Lyst has released its latest Year in Fashion report and coming in a year like no other, it's certainly an interesting one. Despite consumers having plenty of other things on their minds, Lyst said that “fashion as activism was stronger than ever this year” as clothes and accessories expressed shoppers' views on social and political issues.

But the big story was the pandemic and this meant “the everyday wardrobe transitioned towards loungewear and lingerie”. It also made practical brands and items more desirable than ever and Birkenstock, Crocs, UGG and Nike joggers were among the most wanted items.

But in an interesting twist, the company thinks that “as a reaction to a year of wearing sweatpants and rarely any occasionwear, in 2021 we'll be dressing up, we'll be supporting more purpose-driven brands and we'll be celebrating our freedom once again”.

Face masks are among the big 'fashion' stories of the year - Photo: Mikoto.Raw/Public domain
For this year though, as well as focusing on activism, Lyst said consumers were into secondhand fashion and were influenced in this by Princess Beatrice’s second-hand wedding dress and Jennifer Aniston’s vintage Christian Dior by John Galliano gown at the SAG Awards.

Of course the biggest products were new and one product type was one nobody could have predicted last year. Face masks have been the must-have accessory globally and searches increased 502% year-on-year. Off-White’s logo face mask was the hottest item with a 450% increase in searches from January to March.

The star status of Birkenstocks also took a step up in a comfort-focused world. Designer collaborations with Valentino, Proenza Schouler, and Rick Owens gave the label high-fashion appeal this year too, while searches for the easy-to-wear Arizona sandal spiked 225% in Q2.

Telfar’s Shopping Bags also became the key accessory of 2020 with searches for the brand having seen a 270% increase week-on-week since August.

Meanwhile, as mentioned, Nike saw the greatest increase in loungewear searches and its joggers spiked 213% year-on-year.

But women didn’t abandon dresses, although comfort was key. Lyst said “house or nap dresses have become synonymous with sweatpants when it comes to quarantine fashion”. H&M’s puffy-sleeved dress was a top choice for shoppers.

Lyst also linked up with StockX to hunt down the year’s most wanted sneakers and said that thanks to The Last Dance series, Air Jordans topped the list as the hottest sneakers in 2020.

TOMORROW’S BIG NAMES?

It also said that Brands to Watch in 2021 — based on fast-growing search terms over the last six months — include Brother Vellies (+23%), Paris Georgia (+25%), Chopova Lowena (+33%), Thebe Magugu (+27%) and Medea (+40%).

Breakout brands already making an impact in 2020 have included Marine Serre, which has seen “consistent growth in popularity since the end of March”. Beyoncé wearing a full catsuit in Black Is King helped as searches jumped 426% in only 48 hours and Marine Serre’s moon print was the most wanted logo on Lyst this year.

Searches for 1017 ALYX 9SM have also risen 610% year-on-year and typically spiked when the brand collaborated with big names like Nike, Moncler, Mackintosh, and more. Founder Matthew Williams being named creative director of Givenchy in June “will likely fuel more interest towards his brand”.

With 1.8 million followers on Instagram, Fear Of God has the biggest social media following out of all of Lyst’s breakout brands, thanks to a strong celebrity clientele, including longtime fan Justin Bieber. A collaboration with heritage tailoring brand Ermenegildo Zegna has also contributed to its recent success.

And searches for Pyer Moss increased 220% year-on-year, helped by designer Kerby Jean-Raymond being named global creative director of Reebok in September.

Other breakout brands include Casblanca, Martine Rose, Brain Dead, Sunnei and Chinatown market.

INFLUENCER IMPACT

While some observers have been calling out the ‘end of influencers’ for some time, Lyst doesn’t agree. In fact, it seems to be seeing certain influencers cementing their status and new ones emerging too. For instance, in 2020, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez’s endorsement of Telfar helped the brand and Kamala Harris’s acceptance speech drove fashion searches for white pantsuits higher, “with politicians becoming the new fashion influencers”.
And music stars continue to top influence rankings. Harry Styles is the first male celebrity to top Lyst’s Power Dressers list, while Beyoncé, Lizzo, Kim Namjoon (RM) and Travis Scott are all still making a big impact.

Meanwhile, as Tik Tok went mainstream, TikTok star Charli D’Amelio became the year’s the eighth most influential celebrity in fashion.

By Sandra Halliday

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