CFDA unveils New York Fashion Week calendar with 84 brands – some of them to show in Paris

By Godfrey Deeny - 5 February 2021

The CFDA has unveiled its calendar for this month’s New York Fashion Week, with a grand total of 84 brands listed, albeit some of them expected to show as far away as France.
Due to the pandemic, the main season will take place over just four days – from Feb. 14 to 17, with 72 brands. Though the CFDA, or Council of Fashion Designers of America, also lists a further 12 brands – including such notables as Gabriela Hearst, Carolina Herrera, Thom Browne and Coach – with digital presentations stretching through to April 15.

Browne, for instance, has staged his men’s and women’s ready-to-wear shows in Paris for the past half decade. While Hearst presented her most recent collection inside the Beaux-Arts college in Paris in September.

The main New York season itself will open on Sunday evening, Feb. 14 with just two shows – Jason Wu and the downtown avant-garde indie marque Imitation of Christ. And will climax Wednesday evening, with Tom Ford, whose eponymous designer is also the chairman of the CFDA.

Underlining the growing fragmentation of the New York season, the four largest American fashion houses - Ralph Lauren, Tommy Hilfiger, Calvin Klein and Michael Kors – are not listed on the CFDA schedule. The sheer number of designers and show days has also fallen precipitously, from some 170 shows over eight days as little as two years ago.
“While the CFDA will continue to encourage American designers to show in New York during New York Fashion Week, we recognize the need for some to broaden their global visibility. In the past few years, many of our members have chosen to show in Europe, Asia, and other key markets and in many cases off-calendar. The events of the past year have only highlighted the need for flexibility within the fashion system,” said Ford in open letter on the CFDA’s own website.

“Wherever or however American designers choose to show their collections, it is our job as the CFDA to honor our original mission statement and to help promote and support American fashion. Therefore, we will publish on the schedule not only the schedule of designers showing in New York during New York Fashion Week but also those of American designers showing off-calendar and abroad," he continued.

Ford himself has led this fashion caravanserai, going as far as to stage one of his shows in Los Angeles, in the midst of the New York runway season.

In another switch, the CFDA renamed the New York season as the American Collections Calendar in recognition of the increasingly peripatetic tendencies of New York-based designers. The season will be essentially a digital affair, and all the designers on the calendar will show their videos or phygital events on Runway360, the state-of-the-art CFDA website featuring menswear, womenswear, emerging talent, bridal and even accessories.
This new American Collections Calendar also includes a two-hour lunchtime window on Monday, Feb. 15, devoted to menswear designers including Timo Weiland, Koh T, Carter Young and Chelsea Grays.

“The chief mission statement of the CFDA since its inception in 1962 has been to promote American fashion both domestically and abroad. Now more than ever this is one of our primary goals. The world has changed dramatically since 1962 and achieving global brand recognition is key in securing success for American designers. To that end, the show schedule that is released by the CFDA each season will be renamed the “American Collections Calendar.” We will include all American designers within the calendar and on Runway360, regardless of location or collection release date. This season, even more than last, will be a great challenge for all of us as the world grapples with an increasingly devastating pandemic and economic downturn. We at the CFDA are here to support you in any way that we can. Warmest Regards,” concluded Ford in his missive.

May the season, virtually at least, begin.

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