

Menswear Trends Spring/Summer 2016

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Theme & Direction

I found the Spring/Summer 2015 menswear runways to have a strong explorative personality—themes that reflect on one's modern environment while attempting to contact an unfamiliar plane, whether that be the wild, cultural novelty, or imagined and augmented worlds.

These fashions illustrate a persona that is highly immersed and very self-aware, stopping to examine more closely the current point in the journey, moving past previous pretenses and using old ironies and satirical notions as legitimate building blocks.

- Digital Native
- Beyond Irony
- Hidden Temple
- Leisure Sport Luxe Club
- Life Cycle
- Reset
- Resistance
- Soft Tech
- Translator
- Trade Winds
- Troubadour

Digital Native



Experiencing new places viscerally--through proxy
Embracing / Seeking / Nature / Technology / Travel

Digital Native projects our ability to view distant cultures, locales, and insider experiences in an increasingly immersive way. We are able to be in many places at once and tap into perspectives that were inaccessible before our widespread digital connectivity—and we feel right at home. Now, we're in the know with little effort, and the commodity sourced from a continually diminishing pool of hidden knowledge makes us into voyeuristic locals. This theme is all about the comfortable vantage point that makes us forget that we are really looking at pixels.



Rugged, wild details and earthy neutrals like loden, sage, khaki, and taupe separate what would be a normally modern direction, especially when paired with digital blues and strong, thermal yellows. In fact, slightly desaturated primaries serve to reference either the high-tech or the natural, depending on the arrangement, with clean lines pointing toward data clustering and fragmentation in its clean organization while smeared, chaotic and micro-geometric composition harkens to the more primal side that gives this theme its energy. Worn green and bright, clean khakis point us to the merging of both worlds, as well.



Pattern plays a large role in heightening the contrast between wilderness and civilization by injecting the digital element into undomesticated spaces within the garments. At times, the horizontal arrangement of pixel strata reminds us of sheets of bedrock or layers of sediment. Other times, we see mountain shapes, canopy cover, and disrupted transmission signals. At their most wild, the patterns appear as ceremonial paint against a clean, solid, neutral canvas. At their most refined, we find non-threatening order in blocky, neat assembly that borrows from the most natural of primaries—green, yellow, and blue.

Comfort and leisure interact with durability and utility—tactile and smooth knits alike are equally incorporated with traditionally structured bottoms and outerwear that serve as a space for coated and resistant fabrics. The aesthetic is portable, mobile, and transitory. One can appear anywhere on the data-nature spectrum, sometimes layering one over the other, but never betraying the message to others: I have seen the world, I have lived many lives, and I have only just begun. This is a consumer of worldly information that can switch modes at will, and has never been without the option.



Beyond Irony



Moving past the staleness of pop reference to legitimacy

Retrieving / Social / Bored / Self-aware / Critical

Beyond Irony reflects the attitudes of those who had their cultural touchstones abused and commercialized for the mass market to the point that the original adopters grew wary of association. Beloved pop-culture artifacts saturated the mainstream, battering them far past the point of cliché. The Internet could—and still can—generate its own extreme brand of hilarity, but eventually mainstream media grew skilled at snatching already well-worn pieces and waving them in the air with the subtlety of a broken caps lock key. How many times can it be said? As a result, for a time these persons disappeared to explore other identities and brands that felt more authentic, had a deeper heritage, or exuded utility or subdued edge.

Now, these culturally disenfranchised persons have returned to claim what was taken from them. Beyond Irony takes conversational pop references that have been appropriated—graphics, logos, prints, patterns, and silhouettes—and legitimizes them as a serious form of expression, exploring new territories in the process. The theme touches on youth and the maturity that has given this direction its perspective and potency. Garments may pull from cartoony, sophomoric, and ironic images and sources, but these skeptical consumers haven't forgotten the past. What may have once been only sarcastic is now a genuine offering. Overt imagery keeps things light while maintaining artistic integrity.



Primary—even clowny—colors appear in contrast against a balanced palette of neutrals, though even these are saturated to a degree that renders them actively intriguing (where out of context they might have been unappealing). This kind of double negative approach (ugly + ugly = appealing) is appropriately and purposefully used to challenge other high-fashion garments that concern themselves desperately with elegance or mystique. There's no mystique here—only levity, with colors that could have come from a children's schoolhouse. In a way, it's completely valid to be ridiculous, as long as the forms aren't grandiose

Conversational prints and images dominate here. Any forms that can act as a strong focal point are common, and this provides an opportunity for tension when multiple focal points conflict. Beyond Irony creates situations where the juxtaposition of many jarring items actually negates their novelty and helps us to receive them as regular.

