

K E R I N G



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KERING - CORPORATE



Kering shares notch best-ever quarter as De Meo readies overhaul

Investors have pushed Kering shares up 64% since De Meo's appointment, betting the new CEO can reverse Gucci's eight-quarter sales decline and close the gap with LVMH and Hermès. Even before Kering's Luca de Meo has had a chance to turn around stumbling fashion label Gucci, investors have rewarded him with a surging stock price. If the new CEO pulls it off, the shares could have a lot further to go.

That's the view of analysts such as John San Marco at Neuberger Berman, who say De Meo has already started to put the pieces in place for a recovery, naming a new boss at Gucci and vowing to cut costs. The shares have surged 64% since news broke in June that he was joining the company; the third-quarter gain of 53% is the biggest-ever quarterly advance for Kering.

"There's a very high ceiling should they start to get the creative and product right," San Marco said in an interview. "The leadership overhaul we've seen in rapid succession threads a difficult needle of cleaning up lines of accountability and responsibility."

A revival of Gucci would end a long run of frustration for shareholders of Kering, founded by billionaire Francois Pinault and run by his son, Francois-Henri Pinault, before De Meo's arrival in September. In the decade before the Italian executive's appointment, the shares limped along with a return of 3.8% annually, while French rivals LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton and Hermès International returned 13% and 21% a year, respectively.

Kering representatives didn't respond to a request for comment.

In the past three years, Gucci, Kering's biggest brand, has faced management and design upheaval, just as the market for luxury goods weakened, especially in China.

The fashion house has had four CEOs since September 2023, as well as three designers after Alessandro Michele left in November 2022 following a successful creative period that introduced an exuberant and bohemian style to the fashion crowds. Revenue at Gucci has declined for eight straight quarters and is expected to do so again when Kering reports third-quarter sales on October 22.

One thing both bulls and bears agree on is that it's too soon to see the fruits of De Meo's changes. HSBC analysts including Anne-Laure Bismuth, who raised their rating on the stock to buy from hold last month, said Gucci isn't likely to start reporting sales growth until the second quarter next year. But the lackluster performance analysts expect for the third quarter won't really matter, they said.

"We believe the new management gets a pass as the next few quarters will be deemed to be the legacy of the previous management," Bismuth and colleagues said in a report this week. "It will be another opportunity for the market to grasp what profound changes have already been implemented in quite a short period of time."

Demna's Gucci debut: Cinema, family, and the return of drama

Skeptics point out that the market is already pricing in a turnaround. Since July, Kering shares have been more expensive relative to earnings than an industry basket compiled by Goldman Sachs Group, after having been significantly cheaper for more than five years.

That valuation might leave investors hesitant going forward, said Flavio Cereda, investment director at GAM UK, who sold his stake in March when Kering appointed



Balenciaga's Demna Gvasalia as Gucci's artistic director.

"You need a genuine reversal of trend for long-only funds to become interested again, and there's no reason for that to happen yet," Cereda said. "We'll see the real impact from next spring onwards. That's when we'll know whether the perception of Gucci is changing and whether the brand is becoming more relevant again."

Demna, as the artistic director is known, will unveil his first catwalk collection in Milan in February.

Analysts turned much more bearish on Kering over the past three years than on its competitors. The stock now has 10 sell ratings, 15 holds and only seven buys, according to data compiled by Bloomberg, and the average target price of 225.45 euros (\$264.73) is 20% below where the shares are trading. LVMH has only one sell recommendation and Hermès two, with targets above the current stock price.

Still, analysts are growing a bit more optimistic: The recommendation consensus — proxy for the ratio of buy, hold, and sell ratings — has ticked higher since De Meo was named CEO.

"Whilst we are encouraged by a new external and well-regarded CEO, we do not expect an overnight fix," RBC analyst Piral Dadhania, who has a neutral rating on the stock, wrote last month.

And even Kering's high price-earnings ratio isn't an obstacle to further gains: In addition to the higher share price, the valuation reflects the collapse in earnings estimates over the past year. Any upward revisions to estimates would quickly bring the PE ratio back down.

Already traders have trimmed their bearish bets on the stock. Shares out on loan, an indication of short interest, represented about 7% of the company's free float, as of Monday, according to data from S&P Global Market Intelligence, down from 21% in May.

Kering will require investors' patience on Gucci's turnaround and the overall recovery of the luxury sector, Morningstar analyst Jelena Sokolova wrote in a note.

"Gucci should be in a position to regain its pricing and desirability in the long run," Sokolova said. "Although the catalysts are unclear, we have yet to see a brand of Gucci's global recognition and scale fall permanently out of fashion."

By Levin Stamm

Demna's Balenciaga: The anatomy of disruption





Jewellers build on Japan's 'luxury haven' reputation

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Cinemoda Club: una rassegna di film che è stata come un sogno. Tutte le foto e i protagonisti

I frame, proprio come al cinema, dei momenti più belli della prima rassegna cinematografica di Vogue Italia e Kering, durante la settimana della moda di Milano.

Di Corinne Corci



Il racconto, le foto e le citazioni da Cinemoda Club, la prima rassegna di film di Vogue Italia e Kering a Milano durante la settimana della moda.

C'è una frase che porto con me, dopo questa **prima edizione di Cinemoda Club, la rassegna di Vogue Italia e Kering a Milano**, durante la settimana della moda. È che «l'amore nasce in silenzio». È stata solo una delle combinazioni meravigliose di parole emerse durante i discorsi e le introduzioni dei giornalisti, editor della redazione e ospiti speciali che hanno anticipato gli oltre 37 film proiettati tra Cinema Arlecchino, Mexico e Palestrina durante le nostre giornate al cinema. Come **Valeria Golino**, madrina speciale dell'iniziativa, che attraversando i suoi ruoli, ottenuti e non (come quello famosissimo di *Pretty Woman*, al cui casting si presentò proprio insieme a Julia Roberts, «la vidi e sul suo volto ho visto la mia fine»). «Non bisogna diventare un pupazzo. Non voglio portare prodotto ma portare delle cose che ho voglia, che non mi snaturino», ha raccontato a **Gianluca Farinelli**, direttore della **Cineteca di Bologna** che ha curato la rassegna, e con cui ha conversato per il numero di Vogue Italia di settembre. «Ogni abito scelto non deve essere solo bello, ma deve raccontare una storia, senza allo stesso tempo rivelare troppo».

Proprio le storie sono state protagoniste di questi tre giorni di cinema ininterrotti, durante i quali non sono mancate le interazioni con il pubblico in sala, studenti, affezionati (come al Palestrina, con la coppia di amiche che si ritrova in sala ogni venerdì). E se, nelle storie, il motore di tutto è dato dai dettagli (lo ha ricordato anche la modella e attrice **Greta Ferro**, introducendo *Tacchi a Spillo* di Pedro Almodovar: «Un film che puoi sentire invece che vedere, come tutta la sua filmografia», come quando una delle protagoniste associa la madre al rumore dei suoi tacchi, «mi è capitato lo stesso, con mia nonna»), sono proprio quelli più piccoli ad aver fatto la differenza durante questa rassegna. Mani, applausi, risate (è successo durante *Do the right thing* di Spike Lee), aneddoti personali (come capitato a **Federico Chiara**, director print di Vogue Italia introducendo *The September issue*), ricordi di famiglia come per **Sara**





Sozzani Maino, direttrice creativa della Fondazione Sozzani, nelle parole commoventi con cui ha richiamato l'attenzione su Franca, per *Franca: Chaos and creation*.

«Mio padre è in questo film, nonostante abbia sempre negato il suo valore autobiografico», ha detto **Francesco Zurlini**, figlio del Valerio regista de *La prima notte di quiete*. «Leggenda narra che il cappotto indossato da Alain Delon fosse proprio il suo, e lo era, come il resto dei vestiti che indossa il protagonista. Quest'anima viandante, solitaria e sola, che vaga per l'umidità della Romagna nella malinconia degli stabilimenti balneari che si chiudono».

Abiti che hanno fatto la storia delle donne che gli hanno indossati e creati, come Mary Quant. «Per me è importante ritrovare la sua figura, una donna poco celebrata anche se ha avuto un valore importantissimo nell'ambito sociale, storico e politico», come ha ricordato la cantautrice **Marianne Mirage**, approfondendo il documentario *Quant*. «Mi piace molto parlare di lei come di una donna libera, perché è sempre molto importante pensare che la libertà non è qualcosa che abbiamo dappertutto, noi oggi, come donne, non l'abbiamo spesso». Così come *Cleò dalle 5 alle 7* di Agnes Varda, con quei cappelli e quei vestiti che, come ha ricordato Farinelli hanno suggerito uno spazio immaginario in cui salvarsi allontanandosi dai drammi della propria vita.

Dal ricordo di Chanel e dell'abito di mussola nero ne *L'anno scorso a Marienbad*, o nei vestiti di *The Greeks had a word for them*, apologia femminista ante litteram, fino a quello di Giorgio Armani in *Made in Milan*, cortometraggio famosissimo di Scorsese dedicato allo stilista da poco scomparso. E poi i film muti con l'accompagnamento al pianoforte dal vivo, i tentativi di ritrovare qualcuno del cast nel sequel del film durante la proiezione al Mexico del *Diavolo veste Prada* (non avevamo tutti i torti, considerando che **Meryl Streep è venuta a vedere il documentario** dedicato a Diane Vreeland, proprio al Mexico). Dietro alle tende pesanti e alle porte che nascondevano persone e schermi, Cinemoda Club è stato il più felliniano dei sogni, con il paesaggio esterno – quello di Milano sotto la pioggia o sotto il sole – e quello interno di tutte le nostre storie sospese, in cui ci siamo immersi anche grazie alle colonne sonore di **Cam Sugar** (il più grande catalogo di colonne sonore del cinema italiano e francese), ascoltate nei tre foyer tra un film e l'altro.

L'amore nasce in silenzio, come quello tra i due protagonisti di *In the mood for love*, rivisto insieme al fotografo e modello **Malick Bodian** e a un gruppo di studenti che si sono presentati alla proiezione del mattino per vedere per la prima volta o rivedere alcune delle scene più cult di uno dei film ritenuti tra i migliori di sempre. «C'è quel momento in cui loro due scendono le scale, si sfiorano appena, la giacca di lui tocca il qipao tipico tradizionale cinese di lei, e nemmeno si guardano», ha ricordato Bodian, «e lì si legge tutta la passione di un incontro». Perché l'amore nasce in silenzio. Proprio come succede al buio, al cinema.

KERING - LUXE



La fashion week côté coulisses

LE POINT MERCATO C'est historique : 14 maisons défilent cette saison avec une nouvelle direction artistique. Parmi les plus applaudies, Rachel Scott chez Proenza Schouler a réussi l'exploit de réaliser sa collection à la dernière minute en collaboration avec le duo Jack McCollough et Lazaro Hernandez partis chez Loewe. C'est également un sans-faute pour Louise Trotter, qui succède à Mathieu Blazy (parti chez Chanel) chez Bottega Veneta, où l'élégance des volumes et des mouvements de franges et de cuir est totalement respectée. La collection de Simone Bellotti pour Jil Sander a quasiment fait l'unanimité avec ses lignes minimalistes fidèles à la marque. Si la première collection pour femme de Jonathan W. Anderson est saluée, celle de Dario Vitale chez Versace divise. Nouveau pavé dans la mare du mercato : après le défilé, Silvia Venturini Fendi a annoncé qu'elle quittait son poste de directrice artistique pour occuper celui de présidente d'honneur.

LA GUCCI FAMILY

ET SON AVANT-PREMIÈRE Côté mercato, Gucci n'est pas en reste, puisque pour sa première collection Demna Gvasalia (ex-Balenciaga) a mis le paquet sur le storytelling. Ainsi, *La Famiglia* a été présentée en grande pompe avec une vraie-fausse projection du film *The Tiger* réalisé pour l'occasion. Le soir de l'événement, les amies de la maison, Gwyneth Paltrow, Demi Moore ou encore Lila Moss, ont posé au *photo call* comme lors des vraies soirées hollywoodiennes.

Composée de 37 archétypes, chacun présenté dans un cadre de tableau, de la *Ragazza* à la star, en passant par le *Directore* (directeur), le *Nerd* ou la *Gallerista* (galeriste), la collection de Demna, si elle réhabilite certaines pièces iconiques de Gucci, comme la fourrure en guise de robe du soir, le logo en total look ou encore la ceinture au double G, est aussi une parodie des étiquettes que l'on s'obstine à accoler à la mode.

LE CASTING DU « DIABLE S'HABILLE EN PRADA » EN FRONT ROW

À Milan, Meryl Streep, alias Miranda Priestly dans *Le diable s'habille en Prada*, a enfin rencontré son homologue dans la vraie vie, Anna Wintour, vraie (ex-) rédactrice en chef de *Vogue*. Puis l'actrice s'est installée en front row du défilé Dolce & Gabbana, vêtue comme son personnage et accompagnée de Nigel (son assistant dans le film) également en costume de son personnage. Une insertion de personnages fictifs dans la réalité qui sonne comme une *inception*, mais surtout comme un fabuleux coup de com pour promouvoir la prochaine sortie du nouveau volet du *Diable s'habille en Prada*, prévue pour mai 2026.

LA WATCH PARTY Le nouveau défilé, c'est la fan zone. Après sa naissance spontanée à Paris en juin avec la projection du défilé Dior en direct dans un petit bar, l'influenceur et critique de mode Lyas a affiné son concept : donner rendez-vous à ses abonnés qui ne peuvent assister aux défilés pour une projection live de ces derniers. Paris accueille donc la Watching Party, dans la cour de La Caserne (dans le 10^e), et

ce pour toute la durée de la fashion week. De quoi réinventer l'expérience du front row et la transformer en un moment de partage et de joie collective, un peu comme une soirée match. La fashion week, nouvelle Ligue des Champions ? ■



Jil Sander

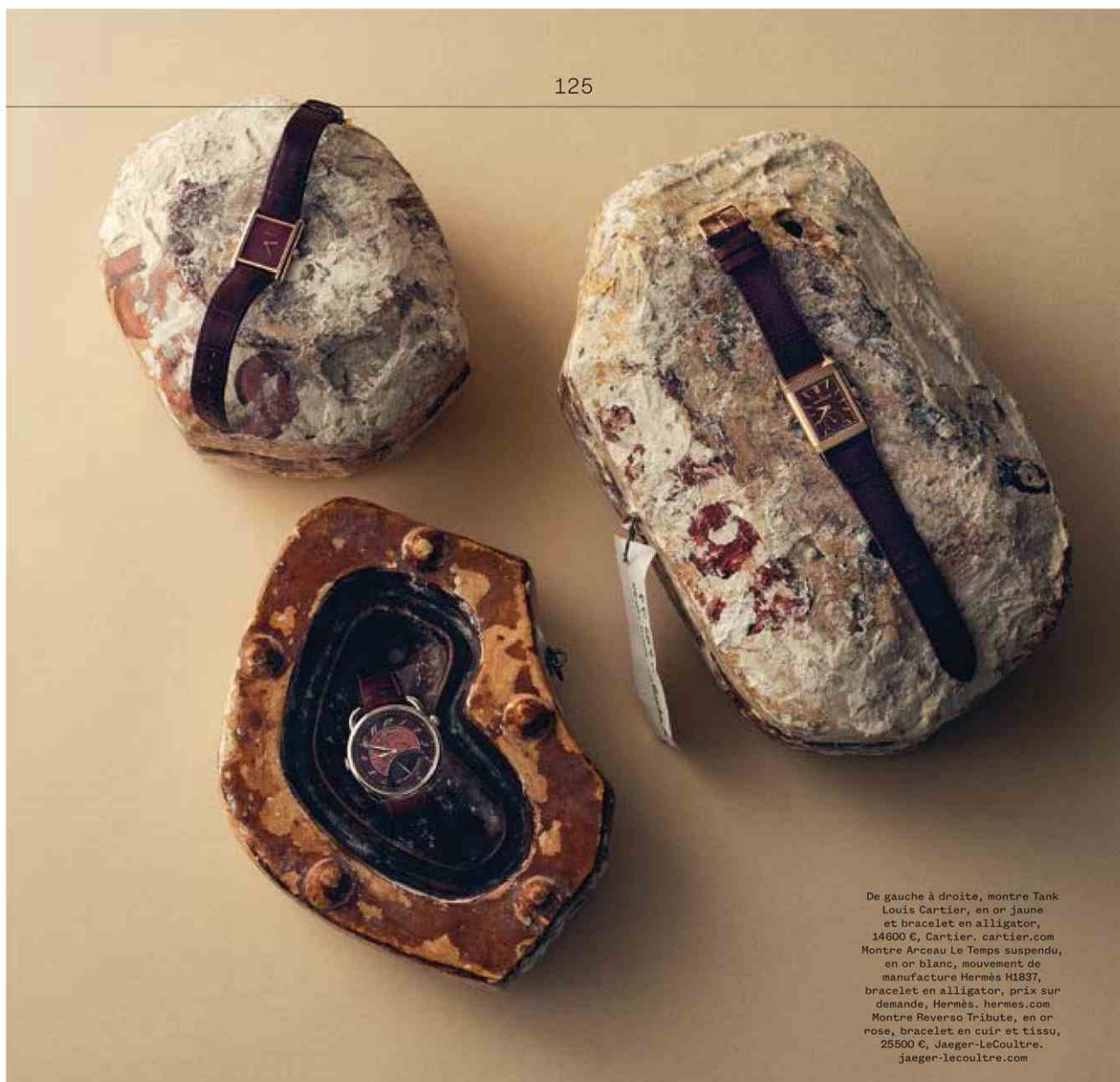


INSTA GUCCI

Dans la famille Gucci, je voudrais la « ragazza » Lila Moss.

SETTY IMAGES / AFP

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De gauche à droite, montre Tank Louis Cartier, en or jaune et bracelet en alligator, 14600 €, Cartier, cartier.com
Montre Arceau Le Temps suspendu, en or blanc, mouvement de manufacture Hermès H1837, bracelet en alligator, prix sur demande, Hermès, hermes.com
Montre Reverso Tribute, en or rose, bracelet en cuir et tissu, 25500 €, Jaeger-LeCoultre, jaeger-lecoultre.com

VARIATIONS

Grands crus

Si les Français disent « bordeaux », Pantone, l'entreprise américaine spécialisée dans le classement et l'usage des couleurs, aime parler de « Windsor Wine » (référence 19-1528). Une histoire de vin noble à la robe séduisante, qui désigne une teinte sobre et automnale, dont le prêt-à-porter de luxe, notamment féminin, s'est piqué ces deux dernières années. Pour sa collection printemps-été 2024, Hermès en faisait la tonalité-clé d'un défilé sensuel et affranchi, où les peaux apparaissaient sous les cuirs et les twills de soie. Gucci, sous l'impulsion de son précédent directeur artistique Sabato de Sarno (parti en février 2025), l'imposait pour l'intégralité des emballages de la griffe sous le nom de Rosso Ancora et le martelait ensuite à grands coups de silhouettes monochromes. Si la mode masculine cède moins facilement à ce genre d'emballage colorimétrique, des notes de bordeaux gagnent toutefois le poignet des hommes depuis quelques semaines. Certaines marques, comme Omega, l'emploient en bordure de cadran, mais la plupart l'épousent pleinement, du cadran au bracelet, comme, récemment, Hublot ou, ici, Jaeger-LeCoultre, Hermès et Cartier. ^(M)

Valentin Pérez | Photo Maxime Poiblanç | Réalisation Fiona Khalifa | Scénographie Margot Thiry



Saint Laurent delivers a picture-postcard show

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CULTURE & TENDANCES

TENDANCE

Crinolines et sleepwear sur les podiums de la fashion week de Paris. Les défilés printemps-été 2026 imposent leurs nouvelles obsessions.

P.37

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THIBAUD MORITZ/AFP

Que retenir des premiers défilés printemps-été 2026 ?

De New York à Paris, en passant par Londres Milan, petit tour d'horizon international des collections et des temps forts de cette semaine de folies.

