

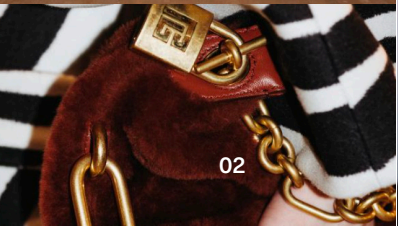
insider



womenswear fall/winter 2025-2026



FÉDÉRATION
DE LA HAUTE COUTURE
ET DE LA MODE



EACH SEASON, THE FÉDÉRATION PUBLISHES EXCLUSIVE EDITORIAL CONTENT AND INTERVIEWS WITH LEADING FIGURES FROM THE FASHION INDUSTRY ON THE PARIS FASHION WEEK® WEBSITE, FEATURED ON THE SECTION «INSIDER – MAGAZINE.» THE AIM OF THESE PORTRAITS, WHICH ARE NATURALLY LINKED TO THE HOUSES OF THE OFFICIAL CALENDAR, IS TO PROVIDE A DEEPER INSIGHT INTO THE CREATIVE PROCESS OF EACH HOUSE AND TO SPOTLIGHT KEY PERSONALITIES.

a feel for fashion

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THROUGH A FEEL FOR FASHION, PARIS FASHION WEEK® INVITES YOU TO SEE AND READ THE ANALYSES, OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENTS OF EXPERTS IN THE SECTOR AND THE FASHION ECOSYSTEM. GIVE US THE OPPORTUNITY TO SEE AND THINK ABOUT THE ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND HORIZONS OF FASHION.

a
feel
for
fashion.

Simbarashe Cha



That old adage of a picture being worth a thousand words doesn't quite hold up for Simbarashe Cha, whose written voice is as real and compelling as his eye behind the camera. He articulates both through his visual column, *Style Outside*, for the New York Times, where he has been on staff since 2023 (and contributing since 2020). While street style has been his focus for more than a decade, he has also worked with brands such as Gucci, Ralph Lauren and Carolina Herrera and shot the runways for GQ, WWD and W magazine. Based in New York, he directed a short film in 2021 about Black surfers at Rockaway Beach for which he won an Emmy. In the great tradition of Bill Cunningham but entirely in his own key, Cha's multi-faceted view of street style is at once informed and fun, each theme drawing a link between individuals and the wider movements across fashion.

How essential is heritage and/or a distinctive identity in contributing to a brand's success?

Heritage, at least in the Western markets, is becoming a niche selling point to a crowd that dwindles as it gets older. It's hard to gauge how mainstream people feel about a brand sticking to a decades-old identity, because we now have a generation of coming-of-age, aspirational fashion people who either want it brand new, or they want it vintage; and more often they want it because they saw it on TikTok, not because the brand is known for the thing.

A lot of brands struggling to find their identity. A lot of brands struggling to support new creative directors as they work to build on or evolve the brand's legacy. The fact that we have entered an era where most consumers don't care about quality, and don't know how to spot it. Then again, if everyone demanded quality, would that even be sustainable?

What surprises you about the industry in 2025?

What do you enjoy most about Paris Fashion Week®?

The rest of the fashion month could be going rather poorly, but we show up to Paris expecting them to fix it.

If I'm complimenting someone, it's because they've done something that excited me. So it's important for me to communicate that excitement. I have no problem being perfectly honest about that.

What is your favourite way/word to compliment someone's style?

There seems to be more overlap between fashion/entertainment and fashion/sports than ever. Thoughts?

I grew up watching sports in the United States. Basketball in particular, in the 90s, went through real growing pains because the league didn't want its players to be too expressive. You'd think those days are over, and probably they are, but I still think about it a lot. I think about [former NBA player] Allen Iverson a lot. When I watch athletes' leagues arrive at their respective stadiums and arenas in all kinds of drip, I think that Iverson crawled so everyone else could run. It took something like 30 years for everyone to run. This stuff is all viral now, and on social alone it's a billions-dollar industry. But when I see the overlap in real time, I think how there was a time — in my lifetime — where none of this stuff was allowed or tolerated. I should be happy we are where we are, and I am somewhat. But mostly, it just makes me think about all the other stuff that still isn't tolerated.

Trends have become a stealth weapon. We think trends don't matter, we have discussions and write about it; but while we're thinking that they're dead because they come and go so fast, fast brands are wondering how they can cycle through them even faster so they can sell to more people. Meanwhile, your not-so-fast brands keep combing for that one viral moment so they can chuck up their prices. There's a particular shoe made by a particular French house that cost double the price over what it was two years ago. They'll call it supply and demand; but that demand is the trend.

Do trends still matter?

Tell us something surprising about how you got to where you are today?

I didn't try to be a fashion photographer, but I did want to be a very good photographer. I started a photo blog where I would take photos of people on the street and write about those experiences in the blog. I made it a fashion blog only because I thought if I photographed fashionable people, readers would find them interesting enough to then look at more of the portraits and in turn, read more of my entries. But (and this is important), while it was a fashion blog, I was always writing first and foremost about technical things. Things like learning how to shoot in different types of light; and then later different kinds of weather; and then someone offered to pay me to shoot a lookbook; and then someone invited me to photograph their runway show; and then someone at Carolina Herrera saw the blog and said, "Hey, come shoot for us." And that was the start of my fashion career. But that entire time, I was just writing about my journey to becoming a better photographer. I just wanted to be great at one thing.

Bronwyn Cosgrave



At this time of year when Paris Fashion Week® overlaps with the Oscars, Bronwyn Cosgrave stands out for her views on both the runway and the red carpet. Along with contributing fashion features to London's Telegraph newspaper, she is an executive producer of *The Queen of Fashion*, an upcoming biopic exploring the life of fashion icon Isabella Blow. Her essay *A Place In the Sun* about Coco Chanel's home La Pausa appears in *Coco Chanel Roaring Twenties* (Hatje Cantz). The book will be published in July to coincide with a summer exhibition with the same title about Chanel's life on the French Riviera at the New National Museum of Monaco. Her column *Bronwyn Cosgrave On Fashion* goes live every week on Substack. And if anyone is longing for more Oscars glamour, her book, *Made for Each Other: Fashion and the Academy Awards*, is required reading.

Where do you look for new ideas or voices in fashion?

I read widely – newspapers, and the hard copies of the New York Times and the FT, rather than online – so that I'm not just diving into the fashion section. I am reading around the subject because fashion often turns up where you least expect such as an arts section story. I also never wear headphones, so when I am walking down the street, I really look at what people are wearing. I never copy anything I see, but I get inspired when I see someone really making an effort, rather than just dressing up in something that screams "latest." I also talk to people who are less than half my age, like my assistant Sona Saldanha who is 23 and a student at Parsons.

It really depends on who has the keys to the kingdom. If a visionary is controlling a brand and knows how to sample something from the past to create the future, that can be worth gold.

How essential is heritage and/or a distinctive identity in contributing to a brand's success?

It's lost the human touch. It used to be that figureheads who helmed the great brands were personalities who connected to the world around them. We knew what they ate for breakfast and wore to work. They talked to the press. Now that conglomerates control the messaging around fashion, it's really hard to connect or know much about what inspires designers and what they put into the fashion they create aside from the materials.

What surprises you about the industry in 2025?

I work my ass off every day.

Tell us something surprising about how you got to where you are today?

What do you enjoy most about Paris Fashion Week®?

Because Paris is the world's fashion capital and the ateliers are unrivaled in terms of craft, I always admire the technical virtuosity that defines the clothing made by the greats.

Subtle effortlessness.

How would you define chic in a contemporary context?

There seems to be more overlap between fashion/entertainment and fashion/sports than ever. Thoughts?

I want it to be over. Or to change. There is too much fashion on screen in films. There are some celebrities whose images are so aligned with brands that it's hard to put that behind when watching films, and brands rely too much on the power of celebrities. It's often that celebrity image overpowers a young designer's image. The red carpet is completely irrelevant at this time of dramatic upheaval around the world. I'm bored of looking at celebrities wearing clothes that look plucked off runways or assembled by anonymous design teams. In terms of sports, there's lots to do, but I'd prefer to see a more natural alliance between these realms rather than situations that seem to be defined by paychecks.

I think it's safe to say that in this fashion age of "musical chairs," there will be a new designer at Gucci and Jil Sander. Possibly Dior. And now that Tilda Swinton has stepped back from film for the rest of the year, she won't be lighting up the red carpet at the Cannes Film Festival. Haider Ackermann will make Tom Ford brilliant.

What is something that you believe will change over the course of the year?

Do trends still matter?

Yes, because they indicate how the world is responding to creative output.

“Today I shall judge nothing that occurs.”
Deepak Chopra

Can you share a mantra that speaks to this moment in time?

What is your favourite way/word to compliment someone’s style?

I like your spirit.

I spend a lot of time mentoring young people. I’ve had a number of mentors during my career and it’s important to raise the next generation up.

In what ways might you hope to have an impact on fashion this year?

Bénédicte Burguet



Having studied law and with a double master's degree in political science and international journalism, Bénédicte Burguet-Journé ultimately found her place in fashion, and is currently the senior editor of fashion, beauty and jewellery at Vanity Fair France. Over on Instagram, her feed reveals an exceedingly chic Parisian style interspersed with her approach to long-term wellness (she also happens to be expecting her second child). In 2019, she authored "What is it about Paris & Fashion," a book that profiled 15 designers on the city as a forever muse. Across all these outlets, what comes through is Burget-Journé's commitment to high standards, which she conveys in a way that feels at once aspirational and attainable.

Where do you look for new ideas or voices in fashion?

I naturally turn to Instagram; it is an incredible platform for discovering emerging designers, fresh perspectives, and industry insiders with a sharp, critical eye. Of course, during fashion week, the shows and presentations provide unparalleled intellectual and creative stimulation. The concentration of talent in a single city, for a limited time, creates a unique sense of emulation and exchange.

In a market saturated with brands, differentiation is crucial. Heritage – whether through craftsmanship, expertise, or the transmission of tradition – remains a powerful asset. However, a strong and singular identity is just as essential, not only for its «eye-catching» appeal but also for its ability to create a lasting impression. Moreover, identity is not solely a matter of design; it extends to a brand's narrative, values, and how it resonates with the contemporary world. More than ever, people are seeking meaning in what they consume.

Tell us something surprising about how you got to where you are today?

I grew up in Paris and pursued law studies at the Panthéon, though my ambition had always been to work in fashion journalism. I graduated at the age of 22 with a master's degree in political science. I then gained experience through several editorial internships and a double master's degree of International Journalism before joining Le Figaro as an intern then a freelance contributor. I met Virginie Mouzat, who later invited me to continue working alongside her at Vanity Fair.

How essential is heritage and/or a distinctive identity in contributing to a brand's success?

Meeting fascinating people and discovering the collections. Paris Fashion Week® is a moment of high intensity where creativity, dialogue, and ideas collide in the most stimulating way.

What do you enjoy most about Paris Fashion Week®?

Do trends still matter?

I would say they only matter in the way they reflect society. I am interested in trends only as a form of cultural translation – a snapshot of the world and its mindset at a given moment. Beyond that, in my daily relationship with fashion, trends do not particularly influence me.

Where there's a will, there's a way.

Can you share a mantra that speaks to this moment in time?

Harriet Walker



Whether she is reporting on the runways or writing about the latest social trends taking hold in London, Harriet Walker brings great wit and relatability to her writing as fashion editor of *The Times*, where she has worked since 2014. Rather than the more typical compartmentalization of work and personal life, she captures how they are often inseparable, hence a loyal following that extends to Instagram. Beyond her newspaper columns, Walker has authored two fashion books, *Less is More: The History of Minimalism* and *Cult Shoes*, as well as two novels, *The New Girl* and *The Wedding Night*.

What do you enjoy most about Paris Fashion Week®?

Walking and taking the Metro to shows! After a month of planes and cars, arriving in Paris always feels like freedom – a moment to enjoy the lifestyle the city offers as well as its fashion.

I'm always telling my kids that they look cool (they do!). It focuses less on looks and more on the energy you're giving out – and it always makes people smile.

What is your favourite way/word to compliment someone's style?

How would you define chic in a contemporary context?

The confidence and serenity of being comfortable not only in your clothes, but in your own skin.

Do trends still matter?

Things move too slowly to be called trends anymore, and it isn't so much the clothes that change now, but the way in which they are worn. So [let's say] moods more than trends?

Can you share a mantra that speaks to this moment in time?

Never look over the battlements. This is my mother's (excellent) advice for coping with stress, anxiety or a long to-do list. Just deal with whatever is in front of you right now.

Elizabeth von Guttman



Elizabeth von Guttman, co-founder of System Magazine and ALTAVA, the 3D fashion platform based in Seoul, Korea, is a cultural polymath who merges fashion, art, and architecture into a singular, dynamic vision. Living in Paris but globally minded, she has built a career that spans journalism, curation, and creative direction – always bridging avant-garde and accessible. System, meanwhile, remains her platform for sharp, engaging dialogues with industry leaders and innovators.

Where do you look for new ideas or voices in fashion?

Everywhere! Given the way fashion today so successfully permeates cultures, fields and communication channels far beyond the ones it previously operated in, it's now as likely to be on a business podcast, TikTok meme or in the streets of a lesser known 'fashion capital' as it is on the runway, in a fashion magazine, or in a clothing boutique. That said, in System we regularly feature fashion schools, and it's often illuminating to see and read how the next generation of designers and management students express themselves.

What surprises you about the industry in 2025?

How an industry had gotten so accustomed to double-digit growth for so long that when the inevitable economic downturn really hit brands this year, so many of them weren't better prepared for it. The other "surprise" is the increased moving chairs phenomenon of the creative directors...

In a contemporary context, not one single thing. It is more about your attitude than what you wear.

What defines women's elegance in a contemporary context?

Put differently: without fashion creativity, there wouldn't be much to effectively drive growth – or certainly any sustainable level of growth. While growth in fashion is now reliant on so many different and converging factors, it remains at its core a place for the kind of creative endeavours that have the power to elicit incredible desirability.

In which ways might fashion creativity effectively drive growth?

There seems to be more overlap between fashion/entertainment and fashion/sports than ever. Thoughts?

In early 2024, we published an issue of System entitled 'That's Entertainment.' The opening paragraph of that issue's editor's letter read as follows:

«More than ever, fashion's popularity hinges on its capacity to wed itself to the prevailing kings and queens of mainstream entertainment: the stars of cinema and TV, music and sport, as well as the digital world's scrappier but no-less-adored luminaries. By doing this, fashion itself is behaving increasingly like – and being widely perceived as – another form of mass entertainment. As such, when it comes to vying for attention, the average fashion mega-show now tussles with all the big guns: Oscars night, the Super Bowl half-time show, royal weddings, Hollywood blockbusters, Netflix's latest streaming sensation, stadium pop... and it often wins. 'Today, digital impressions of the big shows are measured in the hundreds of millions,' veteran fashion-show creative producer Alexandre de Betak points out. Pharrell's debut Vuitton show surpassed a billion – that's an eighth of the planet.»

How essential is heritage and/or a distinctive identity in contributing to a brand's success?

Combining heritage and a distinctive identity now seems to be a one-size-fits-all recipe for success in fashion. And while that's certainly true in some cases, there are plenty of successful brands for whom heritage bears no relevance; and others still for whom looking and feeling like other successful brands is integral to their strategy.

The same thing that great fashion has always generated: desire.

Who or what is generating the greatest influence in fashion today?

Sure! Although a trend feels increasingly like a fleeting moment occupying only a fraction of the fashion ecosystem at any given time.

Do trends still matter?

Hervé Cosmao



Hervé Cosmao, founder of the image and communications agency Syncro, is a media expert with a career that extends across pivotal moments in luxury fashion. Born and raised in French Polynesia and the United Arab Emirates, he entered public relations with a job at Dior during the John Galliano years, and arrived at KCD in time for Balmain's reintroduction during the aughts. Cosmao played key roles at Louis Vuitton during Kim Jones's and Nicolas Ghesquière's eras, followed by six years at Margiela (reuniting with Galliano) before joining Rabanne as communications director. Now, with Syncro, he specialises in visual strategies, PR, and bespoke collaborations – aligning talents, brands, and institutions in perfect sync.

Where do you look for new ideas or voices in fashion?

I love brainstorming with my friends, submitting ideas to them, accepting their criticism and dealing with their comments. It's really part of our dynamic and we love to exchange ideas about our next moves. Getting lost in YouTube suggestions can be very inspiring, [along with] exhibitions, cinema, etc. But my best ideas always come when I'm bored.

There seems to be more overlap between fashion/entertainment and fashion/sports than ever. Thoughts?

I love when creativity meets values meets passion. It makes things more accessible to everyone, and the more you try to cross worlds, the more magic and happy accidents happen. All these worlds have extraordinary values; and mixing them together to celebrate creativity is definitely a source of inspiration for everyone, and will make fashion more accessible and appeal to as many people as possible.

I would always use the heritage of a house as the frame of what should be next, the direction we should go communication-wise. When I started at Rabanne, I made it my business to delve into the history of this house. Paco Rabanne was not only an exceptional couturier, but a true visionary: the first designer to put music on the runway, to have a black woman on the catwalk, to have helped make hip-hop culture accessible in Paris. He was so inspiring and current. I realised that if I could tell this story today, a lot of my work would be done.

How essential is heritage and/or a distinctive identity in contributing to a brand's success?

For many marketers, yes! I sincerely believe that the key to success is to be uncompromising with your creative vision. It's easier said than done, but it makes a real difference – a difference that may inspire and perhaps become a trend.

Do trends still matter?

What is your favourite way/word to compliment someone's style?

Just telling someone when you think they look great can really change their mood. Sharing some love is just the best way to do it.

What do you enjoy most about Paris Fashion Week®?

Lots of friends in town, great energy, and the best houses and shows in the world. It's going to be super-interesting to see the first collections of the designers who have just taken up their new roles.

It's all started in a Fendi store during a heat wave in August. It was my first day, and I sold a mink fur to a Russian woman... This is how my journey in fashion started.

Tell us something surprising about how you got to where you are today?

Today, I think it's all about craftsmanship, the best fabrics, real know-how and integrity. Respecting customers with real value-added products instead of just selling storytelling.

How would you define chic in a contemporary context?

Can you share a mantra that speaks to this moment in time?

Everything we are building today will make sense tomorrow.

Kiki Agbor



Dividing his time between Dublin and Paris, Kiki Agbor is a brand consultant, visual artist, and digital storyteller, exploring the intersection of fashion, cultural commentary, and immersive media. His boutique consultancy, agbor.co, works on shaping the digital presence for brands such as Saul Nash, Bonastre Paris, Rombaut, Rami Al Ali. Beyond his client work, Agbor brings fashion to life through vlogs and fashion commentary, most notably on Youtube. He excels both in front of, and behind the camera, and transforms fashion week coverage into behind-the-scenes runway insights, street-style interviews, and candid conversations that highlight the zeitgeist and showcase talent. Across his work he maintains a mission to humanise fashion, celebrate artistry, and create a welcoming space for authentic dialogue.

Where do you look for new ideas or voices in fashion?

I'm probably biased as a YouTuber myself, but YouTube is hands-down my favourite platform for fresh perspectives. Short-form content might be today's meta – quick, bite-sized, and algorithm-friendly – but there's something irreplaceable about immersing yourself in a 45-minute fashion analysis or stumbling across a decade-old interview with a legendary designer. It lets me cross-reference what I think I know against the industry's own history, and break free from the usual echo chamber. Outside the internet, I love striking up conversations with strangers on the street. I find that some of the most intriguing people have no direct involvement in fashion. They might be architects, painters, or creatives in adjacent fields – people who dress with their own world and practical needs in mind instead of following a “fashion person” formula. Conversations with individuals like that, particularly those older than me, can spark the most unexpected ideas and perspectives.

When harnessed effectively, heritage can be a brand's biggest superpower. Just look at Chanel, Hermès, Ferragamo, and Prada; many of the most influential houses remain majority family-owned, which usually means they're driven by craftsmanship and integrity, rather than perpetual year-on-year growth for shareholders. Consumers today are increasingly savvy, and they can sense when a label genuinely values its legacy. If heritage is applied with sincerity, it can give you that rare spark in a sea of sameness.

How essential is heritage and/or a distinctive identity in contributing to a brand's success?

What do you enjoy most about Paris Fashion Week®?

Honestly, it's the chance to reconnect with friends from all corners of the world – people I might only see a couple of times a year, if that. Paris Fashion Week® brings together so many different talents, cultures, and passions, all united by one love: fashion. It feels like a stylish family reunion, and the energy is infectious.

I stepped into the fashion world with no degree, no connections, and zero industry experience. Instead, I poured all my energy into mastering a niche skill that brands needed, but may not have understood. I started cold-emailing, sending my portfolio around, until one brand finally said yes, then another, and another. Freelancing let me learn on the job while giving labels the flexibility they craved. Over time, through grit, study, and absolute dedication, I built up my expertise and found myself where I am now.

Tell us something surprising about how you got to where you are today.

Once I'd established myself as a freelancer and honed my craft, I decided to explore content creation as a way to connect with people who share my passion for fashion – and to document my journey as a creative and consultant in the industry. About a year and ten months ago, I launched my YouTube channel. After a lot of hard work, dedication, and persistence, I'm incredibly fortunate to have built a community of more than 7.5k subscribers – and truly some of the smartest and most supportive people I've ever encountered.

How would you define chic in a contemporary context?

Chic today goes beyond clothing; it's the knowledge you seek, the experiences you've lived, and the rituals you practice. True style comes from reflecting on your brightest qualities and your darkest complexities, then using fashion as a canvas to express that duality.

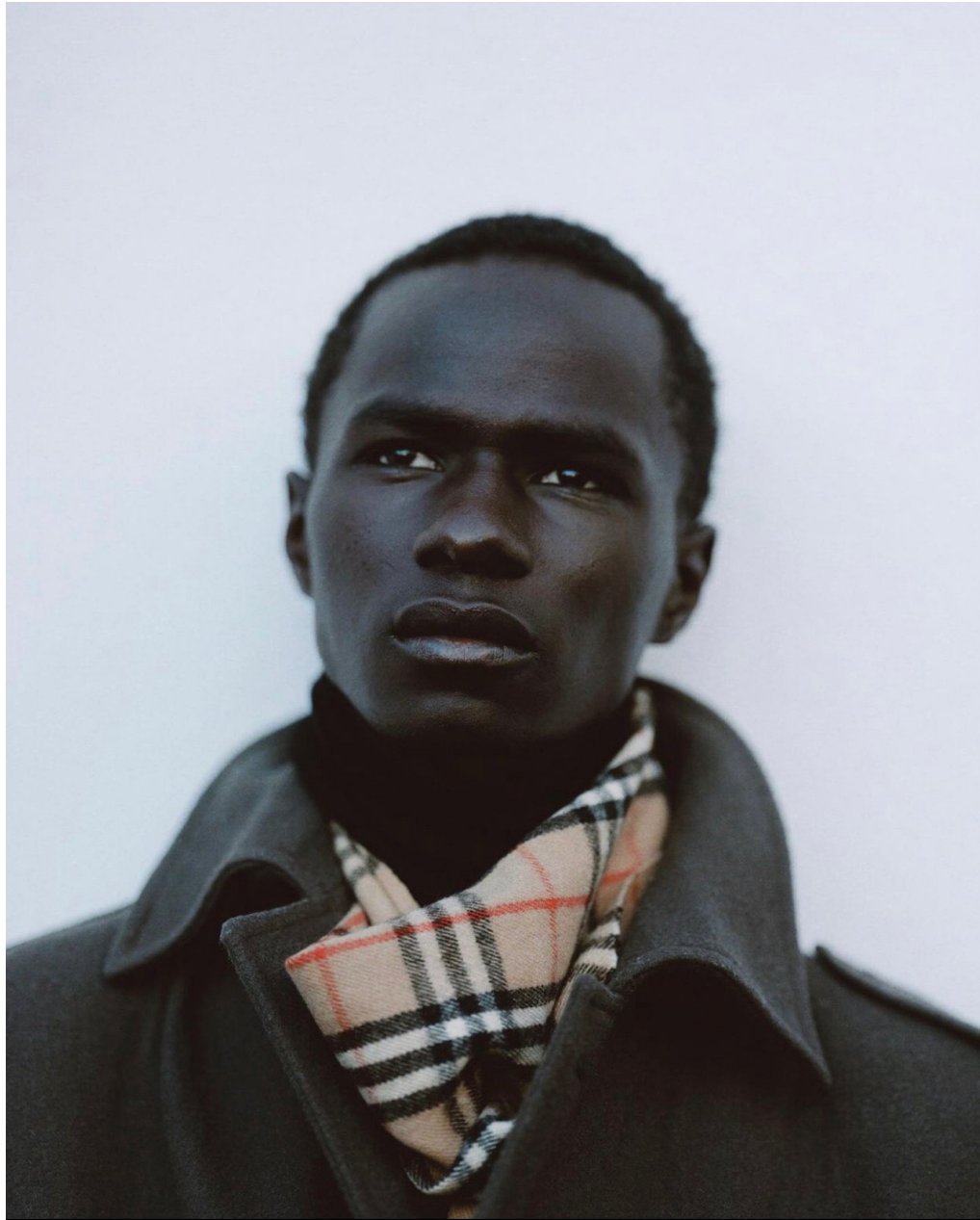
I aim to be a beacon for people who look like me or who share my background and experiences – people who might not see themselves represented in fashion at first glance. When I started, I could count on one hand the people who “put me on.” Now, I want others to see that fashion isn't some elusive secret society; it's an arena where you can shape your own narrative. If I can open that door a little wider for someone else, that's the impact I'm after.

