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Chanel Trompe l'oeil trickery reveals influence of new creative director

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There was no designer to take a bow after Chanel in Paris, but the creative director, Matthieu Blazy – whose first show will take place in October – had already been at the sketchbook. “It is not his collection – but it is not happening without him either,” said Bruno Pavlovsky, president of Chanel. “You will see his touch.”

Inside the Grand Palais sat fashion’s favourite pop stars, Lorde and Gracie Abrams, alongside the outgoing Vogue editor, Anna Wintour. The show space had been transformed into a salon based on Chanel’s first boutique, with butterscotch carpets and floor to ceiling mirrors.

A gold wheatsheaf was placed on each seat – though not obviously

rooted in nature, the shoulder-baring dresses, flat boots and almost hippyish dropped waist wedding gown that closed the show certainly had a pastoral simplicity.

The show began by playing with Chanel’s Chanel-ness: little

box jackets and skirt suits, a look described by Vogue in 1964 as “the world’s prettiest uniform”, came updated in beige and black with jewelled buttons. Coco Chanel made a case for the comfort of dropped waist; here these were replaced by bare waists and belts.

More interesting were the looks that played around with the idea of a two-piece: wide legged mohair trouser suits came in robust plums, and hipster skirts with matching jackets. Known for his trompe l’oeil trickery, Blazy’s fingerprints were all over a suit with a jacket that appeared to be a jumper, and tweed that resembled sheepskin.

Chanel is the second largest luxury fashion brand in the world after Louis Vuitton. But even the biggest brands aren’t immune to the global luxury downturn and, after a decade of growth, last year’s revenues were down 4.3 per cent.

“Chanel is resisting quite well. Ready to wear is always growing, and that’s what matters. But [luxury fashion] is volatile,” said Pavlovsky, citing geopolitics and

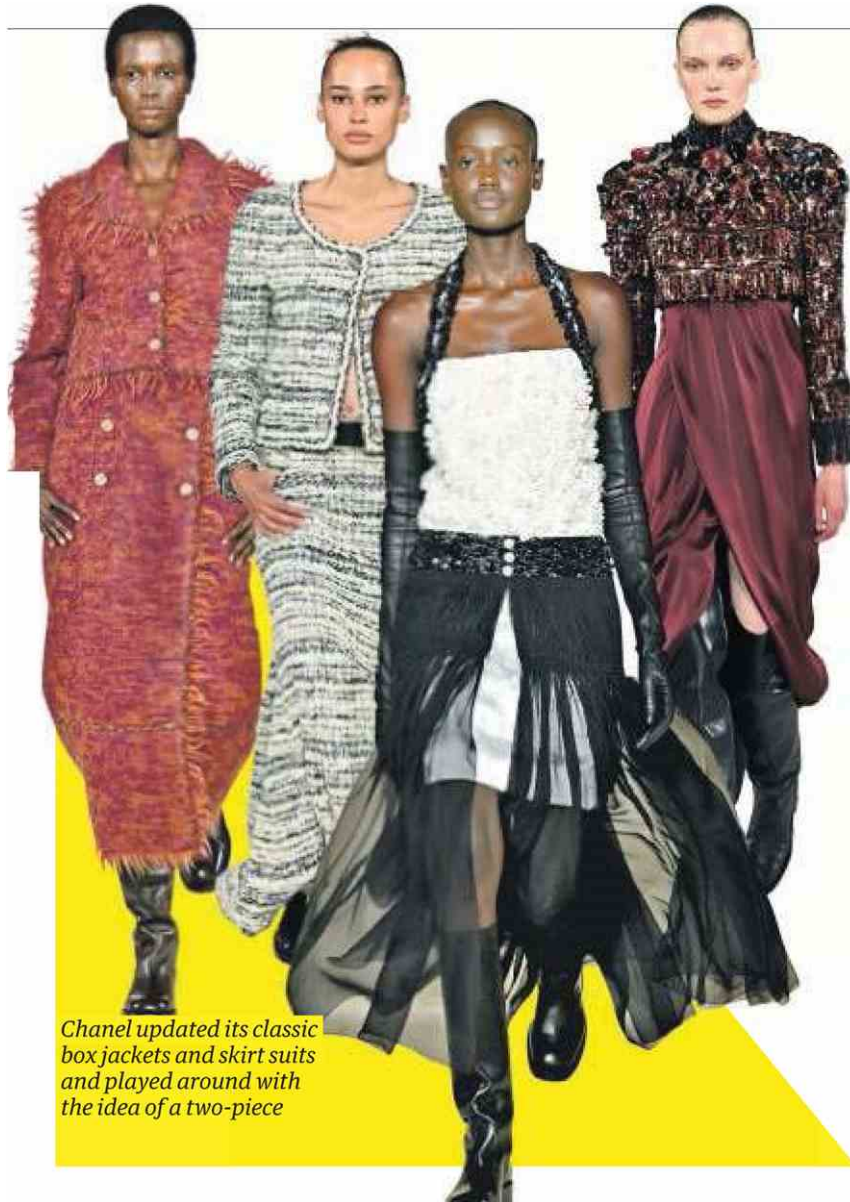
tariffs. “When the economy is difficult, it’s the bags that [suffer].”

The most in-demand designer right now, Jonathan Anderson, had a different response to the downturn: stopping fashion shows altogether. The Irish designer said he didn’t “want to be trapped by the show calendar any more. I am at Dior now, I want to focus on that.”

This isn’t the end for his namesake label, JW Anderson, rather a pivot towards lifestyle and homeware. From September, he will sell more than 500 cherrypicked collectibles and heirlooms, including chairs, gold jewellery, art and even food.

There are clothes too, though most are versions of his “greatest hits”, which will state precisely where they were made in the clothing label. A navy kilt came with new pockets, which kilts don’t usually have, and the resin pigeon clutch from 2022, once carried by Carrie Bradshaw, was updated with a softer and more durable beak.





Chanel updated its classic box jackets and skirt suits and played around with the idea of a two-piece

