

# MODE



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## Fashion Week's Story

Behind New York  
Fashion Week

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# New York Fashion Week

*A History*





**N**ew York Fashion Week. It's the stuff dreams are made of for American designers, for a show scheduled as part of this event signifies one's arrival, one's rightfully earned place among the contemporary forces of fashion. However, it's not only designers who salivate at the mention of the words New York Fashion Week; hoards of fashion lovers would give their limbs to secure a seat at any one of the highly anticipated runway shows which take place in New York twice a year. It's a strictly invitation only affair. If you aren't press, a buyer for a major store chain, or a Hollywood celebrity or celebrity stylist, you won't be watching the action live from Lincoln Center.

of specialty weeks such as Haute Couture week and Men's Fashion Week. It seems like such an established institution, it's hard to believe there was a time when these organized collections of fashion shows didn't happen every Spring and Fall, or possibly even harder to imagine that it all started right here in the USA, in the Big Apple.

The first ever fashion week was in fact New York Fashion Week. First held in 1943, the event was designed to attract attention away from the French fashion scene. Because of World War II, fashion industry insiders were unable to travel to Paris that year as they normally would to see the French fashion shows. American fashion publicist Eleanor Lambert saw this as a golden opportunity to showcase American talent, and she set

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New York is one of the big four fashion weeks worldwide, which also include London, Paris and Milan. They are held in succession in February and September each year for the specific purpose of allowing the press and buyers to “preview” the designers' latest collections ahead of the season for which they are designed. Fall/Winter looks are shown early in the year in February and Spring/Summer looks for the following year are shown in September. Fashion media, stores and stylists look to fashion week to predict trends for the coming season.

Fashion Weeks today take place in over 40 cities across the globe, Paris even hosts a couple

out to organize a week of fashion shows in New York, calling the event “Press Week.” Her goal was to get the attention of the fashion magazines like Vogue and Harper's Bazaar, who had previously focused almost exclusively on French designers. It worked. After the first “Press Week,” was held at the Plaza Hotel featuring 53 designers, Vogue's very next issue was filled with budding young American talent.

Press weeks continued through the 1950s but then dropped off as an organized all in one space event, leaving designers in New York to organize their own shows during the week in locations all over the city like hotels and lofts. In-

formation isn't widely available on when exactly organized fashion weeks started coming together around the rest of the world, but we know that other cities began to follow in the footsteps of New York.

It wasn't until 1990 when a structural accident during a Michael Kors show led to the event eventually coming back to together under one roof. Plaster fell from the ceiling of a loft onto the models during the show and as a result the Council of Fashion Designers of America (CFDA) decided to take action and start planning a coordinated, structurally safe fashion week.

In 1994 the CFDA reestablished the old press week, officially dubbed New York Fashion Week in a series of now famous white tents in Manhattan's Bryant Park. The event gained a major sponsor and was branded Mercedes Benz Fashion Week in 2009. By 2011, it had outgrown Bryant Park and the past two years it has been held at Lin-

coln Center, to the disappointment of some designers. "The Bryant Park shows forever changed the fashion industry," designer Tommy Hilfiger told TIME's Feifei Sun. "They united designers in an unparalleled situation."

Through the magic of technology, fashion bloggers and magazine contributors in cities across the world are now able to watch the shows live streaming online as they happen in New York, and in Paris, London and Milan. As exciting as it is to be able to bring our readers the latest coverage on trends straight from New York without leaving the comfort of home, we also wouldn't turn down passes to be there in the front row. This year's Fall/Winter fashion week just wrapped up and one of the major trends we saw, (besides the 90's coming back - get ready) was a nod to the 1940's, the time when the elegant Plaza buzzed with the energy of New York's first fashion week. I found the



40's inspired collections shown by Carolina Herrera, Marc Jacobs' Marc sister line and even Calvin Klein's WWII Russian military inspired collection this year to be a lovely and appropriate homage as

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