In what ways might you hope to have an impact on fashion this year?

Can you share a mantra that speaks to this moment in time?

“Less is more.” This idea can be interpreted in countless ways, but I see it as a reminder that the solutions we seek lie within ourselves. It's a call to question endless consumption and the pursuit of perpetual economic growth as measures of success. Everything we need is already available to us. By moving away from a mentality of conquest and toward one of communal support and renewal, we can move beyond the current scarcity mindset we find ourselves in as a society, and into a more sustainable, future-focused system that is suitable for the twenty-first century.

Malick Bodian



As a model, Malick Bodian has an instantly recognisable presence on the runways and has walked two momentous shows this season: the final show of Luke and Lucier Meier for Jil Sander and Haider Ackermann's debut for Tom Ford. But Bodian, is based between Paris and Senegal, is also a self-taught photographer whose eye for composition and poetic connection can be appreciated in editorials (Beyond Noise, M Le Monde, Vogue, Perfect) as well as fashion editorials (Wales Bonner, Bottega Veneta, Chanel Haute Couture). Last year, his exhibition, 'Sénégal, voyage temporel' that run during OFF Paris Photo and OFF Biennale Dakar documented his travels through his home country and the family traditions that transcend time. Behind or in front of the camera, Bodian continues to build on his artistic body of work while remaining immersed in fashion.

Where do you look for new ideas or voices in fashion?

Where I find new ideas is always home. I think because, for example, the small city where I live, which is an hour from Dakar, it's like a new city in development and there's the main airport nearby, so there's a lot going on. And every time I go, it's like I'm traveling in time. It's like I'm part of the construction of a whole city. So that really inspires me a lot. And then when I go there, I also kind of forget about everything. Some things that I see over there have nothing to do with fashion, yet they inspire me here. But I would also say movies; I like to watch very old movies.

For me, the biggest change is that I feel like we all came back to sort of a reality. Before, I feel like it was an exclusive world. And I feel like now, people are making clothes for everyone instead of for a certain type of people, which is very interesting. It's good to have a certain exclusivity for certain things, for luxury. But I think this also opens the doors for a new way of making clothes and a different mindset. For example, Jil Sander is a luxury brand, but the way they photograph their clothes is very real. It's very documentary. And that is something quite new. It's the same with new designers.

Can you share a mantra that speaks to this moment in time?

Maybe this has nothing to do with fashion. But in general, I think we are a bit distracted by social media and all these tools, and I think we need to be aware – in a good way.

Where are you seeing change in fashion?

Doing modeling is something I never expected to do. I always wanted to be a football player. But I think I am a very open-minded person, because I come from a world that has nothing to do with fashion. I'm very curious and I think this is what got me to where I am. When I started modeling, I realised that I was made to be a model – even though I never thought I could be a model, I'd never found myself beautiful. But I can adapt very quickly. I remember my style before fashion and now it's so different. I used to wear Adidas jogging pieces – very sporty, very football player. And now what I wear is the complete opposite, and I like it.

What impact might you hope to have through your work?

I think through my work as a model, I'm very happy because when I started modeling, there were not many Black people at the shows. I used to feel sometimes alone. And genuinely, for me and some other models who started modeling before Covid, I think we kind of inspired some other people in a way. This is the impact I want to have as a model – to make some people realise that they are beautiful how they are. And as a photographer, I think my purpose is to inspire something very real, very positive. It took me a long time to realise what I wanted. But I know I am obsessed with documenting positive things. I always see documentaries and photographs of my country and my continent that I love, but they are very sad. And I want to show the positive side, the life. In fashion, I have the same mindset; I'm always trying to show a very bright, I would say hopeful, imagery.

Tell us something surprising about how you got to where you are today?

Olivier Châtenet



A stylist, artistic director and collector, Olivier Châtenet founded In Situ in Paris in 2020, a venue dedicated exclusively to vintage fashion from the seventies to the nineties. In Situ carries brands including Yves Saint Laurent, Gianfranco Ferré, Giorgio Armani, Versace and Issey Miyake. Châtenet is a true enthusiast who, far from being nostalgic, keeps a keen eye on the current times.

«We can no longer afford to wear blinkers.»

Recently, there's been a notable surge in the popularity of «vintage.» What's your take on this trend, and does fashion's pivot in this direction captivate you?

It's more than just a trend. We're witnessing something permanent: a shift in consumer habits that aligns with our previous inclinations towards items and furniture. At fourteen, I loved thrift shops. But back then, second-hand was frowned upon, it implied you couldn't afford a new piece. In certain circles, it simply wasn't the norm. The Rétro collection by Saint Laurent marked a movement initiated by trendsetters like Paloma Picasso. Now, I have two children, aged 30 and 28, and they're both deeply immersed in vintage fashion. There's no reason for this to end. It offers a unique way to express oneself, and frankly, in this new market, the quality-to-price ratio just isn't there.

Fashion has always been a reflection of the times. Today, fashion is facing a difficult moment, because we are in troubled times. There are some very positive things, such as the real democratisation of communication through social media. It's easier today when there's a voice to be heard, to express something. And vintage allows more people to access quality pieces.

What reason do you have to be optimistic about the future of fashion?

How do you see artificial intelligence contributing to fashion?

Artificial intelligence is far from me, and far from what I like about fashion. I'd rather hear about artificial sensitivity... I'll have to wait and see.

Once again, the biggest phenomenon is the democratisation of fashion... There's also communication: we no longer watch fashion live, we watch it on a screen first. People design clothes based on the images that can be produced using them. At the moment, I do not see any great talents producing any revolutions, or waves worthy of those of Azzedine Alaïa or Margiela: those who changed everything, the eye, the spirit, the mentality.

What is your fashion mantra for 2025?

Fashion should try to overcome its individualistic stance and move towards something that embodies a common interest. Fifty years ago, we still had a carefree attitude that justified this. What I'd like to see is less self-absorption. I'll always be interested in the mechanisms of seduction, but it's complicated in the current context. I think fashion is missing the mark a bit by not being open-minded. We can't keep putting blinkers on. I still want to be amazed.

I'm very much a satellite person. I'm going back to my first love: clothes.

How do you see yourself in the fashion world today?

What do you think has changed most in fashion in recent years, and this year in particular?

Annika McVeigh



Annika McVeigh will say she works in brand strategy and as a communication consultant. Yet her career spans a roster of impressive roles in three of fashion's capitals – and is a testament to how brands value her strategic thinking and long-standing relationships with the media. Her first taste of media was as a young fashion assistant at British Vogue, and made a bold move to work with Hussein Chalayan as the visionary London designer was making his mark. In New York, she was VP of communications at Prada and her years in Paris have included director of communications at Comme des Garçons, Celine (during the Phoebe Philo years), Azzedine Alaïa and Carven. She is currently a consultant on brand image for Bottega Veneta, coinciding with Louise Trotter's debut.

Where do you look for new ideas or voices in fashion?

By listening to music, reading different quality newspapers and interviews, walking in cities and in nature. By being attentive to the world and people's lives. By being an observer and even by disconnecting.

As long as it's a genuine collaboration with shared common values, then why not?

There seems to be more overlap between fashion/entertainment and fashion/sports than ever. Thoughts?

What do you enjoy most about Paris Fashion Week®? The energy it gives the city.

A distinctive identity is crucial, and heritage is very nice if you have it.

How essential is heritage and/or a distinctive identity in contributing to a brand's success?

Tell us something surprising about how you got to where you are today?

I didn't go to university or fashion school. I left art school at 20 and took a bus to Paris with a few savings. I had to be in Paris, which was for me the centre of it all... I had no idea about different jobs, just sheer and utter determination to be involved with magic and dreams.

How would you define chic in a contemporary context?

Good manners, an open minded view on the world, and a clear sense of self.

Try to find joy and beauty even in difficult and dark times.

Can you share a mantra that speaks to this moment in time?

Ashantéa Austin



Canadian by birth and currently based in L.A., Ashantéa Austin is a fashion journalist and historian dedicated to creating resources that explore fashion with honesty and in-depth analysis.

Through her articles and video essays, Austin says she “strives to make this ever-evolving industry more accessible, helping people understand how fashion affects them in ways they may have never considered.” Last December, she created an impressive, thoroughly researched infographic titled “THE CREATIVE DIRECTOR(Y)” that noted the movements of creative directors across the industry that should be the go-to resource for understanding the dizzying genealogy of fashion houses.

After studying art history at university, Austin’s pivot to fashion began with a role at SSENSE, which led her to contributing to i-D Magazine, The Face, Dazed, ELLE, Vogue Business among other titles. She adds, “Fashion is political, artistic, commercial, and deeply cultural. By exploring pivotal moments in fashion history, I aim to show how the past informs the present and continues to inspire the future.”

How essential is heritage and distinctive identity in contributing to a brand's success?

It's everything. Fashion moves fast, but authenticity is what makes a brand last. A strong brand identity is what separates one brand from all the others trying to do the same thing: sell clothes. Heritage doesn't have to just mean being a decades-old house either; it can also be about having a clear philosophy, a unique design language, and making deep cultural connections. Look at how Rick Owens has built a cult following. His success isn't just about aesthetics; it's about world building from a unique point of view.

That said, heritage alone isn't enough. A brand has to evolve their point of view while staying true to its essence. This is no easy feat. The ones that do it best balance legacy with reinvention.

My work sits at the intersection of discovery and education. I strive to make fashion more digestible and accessible. I want to amplify emerging brands, especially designers who are BIPOC, and help people understand how fashion affects them in ways they may have never considered: that fashion is political as much as it is artistic. A lot of fashion journalism is written for those already "in the know," leaving no clear entry point for the many people eager to learn. I hope my impact this year is in being a source of discovery for fashion news and a space for those who have a genuine passion for fashion, no matter their level of expertise.

In what ways do you hope to have an impact on fashion this year?

What surprises you about the industry in 2025?

The move away from diversity — especially considering all the recent creative director appointments... very few of which have been women or people of colour. This paired with the shift away from size inclusivity on the runway is disappointing. This is a very real issue for the industry that limits brands from truly connecting with their diverse consumer base and expanding into new markets.

Absolutely, and it makes sense. These intersections make fashion feel more dynamic! They also push brands to think about style as something lived in, something functional and not just something presented on a runway.

There seems to be more overlap between fashion/entertainment and fashion/sports than ever. Thoughts?

Athletes are no longer just athletes; they're brand ambassadors, style icons, and even designers in their own right. Likewise, celebrities in film and music have long influenced fashion. This is nothing new. It's also a smart business move. Brands understand that tapping into entertainment and sports expands their audience beyond traditional fashion consumers. Mbappé fronting Dior campaigns is a great example of this. Also Grace Wales Bonner really pioneered this shift with her sportswear inspired collections.

What do you enjoy most about Paris Fashion Week®?

The energy! There's a tangible excitement in Paris during fashion week that is unmatched. From the street style and exhibitions to the grandeur of the shows, it's a testament to how deeply people appreciate fashion and are involved in making it all happen.

Tell us something surprising about how you got to where you are today.

Maybe that I never studied fashion in any formal sense. I didn't even care much for clothes, nor did I ever plan on becoming a journalist. It wasn't until I finished my Art History degree that I discovered Elsa Schiaparelli's use of trompe l'oeil, then André Leon Talley, and finally, Martin Margiela (in that order).

I was completely captivated by how they viewed clothing as art. Their innovative contributions came through disruption and going against the grain. I wanted to learn everything I could about them! And sharing my thoughts and findings online felt like the natural next step. That's how my career started. If I had let the insecurity of not knowing enough about fashion hold me back, I wouldn't be where I am today. Never be afraid to try and fail.

How would you define «chic» in a contemporary context?

What's your favorite way to compliment someone's style?

"What's 4+4?" meaning you ate (8) — a slang term to express admiration and praise.

Trends will always matter, though micro-trends have been losing momentum. More and more, people are realizing that buying the It-bag or shoe of the season won't unlock a new lifestyle for them. Instead of chasing an idealized version of themselves, people are investing in pieces that are culturally expressive and true to their personal style.

Do trends still matter?

Being unapologetically yourself is chic. It's an attitude. Confidence in the way you dress, yes — but equally, confidence in how you carry yourself in your clothes. Also, anything and everything Sacai sends down the runway embodies this effortlessly.

Can you share a mantra that speaks to this moment in time?

Everything happens for a reason.

Chloe Malle



Perhaps because they sound entirely relatable while discussing a range of fashion topics, Chloe Malle and Chioma Nnadi are podcast hosts par excellence on *The Run-Through with Vogue*. Based in New York City, Malle is the editor of *Vogue.com*, which means she also ensures that the site is delivering a steady stream of coverage that extends beyond fashion to culture, celebrities, sport and living well. Listen to her (and Nnadi, who is head of editorial content at *British Vogue*) on Thursdays; you never know who will be joining them and what relevant subjects they will explore as an engaging — and stylish — duo.

Where do you look for new ideas or voices in fashion?

My colleagues. What I love about the people I work with, especially the Vogue Runway team, is that they each have different interests and deep pools of knowledge across the spectrum of fashion, from Laird's [Borelli-Persson] encyclopedic recall of a 1970s Yves Saint Laurent collection to Nicole's passion for Jun Takahashi's Undercover.

What is something that you believe will change over the course of the year?

Everything! Has there ever been this much change and tumult in fashion?

Wearing comfortable shoes and walking from appointment to appointment through the most beautiful city!

What do you enjoy most about Paris Fashion Week®?

How would you define chic in a contemporary context?

I keep thinking about Nicole's [Phelps] Undercover review where she referenced Jun Takahashi's show notes talking about striving for your personal best. In an age where we are constantly comparing ourselves to others on social media, I think people who dress for the best versions of themselves are chic.

Fab!

What is your favourite way/word to compliment someone's style?

Tell us something surprising about how you got to where you are today?

My first job was writing about real estate for the New York Observer, scanning New York City public records every morning for recent apartment sales feels far away from Valentino.

Rok Hwang



Rok Hwang's journey spans continents and disciplines. Born in Seoul, raised in Austin, and refined in London, he graduated from Central Saint Martins with an acclaimed MA collection. After perfecting his craft at Céline, Chloé, and Louis Vuitton, he founded Rokh in 2017. The label is distinguished by deconstructed tailoring, layered silhouettes, and a dialogue between masculine rigour and feminine grace. With raw edges and subtle asymmetries, Rokh offers an elegant yet unvarnished take on contemporary womenswear.

Where do you look for new ideas or voices in fashion?

Inspiration often emerges from tension: the dialogue between precision and fluidity, uniformity and rebellion. I am drawn to moments of quiet elegance disrupted by imperfection, the poetry of the unfinished. Cinema, literature, and fine art provide endless references, as do the rhythms of daily life, where style is instinctive rather than prescribed. There is also something compelling about the interplay between structure and movement, the way garments can shape and shift with the body. This constant dialogue between construction and wearability informs my approach to design.

Creativity is the engine of desirability. When a brand offers not just garments but a distinct aesthetic world, it fosters a loyal following. The ability to create timeless yet unexpected pieces ensures longevity, while thoughtful collaborations across disciplines – be it art, architecture, or performance – can reinvigorate a brand's reach. There is also something to be said for restraint; in an era of excess, brands that exercise considered refinement often stand apart. Growth, when driven by creativity, should feel organic – an extension of a brand's ethos rather than an exercise in commercial strategy.

In what ways might fashion creativity effectively drive growth?

Where do you look for new ideas or voices in fashion?

The increasing appreciation for craftsmanship and permanence. In an industry that has long been driven by relentless novelty, there is a discernible shift towards pieces with longevity: garments designed to be worn and reinterpreted over time rather than discarded with the next trend. This return to a slower, more considered approach is not nostalgic but necessary, and reflects a collective desire for depth and meaning in what we wear. Another unexpected development is how design languages from different cultural landscapes continue to merge. There is a growing reverence for precision, modularity, and the art of layering – ideas that have long been integral to craftsmanship but are now finding their way into the global conversation with more nuance. There is a quiet radicalism in this kind of approach – a refusal to rush, which feels almost rebellious in today's fashion climate.

By offering something sincere. Desire is not about excess but about connection: pieces that feel considered, that invite the wearer to make them their own. At Rokh, we design with the idea of permanence in mind, garments that reveal themselves over time rather than demanding immediate attention.

There is something profoundly modern about clothing that does not shout for attention but instead allows the wearer to express themselves with subtlety. To sustain desire, a brand must remain authentic to its ethos while allowing room for evolution. It is a delicate balance, but one worth striving for.

How do you think your brand can spark and sustain desire with so much else going on in the world?

por- -traits

JENKE AHMED TAILLY:
“FASHION HAS THE INCREDIBLE POWER TO BRING
CULTURES AND COMMUNITIES TOGETHER.”

Jenke Ahmed Tailly, stylist and artistic director, offers a deeply human approach to fashion that unites the diversity of beauties. From his first steps in Côte d'Ivoire, cradled by traditions and ancestral know-how, to his prestigious collaborations with established houses and emerging designers, and his unrivalled work with icons such as Isabelle Adjani, Beyoncé and Naomi Campbell, he has turned his roots into the driving force behind a creative and inclusive philosophy.



The fashion industry is a complex maze of often little-known professions. The stylist, a behind-the-scenes job, is the person who assembles clothes and invents new ways of wearing them. For fashion magazines, social media, videoclips or publicity campaigns, they bring characters to life and invent images that change our perceptions of beauty. "I want my work to speak to the women and men I love, whatever their origin or skin colour. I want to show the multicultural world in which I grew up in Abidjan, with so many different nationalities. I was sometimes in the minority at school in my own country, and I thought that was fabulous." Taily grew up in "the first Senegalese family to emigrate from Senegal to Côte d'Ivoire." When he was very young, his parents separated, and his father remarried in France. "I spent my school year in Abidjan and most of my school holidays in Paris. I've always been attracted to things that are different from me." A contagious enthusiasm, a resounding personal style that would make the quiet luxury crowd swoon, and a deep, transcendental need to pass on his heritage: his career is a treasure chest of anecdotes and life lessons.

"I didn't know that fashion could be a profession."

From an early age, Taily understood that a garment, a practical everyday object, may harbour a profound symbolic value. "For all the great African families, traditional ceremonies mark the stages in a human being's lifespan. For each occasion or event, there is a symbolic garment, specific fabrics. For the Wolof tribe in Senegal, for example, christenings require white lace called borodeh. Each tribe has its own particularity in terms of thread, design and techniques." This is how he discovers fabrics and know-how, and learned without realising it. "Every week, my aunts, my mother and my grandmothers had to make outfits. Instead of going out to play football, I would stay with them and advise them. I learned to recognise real silk, taffeta, alpaca, guipure, Kente, which is a traditional fabric... I'm thinking of the Baoulé loincloth, which is very similar to the Ndiago loincloth from Senegal." This is precisely the expert consulting he would go on to practice for the rest of his career, as though he was learning his craft from those closest to him before taking the plunge.

"I used to read a lot of my mother's magazines, ELLE, Vogue... My mother loved fashion. She could wear a boubou on Monday and Saint Laurent on Tuesday." As soon as he could be independent, he packed his bags and flew to New York. He studied marketing and at the same time discovered fashion as a model. "That's when I discovered the different professions behind a fashion image, from production to lighting and set design. I realised that fashion is like cinema: it's a whole team telling a story." Unsure of his path, he had a feeling that fashion was attracting him and was looking for his place in it. He discovered retail as a sales assistant at Barneys and Bergdorf Goodman: "I was already very familiar with the French fashion houses, but I discovered a lot of American brands and how a fashion boutique works." After graduating, he briefly joined Donna Karan but eventually returned to Paris to work for Benetton. "I became the youngest marketing and merchandising director. One day, I arrived at a shooting and fell in love with the job of stylist; it was a revelation. I didn't say anything to my parents and resigned from one day to the next. I called a friend, Miles Cockfield, fashion director of Berliner Magazine, because I wanted to assist him. I'd found my calling. He immediately offered me a job as fashion editor."

Finally settled into his shoes, the adventure began, and Taily jumped in with both feet. For his first shoot as a stylist, he worked flat out. "The theme was the trench coat. It was a delight to immerse myself in the history of the garment, from Thomas Burberry who created it in 1914, to Yohji Yamamoto and Comme des Garçons who deconstructed it, to Rodarte who romanticised it." Above all, Taily can't imagine his first publication without Alaïa. "My mother adored Alaïa and I absolutely wanted to have a piece. He contacted the press teams, went to the showroom and met Mr Azzedine Alaïa himself. "I was in the boutique the week before with my mother, and I think he recognised me. I explained the project to him and he replied: 'We don't have any trench coats in the latest collection, but if you'll follow me, I'll lend you some from my archives.'"

When Taily talks about Azzedine Alaïa, his eyes glaze over and his fists clench. "He was my adoptive father. He's no longer here, but he's in my prayers every day." Taily remembers his exceptional generosity. "He always supported me. A week after that first shoot, he organised a dinner and introduced me to the titans, the major figures of the industry, such as Franca and Carla Sozzani and Farida Khelifa. I never allowed myself to call him by his first name, even when he insisted. When a legend gives you so much love, you sometimes wonder what you're doing there, if you deserve it. I have a lot of very intense, very touching memories. He always had people over to his house. He was in the kitchen, serving and seasoning. He was a master of ceremonies."

It was while working with Mr. Alaïa that he met "the great Sophie Theallet," the designer's right-hand woman for over ten years. She then moved to New York to launch her own House in 2007. In September 2015, she presented a collection in homage to Africa, alongside Taily. "I'm very proud of it. We found this rooftop that reminded us of the Médine district in Dakar, Senegal. We brought in the drums of Doudou N'diaye Rose's troupe, who had performed at the bicentenary of the French Revolution under the artistic direction of Jean-Paul Goude. It was beautiful, captivating, joyful. Absolutely chic, a celebration... A very high point in my career." Theallet remains the only French designer to have won the CFDA/Vogue Fashion Fund award, in 2009. At the time, journalist Cathy Horyn described her in The New York Times as "the real deal, a designer who knows how to make clothes from start to finish."

"I've created my own freedom, and I've always fought for diversity wherever I've worked."

Fashion images shape and freeze our aesthetic references, imposing themselves as cultural benchmarks. By recognising African heritage and giving it pride of place, fashion becomes a vehicle for authentic, plural representation. Taily's career has been marked by three major magazine covers.

In 2011, his reputation skyrocketed when he signed the cover of the 90th anniversary of L'Officiel. "When I did my research, I realised that in 90 years, there had been less than ten black girls on the cover. To represent 90 years of fashion, I immediately thought of Beyoncé. She's absolute royalty, her presence, her aura, beyond her vocal abilities, it was an obvious choice." With just a few phone calls, Beyoncé heard about this outgoing young man with contagious enthusiasm, and the project became a reality a few months later.

“All the fashion houses I contacted had prepared made-to-measure clothes for Beyoncé. For the fittings, I arranged the room as if we were entering African royalty. I borrowed works of art, even a piece from the Quai Branly. Fashion is very much inspired by Africa, and with my heritage, I can look at any collection and find an African inspiration. It was a wonderful exercise for me.” For the cover, he chose a Gucci piece by Frida Giannini, creative director of the House from 2006 to 2015. “She put out an incredible collection inspired by Saint Laurent’s 1967 African collection. It featured codes from the Bantu peoples, pieces with conical breasts, Bambara breasts. This is the name of a Malian community whose female statues have very long bodies and pointed breasts. The conical breasts are often attributed to Jean Paul Gaultier, but it was Yves Saint Laurent who first introduced them in Paris.” Taily has worked with Beyoncé for several years, most notably in 2013 for the iconic Super Bowl performance. “I’m one of the only Africans to have been the artistic director of the Super Bowl,” he recalls. He also followed her to Cape Town in 2018, when she gave a concert to celebrate Nelson Mandela’s 100th birthday. He even introduced her to Mr. Alaïa: “He really enjoyed the song “Single Ladies”, and it became a ritual to listen to it during fittings with the cab models. He was really happy to meet her.”

“I had the honour of working with Beyoncé, Kim Kardashian, Iman Bowie, Natalia Vodianova... My ultimate dream was to work with Naomi Campbell.”

