



PAPER TRAILBLAZER
Karl Lagerfeld at the S/S 09 Chanel couture show

SHEET lightning

Paper-inspired pieces are providing an electrifying new direction for chic summer dressing, with scrunched-up silks, origami cuts and clean, all-white collections.

BY LUCIE MUIR

At the Chanel couture show in Paris earlier this year, Karl Lagerfeld wowed crowds with a textile extravaganza inspired by just a sheet of white paper.

'The embroideries are mostly paper – but paper reworked by Mr Lesage is not exactly paper,' he said (referring to the director of France's oldest embroiderers, which created fabrics for the collection). 'It becomes something different. I call this "elegant luxury", because it's so fragile.'

Lagerfeld's collection was not the only one to make magic with papery fabrics. For S/S 09, Giles, Oscar de la Renta, Fendi and Roberto Cavalli took lightweight materials – summer wools, stiff cottons, breezy silks – and gave them a scrunched, hole-punched and shredded appearance. Marni's Consuelo Castiglioni chose macramé in a pattern of circles, in a contemporary take on couture elegance. 'Fabric is the starting point for my collections, and stimulates my creativity,' she says. 'I continually experiment with different materials, in the treatments and finishings, the combinations and colours.' And newcomer Eun Jeong Hong won the 2008 Fashion Fringe award for her all-white collection that featured corsages, draping, shredding and lace.

The worlds of art and design continue to provide fashion with rich paper references. Take Japanese artist Noriko Ambe, who cuts into blocks of Yupo – a synthetic, water-resistant paper – to create ethereal 'landscapes'; her work appears in a new book, *Paper: Tear, Fold, Rip, Crease, Cut* (£24.95, Black Dog). Rob Ryan's cut-out words on card, designed as part of a



£2,700, Christopher Kane

From a selection, Chanel

CUT-OUT AND CHIC
A look from the Chanel S/S 09 Haute Couture show. Top left: detail from an artwork by Noriko Ambe

From a selection, Rob Ryan for Roger La Borde

£30, Zoe Bradley

About £695, Barbara Bui

PHOTOGRAPHS: OLIVER SAILLANT FOR CHANEL; CATWALKING.COM; GETTY IMAGES; GRAHAM WALSER. SEE STOCKISTS FOR DETAILS. FLAT GLOBE VOL. 5, 2008 (DETAIL), YUPO AND GUILLE, BY NORIKO AMBE.

collaboration with stationer Roger La Borde, are jagged to the touch. And artist Zoe Bradley, known for her sculptural window installations for high-profile stores, has launched a range of bespoke paper flowers and bouquets. The designs have a touch of this season's Chanel couture about them.

Russian designer Marina Shlosberg has also put her own papery twist on fabrics,

using lace spun in a remote monastery on the Siberian border, where it has been made for more than 300 years. 'It's not enough for the cut alone to make it anymore, which is why there is so much emphasis on creating unique fabrics,' she says; her S/S 09 collection features intricate lace on exquisite butterfly-shape sleeves.

No wonder so many designers favour white. 'You can make clothes in every colour you want,' says Lagerfeld. 'But on the catwalk, it looks good to show what they call a "toile" – you know, it highlights the cut, the proportions and the construction. And I like the idea of white paper – as an unwritten page to fill.' □



PAPIER SASHAY
A look from the Alexander McQueen S/S 02 show

READY-TO-TEAR A BRIEF HISTORY OF PAPER FASHION

In the 1960s, disposable paper dresses reflected the era's experimental mood, and emerged as a new fashion fad. Since then, paper has been a source of inspiration for innovative fashion designers, best expressed through novel cuts and fabric techniques. For his S/S 94 collection, Issey Miyake created a concertina of his signature pleats to form elongated dresses. The fabric itself takes a cue from Japanese-American sculptor Isamu Noguchi's paper lanterns and was designed to contract and expand with each stride. In 1999, Hussein Chalayan unveiled the Airmail dress. Made from washable paper, the dress arrived as a letter and folded out to become a full-length dress. And for S/S 02, Alexander McQueen coiled fabric to look like soft curls of folded paper. The same season, Viktor & Rolf's evening dresses resembled layers of twisted candy wrappers. Later, for their S/S 06 collection, they decorated lightweight trousers with rows of cut-out paper hearts.