

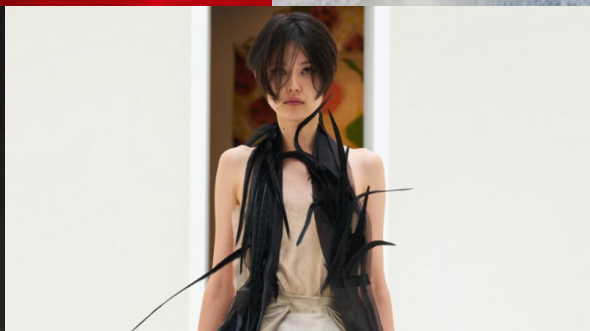
insider



haute couture fall/winter 2024-2025



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 HAUTE COUTURE 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

06	Rick	Dick
10	Caroline	Issa
14	Ari	Seth Cohen
18	Hanan	Besovic
22	Nicole	Chapoteau
26	Carla	Wachtveitl

portraits

34	Marine	Billet
40	Kazuhide	Sekiyama
46	Colette	Maciet

focus

54	Rahul	Mishra
60	Mikimoto	
64	Alexis	Mabille
70	Charles	de Vilmorin
74	Alaïa	Kuramata
80	Iris	Van Herpen
84	Viktor	Rolf
88	ArdAzAei	
92	Chanel	FW 24/25
94	Anatomy	of light

a conversation with

100	Yuima	Nakazato
-----	-------	----------

photos credits



THROUGH A FEEL FOR FASHION, HAUTE COUTURE 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.

Rick Dick



The AI-generated memes picturing Zendaya in her tennis ball gown that Rick Dick conceived right before the MET Gala became worldwide viral. This mysterious and highly creative Italian combines his background in advertising graphics with a passion for fashion, art and technology in order to explore the comedic potential of a new medium. He comes up with timely and relevant content for fashion magazines while also working as a brand consultant. Through his can't-look-away memes, crafted with AI, he offers audiences an entertaining and singular point of view that often extends beyond fashion to societal issues.

What excites you in fashion right now?

What excites me most about today's fashion is its fluidity. I see lines flowing, genres merging, and a total freedom of expression. There are no more rigid categories; everyone can play with styles and create something unique and personal. It's as if fashion is finally freeing itself from stereotypes, embracing multiplicity. And that, in my opinion, is fantastic!

Who or what will drive the greatest change in fashion this year?

I believe that young people will play an important role. The new generations are more sensitive to social and environmental issues, and they are also more likely to experiment with fashion. They are not afraid to dare and challenge conventions, and this is fertile ground for innovation. In addition, social media continues to play a fundamental role in spreading new trends and giving a voice to emerging talents.

In addition to fluidity, another aspect that makes me optimistic about the future of fashion is the growing attention to sustainability. Finally, there is more and more awareness that the Industry has a significant environmental impact and that a change of course is necessary. I see many emerging brands that use eco-friendly materials, adopt more environmentally friendly production processes, and promote conscious consumption. And consumers are also becoming more attentive to these issues, choosing quality garments that last over time and are produced ethically.

What is one reason to be optimistic about the state of fashion going forward?

With my work, I hope to be able to contribute to making fashion a more fun world where everyone feels like they can participate, regardless of their background or budget. I want to use my art to challenge stereotypes and promote a beauty that is not rigidly defined. I believe that fashion has the power to unite people and create a more just and tolerant world. And I want to do my part to make it possible by raising awareness, when I can, of the issues that are close to my heart.

What impact might you hope to have on fashion through your work?

In what ways do you think AI might benefit fashion?

Artificial intelligence can be a powerful design tool. It can analyse trends, predict preferences, and even generate completely new ideas. It can be used to optimise production processes, reducing waste and increasing efficiency.

Can you suggest a fashion mantra for '24?

Absolutely! My mantra for fashion in 2024 is: 'Exist without conforming!' We are free to express our personality through fashion, without having to bend to external pressures and fleeting trends. Let's wear what makes us feel good, what reflects our uniqueness and allows us to stand tall in the world.

Caroline Issa



If Caroline Issa possesses the type of natural style that makes her seem destined for fashion, she actually began her career as a management consultant with an undergraduate business degree from The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania. In 2002, she met the team from the then-nascent TANK Magazine, based in London, and her fashion passion took hold. She left the business world for magazine publishing and brand strategy consulting. Eventually became chief executive and fashion director of TANK, roles she still holds today, and editor of BecauseLondon.com. She is also Chairperson of the Board of Trustees at Artangel as well as a Non-Executive Director of the British Fashion Council — both not-for-profit organisations committed to championing and developing excellence in the art and fashion worlds respectively.

