

Show Notes: Chet Lo SS23 at London Fashion Week

拜神

(baai-san: "to pray" in Cantonese)

"When I feel down, my mum always tells me to pray. It helps me to find my centre."

Buddhism is centred around the idea of a cyclical existence, never finite, never ending, as once this life is complete, reincarnation ensues. When this life's cycle finishes, there is not a full-stop - a period - that awaits us at the end of the tunnel. We instead need only take a few steps towards the ominous dot to realise that it is in fact a circle. No beginning, no end, only hope.

For Chet Lo's debut NEWgen solo show, one must pay close attention to this sentiment; perspectives are challenged throughout the collection, from the transformative prints depending on proximity, to the show music. Guests first hear a tranquil, calming sound bath which briskly metamorphoses into a blaring awakening of techno.

In preparation for his SS23 show, after two seasons with Fashion East, the Chinese-American designer harks back to his childhood. "This season I wanted the collection to be very focussed on where I grew up and my cultural background, which my previous collections always have been, but this time round I really wanted to make a point of it. I grew up Buddhist and we used to go to Temple every week." A main source of inspiration for this collection is a Buddhist tale that takes place on the night of Buddha's enlightenment. Mara, the goddess of death, releases a sea of arrows towards Buddha, but as they near him, the weapons fall at his feet and transmute into flowers. "It's this beautiful imagery that I had in mind when designing the pieces that contain slashes and gashes across them and therefore imagining if the arrows had actually struck him." The slashing effect spans to some of the knit pieces in which the designer envisions the transparent parts of the pieces having been grazed by the flying arrows' point.

The lotus flower - an important symbol in Buddhist culture that represents purity - inspires the prints for this season, seen on a selection of knitwear and denim pieces. "This collection is all about finding peace in my own life." The lotus lily pad acts as inspiration for the globular hats, which the designer sought to make perfectly circular as a nod to Chinoiserie.

For SS23, Chet Lo plays with the illusion of perspectives, seen in the floral print, which up close appears to be a striped pattern, but the further you veer, the flowers are revealed; this technique was heavily inspired by Dutch graphic designer Karel Martens. A similar play on perspectives is seen with some of the knitwear pieces, which up close look like diamonds and from a distance appear as bubbles.

A collection stooped in multidimensionality, typically utility-wear is shown alongside grandiosity. The designer debuts denim provided by ISKO this season, which via direct screen printing, achieves a distressed effect, as well as showcasing resplendent gowns engulfed in embroidery and lotus-inspired 3D plastic flowers. The latter, taking a step towards Chet's previous creations, who at Central Saint Martins, was known more for his classic, elegant fashioning rather than the futuristic aesthetic we have come to associate with Chet Lo. "I wanted that juxtaposition of how I used to think and how I'm thinking now: a mix of sexy and modern but also old-fashioned."

Carrying on the circular theme, a handful of models don gargantuan balloons when walking down the catwalk. The drama of such proportions first bedazzles onlookers until we remember the fragility of the air-filled decoration, and much like the arrows that transformed into lotus flowers, at any moment, the towering balloons can transform into flimsy pieces of rubber.

For this season, Chet really wanted an immersive experience for the show and has transformed the aromas of the space to match those of the temples of his youth. Clear vases filled with coloured powder encase the incense, representing a modern twist on incense vases used to pay respects to the gods.

This season, Chet Lo's partnership with [Nothing](#) is a celebration of the shared principles that guide both emerging brands - innovation, passion and instinct. Nothing and Chet Lo each break down traditions in their respective industries, and create something fresh in its place.

Chet's solo show at London Fashion Week provided a first look at Nothing's new product, Ear (stick), which is launching later this year. The recently launched Nothing Phone (1) was also seen on the runway in custom-made limited edition bags, using sheer fabric that perfectly complements the smartphone's transparent design and illuminated Glyph Interface back panel.

"I was so excited to be partnering with Nothing, their message of transparency was such a resonating theme in my work. It just fit so well" said Chet Lo, Designer and Creative Director

"Chet's collections push the limits of what's been done before and are a result of fusing a classic style category with radical engineering. At Nothing we share similar beliefs. London Fashion Week felt like the perfect setting to kick off an exciting partnership and showcase our upcoming product Ear (stick)," said Carl Pei, CEO and Co-founder of Nothing.

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