Scott shows how to elude Jagger's shadow while Mulberry's Hill bows out in style

US designer's London collection steals attention from rock star boyfriend

Jess Carter-Morley

When fashion designer L'Wren Scott moved her catwalk show from New York to London earlier this year, she had one significant concern: “I was worried that in London I would be judged for who I know, rather than what I do. In New York, I am known for fashion.” Scott, a designer with a two-decade-backstory as one of the most powerful red-carpet stylists in Hollywood, is still better known in the UK as Mick Jagger's girlfriend.

But London's high stock of cultural capital persuaded her the time was right for a show here. “People all over the world pay a lot of attention to what happens in London,” she said. “Last year with the Olympics, the Jubilee, every great art show being here, it just felt more than ever like the epicentre - and as a creative person, that's where you want to be.”

Yesterday at London fashion week, Scott, who stands 5ft 6in in her boucles, showed for the second season that her clothes are capable of stealing the limelight from the diminutive rock star seated next to her. When Jagger

Scott delivers the Oscar-level glamour achievable by dresses that are not only painstakingly tailored to a knock-out silhouette, but embellished and crafted into works of art. A 19th-century Japanese screen decorated with drawings of kimonos, seen in a museum, gave Scott the starting point for bandage-tight dresses delicately embroidered with cherry blossom, a Tokyo-inspired take on Le Smoking, with a kimono-wrapped jacket fastened with an obi-style belt, and bento-box red tailoring with the origami folds at the collarbone that Roland Mouret has long since used to flattering effect.

“What resonates with me about Japanese style is that it is very covered up, but very sensual,” said Scott.

Staging a show at London fashion week, traditionally squeezed between New York and Milan, still has “practical challenges”, said Scott. “You don’t know which models will be in town until they walk through the door for casting, and I find that hard because I’m not naturally a last-minute person. I like to be organised.”

But she has an alpha female aura that infuses the clothes, drawing likenesses of herself from the US, Michelle Obama and Oprah Winfrey are regular wearers. Scott will not, however, be drawn on names of potential high-profile British ambassadors. “I love seeing women looking great in my clothes. I don’t care who they are. I don’t quantify people by celebrity,” she said.

While Scott was amplifying her voice in the British fashion chorus, another female designer was in her比特币 as Emma Hill, the designer at the helm of Mulberry for the past six years, presented her final collection. It was Hill who brought Mulberry, previously an accessory brand, on to the catwalk schedule, a move that transformed the brand's image and profile. However, after the appointment last year of Hermès's Bruno Guillon as Mulberry's CEO, there were rumours that Guillon's ambition to create a fully fledged luxury brand clashed with the image of down-to-earth, approachable glamour that Hill created.

In June, it was announced that Hill would be stepping down. “Mulberry's essence is its inherent Britishness,” said Hill yesterday. “Not as a pastiche, but as a fundamental part of the brand. Mulberry pioneered the desire for 'English style' in the 1970s and that celebration of beautiful, practical things is still a big part of the collection."

The quintessentially British tradition of afternoon tea set the scene for Hill’s final show, with miniature Wedgewood teacups sent as invitations and tiers of scones and clotted cream topping the terrace.

The children's song If You're Happy and You Know It blurred as Cara Delevingne and Turbo the bulldog vied for supermodel status on the catwalk in Claridge's ballroom, and a blast of Land of Hope and Glory closed the show. Before the show, asked about her feelings about the swansong, Hill insisted that it was business as usual. "Each time my team and I spend a week in each other's pockets, it's like a big fashion-week boarding school, so it's very emotional."

Nonetheless Hill, whose next move is yet to be revealed, was overcome backstage as she thanked her team, many of whom were in tears. "You'll always be my Mulberries, and I love you all," she said.

Ewditness. pages 20-21}
Sex and texture

J.W. Anderson spoke with Suzy Menkes about the collection of airy architecture, futuristic and imaginative fabrics that he showed for London Fashion Week.

**The Concept:** “We are so saturated with the idea of flat imagery. This is about trying to find new ways of using textiles to get power in clothing — to take materials that do exist — to progress them into new ways of movement.”

