

MINI TREND

LEG WORK

Don't let this undergarment be an afterthought — hosiery is still in its heyday. By Jen Nurick.



Gucci coat, \$5,200, top, \$1,700, tights, \$765, and shoes, \$3,320. Alessandra Rich earrings, \$775, from Harrolds.



Gilda Ambrosio during Paris fashion week 2019.



MARINE SERRE A/W '19/20



On the streets of London.



On the streets of Paris.



RICHARD QUINN A/W '19/20

DRIES VAN NOTEN A/W '19/20

WHAT WAS ONCE passé will inevitably become popular again. Such is a truism in fashion that holds particular meaning in the legacy of hosiery. The undergarment, born of conservative necessity and thermal requirements, has gained a second wind, coming into its own this season as a legitimate fashion item.

"After a season of showing skin, autumn/winter '19/20 is all about covering up. Modest statement pieces like maxi-skirts, pleated wide-leg trousers and colourful opaque tights take centre stage, to let bare legs hibernate for winter," says Sasha Skoda, head of women's category at luxury consignment store The RealReal, where pre-loved Gucci, Moschino and Valentino versions regularly sell out.

In contrast to the gendered oppression in which hosiery is historically rooted, designers this season swung to the opposite extreme. Marine Serre, Sally LaPointe and Versace toyed with the sheer stocking's potential for subversion. This exercise was two pronged: designers used pantyhose as a means to empower women and illuminate the item's potential to dictate the rest of an ensemble, and did away with the throwaway associations of pantyhose's wear and tear. "Hosiery is a very traditional industry," says Linn Frisinger, co-founder and CEO of sustainable label Swedish Stockings. "The fact that hosiery historically doesn't last long and is usually a last-minute purchase contributes to its negative and outdated perception," she says.

Alessandro Michele at Gucci led the renaissance, showing sheer rose lace stockings in blood orange and plum; while woodland creatures at Rodarte played up the super-feminine, where candy-coloured tights dominated. Emerging designers also presented their interpretations. At Christian Cowan, highlighter-yellow and pink

iterations were worn on their own, while at Richard Quinn, floral motifs adorning mini-dresses were stretched out on legs, giving the illusion of an elongated silhouette.

Andrea Giorgini, founder of Maison Soksi, says the relationship between hosiery's practicality and function as an accessory is inching towards equilibrium, with its reintroduction on fashion runways allowing hosiery to enter the mainstream. "Designers are starting to complete looks with hosiery at the epicentre," he reflects, illuminating a move beyond the conventional nude or black nylon pantyhose toward a validation of tights as counterparts for our clothing (see liberal uses at Anna Sui and Valentino). "The ability to innovate the details on a pair of tights can either make a fashion statement or break a look," he adds.

For those in need of further persuasion, Skoda suggests adopting a streamlined approach to begin with. "Think monochrome," she says. "Take cues from Burberry and Dries Van Noten to match the colour of your tights to your shoes and clothes." Then advance to a different fabrication, as seen at Marc Jacobs, or an understated polka dot as per Saint Laurent. Think of hosiery as jewellery for your legs and proceed not with caution, but with personality. ■

STYLIST: PHILIPPA MORONEY HAIR: DAREN BORTHWICK MAKE-UP: PETER BEARD MODEL: FUYAO PHOTOGRAPHS: GORUNWAY.COM BEG-PARSONS ALL PRICES APPROXIMATE DETAILS AT VOGUE.COM.AU/WTB