

STYLE

LFW: HYBRIDS, HUMANOIDS AND HYPERREALITY

by [Alex Brzezicka](#)

Welcome to the Fashion Week Planet. It's time to choose your freak.

This season of London Fashion Week has definitely been a confusing one. With half of the shows digital, half physical and various forms of presentation from runways to videos, it's been quite a challenge to make sense of that fabulous mess. That's why we've decided not to. When you can't defeat the wave, you have to ride with it. Especially if the most future-forward designers invite you to do so. In 2021, shock factor is simply not enough to break through the smart-phone-glass ceiling and impress our over-loaded with visual stimulation minds. Whether it's CGI, simulation or physical pieces, today only excellence has a chance of getting our attention.

There's an old saying that opposites attract and it couldn't be truer. Among a multitude trends emerging in between countless catwalks, showrooms and cigarette breaks, we've set ourselves on the quest of finding a stand-out pattern. Exploring London's various venues and immersing into dozens of digital-only contents, we discovered our phenomenon: the most fascinating fashion came from contrasting superficially unfit elements. Following the theme, we tracked down five cutting-edge designers and examined their practice of making contemporary fashion hybrids. They've all created distinct universes, blurring the boundaries between opposites, from Xander Zhou's clinical dystopia to Matty Bovan's dollhouse hyperreality.

Xander Zhou

Xander Zhou is at the forefront of a new wave of Chinese designers for a reason. In his newest project 'me(re)me,' he pushes beyond the definition of fashion is but examines what it can be in relation to digitalized future. In the video, he creates a dimension where a boundary between virtual and real is non-existent so characters from different seasons meet and intermingle. It's a robotized dystopia populated with artificial humanoids who, once reached consciousness, creates a new kind of human, dressed in minimalistic clean-cut shapes from flowy dresses, lab-wear inspired two-pieces to 2in1 merged together assembles. Drawing on traditional Asian symbols, the designer includes figures of a dragon into his futuristic mythology, embroidering it on fabrics. Xander Zhou's voyeuristic fashion inception feels as if we're on the verge of converting into a new religion. A cult of nature and technology as one.





Matty Bovan

Following the footsteps of iconic predecessors like Vivienne Westwood or John Galliano, Matty Bovan chases innovation. The recipient of this year's BFC NEWGEN bursary took us to another dimension with SS22 HYPERCRAFT digital presentation. Matty Bovan is a quiet rebel, reigning peripheries of the fashion industry so naturally now that when we can experience the outside again, he presented his collection inside a dolls house. As the title suggests, it's an over-the-top, glitched-up to exaggeration visual trip featuring colourful, clashing patterns and sculptural silhouettes. Matty builds a room inside his head that feels domestic and enclosed but feels like freedom as it's placed in the middle of nowhere in a digital sphere. This hand-tailored hyperreality breeds on our subconscious and feels strangely familiar.



Yuhan Wang

Former Fashion East alumni, Yuhan Wang has gained a cult following obsessing over her layering of rich cultural influences, from East to West, and modern romantic vision celebrating feminine strength. This season, Wang's girls, still dressed in frills and flowers, are all geared up. 'Juliette Has a Gun' SS22 collection presents post-Kill Bill warriors, proud of their soft side but ready to attack anyone willing to undermine their power. They're free, gentle spirits with rebellious hearts of true fighters dressed in embroidered corsets, flocked satin and lace dressed complemented by golden guns and printed holsters. Yuhan Wang blends transcendence with violence and subtle with strong into a hybrid archetype that shows the female complexity.



FEBEN

As BFC NEWGEN recipient FEBEN debuts SS22 collection 'X-Pression', exploring and celebrating the coping strategies that got us through thousands of hours spend in front of the screen, twirling around in sweatpants and emotional rollercoasters we rode so often over the last year and a half. FEBEN resurrects clothing we wish we saw again and re-works it so well, transforming nightmare into a bestselling fantasy. All bathed in eye-catching colours from hot pink, luminescing gold to midnight black. Collection for the first time ever features menswear – a sarong skirt paired with earthen-hued trousers. Even though the garments hint home, they're high fashion and red carpet ready. It's funky, functional and fabulous. We feel like isolation would be a bit better if we'd only wore FEBEN back then.

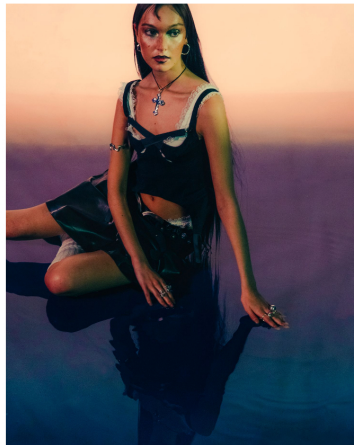




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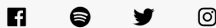
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