



The Reviews

Prada

What's inside the fashion bubble at Prada this season?

Miuccia Prada and Raf Simons conjured a utopian scene – a field of flower-shaped shag carpets dotted across the vast concrete floor of Fondazione Prada, natural light leaking into the space, along with birdsong and cowbells from the speakers.

Their spring show echoed the mood of Rineke Dijkstra's arresting 1993 portrait of an adolescent boy on the beach in Odessa, Ukraine, wearing burgundy swimming trunks that are a tad too big: He's the picture of vulnerability, but also dignified and proud.

"We wanted a change of tone," Prada told a crush of reporters after the show. "The opposite of the aggression, power and nastiness that runs the world now. So we try to make a little contribution with something genuine, nice."

"Something that is calming, positive and balanced," Simons added as he sipped a tiny glass bottle of Coca-Cola. "Freedom to express yourself the way you want."

Prada and Simons opened their display with a starched white camp shirt tucked partially into bloomers, which had the same gawky aspect of the trunks work by Dijkstra's bathers, resembling those paper cutout-doll garments held on with flimsy tabs.

The designers went on to scramble many familiar Prada garments – featherlight ►

macs, flood pants, retro track suits, leather car coats and shrunken sweaters – in a freewheeling way.

New propositions included boatneck sweaters and smocks, plus army shirts elongated to tunic length. Pants were optional in at least a third of the exits.

Straw flowerpot hats and black dress socks – worn with nearly everything and slid into driving moccasins and bi-color boat shoes – confounded things further. Were these young men dressing for the office, the beach, the gym, a mountain hike, a best-legs contest?

Even if you couldn't pinpoint the wearing occasion, you felt the familiar Prada-ness of nerdy chic, here in a more youthful and gangly guise, the uniformly slender and shrunken shapes going against the grain of most other Milan collections.

What also came to the fore were striking color combinations – khaki and lavender, red with sky blue, celadon and pink – the crispness of the fabrics and an appealing, low-key forlornness reinforced by the jangly music and the overwhelming openness of the space.

The show made you think – and it offered respite at the same time. – *Miles Socha* ■



► 23 juin 2025 - N°nc