What excites you in fashion right now?

Designers who use fashion as a platform for good. Brands who are re-thinking the system and tearing up the old rule books to ensure the wealthfare of the planet. Magazines who support those who see both beauty and justice as key to success.

I'll give you one reason with many contributors: Marine Serre, Gabriela Hearst, GmbH, Amy Powney of Mother of Pearl, Kevin Germanier, Willy Chavarria, Paolo Carzana, Paria Farzaneh... and on and on we go.

What is one reason to be optimistic about the state of fashion going forward?

In what ways do you think AI might benefit fashion?

It will allow humans to focus on the things that make us human: emotion, passion, curation, POV and craft and trial by error.

What makes community? Groups of people who share the same values. Fashion magazines express their values through their aesthetic; the teams they work with; the designers and makers they platform. If it connects with a loyal community, that will always be relevant and significant.

How is social media evolution impacting the fashion language?

It's the same one we've had since 1998: Buy Less But Buy Better.

How can fashion magazines maintain their significance in a society where everyone can express their point of view?

I can't answer this in less than 15 seconds.

Can you suggest a fashion mantra for '24?

Ari Seth Cohen



The birth of Ari Seth Cohen's ingenious idea, *Advanced Style*, began with Bluma, his late grandmother who he considered his best friend. A librarian, she made him realise that anyone can be creative, enthusiastic and stylish at every age breaking all the clichés. He gradually began photographing people over 60 and in 2008, he launched the blog, which evolved into a widely popular pillar devoted to capturing the sartorial sense of the senior set. From this came several books (the first, from 2012, has sold over 150,000 copies worldwide), followed by a documentary released in 2014. Currently, he is working on a forthcoming book, *Advanced Pets*.

What excites you in fashion right now?

I am constantly inspired by personal expression. I love to see the mix of vintage and contemporary, and the breaking down of gender norms in fashion. I always look to older women for style inspiration. For me, dressing up is about expressing one's spirit and creativity. Style has the power to bring visibility to the often unseen.

A move towards more sustainable production.

What is one reason to be optimistic about the state of fashion going forward?

In what ways do you think AI might benefit fashion?

I am a bit skeptical of AI. Many AI photographers and operating systems have used my archives to create works that mirror my images. I'm a bit old-fashioned. I love things that are handmade. There will be a strong reaction against AI with a movement of people returning to skills and crafts that cannot be duplicated by computer systems.

More than anything I think we need to be thinking about the impact we have on this planet and the people who create the clothing we love to wear.

Who or what will drive the greatest change in fashion this year?

What impact might you hope to have on fashion through your work?

I created Advanced Style over 16 years ago to bring visibility to the creativity and spirit of the senior set. Over the past decade I have seen a huge shift towards embracing age diversity on the runways and in campaigns. Many of the women I photograph believe in sustainability and choose to wear vintage and upcycled fashions. My goal is to help people to feel good about themselves and about aging.

Can you suggest a fashion mantra for '24?
«Shop Your Closets.»

Hanan Besovic



While Hanan Besovic's widely popular and amusing alter ego, @ideservecouture, makes him an obvious choice for this week, his commentary on fashion extends to all corners of the industry – runway, red carpet, designers, models, magazines — served up in a distinct flavour of meme. From his home country of Croatia to his current home in Florida, Besovic's breakthrough voice has proven that the tired preconception of outsider-insider no longer applies. With humour more than snark, he dares to go where others do not, which helps explain his ever-rising following – 338,000 at the time of this feature.

What excites you in fashion right now?

What excites me in fashion right now is seeing if the new wave of creative directors in many houses is the right choice. I'm always rooting for the designers to do their best, but there has been a change in so many houses that it feels like it's a TV show that I cannot stop watching.

Graduate collections. I always love a good graduate collection because it is a fresh take on fashion and it's a fountain of new ideas.

What is one reason to be optimistic about the state of fashion going forward?

Is AI contradictory or complementary to Haute Couture?

