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the darkness

Gemma Slack, Jacket

Gemma Slack, Dress/suit

Sebastian Lucrecio, Photographer

Rajni Lucienne Jacques, Stylist



fashionista: gemma slack



the darkness

london designer **gemma slack** is bringing out the inner goth in all of us. by rajni lucienne jacques. photographed by sebastian lucrecio

BLACK MAY SEEM basic, but for London-based designer Gemma Slack, it's quite liberating. "I love the possibilities it offers," she says. "There are loads of tonal elements to black, and you can really experiment with textures."

While studying fine arts at Chelsea College of Art & Design, Slack dabbled in fashion design but soon decided to change direction. "The term *artist* can cover such a broad spectrum of work," she explains. "I generally employ a similar method of researching and developing my work, like an artist would. It's just that the final product is different."

Her seven-piece, *Nosferatu*-inspired collection (the clothes also comprised her graduate project) debuted in spring '09. There were structured dresses and skirts made from merino wool and human hair. The presentation had such a strong point of view, you'd never guess that Slack was initially self-conscious about her vision—something she overcame by apprenticing with fellow British designer Gareth Pugh while in school. "I was quite shy about my work and not confident about my skills at first," she says. "Spending long hours with him showed me that things were possible, especially on a small budget."

For fall, the designer has not veered far from her first effort. Black still dominates, and her edge is still there (as is the human hair, along with neoprene and untreated leather). There's a cropped jacket with a "spine" made from leather cut-outs, a skirt that could outfit Tina Turner in *Mad Max*, and a short, leather dress with zipper detailing that looks especially good under her one-of-a-kind plated brass-link armor. But Slack has also tried something completely new this time by venturing into the world of prints. Swirls of smoke inspired by burning incense sticks drift across silky shifts and form-fitting pants. "It looks like church thuribles," says Slack of the pattern. "I wanted the movement of the smoke to be really organic and natural, a direct contrast to the fabric and technology that was being used."

Slack's creating an aesthetic that is strictly for bold and experimental dressers. Her innovation and love of form is reminiscent of her favorite clothiers, Thierry Mugler and Hussein Chalayan. "They produce work that obviously has great artistic value," she says. "And at the end of the day, they are amazing, visionary designers, and I aspire to be as good as them."



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stylist: priscilla polley. hair and makeup: jen nylos using j-life haircare/m.a.c cosmetics. model: nichelle schärner at ny models. jacket and dress by gemma slack. necklace by lizria fortunato. jewelry, ring by nikolas nys.

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