

FASHION SPECIAL

Shine on

As the Scottish Fashion Awards kick off, one of last year's winners Markus Lupfer tells Elizabeth McMeekin why shunning the catwalk was the making of him



FASHION SPECIAL

Markus Lupfer was standing in a humid, glass-fronted room in Glasgow Science Centre surrounded by a gaggle of journalists the last time I met him. It was an evening last June and Lupfer, the German knitwear designer who has impressed fashion insiders and celebrities including model Claudia Schiffer and singer Lily Allen, had just been crowned International Designer of the Year at the Scottish Fashion Awards.

He wasn't particularly effusive about his shiny new award at the time. It was later that I discovered gushing isn't Lupfer's style. He's too laidback for that. Instead he was more keen to tell me how clean he thought Glasgow's streets were and what a great impression the city had made on him in a few short hours. "Did I?" says Lupfer, almost eight months later, in his soft German accent. "I probably did. It is a nice city. I like Edinburgh too though."

Today Lupfer is in the Scottish capital to conduct a trunk show – a low-key catwalk-style presentation of clothing to customers and would-be buyers – of his latest womenswear and menswear collections in Harvey Nichols. Now he's sipping a glass of champagne before we have lunch in the Edinburgh emporium's top-floor restaurant.

After we order food – Lupfer plumps for the fish option – the conversation soon turns back to our last encounter. "That's the first award I ever won," says the 39-year-old designer with a degree of pride. Lupfer was awarded the international prize for his use of Scottish textiles. "It is nice to get the recognition," he says. "Fashion is a tough business and it gets even tougher all the time. The awards are important because they're about recognising what you are doing, what you stand for, having an identity."

Identity, as it turns out, is a big deal for Lupfer. Having one, he thinks, can make or break a fashion business. "I describe fashion as a big cupboard, and in the cupboard there are lots of drawers. In every drawer there is a different brand." According to his theory of fashion business, if a shopper doesn't know what your brand stands for they won't open your drawer. Or, simply put, no identity equals no customers.

"You open the Adidas drawer, you know what's in the Adidas drawer. You open the Puma drawer, you know what's in that. You open the Chanel drawer, you know what's in the Chanel drawer. You know what's in each. You need to know what's in the Markus Lupfer drawer. If you know what's in the Markus Lupfer drawer then you're in business. If you don't know then it's not happening. For the client and for everyone around the brand, knowing what's in the drawer is crucial."

So what is in the Markus Lupfer drawer? "Sequined knits and knitwear," he replies.

Sideboard-based theories aside, Lupfer seems to be doing something right. His clothes – the sequined jumpers, embellished T-shirts and jersey dresses – are so hot you could fry an egg on them. Celebrities such as Olivia Palermo have been spotted wearing Lupfer's tongue-in-cheek jumpers and slogan T-shirts. Even Rihanna, the musical mega-star who can do no wrong in the fashion world, is said to love Lupfer's aesthetic.



Markus Lupfer's slogan shirts, above and above right, have won the German designer high-profile fans including Rihanna, opposite page. Top right: Lupfer with his fellow winners at last year's Scottish Fashion Awards

PHOTOGRAPHS: JULIE HOWDEN; GORDON TERRIS (PAGE 11)

From the smiles, applause and wide eyes at his Harvey Nichols trunk show, it seems Scottish shoppers are taken with his clothes too. One horizontal-striped knitted jumper, with Lupfer's trademark red lip-shaped sequined embellishment in the centre, goes down particularly well with the predominantly female audience.

"Those lips belong to my friend but in the new design the lips are Lara Stone's," says Lupfer, stoking the flames of excitement now licking around the garment. Stone, the wife of British comedian David Walliams, is the biggest model of the moment thanks to her iconic gap tooth and full lips. Lupfer's decision to work the Dutch model into his most famous design is a canny one that will earn him plenty of publicity.

Using Stone's lips isn't the first celebrity coup he has pulled off. Since establishing the



'The celebrities create a different kind of exposure'

current Markus Lupfer knitwear-orientated label in 2007, famous faces have become a big part of his work. "It's something new to me too, but it's exciting," he says.