“Naomi is one of the most beautiful people I’ve met.” Their collaboration has resulted in some phenomenal fashion images. In November 2018, they signed a resounding cover for Vogue Arabia. “I wanted Naomi to wear afro hair. It’s nice to do the flip side, to present something new. In the end it was a huge success. And I mixed up the looks, I took a pair of trousers and made a top out of them, I reversed the pieces, I had a blast.” Also, in March 2021, Madame Figaro presents “L’Odyssée de Naomi”, an issue entirely dedicated to Naomi Campbell, under Taily’s artistic direction. “We had a 100% African team, from Ghana, Cape Verde, Senegal and Nigeria. It was magnificent. We chose an outfit by Olivier Rousteing for the cover.”

Along with Naomi, Taily is committed to identifying and supporting emerging African talent. Together, they chaperone Arise Fashion Week in Lagos, Nigeria, which since its launch in 2007 has become one of the major continental references for African designers. Together, they draw the Western fashion spotlight on the continent’s most promising talents and exceptional know-how. “Naomi and team were the first to invite André Leon Talley to Africa. When he arrived in Nigeria, he was amazed by the beauty of what he saw. He was also able to meet Reni Folawiyo, founder of Alara, one of the most beautiful concept stores in the world. It hosts the biggest European fashion houses alongside the most creative African designers.”

It was there that he discovered the brand founded by Adeju Thompson, Lagos Space Programme, now on the Official Calendar of Paris Fashion Week®. “During the pandemic, Naomi and team organised a competition. The designer Kenneth Ize won and Lagos Space Programme was one of the finalists. We saw them arrive. When they entered the Paris Calendar, they asked me to go with them, and I was delighted to help.”

Taily also works with the CANEX (Creative Africa Nexus) initiative. In September 2024, during Paris Fashion Week®, more than 18 fashion brands from all over Africa and its diaspora presented their creations to the professionals in attendance. The space showcased a wide range of brands including Mafi from Ethiopia, Adele Dejak from Kenya, We Are NBO and Katush, Doreen Mashika from Zanzibar and Emmy Kasbit, Wuman and Bloke from Nigeria. South Africa was represented by Judy Sanderson, David Tlale and Thebe Magugu, while Zimbabwe was represented by Vanhu Vamwe.

“Working for Chanel was my dream. The House represents French savoir-faire and French elegance.” On Tuesday 6 December 2022, Chanel presented its Métiers d’art show in Dakar, Senegal, becoming the first luxury brand to unveil a collection in sub-Saharan Africa. “They told me about this project three years before and we started work a year before the show. It was my dream. It’s the most chic French fashion House. I’ve collaborated with the House for a long time and it’s one of the most loyal Houses I’ve ever worked with.” Taily is still very moved that a French fashion House, such an established reference for absolute elegance on a global scale, has decided to bring Senegalese savoir-faire to the forefront. “It was extraordinary. Everything was done by Senegalese teams. Even the notaries who prepared the contracts were Senegalese. I introduced them to the local equivalent of 19M, the Manufactures sénégalaises des arts décoratifs (MSAD) in Thiès, set up in 1966 on the initiative of former president Léopold Sédar Senghor.”

“When I work, I sometimes have the impression that it’s not my hands. I think that what I do in fashion is sacred, that it doesn’t even come from me. It’s like I’m being carried by my ancestors.”

“We don’t have a written tradition. Every African family has a “griot.” It’s a repository of oral tradition, a transmitter of memory. They hold the book and know who your ancestors were.” When young Taily lost his mother, he travelled to Africa to immerse himself in his family history. “My father comes from a royal African family, from Baibli in the west of Côte d’Ivoire, and my mother comes from a highly spiritual line. I think that what I do in fashion is sacred and that it doesn’t even come from me. I think that, when I’m in my element, when I start working, it’s as if it were another hand, as if my hand was carried by my family. It’s an ancestral heritage that I’m starting to really understand today.”

“In fashion, despite everything we do, we start from scratch every season. It’s a race, and even if you come in first one time, you’re right back at the starting line.” After all these years of learning the ropes, immersing himself in so many House worlds, so many designers’ visions, he feels ready. “It’s time for me to launch my own brand. I’ve been working on this project for a very long time.” In a few seasons - Taily is a playful creature who masters the art of suspense like no one else - he will present a collection of coats in Paris. “Coats don’t exist in Africa and that’s why I’ve always been fascinated by them. In Abidjan, when it rained, I was the only one to come in a mackintosh and the others didn’t understand, but I remained proud. The coat is protection, it’s what wraps you up.” Paying homage to his heritage through Western clothing remains his lifelong struggle, which he is now fully embracing: recreating new models, new images, new symbols.

Reuben Attia

DIANE PERNET: “I LIKE TO SUPPORT, TO EMPOWER NEW CREATIVE TALENTS.”

Diane Pernet keeps on instinctively connecting with the times. A soft, kind yet powerful presence draped in black, who pioneered the digital fashion space in 2005 and rocketed the art of the fashion film on a global scale. Driven by her passion of shedding light on unvoiced talents, she founded the annual “A Shaded View of Fashion Festival” almost two decades ago, positioning fashion as a vessel for not only social, philosophical, and environmental dialogues but also for a broader cultural and artistic exploration.



Washington DC-born, Philadelphia-raised, New York-forged, Paris-blossomed, globally-acclaimed Pernet is one of those fashion figures whose unique role transcends any single professional category. For now, let's just state that she's a cultural pulse-taker. Fascinated by artistic expression since childhood, it took a journey to merge her two passions, the film and the fashion, and filming the fashion and fashioning the film. She first went to study film and communication, then started reportage photography, "not fashion photography. You know why? Because I used to look at Guy Bourdin's work and think if I couldn't be better than this, I shouldn't bother. He was my icon, I guess." Her ever-growing passion for transmitting emotion through a camera is still palpable. "John Cassavetes, Werner Herzog, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Luchino Visconti, Jean-Luc Godard," her pantheon of cinema's geniuses keeps on flowing, as she holds her cup of basil tea. "I was more into filmmakers at first, than I was into fashion designers." Yet fashion, with its unforeseen depths and multifaceted nature, eventually dawned on her. She studied it briefly, for a few months, at the Fashion Institute of Technology, in New York. "I learned textiles, draping, fashion illustration, pattern making. I had great teachers, but I hated that time. If I had stayed any longer in there, I would have lost all desire for fashion." Pernet has a soft voice but does not mince her words. Determined, she launched her own brand and nurtured its growth for 13 years. "Thirteen, right? So, it must have been okay!" she adds, with a smile. "I had a license in Tokyo, the highlight of my fashion career," she quips. "It was about mutual respect, a completely different mentality. Japan holds a special place in my heart."

Still in New York, she witnessed a kind of hell on Earth as the AIDS epidemic began to spread. "In New York, I lived in the West Village, a couple streets down from Christopher Street, which was the main gay street." Home of the Stonewall Inn, and subsequently the 1969 Stonewall riots. After, the street became an internal symbol of pride for LGBTQ+ rights movement. "Today, there is some medication, and you can live with it. But then, it was a death certificate. I remember a good friend of mine. He was working at Saint Laurent and curated the 25-year archival YSL traveling exhibition. He had just slept with one person, and it was over. Can you imagine?" Pernet recalls the lethal pall that shrouded the city. "With no exaggeration, 85 to 90 percent of my neighbourhood were dead or dying." In 1990, she flew to Paris. "It was horrific. I thought, I can't live like this. I don't know what I'm going to do, but I can't live like this."

"A shaded view of fashion, I said shaded, not jaded."

Freshly arrived in Paris in 1991, she began her career as a costume designer for Israeli director Amos Gitai on the film "Golem, l'Esprit d'Exile," having previously met him in New York. "On set, there was the iconic Henri Alekan, who had worked with Jean Cocteau for "La Belle et la Bête," in 1946. He was 87 but a spirit and energy like he was 40. And Hanna Schygulla, Fassbinder's fetish actress. That was the closest I ever came to Fassbinder himself." And Parisian fashion world took her by storm, or vice versa. "I never intended to become a journalist, but I've met Tiffany Godoy, now head of editorial content at Vogue Japan, and she gave my first job for Composite Magazine. She believed in me for whatever reason, so I did it." She started to write for ELLE, the French Vogue, Joyce, covering shows of London, Milan, Paris. Her flair for discovering new talents shone immediately, and she began scouting promising creatives for the Hyères Festival from 2002 until 2011.

In 2003, she teamed with digital artist Alex Czetwertynski, to create a series of short films, "Fashioned Out", commissioned by Galeries Lafayette. "Alex is the sweetest, and a visionary. During Fashion Week, we started filming at 9 am, until the after parties. Then we did the voice-over, the team did the editing, through the night. If you were passing by the windows of the Galeries Lafayette on Boulevard Haussmann, at night when it's quiet, you could hear my voice." Hear, and read. In perpetual quest for creative independence, she launched her own land of expression. "When I was writing for magazines, I had to cover advertising, basically." We're in February 2005, where Internet is babbling and blogging was definitely not a professional activity. "A Shaded View of Fashion" was born, "shaded" referring to her shaded lenses, nothing shady to read here.

"I like to support people, to empower people. If I do not like something, I'd rather not write about it."

What interests Pernet is meeting people and connecting them with one another. Creative ones, of course. The ones that have something interesting to say, or at least an interesting way of expressing themselves. So, she set up a festival, as one does. "You start from scratch!" Pernet decided to fuse her passion for fashion and cinema, committed to elevating the concept of "fashion film" on a worldwide stage. The first edition took place in 2006 as a curated program in Los Angeles and was entitled 'You Wear It Well,' referencing the 1972 Rod Stewart song. It then landed in Paris in 2008 with its final name 'A Shaded View of Fashion Festival,' and it traveled. "I always wanted to be international. I did not want to be a New York designer; I wanted to be a designer. I never wanted ASVOFF to be a French fashion film festival, but an international one. I am interested in creativity wherever it is. That's just my DNA." And she started to tour the world. "It was the first fashion film festival in the world, so museums wanted to have their part. We went at the Guggenheim, Bilbao, CPH Docs [a film festival in Copenhagen], the MoMu in Antwerp several times... We went to 12 countries each year!" But the question remains? What is a fashion film? Is it an ad? How to showcase clothes? Are clothes characters? "It is about storytelling. That's what I like. It can take so many forms. A fashion film is what you'll take on it. How you will tell a story."

«What interests me is all that is relevant to our time.»

ASVOFF is an agora, a welcoming place gathering communities from different horizons. It had developed over years and now permeates creativity and culture from all sides, from social, philosophical, technological, ecological matters: Fashion stands at the crossroads. “We keep on introducing new categories: Mental Health in Fashion; Unleashing the power of AI; Black Spectrum, featuring only black productions; Chinese Films; Queer Archive,” she says listing recent additions. Two editions ago, she unveiled Climate Warriors, a category dedicated to children. “There are two subcategories: one for children aged 6 to 12, and one for teenagers from 13 to 19 years old. Kids must make a 30-second film, and teens a 60-second film, about how they see the future. They’re the ones most concerned about sustainability. I still find it difficult to convince fashion insiders to let their children participate.” In the last edition, one child filmed himself applying bandages to trees. Additionally, the jury for this category is composed of children. “They are judged by their peers!”

“Last edition, Michèle Lamy was president of the jury. And I was thinking, who could follow her? I am so glad Willy Chavarria confirmed, he is so relevant in what he is doing.”

The 17th edition, set to take place from November 13th-16th, 2025, already has us waiting in anticipation. First, the President of the jury. Mexican American fashion designer Willy Chavarria, honoured in 2024 with Designer of the Year at the Latin American Fashion Awards as well as being named CFDA Menswear Designer of the Year for the second time in a row. He rose in New York, then made his way to Paris, much like Pernet, when he entered the Official Calendar of Paris Fashion Week® Menswear in January 2025. The climax of his sensational show featured a recording of Bishop Mariann Edgar Budde’s sermon calling for “compassion” for the LGTBIQ+ community from President Donald Trump. “It was amazing. That was the highlight of the season for me. He passed on so much emotion.” Also, the next edition will feature another theme, « Future Vintage », exploring what vintage fashion could encompass in 20 years. “It’s curated by Byronesque, she’s amazing. She’s also the one who introduced me to our sponsor, Worldnet, which is the reference transport company for luxury products. And interestingly enough, Worldnet is the one that brought the Willy Chavarria collection to Paris.” Go figure, we have come full circle.

“Dover Street Market is a world I feel comfortable in.”

The first Dover Street Market opened in September 2004 at 17–18 Dover Street in Mayfair, London, where Pernet was immediately drawn to the radical concept store founded by Comme des Garçon’s Rei Kawakubo and her husband Adrian Joffe. “I met Adrian Joffe when I was the fashion editor for Joyce in the '90s and I remember when he started 35-37 in Paris as a cultural space. He is a master, truly.” In May 2024, the place was repurposed, marking the arrival of Dover Street Market in Paris, which now stands as the Parisian home of Pernet’s festival.

“I love colour, it gives you energy. My place has lots of colours. I just prefer wearing black because it makes me feel stronger. “

Pernet’s style is way more than a striking, recognisable, trademark silhouette. That’s why it appears here as this portrait draws to a close. If the word “uniform” comes to mind, it definitely does not apply to her in the sense of a uniform echoing sameness, binding diverse souls under a single standard. “The reason behind my look is very banal. I’m short! And I feel I was meant to be tall, and since God didn’t feel that way, I wear platform shoes, and I adjust my hair to give the appearance of being five foot seven.” In September 2000, fashion journalist extraordinaire Suzy Menkes interviewed Yohji Yamamoto for The New York Times and granted the world with that famous quote of the master of noir: “Black is modest and arrogant at the same time. Black is lazy and easy – but mysterious. But above all black says this: I don’t bother you, don’t bother me.” For Pernet, it echoed deeply. “When I read that, it could have come out of my mouth.”

Pernet has been wearing her look “for almost four decades, so it’s just normal to me.” When she arrived in Paris, she felt “a cultural shock” when she realised people kept staring at her. “In New York, nobody cares. I remembered my ex-husband saying that people were looking because they’re scared. Why are they scared? I am pretty easy going.” Though now, glances and comments simply slide off her, she once found them tough to endure. “I’ve heard everything, “Halloween”, “Mardi Gras”, “Morticia Adams” and I thought, “So what? She looks great!” In the beginning, it really bothered me, but it doesn’t anymore.”

If one wanted to see Diane Pernet’s wearing a neon green jacket for a fashion show, “it happened once last season and it won’t happen again! It was hysterical.” Donald Schneider, “the one who was art director of French Vogue when American writer and actress Joan Juliet Buck was editor in chief, from 1994 to 2001, and the one who introduced Karl Lagerfeld to H&M,” recently acquired EHLO, “a heritage ski brand. To support him, I wore the neon green jacket one day, and went to the Sacai show during Paris Fashion Week®. It was really strange. People were in shock. I’ll never wear colour again for fashion shows, I’m a discreet person. Even if it is a really well-made piece. I wanted to support. Because I love to support my friends, and to support talents.”

Application for ASVOFF Festival remain open until September 30, 2025. Go on! To submit a project, it could hardly be simpler. You need only visit <https://filmfreeway.com/ASVOFF> Regular news is published on ASVOFF website and on Instagram.

Reuben Attia

RENÉ CÉLESTIN: “A FASHION SHOW IS A HYBRID, MULTILINGUAL, MULTIDIMENSIONAL CREATURE.”

René Célestin, founder of the OBO agency, has spent the last 25 years orchestrating some of the most innovative fashion shows and luxury events worldwide. From prestigious Houses to promising young talent, his daily work centres on transforming creative visions into reality. His insatiable curiosity about others has led him to found, acquire and co-found various projects, constantly exploring new ways of showcasing beauty. His career reached a pinnacle when he co-produced the Opening Ceremonies of the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Paris last summer.



New York vitality, London grit, Parisian sophistication: Célestin strikes a perfect balance between frankness and quietude. While Paris Fashion Week® is in full swing, in between two meetings, he shares his journey. Notifications may flood his phone, yet he turns the screen away: if he dedicates time to you, it is wholehearted. "Serving others, being at their service, might not be the trend, but it's a notion dear to my heart. And OBO stands for 'On Behalf Of' the other," he says. In his youth, Célestin experimented and explored different paths. First, healing the other: he began his studies in medicine. Then, pampering the other: he took the advice of a trusted friend and switched to hospitality, a field that affirmed his appreciation for order. Finally, discovering the other. "Ever since I was little, I told my parents I wanted to go to America. Everyone laughed because no one really believed it. I spent my evenings reading lyrics on album covers. The Stones, Supertramp, Fleetwood Mac..." His studies ended with a few months abroad, where he experienced New York while attending the prestigious Cornell University. He returned to Paris and then quickly moved back to the city he had always dreamed of as his home. "I started working in Paris for an event organizer. When a branch opened in New York, I took over as general manager for three years. I went to the United States because it was my destiny.»

«I always say I can thank fate for sending me to New York; it re-educated me.»

Célestin arrived in New York with a light step but a heavy heart. "It was very harsh. The loneliness, the lack of resources, and the pace of New York. Parisians complain, but there, you're constantly plugged into the socket." He settled at the Chelsea Hotel, "at that time, it was not at all a glamorous place. I was next to a Russian guitarist who played hard rock all night long." Short nights and intense days unfurled as he led his team and coordinated projects. "What I learned, which I had begun to grasp before, is this commando mindset of starting a new project every two weeks, with a team. It immediately resonated with me. I realised that we could move much faster, much stronger."

Célestin, an "ultimately" sociable creature, began freelancing "for this and that," meeting people at random events and projects. This is how he met his business partner and founded the OBO agency in August 2000 to produce fashion shows. "I told him, as I had with others who hadn't taken the bait, that there was an opportunity. And off we went." Why build endless theoretical plans when sometimes all it takes is to just dive in? "An event production agency at that time was just people, computers, and ideas. You could even start a production company now," he says with a broad smile, nodding towards the corner of the Parisian bistro table that holds his green tea. It was the very start of the century, in a frenetic energy. Paco Rabanne had failed in predicting the end of the world, Bill Clinton was winding down his presidential term – "not to talk politics, but he did manage to cancel the American debt" – and the beginnings of the Internet were underway. And: the luxury industry was taking off. "It was an absolute contest of who had the biggest advertising campaign. The promotion machine was in full swing."

"In the strictest confidentiality, I was told that the House of Saint Laurent was going to be purchased by what would become the Gucci Group."

"When you start a business and you have only one client, your obsession every morning is to find the second, third, and fourth." Shortly after establishing himself in New York, Célestin set up the Paris offices of OBO. "There are territorial differences. Fashion in New York is neither conceived nor managed as it is in Paris. Didier Grumbach often enjoyed reminding us that beyond creativity, fashion is a matter of business. And I am completely aligned with this vision. If you represent a major retail store, you start the season in New York with an open budget, and you conclude in Paris. It's in Paris where the largest number of orders are placed anywhere in the world." Didier Grumbach, a central figure in French fashion, was president of the Fédération de la Haute Couture et de la Mode from 1998 to 2014.

Célestin's intertwined professional and social networks grew quickly, sparking a flurry of contracts. "I found myself in an office where they announced the acquisition of the House of Saint Laurent by what would become the Gucci Group. It was July 2000, it was very hot, and I had come in a T-shirt and shorts because no one had told me where I was going. And I really looked like a penguin among all those people in suits." Kering, formerly known as Pinault-Printemps-Redoute (PPR) until 2013, was then beginning its strategic pivot towards luxury in the late 1990s. In 2000, PPR acquired an initial 42% stake in Gucci Group, and 100% of the ready-to-wear and cosmetics divisions of the House of Saint Laurent. Haute Couture remained under the control of Yves Saint Laurent and Pierre Bergé. With one foot on each side of the Atlantic, Célestin was sent to Paris as a secret agent to discreetly assess the House, to see if the project could proceed, if the House could be ready for a show in September. "I eventually reported back that they wouldn't make it and explained that Saint Laurent was a sacred monument to the French press." He signed Saint Laurent among his clients, then the Gucci Group, which organised an exhibition on the Pop Years at Beaubourg from March to July 2001. "Everything was under the aegis of Tom Ford," who was appointed director of creation for the YSL Rive Gauche ready-to-wear collections, while maintaining his role at Gucci until his departure in 2004.

"I have an unyielding spirit of absolute freedom. The one who could ever chain me has yet to be born – though, to be fair, no one has ever tried! Sometimes, that means making choices that are neither practical nor advantageous"

AMI, Balenciaga, Victoria Beckham, Lemaire, Germanier, The Row, Maison Margiela, System, Valentino... For the major players in the industry, OBO operates behind the scenes with brilliance, fine-tuning every parameter of a fashion show that the general spectator would never suspect. "It all begins with a dialogue, a conversation with a designer who shares their mood, their inspiration, their dreams... offering us a direction." This marks the start of a creative research phase, which encompasses everything from the venue to the lighting, the music, the scenography. "And my ultimate obsession, my all-consuming passion, is the camera, a way of seeing the world that is entirely distinct from the human eye, from photography, from the frozen image."

The creative research and the quest for the perfect venue are handled by OBO's teams. But when it comes to music or lighting designers, Célestin is constantly seeking out both emerging and established talents. "I want to pay tribute to Jan Kroeze, who has worked for Maison Margiela, Dior, and The Row, and to Philippe Cerceau. There are so many incredible talents, I could go on forever." What excites him most is looking beyond the fashion world, drawing inspiration from theatre and opera. "That world fascinates me. I always say that a stunning set with bad lighting is ugly, whereas an ugly set with great lighting is beautiful. No one looks at the light, everyone looks at the object being lit, but it's the light that defines it. It's the negative space."

When the historic House of Poiret was reborn from its ashes in March 2018, 90 years after its closure, OBO worked alongside designer Yiqing Yin to bring her creative vision to life. "We staged it under the grand nave of the Musée des Arts Décoratifs. It was a fusion of Blade Runner, a Bob Wilson play, and a fashion show. And yet, the lighting mechanism was strikingly simple. I still see kids today with that image on their phones," he explains, showing a photo of the show, where the silhouettes seem to emerge from a cosmic rift, bathed in an orange, yellow, mysterious, and enveloping light.

"You have to help the kids. You have to bring in disruptors."

Célestin has always been committed to supporting young talent. In 2008, when the real estate market collapsed, triggering a global financial crisis, New York came to a standstill. "It felt like the end of the world. We were all wondering what new career we'd have to pursue. But luxury kept going. It defied all logic." As young New York designers teetered on the edge of shutting down, he and Keith Baptista launched MADE Fashion Week, a platform that gave emerging designers the opportunity to showcase their work. "There was Joseph Altuzarra, Alexander Wang, Charlie Discord, The Blonds—putting on the wildest shows, endless wigs, total madness."

Since 2022, students from the Institut Français de la Mode have kicked off the Official Calendar of Paris Fashion Week® twice a year, once for the Bachelor of Arts graduates, once for the Master's, an extraordinary spotlight, masterfully orchestrated by OBO. "I firmly believe we've all had mentors. When the opportunity to be one arises, you have to take it. You have to support emerging talent, spark new ideas. You have to bring in disruptors."

"The Olympics? We did something no one on the planet had ever done before. And I am not one for grand statements or exaggeration. When we'll turn 80, sitting by the fireplace, we'll be able to say: we did it."

Going into the Olympics bid, Célestin helped assemble a team of experts over the course of three years. When COVID hit and event agencies found themselves out of work, OBO moved into the offices of Double 2, looking to spark synergies and generate new ideas. What happens when you gather creatives around the same coffee machine? "We figured we could organise ourselves to create events together. We love that. So we founded The Banner." As they prepared for the upcoming Olympic bids, this improvised collective proved to be a perfect fit. "It was an association of agencies, the best-of French event production." Célestin encouraged the Auditoire group to join the effort. The founders of Auditoire, in turn, brought in Havas Event. "For the Olympics, we formed an equal three-way partnership, which we decided to call Paname 24."

As he describes the magnitude of the project, his eyes gleam with pride. "We invented technology. We invented solutions. Six kilometres of scene, or Seine. Over 100 boats, each adjusting speed to the river's flow. A live broadcast requiring every nation to be shown for 20 seconds. Thomas Jolly, the artistic director, breaking everything down to half-seconds. We had 115 fibre-connected cameras, three loops of 18 kilometres of optical fibre running through the sewers of Paris to connect 5,000 IP devices. We were under terrorist threat, coordinating everything with the French Armed Forces, the Île-de-France prefecture, the Paris police, City Hall, the Ministry of the Interior, the Élysée... And Céline Dion singing on the Eiffel Tower. It was infinite, fantastic, Kafkaesque!»

«It's easier to find a client than a good project director.»

