The Covid-19 pandemic is once again shaping fashion weeks this season. Rather than New York or London, it's down to Milan to open the Fall/Winter 2021-22 season, which will take place exclusively online this January. Running from 15 to 19 January, Milan Fashion Week Men's will feature 39 brands, few of which are widely known.

Indeed, most big-name Italian brands have disappeared from Milan men's calendar. Dolce & Gabbana, for example, will be absent from the Milanese runways for the first time in the label's history. The brand was forced to cancel its show at the last minute due to the "uncertain situation related to Covid-19," which meant that the necessary health and safety conditions could not be guaranteed.
necessary health and safety conditions could not be guaranteed.

The four other houses that had planned a physical show have also had to rethink their approach. Fendi and Etro will both reveal their collections at closed shows, on 16 and 17 January, respectively. K-Way, which is set to make its runway debut in the Lombard capital on Sunday, will now only be able to welcome some 30 guests. As for Korea's Solid Homme, led by Woo Young Mi, which was also supposed to host its first Milanese show on 18 January, the brand has opted to unveil its collection digitally.

In terms of exclusively digital presentations, aside from Ermenegildo Zegna, which opens Milan Fashion Week on Friday, 15 January, at 3 PM, and Prada, whose show is scheduled for 17 January, there are hardly any big names this season, which features Iceberg on 16 January, followed by MSGM, Tod's and Sunnei the next day, and A-Cold-Wall, Magliano and Les Hommes on 19 January.

Gucci, which made its big comeback at Milan Fashion Week Men's last January and participated in its first digital edition in July, has chosen to follow a different rhythm this time around. Also present on July's calendar, Moschino has opted out of this season's event as well, revealing its menswear collection on Thursday, just before the official opening of the Milanese fashion week.

Philippe Plein, Ermanno Scervino, Salvatore Ferragamo, Dsquared2 and Missoni have also all disappeared from the programme, with most of them planning to present their menswear collections with their womenswear offerings in February, alongside Giorgio Armani and Versace.

In order to compensate for this exodus, the Camera Nazionale della Moda Italiana has had no choice but to open its menswear calendar up to new names, including several emerging brands, both homegrown and international. 10 new labels will therefore be making their Milan debuts this season.
Notably, the event will shine a spotlight on young African, particularly Nigerian, design, which will be represented by three brands. The first of the Nigerian labels on this season’s calendar is Lagos Space Programme, which was founded by designer Adeju Thompson in 2014 and emphasises craftsmanship and sustainable fashion. The brand will be joined by Faith Oluwajimi's genderless label Bloke, founded in 2015, and Tokyo James, which is led by Nigerian-born British designer Ineyie Tokyo James.

Lagos Space Programme will have the privilege of following Ermenegildo Zegna on Friday, a first day which will end with the new project from Florentine designer Federico Curradi and hatter to the stars Nick Fouquet, with whom the Italian previously collaborated for the Rochas menswear collections.

Among the other newcomers on the Milanese calendar, K-Way and Solid Homme, mentioned above, will rub shoulders with Moldovan-born, Italy-based designer Dima Leu, who won the Who's On Next menswear category this year; emerging label Vaderetro, founded in 2019 by couple Hanna Boyer and Antonio D'Andrea; Dalpaos, led by up-and-coming designer Nicola D'Alpaos; and New Delhi-based Indian designer and entrepreneur Dhruv Kapoor.

No other special activations are planned, aside from a few physical presentations and some parallel virtual events, such as Fashion Film Festival Milano, launched seven years ago by Constanza Cavalli Etro, which will participate in Milan Fashion Week for the first time this season, offering a selection of 220 films from 58 countries.

Milan's White trade fair will also be taking place, with a new concept entitled "WSN Fashion Reboot", showcasing 40 sustainable brands with either menswear or genderless offerings. This edition of the trade show will run from 16 to 18 January, debuting a fully digital format.

By Dominique Muret
Translated by Robin Driver

Copyright © 2021 FashionNetwork.com All rights reserved.