



The Reviews

Balenciaga

Oops! He did it again.

For his swan song ready-to-wear collection for Balenciaga, Demna revisited silhouettes and ideas from his decade at the Paris fashion house – and capped off this effort with a see now, buy now Britney Spears collaboration and a playlist curated by the pop icon.

It was a low-key, rather last-minute unveiling at Balenciaga's airy Paris showroom, but loaded with content, with the designer also revealing he will curate a retrospective exhibition at Kering's headquarters from June 26 through July 9, open to the public by reservation. It's titled "Balenciaga by Demna."

The collection felt more playful than usual – and sleeker, his once bombastic hoodies reduced to filmy, body-con tops paired with slimmed-down sweatpants or skinny jeans.

Some of the women's looks were almost girly, including leather polo shirts with cap sleeves and frilly jabots, and cropped jeans with the hems ringed with faux fur. The sheer finale gowns were borderline fragile, one worn by his fetish model, the American artist Eliza Douglas.

That said, there were still ginormous sneakers and clogs, oversize track suits and meaty, full-circle skirts in denim or black leather. Puffer jackets came extra wide, or pinched with a peplum.

Commercial pieces displayed Demna's formidable skill with wry logos: Here Balenciaga writ in black marker over strips of masked tape; there plastered on the garish ice cream treat charts you see on convenience store freezers.

Demna's successor after his final Balenciaga couture show on July 9 is Pierpaolo Piccioli, who penned a letter

sharing how Cristóbal Balenciaga has been a touchstone throughout his career, most of it spent at Valentino.

Demna's press notes came in the same format, saying his spring 2026 collection "combines pieces from 35 different collections with new pieces and garments from my personal wardrobe, representing the volumes, silhouettes and attitudes that have defined my vision and my questioning of the contemporary wardrobe, what people actually wear, how they wear it and what the fine line is between luxury and fashion."

He said working on the collection "felt like a homecoming after all these years, a very formidable experience of love for fashion and dressmaking."

Considering that his work has also "circled around the anthropology of fashion and dress codes, he conscripted Dutch duo Ari Versluis and Ellie Uyttenbroek, famed for their "Exactitudes" of various people photographed from the thigh up, for his look book.

Meanwhile, the Spears collaboration includes T-shirts, hoodies, caps and the silk twill flags fans hang in their bedrooms.

"I have always loved fashion and was so honored and excited Balenciaga and Demna chose to collaborate with me on Demna's last collection with the house," Spears commented. "These are some of my favorite images from such an amazing time in my career and life, and I'm so excited to share it with everyone."

Her playlist includes a new remix of "Gimme More" by Bfrnd that was broadcast at the spring 2025 Balenciaga show and a new remix of "Oops!," turning 25 this year. – Miles Socha





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