

Artisans provide inspiration for new-season shoes



The resurgence of the craft movement, the artisan and the idea of handmaking are set to have a big influence on fashion and footwear styles for autumn-winter 2016. New public collectives such as Makerversity in London are tapping into the public swell of interest in making custom products. "Craft is moving in innovative ways, thanks to the can-do DIY attitude that's being adopted," says Helen Sac, trends forecaster at WGSN. "We're never stopping this idea of making and learning, uncovering the urge to discover."

Tactical aging of materials will be important: tarnishing, fading and wearing-in. "For country styles, designers will be inspired by the farmhand simplicity and soft, comfortable natural-looking materials while in the city, the inspiration will be factory workers for a more casual, relaxed approach. For footwear we're looking at simple lines, minimal detailing and purity."

Colours have character and authenticity, this palette works with denim blues, lumberjack reds, woody tones, khaki green and stony grey. It will be quite a rustic palette and combines tones with pine greens, with terracotta bringing through the autumn tones.

- **The utility boot.** Workwear is very important for the season, designs will hint at the 1920s and 1940s but with a contemporary twist. Eyelets will tap into the retro feel. "You could execute the shape with a soft leather on a mid-height heel; detailing is key," says Vanessa Belleau, senior consultant at WGSN. "You could push the shape as a mid-calf length boot in patent or high-shine leather upper with a small kitten or a mid-high heel. It will be about playing on the proportions."

Autumn-winter 2016 will see burnished leathers and military looks inspired by the craft movement, styles will be updated with new material combinations and athleisure will have established itself as a sector in its own right.

- **The wet-weather shoe for women.** Tapping into the working aesthetic, this shoe will have an artisan feel because the focus is on the material. There will be a relaxed approach to design there with not much detail but a sense of femininity.
- **The elevated workboot.** Length is important for women's styles. "The Ecco-style boots are here to stay but how do we take the boot category forward? Knee-high boots were not very successful for a while as they are not transitional or easy to style," explains Ms Belleau, "but here it will be about updating the knee-high boot with the sense of craftsmanship and working with the great materials; the leather could be distressed, it's all about attitude."
- **The men's workboot.** A traditional workboot will be a key style, the focus will be on the materials.
- **Artist's brogue.** The brogue will be updated with an exaggerated wingtip or unusual construction and could be made with very soft, unlined leather. "This pair of shoes won't appeal to everybody because the leather will be tarnished or burnished, it's very distressed," adds Ms Belleau.

CRAFT



OPPULENCE



Away from the craft movement, bringing together the old and the new will be key. Plush surfaces will be important for autumn-winter 2016; the season before it will be about heavy adornment and embellishment and this will continue, with faux furs with a beautiful hand feel and an extra level of luxury. "The idea is of moody opulence which holds on to the historic beauty of old libraries and old tapestries. We are still talking of opulence but it's moving into a casual market," says Ms Sac. "Before, we had ideas of ornateness in couture and high-end labels but now we're seeing streetwear labels adopting the decoration, beading and embellishment. Modern nobility, decorated with jewels, a mix of beauty, fairy-tale, romance but coming together in a modern way will be one of the key looks of the season."

The military theme will continue from previous seasons, but taking a smarter approach. "We're using military styling in a functional way, not just in an aesthetic way but making it more useful, making it more practical."

In footwear there will be formal silhouettes in this trend, with oversized panels that wrap around the foot. "For women's footwear it will be about the connection between the vintage detail and the classics," says Ms Belleau. "We are going back to a feminine look, there have been a lot of genderless-looking shapes recently so now we are embracing feminine empowerment. Nowadays it's acceptable to have the smart-casual look, but it will be about rethinking the formal silhouette which got forgotten and giving it a casual spin."

- **Formal sling-back mule.** Mules have been trending for a while and it will remain an important item. It will be updated as a sling-back, which carries the idea of the genderless

aesthetic. Consumers will be looking for comfort. The design could be made more feminine but with sharp lines. Variations would be a leather upper with contrast detail on the leather outsole, or a more artisan feeling could be created by mixing materials such as leather with textile on a rubber outsole.

- **Peep-toe bootee.** "It is fearless and very feminine, it's all about that empowerment through footwear. It's about achieving that perfect transitional style for night-time dressing, but not too formal. A peep-toe is a great way to achieve that mix between the stiletto heel and the block shoe." It will be made in glossy leathers or plush fabric, or with a slightly curved heel. "This season there will be a lot of emphasis on the heel."
- **Retro Mary Jane.** This is a style that taps into the 1960s but can be reinvented with high shine and a toe cap, colour blocking or playing with the height of the heel.
- **Architectural shoe.** "It's about contrasts and it's very graceful, and it's a way to push texture and form. The consumers are ready for it," says Ms Belleau.
- **Slip-on leather boot.** For men, this strong trend will continue. The leather or suede upper will be updated with contrast piping detailing or a thick rubber sole, or perhaps with a graphic printed upper and raw edges.
- **Urban military shoe.** Military shoes will continue to be a very good commercial option for men and women. It is still androgynous but could be balanced with a feminine aesthetic.

