London Fashion Week unveils provisional calendar of the coming weekend's debut digital-only season

By Godfrey Deeny - 10 June 2020

London Fashion Week (LFW) on Tuesday unveiled the calendar for its debut digital-only season this coming weekend, with the opening event kicking off on Friday morning.
After Europe went into lockdown in March, the British Fashion Council – like its confreres in Milan and Paris – cancelled its June menswear season, and then converted it into a co-ed season. Due to social distancing, there will be no life runway shows with audiences present this weekend.

And, even if it’s a co-ed season, in the provisional calendar unveiled today, there are relatively few women’s designers listed. Though Sunday will feature a LFW Designer Diary by the brilliant Roksanda.

“This new digital experience will work as a global meet-up point, offering interviews, podcasts, designer diaries, webinars and digital showrooms, providing the opportunity for designers to tell their stories and share their experiences from the last few months,” the BFC said in a statement.

Data released today by Oxford Economics underlines the continuing importance of fashion to the UK economy. In 2019, the British fashion industry directly contributed £35 billion to the UK GDP, a 9.38% increase from 2018, with the number of people employed by the industry remaining constant at 890,000.

All told, the fresh British calendar lists 51 events; debuting with James Massiah on Friday morning at 12PM GMT and finishing with Mulberry’s virtual My Local, a live event at 8PM on Sunday.

Only a half dozen events are actually proper live events or discussions; like a live interview with Hussein Chalayan; or GQ editor-in-chief and BFC Menswear Chair Dylan Jones doing a podcast with Tinie Tempah.
Over a score of happening young designers will present new ideas, even if every presentation will be via pre-recorded video. The season does boast some real creative star power – the likes of Marques’Almeida, Lou Dalton, Bianca Saunders, Charles Jeffrey Loverboy and Preen by Thornton Bregazzi.

Major players like Burberry, which in recent years has staged menswear and women’s wear together during the women’s season; or the city’s hottest fashion star Jonathan Anderson, who of late shows in Paris are not listed, will not be active this weekend.

Burberry is currently considering doing a mixed show in September - part physical and part digital, which may or may not involve a physical audience.

In what’s expected to be a highly experimental season, London can count on the support of major retail players: Farfetch plans to celebrate London; The Webster plans a 3D film with Natasha Zinko; John Lewis will stage a “catwalk challenge”; and there will be a creative conversation – also on film – between Drake’s London and Bruce Pask, the United States most influential menswear buyer.

The BFC also divided the long weekend into three parts: The LFW Schedule; and Explore Section and finally, Designer Profiles.

Explore will include Edward Enninful, Editor-in-Chief of British Vogue discussing systemic racism with London Mayor Sadiq Khan; Galeries Lafayette bringing 9 British designers to its Champs-Élysées store; Mount Street celebrating fashion with Erdem and Roland Mouret; and Tomfoolery, a London-based writer, performance artist and filmmaker presenting What Are You Drawing, a new piece commissioned for Vogue Italia June Edition.

Sounds like a busy 72 hours.

By Godfrey Deeny