# Celebrating women in fashion on International Women's Day



Fashion has long held a mirror to society, amplifying political sentiments and reflecting cultural shifts. As we recognise International Women’s Day, a focus on the contributions of women who have not only innovated in fashion but also challenged its conventions reveals how attire can transmit deeper narratives. The following five women exemplify significant change agents in the industry, each with a unique story that has transformed the world of fashion.

Sarah Burton, born in Macclesfield, is perhaps best known for designing the wedding dress of the Princess of Wales, an intricate silk satin gown that characterised a pivotal moment for both bride and brand. Burton succeeded Lee Alexander McQueen as the creative director of the iconic label following his untimely death in 2010. Since her appointment, she has maintained the signature dark romanticism of McQueen while introducing a softer, more feminine perspective. Over her two-decade tenure at McQueen, Burton incorporated British heritage into collections that balance modernity with tradition. In 2024, she is set to embark on a new chapter as the creative director of Givenchy, a house that also made headlines when it crafted the Duchess of Sussex’s wedding dress. All eyes within the fashion world are keenly attuned to how Burton will navigate her new role at Givenchy.

Chemena Kamali recently stepped into the role of creative director at Chloé in October 2023, after a career beginning as an intern at the brand under Phoebe Philo. Having worked for established names such as Alberta Ferretti and Yves Saint Laurent, Kamali brings a modern interpretation to Chloé’s heritage of bohemian style. Her debut collection for autumn/winter 2024 featured elements that resonated with her personal aesthetic, sparking a phenomenon dubbed the ‘Chloé Craze’ as numerous celebrities embraced her designs on red carpets. Reflecting on her experience with Chloé, Kamali shared with The Irish News, “It was like this world was opening up in front of me...when you connect to something that you feel is intuitively right.”

Miuccia Prada has played a pivotal role in reshaping the landscape of women’s fashion across both the 20th and 21st centuries. Taking the reins of her family’s leather goods brand in the late 1970s, Prada eschewed conventional notions of beauty and femininity, famously stating, “Ugly is attractive, ugly is exciting. Maybe because it is newer.” Her revolutionary approach culminated in the spring/summer 1996 “ugly prints” collection, which celebrated unexpected aesthetics. Faultlessly combining practicality with high fashion, Prada’s ability to elevate everyday items into desirable luxury has kept her brand relevant while influencing the younger generations of fashion enthusiasts with her label, Miu Miu.

Another pivotal figure, Katharine Hamnett emerged as a vanguard of political fashion during London’s dynamic 1980s scene. Known for her slogan tees, Hamnett made headlines when she met then-Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher wearing a shirt that read “58% DON’T WANT PERSHING,” highlighting public sentiment against nuclear arms. In the 1990s, her commitment to ethical production practices advocated for sustainable fashion long before it gained mainstream traction. Hamnett’s work today resonates through the widespread use of slogan tees as activism and highlights the increasing demand for sustainable practices within the fashion industry.

Diane von Furstenberg stands out as the creator of the wrap dress, which she launched in 1974 amidst the personal journey following her separation from Prince Egon von Furstenberg. The wrap dress quickly became a symbol of independence and empowerment, with sales surging to the extent that she sold 25,000 dresses weekly by 1976. Von Furstenberg’s ability to navigate the fashion landscape over decades, including a prominent role as president of the Council of Fashion Designers of America from 2006 until 2019, reflects her resilience. As she embraces her legacy, the 78-year-old designer expressed her aim to be “the friend in the closet,” aligning her designs with the needs of women.

These women's careers encapsulate how fashion can serve as both a canvas for creativity and a platform for activism. Their unique perspectives have not only impacted the industry but have also contributed to broader social conversations, illustrating the continuous interplay between fashion and culture.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarah_Burton> - This URL supports the claim about Sarah Burton's background and her role as the creative director of Alexander McQueen, as well as her appointment at Givenchy. It also details her design of the wedding dress for Catherine, Princess of Wales.
2. <https://www.businessoffashion.com/people/sarah-burton/> - This URL corroborates Sarah Burton's career path, including her tenure at Alexander McQueen and her new role at Givenchy. It highlights her influence on the fashion industry and her continuation of Lee McQueen's legacy.
3. <https://www.prada.com/en.html> - This URL provides information about Miuccia Prada's brand and her contributions to the fashion world. While not directly discussing her 'ugly prints' collection, it reflects her approach to fashion and her influence on the industry.
4. <https://www.katharinehamnett.com/> - This URL supports Katharine Hamnett's role in political fashion and her commitment to sustainable practices. It showcases her designs and advocacy for ethical production methods.
5. <https://www.dvf.com/> - This URL highlights Diane von Furstenberg's career and her iconic wrap dress. It reflects her influence on women's fashion and her role in the industry over several decades.
6. <https://www.chloe.com/en> - This URL provides information about Chloé and its bohemian style heritage. While it does not specifically mention Chemena Kamali, it reflects the brand's aesthetic and the context in which Kamali operates as creative director.
7. <https://www.irishnews.com/life/5-women-who-changed-fashion-that-you-should-know-about-P5GJJTNEJNMMNHO6RZ3IDDMNGI/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
8. <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/fashion/sarah-burton-golden-globes-miuccia-prada-margaret-thatcher-alexander-mcqueen-b2707995.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data