NINA BOUTLÉROFF

Inaugurée par Saint Laurent avec un show grandiloquent sous la tour Eiffel et un front row de célébrités internationales – Madonna, Zoë Kravitz, Charli XCX, Hailey Bieber ou Charlotte Gainsbourg –, suivi de Louis Vuitton (où se pressaient, dans les appartements d'Anne d'Autriche au Louvre, Zendaya et Emma Stone), puis de Dior et la première collection femme de Jonathan W. Anderson, (attendue comme le messie et observée de près par Rosalia

ou encore Charlize Theron installées au premier rang), la semaine de la mode parisienne a démarré sur les chapeaux de roues. Succédant à celles de New York, de Londres et de Milan, la fashion week parisienne porte jusqu'ici cette même énergie singulière observée dans les autres capitales, où tout le monde semble se poser la question cruciale : les algorithmes ont-ils uniformisé la mode ? Qu'elles accueillent une nouvelle direction artistique (Gucci, Dior, Bottega Veneta) ou poursuivent avec leur chef de file patrimonial (Prada, Saint Laurent, Louis Vuitton), les maisons tentent

► 5 octobre 2025

chacune de se reconnecter à son identité. Lors du défilé Vuitton, un mantra était d'ailleurs énoncé par Cate Blanchett en bande-son : « *Le véritable luxe réside dans la liberté de se retrouver soi-même.* »

Retour aux fondamentaux

Ainsi, chacune des grandes maisons intègre à sa collection printemps-été 2026 ses fondamentaux : des sahariennes et du drame chez Saint Laurent, du baroque futuriste chez Vuitton, du porno chic et des robes du soir transparentes chez Tom Ford, des costumes bien taillés et des matières écoresponsables chez Stella McCartney, des franges et du cuir tressé chez Bottega Veneta... Chez Dior, Jonathan W. Anderson a quant à lui exploré les archives de la maison ainsi que son inépuisable univers créatif. Si de nombreuses silhouettes résonnent avec sa première collection pour l'homme (une cape, une veste à basques en laine verte...), s'inspirant à la fois des épopées à la Maria Grazia Chiuri et de l'ère John Galliano, Jonathan W. Anderson a rendu hommage à tous ses prédécesseurs, Yves Saint-Laurent, Gianfranco Ferré, John Galliano, Raf Simons, Kim Jones, réunis dans une vidéo projetée en introduction du défilé. Outre la réhabilitation des basiques, il règne aussi depuis New York, Londres, Milan, et maintenant à Paris, une ambiance ouverte à la joie – avec des jeux de couleurs –, à l'oisiveté, ou encore à l'opulence. De quoi contrer les sombres années à venir ? ■

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ALPPO F101

Bottega Veneta, un nuovo giorno (profumato)

Una fragranza luminosa come l'alba, dopo l'oscurità della mezzanotte. Invitante come i sogni di un giorno che inizia. Il jus novità di una maison che "intreccia", con maestria, storie olfattive

Di Redazione



La **mezzanotte** è il confine silenzioso tra ciò che è stato e ciò che può ancora essere. È l'ora delle promesse sussurrate, dei pensieri più profondi. Come scriveva **Emily Dickinson**: «A mezzanotte, ciascuno cerca qualcosa, **spesso se stesso**». È a questo **tempo sospeso**, quando non è più ieri, ma non ancora domani, che **Bottega Veneta dedica un trio di nuove fragranze, a comporre la collezione "Mezzanotte"**. E se il buio è introspezione, l'alba è rinascita. Luci e ombre, entrambe, sono parti inseparabili del cambiamento, e ricordano che un nuovo inizio è sempre possibile.

Bottega Veneta, il profumo di un nuovo giorno

Almost Dawn è l'incarnazione olfattiva di questa magica transizione: **l'alba, l'ora in cui l'ombra quieta della notte si apre lentamente alla luce del nuovo**. Le sue note si fondono con armonia, come i ritmi del cosmo. **Ispirata alla prima luce del mattino**, questa composizione olfattiva è un **omaggio silenzioso alla calma** e all'ottimismo con cui si osserva il mondo, prima che inizi a scorrere via, con i suoi tempi. È anche un atto di ottimismo, di fiducia discreta in nuove possibilità.

La rotondità calda e avvolgente del **castagno evoca la terra**, il fuoco lento di un calore che accoglie e conforta. A questa base solida e rassicurante si intreccia la **sofisticata intensità del tartufo, che dona un tocco di mistero e sensualità**, come la scia dell'oscurità che sfuma lentamente. Il tutto viene ammorbidito da una **pregiata vaniglia, una carezza gentile all'anima** e ai sensi. **Almost Dawn** è una fragranza intima eppure espansiva, che resta vicina alla pelle ma sa anche farsi spazio nell'aria, lasciando una scia luminosa.

Un'opera d'arte di flacone

La fragranza è racchiusa in un **flacone di vetro che sembra modellato dalla natura**: la silhouette è **fluida e organica, quasi plasmata dall'acqua**, e poi sigillata dal legno scolpito del tappo. Alla base, **un elemento scultoreo, un piedistallo in marmo nero Marquina**, oscuro come una notte veneziana. Fedeli allo spirito artigianale e materico della maison, i **flaconi di tutte le fragranze sono veri e propri oggetti d'arte**, con il vetro e le sue curvature morbide che omaggiano la millenaria storia di Murano.

Il marmo, solido e regale, richiama invece la forza terrena della natura. **Ogni elemento dialoga con gli altri in un equilibrio raffinato**, in un incontro che trasforma la composizione in un'esperienza da toccare, guardare e indossare.



Una famiglia che si allarga

Prosegue così il racconto olfattivo iniziato con il lancio della prima collezione di fragranze firmate **Bottega Veneta**, lo scorso autunno.

Le altre due new entry? **Hinoki**, che unisce le note balsamiche dell'abete, il pregiato legno giapponese di hinoki e la sensualità del patchouli, a evocare una passeggiata in una foresta antica, e **Good Morning Midnight**, che combina invece l'eleganza dell'oud thailandese con un rosa opulenta e una nota di fragolina di bosco, metafora di ottimismo e gioia di vivere. **Il fil rouge è sempre il concetto di "intrecciato olfattivo"**: un incontro di essenze provenienti da ogni parte del mondo, sapientemente armonizzate per dare vita a profumi dalla personalità unica. Come ciascuno di noi. E ciascuno dei nostri nuovi giorni.



The Reviews

Balenciaga

Scorched-earth policies are so last season: Most designers making their debuts at European heritage houses for spring 2026 are paying homage to the creatives that came before them.

Perhaps none more gallantly than Pierpaolo Piccioli, whose strong debut at Balenciaga on Saturday night drew many straight lines – and some dotted ones – to Cristóbal Balenciaga, and to the two 21st-century talents who propelled the brand into the big leagues: Nicolas Ghesquière and Demna, now leading Louis Vuitton and Gucci respectively.

"I don't want to deny what has been here before," he told a huddle of editors and well-wishers after the show, whose celebrity guests included Isabelle Huppert, Kristen Scott Thomas, Anne Hathaway, FKA Twigs and – to the puzzlement of many – Meghan Markle.

There were moments when you wondered if you might be chez Valentino, where Piccioli spent the lion's share of his career. Among the VIPs arriving at the steamy, cross-shaped venue were Giancarlo Giammetti, Valentino Garavani's longtime business partner, who arrived with Georgina Brandolini, a longtime muse and collaborator of the Roman couturier.

But once the show got underway – the first model wearing a sleeveless black sack dress accessorized with fierce, bug-eyed sunglasses – Piccioli's methodology was clear.

Nods to the founder were many, including T-shirt, white shirt and black leather cape versions of the founder's famous Darth Vader-esque 1967 wedding ensemble; and numerous balloon dresses and skirts, the most striking in black leather.

Cristóbal's famous tulip dress was cross-pollinated with Demna's streetwear sensibility in baggy Bermuda shorts, sometimes in khaki, sometimes in denim with rips and tears. Jeans also came in wide-legged versions, dragging under the feet as Demna would have them, minus the mud.

The tall riding hats and egg-shaped coats with big buttons were an echo of Ghesquière's fall 2006 Balenciaga collection, while supersized and pint-sized versions of Le City Bag took you back to his first "It" accessory, introduced in 2001. ►

Yet the inimitable handwriting of Piccioli – his graceful, sculptural silhouettes, his opulent use of color, his romanticism – shone through, thrusting Balenciaga in an exciting new direction.

The Italian designer, who had a one-year hiatus after exiting Valentino, also proved he's in tune with fashion's current obsession with bringing sexy back, his cropped shirts and leather tops revealing large slices of toned midriffs.

That said, Piccioli made no apologies for opening the show with the sack dress, introduced in 1957 and a radical departure from the stiff, hourglass shapes of the era.

"That dress is so relevant and so meaningful, because it freed women from their restrictions," he said backstage.

To wit: Piccioli built his first Balenciaga collection on new versions of the gazar fabrics the founder used to achieve volume with lightness, his most important legacy.

Underlying these innovations is a kindness and goodwill that Piccioli has demonstrated his entire career, and maybe that's the newest thing in fashion. Welcome back Pierpaolo! – *Miles Socha*







‘There was so much love in that room’: First reactions to Pierpaolo Piccioli’s Balenciaga

Claire Thomson-Jonville, Derek Blasberg, Alix Morabito and more discuss the beloved designer’s debut for Balenciaga.

By Laure Guilbault



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In his debut collection for Balenciaga, Pierpaolo Piccioli drew on founder Cristóbal Balenciaga’s rich archives and picked up where Demna left off, quite literally. The show was staged at the Kering headquarters inside the historic Laennec landmark, where his predecessor’s exhibition was held in July.

There were 560 guests at the star-studded show, including Meghan Markle, Lauren Sánchez Bezos and Georgina Rodriguez. The front row had long-time Balenciaga ambassador Isabelle Huppert and new faces for the brand who wore Piccioli’s creations for Valentino, such as Anne Hathaway, Simone Ashley and Shailene Woodley. (One absentee was Demna’s Balenciaga house ambassador Nicole Kidman, who is rumoured to have joined Chanel.)

Piccioli’s mastery of couture translated into a compelling ready-to-wear proposal. The show opened with an iteration of Cristóbal’s tubular Sack dress. There were black tailored silhouettes, brushes of colours and plenty of new accessories like the Bolero handbag. “I didn’t want to go back to the roots. I wanted to study the archives and find my own way. I discovered a sort of method. Cristóbal was an architect, a sculptor and a painter. He always put the body at the centre of his research,” Piccioli explained during a preview on Saturday afternoon.

Piccioli’s appointment at Balenciaga in May came a year after the Italian designer stepped down from Valentino. His romantic universe seems far from Demna’s process of deconstruction and irony. But when appointed creative director of Balenciaga, Piccioli told *Vogue Runway* and *Vogue Business* global director Nicole Phelps that he wanted “to embrace the past, because I feel that it’s very important to have respect for what Nicolas [Ghesquière] and Demna did before me. The story of Balenciaga is a story of designers that I respect. This is more a passing of [the] torch rather than a game of chairs, and I feel very lucky to be a part of it.”



He did just that. The show invitation came in Balenciaga's signature grey box. In it, there was a Walkman with a cassette playing the sound of a beating heart. It could easily have been mistaken for a Demna Balenciaga invitation. "I wanted to give a sort of continuity between Demna and me, the show is where Demna staged an exhibition about his 10 years at Balenciaga. So I like the idea of starting where my predecessor ended," Piccioli said. The heartbeat was actually Piccioli's, the designer revealed. "This is my deeply personal approach [to Balenciaga]."

And the grey box? "I didn't want to change the colour, the logo. I feel good here, so I don't need to change the font of the logo in order to find my place," Piccioli said.

Balenciaga is not immune to the luxury downturn. Kering doesn't break down sales of its "other houses" division, which includes Balenciaga, alongside brands like Alexander McQueen and Boucheron. "The division's revenue in the second quarter of 2025 was down 16 per cent on a comparable basis, with contrasting performances among houses," Kering said in its Q2 earnings release. According to Morgan Stanley estimates, Balenciaga sales hit €1.66 billion in 2024 (up from €360 million in 2015, when Demna took the creative helm). On Saturday after the show, Kering's new CEO Luca de Meo came backstage to congratulate Piccioli.

Here's what some industry observers have to say about the show.

Derek Blasberg, author of And Another Thing Substack

The man is clearly one of the most beloved men in the industry. There was so much love in that room, and it felt like he knew it when he took his bow. His incredible use of colour was on full display, and so were subtle nods to the designers who were at the house before him — from Cristóbal to Demna. I'm almost certain the green floral knit dress was a print that Nicolas Ghesquière introduced to the house. This is a season of so many starts, which has been exciting to watch. But at a house like Balenciaga, which is over a century old, the trick is longevity.

Claire Thomson-Jonville, head of editorial content for Vogue France

It was a masterful contemporary take on Balenciaga, infused with the best elements that we know and love from Pierpaolo. The gowns were sublime, but they felt very modern. There was an edgy side to the collection, which I loved — those pants were insane with the cropped leather tops and, of course, the denim. Denim is a huge theme this season, but I thought it felt really grown-up but cool. I will see myself dressing like that. It was, in a way, reassuring to see those bags that everybody loves, but there was a real feeling so elevated and fresh that I personally really connected with it.

Alix Morabito, global buying director at Galeries Lafayette

Pierpaolo immersed himself in Balenciaga's archives, and we can see some echoes of this. References to Cristóbal, with work on volumes and colours and a more couture approach; to Nicolas Ghesquière, through the City bag and bowler hats; and to Demna, through certain styling elements such as glasses. We also note the development of numerous accessories.

Tim Lim, group fashion director at Meta Media Holdings

There was a familiar sense of beauty, colour, bold-stroke texture, and pared-down chic that felt as much Pierpaolo as it did Balenciaga, with nods to his predecessors in some of the harder edges and accessories. A very telling sign of this new era was the appearance of Meghan Markle: just three months ago, her presence would have read in a much different way.

Yumi Shin, chief merchandising officer at Bergdorf Goodman

Pierpaolo Piccioli once again proves that fashion can be emotionally powerful, with a refined elegance that has become his signature. Each look showcased controlled volume that equally spoke of discipline



and freedom. The play of colour was vibrant and the proportions were delivered through a couture lens. Designed with kindness and always from the heart. It's this humanistic approach that transforms his work into something deeply moving. In a season of daily debuts, Piccioli's vision is one from the soul.

Law Roach, celebrity stylist

I love the attention to legacy and to the clothes. I also love that there was a little nod to Demna and what he brought at Balenciaga, with the glasses and some of the tailoring. Then we saw the colour, which Pierpaolo is known for. I think we would have been disappointed if we had not seen it. I think that it was a trifecta of past, present and future.

Brigitte Chartrand, chief buying and merchandising officer at Net-a-porter

I loved the black draped tailored looks that Pierpaolo showed under his new vision for Balenciaga. He honoured Cristóbal while bringing a new twist.

Comments, questions or feedback? Email us at feedback@voguebusiness.com.



Pierpaolo Picciolfs next act

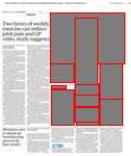
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Balenciaga Royal welcome for debut built around female empowerment

Jess Cartner-Morley

Paris

New names at Dior and Chanel have generated the most noise at this Paris fashion week, but it was Balenciaga's debut that brought the media storm with a front row coup: the Duchess of Sussex, making her first European appearance in three years. On Saturday night in Paris, Dior, Chanel - and Lauren Sánchez, who also attended the show - were all outdone for razzle-dazzle.

Until that point, the mood music around Pierpaolo Piccioli's debut had felt relatively serene. Balenciaga is a venerated house, and Piccioli a world-leading designer. Meghan's choice of Balenciaga - a French house founded by a Spaniard with an Italian designer - was notable for the absence of any links to Britain.

Intriguingly, the theme of Piccioli's "manifesto", as he described the collection backstage, was female emancipation. His starting point was Cristóbal Balenciaga's 1957 sack dress, a silhouette that sits proud of

the body to neither amplify nor constrict a woman's curves. The look was a radical expression of a zeitgeist that was beginning to shift from 1950s conservatism towards the 1960s, said Piccioli. "It was about progress for women. It freed women from the weight of clothes that sit on their body and talk about their body. The sack dress allowed women to be free in space."

Piccioli, who exudes an air of hippy-ish serenity, is not interested in seeing fashion as an ego battle. It is "cooler", he says, for designers to appreciate each other's talents. First on to the catwalk was a reworking of the sack dress, elongated to an ankle-skimming hem, worn with opera gloves - but also with wraparound bug-eye sunglasses that were a direct hat-tip to the apocalypse-chic of Balenciaga's erstwhile designer Demna. Piccioli said he was hoping for a "reconciliation" between the couture roots of the house, and its streetwear era. Balenciaga's most famous silhouettes were included in the show: a "cocoon" coat, this time in poison green, and a trapeze dress in violent purple.

Michael Rider worked closely

with Phoebe Philo during her tenure at Celine, and then spent six years building Polo Ralph Lauren into a flagship for accessible taste. Now back at Celine, he is bringing the inclusive spirit of Polo to Parisian style. So there were trenchcoats, straw baskets, and silk scarves tied around bags - all the motifs of French-girl-chic, a modern moneyspinner.

"Celine isn't a mean brand, or a brand that wants to exclude people," Rider said after the show. "When you wear this brand you may not have the strangest thing, but you have the best coat, and you



▲ The Duchess of Sussex was a front row coup for Balenciaga's Paris show



Designer Pierpaolo Piccioli's debut offered silhouettes aimed at freeing women from the weight of clothes



STYLE

Pierpaolo dans les pas de Cristobal

Quand, lors de la petite entrevue qu'il concède à une poignée de journalistes, quelques heures avant son premier défilé pour Balenciaga, on demande à Pierpaolo Piccioli s'il est stressé, il répond avec le sourire : *« Pas du tout, je me sens ici comme à la maison. »*

Il ne parle pas de la chapelle de Laennec, où sont installés les bureaux de la maison (et de Kering), mais de la maison de Cristobal Balenciaga, pour qui l'Italien n'a jamais caché son attachement et son admiration. Aujourd'hui, il s'en amuse : *« Aux archives, ils ont même brodé mes initiales sur les gants blancs que j'utilise sans cesse. J'avoue que je ne boude pas mon plaisir. Observer de près son travail et celui de tous mes prédécesseurs m'enchantent. Je suis aussi à cette place grâce à eux. C'est de toute l'histoire de cette maison dont j'ai envie de m'emparer. »*

Il raconte longuement sa minutieuse étude de la technique et du don pour la coupe et le mouvement de Cristobal : *« Ce qui me touche, c'est qu'il avait à cœur de mettre le corps au centre de son approche du vêtement. »* Une plongée dans le patrimoine Balenciaga qui lui a inspiré de décliner coton et lainages selon la même technique que le gazar, étoffe haute couture inventée en 1958 pour le maître espagnol. Ce « néogazar », comme il l'appelle, est à l'origine des cinquante-trois silhouettes de l'été 2026. Piccioli ouvre ce galop d'essai par sa version de l'inimitable robe Sack de 1957 de Cristobal. Un fourreau noir à dos ovoïde... porté avec une paire de lunettes rétrofuturistes évoquant l'époque Demna - tout comme le lieu du défilé, cette chapelle, qui a abrité à la rentrée la rétrospective de ses dix ans à la tête des collections. Au fur et à mesure des passages, on décèle les différents « hommages » aux DA qui l'ont précédé : le City, best-seller de Nicolas Ghesquière, et ses casquettes bombes qui donnent le port de tête altier ; le vestiaire à l'américaine d'Alexander Wang ;

la « street crédibilité » de Demna dans les bermudas amples en denim délavé et autres bombers courts.

Justement, lors de ce rendez-vous avec la presse, un de nos confrères demandait à Piccioli à quelle femme il s'adressait, quand Cristobal habillait l'aristocratie, Ghesquière l'avant-garde et Demna la rue. Le designer élude : *« Balenciaga n'est pas une griffe lambda, c'est une vraie maison de mode. »* Puis parle de la valeur derrière le vêtement, de l'authenticité dans son approche créative et des réseaux sociaux qui popularisent « cette culture de mode ». Ce n'est qu'une première collection mais on s'interroge sur ce prêt-à-porter Balenciaga très soir, très précieux, alors que le designer romain est censé présenter une haute couture en janvier prochain. À suivre... **V.G.**



Fashion Week de Paris : c'est quoi, le nouveau Balenciaga ?

Pierpaolo Piccioli signe un premier défilé parfumé pour Balenciaga : un grand chic du jour comme du soir, qui ensorcelle par ses couleurs comme par la magie du noir.

Par Pierre Groppo



Fashion Week de Paris, le marathon continue – la semaine des défilés ne compte pas moins d'une centaine d'événements au calendrier officiel. Parmi ceux-ci, le premier défilé de Pierpaolo Piccioli pour Balenciaga, l'un des moments phares de ce que certains appellent le plus grand moment de mode depuis les années 1990, au vu du chamboulement des directeurs artistiques dans les plus grandes maisons de l'industrie.

