



as anyone within a five-foot radius can hear, it's also emitting the kind of ominous buzz—caused, perhaps, by a dying battery or delicate wiring—one associates with flickering streetlights in horror-movie alleyways. Tonight, it's a sound that says, "Let's get this party started!" At least, I hope it does, because I'm the one wearing it.

Ever since Diane von Furstenberg popped up on her spring 2013 runway clutching Sergey Brin's hand and sporting a limited-edition pair of neon-orange Google Glass cyborg specs, the fashion industry has been bracing itself, with varying degrees of enthusiasm, for The Future. Some designers joined forces with Silicon Valley mainstays like Fitbit (chic-ified fitness trackers from Tory Burch and Public School) and Apple (the latest to jump on board the company's superwatch train: Hermès, with a \$1,250 double-wrapping strap made from the same leather as the house's iconic bags). Other labels struck out on their own. See Rebecca Minkoff's phone-charging Lightning Cable Bracelet and Swarovski's blinged-out activity tracker. Ralph Lauren equipped its iconic Ricky bag with a phone charger and LED lights—like a refrigerator light, they switch on when the bag is opened. And for fall 2016, experimental Dutch designer Iris van Herpen continued her ongoing partnership with architect Philip Beesley, creating celestial-looking dresses made of intricate pieces generated via 3-D printer—one dress comprises 5,000 individually printed elements. Very Effie Trinket.

Even as fashion pundits question the success of the "wearables" market—beyond fitness trackers and smart watches, how much of this stuff are people actually wearing?—the ELLE office is bombarded daily with press releases on the latest and greatest: Caffeine-dispensing bracelets! Sleep-inducing headbands! Form-correcting yoga tights! When we called the companies to test-drive items for this story, we were quickly reminded that wearables



ELECTRIC LADYLAND

The buzz on wearable tech is deafening, but does any of it actually work? The ELLE staff tries on the latest in smart fashion. By Keziah Weir

It's 8 P.M. at Pioneer Works, a 25,000-square-foot, hipper-than-thou art space in Red Hook, Brooklyn, and the evening's show—a hard-to-pin-down amalgam of light and sound featuring a quadruphonic cello and music amplifiers made of wired abalone shells—is about to begin. Indeed, some guests are wondering if it already has begun, for amid the uniformly dressed crowd (understated denim, black-on-black), one dress stands out. Is it an art piece? Part of the performance? The thing is lit up like a neon Christmas tree, for starters, and,

Clockwise from left: The writer's Chromat dress, as seen on a model; Iris Apfel's WiseWear safety-alert cuff; a 3-D-printed dress by Iris van Herpen

STYLE How I'm Wired

are still in their relative infancy, excitedly touted on crowdfunding platforms and at ideafests such as SXSW and CES, but still several key steps away from being put into the hands of consumers (or editors, for that matter). That said, the best of the products we did take for a spin were impressive. Nonagenarian fashion icon Iris Apfel's gold- and palladium-finished WiseWear cuffs—press a spot on the bracelet to send a distress message to your emergency contact—look like a costume-jewelry Fitbit alternative for the ladies-who-lunch crowd. The steel-gray cashmere-and-wool blend wrap coat that British brand Emel + Aris sent over can only be described as heavenly: It's shot through with heating panels and equipped with a small battery pack—none of which is visible to the naked eye, so no one needs to know you're walking around in a very chicly cut electric blanket. And while ELLE staffers have yet to reap the “scientifically proven” cellulite-reducing benefits of Beija-Flor's Emana jeans, which are imbued with microscopic crystals said to absorb heat and reflect back infrared rays to “promote biostimulation” and improve skin elasticity, we can report that they fit like they're painted on and leave one's legs feeling eerily but pleasingly silky upon removal.

And then there's my light-up party dress from tech-fashion brand Chromat, maker of cage-style bralettes worn by the likes of Beyoncé's dancers and Rihanna. For spring 2016, they teamed up with Intel on the Lumina collection, which features responsive light strips that flash according to the wearer's movements—for instance, a sports bra that handily flashes when you bob up and down, presumably at a Rihanna concert. My dress, as I explain repeatedly to curious bystanders at the Brooklyn art show—“So, what does it *do*?”—is a little more straightforward, in that you just flick a switch and it stays lit up. Which is great, except that with one strip glowing and the other flickering, I find myself in competition with the show's wall-size video projections. “Is my dress...rude?” I ask one curmudgeonly gallery employee, who responds with an unamused look. Thereafter, I turn the dress off during performances.

Wandering the party between sets, my “engagement,” to borrow that social media buzzword, is at an all-time high. “Ah, Chromat,” murmurs a bald gentleman in gold bell-bottoms, nodding his approval. “Nice strip,” another man tells me while casually (and completely nonsexually) thumbing my glowing garment. The sentiment is mirrored moments later by a little girl in a tutu: “I like your dress!” she says, then leans forward conspiratorially to inquire, “Did you get it here?” ■