

New York Fashion Week SS26: Resilience Meets Fresh Creativity

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New York Fashion Week Spring/Summer 2026 has officially begun, bringing with it not just glamour and creativity, but also an air of resilience in the face of challenges. Despite rising costs, shifting geopolitics, and retail disruptions, designers and brands are stepping onto the runway with determination and fresh perspectives.

“Everyone is a bit nervous this season,” admits Rachna Shah, CEO of PR powerhouse KCD, noting the impact of tariffs and retail shifts. Yet the fashion capital refuses to back down. With 65 runway shows and 36 presentations, NYFW SS26 boasts **101 events** — 15 more than the February edition.

Highlights to Watch

- **Diotima’s Runway Debut:** After seasons of intimate presentations, designer Rachel Scott takes Diotima to the runway for the first time.
- **Proenza Schouler’s Transition:** The brand presents its first collection since founders Lazaro Hernandez and Jack McCollough moved to Loewe, with Rachel Scott offering creative consultation.
- **Ralph Lauren Returns:** The legendary designer stages his SS26 show at his private Madison Avenue studio, adding timeless elegance to the week.
- **Global Influence:** International names including Off-White, Toteme and Cos join the NYFW lineup, alongside homegrown icons like Michael Kors, Tory Burch, Coach and Calvin Klein.

Adapting to Change

Economic pressures and the Trump administration’s tariffs are shaping how collections come together, with some designers scaling back. Yet, Steven Kolb, CEO of the CFDA, emphasizes resilience: “*We’ve been here before — from the 2008 financial crisis to Covid. American designers figure it out.*”

A Fresh Energy

Fashion consultant Julie Gilhart highlights the vibrant mood despite uncertainty: “*New York has a great energy right now.*” First-time runways from buzzy names like **Lii and Zankov** are already generating excitement, while established players such as **Jason Wu, Alexander Wang and Brandon Maxwell** return to the calendar. LaQuan Smith will close

out the week on 16 September with his signature late-night show.

Meanwhile, infrastructure improvements under the **KFN Venue Collective** promise smoother experiences for brands and guests, with curated venues and shared showspaces designed to elevate the NYFW experience.

As the spotlight shines on New York, one thing is clear: **creativity, resilience, and bold reinvention** continue to define American fashion.

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