En ce week-end à la météo capricieuse, les averses de pluie n'ont pas découragé les fans qui se pressent, avec leur parapluie, devant l'entrée de l'ancien hôpital Laennec, siège du groupe Kering (propriétaire de Balenciaga), qui accueillait, il y a quelques mois encore, l'exposition-hommage à Demna, qui a transformé en dix ans la maison en un géant de la mode et l'une des stars incontestées de la Fashion Week de Paris. Il est 20 heures : pourtant, c'est dans l'après-midi que Pierpaolo Piccioli accueillait, en petit comité, quelques journalistes pour une découverte en avant-première de la collection – et de sa vision pour la maison. Bras tatoués, bijoux porte-bonheur au cou (dont un morceau de corail rouge, gri-gri très prisé en Italie), le couturier dévoilait son moodboard, où voisinaient aussi bien le visage de Sinead O'Connor que celui d'une Vierge Marie, des œuvres du peintre espagnol Francisco de Zurbaran, de Brancusi et de Lucio Fontana, des images de Balenciaga époque Cristobal, des bustes antiques...

« Balenciaga est une maison qui a des choses à dire ».

PIERPAOLO PICCIOLI

Un chassé-croisé d'inspirations aussi graphique que cultivé car, comme le dit le couturier, « Balenciaga est une maison qui a des choses à dire. Ce n'est pas une maison mainstream : elle a une culture de la mode, qui explique la valeur des pièces, par l'attention qui y est portée, la manière de faire, les tissus... » Parmi ces derniers, Pierpaolo Piccioli s'est passionné pour le gazar, une étoffe imaginée par le soyeux Gustav Zumsteg pour Cristobal Balenciaga à la fin des années 1950. « C'est une étoffe qui signe la méthode de Cristobal, qui consiste à mettre de l'air entre le vêtement et le corps, ce dernier étant toujours au cœur des recherches de celui qui était aussi bien sculpteur qu'architecte : en rajoutant un fil, on obtient plus de tenue, mais aussi un tissu qui s'allège », explique le créateur, qui, du coup, a aussi eu recours au gazar de laine et au gazar de coton, pour obtenir « ce paradoxe très Balenciaga entre légèreté et austérité, résolument ancré dans le présent ».



Runway parfumé et volumes basculés

Pour voir ce que cela donne sur le podium, Vittoria Ceretti, Isabelle Huppert, Laetitia Casta, Anne Hathaway et Simone Ashley ont toutes fait le déplacement, et peuvent même humer, sur le lieu du show, les notes d'agrumes salés et de poivre rose du parfum Getaria, baptisé du nom de naissance de Cristobal Balenciaga. Surprise : il se sussure que Meghan Markle est dans la salle. On se demande donc ce que la duchesse californienne pense de cette collection qui emprunte, avec une élégance absolue, à la grande tradition aristocratique de la maison. Jupes à volumes XXL, petits tops coupés au laser, volumes basculés, jeux de plissés à la minutie chirurgicale : Pierpaolo Piccioli signe une collection comme un manifeste de mode contemporaine, qui va du petit jour (avec le bon jean, le manteau dont on ne se lassera jamais, le petit blouson d'inspiration couture) au très grand soir, fait de robes tour à tour amples ou près du corps, de volumes travaillés comme des origamis éblouissants par l'évidence de leur graphisme autant que par la richesse de détails – broderies de fleurs, plumes jaillissant comme un feu d'artifice... « Ceci n'est pas qu'un hommage à Cristobal Balenciaga : c'est un retour aux sources, mais c'est aussi ma perspective et mon chemin », expliquait quelques heures avant le couturier, qui, en guise d'invitation, n'avait pas hésité à enregistrer les battements de son propre cœur, partagés ensuite sur une cassette audio (et un walkman vintage) envoyée aux *guests* du défilé. Le tout, dans une boîte grise, avec la typographie noire époque Demna. À un journaliste qui lui demandait s'il n'avait pas eu envie de tout changer, Pierpaolo Piccioli s'était contenté de répondre : « Non. Je crois que le passé est important pour réussir les choses, à condition qu'on le transforme et qu'on l'enracine dans le présent. Le logo, la couleur sont parfaitement pertinents. Je n'ai eu aucune envie de les modifier. Et puis, j'avais quand même autre chose à faire : cette collection à imaginer... » Reste une question : mais qu'est-ce que Meghan Markle va décider de porter ?

BUSINESS

Pomellato Opens New Rodeo Drive Flagship



A first look at Pomellato's new Beverly Hills boutique.



A first look at Pomellato's new Beverly Hills boutique.

● The Italian jeweler unveils a relocated Beverly Hills flagship with a fresh design concept.

BY RYMA CHIKHOUNE

Pomellato has unveiled the opening of a new Rodeo Drive boutique, debuting a fresh retail concept.

The flagship, at 445 Rodeo Drive, marks a relocation within Beverly Hills for the Italian fine jeweler, founded in Milan in

1967 by Pino Rabolini and part of the French luxury group Kering since 2013. Pomellato currently operates three other U.S. boutiques, in Chicago, Miami and New York, and more than 70 globally.

"Having Rodeo Drive as our first temple with this very unique concept makes a lot of sense because Hollywood, and more in general L.A., are places of artistic expression, dare and utmost creativity," Pomellato's chief executive officer Sabina Belli said in a statement to WWD. "The

new boutique is unique in every way. It reinterprets in an extra refined and precious way the design codes from the '60s that marked both the success of Milanese and Italian design in the world but also the birth of Pomellato."

Conceived by Pomellato's in-house architecture team in Milan, the boutique showcases hand-cast porcelain tiles by Fornace S. Anselmo, hand-painted and embroidered silk wallcoverings by Misha Milano, a bespoke pink-marble

composition by Fantini Mosaici and sculptural Murano lighting by 6:AM Glassworks.

"Strategically, it brings the maison's defining traits to life – craftsmanship, color, unconventional design and femininity – within a LEED Platinum-certified environment," Belli went on. "It is a physical manifesto of Pomellato today: Milanese by soul, global by attitude."

The Beverly Hills flagship features Pomellato's Nudo, Iconica, Catene and Pomellato Together collections, alongside a curated selection of high jewelry and the Monili collection, which was developed in collaboration with Gucci.

"For the Rodeo Drive opening, three precious additions of Monili will be presented exclusively to the public," Belli said. "Three necklaces crafted with precious leather, gold and diamonds – two of which feature a central gemstone, one with pink tourmaline and the other with rubellite."

The new boutique will serve as the design blueprint for future stores worldwide. Upcoming openings include Miami's Bal Harbour and Shanghai's Plaza 66, with additional updates planned across Europe and Asia, according to Belli.

"Materials, color and artisan interventions will be calibrated to each city – maintaining our Milanese DNA while dialoguing with local culture – so every boutique feels uniquely Pomellato and uniquely of its place," Belli added.

Colorado Convention Center photograph by Peter Verri

CONCURRENCE - LUXE



EXCLUSIVE

Bruno Pavlovsky Readies Chanel For Matthieu Blazy's Debut

● The executive shared how the house is preparing for its new creative "spark" by restructuring its teams and naming new brand ambassadors.

BY JOELLE DIDERICH

PARIS – Matthieu Blazy's first show for Chanel is one of the most eagerly awaited events in a year chock-full of designer debuts, fueling the sort of speculation usually associated with the release of a Taylor Swift album.

Observers searched for clues in the red carpet looks worn at the Venice Film Festival. (Chanel on Sunday named Ayo Edebiri, who attended the premiere of "After the Hunt" in a red strapless evening gown, as its new brand ambassador and said she would sit front row.)

Images of old Chanel collections circulated on Instagram, masquerading as an "exclusive preview" of Blazy's spring 2026 collection.

In the run-up to the show at the Grand Palais on Monday, the brand began drip-feeding teaser images shot by veteran photographer David Bailey – the back of a model's bobbed hair, and a white shirt with a garment cover – hinting at a minimalist new direction for the brand.

Ten days earlier, Bruno Pavlovsky, president of fashion and president of Chanel SAS, sat down with WWD in his Paris office to talk about the brand's new chapter under Blazy, who succeeds Virginie Viard, the former right-hand of longtime creative director Karl Lagerfeld.

"The energy here is off the charts," Pavlovsky beamed.

He addressed why the brand has spent more than a year showing collections designed by a studio team, how Blazy's arrival is reshaping its organization, and why he hopes the new collection will prove the right kind of creative "spark."

WWD: This has been an unusually protracted handover period, especially when you consider that some other houses have staged presentations within months of naming a new creative director. Why was that?

Bruno Pavlovsky: I really admire anyone who can join a house and put out a full collection in a matter of days or weeks. We take a longer-term approach. The most important thing was giving Matthieu time to truly settle into the brand. That's also what sets us apart, so I believe we made the right decision and chose the right pace.

First, we wanted to give him the time he needed to really get to know Chanel. Not that he was unfamiliar with it – he is very cultured and has a deep knowledge of the history of fashion, whether at Chanel or elsewhere, so even before his arrival, I believe he spent a great deal of time on his own doing research and really figuring out what Chanel stands for. On top of that, we have adapted our set-up to make sure we can continue producing our 10 collections a year under the best possible conditions.

We've structured the workflow with Matthieu in a way that allows us to manage multiple collections simultaneously, giving him the space to step back and see the broader picture. In many ways, he's like the conductor – orchestrating everything, ensuring that each element aligns, and that kind of process takes time.

His first haute couture collection is coming in January, and that will also mark



the beginning of a new chapter. It will be the first collection with a team that is new to haute couture, which makes it especially interesting.

Then there are collections like Coco Beach and Coco Neige – more tactical in nature, but also offering space for distinct forms of expression.

Coco Beach is ready, and you will see a new narrative both in terms of product and imagery. This is Matthieu's take on the Coco Beach concept, and it's really fascinating. Of course, some people will love it, others may feel it leans too far in one direction or another. But for me, that's not the point. What matters is that it's a fresh start.

WWD: Your fall campaign also marks a departure, with full-page photos of shoes and bags featured as "hero" products.

B.P.: With this campaign, the intention was to put the focus back on the product and that's something we intend to continue doing.

WWD: Did he have any input in this campaign?

B.P.: Of course, he was already here, and from the moment he arrived, we've run everything past him. But this campaign doesn't represent his influence directly. Officially and practically, Matthieu's imprint begins with the collection on Oct. 6.

WWD: His arrival comes against the backdrop of a generational handover on the management side, with the arrival in 2022 of Leena Nair as global chief executive officer of the brand.

Why did you think the time was right for a new creative direction?

B.P.: For me, there are two interconnected but distinct aspects at play. First: the generational change in Chanel's leadership, which was not only planned, but absolutely essential. It was necessary

for us to lay the foundations for the next 20 years, and I believe we're off to a strong start on that front.

Virginie did an extraordinary job handling the transition after Karl's passing. She helped the brand evolve by bringing a greater sense of ease to the collections. It worked really well, but we also knew that, at some point, we would need to introduce a new creative eye to begin a new cycle and regain momentum.

I'm not sure that, in 15 years' time, there will be many creative directors with the longevity of someone like Giorgio Armani, Ralph Lauren or Karl Lagerfeld. They are truly exceptional. Will this new generation of designers have the same staying power? One can only hope so, but inevitably, the questions of succession and creative renewal arise, and it just so happens that it's happening everywhere all at once.

For us, this wasn't the product of some strategic directive. Rather, it was about meeting the moment and it became clear at a certain point that a shift was needed. We're genuinely thrilled to have Matthieu onboard. I have complete confidence in his vision and ability to take the house to the next level.

WWD: For almost four decades, the final fittings before the show were a sacred ritual, when Chanel welcomed chosen editors to preview the collection. For the first time this season, it won't take place. How are the teams adapting to this new way of working?

B.P.: We no longer have those final fittings because everything is ready much earlier.

Karl had established a certain way of working – he taught us to pull it all together in just two afternoons. With Matthieu, it's happening over eight days.

For the teams, I think it's been a welcome change. In the past, there was often a bottleneck of information while

we waited for those final two days and then everything had to come together very quickly. But now, with things being decided earlier and unfolding more gradually, the teams have had time to adapt.

We're still fine-tuning things. Matthieu, his new team and our existing teams are working it out together. Some days, it all runs very smoothly, others, less so, but that's entirely natural. I believe that in six months to a year, with two or three collections under our belt, we will have completely switched to this new way of working.

At the end of the day, what we care about is that Matthieu has everything he needs to deliver a collection and a show that truly reflect his vision. And there's a dedicated team around him, working to ensure just that.

WWD: Has there been a lot of turnover in the design studio?

B.P.: There hasn't been a huge amount of turnover, but we have significantly reinforced the teams.

We have assigned certain people to specific collections, while others work across all of them. This shift has required us to hire more people.

We've had to expand and adapt our development and technical teams too. They are now collaborating with the studio much earlier in the process, and that's a win-win situation. In many cases, we've promoted people from within. Right now, we're in a phase of ongoing discovery, learning and adaptation.

Witnessing this transformation has been absolutely fascinating from my perspective. And I want to be clear: this is not a critique of what came before. At that time, we were doing exactly what was needed. But this new approach will likely improve the speed of development, collaboration with suppliers and overall production timelines, because we're starting earlier. Ultimately, I hope this leads to more reliable deliveries of certain collections in our boutiques.

WWD: Some houses undergoing a creative transition are also using that moment to introduce new muses and brand ambassadors. Are you?

B.P.: Yes, you will definitely see some new faces at this show, but you'll also see ambassadors who have been with us for a long time.

Of course, Matthieu brings his own set of creative affinities, which are new and incredibly enriching, but not at the expense of existing relationships. On the contrary, it's about adding depth and diversity to the panel of women who represent the brand. What matters to us is representing a broad spectrum of identities: different women, different cultures, different nationalities. It's entirely legitimate that Matthieu should gravitate to a new set of people. He's also very comfortable, I think, with our existing ambassadors. They've gotten to know each other and there's a lot of goodwill.

That's precisely why it was important to allow for a longer transition period: to preserve the identity of the house, even as we open up new horizons. We absolutely want Matthieu to put his stamp on the brand – to bring his energy, inspiration and personal vision. Naturally, that means change.

I hope the collection surprises people.

WWD: Even if that involves taking a risk?

B.P.: It might be a risk on paper, but we need this new energy and everything I've seen so far is pointing in the right direction. There hasn't been a single moment where I've thought, "This isn't right." I find it deeply exciting to welcome new perspectives and interpretations. This is the first of many collections to come, so it will be a progressive evolution, but you need that initial spark.





New Beginnings

Chanel has named Ayo Edebiri as its new brand ambassador in the run-up to Matthieu Blazy's first show on Monday.

"Ayo Edebiri embodies a new generation of genre-defying performers who are constantly pushing boundaries. Her distinctive style, her wit and her singular perspective on the world make her a natural ally of Chanel," the house said in a statement shared first with WWD.

Edebiri is best known for playing chef Sydney Adamu in the series "The Bear" – for which she was won several awards, including a Golden Globe and an Emmy – but she is also a screenwriter and director.

She teased the partnership by wearing Chanel for the premiere of her new film, "After the Hunt," at the Venice Film Festival and the New York Film Festival.

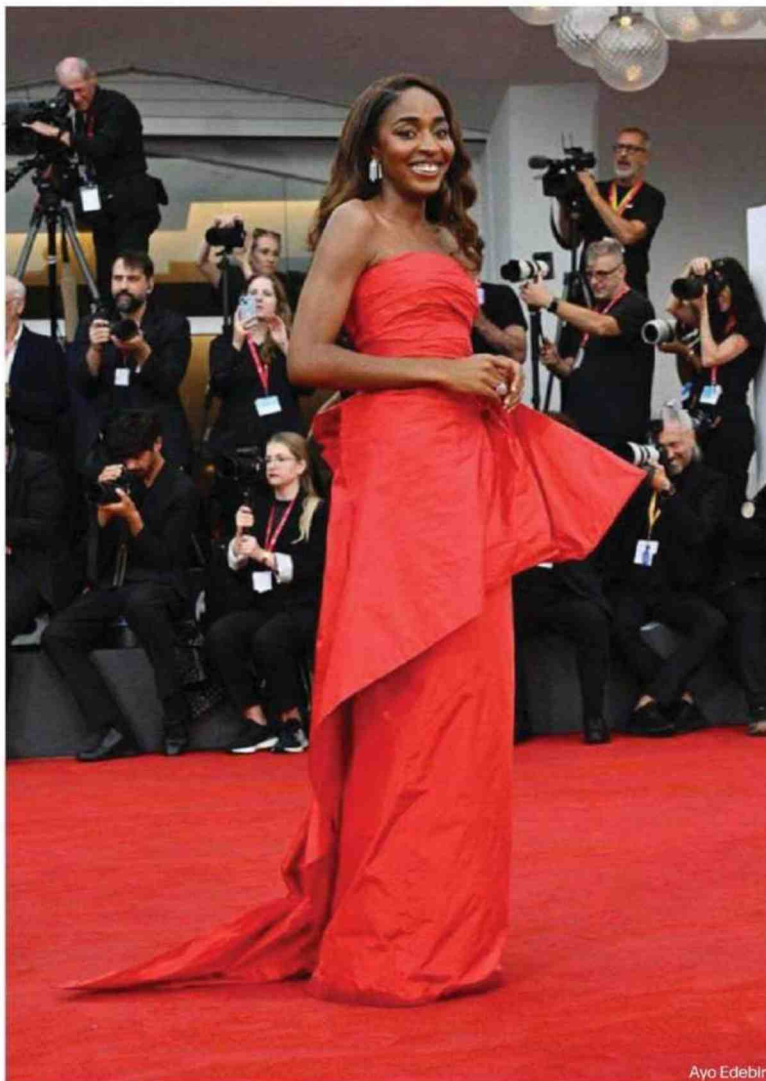
"Ayo is all strength, but at the same time, she is vulnerable enough to always put herself out there," Blazy said. "Nothing can stop her. I admire her boldness, her beauty, her intellect and her choice of artistic projects. She does it all while being incredibly kind and witty, with the warmest smile."

Edebiri is expected to attend Blazy's debut show on Monday evening at the

Grand Palais in Paris.

"Matthieu and I clicked right away. I love his vision, both sensitive and joyful. There is ease and elegance, yet a beautiful internal power. His looks give me confidence, but I still feel like myself. I am so happy to be embarking on this adventure with Matthieu and Chanel," she said.

— JOELLE DIDERICH



Ayo Edebiri



This Week: Matthieu Blazy's Chanel Caps Fashion's Month of Debuts

The designer's first collection for the label is the most anticipated show of the season, but pivoting a brand this big and with this much heritage takes time.

By Brian Baskin



What's happening: Fashion's pivotal month comes to a close with the final, and arguably biggest debut – Matthieu Blazy's first collection for Chanel on Monday.

Tough acts to follow: So far this season we've seen Demna, Dario Vitale, Jonathan Anderson and others put their distinctive stamp on storied houses. Expect Blazy to do the same, though when the brand is Chanel, what he'll do – and how much freedom he'll have to do it – is more of a wild card. His first show will be held at the Grand Palais, the Paris landmark that has hosted where Karl Lagerfeld, and Virginie Viard, showed their collections (aside from a hiatus ending in 2024 while the venue was undergoing renovation). There will almost certainly be tweed, though Blazy may deploy the brand's signifiers in unexpected ways.

The total package: Expectations are high because Blazy so clearly embodies what every major luxury brand says they're looking for in a designer these days – a "fusion of traditional Italian craftsmanship, materials innovation and a kaleidoscope of cultural references ... and an eclectic cast of A-list muses," as BoF luxury editor at large Robert Williams put it upon his hiring in December 2024.

Chanel doesn't need a savior, but it could use a fresh perspective. Like most other luxury brands saw sales decline last year, by 4 percent to \$18.7 billion, and profits contracted by 30 percent. The brand has already taken one step to win back customers, limiting price increases to a modest 3 percent in 2024 after several years of bigger hikes that had put the brand at the centre of the discourse around whether luxury could justify charging sharply higher prices for the same – or some would say, diminished – product.

Those pricing decisions were made at the corporate level, but Blazy will play a more direct role in shoring up the other pillars of Chanel's value proposition. The designer built a reputation at Bottega Veneta for combining old-fashioned craftsmanship with technological wizardry, starting with a debut collection featuring leather printed to look like denim. That will help address quality concerns that have dogged Chanel and other high-end brands.

