

CRAIG GREEN

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Since his graduation show at Central St Martins in 2012, everything the British designer Craig Green has brought out on the catwalk has had a distinctive tone to it. Through a play of form, colour, textures and materials, he has explored a landscape far beyond people's preconceived expectations of what menswear should look like. He has deconstructed symbols traditionally associated with masculinity, and given a great big quivering middle finger to society's norms of how a man should present himself in order to be accepted.

In Green's SS'12 collection, the models on the catwalk wore cubes, blocks and balls attached to their backs, having seemingly arrived from an entirely different planet on which people visibly showcase their emotional baggage and their frustration about the conditions and limitations of their gender.

The following year he turned his eye to the expectation that men should be handy DIY-types. The result was a troop looking like the offspring of a ninja and the Wizard of Oz, with stacks of wooden planks towering around their heads as a constant in-your-face reminder of what it takes to be allowed to call yourself a man. Even though this was a wordless and relatively calm avant-garde revolt, something about the tremendously strong visual imagery still pushed buttons. Green received tons of hate mail and the British media spat out huge bold headlines saying «Walk the Plank Green». In an interview with Dazed he later said that «It's all about emotions and what I want to stir. It's nothing like »OK, what does it take to end up in The Daily Mail? How are we gonna make people hate us this time? It's vital to challenge the existing and pushing things forward, otherwise you're not doing anything new».

His early 2014 collection exhibited the same kind of bombastic style, with heaps of materials, a fierce feeling and violent visual expressions. Yet, for whatever reason, it failed to receive a similar kind of reaction.

Then, in his SS'15 collection he surprised the audience with a radical change in temperament. Green sent forth a legion of male bodies resembling modern angles, strolling barefoot, wearing featherlight garments of a soft, delicate colour palette, radiating something disarming and sensitive, but not feminine. Wooden constructions made another appearance, only this time draped with light fabrics swaying with every step, evoking a similar feeling to the massive, mournful, flags often seen in old paintings of ancient battle scenes. This was an altogether different portrayal of strength. The voice of Enya flowed out of the speakers, wrapping the fashionistas up in emotion until they couldn't bare it anymore and started crying. Tim Blanks wrote at Style.com «The Cult of Craig is about to explode!». Backstage Green would only say «This was my silent rebellion».

Greens' men seemed to have arrived from a faraway planet where our parochial norms of gender and sexuality no longer apply. Their mission: to infiltrate and change us. The outfits

were black and white, only occasionally displaced by the odd red outfit, evoking blood, power, sex and revolution. The models once again paraded down the catwalk without shoes, several of them wearing knitted sweaters with holes where the ribcage meets the softness of the stomach. «That's the most vulnerable part of the body and the place in cartoons where the soul flies out», said Green to [style.com](#)

Nick Knight, the legendary photographer who shot Green's very first campaign, said in an interview with [showstudio.com](#) that «There's a brilliant nerve to his design. On one hand it's simple and clean, and on the other hand it's so dynamic and theatrical, full of energy and movement. That combination makes it very unique for me to photograph.»

When Green showed his most recent collection early this summer, he included women in the mix for the first time. It was less experimental than his previous collections, but still poked hard at outdated gender norms, with sweaters with white lines of fabric streaming from the nipple-area referencing breast milk and the cartoon-like cut-outs present in his previous work. As vulnerable but strong, unafraid, gender-neutral, and rebellious as always.

Green's innovative style and need to utilize fashion design in the attempt to change our view of genders will be an interesting to follow in the future.