# London Fashion Week embraces touch tours for visually impaired guests



In a significant shift during London Fashion Week, designers are increasingly adopting 'touch tours' as a means to showcase their collections to guests who are blind or have impaired vision. This initiative is largely supported by Hair & Care, a non-profit organization founded in 2019 by hairstylist Anna Cofone, aimed at boosting the confidence of blind and visually impaired women and girls in the fashion and beauty industries. Cofone has personal ties to the cause, growing up with a blind father, and has collaborated with activists and influencers to encourage greater accessibility in fashion.

During this year's autumn/winter show, renowned American-Chinese designer Chet Lo, famed for his avant-garde designs and celebrity clientele that includes Dua Lipa and Zendaya, is taking a novel approach by inviting visually impaired guests to explore his garments through tactile engagement. Attendees will be able to feel fabric swatches and receive verbal descriptions of the designs before witnessing the live runway show, thus enhancing their experience. The tactile nature of Lo’s designs makes them particularly well-suited for this initiative.

Blind activist and broadcaster Lucy Edwards, who previously made history as the first blind model to walk at Copenhagen Fashion Week, expressed her enthusiasm for touch tours. “For me, as a fashion lover, if I can be up close and personal, really feeling the designs, that’s a great way for me to be more in touch with trends,” she said, also highlighting the potential impact these designers have on influencing high-street fashion.

Edwards recounted her challenges after losing her sight at the age of 17, feeling initially disconnected from the fashion world she had cherished. She reflected on the changes in her life since then, stating, “I had sight one day and suddenly lost it. I didn’t know I was going to lose my eyesight so young, but I’m here, and I’m loving my life, and I’m able to [still] love the things that I have always loved, like fashion and beauty, because of Hair & Care.”

The role of touch tours in fostering a deeper appreciation for fashion is also shared by Jane Manley, an analyst at the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB). Manley noted the difficulty of navigating fashion while visually impaired but acknowledged that a unique experience is gained through touch. “To be able to dress in a way that says something about you is so fulfilling, and certainly for me, that’s come through the connections that Hair & Care have been able to offer," she said.

Touch tours not only offer accessibility to visually impaired individuals, but they also provide a richer understanding of the artistry behind the garments, according to Manley. She stated, “There’s so much more appreciation of the detail of his work and the variability of the thread and the shape, and it’s just amazing to touch it, because it is not an experience you get just by looking at something.”

As designers like Chet Lo embrace these innovative approaches, the landscape of London Fashion Week is evolving, bringing inclusivity and diversity to the fore within the fashion industry.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.vogue.co.uk/fashion-shows/autumn-winter-2024/chet-lo> - This URL would corroborate Chet Lo's involvement in London Fashion Week and his avant-garde designs, though specific details about touch tours might not be available.
2. <https://www.copenhagenfashionweek.com/> - This URL supports the mention of Lucy Edwards as the first blind model to walk at Copenhagen Fashion Week, highlighting her pioneering role in fashion inclusivity.
3. <https://www.rnib.org.uk/> - The Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) website provides context on the challenges faced by visually impaired individuals in navigating fashion, aligning with Jane Manley's insights.
4. <https://www.londonfashionweek.co.uk/> - This official London Fashion Week website would offer information on the event's focus on inclusivity and diversity, though specific details about touch tours might not be listed.
5. <https://www.fashionunited.com/news/fashion/london-fashion-week-2024-highlights-343142> - This article might cover highlights from London Fashion Week, including any innovative approaches to accessibility and inclusivity, though specific details about touch tours could vary.
6. <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/fashion/london-fashion-week-inclusivity-diversity-b2333264.html> - This article discusses the broader theme of inclusivity and diversity at London Fashion Week, which aligns with the adoption of touch tours for visually impaired guests.
7. <https://www.irishnews.com/life/what-are-touch-tours-how-designers-are-now-engaging-blind-fashion-lovers-with-their-creations-MD7M3NTXJZLBRED7WMRKTW3HBE/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
8. <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/fashion/care-margaret-qualley-lana-del-rey-kylie-jenner-kendall-b2703581.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data