Célestin's craft demands an extraordinary mix of adaptability, sensitivity, pragmatism, and composure. "Recruiting is incredibly difficult. The beasts that are fashion shows are hybrid, multilingual, multidimensional. And what we deliver? It's hard. Very hard. The deadline doesn't move. If the power goes out, it happens in front of the entire world." How do you keep growing, seizing opportunities as they come, and keeping your focus on the future? There's only one way, and a brilliant piece of (professional) life advice that perfectly sums up this craftsman of social connections: "It's all just a constantly nurtured fabric of relationships, of people you meet, people you know, and those you keep close."

Reuben Attia

JUNKO SHIMADA: “I WAS SO DRAWN TO PARIS, TO FRENCH CULTURE, TO ITS OPENNESS AND DIVERSITY.”

The career of Japanese designer Junko Shimada is a combination of phenomenal creative strength and irrepressible drive for independence. Arriving in Paris in the 1960s, she found herself in the midst of a cultural and social frenzy. She first honed her skills at Mafia, the revolutionary communications agency, then joined Cacharel before launching her own fashion House. Growing alongside the legendary Azzedine Alaïa and Kenzo Takada - for whom Paris was also a welcoming land - she depicts fashion as a profoundly human adventure, a succession of encounters with free, assiduous and passionate spirits.



Her studio is adjacent to her Paris boutique on rue Saint-Florentin. On the racks hang pieces from the new collection, along with animal-head masks on wooden mannequins, an eagle, a frog, a blackbird. "It's for the presentation. It's going to be like a jungle. And it's funny, you have to laugh in fashion, and in life too," she states with a smile. The collection is conceived and prepared in Paris, and some pieces are produced in her Japanese ateliers, "mainly knitwear". Shimada makes clothes that are "simple and beautiful, for everyday women. Sexy too, but sexy comes naturally. It's an attitude, it doesn't have to come from the clothes." With two collections a year since the launch of her House in 1982, Shimada has mastered the art of reinventing herself while remaining deeply faithful to her signature style and values.

"In Japan, I used to spend my time at the cinema watching the films of the Nouvelle Vague. I was fascinated by Paris."

Fashion wasn't a vocation; it was a key to independence. "My mother found herself raising me alone and I had to get a job. It was difficult to be an independent woman in Japan at that time." She chose sewing, because "it's a profession, but it was also useful for everyday life. I liked drawing and painting, but you couldn't earn a living that way." She joined the Sugino Gakuen Dressmaker Institute in Tokyo and spent most of her free time at the cinema, carried away by the Nouvelle Vague and its emblematic figures including Jeanne Moreau, Anna Karina and Jean-Paul Belmondo. This movement redefined French cinema and imagery of Paris, radically overturning traditional codes.

After graduating, and getting engaged, she decided out of the blue to go off on her own to Paris for three months. "I was so attracted to French culture, the music, the cinema, the culture. And everything I had imagined was there. It was fantastic, I was so happy." She arrived in Paris in 1966, amid an unprecedented social and cultural revolt that would spread shortly afterwards. An eruption of anti-authoritarian, anti-patriarchal, anti-paternal claims, for equality in short, and the freedom of being. And that's precisely what Shimada came here to seek, then to find.

"I went back to Japan and cancelled the engagement. I wanted to settle in Paris." Not speaking a word of French – "it was very difficult, I couldn't even pronounce the word Mademoiselle" - she landed and set down in Montmartre, without a work visa.

When André Breton, leader of the Surrealists, theorised about "objective chance", he could have used the meeting of Shimada and Kenzo Takada at the bank as a convincing example. One of those chance meetings, like two creative compatriots who spontaneously act like magnets to one another. "He was a kind, intelligent and very generous man. He spoke a worst French than mine! I told him I was looking for a job to stay in Paris and he helped me." Thanks to him, she worked for a few months at Relations Textiles, the very first trends office launched in 1957 by Claude de Coux, for whom Kenzo himself worked before launching his own brand, Jungle Jap, in 1970. "He was fun, we went out every night. He even fell in love with my Parisian fiancé at the time."

"I saw two women get out of a Porsche with extraordinary attitude. It was Maimé Arnodin and Denise Fayolle, from Mafia. They looked like the women of the Nouvelle Vague."

She met Kenzo Takada at the bank, and the founders of Mafia coming out of a bakery, thumbing her nose at all the cynics who still roll their eyes when hearing clichés like "Paris is a village". "I saw a Porsche hurtle towards me and stop at the last moment. Maimé and Denise had incredible strengths of character." She followed them with her eyes, not really knowing who she had just met, but eventually realised that it was the famous "mafia" that her partner at the time, an advertising agent, used to talk about. "I went there without an appointment. I waited but I ended up meeting them. I wanted to work there." And they gave her a test: lingerie. "I'd never done that before, so I gave it a go. I said to myself that we use silk or nylon all the time for lingerie, so I wanted to have some fun by proposing a concept of pieces made entirely from towels." She drew up, and the idea went through. She remembers the offices, "the white floor, the white walls, the white table, just one red spot, the telephone," and a line of women, all women. "It reminded me of Takarazuka, the all-female Japanese theatre. And what beautiful women! I understood afterwards."

Fashion appealed to her; she designed it, conceived it, but hadn't made it yet. In 1970, on Maimé's recommendation, she joined Cacharel to take over the children's line, then the men's line and the "Fikipsi" line, the House's sister brand. Cacharel, founded in 1958 by the former mayor of Nîmes, was enjoying its glory days at the time. Cacharel became an experimental laboratory for creative virtuosos, including Agnès b., Emmanuelle Khanh, Dawei Sun and Azzedine Alaïa. "Azzedine was so funny, and a wonderful cook. He would do the sewing on the table, then we'd tidy up, put a tablecloth on the same table and have dinner with friends every night. Thierry Mugler was there too, in the early years." She remembers the creative genius: "He had an extraordinary technique. As soon as he touched the fabric, the volume changed." Shimada stayed with Cacharel for seven years, working during the day and enjoying the bustle of the Rue Sainte-Anne in the evenings, where the whole of Paris met. "I loved it, I was happy. I came here to discover the difference, the diversity. I didn't want to end up eating rice and seaweed every night, I wanted something different."

“For my first show, I only used striped men’s shirts to make a very tailored suit, a lined trench coat, a pencil skirt...”

The day she left Cacharel, she received a call from a Japanese financing company. “They wanted us to work together. I didn’t know what I wanted to do, so I asked for a year to think it over.” When she returned, she felt ready and the Junko Shimada company was created in 1982. “It was a great vote of confidence and I’m very grateful. I told them my story and they answered me that everyone came to see them to ask for work, whereas all I could talk about was love.”

Five people from her team at Cacharel followed her, the project was launched, and her first fashion show was held at the Pavillon Gabriel in Paris. The entire collection was made from men’s shirts. “Poplin and striped cottons were so sexy. The Japanese were worried that it wouldn’t sell, but the French press helped me a lot.” It was at this point that she found herself referred to as “the most Parisian of Japanese designers”, a term that would never leave her. “At that time, we had around forty models wearing two or three outfits per show... There were many, many models. Now we do a lot less, presenting between 25 and 30 looks per season.”

She remembers “the dresses we finished at the last second, or that we could create in a few minutes once the show had started. One season, I even did a show of wedding dresses only, rather than just one for the last silhouette.” Shimada opened her first boutique on rue Etienne Marcel in Paris in 1984. A second Parisian boutique was opened on rue Saint Florentin in 2001, where she now presents her collections. In 2020, she confirmed national recognition when designing the Japanese team’s suits for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, under her “Junko Shimada JS Homme” licence.

“I go back to Japan two or three times a year, because I don’t want to uproot myself. I left this country and separated from the father of my daughter, whom I raised alone. Like my mother, who raised me alone. She’s the one who gave me this idea of independence.” Junko Shimada is an unstoppable, indomitable force of character who has never stopped enjoying life with the utmost rigour. Of these seemingly lighthearted creative professions that we approach with absolute seriousness, and glee.

Reuben Attia

THE CREATIVE PROCESS, THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COLLECTION, THE STYLISM...
FOCUS GIVES A VOICE TO THE DESIGNERS AND KEY CREATIVE INDIVIDUALS OF
PARIS FASHION WEEK®.

focus

What Abra

WHEN ABRAHAM ORTUÑO PEREZ WAS DESIGNING ABRA'S FALL-WINTER 2025 COLLECTION, HE RECALLED MEMORIES OF HIS MOTHER SHOPPING AT A LOCAL BOUTIQUE IN HIS NATIVE ALICANTE, SPAIN. THE STORE SHE WOULD VISIT STOCKED CLOTHING BRANDS THAT SOLD THE DREAM OF FRENCH FASHION, WITH DRESSES 'IMPORTED FROM PARIS.' AROUND THE SAME TIME, JOHN GALLIANO AND THIERRY MUGLER WERE EMERGING AS THE MOST PROMINENT TALENTS OF THEIR GENERATION. FOR HIS LATEST OUTING – HIS THIRD READY-TO-WEAR EFFORT; HIS SECOND SEASON ON THE OFFICIAL CALENDAR – THE SPANISH DESIGNER DISTILLED SYMBOLS OF FRENCH FASHION FOR A MODERN AUDIENCE.

Did Next



HE TELEGRAPHED THESE IDEAS ABOUT PARISIAN STYLE WITH WIT AND CHARM. THERE ARE SOME RECOGNISABLE EMBLEMS OF BOURGEOIS STYLE IN SLIM BLOUSONS OVER SKINNY TROUSERS AND TRENCH COATS RENDERED AS TRUE TO ABRA: VISIBLY A TRENCH COAT IN FRONT, THE BACK ENTIRELY EXPOSED. PEREZ HYBRIDISED OTHER FAMILIAR GARMENTS LIKE LAYERED FAUX FUR JACKETS (MADE FROM RECYCLED NYLON) THAT ARE FUSED TOGETHER. HE REPLICATED THE EFFECT IN A FAUX FUR COAT DRAPED OVER THE SHOULDERS OF A LEATHER JACKET. ELSEWHERE IN THE COLLECTION, THERE WERE FLAVOURS OF COUTURE WITH ELEGANT SHAPES EMULATING THE SALUBRIOUS SALONS OF PARIS WITH EXPLOSIONS OF CASCADING RUFFLES IN CYAN, CERISE, AND SILVER LAMÉ AND EXTRAVAGANT FAUX FUR JACKETS SHAPED LIKE ROSEBUDS. FINALLY, HE PAID HOMAGE TO GALLIANO WITH A STRING OF NEWSPAPER PRINT DRESSES FROM CHRISTIAN DIOR'S FALL-WINTER 2000 COLLECTION.

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE US TO **KNOW ABOUT THE COLLECTION?**

I WANTED TO HAVE THIS FEELING OF CLOTHING IMPORTED FROM PARIS THAT IS IN BOUTIQUES AROUND THE WORLD. IN EVERY CITY, THERE IS A STORE THAT 'IMPORTS' CLOTHING FROM PARIS. I REMEMBER AS A CHILD MY MOTHER WOULD GO TO A BOUTIQUE IN [ALICANTE, SPAIN] WHERE THEY SELL YOU THE FANTASY OF CLOTHING MADE IN PARIS. THE COLLECTION HAS ELEMENTS OF PARIS IN THE 1980S OR '90S. FRENCH FASHION FOR ME WHEN I WAS A KID WAS JOHN GALLIANO AND THIERRY MUGLER.

I WOULDN'T SAY THIS IS A HOMAGE – IT'S TOO SOON TO CALL IT THAT – BUT IT'S ALSO GOT SOME OF MY GREATEST HITS FROM PREVIOUS COLLECTIONS THAT ARE MORE ELEVATED. MY FIRST COLLECTION HAD BARBIE PROM DRESSES WITH SEQUINS AND IT'S COME BACK NOW IN A MORE MATURE, MORE WEARABLE, AND MORE SOPHISTICATED WAY, BUT STILL REMINDING YOU OF THE BRAND'S BEGINNINGS.

HOW WOULD YOU CHART ABRA'S GROWTH FROM WHEN **YOU FIRST STARTED TO NOW?**

WHEN I WAS A TEENAGER, I WAS A BIG FAN OF FASHION. I WAS COLLECTING CLOTHING FROM NICOLAS GHESQUIÈRE'S BALENCIAGA, BUT I COULD NEVER WEAR THE OUTFIT WITH BALENCIAGA SHOES, BECAUSE MY FEET WERE BIGGER THAN A SIZE 42; SO I STARTED TO CREATE FOOTWEAR FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE LIKE ME AND ALWAYS DREAMING OF FASHION. IT'S FIVE YEARS ON AND THERE IS STILL NOBODY DOING BIGGER HEELS AT LUXURY BRANDS. I STARTED ABRA AS A BRAND FOR EVERYONE, THAT EVERYONE CAN WEAR AND FIT INTO. NOW, WITH THE READY-TO-WEAR, I HOPE PEOPLE CAN COME TO US AND NOT WORRY ABOUT NOT BEING ABLE TO FIT INTO THEM. IT'S ALL ABOUT INCLUSIVE SIZING AND INDIVIDUALISM. WE ARE UNIQUE AND I NEVER LOOK AT OTHER PEOPLE'S WORK, BECAUSE I THINK PEOPLE WANT MY POINT OF VIEW.

DO YOU EVER **CONSIDER WIDER INDUSTRY TRENDS?**

MY BRAND IS NOT ABOUT QUIET LUXURY. I'M HEARING PEOPLE TALK ABOUT ENTERING A NEW ERA OF QUIET LUXURY. WE WANTED TO START THINKING ABOUT THE OPPOSITE OF QUIET LUXURY. WHAT ARE THE MATERIALS OF NOT QUIET LUXURY? [IN THIS COLLECTION] WE WENT THERE: WE ARE USING LAMÉ IN PINK AND SILVER; FAUX FUR MADE FROM NYLON. THERE ARE RUFFLES AND ICONIC BAGS AND SHOES WITH NEW ANIMATIONS.

HOW DO YOU SEE **YOUR ROLE AS A FASHION DESIGNER?**

I ALWAYS TRY TO INNOVATE AND FIND SOMETHING NEW. WHAT'S HAPPENED IS THAT A LOT OF PEOPLE ARE TRYING TO FIT INTO WHAT'S GOING TO SELL. IT'S HARDER FOR HUNDREDS OF BRANDS COMPETING IN THE MARKET WITH THE SAME PRODUCT. WHAT WE DO IS QUITE EASY: IF YOU LIKE IT, YOU'RE GOING TO GO STRAIGHT FOR IT BECAUSE IT'S UNIQUE. FOR EXAMPLE, WE CREATED A BALLERINA SNEAKER AND IT'S ALL OVER THE STREETS. YOU COME TO ABRA BECAUSE WE'RE THE FIRST ONES TO DO IT. NOW, IT SEEMS EVERYBODY IS TRYING TO HAVE THEIR VERSION.

WHEN I CREATED ABRA, I DIDN'T WANT TO CREATE A MASSIVE EMPIRE. YOU CAN SURVIVE AS A BRAND HAVING A SMALLER VISION OF WHAT YOU WANT TO DO WITH YOUR COMPANY. IT'S VERY CHARMING TO HAVE A BRAND THAT IS KIND OF HARD TO GET. PEOPLE COME TO US TO BE UNIQUE, THEY DON'T COME TO BE LIKE THE MASSES. I WANT TO KEEP THIS AS SMALL AND SPECIAL FOR AS LONG AS I CAN.

Marie-Adam Leenaerdt

BORN IN BRUSSELS, MARIE-ADAM LEENAERDT FOUNDED HER BRAND IN 2022. THE REST UNFOLDED RATHER QUICKLY, AND HER STYLE ASSERTS ITSELF THROUGH A CONCEPTUAL AND ARTISANAL POINT OF VIEW. "I LIKE TO SEE A PRACTICAL SIDE TO CLOTHING, WHILE QUESTIONING ITS STATUS AND HIJACKING ITS CODES."



HOW HAVE YOU **APPROACHED THIS SEASON?**

IT'S OUR FIFTH. WE'RE STARTING TO ACQUIRE SOME REFLEXES, BUT AT THE SAME TIME, THERE IS MORE AT STAKE. YOU HAVE TO BALANCE CREATION, PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION. THE BRAND IS PRESENT IN AROUND 20 RETAIL LOCATIONS. WE HAVE RESTRUCTURED ALL OUR LOGISTICS, WHICH ARE NOW HANDLED IN-HOUSE. THE TEAM REMAINS FAIRLY SMALL, LET'S SAY TWO-AND-A-HALF OF US, EVEN THOUGH THE PATTERN MAKER AND THE PROTOTYPING STUDIO ARE LOCATED OFF-SITE, THIRTY MINUTES FROM BRUSSELS. THIS COLLECTION IS PERHAPS THE MOST COMPLICATED. EVERYTHING STARTS TO OVERLAP.

WHAT IS YOUR **MAIN INSPIRATION?**

I REALISED THAT, FOR BUYERS, WE HAD TO PUSH THIS MULTI-FUNCTIONALITY OF CLOTHING. A SKIRT CAN BE REVERSIBLE, BECOME A DRESS. I HAD TO SHOW THE VERSATILITY OF WHAT COULD BE WORN, AND THE REMOVABLE GARMENT IS ONE OF MY OBSESSIONS. I WORKED WITH THE IDEA OF AN ARCHETYPE, A BASIS THAT CAN BE WRAPPED TO ADD DETAIL, COLOUR AND A FINAL LOOK. IT'S AN INTERPLAY BETWEEN THE BASE OF THE GARMENT AND WHAT COVERS IT.

HOW DO YOU EXTEND **THIS REFLECTION** ON THE STATUS OF CLOTHING?

WITH FASHION, WE HAVE LOST THE SENSE OF TIME THAT EXISTS IN FURNITURE AND DESIGN, FOR EXAMPLE. IT IS IMPORTANT TO THINK ABOUT A COAT IN THE SAME WAY AS A CHAIR THAT YOU WANT TO KEEP. IT IS IMPORTANT TO BE THERE EVERY SIX MONTHS, BUT DO WE NEED TO REINVENT OURSELVES EVERY SIX MONTHS? WE'RE WORKING ON THE PRINCIPLE OF A DOUBLE SHOW DONE DIFFERENTLY, TO SHOW THAT IT DOESN'T MATTER IF YOU SEE MORE OF THE SAME THING AGAIN.

WHY **GALERIE PARADIS?**

IT ONLY SELLS DESIGNER FURNITURE, SO IN THE SCENOGRAPHY, WE CONTRAST THESE RENTAL CHAIRS WITH DESIGNER CHAIRS, AND THE MANNEQUINS WANDER AROUND IN THE CENTRE.

WHY **GREY FELT?**

IT'S THE BASE, THE STRUCTURE, THE FRAMEWORK OF THE GARMENT. ON TOP, THERE'S A COVER THAT CREATES THE GARMENT, REVEALING IT IN SILK OR WOOL. YOU CAN WEAR THE GARMENT WITH THIS STRUCTURE, OR NOT: WITHOUT REINFORCEMENT, WITHOUT HORSEHAIR, WITHOUT EPAULETTES, THE SUIT BECOMES LIKE A WAISTCOAT. I AM INTERESTED IN THIS INTERPLAY BETWEEN CARCASS AND FLUIDITY.

AND THE **COLOURS?**

THEY ARE NEUTRAL. IT'S A BEIGE TRENCH COAT, BLACK SUITS, NAVY SUITS. I WANTED US TO FOCUS ON THE CUT, THE VOLUMES. I COLLECTED SOME OLD TABLECLOTHS USED TO COVER RENTED FURNITURE AND MADE DRESSES OUT OF THEM.

WHAT'S THE MOST **IMPORTANT THING FOR YOU IN 2025?**

REINFORCING WHOLESALÉ, WHICH ISN'T SO EASY WHEN IT COMES TO GETTING A MESSAGE ACROSS. YOU NEED AN INSTRUCTION MANUAL, AND THE BRAND ISN'T KNOWN FOR THAT YET. WE ARE CURRENTLY DEVELOPING THE WEBSITE, WHICH WILL BE OPERATIONAL IN APRIL. THIS PLATFORM WILL ALSO BE EDUCATIONAL, TO EXPLAIN THE ORIGIN OF A PIECE, SUCH AS A V-NECK, ROUND-NECK AND TURTLENECK JUMPER...

Mossi Traoré

WHEN PREPARING A COLLECTION, MOSSI TRAORÉ WORKS FROM TWO DISTINCT LOCATIONS: ONE IS ON THE SECOND FLOOR OF THE SOCIO CULTURAL CENTRE AT THE CITÉ DES HAUTES NOUËS IN VILLIERS-SUR-MARNE, A PARISIAN SUBURB WHERE HE HAS LIVED SINCE HE WAS SIX; WHILE THE OTHER IS IN THE 13TH ARRONDISSEMENT OF PARIS. HE WORKS CLOSELY WITH HIS TEAM, DRIVEN BY A SHARED PASSION FOR PLEATS AND A RENEWED TRIBUTE TO MADAME GRÈS FROM SEASON TO SEASON. HE EVEN CREATED A SCHOOL, THE "ATELIERS ALIX," BEFORE REVIVING HIS BRAND IN 2019. "THAT'S WHEN THINGS GOT SERIOUS." TIME HAS PASSED, AND HIS VISION HAS BECOME CLEARER, STRENGTHENED BY HIS UNWAVERING DEDICATION. IN SEPTEMBER LAST YEAR, CHANEL SIGNED AN EXCLUSIVE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT WITH ATELIERS ALIX. THE SCHOOL, WHICH TRAINS "HANDS" IN THE TRADES AND TECHNIQUES OF COUTURE, IS CELEBRATING ITS 10TH ANNIVERSARY THIS YEAR. THE ADVENTURE CONTINUES FOR THIS SON OF A DUSTMAN, WHO HAS NEVER STOPPED BELIEVING IN AN IDEAL TIED TO HIS PROFESSION AND THE PURSUIT OF BEAUTY. MOSSI TRAORÉ PRESENTS HIS READY-TO-WEAR COLLECTION ON MARCH 4.

"My Couture is Me"



HOW WOULD YOU **DEFINE THIS NEW COLLECTION?**

I'M REALLY REPOSITIONING THE BRAND. THE IDEA IS TO OFFER A WARDROBE THAT EMBODIES READY-TO-WEAR WITH COUTURE, CONTEMPORARY AND WEARABLE, EVERYDAY TOUCHES.

WHICH **MEANS?**

SILHOUETTES WITH ARCHITECTURAL ASYMMETRY. PLEATING, DRAPING, LAYERING, BLACK AND WHITE. I'VE CREATED NEW 'EMOTIONAL' PRINTS. A YEAR AGO, I EXPERIMENTED WITH MARKERS AND PENCIL ON PAPER; I TOOK THEM OUT OF THE RUBBISH TO CREATE A PRINT. NOW I'M WORKING IT ON REVERSIBLE KNITS. THE ALL-OVER OF THE EARLY DAYS IS BECOMING MORE REFINED. I'M GETTING BACK INTO THE KNOTTING GAME, USING THE CLOTH FROM PARASOLS THAT I SAW IN MARSEILLE TO MAKE DRESSES, COATS AND THICK WOOLLEN JUMPERS.

YOUR SCHOOL, **LES ATELIERS ALIX**, HAS JUST SIGNED A PARTNERSHIP WITH **CHANEL**. WHAT MATTERS MOST TO YOU TODAY?

CHANEL RECRUITED YOUNG PEOPLE WHOM WE TRAINED, WHO PROVED THEIR WORTH. THIS EXCLUSIVE PARTNERSHIP ENABLES US TO SUPPORT THE SCHOOL AND RECRUIT POTENTIAL TALENT. THIS QUEST FOR EXCELLENCE IS PRESENT IN THE BRAND'S WARDROBE, AS MUCH AS IN ITS TRANSMISSION.

WHAT DOES THIS YEAR MARK AS A **TURNING POINT FOR YOU?**

I'VE CREATED A LOT OF TRIBUTES, BUT FOR THE LAST THREE SEASONS I'VE BEEN REFOCUSING ON THIS QUEST FOR EXCELLENCE. EVERYTHING IS MADE IN FRANCE. WE WANT TO PROMOTE CRAFTSMANSHIP. IT'S EASY TO FALL INTO CLICHÉS AND THINK THAT WE'RE INTO STREETWEAR AND OVERSIZED CLOTHING. I WANT TO SHOW THAT I'M A BRAND BETWEEN PARIS AND THE SUBURBS. I'M A FAN OF MARGIELA, YAMAMOTO AND MIYAKE. AND I'M AN ADMIRER OF CHANEL AND HERMÈS, WHICH ARE FOUNDED ON TRADITIONAL CRAFTSMANSHIP. I WANT TO CREATE BEAUTIFUL THINGS. AND TO SHARE EMOTION. I LIKE TO GO WHERE I'M NOT EXPECTED. OFFERING BEAUTIFUL WORK MEANS BREAKING AWAY FROM UNIFORMITY. IT'S MY WAY OF BEING REBELLIOUS: GOING FOR WHAT I BELIEVE IN. I'D LIKE TO PAY TRIBUTE TO THE WOMAN WHO HELPED ME, MADAME THOMAS, THE BEST CRAFTSWOMAN IN FRANCE, WHO LEARNED HAUTE COUTURE AT BALENCIAGA, THEN AT MADAME GRÈS, BEFORE GOING ON TO TEACH. WHEN I MET THIS WOMAN, I MET COUTURE. MY WORK IS ALSO LINKED TO MY PASSION FOR LEE BUL, A KOREAN ARTIST. THANKS TO THEM, I'VE FOUND MY WAY.

