



Christopher Kane,
dress, silk organza,
fall 2014, London.

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Global Fashion Capitals

June 2–November 14, 2015

Organized by Ariele Elia and Elizabeth Way

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Cover: Lisa Folawiyo, dress, cotton blend, spring 2015, Lagos. | Photograph by Yossi Michaeli.
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GLOBAL FASHION CAPITALS

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Cristóbal Balenciaga, cocktail dress, silk faille, 1959, Paris.



Prada, ensemble, wool, plastic, and fleece, fall 2007, Milan.

Paris, recognized as the world's fashion capital since the 18th century, was joined during the late-20th century by New York, Milan, and London. These cities are now the four major centers of global fashion. However, during the last decade, globalization has created a polycentric fashion system. Hundreds of cities worldwide have begun hosting fashion weeks in hopes of attracting international press. *Global Fashion Capitals* has selected sixteen of the most interesting cities and features one to three designers from each city. These designers create exciting new styles that merge the local with the global to achieve internationally appealing fashions.

The Parisian fashion system, fueled by the city's historical focus on women's clothing and luxury goods, has set the model for other cities. Parisian haute couture inspired worldwide trends from the mid-19th to the mid-20th centuries and "designer" fashion is still inseparable from the image of Paris.

New York and Milan rose as fashion capitals based on innovative ready-to-wear design supported by strong manufacturing bases. During the Nazi occupation of Paris, New York briefly gained attention designing sportswear on its own. During the 1970s, both New York and Milan challenged Paris. Building from Italy's tradition of fine textiles, Milan's designers became known for finely crafted ready-to-wear.

"Swinging London" became famous during the 1960s for its exciting, youth-oriented fashions and street styles. London's creative fashion industry continues to be led by small, independent, innovative labels like the ones that established the city's experimental character.



BACK, ensemble, cotton and synthetic, spring 2015, Stockholm.



Alexandre Herchovitch, jumpsuit, glass beads, spring 2007, São Paulo.

Tokyo emerged as a fashion center during the 1980s, when avant-garde designers launched the "Japanese fashion revolution." Although the most influential Japanese designers have always shown in Paris, Tokyo is often considered to be the world's "fifth fashion capital." By the 1990s, a cohort of designers from Antwerp made an impact during Paris fashion week, leading to a higher profile for Belgian fashion.

In recent years, several cities in northern Europe have gained traction as fashion cities, including Berlin, Stockholm, and Copenhagen. Marina Hoermanseder's sculptural fashions have put Berlin on the map, while Kilian Kerner incorporates Berlin's music and film scene into his work. In the Nordic region, Stockholm and Copenhagen are dual fashion capitals. Distancing themselves from mid-century Scandinavian modern style, designers such as Ann-Sofie Back and Henrik Vibskov are known for androgynous, edgy clothing, designed for city life.

Despite political and economic unrest in Russia and Ukraine, their cities continue to produce innovative fashions. In Kiev, Ukrainian styles range from Anna K's whimsical fashions to street culture-inspired designs by Anton Belinskiy. Of Russia's two fashion cities, St. Petersburg is creative and daring, while Moscow style is refined and opulent.

Although Istanbul is a fashion newcomer, its rich culture provides designers with a wealth of inspiration. Arzu Kaprol, for example, is known for her sharp tailoring. Meanwhile, in Madrid, Agatha Ruiz de la Prada is known for vibrant colors and quirky themes.

In Australia, Sydney style is regarded as sporty and sexy, while Melbourne is more sophisticated. Both cities' designers draw inspiration from aspects of Australia's culture and environment, ranging from "bush clothing" to surf wear.

During the 1990s, São Paulo rose as Latin America's fashion capital. Alexandre Herchovitch captured the attention of the international press with work inspired by Brazilian street culture. Today,



Manish Arora, ensemble, cotton jersey and silk, spring 2006, New Delhi.



Big Park, dress, synthetic and cotton denim, spring 2015, Seoul.

Patricia Bonaldi's vibrant colors and lush textures attract buyers in fifteen countries. Within the last decade, Mexico City's fashion industry has grown with its economy. Carla Fernandez and Ricardo Seco incorporate the work of indigenous Mexican artisans into their sportswear designs.

African cities are more recent players in the global fashion industry. Lamine Kouyaté of Xuly Bêt, a Mali-born designer based in Paris, brought early recognition to African designers. Johannesburg fashion emerged after apartheid ended in 1994. The city is home to many diverse ethnicities, and styles range from Clive Rundle's intellectual and avant-garde designs to Stoned Cherrie's Afro-urban street wear. In Lagos, Nigeria's booming economy has helped support designers, such as Amaka Osakwe of Maki Oh and Lisa Folawiyo, who incorporate locally made African fabrics into their internationally appealing clothes.

Seoul has risen as one of Asia's most exciting fashion capitals during the last decade. The South Korean government prioritizes fashion as a cultural export, and brands such as LIE SANGBONG and Big Park are rapidly breaking into the international fashion scene.

India and China have both developed fashion industries from strong manufacturing bases. In recent years, Mumbai has eclipsed New Delhi as India's fashion capital, creating contemporary fashions as opposed to traditional, intricately embellished looks. China's flourishing economy fuels its indigenous fashion industry. Shanghai and Beijing compete as China's top-tier fashion centers, followed by many second-tier cities. Uma Wang and Masha Ma expand Shanghai's influence by presenting their distinctive collections in Milan and Paris.

Ariele Elia and Elizabeth Way, curators