Graphics depict childhood favorites like aliens, food, and kung fu fighters, and prints provide whimsical images of random objects—cacti, for example. Mock brand imagery appears in raised type, pointing to a grinning counter-appropriation against commercial entities. There is even a meditation on digital imagery in the form of what could be Windows '95 illustration in tacky gradient overlays and simplified landscapes and objects

The fleeting “normcore” movement comes from the same place. “Normcore” misses the reprisal that Beyond Irony enjoys, though it may run parallel. Instead of choosing to exit the social commentary provided by fashion altogether, Beyond Irony plays against traditional fashion indulgence by incorporating the very goofy and odd elements normally eschewed by the industry. Here, the consumer says: *The joke is not the point, just the vehicle.*



Hidden Temple



Diving headlong into lost treasures

Seeking / Legend / Nature / Travel / Danger

Hidden Temple takes extreme pleasure in finding adventure in obscure, wild places that are now just the realm of fantasy and myth. The short memory of the Western population smears together all of the aspects of an Indiana Jones pulp adventure—foreign, mysterious cultures; ancient, long-lost secrets; perilous, exciting encounters—all generalized and recalled with as much truth as fiction.

However, Hidden Temple suggests that the uncovered truth is worth excavating, and the trail leading to it is fulfilling and exhilarating. There is an unbelievable depth to what we find, but some of it is so far-fetched that only some of the tale makes it through. Hidden Temple lives for such fragments.





This theme supplies the information to Digital Native—establishing routes into wild and uncharted places, scouring the depths, and just digging a little deeper. While Digital Native is highly connected and social, Hidden Temple moves via a lonely and internal mission. However, this theme is highly nature- and culture-driven. Deep, lush greens speak to ample foliage, providing a bit of camouflage while absorbing our protagonist into the umbrage. Earthy, dusty browns and baked, sandy khaki act as the traveler's shield, harkening to the traditional safari ideal while pulling in a more rugged, worn direction. At times, saffron, crimson, and subdued, grey-cast blues and greens appear in elaborate tribal and resort designs, utilizing the pigments found in natural dyes from cochineal and woad.

Coated fibers and leather protect with durability, appearing in the form of field jackets, parkas, macs, and bombers. Linen and cotton also appear in bottom weights for temperature mitigation and pyjama fluidity. Other garments have some degree of transparency—textured sheer layers and purposeful distress revealing the treacherous nature of journeys thus far. Patterns take on imagery from bone irregularity, flora, and fauna.

At some level, this theme speaks to those who need to experience the world for themselves in person. After the first few adventures, the first few close calls, every new risk and struggle calls with even greater magnetism. In the nights near the fire, in the mornings within the mist, in the jaws of discovery, Hidden Temple wonders: Will I want to go back?



Leisure Sport Luxe Club



Competing in a friendly exhibition to set the bar

Retrieving / Social / Status / Active / Upscale



Leisure Sport Luxe Club expresses the competition to reach a paradoxical zenith, the marriage of ultimate active performance and complete leisure. In fact, while some may compete in athletics for recreation, this competition to see who can perform the most impressive feats in the most effortless manner is the recreation in itself—the sport of status. Where this differs from the normal Darwinian us against the Joneses escapade is in its communal nature. This is an exclusive group of people, yes—but it is a supportive one.

Remember, this is just recreation. Things may occur at a higher level of skill, but that's where the group draws its boundaries for membership. Once we're in, we're here to enjoy the spoils of our hard work. We're here to enjoy the game outside of the game. The appearance of high stakes and poise is fabricated to elevate the fun and to intimidate the uninitiated.





Naturally, the prestige of the Club materializes in the form of luxury fabrics—cashmere, ultra soft cotton—while maintaining the performance aesthetic through shells, coatings, and rubberized cotton.

The color palette resolves to uphold a classic appeal through creamy-yet-clean whites, tan, taupe, and cool greys, but allows flashes of active from past and present in the form of athletic reds, blues, whites, and navies, particularly when solidifying the sport detailing. Heather and geometric patterns even play a part in providing some luxe texture to the selection.