Blazy can also engineer the sort of viral runway and red carpet moments that were few and far between during the Viard years, which will help the brand's marketing machine convince consumers to pay those



higher prices. In interviews Chanel fashion president Bruno Pavlovsky has described Blazy's arrival a "new era" and an opportunity to "push the boundaries of what Chanel is."

Patience please: Pushing boundaries at the world's second-biggest fashion brand is still a gradual process. It'll take time for Blazy to make his mark across Chanel's sprawling business, including six collections per year. Back in May when the company released results, chief executive Leena Nair made clear the brand is thinking on a longer time horizon than this Monday's show: "Chanel is a brand which has such profound depth that it takes time to truly understand and immerse oneself... We're not focusing on what he's going to bring to one collection, but looking at the next many collections over the next few years. The vision takes time to unfold."

Stay tuned for Tim Blanks' special BoF 500 cover story on Blazy and his vision for Chanel immediately after the show on Monday night.

The Week Ahead wants to hear from you! Send tips, suggestions, complaints and compliments to brian.baskin@businessoffashion.com.





Matthieu Blazy for Chanel

THE NEW WAVE

BY VANESSA FRIEDMAN

Matthieu Blazy, 41, snagged the most coveted job in fashion in December after a six-month search by Chanel. He has become only the fourth designer in Chanel's history, tasked with transforming the brand for a new generation.

Most recently he did exactly that for Bottega Veneta, with a fashion sleight of hand that made leather look like denim — and leather look like cotton, and leather look like flannel.

Now, as he comes home to Paris, he is expected to work a similar alchemy on the pearls, camellias and CCs of the house that Coco built and Karl Lagerfeld redefined.

QUESTIONS OF TASTE

I FEEL BEST WEARING Nothing

THE FIRST THING I LOOK AT IN ANOTHER PERSON IS His/her smile

I SKIMP ON Things for myself

I SPLURGE ON Things for my twin sister

I AM NEVER CAUGHT WEARING A printed T-shirt

I WILL NEVER GIVE UP The broken Bulova Accutron watch my father gave me

MY FAVORITE PIECE OF ART "The Three

Graces" by Lucas Cranach the Elder

COLOGNE Vetiver

BOOKSTORE The Strand in New York

ISLAND Isla Nublar in "Jurassic Park"

ICE CREAM FLAVOR Stracciatella

PEN Staedtler HB2 pencil

BED LINEN Always white

PIZZA 4 Stagioni

DINNER PARTY MAIN COURSE Lemon chicken

COCKTAIL FOR A PARTY AT HOME Pims

COCKTAIL TO ORDER AT A BAR Negroni

CAR "Lowly Worm's Applecar," by Richard Scarry

FLOWERS FOR SAYING THANK YOU Poppies

JOKE The old French one about Flip Flap the Giraffe

LINEN OR SILK Silk poplin

TEXT OR VOICE NOTES Text

FOR A DINNER PARTY, CATERED OR HOME-COOKED Home-cooked

TRUTH OR DARE Dare

REGULAR WATCH OR SMARTWATCH Regular

HOTEL OR AIRBNB Both

ICEBERG OR ARUGULA Arugula

COFFEE OR MATCHA Coffee

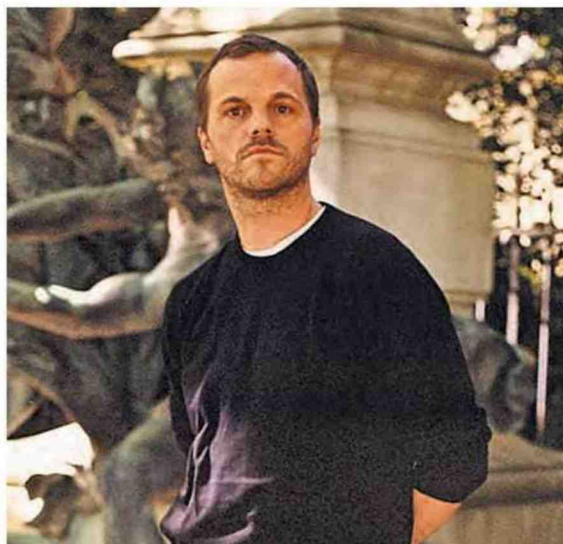
SPARKLING OR FLAT WATER Flat

GUM OR MINTS Mints

CREMATED OR BURIED Buried

ORCHIDS OR CACTUSES Cactuses, but outside

PISTACHIOS OR ALMONDS Neither



FEDERICO SORRENTINO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Matthieu Blazy, photographed in the Luxembourg Garden in Paris.



FASHION WEEK

Matthieu Blazy

Le discret qui doit bousculer Chanel

Le nouveau directeur artistique de la maison parisienne, au parcours quasi sans faute, doit consolider la puissance de la marque en la rajeunissant, tout en s'effaçant pour la laisser briller. Sa première collection sera dévoilée lundi soir à Paris.

Par

MARIE OTTAVI

Il est arrivé rue Cambon, à l'adresse historique de la maison Chanel à Paris, le 1^{er} avril, sans tambour ni trompette, mais avec un simple «1» posté sur son profil Instagram pour signifier son premier jour de travail. Matthieu Blazy, créateur français d'origine belge né en 1984, s'était déjà réjoui sur ce même réseau social de rencontrer les équipes *«et d'écrire ce nouveau chapitre ensemble»* comme pour confirmer qu'il ne faisait pas cavalier seul, un bon point pour une vénérable marque comme Chanel, qui aime qu'on la considère comme une maison familiale, à 18,7 milliards de dollars de chiffre d'affaires en 2024 (15,9 milliards d'euros). Matthieu Blazy a pris le temps de monter aux ateliers, pour se présenter sans chichi, afin de découvrir ces lieux mythiques où Coco Chanel a bâti sa marque, devenue un empire.

A tous les étages, dans ce monde ultra-féminin, on ne parlait ces

derniers temps que de l'arrivée de «Monsieur Blazy», nouveau maître des élégances. Aimant passer inaperçu, il évolue au studio en jean, chemise et une barbe de trois jours qui en dit long sur son côté *low profile*. Depuis ce 1^{er} avril, le directeur artistique n'a cessé de travailler.

Son histoire et ses racines vaquent entre la France et la Belgique, le pays maternel. Il a grandi à Paris avec sa mère ethnologue, son père expert en art précolombien, son frère aîné et sa sœur jumelle. Blazy est doté d'un prisme belge qui l'a fortement influencé, dans sa culture de l'objet et du design, son goût pour l'architecture dont il est plus qu'un amateur, et notamment pour le travail du Flamand Glenn Sestig. La Belgique d'où est originaire son mentor, Raf Simons.

On dit que sa filiation et l'aura de son père, qui fonda la Dérive, une galerie pionnière mêlant arts premiers et art contemporain avec

Chantal Crousel à Paris, ne sont pas étrangères au choix final des Wertheimer, les deux frères propriétaires de Chanel, passionnés d'art moderne et collectionneurs avisés. Son talent et ses références culturelles, son caractère affable, lui ont ainsi permis de remporter le job le plus désiré de la mode, pour l'une des maisons les plus solides de l'industrie malgré la récession mondiale qui l'ébranle elle aussi.

Gros bosseur, adoubé par ses pairs et par la critique, Matthieu Blazy, amoureux de la matière et obsessionnel du détail, a fait jusqu'ici un parcours quasi sans faute. En 2002, à tout juste 18 ans, il entre à La Cambre, école publique dont la section mode, l'une des plus réputées du secteur, est basée dans un immeuble défraîchi datant des années 70 posé dans le quartier d'Ixelles, dans la capitale belge. Il en sortira diplômé cinq ans plus tard, la même année que Julien Dossena, au-

jourd'hui à la tête des collections de Rabanne (groupe Puig), un an après Anthony Vaccarello, designer de Saint Laurent (Kering).

Dès ses premiers pas à l'école, il impressionne Tony Delcampe, professeur responsable du département mode de l'établissement, par ses références hors du champ de la mode. *«Il était déjà très cultivé, ce qui est assez rare à cet âge, souligne-t-il. C'est quelque chose qu'il a poursuivi. Pendant ses études à La Cambre, il était un grand collectionneur. Il allait souvent au marché aux puces où il trouvait des chaises et des lampes signées. Il était plutôt intéressé par les modernistes jusqu'aux contemporains des années 70.»* Ce qui interpelle alors aussi son professeur, dont il est resté proche au point de l'appeler pour le remercier le jour où il a su qu'il allait être nommé chez Chanel, c'est *«sa soif d'apprendre toujours plus»*.

De La Cambre, il a gardé un sens créatif pragmatique. *«Ici, la mode s'inscrit dans une vraie réalité, pas dans un fantasme, précise Tony Delcampe. On ne l'aborde pas du tout par le moodboard [planche d'images servant d'inspiration, ndlr] ou le dessin. On l'étudie en travaillant sur buste pour envisager un corps en 3D et non pas en bidimensionnel.»* Blazy a conservé ce sens du travail au plus près du modèle. Quand il quitte l'école, après avoir présenté une collection dédiée à l'astronaute Claudie Haigneré, le jeune homme sait *«tout faire»*, selon son enseignant, comme ses camarades, *«de la maîtrise d'une poche passepoilée, à la fabrication d'un col, le flou, etc.»*

«Vire à l'américaine»

C'est là un élément clé pour comprendre Matthieu Blazy et ce qui a pu faire la différence avec tous ses concurrents, nombreux ces derniers mois à rêver de s'emparer de Chanel. Le créateur a le sens du savoir-faire, atout majeur pour la

maison au double C, très attachée à «ses» métiers d'art auxquels elle consacre un défilé chaque année au début du mois de décembre.

Après l'école, Matthieu Blazy débute auprès de deux figures parmi les plus admirées du circuit : Raf Simons et la designer britannique Phoebe Philo. Simons, de vingt-quatre ans son aîné, qui crée aujourd'hui les collections de Prada avec Miuccia Prada, lui propose un job après qu'il a gagné le concours ITS à Trieste en Italie, dont il est membre du jury. Le Belge, qui s'est formé au design industriel et s'est d'abord intéressé aux objets, l'influence encore de ce point de vue. Blazy poursuit sa route et va bâtir sa carrière d'abord dans l'ombre de grands talents. Il laisse libre cours à son goût pour la belle façon chez Margiela Artisanal, devenu officiellement à son époque la ligne haute couture de la marque fondée par Martin Margiela. En 2014, alors que les réseaux sociaux n'en sont qu'à leurs balbutiements, Suzy Menkes, plume historique de l'*International Herald Tribune* qui vient tout juste de rejoindre *Vogue*, dévoile que les masques bijoux de Margiela Artisanal sont signés d'un certain Matthieu Blazy. Le rappeur Kanye West, alors encore fréquentable, est fan au point de demander à Blazy de créer pour lui une série de masques signés Margiela pour son Yeezus tour. Cette même année, il rejoint le studio de Phoebe Philo chez Céline comme designer senior.

Puis Raf Simons le débâche et le fait venir chez Calvin Klein à New York. Là, il collabore avec Pieter Mulier, aujourd'hui à la tête des collections Alaïa, qui fut son compagnon. Un beau jour, l'équipe se fait *«vire à l'américaine»*, témoigne-t-il dans l'hebdomadaire belge *le Vif*. *«Tu te retrouves dans la rue avec ton carton et c'est fini, poursuit Blazy. Mais c'est bien parce que cela m'a fait réfléchir autrement. J'étais*

dégoûté de la mode. J'avais l'impression d'être arrivé au bout d'un système. Je n'avais plus envie de mettre le nez dedans.»

Propulser Chanel dans le futur

C'est avec Bottega Veneta qu'il va se faire un nom. Il y entre d'abord comme bras droit de Daniel Lee qui remet la marque italienne, fondée en 1966, sur la carte, crée des produits forts quadrillés de cuir et impose une couleur (surnommée le vert Bottega) qu'on voit alors partout. Lorsque Lee est poussé vers la sortie en 2021 par la direction de Kering, c'est vers Matthieu Blazy, son strict opposé, que tous les regards se tournent. Le Franco-Belge *«a cette capacité d'emmener les gens avec lui, de motiver les troupes»*, décrit Morgane Dubarry Gignoux qui fut l'une de ses proches collaboratrices chez Margiela Artisanal. Blazy permet à Bottega Veneta de poursuivre son ascension, en faisant de la marque, petite en taille en comparaison avec Gucci, la plus performante du groupe. Il propose des vêtements trompe-l'œil, comme ce jean qui se révèle être du cuir ultra-souple, avec l'idée de redonner de la valeur au vêtement. *«C'est un travail presque laborieux, mais pas ostentatoire, commente Tony Delcampe. Avec Matthieu, on ne fait pas les choses de façon démonstrative, pour qu'on les voie forcément.»* A Milan, il collabore avec des artistes qu'il admire, notamment Gaetano Pesce ou le photographe Stephen Shore, sans chercher à placer l'art au cœur de ses collections, contrairement à Jonathan Anderson, désormais à la tête des collections féminines et masculines de Dior, la grande concurrente de Chanel. Rue Cambon où l'on achève ces jours-ci la première collection de prêt-à-porter de Matthieu Blazy, qui sera présentée lundi au Grand Palais, on aime déjà sa discrétion, son



humeur égale, son amour sincère pour le vêtement. Son irrévérence, elle, a déjà commencé à faire chuchoter les équipes. Blazy aime la prise de risque, il l'a dit et la maison Chanel doit s'attendre à être bousculée. Philippe Pourhashemi, critique mode connu pour ne pas mâcher ses mots se dit sceptique sur ce point : *«Beaucoup de gens s'attendent à une révolution, mais je ne crois pas qu'elle aura lieu. La marque a tellement de produits codés à son image qu'elle est devenue une maison très cadenassée.»*

D'après nos informations, Matthieu Blazy devrait pourtant bien marquer de son sceau le prêt-à-porter de la marque, en ôtant quelques chaînes et accessoires bling, pour échapper aux aspects les plus décoratifs et revenir à une allure à la lisière du minimalisme, auquel toutes les VIC (*very important clients*) de la marque ne sont pas prêtes. Alain Wertheimer, le propriétaire, Leena Nair, la PDG, Bruno Pavlovsky, le président des activités mode, ont engagé Mat-

thieu Blazy pour qu'il propulse Chanel dans le futur, sans pour autant ébranler sa base commerciale, qui réside dans l'accessoire et surtout le sac, irrésistible, matelassé ou pas (et hors de prix par ailleurs). On peut d'ores et déjà s'attendre à ce que le créateur déploie un travail minutieux en termes de matières. Minutieux mais pas parfait, lui qui aime l'irrégularité du cuir ou du tweed. *«Il est capable de prouesses techniques en produisant des choses artisanales qui ont toujours un sens, mais restent créatives. Il ne fait pas de l'artisanat pour l'artisanat en somme et c'est aussi pour cela qu'il est respecté par ses pairs»*, observe Benjamin Simmenauer, philosophe et professeur à l'Institut français de la mode.

«Où boit-on le plus de champagne?»

Matthieu Blazy, c'est aussi le choix d'une force tranquille, qui s'efface devant la marque. Quelqu'un qui sait parler – là où la timidité de

Virginie Viard, qui l'a précédé à la direction artistique de Chanel et qui n'a jamais vraiment défendu son point de vue, lui avait coûté cher et valu une pluie de critiques sur les réseaux sociaux, jusqu'à son départ forcé en juin 2024.

Quelqu'un qui sait aussi s'amuser. Morgane Dubarry Gignoux le rappelle à travers une anecdote du temps de leur travail chez Margiela : *«Une saison, il voulait contrecoller des colliers de bouteilles de champagne [la bague en métal doré située autour du goulot, ndlr] sur un manteau en cuir. Il s'est demandé : "Où boit-on le plus de champagne à Paris?" On s'est retrouvé dans les cuisines du Lido après le spectacle pour récupérer cette matière première. Il a transformé le travail en quelque chose de fun. Je n'ai jamais oublié.»* De la joie et une dose de prise de risque, ça ira bien à Chanel. ◀



Hermès

As always, Nadège Vanhée was thinking about equestrian style, but this time the mood was more freewheeling than formal, and there was a sexual frisson in the air. She was thinking about the Camargue in southwestern France, known for its marshes, sand banks and work horses that are used to herd bulls.

"It's also a land of bohemians, gypsies – and freedom. I wanted to bring this zest of freedom to equestrian style, which is often associated with the strict and the rational. I wanted to let go and give it a sense of spontaneity and fullness," the designer said.

It was a polished lineup – this is Hermès, after all – but there was sporty, flirty edge, with lots of curve-hugging silhouettes, short shorts, harness and corset details. The runway was covered in sand and scattered with seashells and the models who crossed it were nothing short of hot.

They wore caramel colored leather coats and minidresses with corset lacing at the back, itsy-bitsy leather shorts with apron fronts, leather harnesses and halter tops.

A strappy, red leather top and matching trousers and a quilted silk dress worn over

bicycle shorts both flashed the flesh, as did a white cotton trench left open to reveal a matching halter top and harness. Va va voom.

Other outerwear was more demure, including the patchwork cotton coat with a nipped waist that opened the show, all of the ankle-sweeping styles and a lineup of cognac leather buckle-front jackets and coats. The color was divine, and the surface high-shine. Vanhée said the leather was hand-polished using special wax usually reserved for saddles.

A lineup of breezy, printed dresses and scarves made with Hermès silk were meant to capture the billowing clothes and hair of women on horseback. Vanhée layered the long scarves under harness top of a sandy cotton suit, and whipped the silk into a blouse with pagoda sleeves and matching bustier.

There was a lightness to it all – no easy feat for a leather-based brand – and a fun subversion of equestrian dress.

– *Samantha Conti*







Louis Vuitton revives its cult-classic Monterey

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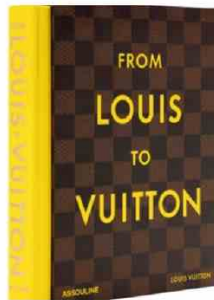




Louis Vuitton par Pierre-Louis Vuitton

Responsable Savoir-Faire et issu de la sixième génération, Pierre-Louis Vuitton s'est confié à la rédaction sur les coulisses de l'ouvrage *From Louis to Vuitton* édité par Assouline.

Amalia Christensen



On connaît l'histoire de Coco Chanel, Yves Saint Laurent... mais Louis Vuitton, celle de l'homme, reste plus discrète... le but de ce livre est-il de lui rendre hommage ?

Quand on regarde l'histoire de la famille, Louis, le créateur de la Maison, s'est concentré sur la création, l'ingéniosité et l'innovation, bien plus que sur l'écriture de son histoire. Georges, son fils, a ensuite pris en main le développement international. Ils ont géré plutôt tout l'aspect industriel et commercial. Finalement, c'est Gaston, le petit-fils de Louis, qui s'est mis à se poser des questions, à écrire l'histoire de la Maison et à enquêter sur le passé de son grand-père. C'est lui le premier à être retourné dans le Jura, là où Louis était né, pour collecter documents et archives. Oui, l'histoire de Louis est restée assez discrète, mais depuis Gaston, le patrimoine s'est considérablement enrichi. Nous avons la chance de posséder aujourd'hui des archives exceptionnelles de photos, d'objets et de malles... Ce livre est l'occasion d'aller fouiller et de ressortir toutes ces belles images et ces belles histoires.

Dans quelle mesure avez-vous été impliqué dans le processus éditorial du livre, dans le choix des archives ?

J'ai rencontré Arthur Dreyfus, l'auteur du livre, lorsqu'il est venu passer une journée sur le site où je travaillais dans la Drôme. Je lui ai raconté l'histoire de la Maison et celle de la fabrication des malles rigides que je réalise sur place. Il avait déjà reçu certaines informations du département Patrimoine et nous avons ensuite parcouru ensemble les photos et les documents qu'il avait réunis pour en faire une sélection. Mais surtout, je lui ai partagé le savoir-faire malletier, en l'accompagnant dans l'atelier et en lui expliquant concrètement ce que je fais au quotidien.

Ce projet vous a-t-il fait découvrir de nouvelles histoires sur vos ancêtres ?

Pas vraiment... Cela fait vingt ans que je travaille pour Louis Vuitton, mais cinquante que je vis dans cet univers. Je suis né à Asnières et j'y ai passé mes dix premières années, sur le site historique. Mon père y travaillait alors comme directeur du site et des commandes spéciales. J'ai donc grandi au milieu de cet héritage, que j'observe depuis l'enfance, et aujourd'hui, on peut dire que je suis devenu la référence sur les questions historiques et de fabrication. Par contre, j'ai redécouvert des images qui m'ont marqué, comme celles des bagages fabriqués pour le film de Wes Anderson. Ce sont des pièces que j'avais réalisées à Asnières, lorsque j'étais chef d'atelier. Je me souviens que c'était assez compliqué, car Wes Anderson nous avait fait des demandes un peu particulières et nous y avions passé du temps. Ce sont de bons souvenirs qui reviennent en feuilletant ces pages.

