

## **Report on Berlin Fashion Week, July 2018**

Berlin Fashion Week is becoming a significant event on the fashion calendar. Whilst it tends to attract home buyers, over the past few years it has been gaining recognition amongst the international crowd as well. It is now a major trade fair and a destination for the fashion companies who wish to reinforce their European presence.

In general buyers are mainly German nationals however, Berlin Fashion Week is also popular amongst buyers from Austria, Switzerland, Poland and Netherlands.

There are two trade fair groups involved in Berlin Fashion Week, working together. Whilst they compete for buyers, exhibitors and press, they align their dates and allow each others' shuttle services to be located close by. This season all the shows took place on the same four days in July.

### **Panorama**

This is the biggest and most commercial of all shows. Hosted in a vast Expo City it spans 9 halls and includes Xoom by Innatex, now in its second edition.

Many of the stands are run by German agents, which can be beneficial from the language and contacts perspective. Halls 1 to 5 primarily feature large mainstream menswear and womenswear collections including UK brands Emily and Fin, Brakeburn and Tom Joule. Footwear and handbags are mainly located in hall 6 whilst halls 7 and 8 are taken over by the ethical Xoom featuring brands such as Komodo. Finally, hall 9 houses Nova which is a section dedicated to newer brands and younger design – this year and up and coming British brand Pretty You London exhibited in Nova.

The main difference between this and other shows is that the brands are encouraged to curate their own stands which results in all of the booths being branded and decorated in line with each brands' aesthetics. It makes for an interesting show.

This year saw a slight decline in British exhibitors, however those in attendance reported having been satisfied with the show. Despite the size of the venue have an atmosphere full of energy and it was evident that it was well attended. Most of the British brands saw a steady stream of buyers, both old and new, visiting their stands.

### **Selvedge Run**

Selvedge Run featured high quality and heritage brands, heavily focused on leather and denim. It is tightly curated and is a show for a very specific buyer who is looking for premium to luxury product with unique yet classic design. British exhibitors included Lair Hatters, Lewis Leathers, Simmons Bilt and newcomer Iron Heart.

The show is a mixture of Japanese and European brands all reported good attendance from the buyers although the atmosphere was more subdued than Panorama.

### **Premium**

Premium is the oldest show on the Berlin circuit. It features mainly high street to contemporary collections. The halls are generally separated to accommodate different categories as well as house similar design and some of the areas feature vast stands allowing the more established brands to feature their full collections.

As with most German shows, agents run the majority of the stands but often brands also attend the show themselves. This year the show featured a strong British representation from Orlebar Brown, Onjenu, Hayley Menzies, People Tree, Pretty Ballerinas, Tateossian, Estella Bartlett, Religion and French Connection to name a few.

Opinions about the show were divided. Some of the more established brands seemed to have been disappointed with both buyers' attendance and general amount of business conducted whilst a host of smaller and more independent designers reported an excellent performance with both old and new accounts coming through.

### **Show and Order**

Show and Order features more of the younger and commercial brands. This year there was only one UK brand Blank who expressed general satisfaction with the show.

## **Seek and Bright**

Seek and Bright are separate trade shows but they are both part of Premium and so they share a general.

Seek is the show that houses commercial to premium casualwear and heritage brands. It always features a great number of British companies this year including Far Afield, Hymn, Brooks England, Oliver Spencer, Lazy Oaf and Beaumont Organic. We have seen a couple of brands showing with a German agent but predominantly it is the brands themselves or a British agent representing their regular clients such as Polly King who showed with Gola, Les basics and Nicce London.

Bright is exclusively streetwear related, with specific focus on garments and accessories relating to skatewear. It is the most relaxed of the shows where the culture of its main product seeps into the general atmosphere. It has, however, seen a slight decline interest over the past few years and this year it did not feature any UK brands.

## **Ethical Fashion Show and The Green Showroom**

Both the shows and the showroom are essentially part of the same show and currently form the only separate trade event dedicated to sustainability. July 2018 marked the second edition of the show and it seemed to satisfy both buyers and exhibitors.

This edition saw 6 British brands in attendance – Rakha, Bluebuck, Cossac, People Tree, Re.sustain and new comer Zola Amour. All brands enjoyed a fantastic show

Below comments from some of the exhibitors:

It was a great show for us again, we consider ourselves very fortunate each time we go as we continue to get support from important customers as well as attracting new customers and of course networking.

### **Debs, Simmons Bilt, Selvedge Run**

We enjoyed the Selvedge Run show, and got a few new leads, although the show was mainly valuable as a way of getting to talk to our existing clients (mainly European) and show them our latest collection.

### **Paula, Iron Heart, Selvedge Run**

The show wasn't really profitable, unfortunately. We didn't pick up almost any prospects and took only one order. On a positive side, it was a good platform to catch up with existing German clients.

As a matter of feedback, it seems like German buyers do visit this trade show but they are generally not prepared "to work" there. It is also definitely more of a local show and it is only worth doing to support the German market.

### **Alexander, Tateossian, Premium**

Berlin was a bit disappointing as having not a corner stand gives much less impact.

### **Harry, Nougat, Panorama**

The show is very good for us and we look forward to showcasing our collections there each season.

### **Ash, Native Youth, Seek**