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# Hot, rich: The Gucci premiere

MILAN

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The curtain went up on Gucci's new era Tuesday evening in Milan, not with a runway show but with a red carpet movie premiere guaranteed to put the brand back at the heart of the cultural conversation — and, possibly, many people's closets.

At least if they want to look "young, hot and rich" (as a line from the film went). Or really just hot and rich.

Hordes of onlookers crammed the square outside the stock market (where a Maurizio Cattelan sculpture offers a giant middle finger to finance) as Demi Moore arrived, resplendent in a high-neck long-sleeve backless Gucci dress dripping with gold sequins and embroidery. Gwyneth Paltrow made her entrance in a beige Gucci logo-a-gogo matching shirt and skirt combo, followed by Edward Norton, in a blue lounge-lizard suit by (yes) Gucci and Elliot Page, his Gucci shirt unbuttoned at the neck. Inside, a screening room had been lined in deep brown velvet, as if to bathe the guests in a sea of chocolate fondant.

"The Tiger," a 30-minute short film by Spike Jonze and the Dutch director Halina Reijn about a dysfunctional fictional fashion dynasty (that happened to be named Gucci), a disastrous dinner party and some accidental psychedelics was starting to roll.

Part absurdist comedy, part social commentary and part commercial, it had been inspired by the new looks that Demna, the mononymic designer charged with reviving Gucci, had created to redefine the brand. They added up to 37 versions of what he called "characters" (but which could also be called archetypes or stereotypes) with names like Primadonna, Contessa, L'Influencer, Nerd and Bastardo.

All of them a little flashy, a little familiar, often G-bedecked and always walking the very fine line between elegant and unapologetically kitschy that has signified Gucci.

The styles, which had been revealed the day before via a look book dropped on Instagram, were onscreen (every character was wearing new-collection

Gucci) and in the audience (every star present was also wearing new-collection Gucci, as was Anna Wintour) in a perfect swirl of life imitating art imitating life. Not to mention about as clear an argument as any designer had made that clothes are the ways we costume ourselves for the everyday theater of our lives, and an almost immediate reset for the brand.

Who doesn't love a fashion house willing to poke fun at the self-seriousness of rich people, as well as at fashion people, while simultaneously offering them the finery to advertise their status and then inviting everyone to be in on the joke?

Sure, the whole thing wasn't entirely original, either in form or in format. Demna has experimented with red carpets before. The clothes very clearly paid homage to Gucci's most formative aesthetics, including Aldo Gucci's Jackie Kennedy chic, Tom Ford's ironic sex, Frida Giannini's unabashed floral glitz and Alessandro Michele's magpie fantasias, all of it with a bit of Demna-isms thrown in: his love of a stiff, quasi-Elizabethan collar and a pussy-bow shirtwaist.

And lately, soft launching new collections during film premieres seems to be a favored strategy of many designers debuting at big brands (see the many celebs wearing previously unseen looks from Dior, Versace and Bottega Veneta at the Venice Film Festival).

But Demna's premiere took that idea and raised it one. That was more than enough to clear Gucci's recent experiment with wishy-washy quiet luxury under the previous designer Sabato De Sarno from everyone's mind. If the TV shows Demna's foundational collection really called to mind were Aaron Spelling's "Dallas" and "Dynasty," but a "Duomo" version, his genius was in swapping out Spelling for Jonze and Reijn and giving the whole thing a knowing high-culture overlay.

The result clearly reflected the difference between what Demna is doing at Gucci and what he did at his former job, at Balenciaga, where he once also replaced a regular catwalk with a (much-heralded) red carpet show. The shift

goes deeper than the fact his suiting is slick, rather than oversize.

Then, as now, the clothes were part of the setup. Then the experience served as pointed meta-commentary on the rise of voyeuristic red carpet culture, and the film was a version of the "The Simpsons."

Now the irony is mostly gone, and, like the multiple fur coats in Demna's new collection, including a chunky mink and a short snow leopard, all of which turned out to all be made of shearling, there's accessibility under the fabulousness. There has to be, if Gucci's design is world domination. Even though, in person and onscreen, some of the fully encrusted gowns with their ego-puffed shoulders looked stiff and unwieldy.

Before the film, Demna, who was happily schmoozing guests as they came into the theater, said the message of the movie was about learning to give up control and accepting the impossibility of perfection. He did, after all, have to hand over the directing and editing reins to Mr. Jonze and Ms. Reijn (and Arianne Phillips, the costume designer, who got to pick and choose what look went with what person).

"I told my therapist 'I think we kind of accelerated therapy by like, five years because I learned how to let go completely,'" he said.

That's not necessarily what comes through in the clothes, which mostly embody the glory of in-your-face striving rather than the beauty of flawed humanity. Still, even more than a lipstick or some piece of small leather goods, a movie is open to all. It suggests everyone can be part of La Famiglia, or at least relate to it, even laugh at it. And, in so doing, buy into it.

**It was a perfect swirl of life imitating art imitating life.**





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Gwyneth Paltrow  
in La VIP, the  
Gucci logo look.



From near right,  
the looks named  
Primadonna, La  
Cattiva and An-  
drogino.







PHOTOGRAPHS BY SIMBARASHE CHA/THE NEW YORK TIMES

**The model Alex Consani attending the Gucci film premiere in a tiger-stripe fur called La Bomba from Gucci's spring 2026 collection.**





Left, Anna Wintour in a Flora print dress and Demi Moore in La Mece-nate, covered in sequins and embroidery. Above, Elliot Page in a Gucci suit.

