

## READY TO DARE

*The future of fashion (and our wardrobes) looks bright, thanks to a host of exciting new designers. Meet the labels you'll want to wear*

Words **Bibby Souvray**

### Y/PROJECT

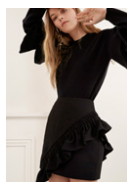
'I had no idea who Margiela was. I barely knew McQueen,' says Y/Project Creative Director Glenn Martens of his fashion knowledge when he began to study design at the prestigious Royal Academy of Fine Arts Antwerp a decade ago.

Originally from Bruges, Belgium, he had a degree in interior architecture under his belt but, feeling too young to enter the professional world, decided to give fashion design a go. 'I went to the interview with a portfolio full of chairs and furniture. I never thought about the fact I would have to sew,' he says from Y/Project's Paris studio. He graduated first in his class in 2008, walked straight into a job at Jean Paul Gaultier and also started an eponymous brand, which debuted at Paris Fashion Week in 2012 and ran for three seasons.

It was in 2013 that Martens heard from menswear brand Y/Project, which had been founded by French designer Yohan Serfaty and business partner Gilles Elalouf in 2010. Serfaty passed away, and Elalouf was looking for a new helmsman. After joining, Martens immediately added a womenswear line, and the brand's profile rocketed. It's been credited with sparking the sense of revolution that's currently happening

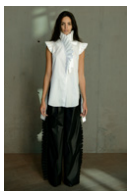
### C/MEO COLLECTIVE

Beloved by the blogger set since its 2010 inception, Australian label C/MEO Collective (pronounced 'cameo') is riding a new wave of fandom after a buzzy collaboration with Solange Knowles. Clean lines mixed with directional shapes make it a go-to for women who want a blend of on-trend and timelessness (pictured, below).  
CMEOCOLLECTIVE.COM



### NABIL NAYAL

Syria-born, England-based Noyal's line is only six years old, but it already has the approval of fashion greats including Karl Lagerfeld, Nicolas Ghesquière and Delphine Arnault thanks to a LVMH Prize shortlist in 2015. His USP? Modernisation of Elizabethan pleats and crisp shirting (pictured, below). Minimalism, this is not.  
NABILELNAYAL.COM



within the industry, alongside fellow French brands such as Vêtements and Jacquemus, all of whom have broken through the strict Parisian system once solely ruled by older, iconic houses.

'We ask customers to think about what they see,' Martens says of Y/Project. 'We ask them what they want to own, and what they want to become.' The SS17 collection is full of adaptable pieces (pictured, above and right), in celebration of women in the world. 'There's streetwear next to velvet cocktail dresses, next to unisex pieces. We take inspiration from wherever we want, whether it's subculture or a historical era. It's an eclectic melting pot.'

The next step for the brand is to add footwear and accessories, but Martens wants to keep the fun factor. 'I hope people can see that there are a lot of jokes and personality in the clothes. Inside any company, you need fun, or you can't deal with the stress. Take it easy.' What better motto to live life by than that? YPROJECT.FR





Cotton top, £385, Teija at Matches Fashion. Viscose dress, £225, Ganni at Selfridges



## RIXO

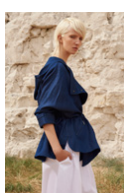
There aren't many successful labels that can say they were born out of a mistake, but Rixo (pictured, above) is one of them.

Having spotted a gap in the market for beautifully made, vintage-inspired dresses at an attainable price, Orlagh McCloskey and Henrietta Rix left their jobs as buyers at ASOS in 2015 to start the brand from their west London flat. They had recruited a friend to design the prints for their collection, but a last-minute schedule clash occurred and the duo, who had no formal design training, were left to do it themselves.

## TEIJA

Finland-native and Royal College of Art graduate Teija Eilola was mentored by Burberry's Christopher Bailey before launching her label in 2012. Stocked at Matches Fashion, style editors love her crisp take on summer/city dressing: striped and gingham shirts, and dresses and skirts with smock detailing (pictured, below). She says her sartorial spirit animal is 'the awkward introvert', but no matter what your personality, you'll want in.

TEIJAEILOLA.COM



## GANNI

Creative Director Ditte Reffstrup and her CEO husband, Nicolaj, are the brains behind this Copenhagen-based brand. Founded in 2000, its playful aesthetic has found new favour in the era of Scandi-cool (pictured, below). Fans range from Alexa Chung and Kendall Jenner to the buying team at Net-a-Porter, where Ganni is stocked. The brand cleverly fills the void between high-street heroes such as COS and Acne.

GANNI.COM



## ROBERTS WOOD

Royal College of Art graduate Katie Roberts-Wood founded her conceptual line in 2014, which explores femininity (pictured, below), construction and proportion. Her whimsical references, frills and drapery promptly earned the attention of influencer retailers; Dover Street Market now stocks the brand in its London, Tokyo and New York stores.

ROBERTS-WOOD.COM



'We spent the whole weekend with paint brushes!' says Cheshire-born Rix, who met McCloskey, from Northern Ireland, while they were studying Fashion Management at the London College of Fashion. 'We'd never intended Rixo to be a print-heavy brand, but the reaction to our first two prints was so great that we said, "We can actually do this ourselves."'

Once the prints were placed on their silk 'Camellia' dress – a breezy midi-length style with blouson sleeves and side-splits – a sell-out was born, beloved for its dress-up, dress-down versatility. 'People have got behind the story of the brand and the fact it's me and Orlagh doing everything from our home,' adds Rix. 'It's not trend-led at all: we want customers to simply see a dress and fall in love with it.'

Rixo has grand plans for the future: an essentials range, handbags, accessories, jewellery and even a concept store are all on the cards. And we don't doubt for a second that McCloskey and Rix will achieve it all. RIXO.CO.UK ■



Silk blouse, £185, viscose trousers, £155, both Rixo