Lupfer, who grew up in the south German town of Kisslegg, moved to London to study fashion at the University of Westminster, graduating in 1997. Soon after he launched his own clothing label, which was a fixture at London Fashion Week until 2004 when he decided to change direction.

As part of that change Lupfer chose to walk away from the glamour of the catwalks in favour of low-key trunk shows and celebrity ambassadors. While he doesn't pay them to wear his clothes, Lupfer invites friends such as Palermo to pick out their favourite pieces of the collection to have and wear.

"If you do a show it needs to be exciting



and you need to offer a vision to the buyers and press," says Lupfer. "You can't have 10 T-shirts running down the catwalk or 20 jumpers on the catwalk – everyone would be bored. You need to offer something else. However my business was all about T-shirts and jumpers, so my business concept didn't fit the show concept."

"So I was thinking I can't do [the catwalk shows]. I had to think what to do to get exposure for the label. It couldn't happen through a show so I tried to find alternatives. The celebrities, they create a different kind of exposure and it doesn't interfere with what we're about as a business, whereas the catwalk might interfere with that." Lupfer's decision to leave the catwalk – a bold one at the time – has been followed by several of his contemporaries, including Paris-based British designer Gareth Pugh, who showed his collection in a video last year.

Lupfer is keen to praise his most loyal famous fans. "I love working with Olivia," he says. "She's a gorgeous girl and so sweet. She is so stylish and she's a good ambassador. I also love the fact Claudia Schiffer wore our products. When I saw that I thought, 'Oh my God.' She wore something two days in a row and I got so excited. So we made contact with her and she sent a nice card back in German. She is an icon, she is incredible and to see my garments or my designs on her, it's like, wow."

Stepping away from the catwalks can have other ramifications though, and not all of them positive. The fashion world has a habit of viewing successful, consumer-driven labels as less creative than the show-stopping ones displayed on the catwalk. "It's a difficult issue," says Lupfer. "If you create a collection girls want to wear and spend their money on, it's not necessarily a collection the magazines love to feature – if it's not new some magazines wouldn't touch it because it's not newsworthy."

"It's about not being afraid of people saying, 'Look at what he's doing, he's just doing those jumpers with the sequins on them again.' I, on the other hand, think it's crucial not to jump too quickly because the customer still wants to buy what's there. We're doing the lip design more and more because that's what's selling."

"You know what? I'm not afraid of designing a T-shirt. If I design a T-shirt and people want to buy it then yeah, I'm excited. I'm designing a T-shirt so everyone can wear it and enjoy it. Before I didn't really design T-shirts because I wanted to create this or that for the catwalk instead."

Aside from his customers, well-known or otherwise, Lupfer has one lifelong fan he can always rely on: his mother. "She does her own little press book," says Lupfer, blushing. "She's sweet and proud. She still wears one of the cardigans I designed before I started Markus Lupfer and she keeps them immaculate in her wardrobe. She got a nice chiffon scarf this season and a few other things, and my sisters did too. I have a younger sister and an older sister, so there are a few pieces in the village where I'm from. My mum's probably the best-dressed woman, but where I come from is not exactly the fashion police. It's not the capital of fashion." ■

Want to enter the Scottish Fashion Awards 2011? See page 14.

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SFA: THE LOWDOWN

The Scottish Fashion Awards are the most demanding, decadent and best-dressed awards Scotland has ever hosted. Judged by a panel of experts from around the world, they will honour Scottish talents who have made a significant contribution to design, photography, modelling, styling, make-up artistry, marketing and writing. The judging panel is made up of professionals from leading fashion houses, the most renowned and respected fashion publications and leading figures in international style. The geographical diversity and invaluable industry experience of this top-flight panel brings a global perspective to the awards. The calibre of the judges alone means these are the honours fashion insiders want to win. Being shortlisted for an award is proof your work is recognised by your industry peers; that you are judged as the best Scottish talent in your field. These awards are, in essence, proof of your fashion success.

JUDGING

Judging takes place in May. Shortlisted entries will be published on the Scottish Fashion Awards website (www.scottishfashionawards.com) in the week commencing April 25, 2011 and published in The Herald Magazine. All awards will be presented at the Scottish Fashion Awards in association with Vogue.com ceremony and gala VIP dinner, on June 15, 2011 at Glasgow Science Centre.

