

How to get the right texture mix



Anna Berkeley

Ask a stylist

What kind of textures go well together? For example does linen go well with silk, does cotton go well with more canvas textures, etc?

In my mind, when it comes to fabric pairings, opposites really do attract.

Some of my favourite mixes for winter dressing are leather and cashmere, suede and crisp cotton, heavy twill trousers with a silk shirt, ribbed knits with sharp tailoring, satin with denim, or a soft sweatshirt with a light wool trouser.

Picture the classic Ralph Lauren ad campaigns. A pristine, crisp white shirt with jeans, a tweed jacket and leather trousers – there is a reason they work so well. The texture mixes add interest and lend “depth” to an outfit preventing it from looking flat or boring.

For casual weekend looks, I would always start with a jean. If you’re more of a straight, angular figure then don’t go mad on the elastane – you will look better in a non-stretch denim, which gives a more structured shape.

Denim is a famously tough fabric with a twill weave (woven diagonally) and one of the best foils for almost anything you want to wear with it. Cotton, merino, cashmere, tailored wools, leather, satin . . . you name it, it works with denim.

I really rate Los Angeles denim brand Agolde – its jeans are well cut and they last. The Wyman straight leg has a hint of the old Levi’s 501, but is easier to wear as it is less tapered (pictured right, £260, matchesfashion.com). This works for a shorter body and long legs as it’s a lower rise. Pair with a cotton poplin

shirt from Arket (£55, arket.com) or a high-quality T-shirt from Sunspel. “The classic” style works for most necks but choose a V-neck or scoop if your bust is full (£65, sunspel.com).

Now you can layer on top with a cardigan from Allude (£355, net-a-porter.com). To avoid looking like a 1950s schoolmarm, push your sleeves and lightly tuck it on one side. The soft yarn contrasts with the stiffer denim so that they set each other off.

If you want to add more drama, choose a leather jacket over a tee or shirt. Who can forget the iconic image of Marlon Brando in this very combination for *The Wild One*? Leather pops well against the flat cotton or the rigid denims.

If you’re curvy you will want a supple leather. Armani’s nappa leather biker moulds around the body beautifully (£590, armani.com). Straighter figures can cope with a structured blazer such as Joseph’s leather jacket in nappa (£1,395, joseph-fashion.com)

Flip this look on its head and pair a leather skirt with a simple merino knit. Try the Derbyshire-based John Smedley’s merino, which is hard-wearing and doesn’t pill, and is available in a host of colours. I’m rather taken with the bronze hue of its Calvert sweater (£200, johnsmedley.com).



Top it all off with a sumptuous, cosy, full-on texture fest of a coat, such as Stand Studio faux-shearling coat (£455, farfetch.com) or invest in a stunning blue soft shearling option by Raey (£1,795, matchesfashion.com). Here you have the flatness of the knit serving as a quiet base for the leather to take centre stage in all its glossy glory. The soft tacity of the coat adds depth.

(As an aside, I simply cannot recommend a coloured coat enough. Remember that you always take a coat off – although you might be sitting indoors in it this particular winter – so adding a bit of pizzazz here is a way to make an entrance. I always get lots of compliments whenever I wear my bright red coat.)

To finish up, how about a going out look? There are myriad combinations to choose from. Team an Alex Perry bright pink strapless crepe dress with no texture (£750, net-a-porter.com) with a pink velvet jacket. Keep it modern with this relaxed velvet blazer by Me + Em (£295, meandem.com).

If you want some lustre and sheen then slip into this simple satin dress from Loewe (pictured top, £895, net-a-porter.com) and colour clash with the same blazer.

Both these dresses cry out for a fabric with surface interest to balance out their flatness. It could just



From top: models at the Fendi show in Paris in January; style aficionado Tamu McPherson during Paris Fashion Week last month pairing an embroidered black jacket with wide-legged, blue denim pants from Chanel

as easily be a fake fur or a vintage feather jacket. There are various velvet suits in red, green and purple, on the market. Check out Stella McCartney, Reiss, Max Mara, Cefinn and NRBY. I like Zadig & Voltaire’s velvet jacket blazer in red with matching trousers (blazer, £500, trousers, £260, zadig-et-voltaire.com). Wear these with a simple cami by Raey underneath (£120, matchesfashion.com).

Sequins offer both texture and shine so you can keep the other elements flat. A sparkly skirt in silver from Dorothee Schumacher (£390, farfetch.com) sits well with Lisa Yang’s simple, short sleeved cashmere knit (sorry, yes, it’s pink again – £311, farfetch.com) or go with a cotton tee if you want to tone it down. See Prada’s cotton rib vest and sparkly skirt look from this season’s catwalk as inspiration.

Finish it off with Acne’s sharp jacket for good measure (pictured left, £700, net-a-porter.com).

In summary, you are trying to complement the innate quality of one fabric by sitting it against something completely different. This is when outfits get that wow factor – they start to feel interesting, tactile, a talking point. Go forth and experiment!