**Parmi toutes les histoires de la maison, avez-vous une anecdote favorite ?**

Il y a un sujet qui me passionne depuis des années. C'est l'histoire de la serrure inventée par Georges, mon arrière-arrière-grand-père. Cette serrure à gorge, mise au point en 1888, comptait d'abord trois gorges, puis quatre, puis cinq, et aujourd'hui six afin d'éviter toute réutilisation des numéros. Je trouve cela fascinant. Chaque client possède son numéro et sa clé, sans aucun doublon. J'ai d'ailleurs mon propre numéro, sur une base de cinq gorges, qui fonctionne toujours. Grâce à des machines modernes, nous avons pu refaire des clés de malles vieilles de plus de cent ans. Et quand on se plonge dans le sujet, on découvre une foule d'histoires autour de cette serrure. Je sais par exemple que Gaston avait imaginé des serrures encore plus sophistiquées, que l'on pouvait fermer... mais plus rouvrir ! Dans le livre, de superbes images mettent en valeur la serrure, ses gorges et de toute sa fabrication. Une autre histoire qui m'avait amusé, c'est celle de Gaston qui avait défié Houdini (le roi de l'évasion) de sortir d'une malle fermée par une serrure à cinq gorges. Houdini ne s'étant pas présenté au défi, il en avait conclu que ses malles étaient inviolables et il en était très fier !

Quel regard portez-vous aujourd'hui sur l'atelier d'Asnières ?

L'atelier d'Asnières occupe une place centrale dans le livre, mais aussi dans l'histoire de la Maison. Lancé par Louis en 1859, il a vu se succéder la famille génération après génération. Louis, Georges, Gaston, Claude - mon grand-père -, puis Patrick, mon père, et moi. J'ai commencé sur le site d'Asnières en 2004. Le savoir-faire métier qui s'y transmet est resté fidèle à celui de Louis. Mon objectif aujourd'hui est de le préserver et de le transmettre aux générations suivantes. Le site d'Asnières est le cœur battant de cette histoire. Nous avons su l'embellir et le rénover. À une époque, mon père a même craint pour son avenir tant le site était en mauvais état. Il a fallu se poser la question de ce que nous allions en faire. Finalement, nous l'avons conservé et aujourd'hui, c'est un lieu exceptionnel.

Que révèle ce livre sur la manière dont Louis Vuitton protège son savoir-faire ?

Nous essayons de l'écrire pour le transmettre. Il avait été transmis par oral pendant toutes ces années de tuteur à élève. C'est mon job aujourd'hui, je passe du temps à écrire les règles autour de ce savoir-faire historique. Les générations se renouvellent parfois un peu rapidement. Il faut donc écrire les bases. Lorsqu'on a monté dans la Drôme le nouvel atelier rigide, je me suis rendu compte que les nouveaux arrivants ne venaient pas d'Asnières. Ils n'avaient pas cette connaissance des bagages rigides. On leur donnait des plans de fabrication, on les formait, mais on ne leur expliquait pas pourquoi il fallait faire les choses. Je me suis dit qu'on allait faire de la formation technique, mais aussi de la formation historique. Leur expliquer ce qu'il y a derrière l'histoire de ces gestes. Ils ont adoré !

Vous avez développé une malle en édition limitée ?

Il s'agit en effet, d'une édition ultra-limitée à 54 exemplaires. C'est une malle qui contient le livre et permet de le transporter. C'est l'équivalent d'une commande spéciale. Lorsqu'il y a un objet à transporter, nous fabriquons le produit qui va autour. La malle a vraiment été dimensionnée autour du livre avec un petit présentoir à l'intérieur. L'on peut transporter son livre à l'autre bout de la France ou du monde... là où l'on a envie d'aller !





All eyes are on Dior

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STYLE

Le tailleur idéal existe... chez Givenchy

Les défilés du week-end ont révélé une collection Givenchy sensuelle et ancrée dans le réel, des robes pile et face chez Vetements et des silhouettes d'un autre monde chez Rick Owens.

Valérie Guédon

Et soudain, il est apparu. Le costume parfait. Une veste à un bouton en drap de laine anthracite à fines rayures, avec la bonne longueur (un peu au-dessous des hanches) pour ne pas casser la silhouette, la carrure profilée pour donner de la stature, cintrée juste ce qu'il faut à la taille pour suivre les contours du corps et dotée d'un revers ni trop petit ni trop grand pour souligner la poitrine. Et puis le pantalon du même tissu d'une droiture proche de la perfection qui allonge la jambe. Soit le costume pour femmes idéal. Pas un ersatz de complet masculin ni un tailleur oversize de « working girl ». Le dixième passage du défilé Givenchy, ce vendredi soir, place Vauban, est tout simplement le graal.

Quelques jours auparavant, nous l'observions sous toutes les coutures, en avant-première dans les bureaux de la maison parisienne, alors que Sarah Burton, la directrice artistique britannique, y mettait la dernière main. « J'ai passé beaucoup de temps dans les ateliers pour ce costume, explique-t-elle humblement de sa voix douce. Mon idée de départ était d'épurer la carrure pour garder une ligne d'épaule très soignée, de perfectionner la coupe pour qu'elle soit près du corps mais pas contraignante. Il fallait qu'il soit léger – les femmes ne veulent plus porter de vêtements lourds –, tout en ayant une certaine structure pour qu'elles puissent se sentir en confiance. »

Quelques centimètres en plus ici, quelques millimètres en moins là, cette fameuse main tailleur « so british », incul-

quée par Alexander McQueen (dont elle a été la stagiaire puis le successeur) que lui-même avait apprise à Savile Row et qu'il exerça chez Givenchy de 1997 à 2001. Mais là où son mentor imaginait le vestiaire de créatures gothiques et oniriques, Sarah Burton, elle, taille, avec une maestria encore plus remarquable cette saison une (vraie) garde-robe de femme.

Tout commence par une petite robe noire. L'archétype des archétypes. La Ford de Chanel. Mais ici rien à voir ni avec celle de Coco ni avec le personnage d'Audrey Hepburn, habillée par Hubert, dans *Breakfast at Tiffany's*. Trop facile. Courte, à bretelles fines et décolleté « fifties » géométrique, la version de Sarah Burton est d'un chic inouï. Et d'une modernité indéniable. Comme les cinquante et un autres passages qui suivent. D'autres variations sur le costume, vestes masculines enfilées sur des bustiers en tricot fin et des jupes fendues haut sur la jambe, des robes en cuir soulignant les courbes féminines, d'autres robes-chemises en popeline du même effet ou version mini à volants en tulle tricoté – un look de poupée décalé d'un Perfecto en cuir à la ligne trapèze très ample.

Alors que Kaia Gerber clôt ce magnifique défilé dans un soutien-gorge de soie blanc et jupe à traîne comme nouée à la va-vite dans le même tissu, on repense aux envoûtants portraits en noir et blanc d'une femme dans sa chambre, affichés sur le mur d'inspiration de la créatrice. « Je voulais aborder cette intimité des moments où le corps se révèle, impliquant vulnérabilité mais aussi force et beauté, préci-

se-t-elle alors. Je suis tombée amoureuse de ce livre de René Groebli, *The Eye of Love*, un recueil de photographies qu'il a prises de sa femme Rita, au début des années 1950, pendant leur lune de miel à Paris. »

« Vetements est connu pour ses volumes et ses superpositions exagérés, ce qui peut donner à nos collections une impression de lourdeur, concède Guram Gvasalia, le cofondateur et créateur de la griffe, à l'issue de son show organisé dans une boutique en travaux sur les Champs-Élysées. Cette saison, je voulais prendre le contre-pied et ajouter un peu plus de légèreté à ma proposition. » Un homme et une femme, le visage couvert par un bas, déboulent sur des aboiements de chiens pas contents. Ils sont vêtus de deux tee-shirts affichant une croix gammée dans un panneau d'intersection. Pour la légèreté, on n'est pas sûr. Mais dans l'esprit torturé mais habité du créateur géorgien, légèreté veut tout dire sauf robettes et sonate de violoncelle. « J'ai revu *Eyes Wide Shut* (1999), de Stanley Kubrick, et cette scène où Nicole Kidman est sur les toilettes et sa robe relevée vers l'avant. C'est une façon magnifique de porter une robe. J'ai retravaillé tous les volumes de façon à les basculer vers l'avant. » Sur le podium, cela donne des robes lingerie, des jupes de secrétaire, des robes de gala « pile ou face » laissant voir le string (et les fesses) vues de derrière. Un érotisme sans nuance déconcertant qui monte d'un cran au moment du dernier passage, le mannequin Anok en pleurs dans une





robe de Sissi noir en velours, également à deux faces. Le top américain d'origine sud-soudanaise semble errer au milieu de stroboscopes et de l'électro industrielle à plein volume, poussée sur le podium contre son gré. « Nous sommes tous les deux des réfugiés de guerre, nous explique Guram. Il y a quelques jours, j'ai décidé qu'il n'y aurait pas de fin heureuse à ce défilé. Anok incarne toute la tristesse de ce monde. La plupart d'entre nous ressentent beaucoup de douleur en ce moment. Je n'ai pas ressenti le besoin de sortir saluer non plus. Je crois que sa prestation a tout dit. »

Rick Owens a encore beaucoup de cho-

ses à dire. À 63 ans, dont trois décennies de carrière, le designer californien est au sommet de son art. La rétrospective « Rick Owens, Temple of Love » consacrée à son travail au Palais Galliera (jusqu'au 4 janvier), n'a reçu que des critiques dithyrambiques. « Les épopées de D. W. Griffith et les films noirs, et puis le Los Angeles de Hollywood Boulevard, dans ce qu'il a de plus glamour et de plus décadent, nous avait-il confié lors de la visite de l'exposition. Je reviens toujours à ces références avec un tel plaisir!... » Un plaisir resté intact pour sa collection été 2026. Toujours autour des fontaines du Palais de Tokyo, ses créatures, com-

me sur un red carpet d'un autre monde (le sien), descendent un long escalier en métal, sur une version rock électro de *Somebody to Love*, de Jefferson Airplanes. Puis marchent lentement à côté des jets d'eau, dans d'étranges fourreaux en tulle de nylon recyclé ou sculptés dans des pans de cuir et de paillettes caoutchoutées. « Des vêtements résistants pour des temps difficiles », résume-t-il dans sa note d'intention. Pour nous, une féerie Vieil Hollywood dépravé hypnotisante. ■



IK ALDAMA, BALENCIAGA





DÉFILÉS

COUP D'ESSAI COLORÉ ET INSPIRÉ
POUR LE PREMIER SHOW
DES DEUX DESIGNERS DE LOEWE

PAGE 31

Loewe, la bonne surprise de cette Fashion Week

Succédant à Jonathan Anderson, les New-Yorkais Jack McCollough et Lazaro Hernandez présentaient leur première collection vendredi à Paris. Avec ce qu'il faut de cuir trompe-l'œil, de couleurs vibrantes et de mode facile à porter. Bien joué !

Hélène Guillaume

Les Français de la mode ont souvent la dent dure envers les Américains. Il est vrai qu'à l'exception de Tom Ford et de Marc Jacobs, les designers

d'outre-Atlantique sont généralement très commerciaux, ou bien trop « red carpet », ou encore, lorsqu'ils arrivent à Paris, jouent les grands couturiers conceptuels et tombent à côté. Sans compter que lorsqu'ils prennent la tête d'une grande maison française, ils succèdent souvent à des directeurs artistiques cultes. C'était le cas d'Alexander Wang qui remplaçait en 2012 chez Balenciaga, Nicolas Ghesquière, l'idole de toute une génération. Et c'est le cas cette fois chez Loewe, avec Jack McCollough et Lazaro Hernandez qui ont été recrutés il y a quelques mois après le départ de Jonathan Anderson pour Dior (un transfert de groupe, les deux marques appartenant à LVMH).

Ces dix dernières années, la marque madrilène est devenue l'une des plus hots de l'industrie. Pendant ce temps-là, les deux New-Yorkais dirigeaient la marque Proenza Schouler qu'ils ont fondée juste après leurs études. Quand LVMH les a approchés, ils étaient conscients qu'une telle décision pouvait les mettre en danger. « Cette proposition nous a rappelé quand Barneys (le department store new-yorkais,

NDLR) a décidé de vendre l'intégralité de notre collection de fin d'études à la Parsons School, expliquent-ils dans le studio de Loewe, rue Scribe à deux pas de l'Opéra. À l'époque, nous avons dû choisir entre profiter de cette opportunité pour nous lancer, ou suivre une voie plus conventionnelle, en devenant designer dans le studio d'une marque. Il y a six mois, nous avons de nouveau eu à décider si nous voulions abandonner tout ce que nous avons construit au fil des ans et quitter la ville qui était notre foyer... et faire preuve d'audace, venir à Paris, commencer un nouveau chapitre de notre vie, tenter une nouvelle expérience. » Après leur show de vendredi matin présenté dans une « boîte » à la Cité U, et au regard des applaudissements, on confirme que l'audace paie...

Ont-ils eu la pression de succéder à Jonathan Anderson, un dieu de la mode moderne ? « Vous savez, ces vingt dernières années, nous avons dû faire tourner l'entreprise avec des moyens très limités puisque nous sommes indépendants, la maintenir à flot, payer nos employés, tout en nous occupant de la direction artistique... Alors oui, il y a

une sorte de pression ici mais elle est surtout créative. Et pour nous c'est une expérience tellement libératrice, nous avons désormais des moyens à la hauteur de notre imagination et de nos capacités. Sans avoir à nous soucier de la logistique. » Et en partant d'un terrain de jeu particulièrement excitant. Le couple a évidemment commencé son voyage Loewe à Madrid dans les archives de cette maison fondée en 1846 « à partir d'un collectif d'artisans indépendants, l'un fabriquait des portefeuilles, l'autre des boîtes à bijoux, des valises, de l'artisanat d'art, etc. ».

Mais l'urgent est de penser une collection pour cette Fashion Week de septembre 2025. « Nous sommes partis de trois piliers. L'Espagne avec tout ce que cela veut dire de sensualité, de fougue, de culture, de peau et de passion, détaille Lazaro Hernandez qui, comme toutes les familles immigrées de Cuba, est « un enfant d'Espagne par extension ». L'artisanat évidemment. Et notre

histoire personnelle sachant que nous avons grandi dans les années 1990, en Nouvelle-Angleterre, avec le culte du sportswear américain et un amour pour ses archétypes - le jean, le tee-shirt blanc, le bomber, le blazer... Ce sont ces pièces que nous avons voulu transformer à travers le prisme de savoir-faire extrêmes. » Le jean en cuir déchiqueté en jaune citrine, en orange Stabilo ou bleu piscine en est l'exemple le plus spectaculaire et le plus désirable !

Le bon sens américain

Également sur le podium, un polo oversize réalisé dans une tranche napolitaine de superpositions de cuirs et des débardeurs plissés et gaufrés comme délavés par le soleil en cuir trompe-l'œil. Ou cette robe en cuir en vert super vitaminé dont la forme en sablier a été cousue à la main sans qu'on n'en voie jamais la trace. « Nous sommes très amateurs d'artistes comme Larry Bell et Ellsworth Kelly qui partagent le concept de Finish Fetish,

qui consiste à créer quelque chose de si bien fait que les traces de sa fabrication en sont effacées. » Comme ce magnifique tableau de Kelly aux couleurs du drapeau espagnol, rouge et jaune, que leur a prêté un ami et qui est exposé à l'entrée du défilé, et dont la surface lisse ne trahit aucun coup de pinceau.

Avec un bon sens américain à toute épreuve, les deux designers ont mis à exécution leur projet d'un sportswear féminin luxueux mais pas chichiteux, en donnant du cool au savoir-faire dans les parkas en col en millefeuille, les cabans en cuir toucher caoutchouc, les robes néoflamenco portables, et les pulls col V rouge primaire très commerciaux estampillés du nouveau logo (qui s'avère être l'ancien décapité de moitié). Une mode spontanée et pas prise de tête qui fait du bien... ■



LYVANS BOULAKY / GETTY IMAGES VIA AFP



Luxe et volupté

Créatures invraisemblables et dames lubriques : Rick Owens, Tom Ford, Mugler et Schiaparelli ont livré leurs visions, plus ou moins réussies, de la féminité pour la fashion week de Paris printemps-été 2026

Le sexe fait vendre : la formule, popularisée il y a trente ans par le mouvement « porno chic », reprend de la vigueur dans la mode. A la fashion week de Milan, en septembre, Demna chez Gucci et Dario Vitale chez Versace ont renoué avec des vestiaires aguicheurs. Leurs confrères de l'édition parisienne printemps-été 2026, qui court jusqu'au 7 octobre, ont montré qu'ils n'étaient pas en reste. Pour certains créateurs – tous masculins –, le défilé est l'occasion de fantasmer une femme, dont ils font une créature extravagante et auréolée de lubricité. Une stratégie périlleuse et pas toujours couronnée de succès.

Chez Tom Ford, place Vendôme, la foule se bouscule pour apercevoir les célébrités de tout bord qui arrivent au compte-gouttes, comme Pamela Anderson, Janet Jackson, Kylie Jenner, Rita Ora ou Kate Moss. Beaucoup de stars, mais un défilé en très petit comité (200 personnes), dans un espace conçu pour ressembler au salon privé d'une boîte de nuit, « ces lieux mystérieux où il se passe des choses auxquelles tout le monde n'a pas accès », d'après Haider Ackermann, le directeur artistique. A en juger par l'allure des mannequins, les « choses » semblent plutôt d'ordre sexuel.

Dans la pénombre de la salle tendue de noir débarquent trois femmes dans des manteaux en cuir vernis ajouré. A mesure qu'elles marchent, on découvre que les perforations du tissu sont plus larges aux endroits stratégiques (sur les fesses, par exemple), et que ces dames sont nues sous leurs pardessus. Des nuisettes en dentelle échantonnées jusqu'au nombril, de longues robes fluides où le tissu coule sur le corps comme une seconde peau, des robes en résille qui, sur la poitrine, se résument à un fil vertical tendu entre le cou et le pubis... Quelques tailleurs en soie rose dragée ou vert anis calment un peu le jeu de cette collection très sexuelle, portée par des mannequins particulièrement sculpturales d'âge divers : Vittoria Ceretti, 27 ans, a fermé le bal avec Erin O'Connor, de vingt ans son aînée. Haider Ackermann n'essaie pas d'être nuancé, mais il sait communiquer sa fougue.

Chez Mugler, le rendez-vous est donné

dans les profondeurs d'un garage de l'Est parisien. C'est là que Miguel Castro Freitas, nommé en mars, présente son premier défilé pour la marque qui appartient depuis 2019 à L'Oréal et dont le modèle économique repose essentiellement sur la vente de parfums. Le CV du Portugais de 45 ans inspire confiance : il a travaillé avec Alber Elbaz chez Lanvin, avec John Galiano et Raf Simons pour Dior, puis aux côtés de Dries Van Noten. Il dit avoir grandi en admirant Thierry Mugler (1948-2022) et partager avec le fondateur une passion pour le cinéma classique hollywoodien. Sur le papier, le casting paraît parfait.

Pourtant, dans le dédale du parking, la magie n'opère pas. Les silhouettes égrènent les clichés de la femme puissante et sexy, avec vestes à épaulettes et à la taille marquée, chemises strictes boutonnées jusqu'au menton, jupes crayons et talons hauts. Mais rien n'est flatteur, ni la couleur chair ni le rembourrage glissé entre la peau et le vêtement, sur les hanches, les épaules ou même le ventre. Les tissus forment des plis ou sont trop tirés, baillent parfois. La robe transparente avec des étoiles argentées qui tient sur le corps accrochée aux piercings de tétou de la mannequin est une mauvaise idée. Non seulement ces créatures n'ont aucune forme de vraisemblance, mais en plus on n'a pas du tout envie de leur ressembler.

Mousseline transparente

Daniel Roseberry, qui préside depuis 2019 aux destinées de Schiaparelli, a choisi d'investir le Centre Pompidou. Dans un espace d'exposition de l'institution, fermée pour travaux jusqu'en 2030, il fait lentement déambuler sur du sable noir des amazones hors-sol. « Je continue de croire qu'assister à un défilé Schiaparelli doit avoir la même intensité que visiter un musée », avance le designer dans sa note d'intention. L'intensité passe cette fois-ci par un parfum de luxe.

