

RULE BRITANNIA

Keep an eye on LONDON'S NEW FASHION GUARD as they stride strong into the new year as the next agents of change.
By Reshma Krishnan

The year 2012 belonged to London. Not only with the week-long celebration of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee but also the Olympics. Through it all fashion stayed in the spotlight be it the Queen's spectacular cornflower blue coat or Kate Middleton's red Alexander McQueen ensemble. But that wasn't the only reason behind Cool Britannia. A clutch of designers has channelled the energy back to the London making it the most exciting fashion capital. Think Peter Pilotto, Simone Rocha, Antipodium, JW Anderson, Michael Van Der Ham, and Lucas Nascimento. According to Debra Hepburn, founder of youngbritishdesigners.com, it's all the magic of the city. "You can be anarchic, irreverent, groundbreaking, shocking and above all, achingly cool." Bazaar profiles these up and comers.



PETER PILOTTO

This enigmatic duo have managed to carve out a niche in the market with their MASTERFUL PRINTS

Runways today are a sea of prints, and yet Peter Pilotto's otherworldly mosaics and subtle, body-sculpturing silhouettes still manage to stand out. Peter

Pilotto, one half of the five-year-old design duo, focuses on the print and textiles while Christopher De Vos focuses on drape and structure. For spring, their art deco prints have an almost an MC Escher like quality in the way they move across the body creating a ripple effect. The inspiration for the season, the designers say, was a trip to Florence. "We loved walking through the town visiting old palazzos, and many of the prints with the arabesques were inspired by those Renaissance palaces." The intricate beading was inspired by their summer visit to Rajasthan and Kolkatta. "We visited India in the summer where a lot of the beading is done. It was impressive to see how skilled and fast the craftspeople are, how elegant." The Peter Pilotto cut is globally flattering and now sells in 27 countries and has a loyal celebrity following including our own Natasha Poonawala and Freida Pinto. Cecilia Morelli Parikh, co-founder of Le Mill, loves this brand and is the only Indian store to stock it. "Their prints are incredibly innovative and classics for generations to come. Pilotto is not afraid of curves, not afraid, of different sized chests, not afraid of short or tall women," she says.



Peter Pilotto
Spring 2013

Dress, ₹1,16,000 (approx) and skirt, ₹63,000 (approx), at net-a-porter.com.

IMAGES COURTESY: PETER PILOTTO.



SIMONE ROCHA

The return of the EDGY ROMANTIC

If the name Rocha tickled the fashion repository in your brain, then its because Simone is the daughter of the celebrated Irish designer, John Rocha, recipient of the British Design award in 1994 and a Commander of the Most Excellent Order Of the British Empire. While the romantic influence is apparent, there is a delicate freshness about Simone's clothes that stem from her treatment of lace and crochet in an emphatically modern and minimalist way just as Rei Kawakubo did with cut-out paper for Comme des Garçons in 1992.

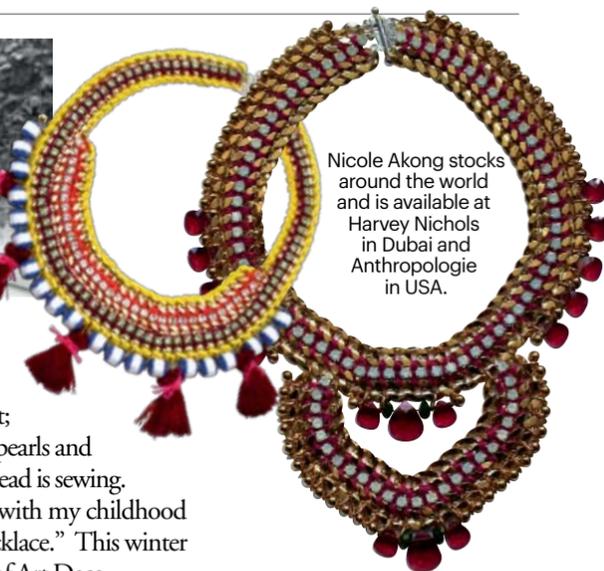
Rocha's Central St Martin's graduation collection in 2010 featured tailored monochrome dresses with sheer panels and surreal net headgear. Two years on, she remains faithful to her palette of cream barring the gorgeous splashes of neon. Her mixing of textures to create plastic dresses, crocheted, lace A-line skirts, and thick, golden knits, show a deepened understanding of fabric. The penchant for romance endures. Just as she paid homage to the mourning tradition in the Aral Islands in the 2010 collection, her spring collection reflects Lolita-esqe sweetness with neon yellow and pink crochet skirts, and baby doll swing coats—it's how you'd dress for high tea in the 21st century. The designer was the recipient of Newgen funding, has her own capsule collection at Topshop and has been nominated for the Emerging Talent British Fashion Award this year. Her signature brogues with coloured perspex soles continue to be on the waiting lists of fashionistas worldwide.

Fall 2012

NICOLE AKONG

For ACCESSORIES that personify CONFIDENCE and DARING

Nicole Akong says she still hasn't gotten over the staggering emotional response to her work at a trade fair three years and six collections ago. It's hard to refute when you can't take your eyes off seven layers of metal, pearls, and semi-precious stones intricately woven together with ribbon. After a fantastic online debut at ASOS and a collaboration with Anthropologie, Akong London is fast becoming the must-have bauble. Each collection is staggeringly different; the Midas collection combines layers of aluminum and gold leaf with Czech pearls and glass stones while her Fall 2010 was a medley of soft feathers. The common thread is sewing. "Because I'm largely self taught," she says, "my inspiration is always married with my childhood experiences of sewing. It is more an embellishment of clothing than just a necklace." This winter Nicole is "breathing Bianca Jagger," as her inspiration is Studio 54 with a dash of Art Deco.



