

# WHAT'S NEWS.

## TAKE FIVE

Brands like Øblanc, Kirin, Ottolinger, Aries and Maisie Wilen are shaking up streetwear. From left: Øblanc clothing, Gap socks and Dr. Martens shoes; Kirin overalls, Re/Done x Hanes T-shirt, Vans sneakers and model's own socks; Ottolinger clothing and The Row boots; Aries clothing and Converse sneakers; Maisie Wilen clothing and Raised by Wolves x Manitobah Mukluks shoes.



## FEMALE FORWARD

Streetwear by and for women is disrupting a category that has long focused on men's silhouettes and sizing.

BY JESSICA IREDALE PHOTOGRAPHY BY JODY ROGAC  
FASHION EDITOR LAURA STOLOFF





**NEW WAVE**  
Clockwise from below:  
Ottolinger clothing;  
Kirin overalls and jacket  
and Re/Done x Hanes  
T-shirt; Aries clothing  
and Converse sneakers;  
Maisie Wilen dress.



**STYLE FILE** Below: Øblanc jacket and pants and Calvin Klein Underwear T-shirt. Models, Zwaan Bijl and Nastya Zakharova at The Society Management, Songhwa Oh at Muse Management, Nikita M'Bouroukounda at Ford Models, Thais Borges at Wilhelmina Models; hair, Fernando Torrent; makeup, Allie Smith. For details see Sources, page 182.

**S**TREETWEAR'S mix of graphic T-shirts, athletic wear, utilitarian denim and status sneakers has become the toast of high fashion thanks to cult labels like Supreme, Virgil Abloh's Off-White and Kanye West's Yeezy. As a category, streetwear has long been male dominated, in both its key players and its sizing and tailoring. But a new crop of female designers is beginning to tip the scales, introducing fits, colors and concepts on the feminine side of the spectrum. And these designers are getting recognition not just from customers but also from the industry powers that be, including LVMH, Adidas, Nike and West himself.

Earlier this year West launched a fashion incubator offering financial assistance and mentorship to young designers, and named Maisie Schloss its first participant. Her womenswear label, Maisie Wilen, debuted in Los Angeles in June—a lineup of colorful pieces inspired by gymnastics outfits, along with paint-by-number T-shirts and snakeskin-embossed separates. Schloss, who graduated from Parsons School of Design, was formerly a womenswear designer at Yeezy, where she caught West's eye early. "He always really admired my style," she says.

Abloh, too, has been instrumental in the launch of a women's streetwear line. After he saw a set by South Korean-born, Berlin-based DJ Peggy Gou, he encouraged her to meet with Milan's New Guards Group, which counts Off-White, Heron Preston, Marcelo Burlon and Palm Angels among its brands. Gou studied at London College of Fashion and worked at the Korean edition of *Harper's Bazaar*, but she had never considered designing. She launched her New Guards

label, Kirin, at Paris Fashion Week this past February. The line takes its cues from what Gou herself wants to wear, including printed-pajama looks, red-latex trenches and robe dresses featuring *haetae*, Korean mythological creatures. "I noticed that if I was going to buy streetwear, it was all always men's clothing," says Gou. "I wanted to create the same vibe, but the female version."

When Olivia Oblanc founded her unisex collection Øblanc, right after she graduated from Parsons, in 2017, streetwear mecca VFiles—a New York City store and social-media platform known for its talent-spotting—picked up the line almost right away. Shortly thereafter Adidas Originals came calling for a collaboration that dropped in 2018; a second collection is now in the works. Øblanc draws a customer base of mostly men, except for its jeans, which feature exaggerated lines and convertible silhouettes. "There is a strong middle ground for unisex clothing," says the designer. "I don't really see myself shifting [away from unisex], but I do want to create more feminine garments because I lack that."

Berlin-based Cosima Gadiant and Christa Bösch employ techniques and fabrics that elevate their four-year-old label Ottolinger beyond typical streetwear. "We don't necessarily think of Ottolinger as a streetwear brand," says Gadiant, who met Bösch when

they were students at the Institute of Fashion Design in Basel, Switzerland. "But we do have a streetwear audience"—likely drawn to the brand's denim, athletic and DIY references. The designers' approach involves a certain amount of deconstruction: denim treated with a blowtorch, for example. And instead of sketching their designs, they use old-school draping techniques to construct everything. LVMH took notice of Gadiant's and Bösch's talents last year, nominating Ottolinger for its 2018 LVMH Prize for Young Fashion Designers.

Sofia Prantera is a veteran of the original '90s streetwear boom. Back then, as a student at London's Central Saint Martins, she found herself immersed in skate culture, working for Slam City Skates and, in 1995, starting her own street label with fellow Slam City alum Russell Waterman. In the '00s, when the big brands began dominating the streetwear market and making hyper-girly fashions, Prantera lost interest and took a break.

She got back into it in 2010, teaming up with Fergus Purcell, who did graphics for Palace Skateboards, on a luxury streetwear line for men and women. Even nine years ago, "streetwear was a bit of a dirty word," says Prantera, who is now the sole designer of the brand, Aries. Hand dyeing, printing and repurposing are core features of Aries' clothing, much of which is unisex. "For me, it's always about designing for women like myself who don't really care where they shop," she says. "They might buy a men's suit or a women's bra."