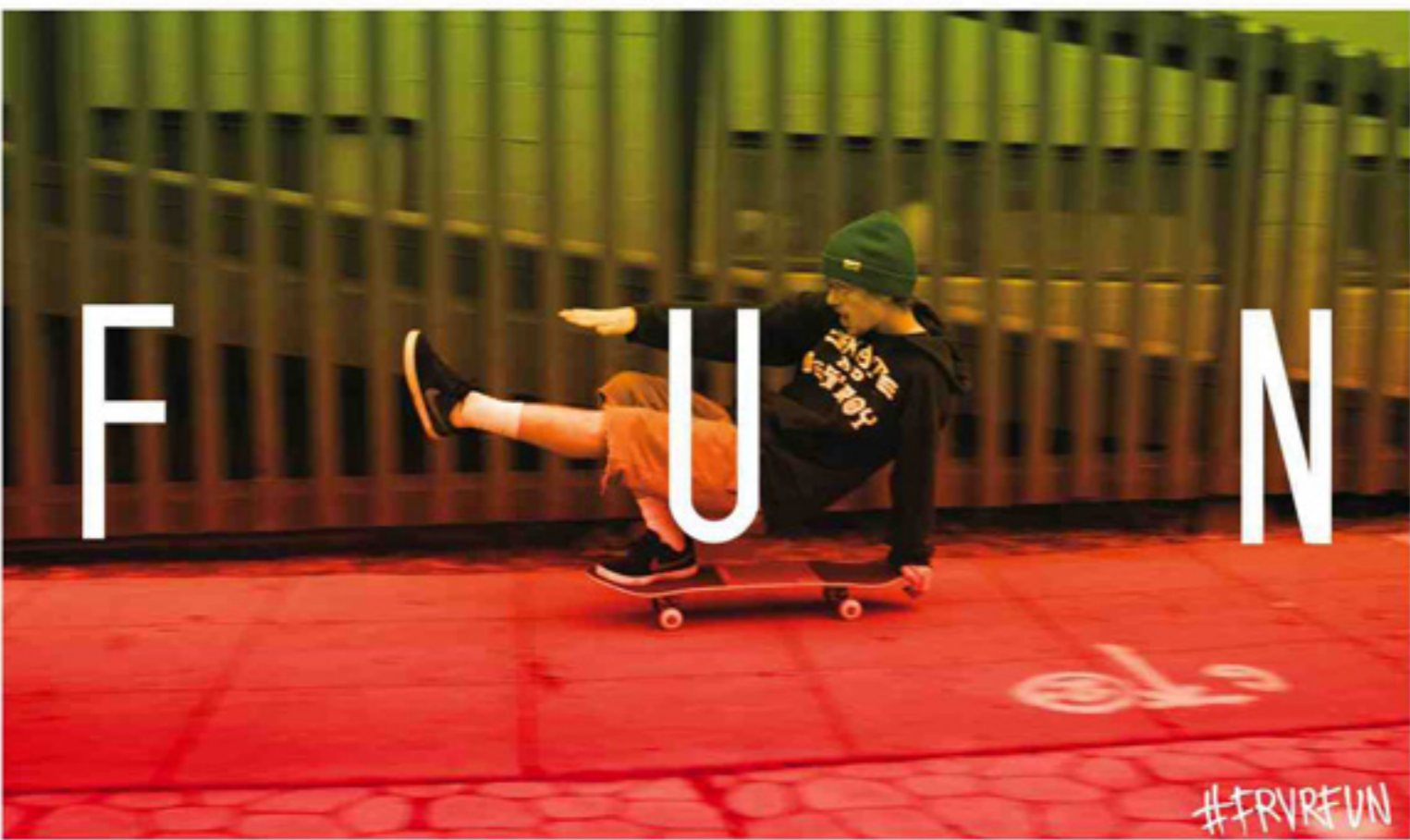


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Pic: Volcom

WOMEN'S STREETWEAR 2015 TREND REPORT

With the rise of fashionable sports clothes that girls wear everywhere from the gym to the office, streetwear for women faces a new challenge beyond the competition between brands and with high street stores. This has prompted a serious reduction of female streetwear collections as well as a new hybrid of apparel that isn't specified to 'streetwear' alone anymore.