I think that it's contradictory. The beauty of Haute Couture is the fact that there is a human factor to it. All these spectacular designs and inspirations that we see on the runway are from somebody's mind, experience, life. There is nothing fabricated about that. AI cannot give you that. It might give you an amazing design; but it's computer generated. There is no story behind it, and that is why I have a hard time connecting to AI in fashion.

Yes. Haute Couture has been a laboratory of ideas since the beginning. And if you want to talk about a laboratory, look no further than Jean Paul Gaultier, who gives designers access to the archives to re-create his designs and come up with new ideas. Haute Couture gives us an idea of what we can do. Is it always practical? No, but is it the best portrayal of fashion? Yes.

We often hear couture designers refer to their ateliers as laboratories.

Can Haute Couture still define new ideas in design?

Can you suggest a fashion mantra for '24?

Creativity is alive and well. I think in a sea of extremely commercial collections that we are being presented throughout the whole year, we have to remember that there's still amazing designers out there that are doing remarkable things. Designers that are putting their dreams, hopes, money, time and dedication into their craft.

Nicole Chapoteau



Given her steady rise through fashion editorial and styling, it may come as a surprise that Nicole Chapoteau initially pursued architecture, working for Rafael Viñoly Architects upon graduating from New York University. Her current role as fashion director at Vanity Fair means she is constantly interfacing with a wide range of talent, styling the likes of Bad Bunny, Regina King, Simone Biles, Julia Louis-Dreyfus and Evan Mock, while working with world-renowned photographers such as Mickalene Thomas, Annie Leibovitz, Ruth Ossai, and the ever-audacious duo, Maurizio Cattelan and Pierpaolo Ferrari. Prior to joining the masthead at the megawatt magazine, Chapoteau worked as a freelance stylist and brand consultant, contributing to Elle, Marie Claire, Harper's Bazaar, The Cut, Out and Ebony.

How does your role at the magazine shape your instincts, your eye?

For me, the fashion at Vanity Fair needs to play a part in expressing the talent's personality and/or telling a more in-depth story. I find, when I am styling a shoot or coming up with the fashion concept, that I am thinking much deeper. I want the fashion to be a little nerdy! For example, I want someone to say, «Oh I see what she did here – that Rick Owens dress mirrored Simon Biles's muscle definition, while the blush colour shows how delicate she is.» I don't know, maybe I get too into it, but that is always my thinking.

In what ways do you think AI might benefit fashion?

At this point, the only thing I like relating to AI in fashion is seeing young people use it to dream up looks their favourite celebs would have worn to The Met Gala. To me, fashion is an art form that still needs human touch and realness.

Is it sad to say the elections?! And I am speaking of globally, not just the US.

Who or what will drive the greatest change in fashion this year?

Every single one of Rafael Pavarotti's shoots! The last shoot he did of Rihanna is all I see when I close my eyes!

What excites you in fashion right now?

What impact might you hope to have on fashion this year?

My goal is always to bring attention to BIPOC talent. Whether it's stylists, designers or creative agencies. If anyone recognises that I do so, cool; but my goal remains to open doors and bring recognition as best as I can.

We often hear couture designers refer to their ateliers as laboratories.

Of course, couture still defines new ideas in design. Couture is one of the highest art forms of fashion. It's the place to dream; to show off craftsmanship; to be innovative in design – from fabrications to construction, even to beauty. Look at the impact of Pat McGrath's makeup from the last Maison Margiela couture show. We were all spiralling trying to figure out how to recreate her porcelain doll skin effect!

Wear your clothes!

Can you suggest a fashion mantra for '24?

Actual sustainable practices!

What would you like or hope to see more of from brands or the industry more generally?

Carla Wachtveitl



Carla Wachtveitl is an exceptional repository of fashion – whether her vast industry knowledge, her extensive network, or her wardrobe of collectible pieces. Born in Bangkok to a German father and Thai mother, she arrived in Paris in the 1990s to study. For two decades, she has been a communications mainstay at Chanel and Givenchy in Paris and at Yohji Yamamoto in New York. Wachtveitl recently launched Kinnara Kind, a creative consultancy that specialises in fashion and luxury while fostering connections to culture and craftsmanship. Just as she has an innate sense for mixing fashion genres, she feeds her curiosity for all the arts – and this will prove invaluable as she sets forth developing bespoke communications and image strategies in Paris and beyond.

How does your role at the magazine shape your instincts, your eye?