OUTDOORS



ATHLEISURE



- **Modern monk strap.** For this style, the key will be the high-shine, almost mirror-like leather, perhaps with a traditional buckle fastening or a more rounded toe shape or toe cap.

Designers will also be inspired by nature and reflection. "It's an era of self-examination, with a growing number of people reporting to have no religious affiliation, so design will be driven by societies' need for a new meaning, exploring the boundaries of religious spirituality," says Ms Sac. "It's inspired by epic outdoors, and at the same time it's an inward trend getting to know yourself and the longing for quiet."

Here, the colour palette sweeps from the pale, breezy neutrals to the heavier moodier greys, which are important for the winter season. Emphasising softness will be key. The greens greys and sandy bases will be set with off-white and pearly metallics that add the soft, wintery glow.

"The idea is comfort and protection with soft, padded materials and this can be achieved in footwear by adding small panels, or embellishing the buckles with padding or felt or soft surfaces," says Ms Sac. "Oily, reflective surfaces are key, moving away from the highly lacquered shine and the heavy coatings; we're looking for a more subtle oily reflection, whether as a coating or on leather. In footwear, the traditional wet-weather silhouettes will be updated with utilitarian simplicity, you've got simple leathers that are lined and coated with the protective surfaces, and that's really highlighting a Spartan sense of modernity. The traditional materials are layered with coatings that offer protection against a hostile climate. And the simple silhouettes are prepared with semi-glossy suedes for a clinical take on streetwear."

- **High vamp court.** A relaxed shoe that will use contemporary constructions to update the classic silhouette. The lines will be almost minimalist and it will be about the purity of the shape. It will be made in soft leather with a rounded toe and a low-cut vamp. The heel could be flared to add interest.
- **The pointed toe.** This women's shoe hints at femininity, not in an obvious way. Following the theme of protection it will feature oversized panels at the front. "You can execute the shape in some luxurious material choices to give it a premium feel," says Ms Belleau. "Pointed toes are very important for this season, we are seeing it as a more general trend for women's footwear and especially heels."
- **Hybrid derby.** The shape will be updated with hybrid material combination or variations on the sole.
- **Heeled wellington boots.** The heel updates the boot.
- **Leather boots for men.** Will be made in a smooth, grained leather and will serve as a transitional product.

"Research suggests we need to invest more time playing and less time working, we yearn for time off, so play is set to grow in significance," says Ms Sac. "It offers a healthy dose of escape, a reprieve. There's a rise in immersive theatre and user-generated art, playfulness among the mundane."

This will be reflected in design: dense colour such as tomato red to sour green. Unlikely tones will be paired together, such as bright pink and gold, smoky hues with apple green, burgundy and browns with lots of depth.



Helen Sac from WGSN forecasts next year's looks.

"We had a season about six months ago where everything was black and white. It's still apparent but we're looking at exaggerated playful shapes. Brands are becoming more daring with their colour combinations and this colour palette was confirmed by the last Prada collection with really unusual mixes of colours. It might take a bit of education for the consumers to understand it but it's definitely something we see for autumn winter 2016."

The athleisure trend will no longer be a trend but a lifestyle. "Athleisure has moved itself off from a trend to something we wear every day," says Ms Sac. "You will see it in the sneakers we're wearing, the track pants, and for this season we will see crazy colours being injected into the athletic ranges. A fun take on shapes, proportions and colours."

- **Wedge-heel platform.** A traditional shape for the youth market but it will become more prolific across age groups. Traditionally this would be made with a leather upper on a moulded rubber platform, but we will see inspiration from sneakers and there will be two-tone patent leather uppers with contrasted rubber outsole, and injections of colour.
- **The track sole boot.** The emphasis is on the sole, which will be exaggerated but with a city shape. "It almost gives a sense of oddness but by 2016/17, consumers would be used to that," says Ms Belleau.
- **The slimline runner.** The runner will be refined and slimlined, and is a canvas to play with colour blocking and different materials.



A buyer at Micam, Milan, browses the displays.

- **The desert runner.** A classic will be updated with a sporty feel, in suede or leather with a lightweight Vibram sole, or with unlined leather upper with contrasted suede panels on a moulded rubber outsole.

"The main themes that will be influencing fashion in autumn-winter 2016 will be the idea that everything is connected, there are no boundaries, it's all about reinvention and new dynamics; looking at classics and thinking about how we update them," adds Ms Belleau. "In my job, day after day, I push my clients to think differently. It's going back to appreciating great leathers and great materials." 🍷