WHAT IS THE **MOST IMPORTANT THING FOR YOU** TODAY?

INNOVATING BASED ON A PRECISE KNOWLEDGE OF TECHNIQUES. DEVELOPING A DECONSTRUCTED PLEAT, ONE THAT DOESN'T READ FLAT BUT IS INSPIRED BY VOLUME. NOT TO GO IN ALL DIRECTIONS. KEEP YOUR OBSESSIONS IN MIND.



Anrealage

KUNIHICO MORINAGA, BORN IN TOKYO IN 1980, IS THE VISIONARY DESIGNER BEHIND ANREALAGE, A BRAND HE FOUNDED IN 2003. KNOWN FOR MERGING CRAFTSMANSHIP WITH TECHNOLOGY, HIS AVANT-GARDE DESIGNS DEBUTED AT PARIS FASHION WEEK® IN 2014. A FINALIST FOR THE LVMH PRIZE IN 2019, HE DESIGNED UNIFORMS FOR JAPAN'S PAVILION AT EXPO 2020 IN DUBAI AND COSTUMES FOR BEYONCÉ'S WORLD TOUR IN 2023. HIS INNOVATIVE USE OF PHOTOCROMIC FABRICS AND LIGHT-SENSITIVE TEXTILES CONTINUES TO PUSH THE BOUNDARIES OF FASHION.



WHERE DO YOU LOOK FOR **NEW IDEAS OR VOICES IN FASHION?**

MY INSPIRATION OFTEN COMES FROM OUTSIDE THE TRADITIONAL FASHION WORLD. I FIND NEW IDEAS IN SCIENCE, CHEMISTRY, PHYSICS, SPACE EXPLORATION, BIOLOGY, EVERYDAY LIFE, AND EVEN THE WAY PEOPLE PERCEIVE THE WORLD. I BELIEVE EVERY FIELD HOLDS SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY, AND DISCOVERING THOSE HIDDEN WONDERS CAN SPARK THE BEGINNING OF A NEW COLLECTION. BY EXPLORING THESE DIVERSE REALMS OF KNOWLEDGE, I CONTINUALLY PUSH THE BOUNDARIES OF WHAT FASHION CAN BE AND CREATE SOMETHING TRULY ORIGINAL.

IN WHICH WAYS MIGHT **FASHION CREATIVITY EFFECTIVELY DRIVE GROWTH?**

FASHION CREATIVITY DRIVES GROWTH BY CONTINUOUSLY EMBRACING INNOVATION AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES. AT ANREALAGE, WE BELIEVE IT'S CRUCIAL TO CONNECT FASHION WITH RAPIDLY EVOLVING TECH. BY APPLYING CUTTING-EDGE TECHNOLOGIES THAT HAVEN'T BEEN USED IN CLOTHING BEFORE, WE CAN TRANSFORM HOW PEOPLE PERCEIVE FASHION AND EXPAND WHAT'S POSSIBLE. THIS FRESH APPROACH NOT ONLY SETS US APART BUT ALSO OPENS UP NEW MARKETS AND OPPORTUNITIES. IN ESSENCE, CREATIVITY FUELS PROGRESS BY PUSHING BOUNDARIES AND OFFERING PEOPLE SOMETHING GENUINELY NOVEL AND EXCITING.

HOW ESSENTIAL IS **HERITAGE** AND/OR A **DISTINCTIVE IDENTITY IN CONTRIBUTING TO A BRAND'S SUCCESS?**

A STRONG HERITAGE AND DISTINCTIVE IDENTITY ARE VITAL TO A BRAND'S SUCCESS, BUT THEY MUST BE BALANCED WITH CONSTANT INNOVATION. FOR ANREALAGE, OUR UNIQUE IDENTITY IS THE FOUNDATION THAT MAKES US INDEPENDENT AND RECOGNISABLE. AT THE SAME TIME, WE BELIEVE IN CONTINUOUSLY CHALLENGING OURSELVES WITH NEW IDEAS AND TECHNOLOGIES RATHER THAN RESTING ON PAST ACHIEVEMENTS. THIS BALANCE ENSURES WE REMAIN TRUE TO OUR ROOTS WHILE STAYING FREE TO EXPLORE UNCHARTED TERRITORIES. IN SHORT, HERITAGE GIVES US CREDIBILITY AND CHARACTER; BUT OUR WILLINGNESS TO EVOLVE KEEPS THE BRAND FRESH AND RELEVANT.

WHAT **SURPRISES YOU ABOUT THE INDUSTRY** IN 2025?

IN 2025, I'M MOST SURPRISED BY HOW SEAMLESSLY TECHNOLOGY HAS INTEGRATED INTO THE FASHION INDUSTRY. THE ARRIVAL OF DEVICES LIKE APPLE VISION PRO HAS BLURRED THE LINE BETWEEN REAL-WORLD FASHION SHOWS AND VIRTUAL EXPERIENCES. IT'S ASTONISHING TO WITNESS RUNWAY PRESENTATIONS WHERE PHYSICAL GARMENTS AND DIGITAL VISUALS COEXIST AND COMPLEMENT EACH OTHER IN REAL TIME. THIS MIXED-REALITY APPROACH TO SHOWCASING FASHION WAS ALMOST UNIMAGINABLE A FEW YEARS AGO. IT SHOWS THAT THE INDUSTRY HAS EVOLVED IN EXTRAORDINARY WAYS, MERGING THE TANGIBLE AND VIRTUAL LIKE NEVER BEFORE.

WHO OR WHAT IS GENERATING **THE GREATEST INFLUENCE IN FASHION TODAY?**

INTERESTINGLY, THE GREATEST INFLUENCE IN FASHION TODAY ISN'T A TRADITIONAL DESIGNER OR MAGAZINE, BUT A LEADER FROM THE TECH WORLD. FOR EXAMPLE, SAM ALTMAN, THROUGH HIS WORK IN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AS CO-FOUNDER OF OPEN AI, IS HAVING A HUGE IMPACT ON CREATIVE INDUSTRIES, INCLUDING FASHION. THE RISE OF AI TOOLS AND INNOVATIONS CHAMPIONED BY VISIONARIES LIKE HIM ARE CHANGING HOW DESIGNERS CREATE, HOW TRENDS ARE FORECASTED, AND HOW BRANDS ENGAGE WITH CONSUMERS. IN MANY WAYS, TECHNOLOGY LEADERS ARE NOW SETTING THE STAGE FOR FASHION'S FUTURE BY ENABLING NEW DESIGN METHODS AND EXPERIENCES WE COULDN'T IMAGINE BEFORE.

HOW DO YOU THINK **YOUR BRAND CAN SPARK AND SUSTAIN DESIRE** WITH **SO MUCH ELSE GOING ON IN THE WORLD?**

IN A WORLD OVERFLOWING WITH DISTRACTIONS, OUR BRAND SPARKS AND SUSTAINS DESIRE BY ENGAGING PEOPLE, BOTH IN THE REAL WORLD AND IN DIGITAL SPACES. WE RECOGNISE THAT MANY INDIVIDUALS NOW EXPRESS THEMSELVES NOT ONLY THROUGH PHYSICAL CLOTHES BUT ALSO THROUGH THEIR AVATARS IN GAMES AND IN THE METAVERSE. JUST LIKE REAL PEOPLE, THESE DIGITAL PERSONAS HAVE UNIQUE IDENTITIES AND CRAVE FASHION THAT REFLECTS WHO THEY ARE. BY CREATING INNOVATIVE, INTANGIBLE DIGITAL FASHION ALONGSIDE OUR PHYSICAL COLLECTIONS, WE CATER TO THIS DUAL REALITY. THIS APPROACH KEEPS THE BRAND RELEVANT AND EXCITING, WHILE OFFERING MEANINGFUL FASHION EXPERIENCES WHETHER YOU'RE DRESSING YOURSELF OR YOUR VIRTUAL AVATAR – AND IT EVEN CONTRIBUTES TO A MORE SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS MODEL BY EXPLORING NON-PHYSICAL CREATIVITY.

THERE SEEMS TO BE MORE **OVERLAP BETWEEN FASHION/ENTERTAINMENT AND FASHION/SPORTS** THAN EVER. THOUGHTS?

TODAY, THE BOUNDARIES BETWEEN FASHION AND OTHER CULTURAL SPHERES SUCH AS ENTERTAINMENT AND SPORTS ARE DISSOLVING MORE THAN EVER. SPORTS, FOR EXAMPLE, WERE NOT ORIGINALLY CONSIDERED PART OF HIGH FASHION, YET ATHLETIC WEAR EVENTUALLY EVOLVED INTO A MAJOR FASHION CATEGORY AND EVEN LED TO LUXURY COLLABORATIONS. I BELIEVE WE'LL CONTINUE TO SEE SUCH TRANSFORMATIONS IN NEW AREAS, AND THE ONE I FIND ESPECIALLY PROMISING IS GAMING. GAMES LIKE ROBLOX ARE ALREADY MERGING WITH FASHION BRANDS, AND I SENSE THAT THE DAY WHEN GAMING ITSELF BECOMES AN INTEGRAL PART OF FASHION CULTURE IS NOT FAR AWAY. THIS KIND OF CONVERGENCE CREATES EXCITING NEW WAYS FOR PEOPLE TO EXPERIENCE STYLE, WHETHER THEY'RE ON THE RUNWAY, IN A STADIUM, OR IN A VIRTUAL WORLD.



SPHERE Paris Fashion Week® Showroom

BY LAURENCE BENAÏM

SINCE JANUARY 2020, THE FHCM HAS BEEN OPERATING, WITH THE SUPPORT OF DEFI AND L'ORÉAL PARIS, SPHERE PARIS FASHION WEEK® SHOWROOM. JOIN AND DISCOVER THE COLLECTIONS OF TEN DESIGNERS AT THE PALAIS DE TOKYO FROM MARCH 5TH TO 11TH FOR A WINTER UNDER THE SUN OF INSPIRATION AND COLOUR.

THE SELECTION INCLUDES LUCILLE THIEVRE, MAÎTREPIERRE, PAOLINA RUSSO AND SEVALI AMONG OTHERS. WITH CHARLES DE VILMORIN, PRINT HAS BECOME A NEO-EXPRESSIONIST HAND-DRAWN SIGNATURE TOTEM. WITH FLORENTINA LEITNER, THE CALL TO DREAM IS SUBLIMATED BY A PALETTE OF ECO-FRIENDLY FLOWERS. THE TITLE "2 COOL FOR SCHOOL" HERALDS THIS WINTER RECREATION, INSPIRED BY THE DANDADAN SERIES, A MANGA WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY YUKINOBU TATSU. TO BELIEVE IN GHOSTS OR EXTRATERRESTRIALS: THAT IS THE QUESTION...

"AN IMAGINARY GARDEN" IS HOW LORASONNEY, A FINALIST AT THE HYÈRES FESTIVAL IN 2022 AND WINNER OF THE PRIX AMI X IFM 2023, DEFINES HER TERRITORY OF INSPIRATION. "MY CREATIONS COME FROM MY CHILDHOOD IN THE JURA REGION, SURROUNDED BY PINE FORESTS, LAKES, PONDS AND, OF COURSE, THE GARDEN!" SPHERE IS MORE THAN EVER A MEETING POINT FOR IMAGINATION AND TECHNIQUE: "I'M DEVELOPING A COMPLETE WARDROBE OF COLOURFUL, OPTIMISTIC ACCESSORIES AND CLOTHING, COMBINING MY VERY UTILITARIAN INSPIRATIONS WITH MY OBSESSION FOR MATERIALS. IT'S LIKE A SECOND SKIN: I EXPLORE THE IDEA OF CAMOUFLAGING, PROTECTING, MAKING WATERPROOF... OR, THE OPPOSITE, DIVERTING THESE FUNCTIONS," SHE EXPLAINS.

EVEN THE EXTREME COLD IS A PRETEXT FOR PLAYFUL CHALLENGES. WHEREAS SONNEY IMAGINED A MOHAIR TRENCH COAT THAT WAS "AS LIGHT AS A CLOUD," VICTOR WEIN-SANTO, AT SPHERE FOR THE SECOND TIME, CREATED A WARDROBE BASED ON HIS PREVIOUS SHOW, CALLED "LES GIVRÉES" (THE WORD REFERS TO 'FROSTED'). "DURING THE SHOW, I LIKE TO STAGE THE NARRATIVE" HE SAYS. IN THE SHOWROOM, THE THEME FADES AWAY, OFFERING A MORE SEDATE VIEW OF THE BRAND. HENCE THIS RANGE OF BRUSHED IMITATION LEATHER THAT EVOKES FROST, AND QUILTED PIECES, "WITH QUILTING TO GIVE THE IDEA OF A DUVET."

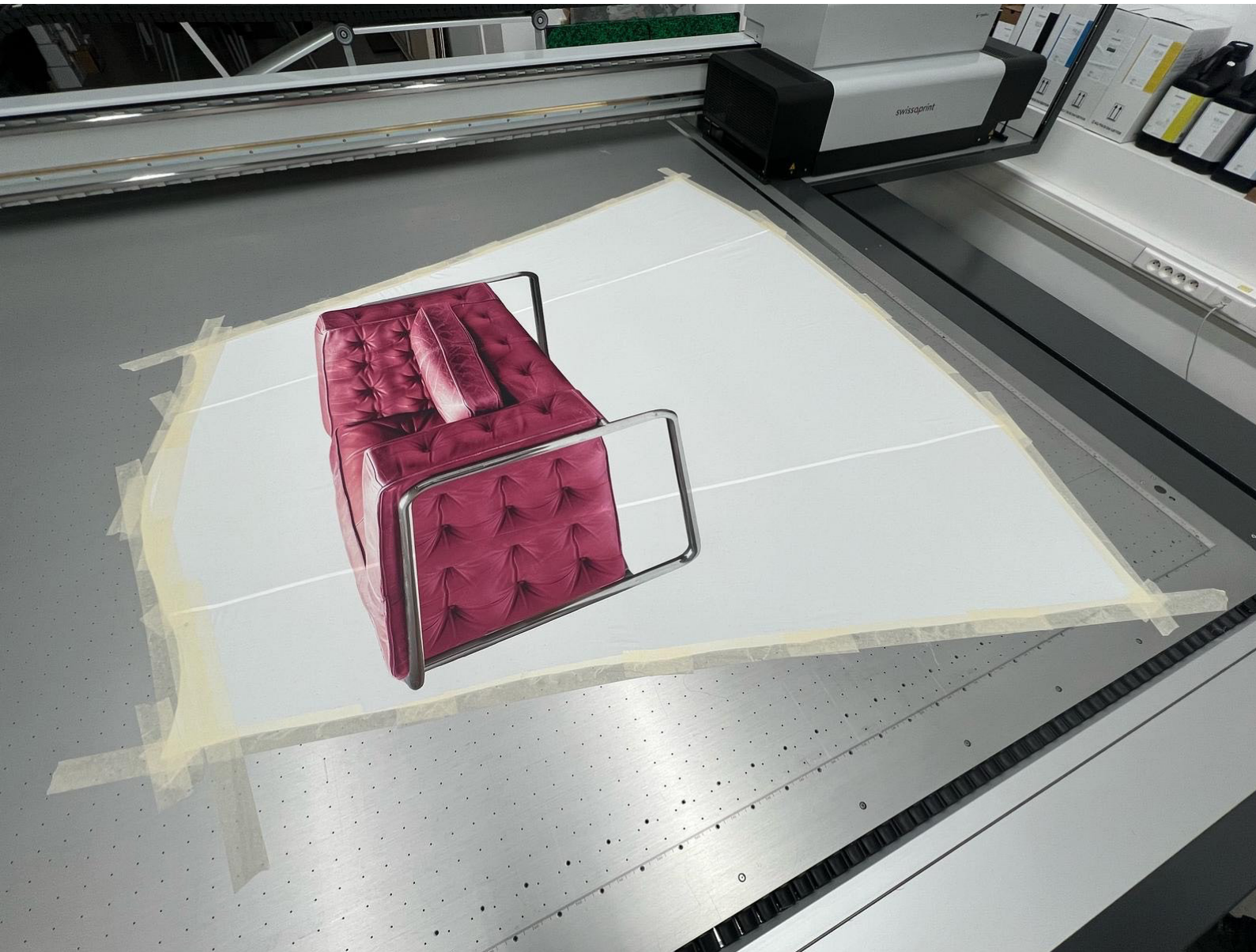
FOR THE FIRST TIME, SPHERE IS SHOWCASING THE WORK OF VAUTRAIT, AN EXCEPTIONAL TALENT WHO HAS HAD A VERY PROMISING START, AND WHOSE MASTERY OF CUTTING, DRAPING AND TAILORING OPENS UP A WHOLE NEW WORLD OF POSSIBILITIES. LAST SEPTEMBER, THE BRAND WAS INCLUDED IN THE OFFICIAL CALENDAR OF PARIS FASHION WEEK®, AROUND THE SAME TIME IT WAS A SEMI-FINALIST FOR THE LVMH PRIZE. JONATHAN CARMEL, THE DESIGNER, HAS A TIMELY PERSPECTIVE. "FASHION IS AT ODDS WITH TECHNOLOGY OR SCIENCE. IT IS LIKE AN AGENT CARRYING A SECRET IN A SUITCASE, A SECRET TO HE CANNOT ACCESS," HE SAYS. FASHION AND KNOW-HOW AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO AI? NO DOUBT. "WHEN I CREATED THIS COLLECTION, I REALISED THAT THERE WAS NO END. MAYBE THAT'S WHY ONE COLLECTION ALWAYS FOLLOWS ANOTHER – THERE'S NEVER A FINISH LINE, NEVER," HE ADDS.

THE NARRATIVE IS BACK IN FASHION, BOOSTED BY "MEMORY OF THE FUTURE," THE THEME CHOSEN BY MARCO RAMBALDI: "SOMETIMES YOU CROCHET, YOU SKIP A STITCH, YOU HAVE TO UNDO EVERYTHING, AND YOU FEEL LIKE YOU'RE HEARING YOUR GRANDMOTHER'S LAUGHTER. SOMETIMES YOU DON'T REALLY LIKE THE DRESS, BUT YOU REMEMBER WHO YOU BOUGHT IT WITH, AND WHEN YOU WEAR IT, YOU SMILE AT THE MIRROR. SOMETIMES IT SEEMS LIKE NO ONE UNDERSTANDS HOW YOU FEEL, EXCEPT FOR THAT ONE PERSON WHOSE NUMBER YOU CAN RECITE BY HEART. AND SOMETIMES YOU CRY ALONE IN THE CAR, SMILING, WHILE THE RADIO PLAYS THE FIRST SONG YOU EVER SANG TOGETHER. THIS FW25 COLLECTION IS DEDICATED TO YOU."



A Laboratory of Expressions

Julie Kegels Dresses for Success



BY PAUL MCLAUHLAN

THE ADAGE GOES: DRESS FOR THE JOB YOU WANT. IT'S WHAT JULIE KEGELS INFERRED FROM READING EXECUTIVE STYLE: ACHIEVING SUCCESS THROUGH GOOD TASTE AND DESIGN BY JUDITH PRICE. THIS WINDOW INTO THE WORLDS OF AESTHETES SUCH AS ESTEE LAUDER AND HALSTON IN THEIR SWANKY OFFICES BRIMS WITH THE MOST COVETABLE MATERIAL OBJECTS, WHETHER MARCEL BREUER CHAIRS OR PLUSH RED CARPETS. IN THE SEMINAL 1980 BOOK, THE AUTHOR IMPLIES THAT THE SPLENDOR OF ONE'S SURROUNDINGS CAN COMMUNICATE THEIR GOOD TASTE. OF COURSE, THE BELGIAN DESIGNER INTERPRETED THE TEXT THROUGH A TONGUE-IN-CHEEK LENS, INTERROGATING CODES OF CLASS AND STYLE RATHER THAN COMPLYING WITH WHAT CONSTITUTES IT.

IN A FEW SHORT SEASONS, KEGEL HAS BECOME AN ARBITER OF TASTE IN HER OWN RIGHT. THE SHOW OPENS WITH A MODEL IN LINGERIE WHO STARTS DRESSING HERSELF IN A WHITE SHIRT, LONG TROUSERS, AND A V-NECK SWEATER: OFFICE APPROPRIATENESS, THE JULIE KEGELS WAY. SHE EXPANDED ON THE UPMARKET LIFESTYLE BY LISTING OFF SOME FAMILIAR TROPES LIKE TAILORING AND HUNTING JACKETS. OTHER LOOKS TAKE CUES FROM FURNITURE DESIGN SUCH AS WOOD PANELS PRINTED ON LACQUERED LEATHER, SILK, AND POPLIN; SOME LEATHER PIECES RESEMBLE TUFTED CUSHIONS. T-SHIRTS PRINTED WITH PHOTOGRAPHS OF CHAIRS, MADE BY THE DESIGNER'S FRIENDS WHO WORK IN THE FURNITURE INDUSTRY, ARE COMMERCIAL GRABS BUT PLAYFUL NEVERTHELESS. THE CLOSING LOOK RECALLS THE OPENING WITH THE SAME WHITE SHIRT, LONG TROUSERS, AND SIMPLE V-NECK SWEATER. THIS TIME, THEY ARE SPLICED TOGETHER AS A TRACKSUIT, UPENDING CLICHED POWER DRESSING. DRESSING FOR SUCCESS IS EASY, AFTER ALL.

"IT WAS ABOUT THE ILLUSION OF SUCCESS IN HOW STYLE AND DESIGN CAN SHAPE PERCEPTION," SAID THE DESIGNER ON A VIDEO CALL FROM HER ANTWERP STUDIO.

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE US **TO KNOW ABOUT THE COLLECTION?**

THE NAME OF THE COLLECTION IS 'DRESS CODE.' THE INSPIRATION COMES FROM JUDITH PRICE'S BOOK EXECUTIVE STYLE: ACHIEVING SUCCESS THROUGH GOOD TASTE AND DESIGN FROM THE 1980S. THE BOOK APPEALED TO ME BECAUSE SHE EXPLAINS HOW TO BECOME SUCCESSFUL BY PUTTING THE RIGHT MATERIALS TOGETHER [ALONG WITH] THE RIGHT FURNITURE. SHE DESCRIBES IT IN SUCH A SIMPLE WAY THAT I FOUND IT FUNNY. IT'S LIKE, ACHIEVING SUCCESS IS ACTUALLY AS SIMPLE AS THAT. SO I RESEARCHED FURNITURE AND GARMENTS LIKE SUITS, HUNTING JACKETS, SHOULDER PADS, AND POINTY SHOES – HOW THEY COMMUNICATE A VERY POWERFUL LOOK.

WHERE DO YOU LOOK FOR **INSPIRATION?**

INSPIRATION CAN COME FROM ANYWHERE AND IT CAN COME AT ANY PLACE OR TIME. BUT THIS SEASON, IT WAS THE BOOK. ANOTHER INITIAL POINT FOR THIS COLLECTION WAS A CONVERSATION WITH MY FRIEND; WE ALWAYS TALK AND CHALLENGE EACH OTHER WITH OUR CONVERSATIONS. IT HELPS ME GET FURTHER AND FURTHER INTO THE PROCESS [OF DESIGN].

HOW DO YOU THINK YOUR BRAND CAN **SPARK DESIRE** WHEN THERE IS **SO MUCH HAPPENING IN THE WORLD?**

TODAY, IT'S IMPORTANT TO BE AUTHENTIC BECAUSE THERE IS, INDEED, A LOT GOING ON. YOU HAVE TO REMAIN TRUE TO YOUR HEART AND WORK WITH PASSION; BECAUSE OTHERWISE, IT'S A BORING BRAND.

WHAT DEFINES **ELEGANCE** IN A **CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT?**

I FIND SOMEONE ELEGANT WHEN THEY ARE TRUE TO THEMSELVES. WHEN THEY ARE IN THEIR MOST NATURAL STATE, THEY FEEL THEY ARE CONFIDENT WITH HOW THEY ARE, AND THEY DON'T CARE ABOUT WHAT PEOPLE ARE THINKING OF THEM.

FROM YOUR FIRST COLLECTION TO NOW, WHAT ARE THE **BIGGEST LEARNINGS** YOU HAVE TAKEN FROM YOUR EXPERIENCE?

