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THE MASCULINITY MODE

Today's man is a different incarnation of who he used to be — and it shows in his wardrobe

"The essence of my inspiration for fashion is the body," said Hussein Chalayan, the British-based Turkish-Cypriot fashion designer and Creative Director at Puma at this year's Edinburgh International Fashion Festival in Scotland. He believes the male body informs the way fashion "should be". Masculinity is the ultimate evolutionary

curve, constantly reassessing itself by addressing beards (its latest fixation), baggage (can a man-bag ever really work?) and everything wearable in between.

"The male role is changing and men have softened their image. It's perfectly acceptable now to show a more sensitive side," said Li Edelkoort, trend forecaster and Design Indaba darling

at her last talk in New York. In *Guys Without Kids*, NBC's new sitcom, which launches this month in the USA, the main characters are all in charge of their babies in a way mainstream TV's never depicted masculinity: they carry babies around in holsters and change their wardrobes to suit their now very practical roles. (There's also the "DILF" phenomenon, which has the social

networks humming, but that's another issue entirely.)

Chalayan's approach is to retranslate issues traditionally associated with women in a masculine way. He achieves this by embracing technology, as well as in Puma's commitment to sports performance. "Technology's the only means through which you touch on new things," he told *Vice*

magazine last year. He continually finds new fabrics for menswear and encourages men to discover their own ways of shunning what's supposedly "acceptable" for the quintessential male.

As was evident at the recent New York Fashion Week, the new masculinity is about exploring all the facets of what it means to be a man, with or without a baby carrier.