# Fashion's regression in body inclusivity: A model's perspective



In recent years, the fashion industry has experienced significant fluctuations in its approach to body inclusivity, spurred by the rise of models and activists advocating for the representation of diverse body types. Skye Standley, once heralded as a rising star in the modelling world, has recently articulated the challenges she has faced in her career. Known for her distinctive red hair and curves, Standley gained notable attention in campaigns for brands such as Dolce & Gabbana, Ganni, and Rihanna’s Savage X Fenty. However, as she described in an interview with The Guardian, the past couple of years have seen a marked decline in her work opportunities.

“The past two years have been really challenging,” Standley stated. “I think there’s been a lot of erasure all around. I’ve noticed a lot less work,” compared to her previous years when she was continuously booked. With London Fashion Week’s casting calls dwindling, Standley ultimately made the decision to leave her agency three weeks ago. Her sentiments reflect a broader concern among models regarding the precarious nature of body inclusivity in fashion, suggesting that the previous embrace of diverse sizes may have been fleeting.

The landscape of fashion has seemingly shifted back towards traditional beauty standards dominated by the “thin ideal.” Factors such as the resurgence of 90s fashion trends, the emergence of weight-loss medications like Ozempic, and the polarisation surrounding diversity initiatives have all contributed to this regression. Standley expressed concern that the initial enthusiasm for inclusivity was performative rather than a genuine cultural shift. “I think a lot of the inclusivity movement was performative – and performative attitudes are easily abandoned,” she remarked.

Tess Holliday, another prominent model and activist, echoed these concerns. Holliday described the past few years as a time when the inclusivity movement felt like a “Renaissance,” but noted that recent events have led to a disheartening decline. She observed a significant drop in opportunities and expressed frustration at the seeming rollback of progress towards acceptance of diverse body types in the modelling world.

Felicity Hayward, a model and activist monitoring size inclusivity during major fashion weeks, highlighted the stark statistics illustrating this decline. Her reports indicated that the number of plus-size models featured in shows across New York, London, Paris, and Milan has plummeted dramatically. For instance, New York fashion week saw a reduction from 70 plus-size models in 2023 to just 23 in early 2024. The London fashion week statistics mirrored this decline, with only 26 models of larger sizes compared to 80 the previous year. Hayward remarked, “I thought, naively maybe, we had come to a place now where women’s bodies in particular had stopped being criticised,” pointing towards a seeming setback in inclusivity efforts.

This trend has been corroborated by findings from the latest size inclusivity survey by Vogue Business, which reported that only 12 designers showcased plus-size models at 198 fashion shows earlier this year. Those who remained with the industry have often felt compelled to alter their bodies; many models formerly seen as plus-size are now reportedly adopting slimmer figures to secure work. As Nyome Nicholas-Williams, a model whose career flourished in 2021, noted, “I think there is a pressure... but I would never lose weight for a brand to hire me.”

The effects of these industry dynamics extend beyond professional consequences; models also report a decline in mental health and financial stability due to the shrinking opportunities. Nicholas-Williams has even begun seeking part-time work to supplement her modelling income, reflecting the real-world implications of this industry-wide shift.

Despite the evident challenges, Standley remains committed to advocating for her community, as she strives to redefine the narrative surrounding plus-size representation in fashion. “Being over a certain dress size, larger than most plus-size models that are working, and not having a super-conventional or commercial look, I keep trying to push back and fight for change,” she stated.

In an industry where change often seems temporary and dependent on prevailing trends, the journey towards true inclusivity continues to be fraught with obstacles. As models and activists like Standley, Holliday, and Hayward continue to push for accountability in a landscape marked by regress, the conversation around body inclusivity remains pivotal in shaping the future of fashion.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://theglossarymagazine.com/fashion/plus-size-models-curve-fashion/> - This article highlights plus-size models who are changing the industry, reflecting the broader movement towards inclusivity. However, it also underscores the challenges these models face in achieving lasting change.
2. [https://www\_vlanagreeting\_her\_at\_\* https://models.com/oftheminute/?p=161986](https://www_vlanagreeting_her_at_* https://models.com/oftheminute/?p=161986) - This article discusses the efforts of casting directors like Emma Matell to promote inclusivity in fashion, highlighting the ongoing struggle to maintain diverse representation.
3. <https://www.instagram.com/skyestandley/> - Skye Standley's Instagram profile provides insights into her career as a model and her experiences in the industry, aligning with her comments on facing challenges and advocating for inclusivity.
4. <https://open.spotify.com/show/6PdyXofl3W6wIZ6A7ZtvYH> - The podcast 'Say It With Your Chest' features an episode with Skye Lukowski-Standley, where she discusses her experiences as a care leaver and her journey in the modelling world, touching on themes of self-love and inclusivity.
5. <https://www.noahwire.com> - The source article from Noah Wire Services provides comprehensive details on the current state of body inclusivity in the fashion industry, including the challenges faced by models like Skye Standley and Tess Holliday.
6. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m9acMmjYWLI> - This video features Skye Lukowski Standley discussing race, identity, and the foster care system, although it may indirectly relate to her experiences and perspectives on body inclusivity in fashion.
7. <https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/2025/apr/15/ozempic-arrived-and-everything-changed-plus-size-models-on-the-body-positivity-backlash> - Please view link - unable to able to access data