YOU CAN'T DO EVERYTHING. IT'S A LOT TO HAVE A FASHION BRAND AND TO CONTROL EVERY ASPECT OF IT. YOU CAN DO EVERYTHING WELL AND IF YOU TRUST PEOPLE WHO CAN DO CERTAIN PARTS FOR YOU, YOU CAN DO IT BETTER. I LEARNED THAT MY MAIN FOCUS IS CREATIVITY, AND I'M SUPER LUCKY TO HAVE PEOPLE BESIDE ME THAT CAN SUPPORT ME WITH EVERYTHING ELSE. I LIKE SPENDING HOURS ON GARMENTS AND TRYING TO GIVE THEM SOUL AND MEANING.

Archives by Rabanne

the recomposed future

BY LAURENCE BENAÏM
CLÉMENT MIGEON, HEAD OF HERITAGE AND ARCHIVES.



WHAT DOES THE **RABANNE HERITAGE REPRESENT TODAY IN TERMS OF COLLECTIONS?**

RABANNE'S HERITAGE AND ARCHIVES DEPARTMENT HOUSES A COHERENT COLLECTION DOCUMENTING THE HAUTE COUTURE ACTIVITY OF MONSIEUR PACO RABANNE FROM AROUND 1964-1965 TO 2000, AND OF THE VARIOUS ARTISTIC DIRECTORS FROM 1989 TO THE PRESENT DAY (WOMEN'S READY-TO-WEAR). THE COLLECTION COMPRISES NEARLY 10,000 HAUTE COUTURE AND WOMEN'S READY-TO-WEAR PIECES, GARMENTS AND ACCESSORIES (MAINLY JEWELLERY, SHOES, BELTS AND BAGS) AND ALMOST 20,000 DOCUMENTARY ARCHIVES (PRESS RELEASES, PHOTOGRAPHS, COLLECTION DOCUMENTS AND SKETCHES, AUDIOVISUAL MATERIAL, LIBRARY, EPHEMERA, ETC.).

WHAT HAVE BEEN THE **MAJOR MILESTONES** IN TERMS OF **DEVELOPMENT SINCE THE CREATION OF THE HOUSE?**

WHEN MONSIEUR PACO RABANNE WAS HERE, IT WAS THE COMMUNICATIONS AND PRESS RELATIONS DEPARTMENT THAT LOOKED AFTER THE ITEMS/COLLECTIONS TO BE ARCHIVED. THEN, WHEN HE RETIRED AT THE DAWN OF 2000, THE ITEMS WERE STORED BUT NOT REALLY HANDLED. AROUND 2009-2010, PEOPLE WERE HIRED TO DRAW UP THE FIRST INVENTORIES. IT WASN'T REALLY UNTIL 2017 THAT A HERITAGE & ARCHIVES DEPARTMENT WAS CREATED... I, MYSELF, HAVE BEEN IN POST SINCE 2019.

WHAT WAS **PACO RABANNE'S VISION OF HERITAGE?**

PACO RABANNE DID NOT HAVE ANY SPECIFIC WISHES REGARDING THE PRESERVATION OF HIS WORK OR THE HERITAGE OF HIS COLLECTIONS. LIKE KARL LAGERFELD, HE DIDN'T WANT TO KEEP ANY ARCHIVES. MOREOVER, IN THE MID-1990S, HE ORGANISED AN AUCTION (1994) TO DISPOSE OF MANY HAUTE COUTURE MODELS AND MADE SEVERAL DONATIONS TO FRENCH MUSEUMS (MAD, GALLIERA, MUSÉE DES TISSUS, MUSÉE DU PEIGNE ET DE LA PLASTURGIE D'OYONNAX...).

WHAT ARE YOUR MAJOR **PROJECTS FOR THE FUTURE?**

IN 2026, WE WILL BE CELEBRATING THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF MAISON RABANNE. STAY TUNED.

HOW ARE THE **COLLECTIONS CATALOGUED**, AND **WHAT DO YOU KEEP** IN ALL THE COLLECTIONS PRODUCED BY THE COMPANY?

WE DISTINGUISH HAUTE COUTURE AND READY-TO-WEAR PIECES. THE COLLECTIONS ARE LISTED BY YEAR, SEASON AND RUN NUMBER. ALL THE GARMENTS ARE GROUPED TOGETHER, AND THE ACCESSORIES ARE CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO THIS TYPOLOGY. THE DOCUMENTATION IS ALSO CLASSIFIED BY HAUTE COUTURE AND PRÊT-À-PORTER, THEN BY YEAR. AND BY DOCUMENT TYPE.

FOR THE CHOICE OF ITEMS KEPT, WE FOCUS ON HAUTE COUTURE AND WOMEN'S READY-TO-WEAR. WE DO NOT KEEP ANY LICENSE PIECES OR SECONDARY LINES. FOR JULIEN DOSSENA'S CURRENT COLLECTIONS, WE ONLY KEEP THE PIECES THAT ARE CURRENTLY ON SHOW (MAIN COLLECTIONS) PLUS THE PRE-COLLECTIONS THAT CAN BE SEEN ON VOGUE RUNWAY.

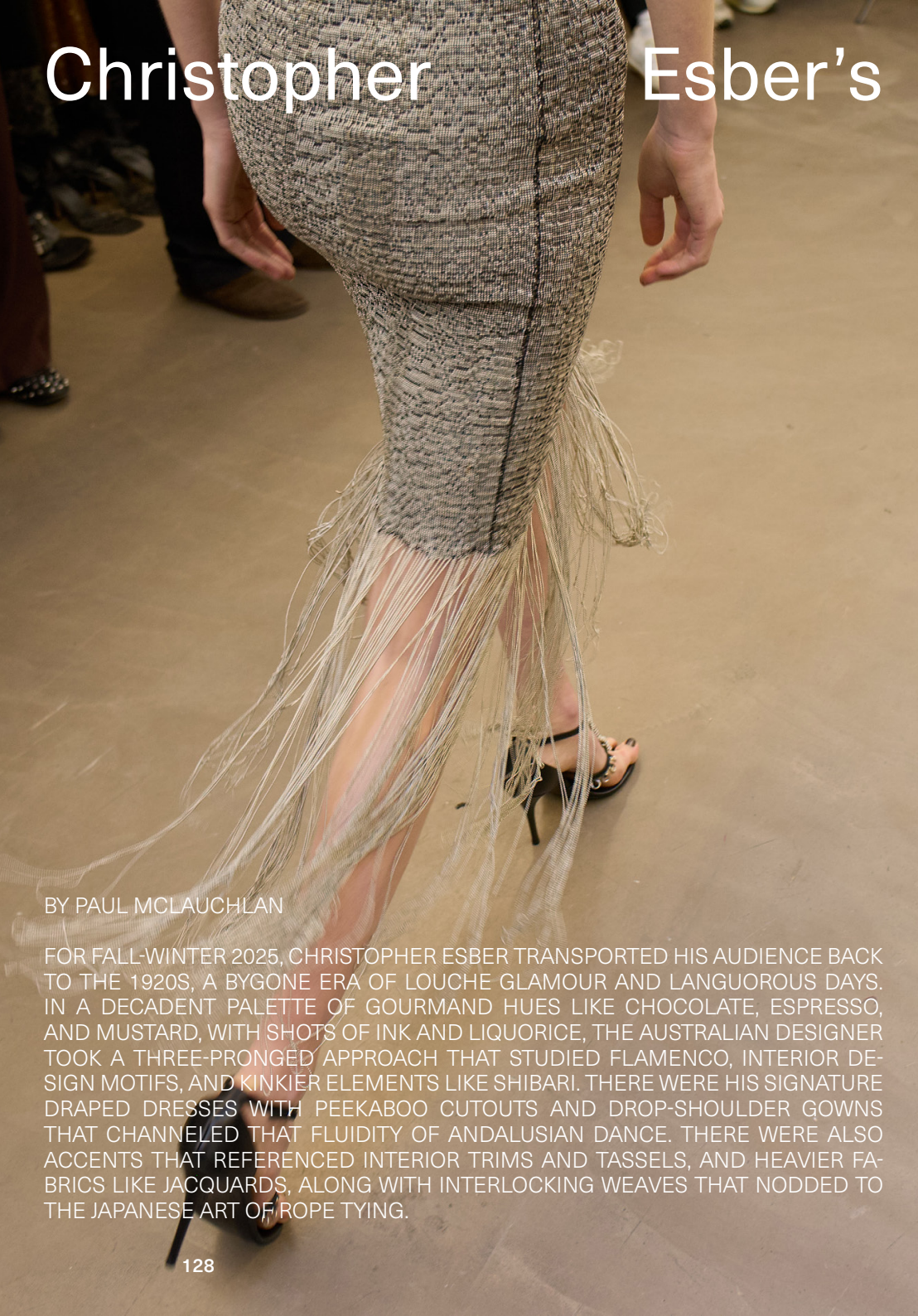
WHAT ABOUT THE **ACTIVITY LINKED TO LOANS? EXHIBITIONS** IN 2024 AND 2025?

WE REGULARLY LEND TO MUSEUMS AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS FOR TEMPORARY EXHIBITIONS. AT THE MOMENT, WE ARE TAKING PART IN THE LOUVRE COUTURE' EXHIBITION AT THE LOUVRE MUSEUM AND FASHION AND SPORT: FROM ONE PODIUM TO ANOTHER AT THE OLYMPIC MUSEUM IN LAUSANNE. IN 2024, WE PARTICIPATED IN THE FOLLOWING EXHIBITIONS AND EVENTS: PIERRE CARDIN & PACO RABANNE. COUTURIERS DE L'AUDACE (ATELIER-MUSÉE DU CHAPEAU - CHAZELLES-SUR-LYON); THE VOGUE WORLD FASHION SHOW IN THE PLACE VENDÔME AND VESTOLOGY: THE JACKET IN ALL ITS STATES AT PRINTEMPS HAUSSMANN.

Christopher Esber's

New

Look



BY PAUL MCLAUHLAN

FOR FALL-WINTER 2025, CHRISTOPHER ESBER TRANSPORTED HIS AUDIENCE BACK TO THE 1920S, A BYGONE ERA OF LOUCHE GLAMOUR AND LANGUOROUS DAYS. IN A DECADENT PALETTE OF GOURMAND HUES LIKE CHOCOLATE, ESPRESSO, AND MUSTARD, WITH SHOTS OF INK AND LIQUORICE, THE AUSTRALIAN DESIGNER TOOK A THREE-PRONGED APPROACH THAT STUDIED FLAMENCO, INTERIOR DESIGN MOTIFS, AND KINKIER ELEMENTS LIKE SHIBARI. THERE WERE HIS SIGNATURE DRAPED DRESSES WITH PEEKABOO CUTOUTS AND DROP-SHOULDER GOWNS THAT CHanneled THAT FLUIDITY OF ANDALUSIAN DANCE. THERE WERE ALSO ACCENTS THAT REFERENCED INTERIOR TRIMS AND TASSELS, AND HEAVIER FABRICS LIKE JACQUARDS, ALONG WITH INTERLOCKING WEAVES THAT NODDED TO THE JAPANESE ART OF ROPE TYING.

LAST SUMMER, THE DESIGNER WHOSE ACOLYTES INCLUDE CHARLI XCX, HAILEY BIEBER, AND ZENDAYA, TOOK HOME THE PRESTIGIOUS ANDAM PRIZE, AND THE ENSUING MONETARY INJECTION AND MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME MADE THIS HIS MOST ROBUST EFFORT TO DATE. HE INVESTED TIME AND ENERGY IN TEXTURAL EXPLORATION. RIFFING ON INTERIORS, HIS EXPERIMENTATIONS INCLUDED DECONSTRUCTED KNITWEAR WITH JACQUARD AND BROCADE PANELS AND EXPOSED SEAMS. THROUGHOUT THE COLLECTION, HE TREATED MENSWEAR FABRIC WEIGHTS IN A MORE FEMININE WAY SPANNING STRUCTURED PINAFORE DRESSES, TIED IN THE BACK WITH SHIBARI-INSPIRED DETAILING THAT TOOK HUNDREDS OF HOURS TO COMPLETE; OFF-THE-SHOULDER WOOL GABARDINE COAT DRESSES; AND CHARCOAL SUITING CUT ON THE BIAS. THERE WERE VARIOUS ITERATIONS OF HUMBLE WORKWEAR FABRICS LIKE CORDUROY AS CORD SEPARATES TO MORE GLAMOROUS AND ELEVATED RESULTS IN VELVET CORDUROY SUITING AND DEVORE DRESSES.

“WE WANTED TO TAKE THESE BEAUTIFUL THINGS FROM THE PAST AND MAKE THEM POSSIBLE IN TODAY’S WORLD BY MODERNISING THEM. IT WAS A CHALLENGE, BUT IT WAS EXCITING TO LOOK AT THESE THINGS AND PUSH THEM FURTHER,” SAID ESBER VIA VIDEO CALL FROM HIS STUDIO IN SYDNEY.

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE US **TO KNOW ABOUT THIS LATEST COLLECTION?**

WE’RE WORKING WITH THREE PILLARS THIS SEASON. THE FIRST IS FLAMENCO AND UNDERSTANDING THE GESTURES, MOOD, SOUND, AND HISTORY AROUND THAT. THE OTHER ELEMENT IS DIFFERENT UPHOLSTERIES FROM THE 1920S AND FINDING WAYS TO MODERNISE THEM. IT PLAYS INTO THIS IDEA OF RESTRAINT, KNOTTING AND ROPING – THE IDEA OF SHIBARI, WHICH BRINGS A KINK OR FETISH ELEMENT THROUGHOUT THE COLLECTION. IT’S A WEIRD PLAY BETWEEN TECHNIQUES AND IDEAS OF THE PAST AND TWISTING THEM TO FIND NEW WAYS TO MAKE THEM FEEL RELATABLE FOR TODAY.

HAVING WON THE ANDAM PRIZE AND SHOWING ON THE OFFICIAL CALENDAR, **THE BRAND IS ON A ROLL** RIGHT NOW. HOW DOES IT FEEL?

IT’S BEEN A GREAT MOMENT TO PUSH THE BRAND OUT THERE AND THE ANDAM PRIZE SUPPORT HAS BROUGHT TO LIFE A LOT OF POSSIBILITIES. WE’VE ALWAYS HAD BIG DREAMS TO DO VERY INTRICATE AND EXCITING THINGS, SO BEING ABLE TO SEE SOME OF THESE IDEAS COME TO LIFE THIS SEASON FEELS REALLY SPECIAL. [THE PRIZE] HAS DEFINITELY MADE CERTAIN THINGS MORE POSSIBLE LIKE OUR ABILITY TO REACH DIFFERENT ATELIERS IN PARIS AND ACROSS EUROPE, AND HOW THE COLLECTIONS ARE DEVELOPED.

WHERE DO YOU LOOK FOR **NEW IDEAS** OR VOICES IN FASHION?

THERE ISN’T ONE ANSWER. SOMETHING MIGHT COME FROM A PREVIOUS SEASON, OR SOMETHING COULD COME ABOUT BECAUSE OF A MISTAKE AND IT ENDS UP BEING GREAT. TYPICALLY, ONE COLLECTION CAN MORPH INTO THE NEXT EVEN IF THE CONCEPTS ARE COMPLETELY DIFFERENT. WE DEVELOP OUR IDEAS IN THE STUDIO; IT’S LIKE AN INCUBATOR OF CREATIVITY. BUT ALSO, WOMEN ON THE STREET ARE ALWAYS SO INSPIRING IN HOW THEY WEAR SOMETHING UNIQUELY OR SPONTANEOUSLY OR SOMETHING THAT CATCHES ME OFF GUARD.

HOW DO YOU THINK YOUR BRAND CAN **SPARK AND SUSTAIN DESIRE** WITH **SO MUCH ELSE HAPPENING IN THE WORLD?**

THE CUSTOMER IS ALWAYS LOOKING TO BE INSPIRED OR HAVE AN EMOTIONAL FEELING OR REACTION TO A COLLECTION OR A PIECE. MY JOB IS TO CONSTANTLY FIND THE DIRECTION AND CONCEPT WHILE BRINGING THIS ELEMENT OF FANTASY AND DESIRE THAT PUSHES THE BRAND FORWARD. I HAVE TO ASK MYSELF, WHO IS [THE CHRISTOPHER ESBER WOMAN] MORPHING INTO? WHAT DOES SHE NEED? IT’S ABOUT CONJURING DESIRE. FOR ME, IF IT’S NOT EMOTIONAL, WE DON’T BOTHER WITH IT. EVERYTHING NEEDS TO HAVE A STRONG REACTION.

DO **TRENDS** STILL MATTER?

I DON’T WANT OUR CLOTHES TO COME ACROSS AS TRANSIENT, OR A ONE-TIME WEAR. I’M ALWAYS THINKING ABOUT HOW OUR CLOTHING CAN BECOME PART OF YOUR CHARACTER, PART OF YOUR LIFE – SOMETHING THAT GIVES YOU THE CANVAS TO BE YOURSELF.

Georg Lux (Léonard Paris): «Beauty is one of the most comforting expressions of our humanity.»



ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF LEONARD PARIS SINCE JANUARY 2021, GEORG LUX BREATHES NEW LIFE INTO THE HERITAGE OF THIS HISTORIC HOUSE WITH BOUNDLESS OPTIMISM. THIS EXCEPTIONAL CRAFTSMANSHIP, CONDUCTED IN THE GREATEST TRADITION, IS HERE SPICED UP WITH INNOVATION, NEW TEXTURES, COLOURS, AND PRINTS THAT OUTLINE A CONTEMPORARY ELEGANCE AND DRIVE THE HOUSE BEYOND FLEETING TRENDS INTO THE FUTURE OF LUXURY.

A STONE'S THROW FROM THE ARC DE TRIOMPHE, THE LEONARD PARIS CREATIVE STUDIO, ORCHESTRATED BY GEORG LUX, IS CAREFULLY POLISHING ITS LATEST FALL-WINTER COLLECTION. ENTITLED "CITY NOMAD", THE PIECES PRESENT "A GRADATION OF TEXTURES AND COLOURS, OF MOODS, RIGHT DOWN TO HOPE. WE CAN SEE SPRING COMING." WHEN LUX TALKS ABOUT FASHION, HIS EYES TWINKLE. "I WANTED TO PORTRAY A WOMAN WHO TRAVELS FROM CITY TO CITY, CROSSING DESERTS AND SURREAL PLACES, IN SEARCH OF BEAUTY," HE EXPLAINS AS HE STARES AT THE PIECES. "WHEN YOU LOOK AT EVERYTHING THAT'S GOING ON IN THE WORLD, I WANTED TO POINT OUT THAT BEAUTY CAN ARISE AMIDST THE VERY WORST THAT HUMANITY CAN SOMETIMES CAUSE. BEAUTY IS ONE OF THE MOST COMFORTING EXPRESSIONS OF OUR HUMANITY."

WANDERING THROUGH A LEONARD PARIS COLLECTION AS YOU WOULD THROUGH A GARDEN: "THE ART OF THE FLOWER" HAS BECOME A SIGNATURE OF THE HOUSE. "EACH SEASON HAS ITS OWN FAVOURITE FLOWER, AND THIS TIME WE CHOSE THE ROSE. IT'S MYTHICAL AND MYSTERIOUS. IT REPRESENTS FEMININITY, LOVE AND DESIRE." AN ENTHUSIASTIC LUX PRESENTED A GARNET-RED JACKET IN WOOLEN CLOTH, WITH A LARGE ROSE SPREAD OUT IN SWAROVSKI CRYSTALS, THEN A COAT IN DOUBLE-FACED WOOL. "HERE, YOU CAN ALMOST NO LONGER SEE THAT IT'S A FLOWER; IT'S BECOME POINTILLIST, ABSTRACT LINES." AND THE JOURNEY CARRIES ON, INTO THE SKIES, ON A BLACK TOP FLECKED WITH ORANGE AND YELLOW DOTS, 'AS IF FROM A PLANE WHERE YOU CAN SEE THE CITIES RECEDING AND THE LIGHTS FADING AWAY." THE BUTTONS IN THIS COLLECTION ARE ADORNED WITH SEMI-PRECIOUS STONES: LAPIS LAZULI, TIGER'S EYE AND MALACHITE.

ALL THE PROTOTYPES ARE MADE IN FRANCE, WHILE PRODUCTION TAKES PLACE IN ITALY. "WE WORK WITH SEVERAL ITALIAN MANUFACTURERS WHO ARE ALWAYS ON THE LOOKOUT FOR SOMETHING NEW," HE EXPLAINS, AS HE DELICATELY GRABS A FAUX LEATHER DRESS SPECIALLY DEVELOPED THIS SEASON FOR THE HOUSE, LIKE A VINYL, PRINTED WITH THIS EMBOSSED FLOWER. "I FEEL THAT THESE PLAIN BLACK PIECES MAKE THE PRINTS EVEN MORE GRAPHIC. IT'S THE LIGHT THAT REVEALS THE FLOWER. INSIDE THE SLEEVES, AN ORANGE FABRIC WITH A LEONARD PRINT, KNOWN ONLY TO THE CUSTOMER, THE ULTIMATE IN CHIC. ON A GREIGE AND KHAKI LINED COAT, THE FLORAL MOTIF TAKES THE FORM OF 'A PRINTED COMPACT POWDER, WHICH GIVES THE FABRIC A PAINTED EFFECT."

"THE HOUSE OF LEONARD WAS FOUNDED IN 1958 AND HAS NEVER STOPPED CREATING, SEASON AFTER SEASON. YOU CAN READ THE TIMES BY EXPLORING ITS ARCHIVES."

OFFICIALLY APPOINTED ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF THE HOUSE IN JANUARY 2021, LUX DISCOVERED AN EXTRAORDINARY HERITAGE. "IT WAS WONDERFUL, GOING THROUGH ALL THESE ACCUMULATED ARCHIVES, THE PRINTS, THE OLD LOOKBOOKS, THE PIECES THAT HAD BEEN PRESERVED. I NEEDED TO DIGEST ALL OF THIS TO EXTRACT THE ESSENCE AND UPDATE IT." HIS CREATIVITY IS METICULOUSLY ARTICULATED AND METHODOICAL, AS IF HE WAS CONSTANTLY CHANNELLING HIS CREATIVE IMPULSE. "FOR EACH COLLECTION, I ALWAYS START WITH AN ARCHIVE DRAWING. THIS SEASON, I CHOSE A LEOPARD PRINT." BROWSING THROUGH THE HUNDREDS OF CAMPAIGNS PRODUCED BY THE HOUSE, LUX CAME ACROSS A PHOTO OF VERUSCHKA IN A VOGUE MAGAZINE FROM THE 1960S. "WHEN I SAW THIS IMAGE, I IMMEDIATELY WANTED TO BRING OUT THIS PRINT. I LOVE VERUSCHKA, SHE'S ALWAYS INCLUDED IN MY MOODBOARDS AS SHE PERFECTLY EMBODIES THE LEONARD SPIRIT." A MODEL AND ACTRESS, VERUSCHKA REVOLUTIONISED THE FASHION IMAGES OF THE 60S AND 70S WITH HER DARING AND CAPTIVATING PRESENCE, AND REMAINS THE MUSE OF CONTEMPORARY DESIGNERS, INCLUDING LUX.

HER INSPIRATIONS GO FAR BEYOND FASHION. "I ALSO DRAW A LOT OF MY INSPIRATION FROM THE CINEMA. I RE-WATCHED "METROPOLIS", STARRING BRIGITTE HELM AS MARIA AND HER DOUBLE FUTURA. FOR ME, THIS FILM SYMBOLISES THE EXTREME BEAUTY THAT COMES FROM ATROCITY. I'M ALSO THINKING OF "THE MOOD FOR LOVE", THE ATMOSPHERE OF A BIG ANONYMOUS CITY IN THE NIGHT, WITH ITS WARM, SENSUAL, AMBER LIGHTS, WHICH WE FIND IN THIS NEW COLLECTION."

"PARIS HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE FASHION EPICENTRE THAT CREATES TRENDS, MAKES THEM DESIRABLE AND THEN EXPLODES ACROSS THE WORLD. I HAD TO LIVE AND WORK IN PARIS."

"EVER SINCE I WAS LITTLE, I KNEW I WANTED TO BE A FASHION DESIGNER. I WANTED TO LIVE IN PARIS AND WORK IN PARIS.» BORN IN BERLIN, LUX GREW UP IN A NEWLY REUNITED CAPITAL THAT WAS EXPERIENCING AN UNPRECEDENTED CULTURAL AND ARTISTIC ERUPTION. "THERE WAS A CRAZY ENERGY AT THAT TIME. BERLIN WAS AT THE HEIGHT OF THE UNDERGROUND, OF GRUNGE. BUT FOR FASHION, PARIS WAS THE CENTRE. YOU HAD TO BE IN PARIS."

