

2025
PARIS Couture




Giambattista Valli

The OVGs – original Valli girls – were out in force on Monday night in Paris as their go-to designer, Giambattista Valli, was decorated as an Officier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, and straight after presented his 29th couture collection, installed on mannequins so guests could appreciate up close the intricate pleating, artful draping and frothy embroideries that would have you believe the tiny flowers on a silk bodice are made of feathers. (It's silk organza, by the way.)

Eugenie Niarchos, Bianca Brandolini, Giovanna Battaglia Engelbert, Lauren Santo Domingo and Alexia Niedzielski were among those who let out a cheer when French culture minister Rachida Dati pinned the green medal on Valli's lapel and drew him in for a hug.

Giambattista Valli and Rachida Dati
Courtesy of Giambattista Valli

Fashion critic Suzy Menkes had already declared the "delicate meld of elegance with froufrou as the essence of the designer's Franco-Italian style."

Valli said he selected Menkes to open the ceremony because he loved how she described him establishing his own brand after designing for the likes of Emmanuel Ungaro, Fendi and Roberto Capucci. "She compared me to a bike weaving through limousine traffic," he said, prompting rounds of laughter.

(For the record, she actually wrote in 2009 that with "no backer, no association with a big-brand luxury group and a bicycle instead of a limo, he represents a 21st-century version of a classic designer who just wants to make clothes.")

In his acceptance speech, Valli spoke of the precious skills his workshops possess, which he put to the test in his latest collection, hinged more on draping

and weightless volumes than surface decoration or bombastic shapes.

Rococo painters Jean-Honoré Fragonard and Jean-Antoine Watteau were references for the dreamy colors, bulging skirts, caped backs and overall bucolic spirit, expressed via fabric roses and buds nestled in bosoms and sleeves.

"Nymphs and muses" was how the designer summed up his seasonal fashion narrative.

All of the dresses seemed ideally suited for a summer ball, like the flower-filled one the Musée des Arts Décoratifs hosted Sunday night to kick off Paris Couture Week. Of course, Valli was there.

"Big volumes, but keeping it super light," he said during a preview, showing the layers of tulle underpinning his ballgowns, one with a portrait neckline in a silk organza printed in a pointillist style.

There were column styles, too, and at least four bridal contenders, for when Valli girls have to walk down a narrow aisle, perhaps on a private jet, or a wider one in a church. – *Miles Socha*