Because good design is truly timeless! When you're wearing vintage, you are pretty certain that few people (or none!) will be wearing the same piece as you. It feels more special. I have always worn a lot of vintage in my life. They are my treasures. I have and still wear my Romeo Gigli coat from 1993, that's still perfect for today. Just like all my Yohji Yamamoto's pieces from the late 1995-2000s, they are still «me.» And many Chanel pieces will always be keepers. Good design, good craftsmanship and especially good quality stand the test of time. And you pair them with different things from different eras. It's about the mix – the styling – in terms of relevancy. Mixing past and present. Ultimately, they're the «real deal,» and this is why they're special and relevant, and you want to collect. And this doesn't mean designer brands, by the way. Some vintage finds have no label, but you see they are handmade.

What excites you in fashion right now?

I always love to dress up, so I might see a cool inspirational picture of someone somewhere, and I am in the mood. That's the power and fascination for fashion. It can be very impulsive. It's an expression of self. And it brightens my day, or it protects me like an armor, when I'm feeling cloudy. Artisanal, crafty and independent brands excite me (Nemeth, Norlha, UK designer, Standing Ground), or designers like Rick Owens or Haider Ackermann – and the Japanese triumvirate obviously! I also love fine jewellery (Ana Khouri, Griegst, vintage Ilias Lalaounis). I'm always about the mix, how you pair things. You've got to make it your own. Go for individuality and the good spirit! What else excites me? I like the industry. The individuals working in the industry: the writers, the photographers, the art directors, the producers, the independent retailers etc.

There are good designers out there; and these LVMH, ANDAM, Festival de Hyères Prizes are wonderful in helping these creatives move ahead. Generally, I am glad to see people who are true fashion lovers, and who get excited about things, especially when they are individualistic. I wish there was less waste, and I hope everyone will hold onto their treasures and treat them as such.

What is one reason to be optimistic about the state of fashion going forward?

AI can be useful in any field, as it helps with research of any kind. Therefore, AI is simply part of daily life, no? But Haute Couture as we know it, the clothes making part in itself (whether for the show or for the client), is supposed to be largely hand-made.

Is AI contradictory or complementary to Haute Couture?

We often hear couture designers refer to their ateliers as laboratories.

When you are John Galiano at Maison Margiela, one can safely say Haute Couture is a laboratory, yes!

Can haute couture still define new ideas in design?

I generally love history. I always want to know the beginning and the evolution of something – the knowing, the context. I learned about Haute Couture and its craft when I was at Chanel over 12 magnificent years, and you get to dive into that world, see everything on a microscopic level. God/the devil is in the details. You actually must see it up close. And it's not only eveningwear and gowns; it's daywear too. You learn to see subtleties, and you develop an even more refined eye. It's not only the tailoring or the draping, it's also about the custom-made fabrics, the work on the fabric's surface. And of course, there are the Métiers d'Art houses that work on the embroideries or the pleating and so forth. They are keeping craftsmanship at the most experienced level alive. If you love craftsmanship, Haute Couture is it! This is clothes-making in its purest and finest form.

What can we learn from Haute Couture?

Can you suggest a fashion mantra for '24?

When I get dressed in the morning, I pick something I haven't worn in a long, long time. This way I circulate the goods, and it feels (sort of) «new,» and I wear it in a different way. Be creative in your own closet, I suppose!

por-

•
-traits

MARINE BILLET: «I'M HERE TO CONCRETISE DREAMS.»

Marine Billet, an independent artisan jeweller, has been bringing Schiaparelli's sketches to life for the last six years. By experimenting, exploring and sculpting matter, she demonstrates with virtuosity that adornment is the key to self-revelation



Billet began her adult journey with uncertainty. A graduate of an architecture school in Normandy, where she grew up, the young woman found herself working monotonous days. What consumed her were jewellery pieces, which she collected compulsively. «I began amassing them. From Christian Lacroix to Saint Laurent, I scoured.» recounts the creative. In Vietnam for training related to her work, she stumbled upon headdresses, earrings and the like, and became enchanted by the craftsmanship.

«When I decided to change my career, people would say I was brave, when in fact it was survival.»

