slow by half in 2019, a rate of just 5%. **LVMH**, one of the world's largest owners of luxury fashion brands that includes **Christian Dior**, **Bulgari** and **Loro Piana**, saw a steep stock slide in the third quarter as investors question the sustainability of Chinese consumer demand.



Andie McDowell in Elie Saab
Photo : Getty Images



Winnie Harlow in Esteban Cortazar
Photo : Getty Images



Christopher Paunil SS19
Photo : George Pimentel



Hilary MacMillan SS19
Photo : George Pimentel



Hilary MacMillan SS19
Photo : George Pimentel



Christopher Paunil SS19
Photo : George Pimentel

TREND SETTING CANADIANS

Canadians are less fossilized about fashion. It takes months for show producers and designers to sell sponsorships, do in-kind deals, open their shows to priority patrons, and sell tickets. Out of financial necessity, Canadian show producers and designers are nimble and resourceful. Toronto, Vancouver, Atlantic Fashion Weeks and TOM/TW all partner with venues and leverage exposure with complimentary events. This Toronto Fashion Week schedule included the CAFTCAD gala, Toronto Life's Best Dressed, and FashionTalks.

JET SET CANADIANS

The Re\Set team brought **Sid Neigum** back to Toronto to stage a remarkable show in the **Yorkville Village** underground garage. Painted walkway stripes with LEDs lit up the runway to reveal Neigum's skill with cut, drape, and cloth punctuated with bursts of colour.

Mikhael Kale, the talent from Toronto, also went 'off-runway' and into the ROM. A moving catwalk among the dinosaur displays attracted a hoard of fashion fans, media and influencers, plus a few bewildered tourists. Kale's 'installation' challenged the norms of the cultural institution that saw T-rex overshadowed by the edgy extremes of youthful clothing.

Other designers avoided the expense of fashion week entirely. Some decided it was more profitable to provide premium service at events that bring out their customers. During **Toronto Fashion Week**, the suites at the Hazelton Hotel were bustling with designers attending private appointments and doing business one-on-one akin to the century old tradition of custom couture.

Christopher Paunil hosted an opulent tour of Versailles by projecting moving images on the runway. The Hall of Mirrors served as a backdrop for stunning bridal gowns while a night sky set off bold yellow and silk jacquard and oversized black and white houndstooth for evening.

"Those who are doing interesting things are not just slotting into the calendar, showing every season... They are doing things on their own terms."

~ Hywel Davies, Programme Director
Fashion at Central Saint Martins, London



Christopher Paunil
Photo : George Pimentel



Christopher Paunil
Photo : George Pimentel



Mikhael Kale at the ROM
Photo : K.Mogg



Hilary MacMillan SS19
Photo : George Pimentel



Christopher Paunil SS19
Photo : George Pimentel



Christopher Paunil SS19
Photo : George Pimentel



Leslie Hampton
Photo : George Pimentel



Mikael D
Photo : George Pimentel



Mikael D
Photo : George Pimentel



Mikael D
Photo : George Pimentel

CONCEPTUAL EVENT

Behind most successful designers are great business owners, sales agents and publicists. Toronto-based **Elsa Reia** is a force not only for selling the **UNTTLD** collection to some of Canada's leading high-fashion retail accounts, but also a business advisor for designers **Simon Bélanger** and **José Manuel Saint-Jacques**.

Instead of the official fashion week, **UNTTLD** chose to show their sophisticated collection at the **Omni King Edward Ballroom** in October. The charity concept event 'where music and runway collide' was organized by **Jessica Panetta** of the **Conceptual Event Society**.

Each runway segment had its own performer such as **Mikael D** doing what he does best, glamorous gowns, mini to maxi, and body-skimming lace to full-skirted pink taffeta. Looks were paired with over-the-top 80s-inspired jewellery by **Rita Tesolin**. It was the strongest collection yet for young First Nations designer **Lesley Hampton** whose broader definition of beauty earned an ovation for a feminine black and white collection with lace ruffles and feathers. A portion of sales went to Boost, a local youth charity.

COLOUR CONFIDENCE

HendrixRoe shows bright neon hues and plastic with attitude. **Hayley Elsaesser** inserts social messages in her own colourful prints and always puts diversity on the runway.



