

BLENDING FUTURE

Benetton's FW 2020 collection celebrates fluidity and blending, two founding ideals of the cultural, aesthetic and social revolution that is happening around us.

Blended Future takes its cue from the Benetton narrative to create totally up-to-the-minute fashion ideas

Coats, together with knitwear (*ça va sans dire*), are the cult pieces of Benetton's FW 2020 collection. Featuring tartan and camouflage prints, 3D appliqués – already sold out – and graffiti designs 'borrowed' from the Keith Haring Foundation archives, they are often made in innovative, hi-tech fabrics such as the bonded neoprene and waterproof oilskins developed in Benetton's research labs.

High-performance quality combines with street style lines and fits, creating pieces that are IG Stories-worthy. Take for example the furry color block suits, the cropped, high neck duvet jackets, and the XL-fit cocoon puffer coats with maxi hoods. Patterns are also blended: a funky fusion of army and tartan, a mix of camouflage and regimental. Nothing is quite as it seems: that mainstay of skinhead fashion, the bomber jacket, is given a reassuring quilted effect along with contrasting pockets and lettering inserts. *Et voilà!*, an idea turned on its head and spiced up with an urban twist.

Fashion talks, more so than ever at Benetton. Sweatshirts become manifestos: together with the Keith Haring Foundation, a capsule has been created featuring the great New York graffiti artist's prints. In this mini-collection, fashion meets culture, for many millennials don't know KH's story. What better way to pique their curiosity about this ironic, intelligent artist? UCB's sweatshirts, T-shirts, jackets and hoodies speak of freedom, friendship, music, revolution and dance. The oversize fit pieces for him and her are both agender and ageless.

Benetton's signature strong, saturated colours are a key feature of the FW 2020 collection. Road signage elements are added to create vivid color block combinations on jackets, sweaters, sweatshirts, bombers and cardigans. These looks have the visual impact of a code, one that combines Benetton colors and the expressive vision of JCC, a couturier who has always been a lover of the "bright side of life". It is evident in his extroverted use of regimental stripes: starting as a mark of bon-ton British upper class, they unexpectedly transform into stylish diagonals. The same goes for camel: one of the emblems of classic style becomes the basis for coats and dusters with a techno, deconstructed flavour. Mixed with grey

- with wide vivid stripes - the leap from 'serious' to 'cool' is immediate.

Because 'mixing' - also with reference to knitwear - is the keyword for this fashion. So here come 'style crusaders' wearing maxi dresses with jacquard crosses, and asymmetric, colorful leopard spot, punk pullovers with Bambi motifs. Here the famous Disney character is a retro reference - who remembers "Who Killed Bambi?", the (unfinished) movie featuring punk band the Sex Pistols? (Malcom McLaren, who helped form the Sex Pistols and managed the band, was the best friend of Castelbajac.) McLaren's mission? To cross-pollinate genres, combine conservative and punk, the basic with the extraordinary, the trendy with the everyday. Just as UCB does today.

Because today nothing is as it seems, everything is ready to be transformed into concepts that bridge the gender divide, where age becomes just a number, stripes become squares, and Disney icons play "Ring a Ring o' Roses" with hip hop graffiti. Blended Future: a winter like a tasty mix to serve piping hot.

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