

What womenswear to look forward to in spring/summer 2019

By  Maroefah Smith

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Trend forecaster WGSN reckons womenswear for spring/summer 2019 will lean towards a reclaiming of power dressing in a sassier, sexier aesthetic with an inclination for the '80s and '00s nostalgia, imperfect details and voluminous shapes. These findings were explored through 'maths and magic' by WGSN director of retail and buying Sara Maggioni when she delivered a womenswear S/S 2019 buyers briefing at the 2018 Source Africa that was recently held at the Cape Town International Convention Centre.



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Maroefah Smith 25 Jun 2018



In line with the [creative manifesto macro trend](#), people are looking to dressing up as a way of coping with the current global landscape and this is particularly seen in the return to formalwear or power dressing. Maggioni says that “we’re seeing a renewed focus on power dressing. We’ve seen a resurgence of tailored and sartorial looks.” However, S/S 2019 power dressing is softer and more relaxed in its tailoring. Maggioni advises to think about high/low styling and mixing smart and casual (‘smasual’) when applying this style. She also indicates that it allows for the inclusion of sportier elements and lighter colours.



Relaxed suiting seen at Dior spring/summer 2019. Image credit: Dior

Moreover, the creative manifesto’s insistence on imaginative expression has given rise to a subtle deconstruction and an imperfect aesthetic. Spring/summer 2019 will be all about embracing imperfection which may also be translated into marketing campaigns and visual merchandising in store. In addition to being softer and relaxed, power dressing in S/S 2019 will also give rise to a sassier visual with a shift toward skin-baring details such as splits, cut-outs, sheer elements, and waisted silhouettes.

The mixing of high and low elements is also reflected in the emergence of a modern prairie visual. This aesthetic is expected to be key for festival wear in S/S 2019 and is boxier, cleaner with no details as opposed to the romantic prairie interpretation.

Looking back, the '80s and the '00s are anticipated as the season's two nostalgic inspirations. While Maggioni believes that the '80s' OTT (over the top) styling is not particularly accessible for the commercial market, she does indicate that its presence is undeniable especially on the runway and magazine editorials.

She also referred to the impact of shows like Netflix's *Stranger Things*; that has also sparked interest in the '80s as well as seen on the runway when Nicolas Ghesquiere presented a [Stranger Things t-shirt](#) as part of the Louis Vuitton spring/summer 2018 collection. In terms of details, S/S 2019 will take volume sleeves, metallic finishes, and ruching from the '80s, but the looks are expected to go in a casual direction.

Inspiration from the not-too-distant-past, the '00s is slowly creeping back into fashion and the Paris Hilton aesthetic circa early 2000s has started influencing collections. Maggioni says that a lot of the elements of the '00s have started like lace-up details, dresses over jeans, coming through and the forecaster has also noted its impact on accessories and footwear.

'Sloungewear' or lounge and sportswear is not expected to go away in the near future and will continue to influence summer collections in particular as it is quite commercial and versatile. Elements like roomy trousers and shirts in linens and lightweight cotton in barely-there pastels, really light colours will elevate the look. Another key look that will remain relevant is the modern global traveller that's been spearheaded by brands like Chloe and Jacquemus. It's got a modern and flattering visual with draped and flowing silhouettes in an earthy colour palette.

While spring/summer is expected to go in a sassier, skin-baring direction, Maggioni says that the growth of the modest fashion market and its impact on fashion cannot be ignored. She says that "Pinterest UK searches for modest fashions is up 500% since the start of 2018. The global modest-wear market is reportedly worth a lot and is expected to escalate in the next few years." In 2019, modest-wear will have a nonchalant coolness about it as WGSN has noticed urban influences entering the modest-wear market.



Louis Vuitton's Stranger Things t-shirt. Image credit: Louis Vuitton

Modernised, elevated basics

Spring/summer 2019 will elevate the usual items with newer details and colours taking them in a modern, contemporary direction. A staple for womenswear, dresses will be presented in a variety of different ways from flowy silhouettes to cut-out midis. The versatility and simplicity of the wrap dress will be explored for layering and modest-wear.

Marking a return to the fashion arena is the cut-out dress which may be applied to festival wear ranges. The move to offbeat and imperfect details is translated in the asymmetric hemline dress. The soft and flattering volume of the draped dress will continue to entice consumers indicates Maggioni. Lastly in the dress section is the pieced midi which has been making the rounds in a/w collections, but in summer it will be presented with see-through elements in high shine, premium fabrics.

The penchant for '80s nostalgia is seen in the '80s blouse because consumers have gotten used to the volume at the top of a blouse. The focus on the waist is seen in a wraparound and knotted construction approach to tops, shirts, and blouses. Bustier tops with sweetheart, square, and U necklines are another item that confirms a move toward a more feminine aesthetic. The menswear staple, the resort shirt has started peering into womenswear as more young designers like Acne Studios and Reformation experiment with the vintage aesthetic. The sassier aesthetic is seen in the cropped shirt which is

presented as an update to the thrift shirt and knitted polos.

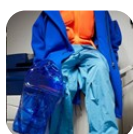


Acne Studios resort shirt. Image credit: Acne Studios

Outerwear will include pieces like the belted blazer which will come in slightly oversized proportions and will work particularly well in fashion-led career-wear ranges. The sheer duster may seem unnecessary and impractical, but Maggioni thinks that it does well to add a new dimension to an outfit and at retail level it may be used at cheaper price points and as a way of experimenting with the brighter colours of the season. In line with the broad move towards being more sustainably aware, the cropped denim jacket presents an opportunity for brands and designers to upcycle denim in a cut-and-paste approach which allows more opportunity to be creative.

