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I arrive at 1a Bouverie Road, Stoke Newington on an October afternoon so windy that, if you have a hairline like mine, you begin to worry about the winter. In the 50s and 60s, this cobbled cul-de-sac's flaking green doors were used as motorcycle garages — and they still are. Emblazoned on the outside wall is the name of the current tenants, BOLT London, purveyors of custom bikes and all the clothing and gear that comes with them. I'm here to meet Edie Ashley, a 23-year-old fashion designer, one year out of school, who's just released her first collection, a collaboration with BOLT London.

BOLT x Edie is an homage to the burgeoning motorcycle culture of the 20s and 30s, when the outfits worn more closely resembled those of horseriders and fencers than the squeaky leather hogmen of today. For Edie, this influence is not only aesthetic but deeply personal: her father is a competitive motorcyclist and her mother a keen equestrian. When I arrive she's dancing round the garage wearing wireless headphones, a beret, a beat-up leather jacket and yellow-tinted motorcycle glasses while hanging photos from the collection's shoot.

The photographs were taken in Wales on the farm where Edie grew up. Her childhood sounds idyllic — “dad would take me to school on his motorbike and mum would pick me up on her horse” — and Edie was made conscious of sartorial *comme il faut* from a young age. “Dad and I used to go to a cafe in Hay-on-Wye, the nearest town, and we'd sit outside eating sheep's milk ice cream while he'd give a running commentary on the people walking past, saying stuff like ‘oh, I like those shoes’ or ‘that hat's nice’. On his business card it says ‘people watcher.’” But the card's being modest. Nick Ashley is a designer, motorbike aficionado, “hero of a dad” and, as BOLT's Andrew Almond puts it, “a fucking legend of fashion and style.”

It was he who gave Edie her mantra ‘techno-retro’, meaning “take from the old and make it new”, which she wore embroidered on her sleeve throughout university. You'd think someone who, aged six, used to lecture her family on colour coordination would find fashion school a breeze, but Edie struggled with the curriculum; or, as she puts it, “seasonal fashion can do one.” Raised to respect fabric and abhor waste, she was appalled at the “bins filled with calico” and decided to rebel. Asked to complete a trend forecasting project (when designers research upcoming exhibitions or movies for their collections) she based hers on the impending eco-apocalypse, captioning clothing made using recycled materials with words like ‘eco-tistical’ and ‘sass-tainable’. Her tutors bristled at first but then conceded its relevance, awarding Edie and her partner first prize.

At her graduation “one of the teachers who'd given me the most grief came up and said they were adding a sustainability module to the course.” Vindicated, Edie's commitment to slow fashion was cemented and when offered a job at Givenchy soon after graduating she imagined “walking into a room filled with snake skins” and turned it down. This also meant she was initially hesitant when BOLT approached. That moment came at her end of year show. Andrew Almond was the only one of 13 designers invited by Edie to actually attend. He was so impressed

with what he saw that he popped the question right there and then. “After I calmed down I had to tell Andrew that there was no way I’d do this if we didn’t use secondhand fabrics and he was like ‘fuck yeah let’s do it’.”

The entire BOLT x Edie collection is made from surplus fabric, most of it sourced from a “ridiculously dutty” old workwear factory in Dewsbury, West Yorkshire. After assembling a small team of skilled individuals, including Edie’s pattern cutting teacher from university who “thought I was a nutter” but is “a wedding dress tailor, so she’s used to that,” they worked day and night in “the coldest room in the garage” to get the collection finished in time for launch. The longest days were the fittings, “the fit is probably the most important thing, so we spent days tweaking it inch by inch then got an amazing grader to make sure the proportions stayed the same across all sizes.” Despite this, Edie is such a fit-fanatic that every garment bought contains the business card of a local tailor, so her customers feel compelled to strive for ‘like a glove’ status.

The launch took place at an art gallery in the Marais during Paris Fashion Week — “I was working for a woman at the time who said, ‘you know, darling, people miss London, people miss Milan, people miss New York, but no one misses Paris Fashion Week.’” Edie and the BOLT team rode their motorcycles down and stuck stickers all over town to drum up the hype. She also hand-sewed invitations onto neckerchiefs made from fabric designed by her grandfather and printed by her father. They parked their bikes in the street, brought sound systems outside and danced all night; it was a roaring success. As Andrew puts it, “fashion has never been just about objects, it has to be a living, breathing scene.” It helps too, that the clothes are awfully groovy: double-breasted tunics, boiler suits and high-waisted trousers that can be worn to the rave, to a wedding or to work.

Though there are men’s and women’s fits, Edie stresses the absence of gender in her designs — “some of my male friends have worn the women’s ones and vice-versa.” The androgyny of her clothes stands in contrast to her grandmother, Laura Ashley, whose floral dresses came to symbolise a particular kind of femininity. Does she think the difference of her work is a rebellion against female propriety? “Not really, my style came very much out of my own experience: growing up horseriding and motorbiking, and my taste in music and film. And actually my grandma was very inspired by the Edwardians too. She was more subversive than people give her credit for — in the 60s, while everyone was wearing mini skirts, she was designing neck-high, ankle-length dresses that had their own sexual power.” It’s hard to argue with Edie and, given her serious talent and charm, it wouldn’t be surprising if this collection served as a launchpad for ascendance to big things — hold on to your hair, people.