Still in her job as an architect, she started investigating opportunities for a career shift. «I knew I wanted to work with my hands. What appeals to me about jewellery is that you can create an object quickly, from conception to realization.» She set her sights on AFEDAP, a school based in Paris that offers a «Jewellery Author» programme, which includes not only design but also manufacturing.» When you wipe the slate clean to reinvent yourself and taste creative freedom, you get carried away, leaving yourself no choice. Yet she threw herself into it wholeheartedly, taking on internships. «I knocked on every door and didn't count my hours.» In her second year of study, she held an exhibition at the Hôtel Mariott République for her first collection, «Paris, I Want You». She recalls, «I walked around Paris and moulded a lamppost, a relief on the ground.» The connections between architecture and jewellery blurred through her material work and she gradually emerged from her former life. During this period, she discovered the term *parurier*, which refers to a person who makes and sells accessories used in dressmaking and sewing. It was a revelation: «It was my dream job!» she claims, her hands raised in the air, the emotion still vivid as she finally found her path.

«I knocked on every door.»

She also completed an internship with Philippe Grand, a prestigious jeweller who has created jewellery and accessories for renowned names in the industry, including Christian Lacroix, Jean Paul Gaultier, Givenchy, and Louis Vuitton. «With Philippe Grand, I learned more in a month than in a year; I discovered different techniques.» she says, of the behind-the-scenes name that the industry knows and shares under the radar.

One day, after ringing the doorbell at Schiaparelli, someone finally agreed to provide her with an email address. The studio had a person overseeing jewellery, but they offered her a first task: to create the handle of a bag, made of driftwood and metal. She starts with the basics: «a workbench, a motor, a handpiece, and a blowtorch,» and as the fashion shows unfolded, her equipment expanded. «Once, I even had to buy a large saw to cut a strip of metal for a runway piece, I still have it» she muses. In January 2018, Bertrand Guyon had been the artistic director of the house since 2015. The seasons pass, as do the collaborations. When Daniel Roseberry took the reins of Schiaparelli in April 2019, Billet sensed «a new style and a lot of energy. It was very exciting.» Still, the Schiaparelli house only presented during Haute Couture Week, finally returning to the Paris Fashion Week Calendar for ready-to-wear in March 2023 for the Fall-Winter 2023/2024 season.

«When I first saw the sketch of the lung dress, I had butterflies in my stomach.»

How viral some fashion pieces can go. On July 11, 2021, Bella Hadid pranced down the red carpet at Cannes, climbing the steps for the film 'Tre Piani,' directed by Nanni Moretti in a dress adorned with the golden *branche* structure of lungs. «When I saw the sketch, I knew it was going to be a beautiful project,» she recalls, anticipating a major fashion moment. «The sketch spoke for itself. That's the magic of a good sketch.» It was indeed the first time she'd ever wondered how to make lungs, so she decided to find out for herself. «I soon realised that they looked like inverted roots. I went to the park next to my house and uprooted a plant to take a look.» The first project took a week to complete. «The central part is made of brass plate, with brass wires around it. If you turn the center over, it is hollow.»

Billet was also behind the Schiaparelli's famous golden resin baby. «The moulding was done on an infant – in plastic, of course – but it was very realistic,» she says, describing the demoulding as «a very funny scene, with the baby attached to this breast.»

Among other unique projects she has created for Schiaparelli, she also mentions a mask for the rapper Cardi B. «The moulding was done in the United States by a makeup artist. I received her silicone face in the post,» she explains with a big smile, miming her surprise when opening the package.

«Petite main? Belle main!»

«I've been told 'you're just a maker',» she confides, referring to the ignorance and disdain that intellectual professions sometimes show towards manual work. «A 'petite main'? My hands are anything but small, I win all my thumb wars,» she retorts with a grin, looking at her ring-adorned hands, including the articulated silver finger she crafted for herself. «Even if we receive a beautiful sketch, it needs to be developed, and that is conceptual work. Behind every skilled hand, there is always a brain. There is always a soul connecting the brain to the hand.» Craftsmanship, the art professions, and manual work are being increasingly valued. «It's changing. Crafts are being recognised and associated with luxury, with excellence. Schools are filling up,» she explains. The spotlight on manual work and craftsmanship provides a fertile ground for the blossoming of creative minds who were previously hesitant to express their primary passion. «If we pursue excellence and passion, we can achieve anything,» affirms Billet, whose early career exemplifies this.

«I waited, it took time, and things fell into place by themselves.»