Des robes en mesh sont ajourées de pied en cap comme si la main d'un(e) affamé(e) de chair les avait déchirées, tandis que des jupes en cuir asymétriques à la taille très basse soulignent les hanches. Une robe en tulle et poil de chèvre ou un tailleur en jersey transparent laissent la plastique à dé-

couvert, tandis que d'autres tenues imitent en trompe-l'œil la peau nue ou le dessin d'une femme galbée de manière irréaliste. Le tout s'avère d'une sophistication presque maniaque et, par moments, surannée. Depuis sa nomination chez Schiaparelli, Daniel Roseberry a prouvé l'étendue de son talent en haute couture, où il parvient au juste dosage entre maîtrise formelle et inventivité artistique. Mais son travail est toujours plus empesé lorsqu'il s'agit de prêt-à-porter.

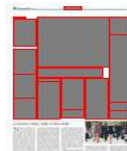
« Don't you need somebody to love? » entonne Jefferson Airplane dans une version techno bouillonnante, diffusée sur le parvis du Palais de Tokyo. Rick Owens, auquel le Palais Galliera, situé juste en face, consacre une rétrospective jusqu'au 4 janvier 2026, propose « des vêtements durs pour des temps durs », selon sa formule. Avec doigté, il mixe attraction et répulsion, glamour et hostilité.

Ses robes de druidesse sont taillées en mousseline transparente, mais agrémentées d'épaules rigides en métal. Ses débardeurs aériens laissant entrevoir de la lingerie sont aussitôt tempérés par des tenues pareilles à un cactus, hérissées de franges de cuir. Ses trenchs en Nylon ultraléger croisent des vestes de motard « à col Dracula ». Ce glamour décadent est accentué par la mise en scène : les mannequins descendent un grand escalier de chantier pour terminer leur course dans le bassin de la fontaine où elles pataugent lentement, leurs traînes d'organza flottant derrière elles. Une vision de la sensualité moins frontale, mais pas moins efficace. ■

ELVIRE VON BARDELEBEN
ET VALENTIN PÉREZ

Chez Schiaparelli, une robe en tulle et poil de chèvre laisse la plastique à découvert





STYLE

La Fashion Week de Paris et ses instants de grâce

Les larmes à l'issue du défilé de Pieter Mulier chez Alaïa, les applaudissements pour les enfants concertistes et le vestiaire prometteur de Glenn Martens chez Maison Margiela, et les frissons devant la gardian sexy d'Hermès... L'émotion était de la partie ce week-end sur les défilés.

Hélène Guillaume

Dans le foot comme dans la mode, le mercato a un impact psychologique, émotionnel et créatif souvent négligé. On s'inquiète en général des transferts ultramédiatisés qui vivent la pression colossale du premier match (Kylian Mbappé au Real) ou du premier défilé (Jonathan Anderson chez Dior). On se demande souvent comment le club ou la marque qui a perdu sa star va repenser son schéma tactique - un PSG qui fait grandir Dembélé, un Loewe qui recrute Jack McCollough et Lázaro Hernández avec succès. On observe parfois le sursaut des « anciens » qui montrent que l'expérience fait la différence, comme Modric à Madrid et, lors de cette Fashion Week, Anthony Vaccarello chez Saint Laurent ou Nadège Vanhée chez Hermès.

En revanche, quid de ceux dont le nom

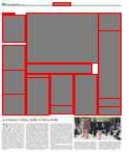
a circulé pour rejoindre une « plus grosse » équipe sans que ça ne se soit concrétisé ? Dans le foot, les exemples sont légion de joueurs qui, sous la pression des rumeurs, gâchent leur saison mais, une fois le mercato terminé, reviennent meilleurs que jamais (Marco Reus devenu une légende de Dortmund, Gerrard de Liverpool, etc.). Est-ce le cas du créateur Pieter Mulier ? Le nom du designer belge depuis 2021 chez Alaïa (dans le giron du groupe Richemont) faisait partie de la « top list » (du moins, selon les rumeurs) d'à peu près tous les recrutements depuis plus d'un an, et en particulier de Chanel et de Balenciaga. En mars dernier, si son défilé avait été plébiscité par son fan-club, il nous avait semblé forcé, avec ses femmes entravées dans des robes sculpturales à l'excès comme si le créateur dont l'esprit était probable-

ment occupé par les rumeurs et les négociations, avait besoin de prouver quelque chose. Mais ça y est, la saison des transferts est enfin close ! Et, ce samedi matin, Pieter Mulier nous semble enfin libéré, délivré.

Pour le plaisir des stakhanovistes de la Fashion Week qui fatiguent en ce dernier week-end de collections, il offre un moment de grâce à la Fondation Cartier du boulevard Raspail, dont ce défilé Alaïa est le tout dernier événement (avant son déménagement place du Palais-Royal le 25 octobre). Alors que la pluie frappe les vitres de la structure, les visages en gros plan des mannequins (Vittoria Ceretti, Loli Bahia, Julia Nobis...) apparaissent sur le sol et se reflètent sur le plafond en miroir.

« Nous avons réalisé ce film nous-mêmes pendant deux nuits, avec l'idée de créer pour vous une bulle de beauté loin d'Instagram et





de l'actualité», explique le directeur artistique quelques minutes après le show.

En quarante-six looks tous extrêmement raffinés, Mulier marche dans les pas d'un géant (de 1,57 m), Azzedine Alaïa. Et propose de très beaux archétypes de la maison (veste sans revers fendue sur les côtés vert saphir, Perfecto en cuir, blouse en popeline noire, caban en python) et des pièces hybrides renversantes de beauté, comme ce pantalon (ou serait-ce une jupe ?) taillé dans un coton rouge magenta complètement ouvert sur la jambe et noué à la cheville. Le soir est particulièrement puissant, entre lyrisme d'un autre temps et radicalité moderniste, à l'image de ce manteau échevelé en franges de soie ivoire ou ce jupon de soie vert forêt qui s'évase en drapé.

« J'ai dit à mon équipe que je voulais des vêtements qui pleurent, d'où ces franges, mais aussi ces drapés qui pendent du cou. Mais avec romantisme, car il y a de l'espoir dans tout cela. Toute la collection existe dans cette tension, entre ce qui est relâché et ce qui est tiré. » Il dit aussi qu'il voulait « des extrêmes de luxe et de simplicité, sans rien entre les deux ». Le show s'achève, le designer sort saluer tout sourire jusqu'à ce qu'il croise le regard de son mentor et ami, Raf Simons, en larmes. Ils se serrent dans les bras alors que tout le monde, ému, applaudit, y compris Kim Kardashian, quasi méconnaissable avec ses cheveux courts à la Kris Jenner, sa mère.

Deux heures plus tard, à l'autre bout de Paris, un autre Belge doit lui aussi enfiler le costume d'un monstre sacré de la mode, Martin Margiela. Il s'agit de Glenn Martens, 42 ans, dans l'écurie de Renzo Rosso (le groupe OTB) depuis 2020 chez Diesel, et donc nommé chez Maison Margiela en janvier dernier. En juillet, il présente une première collection couture bluffante à tous égards, et pourtant la barre est haute puisque l'ultime défilé de son prédécesseur direct, John Galiano, en janvier 2024, est entré dans les annales. En revanche, durant son règne, le Britannique s'est moins intéressé au prêt-à-porter, ce qui laisse le champ à Martens pour redéfinir les fondamentaux de Margiela.

À commencer par le lieu et la scénographie de la collection, présentée au Cent-quatre, dans le 19^e arrondissement. Si le centre culturel accueille régulièrement la mode, il est toujours assez troublant de

voir des kilomètres de berlines noires déposant des gens luxueusement habillés dans ce quartier populaire à la frontière d'Aubervilliers. Ce qui nous rappelle évidemment ce jour d'octobre 1989 lorsque Martin Margiela faisait venir ce public VIP dans un squat du 20^e arrondissement où il avait aussi convié les enfants du coin à participer aux invitations et à assister au défilé. Certains y avaient vu une exploitation de la misère, comme Gérard Lefort, qui écrivait dans *Libération* : « Cette fois, on a franchi une frontière - de la Cour carrée du Louvre à la cour des Miracles - qui n'aurait jamais dû être franchie : celle de l'indécence. » De nos jours, ce choc des cultures ne choque plus. Et lorsque les soixante et un musiciens de 7 à 15 ans paraissent dans leurs costumes trois fois trop grands, le public de Glenn Martens (dont les guest-stars Kylie Jenner et Kim Kardashian) applaudit à tout rompre et rit lorsque ces violonistes, trompettistes, pianistes en herbe (tous originaires de Romilly-sur-Seine) entament le *Zarathoustra* de Strauss avec beaucoup d'enthousiasme et de fausses notes.

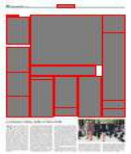
Lorsque le premier mannequin arrive dans une longue veste en cuir ouverte sur le torse nu et pantalon assorti, très beau, quelque chose nous gêne pourtant. C'est l'écarteur en métal enfoncé dans la bouche de la jeune femme qui lui donne des airs de Hannibal Lecter ou de sculptures de Messerschmitt. Est-ce un clin d'œil à l'habitude margielesque d'anonymiser les mannequins, souvent en leur couvrant le visage ? Mais, passé cette gêne visuelle, on s'attache aux vêtements, du vrai prêt-à-porter de créateur comme on n'en avait pas vu depuis longtemps. Martens, dont le travail a toujours été influencé par Margiela, ne boude pas son plaisir en reprenant les classiques jean, trench, veste en cuir, mais aussi des nuisettes « trashisées » par du scotch collé sur les ourlets et des robes en soie imprimée à partir de scan de vraies fleurs. Il reprend aussi le concept de prendre une pièce ou une tenue complète et de l'envelopper sous plastique ou nylon entre housse de pressing et blister de supermarché (magnifique, cette robe faite d'une housse recouvrant un blazer porté par Hanne Gaby). Une prestation plus que prometteuse qui s'achève dans les applaudissements et le sourire des enfants qui ont eu le temps de massacrer joyeusement *Le Lac des cygnes*, *Carmen* et Beethoven.

Ces jours-ci, la campagne pour les nouveaux rouges à lèvres Hermès bat son plein à Paris. « *Le rouge, tout le rouge, rien que le rouge* » (« *Red, only red, nothing but red* » chez nos amis anglo-saxons) a tout du slogan percutant qui devrait inciter les filles de tous âges à pousser la porte du sellier. Plus tard, peut-être qu'elles achèteront un parfum, puis un carré, et un jour, on leur souhaite, un sac (le graal de la maroquinerie mondiale). Encore mieux, un jour, l'une d'entre elles sera peut-être une VIC (Very Important Client) invitée à un défilé de Nadège Vanhée comme celui de samedi après-midi à la garde républicaine. Voilà déjà de nombreuses saisons que la marque défile à la caserne des Célestins, dans le manège principal entouré des écuries. Et le cheval est encore au cœur de cette collection de l'été 2026 que la directrice artistique appelle joliment « À brides lâchées ».

À l'origine de ce vestiaire, une selle camarguaise réalisée dans les années 1930 par les artisans d'Hermès pour le comédien Charles Vanel et rachetée par la maison à l'occasion d'une vente aux enchères au début des années 2000. Une selle au cuir glacé presque acajou, au trousséquin relevé comme un dossier et au pommeau ergonomique comme un joystick. On en retrouve le sublime veau ciré à la main marron fauve façonné en un boléro équestre d'où dépasse une longue chemise en coton blanc craquant. Si la maison est extrêmement vigilante à rester fidèle à ses origines et à ses valeurs, Nadège Vanhée n'est pas la moins loyale, et, cette saison, elle explore une nouvelle fois le style équestre, mais plus libre, plus relâché, plus solaire, en écho à cette Camargue photographiée par Lucien Clergue (dont elle est fan). « *C'est une terre de bohème, une terre de rêve, de folklore*, dit-elle quelques minutes avant le défilé. *J'adore par exemple la fameuse histoire de la bête du Vacarres, qui était une sorte de minotaure et est l'un des derniers mythes folkloriques français.* »

Il y a de la peau, de la sensualité, des brassières qui gainent les seins, des harnais lacés sur des vestes équestres et des minicyclistes en maille sous des shorts portefeuilles en cuir, dans le vestiaire de cette gardian de l'été 2025. Maximaliste, elle entortille un carré de soie dans son collier à maille gourmette, accumule les bracelets en argent Chaîne d'ancre Aléa II, enfle ses bottes de jumping en veau velours, et porte son Kelly hobo par-dessus l'épaule, ou ba-





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lance du bout des doigts son très, très cool sac Bride de jour. Cette fille veut du cuir et du sex-appeal, elle aussi est libérée. Comme Nadège Vanhée, qui, après dix ans à la tête des collections féminines du sellier, s'autorise de plus en plus de pas de côté. « Avec tous ces changements de directeurs

artistiques, ça va être intéressant de voir comment les maisons vont revoir leur répertoire, dit-elle. Mais j'espère aussi qu'on va voir leur travail sur une longue portée. Un directeur artistique, c'est souvent comme les bons vins, qui se révèlent, se décantent avec le temps. » ■



Alaïa



Maison Margiela



Hermès

UMBERTO FRATINI / GORUNWAY.COM ; SDP : FILIPPO FIORI / GORUNWAY.COM



Valentino

The invitation for the Valentino show this season came with a packet of glow sticks. It was one way to fight your way through the ambient gloom.

Creative director Alessandro Michele has been struggling to make sense of his job at a time when many people are simply struggling to survive. He came across a letter written by Pier Paolo Pasolini during World War II, in which he described the simple joy of seeing fireflies.

For Michele, it was a signal to try to recapture the magic he felt as a young designer.

"When I first started to work, I felt that there was really a spell that was almost everywhere: on my table, in my pencil, in every meeting with all the amazing people that I met," he said in a preview. "I would love, in a way, to make it again as it was, because it was really incredible."

His spring collection harked back to another incredible time: founder Valentino Garavani's hedonistic existence in Rome in the early '80s. Michele tried to distill the essence of that period with items like puff-sleeved blouses, jackets with bows and pencil skirts.

Stripping away his usual maximalist styling, he staged the show on a plain black set with swirling lights standing in for fireflies. The models even looked like they'd skipped hair and makeup.

You could read it as a sign of Valentino tightening its pursestrings as its new chief executive officer Riccardo Bellini seeks to reignite sales, but the immediate effect was to put the focus back on the clothes.

They ranged from elevated basics – a zebra-patterned windbreaker, or suits with ironed-in creases – to richly sequined jackets or shorts, many done in intriguing color combinations (think powdery blue with chartreuse, or mustard with deep purple). Bar a couple of naked dresses, his

evening looks were as opulent as they come.

But the murky lighting and models' stringy hair dragged down some of the looks, like a ruched lilac velvet one-shouldered dress that sagged in all the wrong places.

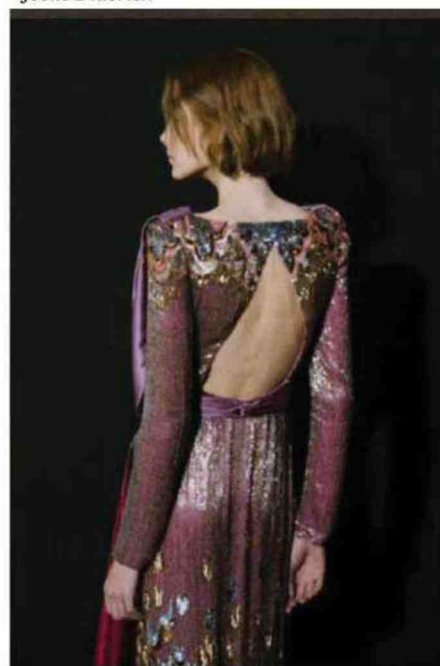
The show highlighted the dilemma facing designers, who are under pressure to both re-entice disaffected luxury consumers and pacify their C-suite. Michele said that with so much change happening around him, he needed to take pause. "I feel myself also in a very sober moment," he mused.

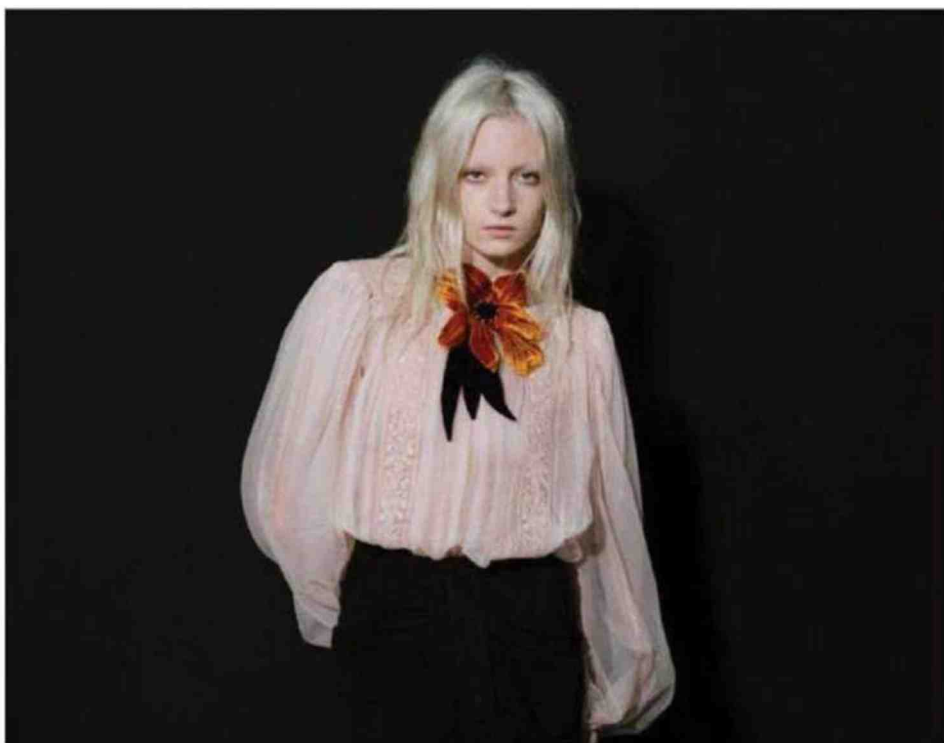
Ultimately, though, he hopes to spread joy through clothes.

"The idea of beauty sometimes seems superficial, but it's not," he argued.

"Everybody must try to do [something] in their playground to push the idea of life and beauty and light. I will never give up."

— Joelle Diderich







Maison Margiela

Among the slew of designer debuts in Paris this season, Glenn Martens' coed ready-to-wear collection for Maison Margiela was technically not a first, since he already set out his vision for the brand with his Artisanal show in July.

That haute couture collection, which tilted the Paris house in a dark, daring and DIY direction, has been snapped up by celebrities like Cate Blanchett and Lisa Manobal.

"It feels a bit less heavy, of course," he said of this outing. "I kind of proved myself already a bit in July – but sadly, the internet and the press doesn't care," Martens added with a laugh.

The million-dollar question, of course, was whether he would follow in the footsteps of his predecessor John Galiano and keep pushing the conceptual envelop with his ready-to-wear, or steer the brand back into more commercial waters.

As former creative director of the now-defunct Paris label Y/Project – where he accrued a reputation for innovative cutting and an experimental approach to fashion – and current designer-in-chief at denim juggernaut Diesel, Martens is equally well versed in both approaches.

"I love all the quirkiness of fashion and things that don't make any kind of sense to wear – and that's what we have Artisanal for – but thanks to my experience at Diesel, I also do love to make clothes [that] people want to wear, which wasn't maybe always the thing happening at Y/Project," he said.

As students at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp, Martens and his friends used to stock up on Margiela at outlet stores. "We were living in it, and I think that's definitely something that I wanted to bring back with this collection: to make clothes that people want to live in," he said.

The result was a lineup that touched on key brand codes, but offered a broader assortment of categories, including a beefed-up selection of denim and the return of leather.

Guests including Kim Kardashian and Kylie Jenner let out a collective "aww" as a troupe of local children, dressed in oversize black suits, took their seats in an orchestra pit and proceeded to play wonky renditions of classical music hits.

Noting that Margiela always started with "a shoulder and a shoe," Martens riffed on a slightly dropped shoulder shape and a heel-less shoe that he offered in a variety of styles, from pumps to boots.

He sliced the lapels off suits and trenchcoats and gave them ties, echoing

the white lab coats worn by Margiela staffers. Biker jackets and crisp white poplin shirts came with tuck-in collars, and were worn with drop-crotch pants or slipdresses bonded with plastic tape.

