

SPARK JOY

Because 2016 has been grumpy as hell, lighten up with two labels injecting optimism back into your wardrobe

Words **Bibby Souray** and **Kerry Potter**



REJINA PYO

'As much as I appreciate art, I'm not interested in making costume pieces,' says London designer Rejina Pyo. 'I'm interested in a real woman who has a job and has to go straight from the office to evening drinks. So while I make clothes with interesting details, they don't scream at you,' she adds.

Her speciality is artful clothing that is equally wearable, such as a reversible cocoon coat with grey wool for everyday wear, and a mustard and olive jacquard for your bolder moments. 'I love giving people options they can play with,' says the softly spoken Seoul native.

It's an approach that's won Pyo fans including style influencers Caroline Issa and Kate Foley, and the retail team at Browns, which has just picked up her line for autumn. Pyo is also one of 12 young designers awarded a grant from the BFC Fashion Trust - money that will allow the expansion of her online shop.

Now 33, the Central Saint Martins alumna launched her label three years ago after a stint at Roksanda Ilincic. 'We shared an aesthetic. Neither of us are interested in a brash, sexy woman,' she explains. 'I think about what my friends and I want from clothes, and that's what I design. It's that simple. If I go out for dinner, I want a dress with a bit of room around the waist so I can eat.'

Pyo admits that her aspirations are high: 'I want to be like Acne or Marni. I like to make clothes that people treasure and keep coming back to.'

Available at Browns and Harvey Nichols, prices from £245



Top: Silver foil jacket, £599, Rejina Pyo. Below: Cotton top, £325, Rejina Pyo



SIES MARJAN

How many of us have our dream job? Sander Lak, the 33-year-old Dutchman at the helm of Sies Marjan, does. 'To be able to create a company like this is a joy, and that gets into the work,' he says from his New York studio.

The crowd of retailers and editors at his AW16 New York Fashion Week debut agreed. Styled by Vêtements' Lotta Volkova, each piece was as wearable as it was beautiful: a floral bias-cut dress; a ballet slipper-pink ruffled sweater; effervescent oranges and yellows.

'I start and end with colour,' he says. 'I create things that make me happy.'

Lak cut his teeth on Central Saint Martins' MA course before design stints at Phillip Lim, Balmain and Dries van Noten. When the chance to start his own label arose last year, he relocated to New York and Sies Marjan was born. 'Sies is my father's first name, Marjan my mother's first name,' he explains. 'I didn't want to use my own name: I'm not after fame, but I did want it to be personal.'

He may not want it, but it's coming for him whether he likes it or not.

Available at Matchesfashion.com, prices from £690



Above: Silk jacket, £2,670, and matching trousers, £690, both Sies Marjan. Top: Silk crepe top, £890, Sies Marjan

Photography: Graham Waiser at Hearst Studios.