The Leisure Sport Luxe Club is for people who look like they can win Wimbledon without ever having to leave the couch. This is a theme where ability directly manifests in apparel. The Club creed? We will not play hard.



Life Cycle



Reflecting on where we are in the journey—and where we've been

Meditating / Internal / Contextualizing / Personal / Material

When we walk with someone or something long enough, it is only a matter of time until it strikes us how much has changed. Here, the dynamic between garment and wearer plays a role in mutual growth and development. As things wear, they must adapt a new form. Sometimes, we assist in the repair, modification, or repurposing of an object. After all, we have been through much together. We can remember when we just began. It would be a shame to give up now. Just as the garment silently supports and bears witness to what befalls us, we soon realize that the garment has begun to reflect our identity. Thus, the garment becomes a mirror of life. This is not a quick process. No, it is quite the opposite—so gradual that it often takes us by surprise. Still, by the end, the garment, as an extension and ambassador of us, has become something deeply personal.



Patchwork, distress, and color fading all signal a life lived, providing a constant physical reminder of the accumulation of new experiences. The Life Cycle manifests particularly well in denim, where garments bought at the height of the raw denim craze have begun to fade as promised.

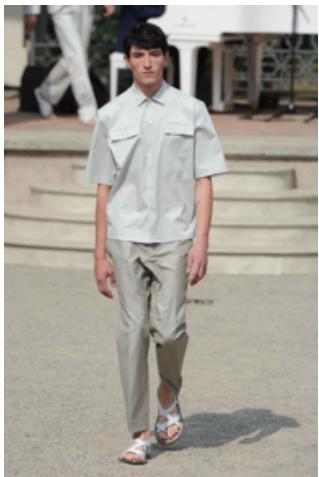
All ranges of denim blues and indigoes, muddy browns, tan-cast whites, and spikes of bright primaries populate the color palette, appearing in patchy blocks or fading gradients peaking at the site of fresh wounds.

These colors are from the realm of life's natural course—dirt, paint, grime—all scraped from other places.

If the garment is now made entirely of new patches or its pigment has slowly faded to become another color throughout, is it still the garment as we knew it? No—there is no true and pure form of any idea, whether it be a quintessential military garment concept, nautical garment concept, etc. There is only the item as we know it now. We caress the garment knowingly, and we express a revelation in unison: I may call you the same name, but you are hardly the one I knew.



Reset



Returning to a place of balance by redefining our center

Departing / Utopian / Connecting / Neutral / Modern



A perfect future lies after a certain point in human history that will allow us to reminisce on our current conditions and wonder how we ever lived this way. This reality exists in the distance of our mind's eye, providing the unspoken heights that explain our constant climbing. Unfortunately, the line between then and now will not be so clean in its cleavage. We face hiccups in our ascension that glare painfully everywhere we look—war, disease, social iniquity, to name a few—but such is the nature of progress. Our utopian ideal will never be realized so effortlessly. However, it is the reality that we must constantly reverse engineer. It is the Reset that we so desperately desire and emulate.

Reset explores the nuance of neutrals, allowing color to energize or ground while assuming neutrality in complement instead of contrast. All manners of white, grey, black, and khaki provide the base for the inclusion of pale blues, taupe, and daffodil. White and yellow pair to evoke optimism and the new ultra clean environment of the modern. Blue-grey and metallic ice infiltrates medium tints to elicit calm structure. At the same time, charcoal and near-black provide a sturdy and unassuming foundation for low-key activity.

The future does not eliminate gender or sexuality, but instead allows form to channel the purposeful energy of the wearer. In this, silhouettes capitalize on their utilitarian simplicity to allow small details to stretch farther in their implicit meaning. Bottoms experiment with straight, structured legs to convey masculinity. Tops use conspicuous shirt pockets, structured shoulders, and vest construction to concentrate the male form. The jumpsuit, or boiler suit, while unisex, harkens to the male-dominated labor so prevalent before the Reset. Inversely, loose, fluid tailoring and long drapes accentuate gender neutrality.