Among the best ideas were tailored jackets shrouded in black chiffon, leaving only a ghostly shape, and men's jackets and coats with silk scarves fused into the neckline, for a clever trompe-l'oeil effect.

It was a pity the models didn't collectively revolt against the mouthpieces modeled after Margiela's four-stitch signature. In its show notes, the brand said it was to achieve a "uniformity of expression," but distorting the face of any model – let alone veterans like Guinevere Van Seenus, Saskia de Brauw and Hanne Gaby Odiele – was at best a waste, at worst insensitive.

While this collection did not set off fireworks, it was strong enough to stand on its own – no gimmicks required.

– Joelle Diderich









Celine

For his sophomore show, Michael Rider decamped from Celine headquarters in central Paris to Parc de Saint-Cloud – about a one-hour car ride away, or nearly 90 minutes by public transit – and erected an open-air runway theater in a shady, breezy alley.

“I thought it would be nice if we got out of the city and to a park, where I think it’s nice to spend time,” he said after the show.

Although the hugely inconvenient venue was different, the collection felt familiar – on purpose.

Asked how he approached his second effort, he replied, “Not much different than the first. We were thinking still in terms of foundation.”

Indeed, Rider had set a promising and fetching template with his debut, drawing the best elements from the Hedi Slimane era and the Phoebe Philo years, of which he was part, and folding in his own point of view as an American who spent the last eight years designing at Polo Ralph Lauren.

So he doubled down on mannish jackets with a vaguely apple-core shape, skinny jeans, plays on tuxedo dressing,

and preppy signifiers like polo and rugby shirts, the latter oversize in fluid silk.

Newish elements included feisty baby-doll dresses in soigne boucle, or psychedelic florals – and a bevy of logo bicycle helmets. Why?

“When I moved back to Paris, I was so happy to see that cycling had become a thing here,” he said. “All the stylish kids show up in the studio with their helmets hooked on their elbows.”

Rider’s Celine blows the stuffiness out of idealized Parisian dressing with scarf-like collars spilling off coats and jackets, vaguely bohemian jewelry, mostly sensible shoes and an offhand way of carrying handbags or a doffed leather coat.

The menswear held its own, which is a rarity with coed shows this season, and seemed aimed squarely at the influential Korean boy band members in the front row.

The show did not have the electricity of Rider’s first outing, but enough spunk to let you know that fresh air is blowing through the house. – *Miles Socha*







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STYLE

La femme Celine, belle et bien réelle

« Nous avons réfléchi à ce que Celine est et n'est pas », écrit Michael Rider dans une lettre adressée à ses invités au sujet de la conception de cette collection de l'été 2026, sa deuxième (après celle de juillet) pour la maison. Qu'est-ce que Celine ? Un style parisien, une garde-robe réelle, des vêtements de qualité. Qu'est-ce que n'est pas Celine ? Une mode qui change au gré des tendances, une marque ultra-conceptuelle, un luxe inabordable. Michael Rider connaît la maison comme sa poche, car, s'il a été nommé il y a moins d'un an, il était le bras droit de Phoebe Philo, qui a propulsé la marque sur la scène mode, entre 2008 et 2017. Ça ne suffit pas pour faire un succès, mais c'est déjà beaucoup pour déterminer un cap dans une industrie de la mode complètement déboussolée.

« Celine n'est pas une marque du genre à passer d'un concept à un autre chaque saison, explique-t-il à la fin du défilé. Cette collection de l'été 2026 s'inscrit donc dans la continuité de la précédente, c'est la même femme mais c'est juste qu'il

fait chaud dehors et qu'elle fait ses valises pour partir en vacances... » C'est pour-quoi, dimanche après-midi, l'Américain invitait la caravane de la mode à faire son balluchon et à quitter la frénésie de la Fashion Week pour le rejoindre au parc de Saint-Cloud. Organiser un défilé hors de Paris en pleine semaine des collections est toujours risqué, il faut une certaine cote de popularité pour motiver les gens à se déplacer dans ces conditions et malgré les bouchons. Heureusement, le public est curieux de découvrir ce nouveau Celine - sous le soleil par-dessus le marché -, ce qui n'était pas gagné au regard de la météo catastrophique des jours précédents.

Le fond de l'air est frais, mais les filles (et les quelques garçons) qui apparaissent sur le podium n'ont pas froid aux yeux, sûres d'elles dans leur petite robe baby doll en soie bouclette portée avec de très belles babouches en cuir, leur trench ample doublé de soie foulard, leur pantalon noir bien coupé rehaussé d'une ceinture à boucle logo maximaliste ou leur manteau queue-de-pie bleu marine, balayant le sol de leur panier géant. C'est la Parisienne

qui part en week-end à un mariage d'amis en Provence. Chic et cool dans sa robe col cheminée en coton Néoprène blanc optique passée sur un pantalon large en lainage ivoire, et avec ses lunettes de mouche à la Polly Maggoo.

« En Celine, vous ne serez sans doute pas la personne la plus étrange et extravagante de la soirée, mais vous aurez le meilleur blazer et vous aurez l'attitude pour le porter », dit encore le directeur artistique qui a le sens de la formule. À une journaliste italienne qui lui demande si cette consistance a toujours fait partie de sa manière de travailler, il répond : « Ça fait partie de ma personnalité, mais ça vient aussi avec la maturité.

Ce n'est pas une critique envers ceux qui embrassent les tendances, mais j'ai mûri cette idée et j'aime les personnalités et les marques qui défendent une posture et qui s'y tiennent. Le plus beau dans nos métiers, c'est quand on peut créer quelque chose de beau qui dure. » ■ H. G.



PASCAL LE SEGRETAIR / GETTY IMAGES VIA AFP





‘A New Heartbeat’: Decoding Duran Lantink’s Gaultier Debut

To keep his Jean Paul Gaultier as new as possible, Lantink decided he would stay away from the archive, the designer told Tim Blanks in an in-depth interview.

By Tim Blanks



PARIS — “Junior” was the name Duran Lantink chose for his debut collection as creative director of Jean Paul Gaultier, after the sporty, lower-priced line Gaultier launched in 1988 to seduce a younger audience. Like Junior, Lantink was also born in 1988, but his connection with the label runs deeper than mere calendar coincidence. His parents were part of a fast, fashionable young crowd that patronised the RoXY, a club in Amsterdam, which *also* opened in 1988, and some of his earliest memories are of them and their friends dressing up to go out.

“They were the sort of people that you don’t see during the day but they flourish in the night life, and they were always so inspiring, because it felt like there was a community that wasn’t necessarily seen in my elementary school, or when I would go to tennis or rugby or ballet or whatever,” Lantink said. “I would go home, and then it was like, Friday evening, and there was house music and cat suits, party outfits, gold cone bras. Very much in the Gaultier spirit. There was one guy called Johnny, and I would say, ‘Hello, Uncle Johnny’, and he would say, ‘It’s *Auntie* Johnny for you.’ It made me feel a bit scared, I think, but it also made me feel there’s more in this world than just defining a male-looking person as uncle. They can also be auntie.”

It was that spirit of anything goes that Lantink wanted to capture in his first collection for Gaultier. It was a significant schism from the repertoire of guest designers — Chitose Abe, Glenn Martens, Simone Rocha and more — who have been keeping Gaultier’s name alive for the past four years. “It feels like a new heartbeat,” Lantink agreed during a preview last week. And, to keep it as new as possible, he decided he would stay away from what must surely be a formidable archive. “I mean, I’m dying to go into it, but I also think it’s better if I stay away for a bit.”

But Lantink acknowledged it would be difficult to maintain that kind of innocence. “Somehow we live in a society where everybody knows what Gaultier is, but everybody has a different perspective of it, because he tapped into so many different subcultures. There’s the bourgeois lady who was into the





tailoring and the sailor stripes, and there's the world that was more focused on Junior and clubbing." And that was where *he* went in his presentation on Sunday afternoon.

One lesson we learned from Gaultier over the decades was to expect the unexpected. That's only one reason why Lantink is his ideal spiritual heir. He showed in the Jean Nouvel-designed Musée du Quai Branly, whose halls are filled with unparalleled collections of indigenous art and artifacts from Africa, Asia, Oceania and the Americas. But the audience was steered underground, away from all that splendour, through the detritus of a rave into a long, grim tunnel lined with metal ducts, the kind of environment that demanded pounding techno. "I don't have time for it at the moment, but I love to go to a rave," said Lantink. "When I was 15 or 16, I started really being into the whole Cyber Dog situation, I got super obsessed by the Japanese streetwear things and Walter Van Beirendonck. And I started seeing all these people combining different colours and patterns, being completely overexaggerated in their looks. And I thought, 'Oh, that's very nice, it's like your body is kind of transformable into whatever you want to be at whatever stage in life.' I was always very drawn to that. I guess it shaped me as a designer."

The sculpted anatomical exaggerations of his own collections sometimes feel like Lantink is trying to create a new human. He's just not that interested in conventional forms, something else he shares with Gaultier. But he refined his experiments in this collection. In his pomp, Gaultier also mutated silhouettes, most famously with Madonna's cone bra. Its ubiquity made Lantink wary, but he felt compelled to acknowledge its importance as *the* house icon by opening the show with his version, rounded and pushed to the side. It was the best possible way to announce his arrival. He followed it with Leon Dame in a cropped black leather bomber that devolved into a jockstrap, looking like a cross between a Colt Man and a Superman, a hybrid that Gaultier himself exalted when he had muscled Adonises John Francis and Cameron Alborzian opening his shows in the 1990s.

Gaultier often fetishized the body with belts, straps, harnesses and extreme forms of tailoring. The difference here was that Lantink's celebration of body consciousness felt younger, somehow healthier and more rooted in the unselfconscious Nirvana of his clubby youth. Carved-out bodysuits, sculpted breastplates, bikinis and cycling shorts pared looks back to bare essentials. A backpack formed one piece with a broad, pocketed belt that linked to the ankles. "I'm very much thinking about this guy going to a rave outside," Lantink daydreamed, "and it's like 40 degrees, and he's only wearing a belt with pockets and a backpack, and he's completely naked with a pair of sunglasses. Who doesn't want to just wear a belt and go to a rave?"

There were varying degrees of nudity – or opportunities for more baring of flesh – throughout the collection, culminating in a matt-chested, hairy-legged, anatomically correct male form printed on a body stocking. The exquisite Lulu Tenney also sported one, though her "modesty" was protected by a pair of flaring shorts based on a trawlerman's hat. "I don't even know if I'm challenging things," Lantink mused, "but I just want to show where I find beauty. Somehow people see that as challenging, but I just feel like it's really beautiful, and I want to show it."

As Lantink conceded, Gaultier has been imprinted on him, archives or not. When he first looked at the Spring/Summer 1994 collection "Tatouage," Jean Paul's monumental paean to inked skin and one of the greatest fashion shows ever, he said his initial response was to try and do a new tattoo. "But it didn't work at all. So I was like, 'Okay, there's things that we use without changing. Only change the technique of it.' And we did 3D printing, so the tattoo becomes three-dimensional." On a sheer bodystocking, it was one of the most striking syntheses of Lantink and Gaultier in the collection, for this old fan at least.

There were others. The daisy jeans were a reminder of how much Gaultier loved Deee-Lite (who were also favourites at the RoXY). The diagonally-printed Junior tops echoed his affection for Russian Constructivism. The stripes were an op art nod to the marinier. Bomber jackets, of course. Lantink even managed a trench coat, truncated to create that essential bared midriff. And the pleated "Marilyn





Monroe” dress was a quote from an ad for Junior. (People would eagerly anticipate Gaultier’s ad campaigns. Those truly were different times.) Lantink also did an excellent job with Gaultier’s sunglasses and shoes. You could feel his sheer pleasure in finally having the budget to create accessories, although he had the common sense to leave the men’s sandals designed for Gaultier by Stephane Kélian in 1988 exactly as they were. You don’t mess with perfection.

All of this is mere trainspotting on my part, when the main event is Lantink assuming the creative director role at Gaultier. He said they have lunch maybe once a month. “We don’t talk much about fashion. We talk more about movies, music, vacations, sometimes he tells stories about Pierre Cardin or Courrèges. We have nice conversations, but not necessarily about what I’m going to be doing.”

“But it’s nice to merge these identities into each other,” Lantink added. “I think it’s a very important moment in time. The late 80s and 90s knocked down doors for people like us. And now we’re in this situation in life where it feels like people are trying to take that away.”





‘A dose of poison against nostalgia’: First reactions to Duran Lantink’s Jean Paul Gaultier

Simone Marchetti, Julie Gilhart and more on Duran Lantink’s first runway show as artistic director of Jean Paul Gaultier.

By Luke Leitch



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“I’m probably going to be slaughtered for it,” predicted Duran Lantink before his debut collection as artistic director of Jean Paul Gaultier this afternoon. Succeeding French fashion’s most irreverent iconoclast, who retired from design after presenting his 50th-anniversary couture show in January 2020, was never going to be easy. But as Gaultier himself once said: “It’s great to be who you are” — and Lantink was determined to retain his own process and essence while making this debut. So did he?

Absolutely, reckoned the influential talent spotter and creative business consultant Julie Gilhart as she left the show. “Duran dared like a young Jean Paul once did,” she said: “I loved the opening look with its pointed-bust reference — pure Gaultier energy.” She added: “When I was a buyer, I used to buy Gaultier and always left those shows thinking, where’s the afterparty? Duran’s show had that same vibe. It was sexy in Duran’s imaginative way, confident and ready to turn heads wherever the night goes next.”

Lantink was appointed this April to act as permanent creative lead at Gaultier following a five-year period in which the house’s fashion output — strictly limited to couture — was designed by a rolling cast of guests. These cameo creatives comprised Chitose Abe, Glenn Martens, Olivier Rousteing, Haider Ackermann, Julien Dossena, Simone Rocha, Nicolas Di Felice and Ludovic de Saint Sernin. All of them professed themselves honoured to be adding their names to the history of a house founded by one of modern French fashion’s most seditiously democratic designers. Despite focusing on couture for his last decade of work, Gaultier’s spirit has always been informed by the streets. As he once observed: “It is always the poorly dressed people who are most interesting.”

“He challenged not just runway conventions but also mainstream attitudes,” wrote Nicole Phelps in *Vogue Runway*’s review of Jean Paul Gaultier’s last-ever ready-to-wear show. Raised in the Paris suburbs, Gaultier worked first at Pierre Cardin, Jacques Esterel, and Patou before presenting his first show in 1976 and founding his company in 1978. During the 1980s, he developed a disruptive dialect of satirically progressive codes that included menswear skirts, eroticised mariniera shirts, and cone-





shaped bullet bras. His fame expanded when he brought that last motif into the orbit of Madonna for her Blonde Ambition tour of 1990.

In 1993, he launched his first fragrance, Classique, which was followed two years later by Le Male. In 2003, he was appointed creative director at Hermès, where he remained until 2010. Financial pressures and the shifting fashion landscape led him to end his ready-to-wear line in 2014, focusing on haute couture and fragrance. In 2016, however, the Spanish beauty and fashion conglomerate Puig acquired the Jean Paul Gaultier brand and fragrance license from Shiseido, consolidating creative and commercial control under one owner.

Puig, which reported revenues of €4.79 billion and profits of €530 million in 2024, has taken a long-term approach to rebuilding Gaultier's fashion presence — a strategy which also naturally reflects the group's core focus on fragrance and beauty. The five-year rotating designer policy for couture brought a lot of goodwill to a house already well-regarded for its creativity. And with the appointment of Lantink, it has apparently found a permanent lead innovatively provocative as Gaultier himself.

"If we're not being radical, then what are we doing?" said Lantink when he was awarded the Woolmark Prize earlier this year. After founding his brand in 2016, Lantink served notice of his arrival with the 'vagina pants' featured in Janelle Monáe's 'Pynk' music video. He made his debut on the Paris schedule in 2023 and has since shown collections that take dramatic liberties with the human form. The trompe l'oeil torsos of his AW25 collection seemed to have a particularly powerful unintended connective resonance with the iconography of Gaultier.

Lantink delivered this article's opening prediction while speaking to Phelps on yesterday's *Vogue* podcast. He explained that this debut has seen him lean into the history of Junior Gaultier, the diffusion line that ran between 1987 and 1994 and found wide street-level currency. However, he added, he had yet to even peek into the house's archives: "I decided to approach it a bit like Charlie and the Chocolate Factory... I really want to go in, but first I want to imagine what's behind that door and create a fantasy world."

So did Lantink's pure imagination deliver a bad nut or a golden ticket? Here's what members of today's audience thought.

Simone Marchetti, Vanity Fair Italia editor-in-chief and Vanity Fair European editorial director

In a season of fashion conservatism and beautiful, nostalgic clothes, Duran at JPG went in the opposite direction. His debut was disturbing and full of clever mistakes. Less than a breath of fresh air, it was a dose of homoeopathic good poison against nostalgia.

Bosse Myhr, director menswear, womenswear and childrenswear at Selfridges

Duran Lantink revisited some of Gaultier's most recognisable motifs, including stripes, conical forms, and spirals, while also expanding them into new terrain. The surfacing of performance fabrics gives many pieces a sporty edge, but with a clearly hedonistic intention. He challenged gender norms by dressing men in skimpy partywear and dresses with the same revealing directness afforded to his women. And the beachwear riffs were especially daring: the bikinis and 'mono-mini' silhouettes push the body into a provocative geometry.

Nick Tran, head of buying and merchandising, Dover Street Market Paris

It was Duran turned on, up and around. Specific, challenging and fun — as JPG should be.

David Martin, founder and editor-in-chief, Odda magazine





Duran is disruptive and makes people talk. Jean Paul was exactly like that when his career started. We need Duran — culture needs his ideas and fashion needs to shake it up a bit from time to time in order to support the vision of tomorrow.

Edward Buchanan, designer and journalist

Duran really knows how to twist our libidos into a tailspin. I was really looking forward to this debut because there was real risk involved in hiring someone with no experience leading a heritage house. Jean Paul Gaultier was an originator in a time when being provocative in the design space was rarely celebrated. This show really felt akin to the origins of the brand. It felt like such a celebration of raw creative freedom, with memorable consideration of the codes of Gaultier. The sailor stripes were there, the tattoo was there, the eroticism was there, the off-colour stories were present — and the coolness was there. A solid, animated beginning.

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CONJONCTURE - TENDANCES

Go Inside The BoF 500 Gala 2025

Rising talents and industry heavyweights came together to celebrate the newest members of the BoF 500, the definitive index of people shaping the global fashion industry.

By Annabel Bolton



PARIS — As fashion month approaches a crescendo in the French capital, rising talents and industry heavyweights came together at the Shangri-La to celebrate the newest members of the BoF 500, the definitive index of people shaping the global fashion industry.

2025 BoF 500 cover star Kim Kardashian, Charli XCX, Demi Lovato. Colman Domingo, Moncler's Remo Ruffini, Edward Enninful and Kering's new chief executive Luca De Meo mingled with the BoF 500 Class of 2025, including designer Giambattista Valli, model Alex Consani, Dries Van Noten's Julian Klausner and acting duo "Freen" Sarocha Chankimha and "Becky" Rebecca Patricia Armstrong, as well as industry pioneers from previous BoF 500 classes: Jaden Smith, Anok Yai, Burberry's Daniel Lee and Jil Sander's Simone Bellotti.

"For me, this event starts to feel more and more like a homecoming. It's the Saturday of Paris Fashion Week. Everyone is a little exhausted and this is a moment for us to let off some steam, catch up with old friends, meet people you've admired from afar and celebrate the Class of 2025," said BoF's founder and editor-in-chief, Imran Amed.

"The creativity and sense of celebration and inclusion in the room is inspiring. It's remarkable to see such a wonderfully diverse and innovative collective of visionaries gathered here in Paris," said Jenny Freshwater of Amazon Fashion, the presenting partner for the event. "We are so honoured to be part of the BoF 500 gala tonight."

The celebration came during a pivotal season in fashion, with some of the biggest brands in the industry debuting new creative visions under new designers, from Demna's Gucci, Jonathan Anderson's Dior and Pierpaolo Picciolo's Balenciaga to the most anticipated debut of all: 2025 BoF 500 cover star Matthieu Blazy's first show for Chanel on Monday night.

Imran Amed and Luca de Meo attend the BoF 500 Gala. (Getty Images for the Business of Fashion)

In the room, the moment was palpable, with industry leaders looking ahead to fashion's next chapter — and what this moment of transition signifies for fashion's future amid a sharp downturn in demand.

