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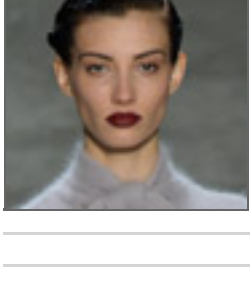
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Pumps and Circumstance

Katia Jean Paul ruminates on the trends and the elements of style within the culture at large.



Long Live Sweater Weather

by [Katia Jean Paul](#)
published October 24, 2014

Originally fashioned out of natural wool and worn by fishermen and sailors to guard against the cold, the sweater has evolved into the fall garment par excellence for looking stylish all the while keeping warm. Our fashion columnist traces the history of this sartorial classic.



Actress Lana Turner, the original "sweater girl". (Photo: [Retrogasm/Flickr](#))

Victor Skrebneski's compelling body of work features [a series of intimate portraits](#) in which silver screen stars like Bette Davis, Orson Welles and Ginger Rogers appear clad in a black turtleneck sweater. Titled "the black turtleneck sweater portraits", the celebrated fashion photographer's collection of snapshots manages to imbue an otherwise plain piece of clothing with style and sophistication. Or rather, could it be that the sweater—rather elegant in itself—in concert with Skrebneski's studied lens, lends an air of subtle refinement to his portraiture?

Long before Skrebneski's acclaimed black turtleneck sweater portraits, however—most of which were taken during the 1970s—the sweater was already a sartorial fixture. From the buxom "sweater girls" of the 1940s in their tight knit tops nipped at the waist, to the seminal postwar jersey twin sets designed by Coco Chanel, to whom we owe the initial transformation of the sweater into stylish accoutrement, the iconic garment had successfully moved away from its utilitarian roots and that, as early as the 1920s. No longer reserved for fishermen, sailors and athletes, the sweater has gone through many incarnations since its leap from functional to fashionable garb, moving to the forefront of the pop culture landscape in the process. Lana Turner made heads turn in a fitted sweater top in the 1937 film *They Won't Forget* while *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood's* Fred Rogers' signature zippered cardigan sweater and sneakers ensemble spurred a variety of trends around the laid-back look that still exists today. Despite a plethora of styles, fits and cuts, most impressive about the sweater is how it burgeoned into a flattering, feminine piece of clothing all the while retaining its practicality throughout the years. Herein lies its appeal.



From left to right: Fall 2014 sweaters as seen on the runway at Zimmermann, Ralph Lauren and Yigal Azrouel during Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week.

As cool fall days turn to brisk autumn nights, whether crocheted, cable, Fair Isle, Aran, argyle or intarsia, the sweater is, as with every cold season, our elected sartorial go-to. Whether layered atop a crisp white shirt or worn on its own, it is the perfect enveloping piece, one we reach for almost instinctively. A seasonal classic and a perennial favourite, this season, the sweater continues to beguile with striking colours, artsy prints and warm, cozy textures. From the slouchy sweaters at The Row to the dainty fuzzy knit tops spied on the runway at Zimmermann, the sweater is like a fine wine; it only gets better with age.

Now, on to some sweater inspiration as you stock up on the knitted classic for fall:



Intarsia Poncho Cardigan, \$79.90 at [Zara](#) stores, and online.



Fashion, art, architecture, design, TV, and film: Katia Jean Paul is a Montreal-based writer who casts a critical eye on her many idées fixes, unearthing the aesthetic and cultural dimensions within each and every subject. / Follow Katia on Twitter: [@KatiaJeanPaul](#)

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