Tailoring is going to come through in the pleated trouser for s/s 2019 as WGSN's data indicate that pin-tuck details grew 21.7% year-on-year in the UK and 76.5% in the US. Additionally, the market is generally starting to veer away from the skinny pants which has allowed the palazzo pants to make a return in more extreme volumes; WGSN records the increase in wide-leg trousers and a decrease in skinny-fitted trousers at 55% year-on-year. An update to jeans, this season, is the double hem or mock layered effect which returns to the cut-and-paste aesthetic and Maggioni calculates that it has the potential to enjoy the success of step-hem and raw-hem jeans.

A reflection of the common ground macro trend, the apron-inspired summer dungaree indicates the return to rural and rustic simplicity. While they are usually directed at a junior market, they do have the potential to be included in wider-ranging markets given its commercial appeal. The skirt is slowly but surely making a return to womenswear, the WGSN maths show that they grew 22.3% year-on-year across skirt categories in the UK. For this season, they will be presented in a soft design with asymmetric details and may be considered as a set offering.



#SourceAfrica2018: WGSN forecasts bright, hybrid menswear for spring/summer 2019

Maroefah Smith 28 Jun 2018



Sweet and fruity colours

In S/S 2019 colour blocking will be presented in sweet pastel and vivid colours. Rust and earth colours pair up with spicy oranges and reds which feels fresh on materials like satin and lace. Lilac, as well as richer purples like cyclamen, have started to make headway as an alternate to millennial pink. As seen in menswear, Gen Z yellow presents its optimistic, vibrancy in a variety of shades from banana to buttercup while its counterpart sherbert yellow presents a paler and softer take on yellow and feels fresher when used in an ombre effect with purple or red.

An old favourite red will forge on but in a bolder, brighter shade and allows for more experimentation when applying the brighter colours of the season because it's a familiar colour. The younger generation or Gen Z is also keen on fruitier oranges in shades of tangerine, papaya, and clementine which will be key for streetwear and casual wear as well as accents for statement dress pieces.

Neutrals are given a new lease of life this season and are moving away from connotations of being boring and basic and are elevated into fashion territory.

Expressive and daring

Art camo, one of the prints making an impact in menswear, is gaining traction in womenswear. It's expressive and while it has a tie-dye feel, it's applied in an arty, art school aesthetic. Checks are a print usually reserved for autumn/winter but for spring/summer, it's done in pastel colours which add a subtle vibrancy to core items.

First seen on the runway when Versace presented the Gianni Versace tribute spring/summer 2018 collection, the scarf print is to make a larger impact in this year and will be presented in a number of motifs ranging from chains and florals to nautical. Traditional classic prints like polka dots and mini florals will be updated as an undefined repeat.



Versace scarf print. Image credit: Versace

Pop checks which were used at Burberry a/w 2018 fall in line with the optimistic tone of the rainbow stripe seen in menswear; the neon accents are a novel way of updating tartans for the season. Upholstered-inspired patterns have been growing on the catwalks for quite a while now, particularly for A/W, but toile de jouy is coming into its own and several

designers have already been experimenting with this look; it may be presented as an update to [denimwear ranges as seen at Off White](#).



Off White updated denimwear. Image credit: [VWD](#)

Discreet geometrics take on a sophisticated quality and come in these earthy, muted shades applied in symmetrical tiles as well as hand-painted designs, and small-scale flower looks. Outsized blooms steer into the OTT 80s aesthetic and may be applied in really bright shades for evening wear as well as an update to the resort shirt. Disguised patterns offer a *trompe-l'œil*; and hide-and-seek look and once again reinforces a reimagining of something that's been done before; it's been presented as images hidden in surrealist, eccentric patterns. Newer brands have been taking inspiration from the 00s for logos and have started incorporating the tattoo inspired motifs, dragons, and tribal-inspired signs and markings from that time into pieces.

Textured, twisted, and knotted

Textured florals merge lace and florals to create a summery aesthetic and present the opportunity to appeal to different price points; sheer, multi-coloured florals are ideal for the mid-market while embellishment and overworked florals are optimum for premium price points. Shimmer is commonly associated with a/w collections and partywear but it has made a notable increase for summer. WGSN's data point out that for festival wear, sequenced glitter and shiny materials increased by 33.4% year-on-year across dresses, tops, and shirts, and trousers in the UK. It is expected to be quite subtle and will not swerve into a full-on '80s look and again presents a way to update items.

Twisted and knotted tops are updated in a crossover manner for s/s 2019 and present versatility through its ability to move around and create different looks. Multiple micro buttons may be considered a decadent detail but it adds aesthetic value to dresses as well as shirts and skirts. Maggioni advises that a secondary fastener should be used because tiny little buttons aren't practical.

Smoking and ruching is another fabrication technique that is normally reserved for a/w but the '80s influence brings it to s/s and is another indicator of the season's proclivity for the waist-defining silhouette and may be applied on boob tubes and polos. Knots present a fresh approach to skirts as applied by Alexander Wang in his new collection which had a faux sleeves detail and it taps into that *trompe-l'œil*; or optical illusion effect.



Alexander Wang knotted skirts. Image credit; Alexander Wang

Coming back to the sassier and sexier elements of the season, the slit is one of the details that is an echo of that and Maggioni has noted that it was quite prevalent in the pre-season collections and may be applied to skirts, dresses, and trousers as well as palazzo trousers to a certain extent. The lettuce edge detailing or lettuce frills is a nice way to modernise jersey-wear when it is applied to knit sleeves as well as shoulder straps.

ABOUT MAROEFAH SMITH

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