"I want to affect change, and I don't see that as [something] I can affect just by myself," said designer and new inductee, Conner Ives. "We need hope, and I feel like there is a sense of optimism in the room."



“I think it means: I’ve made it,” said NFL fashion editor Kyle Smith, reflecting on their recognition as a new BoF 500 member. “To see so many of my peers made me feel instantly welcomed. I feel like I’m part of a very cool community.”

As guests moved their way from the red carpet into the ballroom, they were met with a banquet table adorned with autumnal botanical decorations, around which they mingled and reflected on the latest happenings in the industry and their company in the room.

“It’s good to surround yourself with so many interesting people. It’s unbelievable,” said Thai actor and musician Bright. “There are so many new cool brands, very niche, small brands from Africa, India... they put the culture in fashion and I want to see more [of this].”

Other guests looked to the future of fashion with excitement for change and optimism, commenting on their hopes for the industry’s trajectory.

“I’m looking forward to opening the doors from fashion to a whole generation that feels excluded,” shared content creator and founder of La Watchparty, Lya. “I’m trying to open those doors — God knows it was hard for me to enter this industry, so I hope to be able to make it easier for the new kids.”

“We live in a different reality than the fashions that we look to as inspiration, so we do have to innovate. Innovation is just forward motion, so I think that as long as we don’t stay in this archaic idea of how fashion should look and be and feel. We will continue moving forward,” said model Palomar Elesser.

As night fell over Paris, guests danced in the glow of the Eiffel Tower, framed by the Shangri-La’s terrace, to music curated by Benji B and sets by DJs Naomi Clement and Manaré.

“There’s no certain shape that you have to fit to be creative,” said Satoshi Kuwata, founder and creative director of Setchu. “And it’s a really great time to be creative, to find something to be unique. Right now, I only find excitement.”





Yohji Yamamoto: ‘The Fashion Business Is Disappearing’

The 82-year-old punk poet anti-hero of fashion has grown a brand that now generates more than \$200 million a year, but there is plenty he is angry about as he prepares his label for the future.

By Imran Amed



TOKYO and PARIS — Yohji Yamamoto is angry.

“Fashion has become a joke,” he says. “It’s all about money. The major companies of fashion, they’re like kids playing soccer, just running after the ball. They’re not thinking about their customers. I just think they have too much money, so they don’t need to work hard. Money is always floating on them.”

There’s little doubt the sharp downturn in demand for some of the world’s largest and most prestigious luxury houses is, in part, the product of what some analysts have called “greedflation” as brands sought to juice profits with punchy price hikes while under-delivering on creative innovation and quality.

But Yohji-san, as he is called out of respect by his team and the wider industry, is no stranger to tough times. “We were there before also,” he says, recalling his 2009 bankruptcy and restructuring. “So now I’m focused on making my company small but strong.”

A survivor who succeeded by going against the grain with the label he founded more than four decades ago, Yamamoto’s creative energy has long sprung from anger and frustration. In the early years, the loss of his father during World War II when he was only two years old was the main source of his fury, but these days he’s equally upset about the state of fashion — and the wider world.

We are at the Tokyo headquarters of Yohji Yamamoto Inc. All around Yohji-san’s office, things are piled up on the floor. Papers are strewn everywhere. The main table in his office is cluttered with a crumpled pink tissue box, an old-school landline phone, post-it notes, used coffee mugs and, of course, a lighter and a pack of cigarettes. There is a small clothing rail in the corner with a few garments hanging together, but they don’t seem to be part of a collection he is working on.

As always, Yamamoto is wearing a long crumpled black blazer and black trousers, and his signature black wool hat. But he is more frail than the last time I interviewed him at length, almost 10 years ago. This time, interacting with the designer reminds me of speaking with my father, who is about the same age and whose own anger and frustrations have softened over time. So, I want to be sensitive with him, but I am also curious about how Yohji-san is thinking about the legacy he will leave behind.



These days, he's thinking about the future: of his company, of fashion and of a planet roiled by wars and climate disasters. He is angry, not just with fashion's big groups, but with politicians — especially US President Donald Trump: "I'm a fashion designer, so if I am thinking about a new collection, I need to imagine the models. But when I see his face, I lose all my imagination," he sighs.

He's exhausted with geopolitical conflicts, and frightened by the climate crisis. "Human beings are making climate change," he says. "This is our mistake. And, at the same time, we have so many wars. People are killing each other. I'm always asking myself, why, why, why? I can't find an answer. I really hate it. It makes my heart so dark and down."

But Yamamoto is also worried about the future of the fashion industry, particularly the loss of skills required to make the special fabrics he uses in his collections. "Specialist workers for threads and fabrics and dyeing, so many of these important specialist techniques are disappearing around the world. Those jobs are very, very hard and complicated. You need high skills, but the workers are getting old," he says.

They don't want to jump into that world, so those specialists are disappearing. In this way, I think the fashion business is disappearing.

"And young people don't want to do it because it looks too hard. They don't want to take the place of their father or uncle," he continues. "They don't want to jump into that world, so those specialists are disappearing. In this way, I think the fashion business is disappearing."

In Japan's Aichi prefecture, one of the top three regions in the world for high-quality wool manufacturing, alongside Biella in Italy and Huddersfield in the UK, many small family-owned businesses are closing.

In contrast to the natural fabrics that dominate Yamamoto's mainline collection, much of what is available in contemporary Japanese fashion (including brands like Issey Miyake, CFCL and Yamamoto's own Y-3 line with Adidas) is made from less expensive polyester fabrics, which Yamamoto points out are made from petroleum and fossil fuels. According to a recent report from Textile Exchange, global textile production rose to record levels last year, increasing industry-based emissions, especially from polyester, which accounts for 43 percent of global emissions from fibre production.

Yamamoto, who is known around the world for his pure-black aesthetic, also has his own sustainability issues to contend with. "The chemicals in the black dye are very bad for human health," he admits. "In the future, intelligent countries will decide no black anymore because to make real black we use chemical dyes. In the future, people will have to wear only white!" he jokes. "I'm always thinking about it."

"And anyway, year by year, my creations are becoming more and more expensive because manufacturing is becoming more expensive," he adds. "People don't want to spend on well-designed, -cut and -made clothes. The industry is doing things more quickly, so generally, when you visit fashion stores, everything looks the same."

With all of this weighing on his mind, Yamamoto says he has been in a creative rut. It's July 29 and this is his first day in the office since returning from the Paris men's shows a few weeks earlier.

Lately, he has found solace in the music of two young singers: Aki Azuma, who sings *enka*, an old-time Japanese genre known for its sentimental ballads, and Kawai Yuto, a 14-year-old street singer who has found fame on TikTok. He plays a few of their covers of anime and Studio Ghibli songs, and their duet of Bette Midler's "The Rose" in Japanese for me on his mobile phone, bringing a sweet smile to his face. "They sing so nicely," he says. "It's so touching. Sometimes when I am listening to them, I naturally start crying. And I am so surprised. Why? Why am I crying?"



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His newfound sentimentality comes on the heels of a personal loss: the death of Rin, his dog, an Akita breed known for their dignity, courage and loyalty, who would often accompany Yamamoto to the office. “I don’t need a new girlfriend. I just need a new dog,” he jokes. “Just before you arrived, I was talking to my daughter Limi about getting a new dog. For two months, I didn’t want to have a new dog, because I can’t forget her. Then after a few months, I thought maybe she would want me to have another dog.”

A Renegade’s Vision

Backstage after his Spring/Summer 2026 men’s show at the historic Maison de la Culture in Paris a few weeks earlier, Yohji Yamamoto was curled up on a chair, having a post-show cigarette. He knew a queue of journalists and well-wishers were waiting to say their hellos, but it was easy to understand why he’d rather just return to his hotel and take a nap.

Yamamoto has been doing the backstage dance since 1981, when he and his then-girlfriend Rei Kawakubo first arrived in Paris and shocked the fashion establishment with their radical new aesthetics. Yamamoto’s deconstructed, all-black look couldn’t have been more different from the personas of the French designers dominating the runways at the time: Yves Saint Laurent’s power women, Thierry Mugler’s sexy sirens and Jean Paul Gaultier’s irreverent provocateurs.

Along with Kenzo Takada, who had arrived a few years earlier, and Issey Miyake, who came a few years later, Kawakubo and Yamamoto created a burst of new energy that still resonates in fashion today.

“Yohji is fashion’s anti-hero,” says the photographer Max Vadukul, who has collaborated with the designer since the 1980s. “Against all odds, he broke into the European fashion world — one of the hardest arenas for an outsider to survive in — and he’s thrived there for decades. He doesn’t bend to the system, he doesn’t bend his values. His work is uncompromising, deeply personal. The asymmetry, the drape, the way a garment catches your eye — it’s not just design, it’s emotional intelligence made visible.”

Yamamoto’s signature aesthetic and silhouettes have influenced countless designers from Rick Owens to Christophe Lemaire, but he remains a renegade who continues to do things his own way.

“When I went to the Yohji Yamamoto retrospective at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, I remember wishing that this could be the standard of dressing for the world,” says Owens. “A world of gracefulness and graciousness, and benevolence. I think Yohji-san occupies — and dominates — a niche in fashion closer to delicate poetry than standard clickbait. And of course we need both, but his contribution to the balance is crucial.”

Indeed, Yamamoto refuses to engage in the circus that has turned fashion shows into spectacles competing for attention on social media. In an industry chasing algorithms and celebrity culture, Yamamoto stages the same kind of shows he always has — slow, reflective, uncompromising. There are no gimmicks designed for virality, no stomping down the catwalk and no celebrities there to promote their next movie.

But that doesn’t mean young fashion fans are not deeply engaged in his work, too. Yamamoto’s front row included the content creator Wisdom Kaye who sees in Yamamoto not nostalgia, but genuine fashion creativity at a time when the industry is suffering from a creative malaise.



“Having the honour to attend his shows and witnessing the slow and simmering pace of the models, giving time to analyse each detail juxtaposes so greatly against the fast-paced runways which are indicative of the industry as a whole,” says Kaye.

Also in the crowd at the show was Donatien Grau, head of contemporary programs at the Louvre Museum, who included Yamamoto among 100 contemporary artists in “Copyists,” an exhibition he curated in collaboration with the Centre Pompidou-Metz that also featured Jeff Koons, Francesco Vezzoli and Agnès b. — the only other fashion designer included.

“Yohji has studied deeply the history of culture and costume,” says Grau. “He knows the history of French and European dressmaking, and he understands the techniques of Japanese dressmaking and pattern making. It’s not about turning them against each other — it’s an interplay, a layering, a constant tension.”

Indeed, taking in a Yohji show usually requires deciphering and contemplation to appreciate this tension. But increasingly, it seems he feels there is little time for subtlety. In the men’s show, his messages — “NO MORE WARS,” “OCEAN DISAPPEARS MAKES HUMANS FINISHED,” “NUCLEAR POWER DISASTERS” — were written directly into his designs.

In a quintessentially Yohji puzzle, these warnings were juxtaposed with syrupy love songs that had the front row singing along — “Endless Love,” “Killing Me Softly” and other ballads from the 1980s — on a soundtrack that was, as always, created by Yamamoto himself.

The show offered a rare moment of reflection and pause during a busy men’s fashion season. While most of the industry was preoccupied with the worsening crisis, Yamamoto’s show was a reminder that the original source of success in fashion is rooted in creativity and emotion, not in the safe, commercial merch on offer elsewhere.

A Creation-Led Model

Back in Tokyo, Yohji Yamamoto operates slightly apart from the rest of the Japanese fashion cluster. His headquarters overlook the waterfront in Shinagawa, a transportation gateway and business hub on the southern edge of the city, far from the fashionable neighbourhoods of Omotesando, Ginza and Aoyama, where most of the industry is based.

The company is led by chief development officer Tsuyoshi Muraki who joined the company 26 years ago after he saw a television show about Yamamoto’s growing impact at Paris Fashion Week. Muraki-san, who started as a junior employee in the then-nascent Y’s business, has held a variety of increasingly senior roles in the company ever since.

“I was nervous when I met him for the first time,” Muraki-san says about his first meeting with the designer. “I respect Yohji-san so much. He has this aura. The atmosphere he creates is very special.”

Indeed, the first thing everyone mentions about working with Yamamoto is the unique energy — and high-pressure environment — he creates. This is a business focused on artistic integrity over commerce, where creation sits at the centre of everything, fostering a sense of loyalty and devotion that is rare in the fashion industry. Many team members have worked with the company for more than 10 years. Some, like Muraki-san, have worked with the company for their entire professional lives.

“We are all very faithful to him,” says Caroline Fabre, the Paris-based PR executive who joined the company in 1986 before going to work with Azzedine Alaïa in 2003, only to return to Yohji Yamamoto in 2022, five years after Mr. Alaïa died. “He creates this atmosphere of family even if it’s not easy. He’s very challenging. He’s never happy. He’s never satisfied. He’s always looking for more, pushing his own limits and also testing our limits.”



Nowadays, Fabre is Yamamoto's key intermediary with Western media and in private, seems to be his "shadow," his greatest cheerleader, supporter and protector, especially on those days when he is feeling tired and exhausted.

The business has been on a sustained growth streak since Covid. Today, Yohji Yamamoto Inc. generates more than \$200 million in annual revenue and has been steadily growing at 15 percent annually, according to figures shared for the first time with *The Business of Fashion*.

That the company has managed to not only endure but thrive in the current crisis is in part due to the fact that they have been through tough times before. After the global financial meltdown in 2008, a heavy debt burden of \$65 million nearly sank the company before it was rescued and restructured by private equity firm Integral Corp, leading to the shuttering of the Y's for men line and the sudden closure of the brand's two New York stores.

Now, the company reaches customers through a global e-commerce website and more than 630 wholesale doors and shop-in-shops and 23 flagship Yohji Yamamoto stores and counting, in London, Paris, Shanghai and beyond. Yamamoto made his return to the New York retail scene with a store on Wooster Street which opened in September 2023.

Another thing that stands out about the company is its brand architecture and go-to-market model. Whereas other companies such as Chloé, Marc Jacobs and Dolce & Gabbana have collapsed their secondary lines under one brand to streamline operations, Yamamoto has done the opposite. The company now has nine different brands, plus six brands under Yohji Yamamoto, like a constellation orbiting around the main Yohji Yamamoto line, which the designer still personally oversees.

There's Y's (the original brand started by Yamamoto in 1972), Ground Y (genderless clothing), discord (accessories), Wildside (for younger generations) and Limi Feu, a line designed by his daughter. Each brand has its own distribution network of stores and stockists and a different customer target in mind.

Without Y-3 there would be no Rick Owens, Grace Wales Bonner and Kiko Kostadinov for Adidas or Virgil Abloh and Undercover by Jun Takahashi for Nike.

Even though it would be more cost-efficient to operate fewer brands, Muraki-san says that building and operating these different lines is part of the company's creative process. By creating new brands, Yamamoto pushes the company in new directions that people don't understand at first.

"For instance, take the Y-3 business. Other brands are creating clothes, we are creating new categories," says Muraki-san, pointing to the pioneering sports-meet-fashion collaboration with Adidas, now in its twenty-third year. As the first high-fashion brand to partner with an athletic apparel company, Yamamoto paved the way for countless other designers to mix fashion with sports. Without Y-3 there would be no Rick Owens, Grace Wales Bonner and Kiko Kostadinov for Adidas or Virgil Abloh and Undercover by Jun Takahashi for Nike.

"We also have a kind of special business model. We don't do any paid advertising. We don't pay VIPs. We don't pay people to come to our shows," adds Fabre. Everything shown on the runway is produced even if it is uneconomical to do so, and the collection is priced in a way that customers can also buy into the most complicated garments. "Because the business is growing, we can be more creative and we can take more risks," she says.

"The business follows the creation," agrees Muraki-san. This core strategy, now under single management and with better collaboration between the commercial and design teams has also led to a healthier working environment.

"You can feel it in the company. It was really noticeable when I came back," says Fabre. "It was like 'Wow, there's a huge change.' It's a completely different company. People are more open, speaking and





smiling ... which was not always the case before. He wants everybody to learn to speak English, to have the people from the atelier visit museums to open their minds. He knows that we have to expand, and that we have to be global and think internationally.”

Securing the Future

“I’ve been thinking about my past recently, because I am getting old,” says Yamamoto. “When Caro came back to the company three years ago, she made me promise I would do at least 20 more collections,” he says motioning to Fabre.

As of now, he has completed 12 collections and for now he continues to work. So, what’s left that he wants to say?

“Nice question,” he says. “Every time I think about a new collection, I think I don’t have any new ideas because you need strong, fresh emotions for creation. But sometimes I’m losing it. To get my passion back to create, it takes time,” he begins.

Yohji-san still works with paper patterns and aims to design something new every season, with new show formats.

“This duty is becoming very heavy because making something special is becoming too hard and expensive. I have to compete with what I did before. Very often my creative staff don’t know what I want ... so I get angry. And then I’m asking myself, why do I have to be angry so much? And sometimes I hate myself for it because as you know, we cannot go back.”

“But as long as I’m living, I will keep doing what I do. My son is 25 years old. He’s working for the Y-3 business. His generation is going to lose the real creation. Recently, young people stop me in the street because they want to take photos with me. In those cases, I get angry ... about me. ‘Hey you,’ I’m telling myself. ‘Why did you become so famous? It’s meaningless.’”

I gently broach the topic of succession, about what will happen when the 20 collections are finished, and he responds pragmatically.

“There are two ways. One way is that I keep on designing until I die. The other way is that in four or five years, I have to name head designers for each brand. For example, Mr. Giorgio Armani, he has five head designers. When I heard about that, I wondered, ‘Should I copy him?’ (Just over a month later, Armani died at the age of 91.)

“No, I don’t think so. To get a strong spirit in the outfits, five people is almost impossible. With two or three people at most, I can put all my power and imagination and work together with them. I don’t like talking in this way, about my future.”

Reading the tea leaves, his daughter Limi, whom he has mentored over the years, is most likely to succeed Yohji-san. Though he hasn’t made his intentions known, the designer for the first time included looks from her Limi Feu collection in his own Autumn/Winter 2025 women’s show in March.

“Yes, the reason I included Limi’s pieces in my show is because her creations are becoming stronger. I feel really confident in her,” he says.

Limi-san, a shy and reserved character like her father, says she became a designer because he expected it of her. There was no other way. Like him, her creativity often comes from anger or frustration, but the identity she has carved out a different, more feminine approach within the Yohji Yamamoto universe.

“I don’t know the full picture of what he wants, but I am confident I can protect the universe of the Yohji Yamamoto brand,” she says. “I grew a lot by learning from him, especially on the technical aspects,” she says. “He taught me to draw patterns around the body, as if you draw a painting. And every season





I always start with a new pattern, just like my father. I don't want to look at the past, I want to be in the present and think about the future."

"It's personally very important to me," she adds. "This started as my grandmother's business, and my father started working with her and turned it into a big company." Yamamoto's mother Fumi-san, who died in January 2023 at the age of 103, was an ever-present force in the company who had her own office in the headquarters until she died.

As my conversation with Yohji-san comes to a close, he lights a cigarette and pauses to reflect on all we have discussed. The shifting sands of an industry in crisis and world in chaos, dealing with fame, trying to keep a business going and, through it all, the constant pressure to create something new.

"Lucky or unlucky, when I'm driving my car and I stop at the stop sign, many people pass in front of me and a new idea falls down. I catch it, like this!" he says, gesturing with his hand. "Never in the toilet, always on the street."

"So maybe I should not be resting in my bed. Maybe it's better for me to be driving and walking, so I can catch an idea. Activity gives you power. But after the last men's collection, I got so tired. Because I lost my dog, I stopped walking in the morning. That makes my legs powerless so last time I was in Paris I needed help to walk. And then I started thinking, 'No, no, this is not good. I have to walk by myself without any help.'"

"Right now for the next ladies collection, I'm already late; eight to ten days later than usual. I wanted to make a surprise, to create something new. But I couldn't find my surprise for two weeks. But finally, I found it. Before you came here, I explained my main sense of beauty, sense of funniness to my pattern-maker, to my drawing team and painting team," he says. "I made it today!"

"I have to thank you, because you were coming today, I came here. If you weren't coming today, I don't know..."

I say to Yohji-san that he is following his own advice, that he needs to get out of his bed and into the street and drive. Only then can you catch an idea.

"Today, my wife drove me, because my legs are too weak because I started not to walk. But from next week, I'll start driving by myself — and walking with the dog."