To enter use the entry form below or download

the nominations form from the SFA website. All entries must be submitted by noon on April 8, 2011.

The judging panel includes:

Richard Walker – editor, Sunday Herald
Dolly Jones – editor, Vogue.com
Caroline Rush – CEO, British Fashion Council
Sarah Mower – European editor, Vogue (US), ambassador for emerging talent – BFC
Brian Duffy – president, Ralph Lauren Europe
Professor Wendy Dagworthy – head of fashion and textiles at RCA, London
Nathalie Colin – creative director, Swarovski
Hilary Alexander – fashion director, The Daily Telegraph
Amanda Wakeley – designer
Paula Reed – style director, Grazia
Sarah Bailey – deputy editor, Harpers Bazaar
Tessa Hartmann – chairman and founder, Scottish Fashion Awards

CATEGORIES AND AWARDS

1. Scottish Designer of the Year, sponsored by Vogue.com

This award recognises the work of a designer (on an international level) whose designs over the last year have made the greatest impression.

2. Scottish Textile Brand of the Year, sponsored by The Herald

An individual or business that has shown to be leading the way in the specialist field of cashmere and textile design.

3. Communicator of the Year, sponsored by BAA Glasgow

Fashion communication through photography, fashion writing, styling, marketing/PR, session styling or make-up artistry.

4. Scottish Young Designer of the Year

This recognises the work of young designers in all areas of fashion who show promise as future leaders of the industry. Entrants must have produced a minimum of one collection and be stocked in one retail outlet.

5. Scottish Fashion Graduate of the Year, sponsored by Marks & Spencer

This recognises the work of students in their graduating year from FE courses across fashion and textiles. Students must be Scottish to be eligible for this category but can be studying anywhere in the UK. Finalists will be required to respond to a brief from M&S as part of the competition and the overall winner will receive a work placement within M&S this summer. Finalists will be notified by April 30 and must respond to the brief with their submission by May 20. Entries received after this date will be deemed invalid.

6. Scottish Retailer of the Year, sponsored by Braehead

To reward the endeavours of a Scottish retailer who has led the way in bringing new fashion brands, innovative retail concepts or designers to Scotland. Consideration will also be given to overall retail proposition, merchandising, marketing and brand image. Online retailers are included.

7. Scottish Model of the Year, sponsored by Toni & Guy Haircare

A Scottish model (male or female) who has captured the attention of the fashion world and boasts a portfolio of significant fashion work over the last year.

8. Scottish Jewellery/Accessory Designer of the Year, sponsored by Swarovski

This recognises the work of an individual or company whose design/manufacture of precious or non-precious jewellery, or

fashion-related accessories, has made a significant impression in the fashion community over the last year.

9. Scottish Fashion Awards International Designer of the Year, sponsored by Hotel Du Vin (Malmaison Glasgow, Hotel Du Vin at One Devonshire Gardens)

A non-Scottish individual who has produced the most exciting and industry important collections over the last year, utilising a Scottish fabric. The original textile must have been manufactured in Scotland.

PUBLIC VOTE AWARD

10. Scottish Fashion Icon Award, sponsored by Capital FM

Voted for by the public, this award recognises the individual regarded as the Scottish fashion icon of the past 12 months. Details on how to vote will be launched at www.scottishfashionawards.com in late April.

SPECIAL AWARD

11. Scottish Fashion Awards Hall of Fame

This recognises the outstanding work of an individual to whom the fashion industry is indebted. An individual whose contribution to fashion has either shaped or changed the world of fashion. Entry to this award is not permitted. The decision is made by the Scottish Fashion Awards.

12. Fashion Ambassador

This recognises the work of a non-Scottish individual or business who has made a significant contribution to the promotion of Scottish designers or Scottish manufacturing or the profile of Scottish fashion around the world. Entry to this award is not permitted. The decision is made by the Scottish Fashion Awards.



