



FALL 2015
LOOKS FROM
COS; HEAD OF
WOMENSWEAR
DESIGN KARIN
GUSTAFSSON
(BELOW) AT
HER OFFICE
IN LONDON



CLEAN SWEEP

From sculptural outerwear to sleek pencil skirts, H&M's sister label COS brings Euro minimalism to Canada this fall. By RANDI BERGMAN



IF YOU'VE EVER COME BACK FROM VACATION with a suitcase full of new clothes, you're probably pretty familiar with the thrill of responding, "Oh, this old thing? It's from Paris," to anyone who asks. Well, it looks like those days are done, as one of Europe's best-kept secrets hits Toronto and Montreal this fall. A favoured stop for globetrotters with a taste for dramatic simplicity (think wide turtle-neck sweaters paired with super-wide trousers), COS (a.k.a. Collection of Style) is Swedish megachain H&M's chic higher-end sister. Launched in 2007, when it debuted on the runway at London Fashion Week, this cool label offers sleek staples in muted palettes, going big on the industry's new wave of streamlined minimalism pioneered by the likes of Céline's Phoebe Philo. This season, the label's kimono-style coats are the perfect paradigms, with obi belts adorning dusters and Watteau pan-

els adding drama to the backside. Simply put: It's not trendy—in a good way.

"We are heavily inspired by the world of art and design and take inspiration from creative outlets rather than following trends," says Karin Gustafsson, head of womenswear design at COS. The cool blonde Scandinavian walks me through the season's inspiration board at the brand's HQ in London and is the picture of effortlessness in a

silk tuxedo dress and gleaming block-heel sandals. Fall's inspiration runs the gamut from Japanese kimonos to German photographer Olaf Otto Becker's shots of Nordic glaciers. "We lock ourselves in a room for a few days to create our vision for the season," she says. Glacial shades seem just right for the brand's Canadian entry—an icy blue sleeping bag coat and a speckled black and white wool pencil skirt stand out as insta-hits.

At its core, COS is a treasure trove of staples, with a twist. Take this season's many iterations of the white button-down: finished with drawstrings, selectively placed cut-outs and gathered backs. "We love reinventing classics and reinterpreting them in unexpected ways," says Gustafsson. "It goes back to our approach to design—creating quality, timeless pieces." If we've learned anything from norm-core, it's that timeless dressing is where it's at. □