Anna Berkeley is a personal stylist who has worked in the fashion industry for more than 25 years. Every month, she will answer readers’ questions about fashion and what to wear. Email her at anna.berkeley@ft.com

Lev Tanju’s retail poetry

Interview | The Palace co-founder’s offbeat

product descriptions are a delight to customers –

and now have their own book. By Adam Wray



HUMANITY T-SHIRT FLURO YELLOW

- I KNOW
- I'M SUPPOSED TO
- BE DESCRIBING A FLURO
- T-SHIRT OR SWEATSHIRT
- AND TALKING ABOUT HUMANITY
- BUT I TELL YOU WHAT
- WATPROOF ESSENTIALS
- POPPY SEED CRACKERS
- ARE 100%
- THE BEST CRACKERS
- I HAVE EVER HAD
- IN MY WHOLE
- ENTIRE LIFE

TECHNICAL DETAILS
Size ADD TO CART



PERTEX BALACLAVA PUFFA OLIVE

- TO DO LIST TOMORROW!
- WAKE UP LATE
- GO TOILET TWICE
- POTTER ABOUT FOR A BIT
- ORDER LUNCH OFF DELIVERY
- PLAN TO GO SKATE
- FLOP LAST MINUTE WHEN FOOD NETWORK STARTS
- GETTING GOOD AROUND 5PM

TECHNICAL DETAILS
Size ADD TO CART



ADIDAS PALACE PRO BLACK / ORANGE

- SAW YOU IN WETHERSPOONS
- IT WAS 10AM
- GUINNESS IN THAT
- YOU WAS CRYING
- BARE TEARS
- ALL OVER YOUR ONE QUID TOASTY
- LOOK AT THESE SHOES THO

TECHNICAL DETAILS
Size ADD TO CART

Palace Product Descriptions: The Selected Archive is one of the most delightfully peculiar releases from a fashion brand in recent memory. A joint venture between London skate brand Palace Skateboards and art book publisher Phaidon, it delivers exactly what its title promises: more than 300 pages of the miniature texts that accompanied items for sale on Palace’s web shop, all written over the past decade-plus by co-founding creative director Lev Tanju.

While product copy is a fundamental part of online retail, it is typically noticed only when it has somehow gone wrong – a typo, a repeated descriptor, an overly intellectualised flourish describing what is, ultimately, a pretty basic jumper. So, what is it about Palace’s copy that merits a bound retrospective?

For one thing, Tanju’s descriptions are highly irregular. They often have nothing to do with the products they’re attached to, written in enjambed bullet points ping-pong from bawdy to erudite. His slangy all-caps style can be totally inscrutable to the uninitiated, yet there is a sort of poetry to it. Here is a representative example, describing a pair of socks:

- JUST ORDERED DELIVEROO TAPAS
 - WILL LET YOU KNOW WHAT IT’S SAYING
 - SEEMS LIKE A GAMBLE
 - YOU KNOW HOW THEM PRAWNS TRAVEL
 - CHECK THIS PAIR OF SOCKS OUT
- Or this one, appearing alongside a lime green T-shirt with reflective print and piping:
- SAW YOUR SISTER IN PRET



Above: Lev Tanju photographed at home for the FT by Guy Bolongaro; left: examples of captions written by Tanju, from ‘Palace Product Descriptions: The Selected Archive’

- STEALING A SANDWICH
- BUT ONE OF THE ONES YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO HEAT UP

The book organises thousands of these snippets into sections such as “Religion”, “Etiquette”, “Romance”, “Food & Drink”. Topics of persistent interest for Tanju include male pattern baldness, streaming television, the comfort of his couch, and how exhausting it is coming up with new product descriptions. He’s a high-low gourmand as likely to advise on structuring a perfect McDonald’s takeaway order as he is to fret about a hypothetical downturn in Palace sales forcing a right-sizing of his calamari budget.

Tanju hectors the reader warmly, like an older brother. The overall effect is one of rough conviviality, and if you really need, say, a precise pocket count

super into clothes, so it branched out pretty early on and wanted to make quality stuff.”

Beyond Palace’s ever-expanding range of mainline products – which began with skate decks and hardware and now runs the gamut from denim and Gore-Tex outerwear to button-down shirting and knits – Palace collaborates enthusiastically and often, sketching out a lifestyle with its partners: Adidas, Stella Artois, French artist and designer Jean-Charles de Castelba-

‘A lot of it is my life . . . I’ll take the piss out of our own products, which I think is funny, too’

jac, Mercedes, Gucci, who seek the cred that comes from working with a legitimate skate brand. Palace now has shops in London, Tokyo, New York and Los Angeles, though Tanju’s texts are an online-only exclusive.

The looseness of Tanju’s captions makes one wonder what other designers might say if they took the same approach to communication with their audiences. How much more enticing would an observation from Miuccia Prada or Raf Simons make one of their jackets, even if it was just a Tanju-style

stray thought on restaurant etiquette? Or Rick Owens, who also writes indelibly in all-caps?

Shopping online has become brutally functional, spiritually deadening. The sameness of mobile interfaces has flattened a wide range of experiences into a style of interaction that makes everything feel vaguely like shopping, whether one is swiping through black slingbacks on Ssense or potential partners on Hinge. In the right environment, though, shopping can be rewarding. Sometimes it’s educational, with the potential to expand one’s tastes and understanding of craft, and sometimes it’s simply entertaining. Palace, through Tanju’s dashed-off micro-ramblings, is one of the few e-commerce operations that have managed to create a consistently surprising experience. That’s worth celebrating in print.

Plus, amid the delivery app orders, bathroom jokes and episodes of *Bake Off*, Tanju occasionally delivers something wryly useful. Like this one, accompanying a varsity jacket available for purchase on the Palace web shop:

- LOOK AFTER THE PENNIES
 - AND THE POUNDS
 - WILL TAKE CARE
 - OF THEMSELVES
 - YOU WILL COME ACROSS QUITE TIGHT THOUGH
- File that one under the “Etiquette” section of the next edition.



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