

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Chinese brand Li-Ning's new collab seen at first live Fashion Week since COVID-19

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Model Wearing the Soulland x Li-Ning Shadow at Soulland's Spring 2021 Collection at Copenhagen Fashion Week. Image credit: Spulland, Li-Ning/Adam Katz

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On Monday, Aug. 10 Chinese sportswear maker Li-Ning showcased a collaboration with the Danish brand Soulland, which was taking part in a runway show at Copenhagen Fashion Week the first official fashion week to return to live events, in addition to online presentations, after the appearance of COVID-19.

The two designs were teased during the [weeklong #NotInParis virtual exhibition](#), hosted by Highsnobiety in June, but they did not appear live until this week.

The cross-continent partnership produced two co-designed running sneakers. Silas Adler, cofounder and creative director of Soulland, and Li-Ning's design team in Beijing completed the collaboration by frequent video conference calls via [WeChat](#).

"We wanted to study the sport holistically and examine the mindful processes and shifts a runner goes through before, during, and following a run," Mr. Adler said, adding that the concept of "Pre-Intra-Post" (Before-During-After in Latin) was at the heart of this collaborative project.

The two sneaker models have minimal looks resembling modern architecture and are made with innovative, nearly transparent fabrics.

The first shoe, called the Shadow, features a hollowed-out sole and the phrase "Pre-Intra-Post" on the side, and the second, called Wind Ranger, has a side strap over the top and sits on a cushioned, angular heel.

The Shadow model is being sold exclusively in China for now, but will be made available worldwide later this year. More retail information such as stockist details and pricing will be announced soon, according to a Li-Ning statement.

The two design teams worked well together from the beginning after receiving an introduction from a mutual connection, said Li-Ning's brand strategist, Liad Krispin.

"From the outset, the Soulland team felt very strongly about exploring running, but wanting to do so in an unexpected way," Mr. Krispin said.

"For Li-Ning, running remains one of our core areas of product focus and leading design innovation," he said. "So, right away, we were both already on the same page."

This collaboration drops just as [Li-Ning](#) announced that it plans to resume its showing schedule on international runways.

Rooted in the production of sportswear and footwear for sports such as basketball and badminton, the Chinese brand first ventured into the high-fashion world in 2018 when it released a Spring 2019 collection during Paris Fashion Week. That was followed by a Fall 2019 collection, which the brand presented at [New York Fashion Week](#).

This year has also seen the brand's first designs aimed at the white-hot [sneaker market](#).

This past January, Li-Ning released one collaboration with Random Identities created by former Saint Laurent designer [Stefano Pilati](#) and another with the English designer [Neil Barrett](#)'s eponymous label.

What else can fashion fans expect from Li-Ning?

"A trademark of any given Li-Ning collection is the contrast of Western sportswear silhouettes paired with elements of Chinese culture and tradition," Mr. Krispin said, adding that Li-Ning would also return to Paris Fashion Week this September to unveil a new collection in "an innovative way."

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