

# Think PINK

**Pink for a girl and blue for a boy? Think again! One of the hottest neutrals this season, pink is girly no more.**

**G**irly? Unmasculine? Wrong! Though David Beckham may have instigated the modern rise of pink clothing for men, it wasn't done to court controversy, like his dalliance with a sarong and nail varnish. No, Beckham is English and Englishmen have known for ages what the rest of the world is only realizing now – that you can't go wrong with pink. An alluring color, psychologically calming and complimentary to most skin tones, pink has a lot going for it. It oozes self-confidence and it goes with almost every color in your wardrobe, from black and tans to navies and greys (we especially love a grey/pink combo).

Take a look at the shirts worn by the most powerful chief executives and banking hot-shots, and you will see an above-average proportion of pink choices. There is no hint of weakness or self-consciousness. Wear a white or blue shirt to the office and you'll blend in with the rest

of the corporate-masses; wear a pink one, and you'll subtly stand out. And it doesn't stop with the shirt. Pink in hues from pastel to fuchsia have been seen on pants, tees and blazers in collections from Paul Smith and Lanvin, and the high-street is now awash with all things pink.

For those Alpha male types who are still uncomfortable with breaking the stereotype, just take a look at the amount of pink being worn in the sporting world: French rugby monsters Stade Français Paris glory in pink, as do Dutch rugby team, the Pink Panthers. In fact, pink has been used as rugby and other sporting uniforms since the 18th century. Still concerned? Try easing yourself into the color by gradually wearing smaller items such as ties, tees or even shoes. **b**

## Space Hunter

Fresh from the team of fashion-forward thinkers that brought us Five Green and Heaven's Playground comes 50°C; a haven for uber-cool gifts and guy gadgets. Stocking a selection of clothes, cards, music, home-ware and toys from brands such as: Suck UK, Norman and Whimsy and Whish; 50°C is giving us style palpitations! And, the store itself is also an experience. Designed by Japanese designer Manabu Ozawa, who sought inspiration from sources such as vintage British motorbikes and cowboy boots; it's more than male-friendly! **50°C, Souk Al Bahar, Downtown Burj Dubai, Dubai. **b****





# For ART'S Sake

**Feminine draping and flounce make way as the structured silhouette returns.**

Asking the question: is fashion art or commerce – or indeed both – will produce a million different answers. And this season, thanks to Balenciaga's tour de force, Nicholas Ghesquière, this debate has gained renewed vigor. Taking the seemingly oppositional forces of Couture and sportswear and combining them into an armor-like uniform for the modern woman; Ghesquière produced stiffened – thanks to hefty latex injections – floral two-pieces and dresses. Each look with curvilinear topstitching, supported with sports-derived foam and with the material cut by a high-tech laser machine.

"Instead of a put-together thing like last season, I wanted total looks – 'ensembles', as we say in French," says Ghesquière, "with graphic volumes like car bodywork. Sports cars!"

Like sports cars, the sculptural shapes in the collection produced equal amounts of appreciation; with their standout shoulder lines,

corset-like waists and pannier hip volume. Combined with the classic floral print, the look represented an edgy subversion of the usual passive feminine connotations that come with the print.

Not that this is a new concept – at least not for the house of Balenciaga. Long before Ghesquière; the original Balenciaga maverick, Cristobal, etched the outline for the label's signature sculptured-shape when he opened his couture house in 1919. Influencing the face of modern couture with his imposing designs and sculpture-like silhouettes, Cristobal wanted his creations to be viewed as independent works on art.

And, it isn't only Balenciaga who has been heralding a return to a sculpted shape. Stylized sculpture has been a mainstay in Japanese fashion for some time. And looking forward to next season, other mainstream designers such as Marc Jacobs – who is no stranger to blurring the boundaries between art and fashion having famously collaborated with conceptual artist Richard Prince and Takashi Murakami for Louis Vuitton – and Katy Rodriguez, both showed a collection that featured strong shapes and sharply-peaked shoulders;

padded shoulders that Joan Collins in her 80s heyday would no doubt be proud to sport! This power dressing silhouette is another example of the 80s revival that has been around for several seasons. It also links in with another strong fashion trend this season, that of the 'warrior woman'. Though the warrior woman that Jacobs and Rodriguez – and indeed Ghesquière – have in mind is a corporate warrior. Channeling the yuppie, these clothes are for woman about to do battle in the boardroom.

Not ready for the full-on floral, robot look? Remember, sculptural is wearable in moderation. A defined waist here, some peaked shoulders there or try accenting with some sculptural shoes, such as Prada's flower-heeled Mary Janes. Yes, the thought of shoulder pads may terrify you, but there's no denying what a bit of padding – combined with a cinched waist – can do.

As for Balenciaga's latest offering; well, they may not be wearable nor practical to clean and they're certainly not affordable, but that's not the point, is it? Good art inspires and inspiring the world to change the way they dress; well, that's definitely an achievement! **b**