



# A Riot of Fabrics

Fabrics played a pivotal role at the five-day Lakmé Fashion Week Summer/Resort 2019. Designers worked with fabrics to give a new dimension to their styles to craft some unique garments. Sustainable fabrics made a major impact along with the promotion of crafts and weavers. The event was held in Mumbai from January 30 to February 3. **Meher Castelino** reports.

**Madhumita Nath:** Using a combination of textures created with herringbone and diamond weaves, there were organic hand-woven patterns along with prints that created a calm essence for garments.



**Asa Kazingmei:** The collection was futuristic in nature with denim and leather as the basis along with studs, chains, rivets and a dash of painting for the 'Bionic' line of tight trousers, biker's jackets and shirts, which were battle-ready and Gothic in appearance.

**Sneha Arora:** Botanical miniature prints with hand-embroidered details were the favoured option for the 'Breathe' collection. So, the designer used airy silks, smooth cottons, skinny organzas and cotton silks that had sky blues, leaf greens, earthy beiges and whites as the colour card.



**Gaurav Gupta:** The opening show called 'Unfolding' had chikankari and brocade with origami folding as the centre of attraction. The colour card started with midnight black, then fiery rose, soothing ivory and gradually moved on to gorgeous golden brocades. The fabrics were wired, curved and moulded for eveningwear creations.

**Ujjwala Bhadu:** Mixing cotton and satin with silk gazar, there was a blend of knitwear for the collection that had textured weaves as well as tassels for edging the garments to give a retro look.



**Gauri and Nainika:** Chiffon, crêpe de chine, organza and micro crêpe formed the fabric base and presented a luxe line called 'The Art of Latte' with prints of polka dots and vivid colours holding centrestage.

**Rohit Bal:** Using exquisite organic fabrics like cotton, silk blends, chanderis, silk organzas, silks and velvets, along with the beautiful Kashmiri embroidery, the collection called 'Guldastah' was like a bouquet of fresh flowers on the ramp. With motifs of poppies, tulips, sunflowers and peonies along with a few prancing horses, the embellishments were the focal point of the ensembles.



**Varun Bahl:** The collection called 'The 5 Petal Story' had the five-petal blossoms that were so versatile that they appeared in multiple prints and as embroidery. The motifs were seen tantalisingly on micro-floral gingham checks as well as on damask and mosaic prints, while the five-petal design was achieved through tessellation as well as 3D laser-cut flowers.

**Anita Dongre:** Tencel was the basis of the collection called 'A Summer Reverie' the fabric for which was developed with Tencel fibres used with silk to create perfect summer blends. On a background of floral tones that exuded freshness on the runway, the creations in yellow, apricot, sea foam, feisty fun summer prints were splashed with pista green, marigold, yellow, misty blue, champagne pink and a flow of lively lavender motifs.



**Soumitra Mondal:** Soumitra has worked for 15 years with weavers as well as artisans in West Bengal. Currently, he has 450 artisans working for his fabrics and collections. His collection called 'Bunon' was made from handloom khadi and linen silk, all woven with natural yarns and was a simple wearable line that allowed the textiles to hold centrestage. All silhouettes' fabrics had a count of more than 300-400.

**Péro:** The Péro with Woolmark Company and Bhuttico trio featured a collection in merino wool with the marked designs of Pattu patterns, which have the traditional geometric patterns created in Kullu Valley. It was of monochrome colours in shades of blue, khaki and off-white. The fabric tapes developed by Péro with the Bhuttico weavers also featured the geometric designs inspired by Pattu patterns.



**Anavila:** Known for her experiments with linen for her saris, this season, Anavila was selective about her yarns as she opted for cotton, linen, silk and then turned them into a mélange of colours with 100 per cent natural dyes that heightened the beauty of the hand-woven and crafted creations. Making the collection more global in nature, Anavila's colours and dyes were prepared at clusters in West Bengal, Bhuj and even Sa-Pa, Vietnam.

**Ashish N Soni:** Grado, the luxury fabrics and apparel brand from the house of GBTL – Grasim and OCM, unveiled the very exciting menswear line by Ashish Soni. The designer played with checks creatively, as light windowpane versions were surprisingly contrasted and juxtaposed with the well-known traditional Prince of Wales checks. Colours too were very important, as along with the usual masculine hues there were also tones of saffron, green and blue to liven up the menswear line.



**Kanika Goyal:** The blend of sheers, denims and textures added to the classy vibe of the collection. Focusing on the young generation, ripped cropped tops, bomber jackets with translucent sleeves were mixed together. Metallics were used to add a touch of glamour.

**Eka:** The pastels in all their gentle glory were the basis for the sheers, laces and layered visions of beauty as they floated down the ramp. The cleverly created weaves, the monochromatic stripes, fragile feminine negligees and noodle-strap blouses, were what fashionistas will desire during the summer.



**Sayantana Sarkar:** Sayantan Sarkar played with sheer organzas, basic cottons, Bengal handlooms and textures to create an aesthetically pleasing line of womenswear.

**Tahweave:** The iconic art of ikat was entwined within the ensembles to highlight the delicate beauty of the creations. The outfits were draped eloquently. Comfort being of prime importance, the anti-fit garments were teamed with customised leather belts and shoes. The marriage of the chattai weaves with jamdaani silk was a visual delight. Delicate french knots were intricately woven along with floral prints.



**Narendra Kumar:** The brand Alcis X Nari collaboration was an exclusive line of sustainable athleisure creations made from recycled polyester scoured from PET bottles making the garments softer and lighter to wear and feel. The various treatments like dry-tech for moisture management, anti-odour, anti-static, anti-UV and light x have been created keeping Indian lifestyles and weather in mind.