While for some brands this meant a retreat from this sector altogether, others are happily embracing the challenge and rejoicing in a new kind of playground. "It's an exciting time for Vans to grow our apparel line, and we have a great story to tell. There are so many brands out there, but not one with a heritage like Vans, it's incredible," comments Oli from Vans and Volcom, too, believe that "there's a market for our product, we just have to have a clear story, the right sales channels and great product to make it sell." **By Anna Langer**

SOFT GLAM & FEMME FATAL VS. GRITTY SKATER GIRL

In 2015, this is done through two main approaches that address both sides of the modern woman: the feminine, sexy lady standing out in fashionable silhouettes, and the wild tom-boy, who enjoys a more casual look facilitating her active lifestyle.

Volcom work with "soft feminine" fits to create a "sexy but laid back" look, RVCA play with sexy dresses, skirts and cropped tops, that Vans will offer in a tight fit next year. Zimtstern is going for a "less sporty, more feminine" look too, just like Carhartt, whose silhouettes are becoming "slightly slimmer and more feminine" in 2015, just like O'Neill's. The latter also introduce "short shorts", for a fun, layering "festival look", while RVCA (with their Ashley Smith Capsule Collection) and Vans go for fashionable high-waist pants and denims. In general, Vans use a lot more "fashion silhouettes instead of

core basics" and top these off with stylish cut outs and other details. Details are also gaining importance at Zimtstern, RVCA, Element and O'Neill, who add crochet and lace details and even fringes for the perfect, carefree summer look.

For summer, "dresses remain very important" too obviously, and "have really taken off for us!" report Vans, but also O'Neill and RVCA state them as important pieces of their 2015 collections, that "emphasize the feminine side". Fashion pioneers Nikita pair them with "cut-out shoulders and peek-a-boo backs" but also offer their aggressive "signature cuts" with "chunky, oversized dresses" and tops with open backs.

Clothes that are made to be taken to the streets also need to provide functionality with style for those who enjoy the more feminine

“We see a bit of soft glam and femme mixed with a gritty girl skate sensation balancing the urban street aesthetic,” Volcom summarize.

looks, and we’re also seeing a “gritty skater girl” vibe (Volcom) that addresses the more casual, tom-boy girls. “We see a bit of soft glam and femme mixed with a gritty girl skate sensation balancing the urban street aesthetic,” Volcom summarize.

“Loose clothes for loose people” is how this concept is described at Jimmy’Z, with oversized tops (Jimmy’Z & Vans), cropped loose fit tops (O’Neill), loose fit beach pants (O’Neill), relaxed tees (Vans), boyfriend sweaters (RVCA) and even a “Velcro wrap skirt like in the good old days” from Jimmy’Z. Zimstern designed their whole collection around “being outside and feeling nature.” Colour Wear and Burton focus on an active sportswear look. “We spent a lot of time working with our fit team to make sure freedom of movement was kept in mind when creating the patterns. We want to make sure our products are comfortable and don’t restrict you in your activities,” says Burton Marketing Manager Birgit. Despite a strong influence from the 80s and early 90s, (at Colour Wear, Volcom, Jimmy’Z) the sporty vibes can’t be too bold though, but rather incorporating the heritage aspect of this lifestyle, with “new life for time-honoured classics” (Carhartt), creating an “urban sporty look with loose, comfortable fits” (Element). “We wanted to produce a lifestyle collection that was casual in its appearance but was very technical in its function,” Burton explains.

This strong trend for “boyfriend” looks in high fashion as well as the main stream is obviously not making things easier for women’s specific streetwear. And so many core skate and streetwear brands actively invite and welcome female customers to shop their men’s collection, sometimes even photographing their menswear on girls. Cody from HUF says that “girls really tend to like our volleys and the HUF Plantlife Socks. For 2015 we will also be collaborating with London-based fabric brand Liberty on special hats comprised of their fabrics.” He’s backed up by Brien from The Hundreds, who states that “a lot of accessories have been used in women’s shoots, as well as fleece products.”

