

DEDICATED FOLLOWERS OF FASHION

Look forward to the new season with fashion inspiration direct from the catwalk. Norwich Fashion Week comprises seven days of fashion, hair and beauty

Melanie Cook of VisitNorwich says it's time to let the creative juices flow

VISITNORWICH, www.visitnorwich.co.uk

WHAT'S ON



Photography by ANDI SAPPY, WEX PHOTOGRAPHIC; PAUL BIRFIELD; GEMMA LOCK

A MUCH-ANTICIPATED annual event, Norwich Fashion Week (March 10 to 17, www.norwichfashion.co.uk) has become a spring highlight in Norfolk, for it is here we get together with like-minded fashionistas to uncover the coming season's new looks and beauty secrets. At NFW we get ahead of the game in exciting, live environments. No flicking through magazines during March; it's all about dressing up and getting out, skipping to the beat of wearable fashion and soaking up an atmosphere which celebrates men and women, hair and beauty, established brands and upcoming talent.

This year Norwich Fashion Week's core line-up will take place at OPEN, situated in the heart of Norwich. A fitting venue oozing style and contemporary design, it's a charismatic, architectural building in itself and a great place to show off.

The Retailers' Show, sponsored by Mercedes-Benz of Norwich on Thursday, March 10 (£15) is the launch event. This show opens the week showcasing current and future fashion trends from thrilling local independents and established high-street retailers. It's a lively evening packed with an audience of both men and women of all styles and ages.

New for 2016 is the Dipple & Conway Hair Show taking place on Friday March 11 (£10). No look is complete without great hair and so it is here we'll witness a wealth of hairdressing talent from across the city, with stylists, colour technicians and barbers all inspiring us to revamp our looks and spoil our tresses. And being a Friday night, it would be rude not to treat ourselves to a pre-show cocktail or two in a city bar and perhaps a bite to eat later.

Sunday March 13 presents one of my favourite shows, The Vintage Show – a chance to immerse in fashion and hair from the 1930s to the 1980s. It's a night to indulge your passion for the past and to delight in seeing much of the audience dressed to the nines in glamorous outfits that are a joy to behold.

Over the week there will be six headline shows plus Fashion 360° and other pop-up fashion related events across Norwich. Purchase show tickets from OPEN on 01603 763111 or at: www.opennorwich.org.uk

Fashion is about voyeurism; closely watching what's trending, what's on the catwalk that will eventually morph into high street collections and what celebrities and icons are wearing. It's about individuality, personality and influences. Norwich Fashion Week gives us the opportunity to see first-hand the colours and designs we will be coveting this year, along with ideas on where we should spend our money and how creatively we can experiment.

One of the week's highlights is the event at the Norwich University of Arts. The University hosts Fashion 360° – a selection of talks, discussions and displays of work to celebrate connectivity, pattern and form. Student work is exhibited to complement the ideas and practice of invited designers, makers and creatives to reveal the global processes, skills and technologies usually hidden from view.

The exhibition kicks off with a special evening on Wednesday March 16 at NUA Duke Street, when the University welcomes renowned fashion and accessory designer Orla Kieley who will talk about her well-established brand and iconic print designs. This hot ticket event will surely be a sell-out. Inspired by the 1960s and 70s, Orla's patterns are recognised the world over for their distinctive colour palette and joyful representation of floral forms. Many a household with an eye for style will boast an Orla Kieley lifestyle creation or garment, but surely most desirable are her gorgeous handbags; lusted-after fashion staples without a doubt. This is a not-to-be-missed event with one of the industry's best-known names in fashion and I, for one will be elbowing my way to the front row – in as polite a way as possible, of course! Tickets cost £10 which includes exhibition entrance, a glass of wine and the talk by the pattern queen herself, and are available direct from the NUA at: www.nua.ac.uk/visit/.