

Lifestyle | Fashion

PARIS FASHION WEEK BRACES FOR CLIMATE PROTESTS, ABSENT STAR

Paris women's fashion week is bracing itself for climate change and animals rights protests as it started yesterday, with one of its biggest stars—Virgil Abloh—missing. Extinction Rebellion activists had called for London fashion week to be cancelled entirely because of the “climate emergency” and laid down their own bleeding red carpet to highlight the environmental damage done by the industry.

Animal rights group PETA also took to the streets in London to denounce fashion's love affair with leather, saying tanneries were among the world's worst polluters. Protesters smeared themselves in black slime as a metaphor for the “hazardous waste associated with the leather industry”. Similar protests are likely in Paris over the nine-day marathon of its spring summer shows—by far the world's biggest and most important fashion week.

But the French capital will be without Abloh, the hyperactive American streetwear guru behind Off-White, who has managed to hog the headlines on both the men's and women's runways over the past year. The 38-year-old—who also designs Louis Vuitton's menswear line as well as working with Nike and Ikea—has been forced to curb his manic globe-trotting schedule because of “health considerations”.

Abloh forced to slow down

With his doctor advising him not to travel, Abloh will stay at home in Chicago, where a retrospective of his work at the city's Museum of Contemporary Art has been extended after breaking box office records. “I was just tired, so I went to the doctor,” the architect-turned-

designer told Vogue. “Everything is fine, but the doctor told me: ‘This pace that you've pushed your body to is not good for your health.’”

“Being busy isn't working,” he confessed in a remarkably frank admission in an industry where creative burn-out is something of a taboo. Abloh's Paris Off-White show will go ahead Thursday without him. “I designed it with this seeming hurdle in tow. There's an element that replaces my attendance with crowd participation,” he added. Last week Paris' other big new star, Demna Gvasalia, quit Vetements, the rebellious uber hip brand where he made his name as the bad boy of fashion.

Having “started Vetements because I was bored of fashion”, he said that he felt he had accomplished his “mission” of shaking the industry up. But Gvasalia is staying at Balenciaga, the venerable Paris luxury label he has also shaken up, the brand told AFP.

Koreans are coming

Kiminte Kimhekim, who cut his teeth at Balenciaga, will make his Paris debut with his eponymous label Monday a few hours before another Korean newcomer, Rokh, will present its second collection. Kimhekim—known for his use of giant bows—has already caught the eye of Hollywood star and fashion icon Elle Fanning, who wore a pink transparent dress belted with a giant bow to the premiere of her new film “Maleficent: Mistress of Evil” last month. He told AFP that his show—cheekily called “Buy it if you can”—mixes the chima, the long traditional Korean skirt, with high school uniforms worn there, spiced with an extra touch of “provocation”.

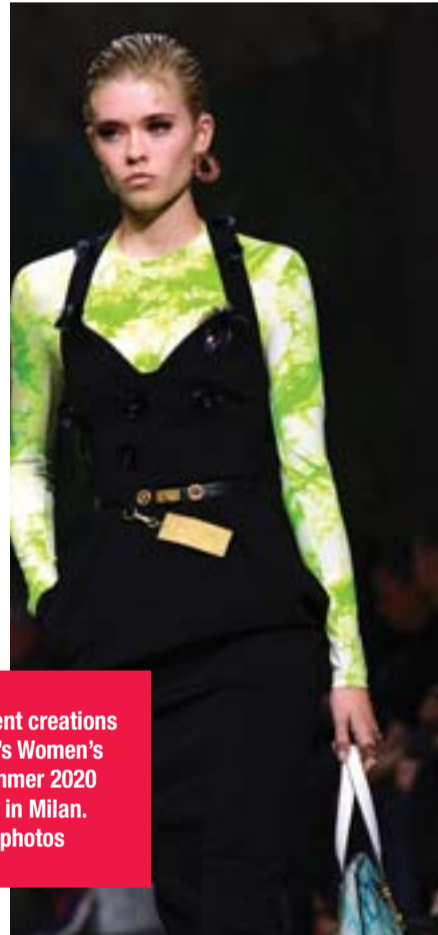


Activists for animal rights group People for the Ethical Treatment of Animal (PETA) douse themselves with black product during a protest against the use of leather in the fashion industry in front of the Eiffel tower in Paris. — AFP

His collection includes a pair of trousers that are twice as long as a normal pair. “Some people might think that they are not terribly wearable, but I don't care. If you can, buy them!” he joked, saying it was important to push boundaries and experiment. Fellow Korean Rok Hwang, a protege of the ex-Celine creator Phoebe Philo, shares much of the British designer's discreet modern chic. Having deconstructed the classic wardrobe staples of trench coats and suits in his debut Paris Rokh show, this time he is going outdoors with a show he calls “Field Trip”.

The other Paris debutante is Japanese designer

Maiko Kurogouchi, who eight years after leaving the “King of Pleats” Issey Miyake, is bringing her own Mame label to Paris. Like Miyake, Kurogouchi's clothes are both ultramodern and steeped in Japanese craft tradition. “Designers can make something new from ancient know-how and transmit it to the next generation,” she said.—AFP



Models present creations for Versace's Women's Spring Summer 2020 collection in Milan. — AFP photos

Jennifer Lopez is Versace guest star in Milan

Hollywood star Jennifer Lopez on Friday made a surprise catwalk appearance at the Versace fashion show in Milan, sporting a near identical dress to the green jungle print robe she wore to the Grammy Awards in 2000. The actress closed Donatella Versace's spring/summer 2020 collection in the green silk creation with a deep-V plunging neckline, triggering an ecstatic reaction from the audience. Versace sent out a string of other looks also using her green jungle print from shorts to suits. Other outfits included little black dresses teamed with knee-high strappy sandals, a big-shouldered denim jacket and trench coat, a red feathery mini dress and a fuchsia pink parka.—AFP

