Milan Fashion Week Men's kicks off in phygital form on Friday

By Dominique Muret - June 18, 2021

Hot on the heels of London Fashion Week Men's, starting Friday it's Milan's turn to unveil its menswear collections for Fall/Winter 2021-22. In contrast to last January, when almost the entirety of the programme took place online, this summer session is taking cautious steps back towards normality, with physical presentations, a few cocktail receptions and even three real runway shows.

Dolce & Gabbana will show on Saturday 19 June, Etro on Sunday 20 June and Giorgio Armani on Monday 21 June, with two shows. Otherwise, we are still looking at an ultra-light fashion week of only four days. Stripped of many of its big names, excepting the three shows mentioned above and the videos expected from Fendi, Prada and Ermenegildo Zegna, who will open proceedings on Friday, Milan Fashion Week Men's will once again concentrate on young Italian design and new international names, most of which are little known by the general public.

Running 18 to 22 June, this summer edition's calendar of physical and virtual shows features 47 names, versus the 39 that participated in the event last January. Including presentations, one of which will be the debut of trouser specialist PT Torino, the fashion week will bring together a total of 65 brands for a programme that is further complemented by 12 special events.

Among the highlights, one unmissable rendez-vous is the first collection designed for Diesel by Glenn Martens, who is also creative director at Y/Project, set to show in Paris on 27 June. For the Italian jeans maker, the Belgian designer has come up with a collection "for all genders," which will be revealed via a video. Another one to watch is the collection designed by Andrea Pompilio for Neapolitan brand Harmont & Blaine. The Italian designer has also been presenting menswear line APN73, launched in partnership with Chinese textile group JNBY, in Milan since last season.

Other first-timers on Milan's virtual runway include two Spanish graduates of the Istituto Europeo de Design de Madrid. The first, Tíscar Espadas, is a designer and illustrator from Úbeda in Andalusia. Having studied at London's Royal College of Art with a scholarship from Burberry, Espadas decided to launch her menswear brand in the city in 2018. Her label is now distributed by some 15 Japanese multi-brand retailers.
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The second, Jaime Alvarez, founded Mans Concept Menswear in Madrid in 2018 and quickly attracted attention at Barcelona Fashion Week thanks to his couture "soft boy" aesthetic, which reworks men's suiting in quality materials for a vibrant offering that is 100% made in Spain.

The Milanese calendar also features two African brands: South Africa's Franc Elis, which was founded in Johannesburg as a manufacturer and supplier for other companies in 2003 and which specialises in shirting and chic cutting, and Cameroon's Paul Roger Tanonkou. This IT graduate and self-taught designer stepped onto the fashion scene in 2004 with Zenam, an ethical and sustainable menswear line made in Milan, where the creator established his atelier. The label mixes African traditions with Western couture.

Joining these names is cult Californian streetwear brand 424, led by Los Angeles-born designer Guillermo Andrade, who cut his teeth opening a multibrand store before launching his own line in 2015.

Finally, there are two new Italian names to discover: Revenant RVNT and KNT. Established in Florence in 2016, the former is a streetwear label launched by Tommaso Bencistà Falorni via design and communication firm TBF Limited, which he founded in 2011 with his brother, Andrea, who heads up operations. KNT is an urban line launched by historic Neapolitan tailor Kiton in 2018. The label's collections are designed by twins Mariano and Walter De Matteis, the third generation of a family business.

Not content with a simple video, many of these designers have also organised physical presentations in Milan, where there will be plenty of in-person events, such as the opening cocktail reception, hosted by the Camera della Moda Italiana in the gardens of a sumptuous palace, or that held by Portugal Fashion Week to celebrate its 25th anniversary on Sunday, just before video presentations from David Catalan and Miguel Vieira. Not to mention the presentation from up-and-coming Anglo-Italian streetwear label Jordanluca, organised by the Slam Jam showroom.