

THE
BEST
OF

AMERICAN

"AERICAN SPORTS-WEAR WAS BORN OF A WOMAN'S LIFESTYLE. A WOMAN WHO JUGGLES THE PROFESSIONAL WITH THE PERSONAL WITHOUT A LOT OF TIME OR CLOSET SPACE. FOR ME, THAT MEANS SHE NEEDS DAY-INTO-NIGHT VERSATILITY—CLOTHES THAT ARE SIMPLE AND SOPHISTICATED AND CAN BE WORN IN MORE THAN ONE WAY."

—DONNA KARAN

DONNA KARAN NEW YORK cotton blend sleeveless bodysuit, wool and silk skirt, leather studded belt; DONNAKARAN.COM. JIMMY CHOO snakeskin sandals; JIMMYCHOO.COM.

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MORE JUL/AUG 2015

"TO ME, AMERICAN FASHION IS STREAM-LINED WITH A SENSE OF FUNCTIONALITY. IT SPEAKS TO WOMEN WHO ARE VERY FORWARD LOOKING AS WELL AS CONFIDENT AND MODERN."

—FRANCISCO COSTA,
WOMEN'S CREATIVE DIRECTOR
OF CALVIN KLEIN COLLECTION

CALVIN KLEIN COLLECTION wool coat; 212-292-9000. PROENZA SCHOULER cotton blend pleated knit skirt; 212-585-3200.

DESIGNERS

THERE'S A DEMOCRACY TO CLOTHES THAT FAVOR MODERN SHAPES AND AN EDITED COLOR PALETTE. WEARABLE AND STYLISH, THEY ARE NEITHER FLASHY NOR FLASH IN THE PAN. **GUGU MBATHA-RAW** MAKES THE MOST OF THE UNMISTAKABLE AMERICAN DESIGN AESTHETIC

PHOTOGRAPHED BY PAUL JUNG / STYLED BY JONNY LICHTENSTEIN

"AMERICA INVENTED COOL! AS AN AMERICAN DESIGNER, I TRY TO KEEP MY DESIGN HEAD OPEN, FREE AND CHALLENGED. I BELIEVE MY FASHION CAREER IS A METAPHOR FOR MY LIFE AND THE ATTITUDE THAT DEFINES OUR COUNTRY."

—VERA WANG



"AMERICAN SPORTSWEAR WAS ALWAYS SET IN REALITY, AND THAT IDEA HAS ALWAYS RESONATED WITH ME. HERE, PEOPLE WANT TO WEAR INTERESTING PIECES EVERY DAY, NOT JUST FOR SPECIAL OCCASIONS."

—MARIA CORNEJO

ABOVE: VERA WANG COLLECTION sleeveless wool coat with ivory-pearl and crystal pockets, and georgette pants; 212-382-2184. GIUSEPPE ZANOTTI DESIGN velvet mules; GIUSEPPEZANOTTIDESIGN.COM. LEFT: ZERO + MARIA CORNEJO tweed coat, button-down shirt and pants; 212-925-3849. OPPOSITE: J. MENDEL sleeveless leather dress; JMENDEL.COM. CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN filet and leather heels; CHRISTIANLOUBOUTIN.COM.

"THERE'S A SPORTY EASE AND CONFIDENCE TO AMERICAN FASHION THAT I RELATE TO AS A DESIGNER. THE MORE EMBELLISHED AND HIGHLY CRAFTED A DESIGN, THE MORE I WANT IT TO LOOK AND FEEL RELAXED AND EFFORTLESS."

—GILLES MENDEL



“WE’RE INTERESTED IN CODES OF CLASSIC AMERICAN SPORTSWEAR. LIKE WHAT DOES AN ARGYLE MEAN TO US, WHAT DOES A POLO MEAN TO US, WHAT DOES A PRINCE OF WALES CHECK MEAN TO US? WHAT’S OUR VERSION OF ALL THOSE THINGS?”

