

WWD

Rachel Comey RTW Fall 2019

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Rachel Comey is one designer who believes you can have a runway show whenever and wherever you want – or not. The last time the Brooklyn independent had one was in Los Angeles in June 2018 at the old Bullocks Wilshire department store building, which made the perfect Art Deco foil for her starlet-worthy resort collection of moire silk suiting with marabou feather trim and glam tulle overskirts worn atop jeans.

On Wednesday afternoon, she chose a similarly appropriate location to show fall 2019 – Chelsea’s Marlborough Contemporary art gallery, where Davina Semo’s large-scale abstract sculptures in bronze, aluminum and plastic echoed the collection, which was punched up with optimistic color.

“In terms of big picture stuff, I was thinking about intergenerational relationships, since on a personal level lately I’ve made friends with several people much older than me, which has been very rewarding,” Comey said backstage, pausing to greet Sandra Bernhard, who pointed out she was wearing the designer’s necklace. “As we grow as a brand, our customer age range has been diversifying so much.”

It was reflected on the runway, where Comey’s cast of models was inclusive in age and size in a way that felt seamless. The beauty of her clothing is similarly subtle; it’s never so specific or attached to a theme that it seems trapped in any one season or time.

Instead, she zeroed in on the pieces that Bernhard, Rashida Jones, Tracee Ellis Ross, Busy Philipps, activist Sarah Sophie Flicker and others have come to rely on her for, including denim (high-waisted, grass-green acid wash jeans looked cool with a matching cropped sweater); statement coats, such as the lush, cinnamon-colored shearling, and knit dressing (a cropped sweater with cutout over the waist, worn with a matching ribbed skirt).

She also excels at quirky patterns, like on a comics-inspired "chatter" print jumpsuit; contrasting textures, as seen with a crinkly chartreuse silk balloon sleeve dress worn under a patchwork Fair Isle sweater vest; innovative materials (a red plaid squiggle quilting top was made of fabric developed from recycled water bottles), and arty jewelry (those earrings decorated with fragments of scarf prints were a must).

Shoes, which have been a brand builder for the designer, are being made in Italy instead of Peru for fall, and they did seem elevated in style; with fold-over cuff ankle booties, and T-bar pumps in mixed hues. And they will cost a little more at retail, too, "which I think is fine," Comey said. "I don't hit a lot of price resistance with my customers.

If anything was missing, it was a bit of that evening sizzle Comey dipped into so adroitly for resort. Aside from a pink-hued paillette shift dress, it wasn't much of a party.