

## STREET VS. RUNWAY

# Style Wars

The model prances down the runway, feet pounding to the blasting beat. She halts at the end, striking a pose as the photographer hurriedly snaps his shutter. The reporters swarm, asking her name and what she is wearing – and the music stops. Turns out she isn't a model at all. The runway? A cold, no-name slab of concrete in Middletown, America.

This scene is becoming the norm in the fashion world. Street style blogs such as *The Sartorialist* and *Who What Wear* have become a main source of inspiration for real women and designers alike.

Rachel Nguyen started her blog, *That's Chic* ([thatschic.net](http://thatschic.net)) during her senior year of high school in 2007 and has since had much success in the blogosphere. Although Nguyen started out pulling and posting inspiration from the latest trends on the runways, she admits to a changing of tides.

"I'm not as attentive [to designers] as I used to be when I first started my blog," Nguyen says. "I realized, 'Why am I even looking at stuff like this because I can't really relate to what they're wearing.'"

And that is the appeal of street style, according to Nguyen. The ability to relate to trends and sources of inspiration is what tipped the scales in favor of the masses.

Ranya Barrett, executive assistant to the editor-in-chief and assistant writer at *Glamour*, agrees that street style adds a sense of realness and applicability to trends. *Glamour* has traveled all over the country to see how real women dress, resulting in the magazine's *Caught Looking Good* page.

"Before, when the focus was almost entirely on the runway or the models, the shapes were mostly dictated by [models'] bodies," Barrett says. "Now it's women with curves and different body types, and I think that's exciting for [readers] because it makes them feel like they can access the trends no matter what their shape or size."

Although Barrett and Nguyen are pro-street style, some hold reservations on

*With street style becoming a more prominent source of inspiration for the fashion-minded, where does that leave runway? TREND talked to Rachel Nguyen & Glamour assistant Ranya Barrett to find out.*

the trend, questioning the authenticity. Will Welch, senior editor at *GQ*, argues that street style has become over-thought and thus lost the excitement and authenticity that once made it so unique.

"It's the same with the underground music scene, or you know, the cool underground art scene," Welch says. "It's just the way trends work – you go from brand new to hip to trendy to overexposed to dated."

Barrett acknowledges the saturation of the blogging market, but maintains faith, citing a recent assignment trip to Miami as an example.

"Women were playing volleyball, they weren't dressed up to do something," Barrett says. "We approached them and said 'you look beautiful, your body's great, we love your style, can we snap your picture?' To me that's as authentic as you can get."

Despite the criticism, this is what the fashion industry has become, and Barrett has faith in the future.

"The importance of designers will never diminish," Barrett says. "But I think that street style is definitely something to pay attention to and put up there in terms of what's influencing trends."

So what does it take to create an authentic street style look? Nguyen says it's a lot more than rummaging through the nearest Forever 21.

"Style comes from within, it doesn't come from what you read in a magazine," Nguyen says. "It's going to a pile of dirty old clothes in a thrift store and really pulling out something that looks unique."



### SPRING STREET STYLE TRENDS

BRIGHT NEON

BOLD FLORAL

GEOMETRIC SHAPES

PLEATED SKIRTS

CHUNKY BANGLES