FAB, FUNKY, FREAKY, FUN: SEE ART OF SCOTLAND'S TOP DESIGNERS IN THE SUNDAY HERALD TOMORROW

ENTRY GUIDELINES

- All nominations and submissions should relate to work carried out between January 2010 and April 2011.
- All entries should be completed and accompanied by the entry form on page 20 and the appropriate cheque (£45 plus VAT of £9 per entry). Entrants are exempt from the fee.

- Entries should also include supporting press clippings and imagery on CD, jpeg or transparency.
- The summary sheet should be placed on top of entry and payment should be attached to application form.
- There is no discount for submitting more than one entry.
- If submitting the same entry in more than one category, each entry still needs to be submitted separately with its own entry form.
- No materials will be returned.
- All submissions must be made by noon on April 8, 2011.
- Do not submit materials requiring complex packaging.
- Entry guidelines are available on the Scottish Fashion Awards website – www.scottishfashionawards.com.
- Application forms can be photocopied.

GUIDELINES FOR CATEGORIES 1, 2, 3, 4, 8 & 9

- Each submission must consist of a complete entry form from this magazine or the official website, along with the summary sheet of no more than 600 words, clearly headed with category name, name of student and FE institution name, focusing on:
 - Biography background – include company history, number of stores, any awards or high-profile activities and, if appropriate, the brands the company has produced for.
 - Detail top three design works or company achievements between January 2010 and April 2011.
 - Optional – provide a reference from a journalist or a media figure who would comment on your/the company's most successful designs/retail achievements. Press cuttings may be included.

- Biography - include career or company history, any award or high-profile company philosophy and fashion ambitions. Supporting imagery should be supplied on either a jpeg or CD.
- Shortlisted graduates you or the company have undertaken between January 2010 and April 2011.
- Optional – provide a reference from a journalist or a media figure who would comment on your/the company's most successful designs. Press cuttings may be included.
- In no more than 50 words, please detail you or the company's most iconic design or achievement between January 2010 and April 2011. Please provide an image of the design. This should be on either a jpeg or CD.

ENTRY GUIDELINES FOR CATEGORY 5

- Each submission must consist of a complete entry form from this magazine or the official website, along with the summary sheet of no more than 600 words, clearly headed with category name, name of student and FE institution name, focusing on:
 - Biography background – include company history, number of stores, any awards or high-profile activities and, if appropriate, the brands the company has produced for.
 - Detail top three design works or company achievements between January 2010 and April 2011.
 - Optional – provide a reference from a journalist or a media figure who would comment on your/the company's most successful designs/retail achievements. Press cuttings may be included.

- In no more than 50 words, please detail the company's mission statement or retail proposition. Supporting imagery should be supplied on either a jpeg or CD.
- Each submission must consist of a complete entry form from this magazine or the official website, along with the summary sheet, clearly headed with category name, name of entrant and name of model agency. (This award is open to both female and male models.) The summary should cover:
 - Personal details – name, age, height, dress size, waist, hips, bust, shoe, eye and hair colour.
 - Model agency contact details (name, telephone number and email address).
 - Biography (include career history, campaigns, awards and high-profile activities).
 - Detail the top three work assignments or campaigns undertaken between January 2010 and April 2011.
 - Optional – press cuttings may be included.
 - In no more than 50 words summarise your most iconic assignment and supply an image, on either a jpeg or a CD.

ENTRY GUIDELINES FOR CATEGORY 6

- Each submission must consist of a complete entry form from this magazine or the official website, along with the summary sheet of no more than 600 words, clearly headed with category name, name of entrant and brand name where appropriate, focusing on:
 - Biography background – include company history, number of stores, any awards or high-profile activities and, if appropriate, the brands the company has produced for.
 - Detail top three design works or company achievements between January 2010 and April 2011.
 - Optional – provide a reference from a journalist or a media figure who would comment on your/the company's most successful designs/retail achievements. Press cuttings may be included.

- In no more than 50 words, please detail the company's mission statement or retail proposition. Supporting imagery should be supplied on either a jpeg or CD.

