



# 'Doing less isn't necessarily easier': Prada's stripped-back mix of military and pastels

**Scarlett Conlon**  
Milan

Miuccia Prada may argue her collections are not a response to the global political landscape. But in keeping with the theme for her spring/summer 2026 menswear collection shown in Milan on Sunday, there may be a change of tone.

The show notes described the collection as representing "a shift of attitude - dismantling of meaning and dismantling power".

As the designer spoke about "the nastiness [in the world]", her co-creative director, Raf Simons, said the pair "wanted to bring ... something that makes you feel ... positive and balanced".

The collection, displayed at the Deposito show space at Fondazione Prada, emphasised that point. Precision-pressed shirting with hand-drawn wave illustrations, khaki knitwear with fringed hems, utilitarian-grey tailoring paired with tiny matching shorts and striped tracksuits styled with thonged sandals suggested individuality over conformity.

Accessories including grey wash bags, backpacks with multiple compartments as well as white canvas plimsolls - items with sartorial origins in military survival gear - were countered with raffia cloche hats and a pastel palette that suggested escapism rather than restraint.

The buzzwords for this stripped-back collection included "limitless elemental compositions", "nonconformist harmonies, new movements" and "impulse". In reference to its simplicity, after the show

Prada decried "useless, complicated ideas" and "a lot for the sake of doing a lot", adding: "We did less - but doing less isn't necessarily easier."

The catwalk setting emphasised the fine line between escapism and political statement. Models walked to an abstract soundscape, which started with birdsong and concluded with Elvis Presley's 1969 hit In the Ghetto, in a space that featured bare walls with retro, floral shagpile carpets, though it was usually adorned with chandeliers.

"This is the first time the Fondazione is ... completely bare, with all the daylight coming in," said Simons. "I think we conceived it as a whole experience, not like a collection, a show space ... more as a total feeling that we want to do."

As one of the world's most influential and in-demand brands, the spotlight is always on Prada to set the next season's trends. That its recent menswear shows have taken place during pivotal political moments this year has again put Prada in the hotseat to respond.

Asked on Sunday whether the collection had changed in response to world events, Simons and Prada said it had not, instead emphasising the theme of escapism.

"There were a lot of different elements coming in ... different cultures and ... eras," said Simons. "We talked a lot about nature ... the elements. Freedom to bring things together and express yourself the way you want."

Sunday's catwalk show was Prada's first since it bought Versace

for €1.25bn from the fashion conglomerate Capri Holdings in April, a historic deal that united two powerful Italian brands.

Last week the consultancy Bain & Company released a report that revealed the enormous pressure facing the global luxury sector.

It said: "Worldwide luxury spending, historically sensitive to uncertainty, is coming under intensified pressure as luxury consumers' confidence is eroded by current economic upheavals, geopolitical and trade tensions, currency fluctuations and financial market volatility ... The €1.5tn revenue industry faces its first slowdown since the global financial crisis of 2008 to 2009 (excluding the temporary shock of the Covid-19 pandemic)."

In spite of the slowdown, the Prada Group has reported revenues of €5.4bn in 2024, 17% higher than the previous year.

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**Raf Simons**  
Co-creative director





*The collection featured  
precision-pressed shirts  
with utilitarian tailoring  
and tiny matching shorts*