FUNCTIONAL FABRICS

Bleed on the other hand combines “fashionable with functional aspects”, using mainly organic and recycled fabrics to do so, and Nikita have also made “cross-functionality a priority this season.” For technical pieces like jackets and fleece, on which Burton specialize in 2015, “technical Dryride” is still the main material, like Hyperdry for the O’Neill jackets, full-dull mini ripstop with 3K waterproofness at Zimstern and 3-layer fabrics for Colour Wear.

Bench have a line that shows real function, as Kerstin Groeber, their Head of Design explains: “For SS15 multifunctional clothing suited to the fast pace of everyday life is the focus for the womenswear range. All items within the collection are designed to enhance safety, deliver adaptability and enable the wearer to explore their surroundings in comfort.”

Denim is similarly important for all brands and collections, with jackets (Jimmy’Z), dresses and shirts (RVCA) or in different washes (Vans). Apart from that, materials have become a lot softer, lighter and more “fluid” (RVCA, Carhartt, O’Neill & Vans) and sometimes even see-through in sheer versions, as Nikita show. Vans also introduce a jacquard fabric for enhanced texture, while RVCA experiment with knitted pullovers and bustiers.

PRINT PATTERN PORTRAITS

The main field for experiments in 2015 are prints and patterns though, with almost all brands stating them as an important trend for next year’s collections. All-over prints in particular, mixed or matched at O’Neill, inspired by advocate artwork at RVCA and Zimstern, or made up of florals at Element Eden. Nikita even features two custom made all-over patterns: kaleidostone and an acid one, which come in various colourways. At Colour Wear you can even find some stripes, anchors and animal prints (the latter at Element Eden too). Carhartt play with a “pixelated and stretched camouflage” next to tropical patterns, while RVCA put a “gritty edge on Tropical Aloha” with darker colours and bold cuts. Bleed use more subtle, natural and “sustainable” colours as well, with “dirty yellow, rusty red, crab red, blue nights and anthrazit” that were “inspired from the ocean and the animals living there.”

Element Eden, Colour Wear and O’Neill follow with a “soft colour pallet”, “washed out pastels” (Colour Wear) and “soft pinks, corals and greens” in Spring, that transition to “brighter pinks, aqua, lime, blue and coral” in their summer deliveries (O’Neill). Jimmy’Z use “bright but tonal” colours, similar to Vans who work with “bright navy, royal blue and coral” shades.

OUTLOOK

Terms and conditions have definitely changed in the Women’s Streetwear market, and it’s not exactly clear yet, where this will lead to. Through the internet and Social Media, “it became harder to catch up with the newest trends and meet the fast changing needs of our female customers,” Zimstern notice and Michael from Bleed thinks that “sportswear, especially in terms of boardsports, needs to find its own style again. At the moment the influence of fashion is too high...”. Nikita on the other hand, a brand that has very successfully pushed the fashion boundaries in recent years, have a slightly different take: “Streetwear trends and styling have increasingly been borrowing from the surf-skate-snow culture— skateboarding especially. And women who traditionally come from that action sports culture are investing more time in choosing fashion on trend. The result is a mixed bag of more aggressive, androgynous vibe complemented by feminine pieces.” Hence this new hybrid of fashionable sportswear style that lets females choose between their wild tomboy and softer feminine side, might just be what women were looking for after all.

TRENDS AT A GLANCE

- A smaller offering of lines than previous seasons
- Function meets fashion with hybrid lines
- Two looks – feminine and tom-boy.
- High waists are still hot.
- Crochet and lace details are in.
- Denim & dresses are both featured heavily
- On the whole materials are becoming more ‘floaty’
- All over and partial prints come to life in 2015
- Brands still focusing on surf/tropical heritage to tell stories in their lines