Leslie Hampton
Photo : George Pimentel



HendrixRoe SS19
Photo : George Pimentel



HendrixRoe SS19
Photo : George Pimentel



HendrixRoe SS19
Photo : George Pimentel



Hayley Elsaesser
Photo : K. Mogg

▶▶ RUNWAY REVIEW



Re\Set at Hudson's Bay
Photo George Pimentel

RUNWAY TO RETAIL

Just about every fashion week in Canada has a retail component. **Re\Set** by **The Collections** has been successful at creating must-see shows at **Toronto Fashion Week** that allow for creative expression by some of Canada's most advanced contemporary designers, including **Sid Neigum**, **Beaufille**, **Markoo** and **Mikhael Kale**. The Collections works year round with designers to produce highly curated temporary retail environments to generate revenue. This season they have gone mainstream with a major presence on the sales floor and in the windows of 5 **Hudson Bay** flagships.



Stylist Suite
Photo : Ryan Emberley

In past seasons, **TOM** and **Toronto Women's Fashion Week** had host **Jeanne Beker** conducting post show interviews for **The Shopping Channel** with designers from Montreal's **Cabinet Éphémère**. The TOM/TW websites indicate that, after two seasons off, the **Canada Fashion Group** is actively working toward October 2019 and that it is seeking paid subscribers and soliciting designer applications. The plan is for five fashion-forward initiatives based on music, film, talks and shop, plus 5 days of runway fashion featuring TOM, TW and an array of specialty shows as the grand finale.



Mikhael Kale at Re\Set popup
Photo : George Pimentel



Sid Neigum
Photo : K.Mogg



Sid Neigum
Photo : K.Mogg

PRODUCT PLACEMENT

The **Stylist Suite** is an invite-only 'chic fashion showroom' for celebrities, stylists, media and designers. Over 250 attended over just four days, giving participating designers great value-for-money considering the media and social media coverage generated.

"Every year we look forward to hosting The Stylist Suite. Not only do we love dressing all the celebrities for their red carpets and galas but I personally love exposing them to Canadian designers they may not know – many become lifelong fans and clients of the designer or brand," says co-founder and on-air fashion expert **Christian Dare**.



ZOFF by Michael Zofferani
Photo : K.Mogg

LAUNCH PAD LONDON

In spite of Brexit, the **TFI** (Toronto Fashion Incubator) returned for a second time to **Canada House** in September. A slightly tweaked showcase presented thirteen designers primed to maximize buyer and media exposure during **London Fashion Week**. The show featured inclusive social statements and niche products such as special sizes, eco-friendly and even recycled materials made from textile waste. Fashion lines included **Miriam Baker**, **Leslie Hampton**, and up-and-comers **Zoff** and **Jonah Jay**. Jewellery brands included **Alan Anderson** and **Victory of the People**. **Barcelona Collective** and **Manitobah Mukluks** offered practical and distinct footwear. Funding help from the **City of Toronto**, the **Canada-UK Foundation** High Commission of Canada to the UK, and **Suzanne Rogers Fashion Institute** will allow **Susan Langdon**, Executive Director of the **Toronto Fashion Incubator**, to return for a third time with more emerging designers in February 2019.

ATLANTIC FASHION WEEK

“It is a financial necessity to do ‘see now – buy now’,” says

Angela Campagnoni, founder and executive director of **Atlantic Fashion Week**. Thirty-one designers showed a wide range of fashion tastes and local talent in a 12th season last October.

“It has always been a consumer-facing show, where the public can buy tickets ... and shop directly from the designer. Attendance was up 160% this year - 300-400 fashion fans each night.”

Campagnoni credits the success to her partnerships, especially with **Redken** who has been there from the start. Only last year was she able to secure funding from the new provincial cultural heritage fund. Still, it is not something she banks on.

“It allowed us to expand and improve what I built over 10 years, but I don’t count on it... you have to be able to change.”



Sueno Swimwear
Photo : Brent McCombs/Alter Ego



Melanie Jacqueline
Photo : Brent McCombs/Alter Ego

Also at the show:

Jenn Hansom, Twigg & Feather’s skilled knitwear designer, does bold stripes and sells at over 45 boutiques.

Kelsey Erin counteracts throwaway fast fashion by offering stylish quality wardrobe staples.

Sophisticated **Sueno Swimwear** stays put no matter what you do at the beach.

Kristen Reid of **Lore Collective** draws folklore to create edgy luxury with silky fabrics and generous silhouettes.

Happiness bursts from the **Melanie Jacqueline** collection, by St. John’s designer **MJ Couch**, with an exuberant mélange of tulle and graphic prints.

NEXT UP: FW’19

Toronto Fashion Week
February 5-7

London Fashion Week - TFI Showcase
Feb 15

Vancouver Fashion Week
Mar 18-24

TOM/TW
October

Atlantic Fashion Week
Mid-October



Twigg Feather
Photo : Brent McCombs/Alter Ego



Kelsey Erin
Photo : Brent McCombs/Alter Ego