**Raghavendra Rathore:** Using exclusive hand-woven textiles along with fabric developments with prominent use of silk and natural yarns, the unconventional silhouettes and colour tones were a mix of navy, black, ivory and charcoal grey that created a very distinct fashion statement for the collection called 'An Ode to the Bandhgala'.



**Shivan & Narresh:** R|Elan powered by GreenGold is one of the most eco-friendly fabrics globally, with one of the lowest carbon footprints. Made from used plastic bottles, GreenGold furthers sustainability with a traceable manufacturing process that uses renewable energy. The latest Shivan & Narresh collection called 'The Pattu Series' looked towards the crafts and paintings of India. It was Bengal's Kalighat Pattachitra art that got the duo's creativity into top gear and when they turned their gaze towards the Tholu Bommalata leather puppetry of Andhra Pradesh, the amalgamation was unbelievably noteworthy.

**Nikhil Thampi:** Opposites came into focus as body-con silhouettes suddenly took off-body shapes, while angles, curved panels, shine, matte, solid, monochrome and colour blocking, all came together seamlessly perfectly for sturdy fabrics that were akin to suiting material.



**Jajaabor:** Khadi, cotton gauze, mul-mul, silk, chanderi and organza brought 'The Moving Wall' collection to life. With a versatile range of colours, the garments burst on to the ramp in hues of bright yellows, blues, oranges, greens, reds and whites.

**Kunal Rawal:** Bringing in a novel concept of lines and dots that interpreted the idea of Morse coding, Kunal Rawal also drew inspiration from heritage archives. Tradition came in the form of Indian handlooms in the style of bold prints and the distinct knotted forms embroidered on the outfits, along with hints of bandhani done in a contemporary manner.



**Shriya Som:** Gentle hues of peach created a fashion melody with rose quartz and orchid that were perfectly blended with soft blues. The slightly androgynous nature of the ensembles was emphasised with angular motifs and pre-pleated textures. Raffia in florals, fringes at times appeared as embroidered, braided, twisted, knotted, dyed forms that took on myriad looks.

**Shehla Khan:** The powerhouse shoulder pads gave a retro feel to the clothes of that decade; while the opulent embroidery and the luxe fashion with sheers at the centre took the ensembles up the formal wear ladder. From pretty pastels, the colour card moved to black with embroidery or ombré touches for lehengas, cholis and dupattas.



**Latha Puttanna:** With intricate detailing and borders, the motifs were juxtaposed to create a striking range. Sheer fabrics were prominent along with pleats and a mélange of checks and geometrical motifs. The hints of metallic touches added a glam touch to the already stunning outfits.

**Kanella:** This inspiration was gently created into handwork techniques like 3D embroidery, block printing, stitch detailing and manipulation of fabrics into flora motifs. The ensembles were further enhanced with the correct use of light, fluid, cotton linen, chanderi, kota, linen, khadi silk and organza.



**Mohammed Mazhar:** This time the fabric base was cotton cambric for the required flounce in the creations. Indian gauze, voile and mul-mul as well as Tencel were the other selections for their sheer feminine quality. These white visions were then embellished with Mohammed's exclusively developed khaka prints and interesting embroidery. With hints of very discreet blue motifs on the garments, the frills, flounces and voluminous silhouettes came to life on the catwalk.

**SWGT:** With fabulously hand-woven fabrics from Madhya Pradesh, Shweta combined these into arresting garments that were visually appealing. The handmade crafts included the beauty of crochet that helped to enrich the striking quality of the ensembles.



**Essé:** It was a line of deconstructed garments that were presented in a fluid as well as figure-hugging forms. At times, the designers brought in the beauty of hemp, as well as the dabka embroidery.



**Payal Singhal:** Payal's clever amalgamation of Indian folk art with transcontinental technics and crafts appeared to be a 'Renaissance meets Mughal Art' story for her collection called 'Qo'shillish'. The designer set her sights first on the beauty of mid-European art, and then moved to Indian shores and the result was a sophisticated dramatic line on the ramp. The beautiful art forms of Pietre Dura, Parllin Kari, Malileh Kari, Tilla Doza and the popular zardozi were cleverly and painstakingly embellished on the garments in a contemporary form.



**Ereena:** Jyoti Reddy's work on the textile front has been path-breaking as designer, producer and marketer of her 'Ereena' brand that offers Eri silk fabrics, saris, accessories and home furnishing. Taking 'Ereena's' Eri silk to the world markets, Jyoti has worked with textile technologists with whom she associated and started Eri silk yarn factories in Guwahati in 2007. The 'Bhoomi Bhoomi' colours were inspired by nature; so, the natural dyes from manjista, indigo, annatto, pomegranate and sapan were striking on the ramp. The 'Ereena' fabrics have the ability to make the wearer feel cool in summer cotton and warm in winter's light wool.

**Ank:** Usha Devi Balakrishnan's Anka endeavours to revive and sustain the weavers of Balramapuram, started in 2016. Bringing the gorgeous gold weaves of Kerala, the 'Anka' brand used the highest quality of chemical-free cotton, as well as the purest form of gold and silver. Twenty master weavers worked on pit looms for the cotton and Kasavu collection in pure cotton and zari. The saris were presented with the most exquisite motifs that featured leaves, paisley, mullavalli motifs, elephants and peacocks, which were worn with a variety of colourful and woven corsets. Geometry came in the form of polka dots, circles, squares, checks, checkerboard design and stripes.



**Anaam with Rangсутra:** The label has fashionably combined craft, art, roots, modernity and this season, brought bandhani to centrestage. Combining bandhani craft with mirror work, the collection was a colourful artsy, fantasy of style and craft. Colours moved from rich teal to bright green, royal purple and electric, along with hints of deep grey for unconventional silhouettes and apparel. **FF**