**Cut & Style:** “There is the idea of paneling, so that it subjugates the architecture. Chevrons are laser cut, positioned in a central structure. There is building from a column outwards, by wrapping, folding and folding. The front might be long and the back short — contradictions and a bit more freedom.”

**On Size & Transparency:** “It’s a dialogue between the different collections. On these tops, I have this membrane on the back in organza, so that it seems as though it is implanted on the skin.”

**The Theme:** “I like the idea of modern荻atons. Design and this ‘pleather’ has this domestic ring. Then there is cotton that feels like paper. There is an airiness to the clothes.”

“Fringing is something I explored in Resort collection — it becomes a rhythm in movement.”

**The Fabrication:** “This is leather. The machine embraces everything. But even though it is quite dense, there is still an element of lightness. There is a kind of Japanese — I like fabric that gives a really good curve — back curves and straight angles.”

“It is always an idea of something that is ultimately a contradiction.”

**The Craft:** “I like the idea of commitment to collectables without committing to color or texture.”

“This jacquard is done in Switzerland onto a lace back. It is metallic so that it will make the fabric shine and be clear so that they pick up different tones.”

“This is incredible fabric — like air. I always think with Swiss companies that the fabric is like what they do with watches. Ultimately they want still to be functional.”

**The Clothes:** Cardigans are kind of bags, they look twisted on the body. This looks like latex, for an asymmetrical little cap. I like the idea of waxed cotton — it sounds a bit heavy but I love the robustness of that. There is a kind of siwery density in navy blue and black.”

**Conclusion:** “I commit to the architecture — and as it moves, it becomes its own thing.”

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**What rules Britannia?**

The sun is shining on London Fashion Week — metaphorically speaking. As a storm of wind and rain broke over the event’s new venues, a test in Regent’s Park, with the catwalk artfully created to protect high heels by growing grass through the felt surface — an impressive lineage of the power and the show held to how this British section of the four international fashion weeks has expired with energy.

Sir Philip Green, owner of Topshop and supporter of fledgling designers, sat between Anna Wintour of American Vogue and Kate Moss, her high cheekbones at 39 still facing off the young celebrities from Daisy Lowe and Piste Geldof to Ellie Goulding, who brought her indie electro-pops to the William-and-Kate wedding.

**Summer unique** is not great designer fashion, but it catches the vibe of everything that now rules Britannia: a multi-ethnic vibe on the runway, as on the streets, a sensual energy, but more in bare backs and silhouetting fabrics than in vulgarity; and a joyful sense of self. Add vivid color whatever the weather — and the current glow of a sunny summer.

The result was a show where tailoring was in richly colored suede, the deep blue of an African story; where jacquard stripes, crocheted prints and mirror embroidery, emphasized from the 1960s, brought pattern and textures; and where the back was in a sweep-the-floor sundress completed with the current “gazelles” for a chelly covered-up look. The show was labeled “Heat Wave!” And it was all of that.

Paul Smith made a show with 20 years of show music by commissioning Lou Hayter and Nick Phillips of The New Skies to play a song that every woman would get: “The clothes I wear — I wear these clothes for me” went the lyrics.

What a fitting response to overrelatable “fashion!” And it expresses the sprit of a designer who still flies a flag — with smart country blazers and simple shorts — for a more, more traditional England.

But mainstream tailoring looks good from this designer, who might learn a bit more about the infinite possibilities of digital printing but still brings charm to detail: flower garden patterns on the back of a blouse or dogtooth check woven into a sweater.

Charm in the detail. There was a simple, narrow dress with a high side slit, red as a touch of color at neckline and shoes. And held delicately above the angular, lobbed hair were wasy parasols, designed by the milliner Stephen Jones.

For Mulberry, it was the finale of the show from designer Emma Hill, who has been in Milan, but is now back in London, where the show was held.

**Charm and Texture**

Charm and Texture by Richard Nicoll

Charm and Texture by Mark Fast

Charm and Texture by Sister By Sibling

Charm and Texture by Holly Fulton

Charm and Texture by House of Holland

Charm and Texture by Mulberry

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