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Pumps and Circumstance

Katia Jean Paul ruminates on the trends and the elements of style within the culture at large.



World MasterCard Fashion Week FW14: In With the Old, In With the New

by [Katia Jean Paul](#)
published March 26, 2014

rating: ★★★★★ (10 Ratings)

Old hand Joseph Mimran goes for outdoorsy chic at Joe Fresh while budding couturier Brit Wacher opts for noir minimalism. Spotlight on one established and one emerging designer.

We may not have Les Tuileries or Lincoln Center. We may not have mild winters, the kind that allows us to wear peep-toe pumps sans tights without any concern (no matter how much we try). We may not have terribly avant-garde fashions or a Chanel supermarket. But we do have talent. Canada is rife with talent and that talent converged under the tent at Toronto's David Pecaut Square this past March 17-21 for **World MasterCard Fashion Week**.

Off all the Fall-Winter 2014 collections that debuted down the runway, there were some clear standouts. **Mikhael Kale**, whose deft craftsmanship shone through flattering peek-a-boo confections, wispy pieces adorned with tulle ruffles and intricate details, and breathtaking floral prints. **Sid Neigum's** crafty cutout dresses and waistcoats, exaggerated collars and draping, and checkered terracotta separates were swoon-worthy. Friends Claudette Floyd of **Rush Couture** and **Helmer** brought high fashion elegance, femininity and expert tailoring to the catwalk with voluminous propositions and fabrics big on texture. And **Pink Tartan's** fur accents, quilted skirts and plaid confections were perfection.

What we lack in pageantry, sophisticated locales and comfy weather, we make up for in raw talent, more diverse catwalks (Amy Winters, an ultramarathon runner who lost her left leg following a motorcycle accident in 1994 walked the **VAWK** runway show in a sparkling prosthetic leg), and a unique aesthetic.

But like all fashion weeks, WMCWF also brought established and emerging talent together under one roof. Below, a look at the contrasting but equally stellar collections of two such designers, veteran fashion player Joseph Mimran of **Joe Fresh** and fledging Montreal-based couturier **Brit Wacher**.

Joe Fresh Does Wearable Chic



Photos: George Pimentel

Joe Fresh's FW14 collection is sporty chic materialized. And apropos. We may have bid spring welcome a few days ago but the transition was clearly a figment of our collective imagination. Mimran's oversized funnel neck coats and faux fur-adorned parkas would be perfect for the enduring cold weather. There isn't a lack of outerwear, most of which plays on proportions and put run-of-the-mill parkas and anoraks to shame. Whether of glistening vinyl, cozy shearing or even teddy-like fur, they are surprisingly elegant. The slim drawstring pants, while very sporty, also bear a luxe quality. The earthy colour palette perfectly ties everything together, but the picturesque shirtdresses, sweater dresses, and skirts bearing images of the great outdoors meld sporty and urban chic with aplomb. This collection is a breath of fresh air, an elegant and wearable lot for stylish working gals. It's a shame we have to wait until next fall to wrap ourselves in Joe Fresh's sophisticated outdoorsy wares.

Brit Wacher's Futuristic Femme Noir



Photos: George Pimentel

While Mimran's collection has mass appeal, Wacher's is not for everyone. And therein lies its appeal. Her angular shapes and flowing confections are austere and otherworldly. There's minimal colour but plenty of asymmetries at work: the sleeves of varying lengths are not at all jarring but easy on the eyes thanks to artful craftsmanship. Through sleek, sophisticated clothing, Wacher has fashioned a futuristic femme complete with sharp-edged shoulders. Speaking of which, the two-tone shirt with slightly overhanging shoulders pictured center is an edgy interpretation of the classic button-up. And the long green turtleneck dress draped with a slightly glistening black wool coat is stunning in its simplicity. Wacher's attention to detail makes for sexy minimalist pieces with grit. While this collection is more restrained than the designer's SS14 presentation, it bears the same fantasy-laced quality that makes her designs so appealing. Women who like to let their futuristic alter egos roam free will have no trouble appropriating these stylish pieces for themselves.



Fashion, art, architecture, design, TV, and film: Katia Jean Paul is a Montreal-based writer who casts a critical eye on her many idées fixes, unearthing the aesthetic and cultural dimensions within each and every subject./Follow Katia on Twitter: @KatiaJeanPaul

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