Reset implies that, while fashion can be reflective and illustrative of the nature of an individual, there is much more underneath from which to draw. Neutrality clears a path for egalitarianism in all aspects of life, eliminating the oppressions of the past and allowing for absolute experience in the act of life unrestricted. This may be an unrealistic vision—it should seem so to us today.

However, as long as we desire perfection, there is a growing murmur: Have we all dreamt of this?



Resistance



Refusing to accept the world as is
Rejecting / Social / Technology / Active / Utopian

Resistance aims to meet Reset somewhere in the middle—while the latter works backwards from the vision, the former must lay the groundwork to get us there. The Resistance works to ensure that when we meet the coming changes—and we will—that their results will be for the better. In a world of ever increasing technological capability, Resistance works on the behalf of all humans to bring the conversation on injustice to the attention of the population.

Clandestine and stealthy though it may seem (and may need to be for its survival), Resistance has moved from the realm of shadows to bring its message into the light. It is no longer uncommon for the most pedestrian of us to take a stand for his, her, or their beliefs.

This shared defiance of the wrong of the world allows us to approach the situation with the brightness and diversity of color. Bright primary colors reminiscent of combusting minerals and vivid graffiti draw intense and dynamic contrast to covert neutrals and clean, innocent white.



Silhouettes favor outerwear and extended-coverage base layers. Summer parkas, bomber jackets, and shirt jackets provide utilitarian coverage while still enabling mobility for a hasty escape. Masks, face wraps, and shady hats make a much-needed reference to anonymous protest—even makeup is used as a disguise. Graphic prints, distressed text, and splotchy, disruptive paint mimic all of the energy of a popular movement. To describe the new stage in the Resistance, banded paneling, patches, and applique mark the advent of organization, structure and affiliation. Interference camouflage in the form of distress or overpopulated floral schemes offer a take on camo from another angle.



Active fabrics reign supreme, descending from the tech- and goth-ninja archetypes introduced by brands like Acronym and Rick Owens that popularized the idea of stealth, mobility, and anonymity. However, this does not prevent heavily printed plant fibers and sleek knits from entering the game. Digital print-dye fabrics keep garments modern and slick.

Members of the Resistance continue to act tirelessly to respond to now-global problems, finding solutions in community and commonality.

Fulfilling a herculean role as a collective mass, the Resistance has proved one thing: There is no reason to stay quiet.

Soft Tech



Adapting engineering to a high-touch society
Embracing / Technology / Connecting / Social / Material



Technology is rarely associated with fuzzy feelings. However, Soft Tech focuses on tech developments that bring us closer together by elevating our data sphere to connect with the world around us. While data collection happens quietly to form an environment that more closely resembles our preferences, suddenly we are matched with opportunities that strengthen our relationships and enrich our experiences. We are gently nudged in the right direction and guided to better choices through aggregated information. It becomes easy to lose ourselves in the present moment.

Dusty pastels, especially pink, green, and blue illustrate notes of ecstasy and unadulterated experience while also reflecting the smoky mist of information traveling around us. The chemical feeling even ventures into dusky purples and bleeds into the khaki neutral space, which reacts to become soft camel or yellow limestone.

Prints and marled knits play with the barriers between precision and organic designs, while micro-level texture in the form of raised yarns and suede elevates garments and mirrors the hidden mechanisms at work in augmenting reality as they adapt to our inputs. Soft, comfortable fabrics highlight the supple, ergonomic nature of the theme.

One important implication of Soft Tech is the emergence of the wearables market. This integrates the personal data sphere as a taken-for-granted second skin—though this only works at a point where the technology is highly gesture-oriented, automatic, and nearly unnoticeable. Such a blend of technology and our high-touch nature results in a marriage that feels natural and enhances our lives and relationships.



Freed up to enjoy our newfound horizons, we can't help but embrace this wave of the future. Having woken up from the optimal sleep duration and opening the closet to find a digitally curated wardrobe, the Soft Techie grins and thinks: Let the technology do the worrying; I'm busy living.

Translator



Dissolving barriers between identities

Seeking / Embracing / Empathy / Cultural / Social

Translator answers our deep desire for human connection in an increasingly available manner, connecting and understanding to the point of adoption and transmutation. The trans- prefix carries a strong weight with this theme in that it describes our shift from a state of one or the other to the space in between. No longer do we require clear cultural, sexual, or age-specific identities. Instead, our identity is free for us to shape as we separate from past conventions and cultural legacies to explore truly unique variations.

