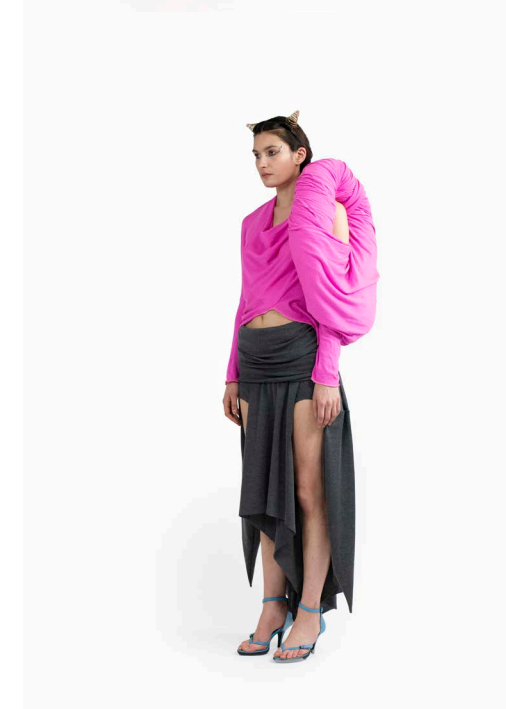
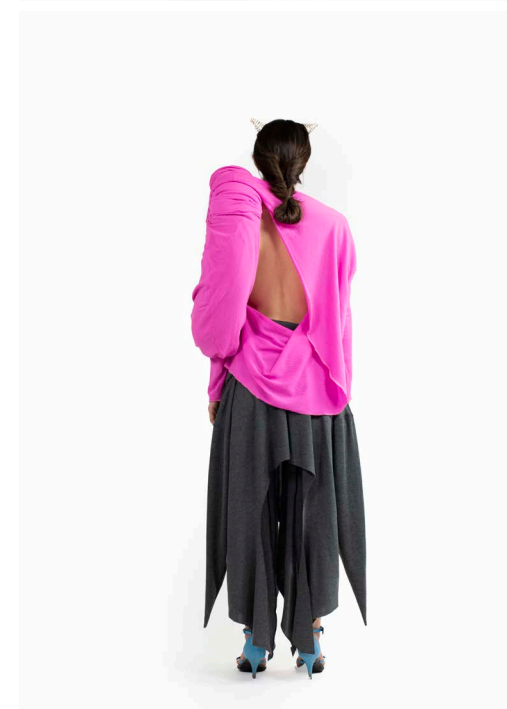
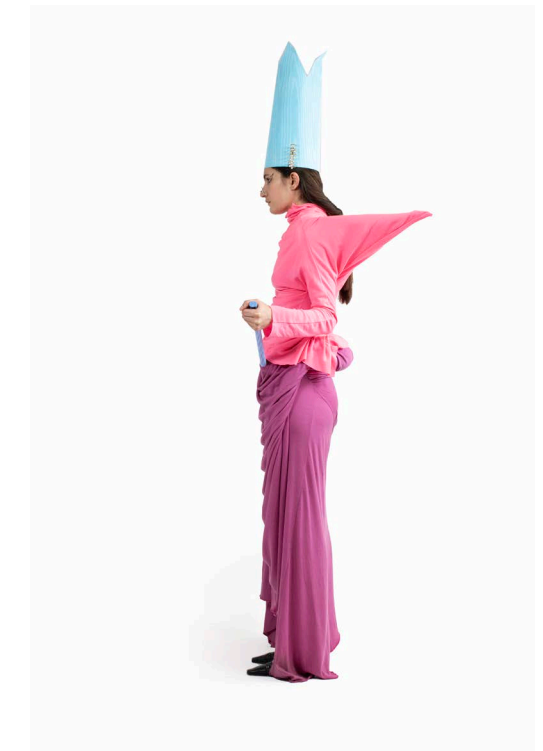


NEWCOSTUME

A Column by Matthew Linde

Episode IV Ru Kwok



I have a tendency to believe a designer's masterstroke is often their graduate collection. One impressive graduate from this year's Central Saint Martins Masters fashion course was Ru Kwok. Quoted in Vogue, the designer describes the collection as "power dressing for women without referencing the male wardrobe." Comprised of 15 looks that tailored a deskilled approach to maximalist garment-making, the collection narrated a hand drawn witchcraft.

Across the collection fabric plunges upon the body through twisted drapery, excessive pleating and wadded shapes holstered underneath. Ad hoc materials such as cardboard, books and rolled up jumpers were used to drape and draft the bizarre pattern pieces. Absent of any le smoking, the suit was suggested, however, through yards of grey wool suiting, creating a full-length split skirt held by awkward tucks at the hip as well as a winged one-shoulder cape fastened by a golden broach.

Merino jersey dyed in vivid fuchsia, rose and scarlet red block the body in a series of loosely suspended tops and skirts. A lurex silk twill of pearlescent pink and gold conjure a ceremonial ensemble fit for boardroom and battlefield. Epaulettes and armour plating.

One gets the sense of historical compression. The 1580s farthingale roll and 1980s shoulder pad work in tandem. Folkloric Sorbian headdresses made in the synthetic polyurethane invention of Lyrca.

Costume is a kind of ersatz fashion: a clunky reduction. It requires a special occultism to convince us otherwise.

