



Image Source: Berlin Partner: Fashion Capital Berlin. Designers: Events, Networks, 3/2013 (modified by BATO)

Berlin - The Rising Fashion Star on the International Runway

The second *Berlin Fashion Week* of this year (*Spring/Summer*) is around the corner, taking place 4.- 7. July 2017, and it will turn the city into an international runway once again. But fashion is flourishing in Berlin all year round. The German capital may not yet have the same reputation in the world of fashion as Paris or New York, but, as Karl Lagerfeld said: "Personality begins where comparison ends" - and that seems to be so true for Berlin. The city has that certain something, and with that, surely more upside potential for the city in its leading role in the global fashion scene. The fact that Berlin repeatedly appears in the top ten global fashion cities in the ranking by *fashion-schools.org*, an authoritative online platform for future fashion professionals in America, as well as regular new openings of flagship stores in the capital's famous shopping streets speak in favour of a prosperous future as a fashion influencer. We shed more light on the fashion landscape of the German capital in our today's newsletter.

Needles to say that Berlin's free-minded and eclectic atmosphere makes fashionistas and creatives feel home in the capital. The abundance in fashion events, the well-established design and fashion schools and the international networks create a fruitful environment where fashion can be passionately created and traded.

The famous Berlin Fashion Week is a meeting point for fashionistas, fashion industry visitors, purchasers, media representatives etc. from Germany and abroad. Visitors mostly come from Europe, but the numbers from Asia and Eastern Europe are growing. More than ten fairs, shows and competitions take place during the Fashion Week, such as the trade fair *Bread & Butter* (recently bought by Zalando and relaunched as the "world's first trend show for Everyone" in Zalando's words), the international fashion show *Premium Exhibitions*, *Panorama Modemesse* (a series of fashion shows), the *Green Showroom* for sustainable fashion, the *Berlin Modesalon*, the *Berlin Fashion Week Show & Order* and more.

Berlin gained its reputation as a fashion influencer since the year 2000, according to *Berlin Partner*. The industry developed rapidly since then. That

can be seen in the growth of revenues, which went up by 118% from the year 2009 to 2013, for example, and the number of employees grew by 42% in this period. From 2012 to 2013, the sales went up by 43% to ca. 2,2 billion Euros and employee number increased by 60%.

Statistics say that every tenth working citizen and every sixth business in Berlin are active in the creative industry. With that, the German capital has the highest density in fashion companies in the country (around 2,500 businesses in the local fashion industry) - from design ateliers over fashion and online retailers to clothing manufacturers.

The vast variety offers all sorts of styles ranging from high end couture over street wear, sustainably crafted eco fashion and smart wearables to avant-garde and exclusively unique pieces and collections.

Green fashion deserves a particular mention in this context. Eco couture and up-cycling used materials are becoming increasingly popular and notably significant for the Berlin fashion scene. There are dedicated events for sustainable fashion such as the *GREENshowroom* and *Ethical Fashion Show*, but it is also presented on regular fashion events.

Unsurprisingly, startups play an important role in the Berlin fashion landscape. There are highly innovative businesses which combine design & technology in smart wearables and also rapidly growing e-commerce ventures.

The best example is the online retailer *Zalando*, which expanded to Europe's biggest fashion retailer in just five years after its foundation in 2008, reaching a calculated valuation of up to 5.6 billion Euros at the initial public offering (IPO) when launched at the stock market. The next one to watch out for might be the online retailer for low-cost apparel, *Lesara* (founded in 2013). It was ranked as the fastest growing startup in 2016 by Gründerszene, the leading online resource for the German startup and digital economy.

The fashion industry is a great economical contributor for the Land of Berlin. With its ca. 70 shows, the industry attracts around 250,000 industry relevant visitors per year.

The fashion scene contributes about 120 million Euros per season to the Berlin economy increasing the Berlin's public income by 33 million (according to a study by the Investment Bank Berlin*).

The Land Berlin provides active support for the successful development of the fashion industry. It provides or supports with communication campaigns (national as well as international) for the Berlin Fashion Week and reserves a minimum of 8 fashion show slots for fashion labels from Berlin. Support of new talents is granted via special programmes such as the Fellowship Programme of the German Fashion Councils, a competition for designers. The Berlin Senate for Economy, Technology and Research offers funding to individual and infra structure projects with ca. 1 million Euros a year since 2007.

Additionally, numerous programmes are offered for fashion related companies by the land Berlin via the IBB with easier access to micro loans of up to 25,000 EUR, services and programmes. The Land Berlin has contributed to the development of the fashion industry with several grants and co-investments worth over 10 million Euros.

Young talents will find a great educational system with ten fashion schools in the German capital, where they can grow their skills and get their inspirations. Quite prominent are the *University of Arts (UdK)* and the *International Academy of Fashion ESMOD*. The British style icon Vivienne Westwood taught as a fashion design professor at the UdK for many years and at the ESMOD Academy.

The famous German designer Wolfgang Joop also taught students as an honorary professor at the *University of Arts*.

Berlin has already produced some nationally and internationally awarded designers such as Isabell de Hillerin, Tim Labenda and Bobby Kolade, Augustin Teboul, Nobu Talai and Marina Hoermanseder (names to watch out for).

While Berlin's affordable accommodation cost offer outstanding conditions for young, creative businesses to thrive, expansions of those companies fuel the property market in the capital.

Zalando, for example, just closed the second largest deal in the Berlin office market in Q1 2017 by renting 34,000 sqm (incl. 5,000 retail space) in a new project development. Altogether, the company has 100,000 sqm of rented space in the capital.

New store openings by international labels such as Louis Vuitton, Uniqlo, Ace & Tate (eyewear design) and other greatly contribute to the retail space take-up in the city.

Please note that the contents of this newsletter have been researched and written according to the best of our knowledge; however they are in no way to be accepted as a legal advice or suggestion. Therefore we exclude any liability.

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*as reported by Tagespiegel