

A Candid Conversation with Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner



The Best of the SPRING COLLECTIONS 2010





ver since Tommy Ton started his blog, Jak & Jil, in 2005, he has lived for those instances when the runway intersects with real life. He started photographing the parties in his native Toronto,

"getting excited," he says, "if I saw YSL shoes." These days Ton travels the world, shooting the sideshow of the fashion circus—the editors, the models, the cool girls. And the Jak & Jil money shot would look something like this: sky-high Balmain fetish booties sinking into the ground with every step through the Jardin des Tuileries in Paris. "It's more interesting," Ton says, "to see heels like that walking on sand or on cobblestones than on a designer's runway. What I want to do is document personal style because that's what people are really interested in."

No one, least of all the global fashion industry, could have ever predicted just how many people would be sufficiently interested in looking at stylistic gestures uploaded minutes after they were shot, or that those making them would attain celebrity status. No one had grasped the huge constituency with only one thing on its mind: What are Sasha Pivovarova/Anna dello Russo/Vanessa Traina, et al wearing today?

All that has changed. Blogging can command a profile in the fashion world, bringing a certain kind of power and privilege. So, in the interests of charting this phenomenon, we decided to profile nine individuals who matter now.

Jak & Jil is here because Tommy Ton helped raise street photography to the point that his blog is as much essential viewing during the collections as the shows. Garance Doré and Hanneli Mustaparta work in that genre, too, but they also feature themselves in their blogs, placing trends, fads, and designers right in their own closets. Catherine Kallon evaluates the red carpet wherever it has been unrolled. Yvan Rodic records who's wearing what in locales rarely visited by designers and brands. The addictively opinionated posts of Bryanboy (a.k.a. Bryan Grey-Yambao) saw a fashion addict from Manila end up with Marc Jacobs on his speed dial, plus a Marc campaign (fall 2008) styled to look like him and a bag named after him (he has one, in green ostrich). index >516





point . . . as long as they have a laptop and a Wi-Fi connection, they can engage and participate in the conversation.

Still, talking and being listened to are two very different things. Just what made the industry sit up and take notice at this moment? It wasn't as if there weren't previous blogs discussing, dissecting, and sometimes plain old dissing style. And surely it has to be more than Dolce & Gabbana's putting four bloggers (Bryanboy, Doré, Ton, and Sartorialist Scott Schuman) in the front row of their spring 2010 show, a smart/cynical/



surreal moment intended to depict a dramatically different fashion hierarchy.

In part it's the economy. As the recession decimated stores, brands, and businesses, not to mention the desire to shop, bloggers were there, lavishing attention on fashion, cheerleading its relevance. "I believe in the dream of fashion," says Doré. "I'm friendly and positive and passionate about it. I don't attempt to democratize it but to show what I love." And the industry, realizing the kind of loyal global following that bloggers can command, is only too happy to return that love. "If I want to shoot a Balmain dress," Doré says, "it's not a problem, even though the house doesn't loan its clothes to every magazine."

Balmain and all the rest are only too aware that bloggers can do the one thing everyone wants to do these days: connect. The industry has watched as ever more rapid technological developments have radically changed how you make contact with people. Lancôme signed Phan on the strength of the numbers she generated with her homemade videos. Since then, she has been creating tutorials for the Lancôme Web site (as well as developing a line *index* >523

for the company). "I think they feel," she says, "'Michelle's established and reaches out to people. We don't need to spend a lot of money to do it."

She's not the only one whose blog has brought success from those keen to collaborate and identify themselves with a new generation of media-ites. There are books being published (Selby, Rodic, Tomer), T-shirt lines being created (Doré for the Gap, Selby for Uniqlo), advertising campaigns being shot (Lacoste by Rodic, Cole Haan by Selby, Lane Crawford by Ton). Yet do we want our bloggers to become part of the industry? "My blog still feels like a hobby," says Kallon. "If that changed, I might feel different. I like the outsider status." One way they're preserving their status is by being picky about advertising. Tech, yes. Fashion, no. They don't want to be beholden.



Yet here's the thing: What constitutes inside and outside is changing anyway. "I'm treated like an expert on fashion," Tomer says, "even though I don't work at a magazine or go to shows." Blogging has become a profession, even if no one has worked out the full terms and conditions yet. "I don't know what *professional* means anymore," Selby says. "I give myself assignments and shoot them and show them for free. It's a totally new way of thinking about things."

Let's add one thing to that job description: You can become public property, with virtually no division between what you do and who you are. "Blogging has evolved into a mix of work and personal life," says Rodic. Having made fashion accessible to all, they're out there, too. Doré gets stopped on the street three times on a December SoHo afternoon. Ton is snapped on a camera phone at Whole Foods on *index* >524

Video: Meet the bloggers! Go to vogue.com for exclusive footage and interviews.







the Lower East Side while being interviewed for this story, and before you know it, "Vogue is covering bloggers!" is whipping through cyberspace. On the morning of the photo shoot, Bryanboy and Kallon have just finished a coffee run when he feels his Nokia smart phone vibrate. The new E-mail reads:

I was standing right near you in the Starbucks by Bryant Park this a.m. You were with a very tall girl who was carrying the Alexander Wang Coco duffel (so jealous). I came over and stood next to you in a horribly awful, black, long North Face puffy coat (hey, it was cold this morning!). I wanted to say hello but didn't want to seem like a crazy blog reader. Anyway, I enjoy your blog, and it was great to see you in real life. Loooved your sweater.

-MARK HOLGATE



Phan reports on beauty trends. Helmut Lang blazer (\$585), shirt (\$185), and pants (\$320); (212) 242-3240. Alexandre Birman booties, \$350; bergdorfgoodman.com.



On Her Radar: MODERN-ROMANTIC MAKEUP

"Inspired by James Jean, it's a look that plays with textures and colors."



Apple iPhone 3GS, \$199; Apple stores

Yves Saint Laurent

Blush Variation in

yslbeautyus.com.

#2 Pink Bloom, \$44;

Lancôme Ôscillation Powerfoundation, \$48; lancome-usa.com



2. The Rendering Phan's digital painting of bold color combinations.

1. The Inspiration



HER **BOOKMARKS** catwalkqueen.tv; frugal-fashionistas.com; bellasugar.com



Shu Uemura drawing pencil in M Brown 02, \$19; shuuemura-