

Lyas' Chanel Watch Party Was Bursting at the Seams

Fashion enthusiasts huddled against the cold October evening in Paris' 10th arrondissement as they watched Matthieu Blazy's Chanel debut. Reviews for the collection itself were mixed, but everyone was happy to be there.

By Simone Stern Carbone



PARIS — Cold air, cigarette smoke and lively chatter filled the air at La Caserne, a Parisian incubator for emerging brands in the central 10th arrondissement. Some 2,000 attendees were gathered in the open air space to watch a simulcast of Matthieu Blazy's first Chanel show, put on by Lyas, the fashion influencer who has hosted watch parties this autumn in London and Milan. Most of them were students, though the occasional thirty-something was spotted.

"We've been queuing since noon," some fashion enthusiasts, seated on the ground in front of the screen in the shape of a laptop said, clinking their beer bottles together.

By 8 pm, hundreds were still pressed against the barricades, hoping to get in — to no avail. "We are at capacity," the security guards stoically repeated. Some tried to queue at the VIP entrance — intended for Lyas' friends, influencers and some "big brand directors" — though that line had long stopped budging, too.

Those who didn't manage to get in stayed outside the entrance throughout the show, craning their necks for a glimpse inside. They were hoping to at least get into the afterparty.

Lyas himself was not present. He had scored a coveted seat at the actual Chanel show, held at the Grand Palais and easily the hottest invite of what had already proven to be a momentous Paris Fashion Week. Blazy's show, which was also simulcast on Chanel's website, came at the end of a two-week stretch that saw designer debuts at Gucci, Jil Sander, Versace, Bottega Veneta, Balenciaga and other brands.

Even in its host's absence, the watch party was buzzing, occasionally animated by Lyas' friend Amine, who called out "are you ready for Chanel!" at regular intervals. For those who made it in, not an ounce of impatience was palpable once inside La Caserne, despite the cold and the queues.

Just after 8:30 pm, the feed kicked in with celebrities including Nicole Kidman and Pedro Pascal entering the Grand Palais. The crowd erupted.

As the first model walked out, all chatter ceased. The subdued opening music lulled the crowd into a trance, the sea of black coats unmoving in the wind.

The first looks drew absolutely no reaction. At a close up of a necklace, one attendee tentatively whispered, "I'm getting inspired." When more upbeat music kicked in — a variation of the dance hit





Rhythm Is a Dancer — a hum of excitement rippled through the crowd, though it didn't last long. A few attendees barely looked at the screen at all, preferring to chat as model after model paraded by.

Then, a colourful dress drew some louder cheers. "Isn't that model the girlfriend of... What's his name?" someone whispered. More extravagant looks drew applause from the overwhelmingly Gen-Z crowd. Some whispered excitement at Blazy's accessories, but most seemed underwhelmed by the looks presented. "That's... simple," someone murmured as the yellow maxidress floated down the runway.

Yet everyone was happy to be there; after all, it was a free party! Everything was free — beer, cocktails, entry — a deliberate democratisation of an event usually reserved for the select few. With only a month of preparation, the watch party series turned into a buzzing success, with Chanel the biggest night of them all.

