

WOMENSWEAR LABELS TO WATCH



XU ZHI

London-based label **Xu Zhi**, founded by Chinese-born designer Xuzhi Chen, reveals a contemporary attitude to craftsmanship, with a focus on simplicity and quality. After studying at the prestigious Central Saint Martin's College of Arts & Design in London, the designer worked for emerging labels **J.W. Anderson** and **Craig Green**. Establishing his signature technique of yarn and embroidery in his graduate collection, Chen obtained the nomination for the H&M Design Awards in 2015 and the LVMH Prize in 2016, followed shortly after by the Woolmark Prize in the same year. Material innovation is at the heart of Chen's approach. The Spring/Summer 2017 collection, inspired by the impressionist painter Claude Monet, is light and feminine with delicate draping and fringe. Xu Zhi shows his collections in London, Paris, Milan and China and his pieces are currently stocked at stores such as **Dover Street Market** (UK), **Lane Crawford** (China), **D-Mop** (Hong Kong) and **Restir** (Japan).

www.xuzhi.co.uk



YOHEI OHNO

Tokyo Fashion Award 2017 winner **Yohei Ohno** has recently been generating a lot of buzz. The Japanese designer received his degree from the Bunka Fashion College and went on to win the special prize at the Kobe Fashion Contest – a scholarship to study at Nottingham Trent University in England. Ohno's fresh, minimal clothing, which employs bonded materials and geometric patterns, has attracted attention since his debut in Fall/Winter 2015/16. In his eponymous brand's Spring/Summer 2017 collection, studs decorate a lattice pattern on Ohno's signature bonded fabric; summer wool, mesh and high density polyester coalesce in futuristic, easy-to-wear and sporty designs. The vivid, eye-catching color palette, giant spring motifs and poster-like graphic prints create a striking visual narrative. Yohei Ohno's collections are currently carried by signature retailers in Japan, such as Tokyo's **Isetan Restyle Plus**, **Restir** and **Mikiri Hassin**. However, in January 2017 Ohno is participating in **showroom.tokyo** in Paris, and he is enthusiastic about expanding into overseas markets going forward.

www.yoheiohno.com



KENTA MATSUSHIGE

Japanese-born, Paris-based **Kenta Matsushige** holds degrees from ESMOD in Osaka and the Ecole de la Chambre Syndicale de la Couture Parisienne. Before going solo, he honed his skills at some of the finest Parisian fashion houses: **Anne Valérie Hash**, **Givenchy** and the Haute Couture studio of **Christian Dior**. Matsushige's pristine and sophisticated collections, inspired by the relationship between 'Hinabi' (nature) and 'Miyabi' (the city), earned him the Grand Prix at the Hyères Fashion and Photography Festival in 2014; in 2016, he was one of three ANDAM Prize finalists. As well as designing his own line, he has collaborated with historic French label **Petit Bateau**, for whom he developed a capsule collection featuring kimono shapes and deconstructed sailor stripes. His architectural cuts, monochromatic color palette and tailoring are redolent of the 1950s haute couture, but his unconventional silhouettes as well as his love of asymmetry and the oversized firmly place him in the avant-garde. Current stockists include **Isetan** (Japan), **Jenko** (Hong Kong), and **Grain** (Kuwait).

www.kentamatsushige.com