YOUNG LUX QUICKLY DISCOVERED FASHION BY DELVING INTO THE ARCHIVES OF THE GREAT POST-WAR MASTERS. "I ALWAYS LOVED JACQUES FATH, A CONTEMPORARY OF CHRISTIAN DIOR, PIERRE BALMAIN AND CRISTÓBAL BALENCIAGA," HE SAYS WITH A SMILE, REVEALING ECHOES OF THE ENTHUSIASM HE MUST HAVE FELT WHEN HE FIRST SET EYES ON THESE DESIGNS. "FATH WAS AN EXTREMELY CHEERFUL DESIGNER AND REMAINS CONTEMPORARY. HE SHOWED YOUTH, FRESHNESS, SEXINESS, GLAMOUR, AND WAS WAY AHEAD OF HIS TIME." FASHION DESIGNERS AND FASHION IMAGES FUELED HIS TASTE AND REFERENCES. "I WAS ALSO FASCINATED BY IRVING PENN AND RICHARD AVEDON'S IMAGES OF SUZY PARKER WALKING THROUGH PARIS AT NIGHT. IT ALWAYS MADE ME DREAM."

LUX PURSUED HIS PASSION HEAD-ON, ATTENDING THE LETTE-VEREIN SCHOOL OF APPLIED ARTS IN BERLIN BEFORE FLYING TO PARIS TO COMPLETE HIS STUDIES AT THE ÉCOLE DE LA CHAMBRE SYNDICALE DE LA COUTURE PARISIENNE, WHICH MERGED WITH THE INSTITUT FRANÇAIS DE LA MODE IN 2019. WHEN HE ARRIVED IN PARIS, HE SETTLED "IN A TINY FLAT ON BOULEVARD SAINT-GERMAIN, CLOSE TO THE CAFÉ DE FLORE," IN THE HEART OF THE LEGENDARY PARIS RIVE GAUCHE. HISTORICALLY, THIS DISTRICT HAS NURTURED THE DEVELOPMENT OF ICONIC FIGURES SUCH AS SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR, ERNEST HEMINGWAY, PABLO PICASSO, JEAN COCTEAU, GEORGES BRAQUE... MAJOR FIGURES WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO FORGING THE MULTICULTURAL, CREATIVE AND THOUGHT-FULFILLING HERITAGE OF THIS DISTRICT THAT SPANS GENERATIONS. "I LOVED WATCHING PEOPLE ON THE STREET, THE WOMEN'S OUTFITS, THEIR LIFESTYLE. IT IMMEDIATELY APPEALED TO ME, AND I FELT AT HOME."

"YOU CAN BE ELEGANT IN MANY WAYS. I DON'T CREATE A WOMAN WHO FOLLOWS TRENDS, BUT WHO HAS HER OWN STYLE, HER OWN PERSONALITY."

THE QUESTION REMAINS THROUGH EACH ERA, FOR EVERY DESIGNER: WHAT IS ELEGANCE TODAY, AT THE MOMENT WE CREATE? "TODAY, TRENDS CHANGE EXTREMELY RAPIDLY AND CAN COME FROM ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING. THE ADVANTAGE OF BEING A LUXURY HOUSE IS PRECISELY NOT TO FOLLOW TRENDS, BUT TO CREATE THEM, WHILE MAINTAINING ONE'S OWN STYLE." THIS APPROACH NECESSARILY INVOLVES PAYING GREAT ATTENTION TO "THE INNOVATION OF CRAFTSMANSHIP AND TECHNIQUES, TO PRODUCING SOMETIMES IN SMALLER QUANTITIES WITH THE HIGHEST QUALITY, AND ENSURING THAT NOT EVERYTHING COMES FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WORLD."

FOR GEORG LUX, LUXURY IS THE ART OF BEING ABLE TO TAKE ONE'S TIME, TO ENJOY, IN THE UTMOST COMFORT, EACH MOMENT. "IT'S THIS SLOW-PACED MOVEMENT OF EXTREME LUXURY THAT WE WANT TO EMBRACE, INTIMATELY, LEISURELY."

REUBEN ATTIA



Benmoyal



BY LAURENCE BENAÏM

IN 2020, TWO YEARS AFTER GRADUATING FROM CENTRAL SAINT MARTINS, BENJAMIN BENMYAL FOUNDED HIS OWN BRAND. HE RECENTLY RENAMED IT "BENMOYAL", TO SIGNAL A NEW STARTING POINT. NEW CONCEPT, NEW INVESTORS. NEW HISTORY, NEW PALETTE, NEW CHALLENGES.



HOW WOULD YOU **CHARACTERISE** THIS SEASON?

WE SKIPPED LAST SEASON, SO WE TOOK TIME TO REDEVELOP THE BRAND, AND ABOVE ALL, REDEFINE THE ARTISTIC DIRECTION.

HOW DID THE **FUND-RAISING** GO?

THE €1 MILLION FUND-RAISING ENABLED US TO MOVE IN A NEW DIRECTION. THERE'S A REAL DESIRE TO FOCUS ON CLOTHING. THE QUESTION WAS HOW TO STRIKE A BALANCE BETWEEN THE CREATIVE PROCESS AND DEVELOPING THE COMMERCIAL SIDE. THE TEAM HAS GROWN FROM TWO TO EIGHT PEOPLE.

HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE THE **CHANGE** WITHIN THE COMPANY ITSELF?

IT'S NOT JUST A QUESTION OF IMAGE, BUT OF CLOTHING, WHICH HAS TO REMAIN IDENTIFIABLE AT ALL TIMES. THE NEW ARTISTIC DIRECTION IS A 20 TO 25-YEAR-OLD GIRL GOING INTO HER GRANDMOTHER'S WARDROBE TO MIX VINTAGE WITH URBAN AND CONTEMPORARY PIECES. WE KEEP THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE KNOW-HOW THROUGH UPCYCLING, BUT ALSO THE DEVELOPMENT OF TWEED AND EMBROIDERY, WHICH REPRESENTS 50 PERCENT OF THE PIECES PRODUCED. INSTEAD OF A FASHION SHOW, WE'RE DOING A VERY SCENOGRAPHIC PRESENTATION IN THE FORMER HABITAT BOUTIQUE, PLACE DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE. THE SHOWROOM IS ON THE SAME SITE, WHICH IS SIMPLER FOR LOGISTICAL REASONS.

WHY THIS **FORMAT**?

I CHOSE THIS FORMAT TO BETTER EXPLAIN THE NARRATIVE, WHICH TAKES PLACE IN A FLAT FROM THE 1950S, WITH MANNEQUINS MOVING AROUND THE DINING ROOM, LIVING ROOM, KITCHEN AND BATHROOM. I REMAIN ATTACHED TO MY MOROCCAN CULTURE, AS EVIDENCED BY THE EMBROIDERY AND THE CHECHIAS. IT'S A MIX WITH A TRANSGENERATIONAL LOOK, ANCHORED IN A REALITY.

WHAT ARE YOUR **EXPECTATIONS FOR 2025**?

TO ACHIEVE WHAT WE'VE SET OUT IN OUR BUSINESS PLAN.



Ann Demeulemeester Advances Forward

NOW IN HIS FOURTH SEASON AT THE HELM OF ANN DEMEULEMEESTER, STEFANO GALLICI IS ADVANCING THE MYTHOLOGISED BRAND FOR A NEW GENERATION OF EAGER FOLLOWERS BESOTTED BY A DARKLY ROMANTIC AESTHETIC. THE ITALIAN DESIGNER IS MELDING HIS PERSPECTIVE WITH THE EPONYMOUS FOUNDER, WHOSE CONSTRUCTIVIST-MEETS-WHIMSICAL DESIGNS CAPTURED THE ZEITGEIST DURING HER ASCENT IN THE 1990S. THIS SEASON, HE EMBARKED ON A CREATIVE EXPEDITION ACROSS DESERT TERRAIN, EMBRACING THE VASTNESS AND QUIETUDE OF THE LANDSCAPE AS A CHALLENGE AND INVITATION TO THINK CLEARLY ABOUT HIS VISION FOR THE BRAND.



WITHOUT FULLY RETREATING INTO THE PAST, GALLICI PUT HIS STAMP ON THE BRAND CODES LIKE ANDROGYNY, TAILORING, AND POETIC ELEGANCE ON A CAST OF WAIFS AND VAGABONDS, WHICH EVOKES GEORGIA O'KEEFFE AS MUCH AS THE KIDS ON THE PARIS CLUB SCENE. THE INDELIBLE IMPRINT OF THE FOUNDER LOOMS LARGE OVER PROCEEDINGS TODAY ON THIS RUNWAY — AND ON MANY OTHERS. YOU CAN SEE IT IN THE ROBUST TAILORING OFFERING, OR WHITE SHIRTS WITH RUFFLE TRIMS AND THE LARGELY MONOCHROMATIC PALETTE. GALLICI IS MUCH MORE COMFORTABLE WITH IMPARTING A SENSE OF ROMANCE THAN HIS PREDECESSORS WHO CAME AFTER THE FOUNDING DESIGNER. THIS COULD BE THE CLARITY HE FOUND IN THE DESERT.



“THE HERITAGE OF ANN DEMEULEMEESTER IS NOT SOMETHING I SEE AS SEPARATE FROM MY VISION; RATHER, IT’S A NATURAL EXTENSION OF IT. MY WORK HAS ALWAYS BEEN ABOUT CREATING A DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE PAST AND THE PRESENT, WHERE THE ESSENCE OF WHAT CAME BEFORE CAN SEAMLESSLY INFORM AND ENRICH WHAT IS TO COME,” GALLICI SAID IN AN EMAIL, AHEAD OF THE SHOW.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE THE LEGACY OF ANN DEMEULEMEESTER WHILE TRYING TO BRING THE BRAND FORWARD INTO A NEW ERA?

FOR ME, IT'S NOT REALLY ABOUT BALANCING THE LEGACY; IT'S ABOUT EMBRACING IT AND ALLOWING IT TO EXIST ALONGSIDE MY WORLD. I FIND IT QUITE NATURAL TO MOVE BETWEEN THESE TWO UNIVERSES, DRAWING FROM BOTH TO CREATE SOMETHING THAT FEELS AUTHENTIC, YET FORWARD-LOOKING

WHO WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO CONNECT WITH IN THIS NEW CHAPTER OF ANN DEMEULEMEESTER?

IN THIS NEW CHAPTER, I'M FOCUSED ON REACHING OUT TO YOUNGER GENERATIONS. AS A YOUNG CREATIVE DIRECTOR, IT FEELS COMPLETELY NATURAL FOR ME TO COMMUNICATE DIRECTLY WITH MY PEERS. BUT I ALSO WANT MY WORK TO BE MORE THAN A «ONE-WAY» CONVERSATION. I WANT TO OPEN THE DOOR FOR AS MANY PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE TO CONNECT WITH THE BRAND. EVERY SEASON, I SEE THIS DIALOGUE EXPANDING, GROWING, AND DEEPENING. I BELIEVE THERE IS A DEEP NEED TO DREAM, TO CREATE, TO MAKE. ANN DEMEULEMEESTER IS, AT ITS CORE, A BRAND FOR DREAMERS AND MAKERS — THOSE WHO SEE THE WORLD THROUGH A POETIC LENS. I AIM TO GATHER ALL THOSE WHO WANT TO CREATE, TO PUSH BOUNDARIES, AND TO LIVE WITHIN A UNIVERSE OF ART, IN ALL ITS FORMS. IT'S ABOUT SPEAKING TO ANYONE WHO FEELS THE PULL TO BUILD SOMETHING, WHETHER THROUGH FASHION OR ANY OTHER MEDIUM OF EXPRESSION.

HOW ESSENTIAL IS HERITAGE AND/OR A DISTINCTIVE IDENTITY TO A BRAND'S SUCCESS?

HERITAGE IS ESSENTIAL, ESPECIALLY FOR A BRAND LIKE THIS. IT'S NOT JUST A FOUNDATION, BUT A SOURCE OF STRENGTH THAT KEEPS YOU GROUNDED. FOR ME, THE IDENTITY OF ANN DEMEULEMEESTER IS DEEPLY ROOTED IN ITS HISTORY. IT'S ABOUT HONOURING THAT LEGACY WHILE STILL LEAVING SPACE TO EVOLVE.

HOW DO YOU THINK [YOUR BRAND/FASHION INDUSTRY] CAN SPARK AND SUSTAIN DESIRE WITH SO MUCH ELSE HAPPENING IN THE WORLD?

IN A WORLD THAT IS CONSTANTLY SHIFTING AND EVOLVING, I BELIEVE THAT FASHION CAN SPARK DESIRE, NOT BY RESPONDING TO THE NOISE, BUT BY OFFERING SOMETHING AUTHENTIC, SOMETHING DEEPLY PERSONAL. I DON'T SEE FASHION AS SOMETHING TO FOLLOW; BUT RATHER AS A FORM OF ART THAT CHALLENGES AND INSPIRES. BY STAYING TRUE TO A VISION, BY EMBRACING BOTH THE BEAUTY AND THE FRAGILITY OF LIFE, I THINK FASHION CAN REMAIN RELEVANT AND SUSTAIN DESIRE, EVEN IN SUCH TURBULENT TIMES. IT'S ABOUT OFFERING MORE THAN JUST CLOTHING; IT'S ABOUT OFFERING A WAY FOR PEOPLE TO EXPRESS WHO THEY ARE, OR PERHAPS, WHO THEY ASPIRE TO BE.

WHAT DO YOU FIND MOST EXCITING ABOUT WORKING IN FASHION IN 2025?

WHAT EXCITES ME MOST ABOUT WORKING IN FASHION IN 2025 IS THE ENDLESS POTENTIAL FOR STORYTELLING — THE ABILITY TO DREAM WITHOUT LIMITS. FASHION, AT ITS CORE, IS A MEDIUM FOR EXPRESSION, AND EVERY SEASON OFFERS AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLORE NEW IDEAS, NEW COLLABORATIONS, AND NEW VISIONS. IT'S A SPACE WHERE BOUNDARIES ARE CONSTANTLY SHIFTING, AND EVERY SIX MONTHS, THERE'S A FRESH CANVAS, A CHANCE TO REINVENT AND DISCOVER SOMETHING NEW.

WHAT SURPRISES YOU ABOUT THE FASHION INDUSTRY IN 2025?

WHAT SURPRISES ME MOST ABOUT THE FASHION INDUSTRY IN 2025 IS THE OVERWHELMING PRESSURE TO PRODUCE SO MANY COLLECTIONS IN SUCH A SHORT TIME. IT FEELS AS THOUGH THE RHYTHM HAS BECOME RELENTLESS, WITH EVERY SEASON DEMANDING MORE, FASTER, AND WITH LESS ROOM FOR REFLECTION. THIS RAPID PACE CAN SOMETIMES OVERSHADOW THE ESSENCE OF WHAT FASHION TRULY IS — A SPACE FOR CREATIVITY, FOR THOUGHT, FOR DEEPER EXPLORATION.

Behind


Hodakova's Paris

Debut



BY PAUL MCLAUHLAN

THERE WAS EXCITEMENT IN ANTICIPATION OF HODAKOVA'S FALL-WINTER 2025 SHOW AT LA MAISON DE LA MUTUALITÉ. HAVING SCOOPED UP THE €400,000 LVMH PRIZE LAST SEPTEMBER, ELLEN HODAKOVA LARSSON WAS READY TO TAKE HER BUZZY EPONYMOUS LABEL TO THE NEXT LEVEL. AT HER DEBUT ON THE OFFICIAL CALENDAR, THE SWEDISH DESIGNER MATCHED THE TEMPO OF HER CROWD AND CHANNIELED A MUSICAL ENERGY. FROM THE THUMP OF BLACK BELTS, SEWN ONTO DRESSES, THWACKING ON THE FLOOR TO THE BOUNCE OF FAUX FUR COATS, BRAIDED TOGETHER FROM VINTAGE HATS, TO A VIOLIN HEADPIECE AND THE BODY OF A CELLO DOUBLING AS A DRESS IN THE FINALE, THERE WERE HIGH NOTES THROUGHOUT.



IF THIS WAS LARSSON'S SCORE, IT WAS DECIDEDLY UNDERGROUND. THERE WAS SOMETHING SEEDY ABOUT THE WAY THE MODELS SWAGGERED DOWN THE CATWALK IN LACED-UP LEATHER TROUSERS AND BUMSTER JEANS. SOMETHING ABOUT THE DISTRESSED, SHRUNKEN FAIR ISLES, AND EMBELLISHED CHIFFON SLIP SKIRTS UNDER ABBREVIATED DOUBLE-BREADED TRENCH COATS THAT EVOKED ANGST BETWEEN SELF-EXPLORATION AND SELF-ACTUALIZATION. SOMETHING ABOUT THE AWKWARDNESS OF THE ATTENUATED SILHOUETTES THAT FELT FAMILIAR. OR HOW TROUSERS, SPLICED TOGETHER INTO DRESSES, WERE THROWN OVER THE MODELS' HEADS LIKE DRESSES, WITH LITTLE ELSE UNDERNEATH, UNDONE BELTS TRAILING BEHIND THEM. BEHIND THE ATTENTION-GRABBING PIÈCES DE RESISTANCE THAT GARNERED HER ACCOLADES AND CELEBRITY ADMIRATION, THERE IS AN URGENT MESSAGE ABOUT RESOURCEFULNESS, SUSTAINABILITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT. EVERYTHING IN THE SHOW, FROM THE COTTON SHIRTS TO CELLO, ONCE LIVED A LIFE ALL OF THEIR OWN.

"I WANTED IT TO REFLECT FRAGILITY AND BOLDNESS," SAID LARSSON, BACKSTAGE AFTER THE SHOW.

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE US **TO KNOW ABOUT THIS COLLECTION?**

I'VE BEEN OUT WALKING IN A FIELD BY OUR STUDIO WITH MY DOG. I WANTED [THE COLLECTION] TO HAVE THIS FEELING OF FREEDOM THAT YOU FEEL WHEN YOU'RE WALKING, WITH YOUR HAIR BLOWING IN THE WIND, AND YOU'RE IN THE MOOD OF THE ENERGY. THERE'S THIS MUSICALITY TO IT AND HOW MUSIC CAN CAPTURE DIFFERENT PARTS OF YOUR ENERGY.

HOW DOES THIS **COLLECTION BUILD** ON THE LAST?

EVERY SEASON, WE DO THIS LAYERING AND TURN THINGS INSIDE OUT. I WANTED IT TO REFLECT FRAGILITY AND BOLDNESS AND EXPLORE THE MEANING BETWEEN BOLDNESS AND THE NAKED BODY. THERE'S ALSO THE FRAGILITY IN YOUR OWN VULNERABILITY AND I WANTED TO HIGHLIGHT THAT VULNERABILITY BY COMBINING IT WITH BOLDNESS. THERE'S THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE TIGHTNESS, SKINNINESS OF THE NAKED BODY WITH THE SHELL THAT WE PUT ON OURSELVES.

HOW DOES THAT **CONTRAST PLAY OUT IN** YOUR OWN LIFE?

WE ALL HAVE THESE CONTRASTS WITHIN US AND THEY BALANCE EACH OTHER OUT: DIFFERENT MOODS, DIFFERENT OPPORTUNITIES, DIFFERENT PERIODS OF YOUR LIFE. FOR ME, THIS YEAR HAS BEEN MORE ENERGISED.

Sarah Burton's Emotionally

BY NICK REMSEN
THE DEBUTS HAVE BEEN DAZZLING.

AT TOM FORD, HAIDER ACKERMANN'S FIRST COLLECTION FOR THE HOUSE – SHOWN A FEW DAYS AGO – ENDED WITH A STANDING OVATION FOR ITS BRILLIANT COLOUR USE AND SENSUAL (BUT, TAKE NOTE, NOT SEXY!) SHAPES. AT DRIES VAN NOTEN, JULIAN KLAUSNER UPHELD THE LABEL'S RETIRED NAMESAKE'S PENCHANT FOR TEXTURE, GREAT COLOUR AND PATTERN PLAY, WHILE INFUSING THAT LEGACY WITH A STRONG LUXE-BOHEMIAN UNDERCURRENT. AND AT GIVENCHY, SARAH BURTON, PREMIERING HER VISION FOR A HOUSE THAT HADN'T QUITE FOUND ITS FOOTING SINCE THE DEPARTURE OF RICCARDO TISCI YEARS AGO, BROUGHT IT ALL THE WAY HOME WITH A STELLAR SUGGESTION OF WHAT'S TO COME – AND WHAT HAS BEEN.



Intelligent debut at Givenchy

KEEPING THE FOCUS ON BURTON'S GIVENCHY COTILLION, THE DESIGNER, WHO MOVED TO GIVENCHY FROM ALEXANDER MCQUEEN, REPORTEDLY WENT ALL THE WAY BACK TO HUBERT DE GIVENCHY'S VERY FIRST SHOW HELD IN 1952. APPARENTLY, SHE HAPPENED UPON A BIT OF GOOD LUCK (OR FATE, IF YOU'RE A BELIEVER) IN HER RESEARCH PROCESS: DURING A DEMOLITION AT A GIVENCHY-OWNED SPACE IN PARIS, CONSTRUCTION WORKERS FOUND PREVIOUSLY UNACCOUNTED FOR PATTERNS FROM THAT EXACT 1952 SHOW. BURTON ESSENTIALLY KNEW SHE HAD TO RETURN TO NOT ONLY THE HOUSE'S ROOTS, BUT ITS GENESIS. HUBERT'S MODERN, MID-CENTURY AND POST-WAR PROPOSAL OF SIMPLY-BUT-BRILLIANTLY CUT GRAPHIC SILHOUETTES AND SENSIBILITIES BECAME HER JUMP-OFF.

THAT 1952 UNVEILING STARTED AN ALL NEW CHAPTER OF FASHION HISTORY. BURTON'S 2025 HARD LAUNCH MIGHT WELL DO THE SAME. THE WHOLE THING WAS BAR-NONE EXCELLENT, AND IT TETHERED THE THEN-AND-NOW IN SUCH A WAY THAT FELT FAR MORE CONTEMPORARY THAN NOSTALGIC. IT HAD A TRUE KNOWINGNESS ABOUT IT; BURTON'S ASSURED AND UNDERSTATED CONFIDENCE WAS BRIMMING. OFTEN, FASHION REVIEWERS ARGUE THAT A COLLECTION IS SUCCESSFUL IF IT CATALYSES BOTH A FRESH IMPRESSION AND A DESIRE TO WEAR, AND PROJECT, THAT VISION. SOMETIMES THIS POSITION CAN FEEL A BIT CONVENIENT. HERE, BURTON'S GIVENCHY CERTAINLY HAS NEWNESS AND WEARABILITY, BUT AN ADDED LAYER THAT IS PRETTY RARE THESE DAYS: HER WORK IS RELATABLE, AND INCREASINGLY MEANINGFUL, BECAUSE OF ITS SENSE OF HEART AND MATURITY. IT'S EMOTIONALLY INTELLIGENT.

SOME EXAMPLES: MID-SHOW, BURTON REVEALED A HIGH-COLLAR – A CHOKER-COLLAR, REALLY – DRESS WITH A LOOSELY COLUMNAR DRAPE, EACH PLEAT BREAKING AWAY AND DOWNWARD INTO A SEMI-STRUCTURED SILHOUETTE, BACKLESS AT THE REVEAL AND POCKETED AT THE HIP. THE PIECE WAS STRIKINGLY FORWARD-THINKING, WHILE STILL BEING REVERENT AND TECHNICAL; IT FEATURED SIGNATURE GIVENCHY TAILORING, PUSHED INTO THE FUTURE BY BURTON'S KNOWHOW. IT WAS FUSS-FREE AND INTENTIONAL. ANOTHER STRONG EXAMPLE VAGUELY ECHOED THIS PIECE: A DRESS WITH A SHEER, ALMOST SWIMSUIT-LIKE TOP – SUPER MINIMAL – THAT, AT THE WAIST, TRANSFORMED INTO A DISCUS OF LAYERED, WHIRLED, PURE WHITE TULLE. IT WAS BEAUTIFUL, BOLD, WELL-INFORMED AND PERFECTLY MADE.

WITH HER WARDROBE VARIETY (THERE WERE A LOT OF STAPLES HERE, PANTS TO BLAZERS TO FLATS AND MORE), HER FEMININITY AND INTERPLAY OF COLORS, SOME OF THIS COLLECTION FELT LIKE BURTON IS INHERITING THE "PHOEBE PHILO" MANTLE OF PLAIN-COOL CLOTHES TINGED WITH INSOUCIANCE AND TOPFULL OF INHERENT STYLE. MAYBE BURTON ALREADY DID THIS AT MCQUEEN, BUT MCQUEEN WAS, BY NATURE, MORE THEATRICAL. AT THE SAME TIME, THOUGH, BURTON'S DISCERNMENT IS HARDER-EDGED; HERS ARE BLUNTER, BOLDER CLOTHES FOR A MORE CHALLENGING WORLD.

NOT ONLY, THEN, DOES HER GIVENCHY DEBUT BRIDGE THE THEN AND NOW. IT'S THE THEN AND NOW – AND NEXT.



