



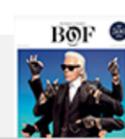
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Has Sportswear Gone Luxury?

By Hayley Larson 25 Sept. 2014

When thinking about luxury clothing your mind does not immediately go to sportswear. Thinking of sportswear I immediately think of oversized t-shirts and gym shorts, but fashion is revolutionizing the way we think.

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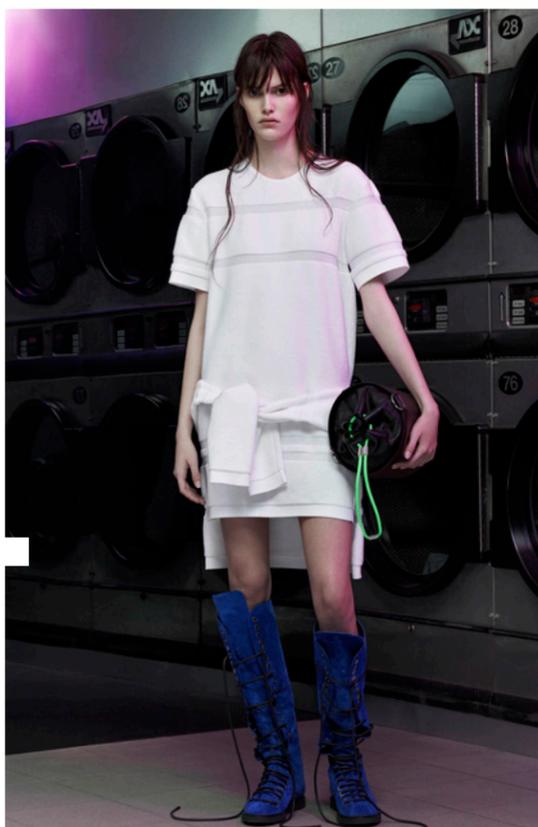
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Alexander Wang



Live the Process

Functional fashion is beginning to take the spotlight, by balancing active function and fashion in a new, exciting way. Part of what started this revolution of fashion and function is the shift from “thinspiration” and “thigh gap” to a new idea that being fit and strong is the new skinny. This is a body trend that is taking over social media and even the runways. Victoria’s Secret Angels were prepped by fitness trainer Justin Gelband using a combination of yoga, Pilates, balance and strength training. With fitness taking such a leading role in the lives of consumers it makes sense that fashion would follow.

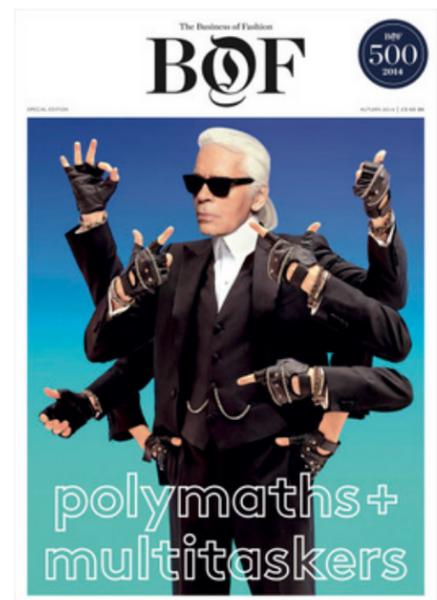
We have seen hints of active wear in name brand clothing before but Net-A-Porter is taking fitness fashion to a whole new level. Net-A-Porter launched Net-A-Sporter in July 2014, revolutionizing luxury sportswear. They are branding themselves as “sportswear as chic as everything else in your closet”. Net-A-Sporter offers luxury workout clothes for eleven different athletic activities including, gym and cross-train, running, yoga and dance, tennis, sailing, equestrian, swimming and surfing, golf, accessories, outdoor, après, and coming soon skiing. Net-A-Porter saw the necessity for this new shop because they noticed a shift in consumer purchases, consumers were building a sports wardrobe in a similar way that they purchased ready to wear. Net-A-Porter president Alison Loehnis said, “We found that there was a bit of a gap in out offering for someone who loves fashion and exercise and wants to look great doing it. She shouldn’t be in any way short-changed when it comes to exercise and looking great.” WGSN predicts that due to the branching out of fashion into sportswear, premium sports bras, leggings, and other yoga pants may enter the top 10 luxury items!

Having decided that I should check out the website for all you consumers that may be reading this and want to know what to expect before you dive in. The Net-A-Sporter part of the site is very user friendly; they break up the different sport types right away and give you the garments specifically for that exercise. You can also view all of the sportswear on one page, but that can be overwhelming for someone that really just wants a cute pair of yoga pants and gets lost in a sea of equestrian riding pants or wetsuits. This is not a website for someone that is looking for fashionable, cheap clothing to workout in. You need to be willing to drop some serious cash, a pair of socks by Falke Ergonomic Sport System will set you back \$25. But if you are determined to rock that new Adidas by Stella McCartney printed stretch tank this is the site for you.

Some designers and brands that you may recognize that have already jumped on board with this niche are, Stella McCartney designing for Adidas, Lucas Hugh, Theory +, Banjo and Matilda, Burberry Brit, T by Alexander Wang, James Perse, and many more. You can find a complete list of designers on the Net-A-Porter website.

I am not sure that I think sportswear needs to go so high luxury, what’s wrong with Target workout wear? Granted it’s not a name brand, but if I am at the gym do I really care? Personally I can think of other things that I would rather spend \$25 on rather than socks, like food. Hopefully the trickle down won’t take very long and everyone will be able to enjoy the benefits of fashionable gym wear sooner rather than later. For now you Urbanista’s that are looking for the hot new workout class to get your daily socializing in, this website is perfect! Luxury sportswear is the new great idea for women that want to show status even when they are at the gym. Until then you will be seeing me in my Target brand sports bra and shorts at the gym. However the active lifestyle trend keeps growing which means this niche market will continue to grow, the question is; who will fall behind? Some brands are already establishing themselves in the market for luxury sportswear but others might get the memo too late and find themselves scrambling to make a name in the market.

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