ENTRY GUIDELINES FOR CATEGORY 7

- Each submission must consist of a complete entry form from this magazine or the official website, along with the summary sheet, clearly headed with category name, name of entrant and name of model agency. (This award is open to both female and male models.) The summary should cover:
 - Personal details – name, age, height, dress size, waist, hips, bust, shoe, eye and hair colour.
 - Model agency contact details (name, telephone number and email address).
 - Biography (include career history, campaigns, awards and high-profile activities).
 - Detail the top three work assignments or campaigns undertaken between January 2010 and April 2011.
 - Optional – press cuttings may be included.
 - In no more than 50 words summarise your most iconic assignment and supply an image, on either a jpeg or a CD.

ENTRY GUIDELINES FOR CATEGORIES 10, 11 AND 12

Category 10 will be voted for by the public and details will be announced on the official website at the end of April 2011. Categories 11 and 12 are not open for public entry and shall be presented by the organisers at the event on June 15 2011.

ENTRY FORM: SCOTTISH FASHION AWARDS 2011

Please photocopy this section as many times as necessary, or download it from the website. Enclose a separate form for each entry.

Category (number and name):

Name of entrant (individual or company):

Contact telephone number:

Institution: Institution telephone number:

Course: Course director:

Payment details

Fees: £45 (Plus VAT £9) Students are exempt. Enclosed is a cheque made payable to the Scottish Fashion Awards for £..... **Signed**

How did you find out about the Scottish Fashion Awards? (Please tick) Press (broadcast or print)

Website / E newsletter Word of mouth Other (please specify)

Students: give details of the educational institution you are enrolled in:

Contact email address:

Postal address (companies must supply registered office and correspondence address):

Date of birth (for category 5 entrants): Place of birth:

Current residence: (city and county):

Note: The title used on this application form for your entry will be the title used in all future references

SCOTTISH FASHION AWARDS: 2011 GENERAL RULES

The following rules apply to all categories.

- Entries must have been produced by the individual or representative of the company entering the competition.
- Entrants can enter more than one category, or submit the same entry for more than one campaign, but each submission needs to be treated as a separate entry with its own application form, fee etc.
- Entrants must be Scottish or their main body of work must be produced in Scotland, or head office registered in Scotland (excludes International Designer Award).
- Students entering the Scottish Graduate category must be Scottish by birth but may be studying at any FE institution in the UK. They must also be graduating in 2011. Graduates from any other year will be deemed ineligible.
- The SFA/Hartmann Media reserves the right to combine or withdraw a category if it considers there are insufficient entries in any category.
- The SFA/Hartmann Media reserves the right to refuse any entrants or entry for the Awards that it deems could be detrimental to the successful running of the awards.
- The Scottish Fashion Awards reserve the right to change the rules of the competition at any time and without prior notice. Please check these terms on our website (www.scottishfashionawards.com) regularly for changes. Your continued use of the official site after changes are posted will mean you accept the terms as modified by the posted changes.
- Any material requested by SFA along with the entry form, cannot be returned to the sender.

SUMMARY OF TIMETABLE

- All entries to be submitted by noon on April 8 2011. Publication of shortlists: April 30 2011.
- Judges initial review May 9 - May 30 2011.
- Scottish Fashion Awards 2011: June 15 2011
- Enquiries: Scottish Fashion Awards - Tessa Hartmann: Telephone: +44(0) 1236 626666 or email karta@hartmannmedia.co.uk

SFA take no responsibility for any material submitted.

- The SFA/Hartmann Media will decide in which order the categories, and all entries in each category will appear at The Scottish Fashion Awards.
- All entries must be received by noon April 8 2011 accompanied by a cheque as payment for the judging fee of £45 plus VAT per category. All material should be sent to The Scottish Fashion Awards, C/O Hartmann Media Ltd, Lovat House, Gavell Road, Glasgow G65 9BS or e-mailed to eventsteam@hartmannmedia.co.uk
- Entries to the competition should be made on the official entry form. Any illegible or defaced forms will be rejected.
- Feedback will not be given to any individual entrant. Finalists for each category will be announced in May 2011 (Check website for full details).
- All nominations and submissions should be related to work carried out between January 2010-April 2011.
- Information supplied by the judges or discussed between the judges and entrants will be treated in complete confidence and confidentiality on the part of entrants is requested.
- Online retailers are permitted to enter the Scottish Retailer of the Year category.

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