Fondation Azzedine Alaïa

Passion/

Transmission

"FOR MANY YEARS NOW, I'VE BEEN BUYING AND COLLECTING DRESSES, COATS AND JACKETS THAT BEAR WITNESS TO THE GREAT HISTORY OF FASHION. FOR ME, IT HAS BECOME A CORPORATE ATTITUDE TO PRESERVE THEM, A MARK OF SOLIDARITY WITH THOSE WHO, BEFORE ME, HAD THE PLEASURE AND SKILL OF THE CHISEL. IT'S A TRIBUTE ON MY PART TO ALL THE PROFESSIONS AND ALL THE IDEAS THAT THESE GARMENTS EXPRESS," SAID AZZEDINE ALAÏA (1935-2017).

INAUGURATED IN 2018, THE AZZEDINE ALAÏA FOUNDATION, AT 18 RUE DE LA VERRERIE IN THE MARAIS DISTRICT, HAS ESTABLISHED ITSELF AS AN INCOMPARABLE MEETING PLACE FOR ART AND FASHION. RIGOUR, PASSION AND CONVICTION MAGNIFY THE POINT OF VIEW OF A TEAM PRESIDED OVER BY CARLA SOZZANI, FAITHFUL TO A MASTER OF THE LINE, WHOSE EXACTING STANDARDS WE FIND HERE. "THE QUEST FOR THE INVISIBLE GUIDES THE GREATEST WORKS. AZZEDINE ALAÏA PURSUES THE QUEST FOR A DEFINITIVE COUTURE OF WHICH HE IS THE VIRTUOSO, EVEN IF HE DOESN'T SHOW IT," NOTED OLIVIER SAILLARD IN 2018, ON THE FOUNDATION'S INAUGURAL EXHIBITION, "AZZEDINE ALAÏA, JE SUIS COUTURIER."

WITH THE OPENING OF THE "AZZEDINE ALAÏA AND THIERRY MUGLER" EXHIBITION, CURATED BY OLIVIER SAILLARD, DIRECTOR OF THE FOUNDATION, SHOWCASING TWO DECADES OF ARTISTIC COMPLICITY BETWEEN THE TWO DESIGNERS, CARLA SOZZANI, FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT OF THE AZZEDINE ALAÏA FOUNDATION, LOOKS BACK AT THE FUNDAMENTALS OF THIS PLACE OF MEMORY. THE AZZEDINE ALAÏA FOUNDATION IS AS MUCH ABOUT THE FUTURE AS IT IS ABOUT PRESERVING A UNIQUE BODY OF WORK AND A UNIQUE COLLECTION.

WHAT DOES THE ALAÏA **HERITAGE REPRESENT TODAY** IN TERMS OF COLLECTIONS?

THE HERITAGE INCLUDES TWO MAJOR FASHION COLLECTIONS: ON THE ONE HAND, THE WORK OF AZZEDINE ALAÏA, WHICH REPRESENTS AROUND 22,000 PIECES PLUS ACCESSORIES AND SHOES, FROM HIS BEGINNINGS UNTIL HIS DEATH IN 2017. ON THE OTHER, A COLLECTION DEDICATED TO THE HISTORY OF FASHION, FEATURING THE GREAT MASTERS COLLECTED BY AZZEDINE ALAÏA SINCE 1968. THE COLLECTION INCLUDES NO FEWER THAN 150,000 PIECES, FROM PAUL POIRET TO MADAME GRÈS, FROM MADELEINE VIONNET TO COMME DES GARÇONS. IN ADDITION TO THESE TWO MAJOR COLLECTIONS, THERE ARE ALSO IMPORTANT COLLECTIONS OF DESIGN AND PHOTOGRAPHY, WHICH ALSO CORRESPONDED TO AZZEDINE ALAÏA'S PASSIONS.

HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE INVOLVED IN THIS ACTIVITY?

THERE ARE TWO GROUPS, ONE OF THREE PEOPLE FOR THE COLLECTION OF AZZEDINE ALAÏA'S WORK, AND THE OTHER OF TWO PEOPLE FOR THE HISTORY OF FASHION.

WHAT HAVE BEEN THE **MAJOR MILESTONES** IN TERMS OF DEVELOPMENT SINCE THE HOUSE WAS FOUNDED?

AZZEDINE ALAÏA'S WORK CAN BE DIVIDED INTO THREE MAIN PARTS:

1956-1982, FROM HIS ARRIVAL IN PARIS AND INTERNSHIP AT DIOR TO HIS TRIUMPH IN NEW YORK IN 1982.

1983-1992: THE YEARS OF GREAT SUCCESS, FOLLOWED BY A PERIOD OF RETURN TO A CONFIDENTIAL CLIENTELE AND ULTRA-SELECTIVE DISTRIBUTION, WITH VERY LOYAL CUSTOMERS SUCH AS BARNEYS.

2000- 2017: A SECOND PERIOD OF GREAT RECOGNITION FOR HIS WORK AS A COUTURIER

AND THE **CREATION** OF THE AZZEDINE ALAÏA **FOUNDATION**?

IT WAS SET UP IN 2018-2020 AND RECOGNISED AS A PUBLIC UTILITY BY DECREE IN FEBRUARY 2020. TO DATE, IT HAS THREE MAIN ACTIVITIES: ARCHIVING, EXHIBITIONS (BOOKS AND CATALOGUES) AND EDUCATION.

WHAT WAS AZZEDINE **ALAÏA'S VISION** IN TERMS OF HERITAGE?

HE WANTED TO PRESERVE A FASHION HERITAGE IN FRANCE. HE WAS PROUD TO HAVE BECOME A FRENCH CITIZEN. AZZEDINE ALAÏA WANTED HIS WORK AND THAT OF THE FASHION MASTERS THAT HE HAD ACQUIRED OVER 50 YEARS TO BE PRESERVED, EXHIBITED AND TO HELP NEW GENERATIONS LEARN THE SECRETS OF COUTURE.

HAVE YOU **IDENTIFIED** AND DOCUMENTED EVERYTHING HE ACQUIRED?

NOT YET, IT'S A LONG PROCESS OF ARCHIVING AND DIGITISATION.

WHAT ABOUT **RESTORATION**?

IT IS CARRIED OUT IN-HOUSE, BY THE SAME TEAM, AND WE ALSO USE FREELANCE RESTORERS.

WHAT ARE THE **DIFFICULTIES** AND CONSTRAINTS?

AZZEDINE ALAÏA BOUGHT THIS BUILDING IN THE HEART OF THE MARAIS DISTRICT, WHICH HAS ENABLED THE FOUNDATION TO CREATE AN EXCEPTIONAL ARCHIVE WORTHY OF A MUSEUM. THE ONLY DIFFICULTY IS TIME; WHAT HE HAS PRESERVED IS IMMENSE... IT WILL TAKE ANOTHER THREE YEARS TO FINISH.

HOW ARE THE COLLECTIONS CATALOGUED, AND **WHAT DO YOU KEEP OF ALL THE COLLECTIONS** PRODUCED BY THE COMPANY?

AZZEDINE KEPT EVERYTHING. THE AZZEDINE ALAÏA FOUNDATION PRESERVES ALL THE PIECES AND ACCESSORIES FROM AZZEDINE ALAÏA'S WORK, FROM THE 1970S TO HIS LAST COLLECTION FOR SUMMER 2018.

WHICH **EXHIBITION** HAS BEEN THE MOST **SUCCESSFUL** TO DATE?

THE FIRST: "AZZEDINE ALAÏA, JE SUIS COUTURIER" (2018), WITH 41 ABSOLUTE MODELS EXPRESSING THE QUINTESSENCE OF A WORK. AND THEN "AZZEDINE ALAÏA COUTURIER COLLECTION-NEUR" AT THE PALAIS GALLIERA (2023), WHICH HIGHLIGHTED HIS HERITAGE COLLECTION.

WHAT ABOUT **LOANS**? EXHIBITIONS? IN 2024, AND THIS YEAR?

THE AZZEDINE ALAÏA FOUNDATION HAS MADE SEVERAL LOANS TO VARIOUS INSTITUTIONS, INCLUDING THE CENTRE POMPIDOU, THE MUSÉE DES ARTS DÉCORATIFS, THE V&A, THE PALAIS GALLIERA AND THE LOUVRE. SINCE 2019, WE HAVE HAD AN ONGOING COLLABORATION WITH THE SCAD IN THE UNITED STATES, WITH AN EXHIBITION IN 2024 OF PART OF THE BALENCIAGA COLLECTION ACQUIRED BY AZZEDINE ALAÏA, FOLLOWED THIS YEAR BY THE JEANNE LANVIN COLLECTION, WHICH HE ADMIRER, AND FROM WHICH HE HAD COLLECTED SEVERAL HUNDRED OF HIS MODELS. ANOTHER EXHIBITION, "AZZEDINE ALAÏA COUTURIER," IS BEING PREPARED IN COLLABORATION WITH THE PRATO FABRIC MUSEUM.

WHAT OTHER MAJOR **PROJECTS** ARE IN THE PIPELINE?

AN EXHIBITION ON AZZEDINE ALAÏA'S ORIGINS AT THE MUSÉE DU MONDE ARABE WITH JACK LANG, PROBABLY CALLED "AZZEDINE ALAÏA AND THE MEDITERRANEAN," AND IN AUTUMN 2025 "AZZEDINE ALAÏA AND CHRISTIAN DIOR," AS HE HAD COLLECTED ALMOST 500 PIECES...



BY PAUL MCLAUHLAN

FEMME, A THRILLER ABOUT A DRAG PERFORMANCE THAT SEEKS REVENGE ON A HOMOPHOBIC ATTACKER. THE INCOMPARABLE SINÉAD O'CONNOR. THE MESOPOTAMIAN GODDESS TANIT. THE WOMEN THAT RAISED HIM. BURÇ AKYOL'S FALL-WINTER 2025 COLLECTION IS A DEEPLY PERSONAL AND EMOTIONAL STUDY ON FEMININITY AND WHAT IT STANDS FOR TODAY. IN THE WORLD HE CONSTRUCTS, WHEREIN GENDER CONVENTIONS ARE THROWN TO THE WIND, THE TURKISH DESIGNER ADDRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF EMBRACING FEMININITY DESPITE WOMEN'S BODIES BEING SUBJECT TO MALE OPINION AND HOMOPHOBIA, AND CREATING A SENSE OF SIGNIFICANCE AROUND DRESSING FOR SPECIAL OCCASIONS.

THROUGH SURMISING AND REWORKING FAMILIAR TROPES, AKYOL REPOSITIONED FEMININITY AS AN ACT OF RESILIENCE. HE LISTED A HOST OF FEMININE DETAILS AND SILHOUETTES. THERE WERE BASQUES RENDERED IN EXAGGERATED PROPORTIONS. THERE WAS HIS EONYMOUS COWL DRAPING AT THE HIPS ON SINUOUS GOWNS. HIS SIGNATURE TAILORING WAS PRESENT IN A SCOOP-NECK BLAZER – ORIGINALLY INTRODUCED IN SPRING-SUMMER 2025 – WITH A NARROW WAISTLINE. AKYOL BIFURCATED REFERENCES TO HIS HERITAGE: ON A PERSONAL LEVEL, HE RECALLED HIS GRANDMOTHER'S STYLE, WITH A SMATTERING OF FAUX FUR JACKETS MAKING AN APPEARANCE ON THE RUNWAY. ON A CULTURAL NOTE, HE PRINTED JACQUARDS WITH PATTERNS BORROWED FROM TRADITIONAL TURKISH CARPETS. HE ROUNDED OUT THE OFFERING WITH ETHEREAL MOUSSELINE DRESSES.

“THERE ARE SO MANY TYPES OF WOMEN IN THE WORLD THAT I DIDN'T WANT TO CATEGORIZE THEM. IT'S ABOUT OFFERING THEM A SPACE WHERE THEY CAN BE MULTIPLE AND PLURAL,” SAID THE DESIGNER, CALLING FROM HIS WORK BENCH, WHERE HE WAS STILL CONCEPTUALISING NEW DESIGNS FOR THE COLLECTION.

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE US **TO KNOW ABOUT THE COLLECTION?**

I DON'T KNOW IF AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL IS THE RIGHT WORD BUT IT'S ALWAYS A PERSONAL TAKE ON SOMETHING THAT I'M FEELING AT THE MOMENT. WITH EVERYTHING THAT'S HAPPENING IN THE WORLD, WE CANNOT BE TONE DEAF TO ANYTHING AS DESIGNERS.

THIS COLLECTION IS CALLED 'FEMME,' BECAUSE OF A FEW EPISODES IN MY OWN LIFE WHERE I HAD TO SUPPRESS MY FEMININITY. LUCKILY, I GREW UP AS A GAY KID SURROUNDED BY WOMEN WHO ENCOURAGED ME TO BE MYSELF. WHEN I WAS A STUDENT, I USED TO WEAR MAKEUP, I WOULD WEAR LIPSTICK, AND I WOULD WEAR HEELS. UNFORTUNATELY, I HAVE HAD A FEW HOMOPHOBIC EPISODES IN MY LIFE THAT MADE ME AWARE OF MY FEMININITY AND IN A WAY THAT MADE IT FEEL UNACCEPTABLE. WITH EVERYTHING THAT'S HAPPENING IN THE UNITED STATES WITH WOMEN'S BODIES BEING SUBJECT TO MALE OPINION, IT MADE ME ASK MYSELF, DO I HAVE ANY LEGITIMACY IN TALKING ABOUT FEMININITY FROM A WOMAN'S POINT OF VIEW? I DON'T THINK SO. AS MEN, WE SHOULD STOP TALKING ABOUT IT. BUT, FEMININITY IS INSPIRING TO ME AND I WANTED TO EXPRESS ASPECTS OF MY OWN FEMININITY. IT BROUGHT ME TO THIS FUN SPACE THAT IS ALMOST CAMP.

IT'S YOUR **FIRST SEASON ON THE WOMENSWEAR SCHEDULE.** WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO BRING?

I'M FOCUSING ON WHAT I WANT TO OFFER IN TERMS OF WOMENSWEAR. IF I'M GOING TO TALK ABOUT WOMEN, I WANT TO SPEAK TO THE ONE THAT I WOULD LOVE TO BE. I WAS PLAYING WITH THE IDEA OF THE BOURGEOIS, THE DRAG, AND THE PERFORMING OF FEMININITY.

HOWEVER, LIKE ANY COLLECTION, IT'S AN ARTISANAL PROCESS BECAUSE I MAKE CLOTHES EVERY DAY. I HAVE A POINT OF VIEW AND I WANT TO BE AS PERSONAL AS POSSIBLE WITH IT. OF COURSE, IT'S EXCITING BECAUSE IT'S PARIS FASHION WEEK®; PEOPLE ARE GOING TO PAY MORE ATTENTION TO IT, BUT I DON'T WANT TO POLLUTE MY PROCESS WITH THIS IN MIND. I'M PROUD AND HAPPY THAT MY APPLICATION WAS SUCCESSFUL AND IT CHALLENGES YOU, LIKE EVERY COLLECTION, TO SHOW THE BEST OF YOURSELF. AND ALSO, IT'S A DEADLINE TO KEEP IN MIND [LAUGHS].

WHAT ELSE IS **NEW FOR FALL-WINTER?**

TO ADD TO THE UNIVERSE I'M BUILDING, WE'VE STARTED A HOMEWARES COLLABORATION WITH CACHE, A FELLOW TURKISH BRAND. [THERE ARE] BATHROBES, CARPETS, BED LINENS, AND TOWELS. IN TURKEY, THE FIRST THING YOU DO WHEN YOU SET UP A HOME IS TO LAY DOWN CARPETS BECAUSE YOU NEED TO HOST PEOPLE AND WELCOME YOUR FRIENDS.

DO **TRENDS** STILL MATTER?

WITH THE QUIET LUXURY BULLSHIT THAT I'M TIRED OF HEARING ABOUT – IT'S SO BORING AND CONSERVATIVE – WE ARE SEEING A POVERTY OF DESIGN. AS DESIGNERS, WE ARE BECOMING LESS GENEROUS WHEN WE OFFER PIECES. WITH A SHOW, YOU'RE SHARING A VISION AND IF YOU'RE NOT COMPLETE, RAW, AND OPEN ABOUT EVERYTHING THAT YOU LOVE ABOUT DESIGNING FOR THE SAKE OF REDUCTION, THEN THERE'S NOTHING LEFT, AND WE ALL END UP DOING THE SAME CAMEL COAT. I'M NOT REALLY INTO THAT.

COULD YOU SUGGEST A **MANTRA?**

RESILIENCE. NEVER TAKE NO AS AN ANSWER. YOU WILL ALWAYS FIND THE SOLUTION OR RESOURCES.

Chanel Fall-Winter 25/26

Ready-to-Wear Collection

LIKE A THEATRE OF DREAMLIKE ILLUSIONS, THE CHANEL FALL-WINTER 2025/26 READY-TO-WEAR COLLECTION, PRESENTED BY THE CREATION STUDIO, PLAYS ON SCALES OF SIZE, LENGTH AND PROPORTION. BENEATH THE GLASS ROOF OF THE GRANDPALAIS, AN INSTALLATION DESIGNED BY SCENOGRAPHER WILLO PERRON DANCES OVER THE FLOOR WHILE SOARING INTO THE AIR. WITH HIS BLACK RIBBON AS A MONUMENTAL BACKDROP, THE COLLECTION LEANS INTO POINTS OF REFERENCE AND ALTERS PERCEPTIONS.

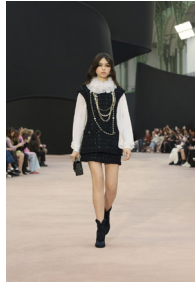


FROM THIS PERSPECTIVE, A MINI JACKET IN BLUE, WHITE AND PINK TWEED IS WORN WITH EXAGGERATEDLY LONG TROUSERS. A BIG POPLIN SHIRT REACHES DOWN TO THE ANKLES, A LITTLE BLACK TWEED JACKET TRIMMED WITH BRAID ADOPTS THE APPEARANCE OF A LONG COATDRESS WITH JEWELLED BUTTONS, AND A CAPE ENDS WITH JACKET CUFFS.



THE BOW, THE RIBBON, THE PEARL AND THE FLOWER... THE COLLECTION REVISITS SOME OF THE MOST CHERISHED HOUSE SIGNATURES. IN EVERY SIZE, BOWS BLOSSOM OVER THE COLLARS AND CUFFS OF BLOUSES AND DRESSES, ACCUMULATE ON NECKLACES AND DOWN TO THE ANKLES OF A DAZZLING BLACK DOWN JACKET AND SWEAT-PANTS ENSEMBLE. A LONG WHITE KNITTED RIBBON WRAPS AROUND A BLACK SWEATER CONCLUDING IN A BIG BOW ON THE SHOULDER. OTHER VOLUMINOUS OR OPENWORK (CUT-OUT) BOWS HIGHLIGHT DRESSES, CARDIGANS AND SWEATERS. HEELS ARE MADE OF A SINGLE PEARL, A CROSS-BODY BAG GIVES THE IMPRESSION OF AN OVERSIZED PEARL NECKLACE, AND A SET OF JEWELS IS ADORNED WITH MAXIMALIST RHINESTONES: SPIRITED ILLUSIONS OF SCALE DOMINATE THE COLLECTION.

TO GIVE BODY TO THESE TROMPE L'OEIL EFFECTS, THE COLLECTION ALSO EXPLORES LAYERING. A THREE-PIECE OUTFIT IN GRENADINE TWEED CONSISTS OF A MICRO-JACKET LINED WITH BRIGHT RED SILK, A WRAP SKIRT AND A PAIR OF FLARED TROUSERS. ANOTHER IN BRONZE HUES INCLUDES A TUNIC AND TROUSERS WITH A SKIRT BUTTONED OVER. A THIRD FEATURES A SLEEVELESS BLOUSON GILET AND A LONG IVORY SLIT SKIRT TOPPED WITH A MINISKIRT.



BETWEEN CONTRAST AND BALANCE, A SUIT IN CHAMPAGNE, BLACK OR WHITE TWEED IS SET OFF BY A DIAPHANOUS FLOUNCED CAPE IN BLACK OR WHITE ILLUSION TULLE. HERE, A BLOUSE AND SKIRT IN BLACK TULLE ARE WORN OVER AN ECRU TROUSER SUIT. THERE, A LONG SHIRT WITH PUFFED SLEEVES IN WHITE TULLE ENVELOPS AN ECRU JACKET-DRESS. THROUGH THIS TRANSPARENCY, THE LINES OF THE SILHOUETTE ARE SUPERIMPOSED AND CREATE MOVEMENT.



DELICACY ALSO INTERVENES IN THE SHAPE OF CHIFFON JEANS, SILK LOOKING LIKE TWEED, A PRINT OF RIBBON MOTIFS FLOATING IN THE WIND AND AS A HOODED PARKA IN BLACK ORGANZA EMBELLISHED WITH BOWS. FEMININITY REIGNS SUPREME WITH SOCK-ANKLE BOOTS AND A SATIN BOUILLONNÉ ALONG THE LENGTH OF THE VAMP OF A PAIR OF SHOES.



REMOVABLE RUFF-COLLARS RESEMBLING COROLLAS, BLACK WOOL LACE TRENCH COATS INLAID WITH ENHANCED FAUX FUR, AND BLACK SWEATERS WITH 3D WHITE PETAL PLASTRONS PUNCTUATE THE COLLECTION WITH A POETIC TOUCH. NEVER FAR FROM THE UNIVERSE OF FAIRYTALES, THE FALL-WINTER 2025/26 READY-TO-WEAR COLLECTION CONJURES UP A WORLD OF MASTERY AND IMAGINATION, ALL WHILE RENDERING THE HOUSE CODES SUBLIME.

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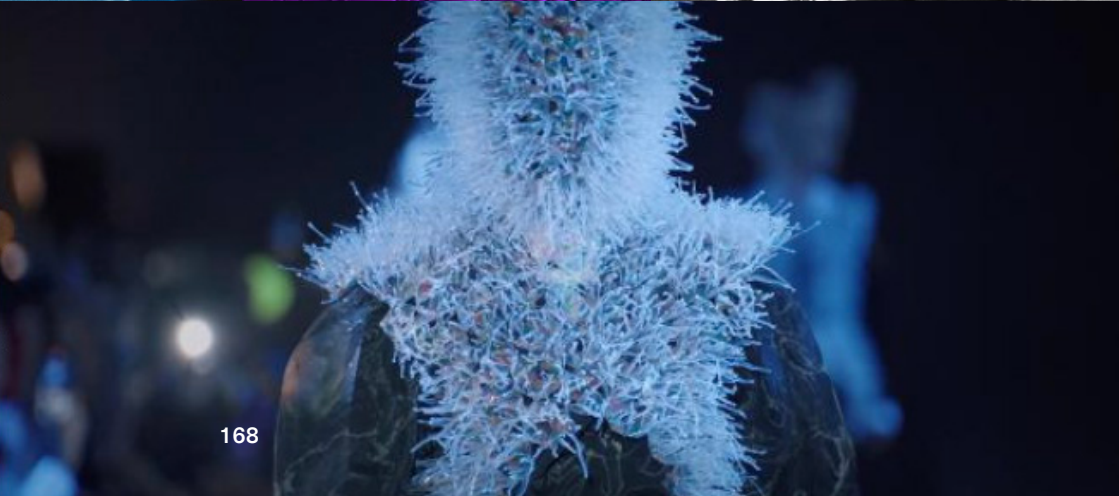
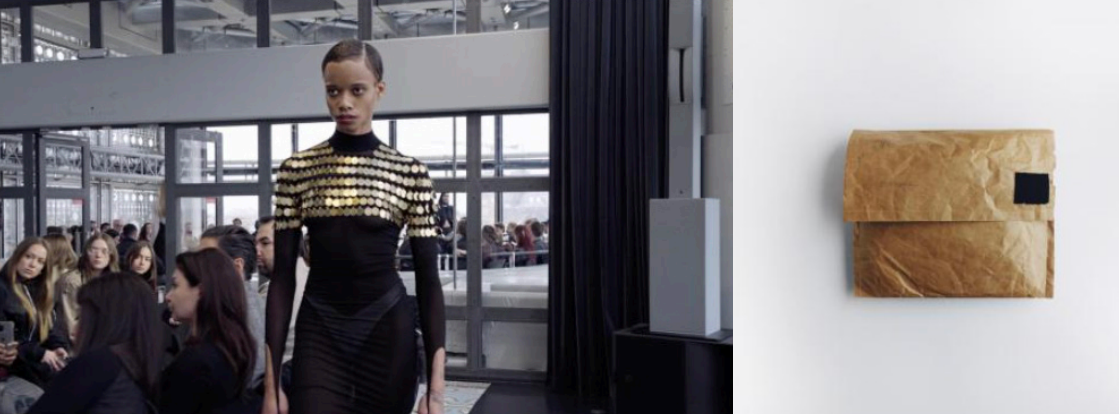
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