Unique often comes with a cliché connotation, but it could not be more appropriate to describe the time between phases where there are infinite places to occupy within the spectrum. This new paradigm allows for the crosspollination of cultures and ideas, since we are required to empathize with identity in many forms to truly grasp reality.



Garments speak to this by appropriating cultural touchstones and actively incorporating refreshing influences, especially from Asia and Africa. Language and text in print emphasize forms of exchange and communication. Floral prints are extended as material contrasts in sheer segments and raised, irregular lines. The nature of the floral shapes also varies in their presentation, whether hand drawn or exacted digitally.

Handmade and hand drawn words and symbolism evoke imagery of our common cultural ancestors and their first depictions of the animals and stars—the beginning of language and civilization. This folkloric update reminds us of the link between all of our precursors.



This theme maintains a cooler color palette punctuated with heavy winter colors, employing wispy blue-greys and chambray anchored by deep reds, woody greens, and iconic off-blacks.

The Translator relishes the opportunity to know others as they know themselves, in all their complexity. There is no discrete nature, but one that is constantly in flux, making the journey for true empathy never-ending.

Here, we follow the mantra: *Let us know who we continue to be.*



Troubadour



Walking free as a modern minstrel

Channeling / Bohemian / Social / Travel / Legend



Without the bounds of time, location, or physicality, Troubadour aims for immortality through ultimate freedom of expression--not only that, but a steadfast place in our transactive memory. Troubadour is rooted in iconography and idolatry as the incarnation of our desire for grander purpose, borrowing from centuries of hero worship and protagonist-driven self-modeling. This time, instead of being centralized in a few key figures like The Beatles, the accessibility of message platforms and the saturation of would-be stars has disseminated amongst us with equal opportunity. Dripping with rock and roll influence and nomadic tones, Troubadour realizes the ultimate in bohemian mystique.

Eclectic, elaborate floral designs adorn Troubadour's sweeping cloaks and cropped jackets with little prejudice. Even geometric tribal prints find their way in here. Military structure hides amidst the billowing mantles, already enlarging the presence of the wearer. Scarves and lopsided hats extend the traveler image, while dark, trim bottoms anchor the silhouette.



Desert tones in sandy tan, beige, and brown accompany worn, folky denim blues. The richness of the bohemian element drives through in deep reds, greens, and pinks.

The Troubadour, though associated readily with music, provides an outlet for vagabonds of all sorts—an outlaw figure which cannot be eliminated from the societal spirit. Mystical, nomadic, timeless, and eclectic, Troubadour's very presence is immediate and captivating. With no verbal exchange, we know: The next story will be my own.



Color



Khaki



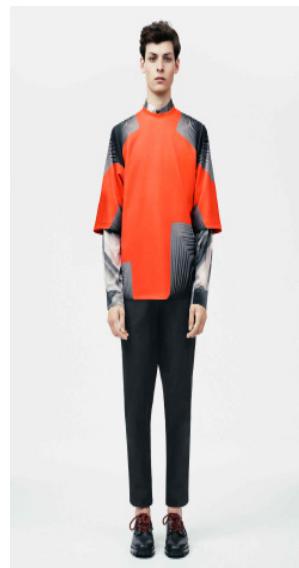
Yellow Focus



Green Shift



Winter Reprisal



Bright Primaries



Magnesium Burn



Dusty Pastels

Fabric & Finish



Geometric
Jacquard



Natural
Tactile



Radiation
Shielding



Sheer Layer

Pattern & Print



Blanket
Stripe



Conversationalist



Data Segment



Extending
Florals



Folklore



Interference



On the Grid

Tailoring



Infiltration



Leisure Shift



Pyjama Tailoring



Patchwork



Long Suit

Apparel

Outerwear

Cagoule Pullover
Cinched
Long Mac
Bomber
Summer Parka (Light Parka, Winter Influence)



Tops

Sweatshirt Tee
Tunic
Baseball Tee
Underlayer



Bottoms

Size Contrast
Top-heavy
Loose Crop
Smart Elastic
Jogger
Structured Short
Jumpsuit



Denim

Distress Call
Exhaustive Use
Patchwork



Knitwear

Grand Resort
Crew Neck Comfort



Footwear

Sandal Focus
White Tennis Shoe