Nicole Akong stocks around the world and is available at Harvey Nichols in Dubai and Anthropologie in USA.

IMAGES COURTESY: SIMONE ROCHAS; NICOLE AKONG.



Her spring collection reflects a Lolita-esqe sweetness with neon yellow, pink crochet skirts, and baby-doll swing coats

ANTIPODIUM

For the seriously MODERN and INDIVIDUALISTIC

“Antipodium happened by accident,” says Geoffrey J Finch, the creative half of the label which began as a PR house founded by Asha Peacock. “It was the end of boho,” he adds, “and we saw a gap for versatile, wearable, wardrobe staples that were not ridiculously Priced.” The clean modern silhouette of their first piece, the—shirt, led to the birth of a cult brand that has become the unofficial uniform of DJs, models, and the inimitable style icon Alexa Chung. Debra Hepburn, a buyer for youngbritishdesigners.com says, “The current lot of young designers work with a sense of irreverence and a twinkle in their eye.” Finch believes that the joy is in the details that wearers don’t notice till the third or fourth wear like the silk-satin on the under collar, or contrast collar on the inside cuff.



Spring 2013



Lucas Nascimento Spring 2013

LUCAS NASCIMENTO

Sexy, sensual, light-reflecting KNITWEAR

Does knitwear make you think ribbed turtle necks? Think again. Lucas Nascimento’s spring collection takes inspiration from the heavens, as planets float in a sea of gossamer fabric spun so fine you can’t believe it’s knit. “I like to create silhouettes that are not typical of knitwear, using knit unexpectedly through careful yarn consideration and solid research,” Lucas says. This Brazilian winner of the Newgen award is only three seasons old but already creating ripples in knitwear because of his innovative light-reflecting weaving techniques that result in turtlenecks as delicate as silk chiffon. When paired with a long slit white skirt cinched at the waist, this is sexy knitwear like you’ve never felt before.



Fall 2011

IMAGES COURTESY: ANTIPODIUM; JW ANDERSON; GETTY IMAGES.

JW ANDERSON

Draws on MENSWEAR TAILORING and an extremely URBAN AESTHETIC to dress the girls

If you’re looking for party dresses you’ve come to the wrong designer. JW Anderson is a lover of separates and his critically acclaimed clothes are inspired by youth subcultures and practicality. His ideal client, he says at London Fashion Week, is “free”. Winner of the British Fashion Council’s emerging talent ward, this Irish designer began with menswear in 2008 and moved onto womenswear by expanding into jewellery and shoes. Debra Hepburn says, “he experiments with cut, texture, gender and role. He shocks and amazes. With each and every collection, he epitomises British emerging talent.” His spring collection reflects a more mature Anderson working with drapes and patchwork even as he continues to experiment with tartan, jackets, and traditional ribbed sweaters. It’s no wonder that he’s Topshop’s most successful collaboration yet.



Spring 2012



Michael Van Der Ham Spring 2013

MICHAEL VANDERHAM

The prince of DECONSTRUCTION and MIXED MEDIA



IMAGES COURTESY: MICHAEL VAN DER HAM; WWW.YOUNGBRITISHDESIGNERS.COM.

Quickly becoming known for being the master of deconstruction, Michael Van Der Ham’s ideal client is one who is daring and bold. His soft printed knits combined with layered chiffon, devoré velvet and brocade are making style editors go weak in the knees. Originally from the Netherlands, Michael graduated from Central Saint Martins and is now on his sixth collection after finishing enviable internships at Alexander McQueen and Sophia Kokosalaki. For spring the works of Spanish artist Joan Mirò come to life through geometric watercolor swatches filled with sequins that drape over the body to create mixed media collages on the catwalk.



Debra Hepburn of youngbritishdesigners.com

YOUNGBRITISH DESIGNERS

Making shopping online a more PERSONAL JOURNEY

We are a about designer stories,” says Debra Hepburn, founder of youngbritishdesigners.com, a unique website that aims to showcase the very best of emerging British design talent onto a global stage. “Anyone can sell online, but we are moving towards a more personal engagement with fashion.” Each look is accompanied with a detailed opinion

of why it’s been chosen and it’s easy to see why emerging designers Drawing Light and Meli Melo are thronging to be featured on a site that sports well know names like Joanne Stoker and Zöe Jordan. Debra receives over 15 portfolios a day and uses only one yardstick—“the wow factor” and does not compromise design for price. The site focuses on everything from hosiery by Hose to exquisite scarves by Sara Ebbet. “The analogy we use,” she says, “is that the people who shop at net-a-porter want to look as if they have walked out of the pages of a fashion magazine. The people who shop at YBD walk onto the pages of the magazine and set the trend.” ■



Kirsty Ward necklace on youngbritishdesigners.com, ₹70,000 (approx).

J D’Cruz bag on youngbritishdesigners.com, ₹11,000 (approx).

Joanne Stoker shoes on youngbritishdesigners.com, ₹20,000 (approx).

JW Anderson at youngbritishdesigners.com