—LAZARO HERNANDEZ OF PROENZA SCHOULER

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SOURCE: "A POST-SHOW INTERVIEW WITH PROENZA SCHOULER," VOGUE, SEPTEMBER 12, 2014.
"REVIEW: FASHION FROM DE LA RENTA, SENSIBLE CHIC," NEW YORK TIMES, JANUARY 20, 1993



“I WANT TO MAKE CLOTHES THAT PEOPLE WEAR, NOT STYLES THAT WILL MAKE A BIG SPLASH ON THE RUNWAY.”

—OSCAR DE LA RENTA, 1993

LEFT: PROENZA SCHOULER cotton blend cable-knit dress and woven-leather heels; 212-585-3200. ABOVE: OSCAR DE LA RENTA strapless silk jumpsuit; 212-288-5810. JIMMY CHOO suede sandals; JIMMYCHOO.COM.



Gugu Mbatha-Raw's got range. In the 2013 drama *Belle*, she played Dido, the illegitimate daughter of a slave and a nobleman, the picture of 18th-century aristocratic poise in corset-defined gowns and a classic pearl choker. By the time she received a British Independent Film Award for the role, she had appeared as a suicidal pop star in the indie hit *Beyond the Lights*; shortly after that, she portrayed a half-deer/half-human in *Jupiter Ascending*. She creates characters of vastly different backgrounds, eras and temperaments, inhabiting each as comfortably as a bird in a feather-lined nest. "Gugu's a proper actress," says *Belle* director Amma Asante. "It's real talent she's expressing when you see her up there literally being these other characters."

The daughter of a South African doctor and a British nurse, Mbatha-Raw—her first name, Gugulethu, means "our pride" in Zulu—has always had a passion for performing, starting ballet classes at age four in her hometown near Oxford and adding tap and jazz soon after. "My mum didn't always love her work," says the actress, who went on to graduate from the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. "She would have liked to have the opportunities I had to be more creative. To be able to have that in my job was the ultimate."

On the red carpet, Mbatha-Raw, 32, is learning the role of fashion plate, favoring designers such as Carolina Herrera, Narciso Rodriguez and Oscar de la Renta and attending last year's Met Gala in a custom Lanvin dress. Even out of the spotlight she's comfortably chic, wearing silk ankle-zippered pants, roomy enough that she can sit cross-legged on an L.A. hotel patio recently—a posture facilitated by her long-standing yoga practice. More flexibility: Next up we'll be seeing her as Will Smith's wife in *Concussion*, about the doctor who linked brain injuries in the NFL to dementia; as an attorney opposite Keanu Reeves in *The Whole Truth*; and as a house slave who falls for Matthew McConaughey's Confederate soldier in *The Free State of Jones*. One day she hopes to voice a Pixar character. "That must be the most fun," she says, "to be free of what you look like and invent yourself as an animated creature. A squirrel—why not?" —**MARGOT DOUGHERTY**

"THE MIXTURE OF SOMETHING TIMELESS WITH SOMETHING UNEXPECTED IS A HALLMARK OF AMERICAN STYLE, LIKE A CLASSIC LBD WITH AN INTERESTING NECK AND AN ASYMMETRICAL BOW."

—MICHAEL KORS



MICHAEL KORS crepe bouclé sequin-embroidered dress; **MICHAELKORS.COM**. **GIUSEPPE ZANOTTI DESIGN** patent leather sandals; **GIUSEPPEZANOTTIDESIGN.COM**. For prices and links to products, go to more.com/wheretobuy.

HAIR: ROB TALTY AT FORWARD ARTISTS USING ORIBE HAIR CARE; MAKEUP: KARA YOSHIMOTO BUA USING CHANEL ROUGE COCO SHINE 93 INTIME AT STARWORKSARTISTS.COM; MANICURE: NETTIE DAVIS; SET DESIGN: KELLY FONDRY