In late 2023, Billet won two awards within two weeks. The Prix des Artisan·es was awarded by ELLE Magazine with the support of LVMH, in partnership with Artisans d'Avenir and the Institut pour les Savoir-Faire Français (formerly INMA). Last year, it inaugurated a «Jewellery-Watchmaking» section. She submitted her application and presented her pieces to a jury that was immediately won over. This was a major recognition for the creative who had switched careers six years earlier. Shortly after, she received a second award in Milan, «Best in Creativity» created and handed over by Laura Inghirami during Milan Jewelry Week. «Everything accelerated at once. You have to take your time, and eventually, it happens,» she explains. While this was a strong professional recognition, she reflects on it calmly and humbly. It is when she talks about the metal she bends or the shapes she sculpts that her eyes light up, expressing her passion.



«Working for others, technically, allows me to surpass myself.»

In October 2023, she founded Incarnem, her own brand, her creative outlet. Her desire for independence, from conception to creation, became a reality. «The further I go, the more I do everything myself. I even do my own gilding, with gold baths at home» she explains. «Every morning, I'm happy to go to my atelier. «Starting her own brand was also about asserting her own style. «I want to make accessories, not in the mediocre sense of the term, but so that they become a second skin.» Already, she had been creating pieces on the side for several years; experimenting, because ideas were always buzzing. «My pieces are in silver or gold and are normally hallmarked, which I didn't do at the beginning. I didn't sign my pieces; that was a mistake,» she explains, emphasising that she only offers «bespoke pieces that fit a person's morphology like a glove. I'm not interested in commercial work.» Incarnem will celebrate its anniversary later this year, from October 3 through 16, in the gardens of the Palais Royal in the 3m2 gallery. «It will be a mix of collections and body moulds, with a special scenography,» she says. It will also be an opportunity to look back, to contemplate the path taken. «I was so driven, I didn't count my hours.»

Recently, Billet was invited to present her work at her high school in Fécamp, «a small town where, compared to Paris, there are few choices and opportunities for manual trades,» she says. She presented her journey, her doubts, and her accomplishments. «I was surprised to receive many questions about my salary and whether I could make a living from it. I earned more as an architect, but I feel much better now,» she says. Financial fulfillment cannot supplant personal fulfillment. «One boy wanted to be a cabinetmaker although he was also considering law school. If we can help at least one or two people find their path, that's already something!» she concludes optimistically.

Billet is an artisan-model maker-prototypist-jeweller-artist (all apply), and her creations consistently stem from a process of reflection and commitment. The pieces are powerful, distinctive and memorable. Even when she's creating for others, she immerses herself in them head-on. «When I hand over a piece I've crafted, even if it's not my design, there's always a snippet of my soul that goes with it.»

KAZUHIDE SEKIYAMA

Kazuhide Sekiyama, born in Tokyo in 1983, was still attending Keio University studying bioinformatics when he founded Spiber in 2007, the biotech venture company which creates sustainable and high-performance materials in various industries such as apparel, food, automotive, and more. The process is unique, based on the Brewed Protein, a new material platform utilising fermentation technology inspired by nature's diversity and circularity. Thanks to Seykiyama, who now Director and Representative Executive Officer, there are many brands that use Spiber's highly sustainable fabrics including Yuima Nakazato for in Haute Couture, and Y's by Yohji Yamamoto, Sacai, The North Face, Goldwin, Nanamica, and Woolrich for Ready-to-Wear.



How do you think Haute Couture might embrace technology while maintaining the dream of the uniqueness?

With all due respect, it's truly remarkable how the artisans in Haute Couture have been pioneers, consistently pushing the boundaries of creativity beyond clothing. Yet I can't help but think that with the thoughtful use of technology, they could take their craft even further, introducing concepts that honour tradition while also being visionary. It's fascinating how, the more innovative the concept, the more captivating and special it seems. For instance, Japanese couture designer Yuima Nakazato in collaboration with Hosoo, a renowned Japanese weaver and kimono curator, has presented nishijin-ori, a traditional kimono textile with a history spanning 1,200 years from Kyoto by introducing Brewed Protein fibres and silk to craft in his Fall-Winter 2021 collection. As a result, they created a never-before-seen shade of metallic blue. I believe that by blending tradition with innovation, there's a potential to captivate and inspire, often found in novel concepts that embody uniqueness. It's through this harmonious integration that we aim to honour the legacy of Haute Couture while humbly embracing the possibilities of tomorrow.

Traditionally Haute Couture is defined by craftsmanship and handwork. In what ways are proteins that become fabrics considered to be similar?

The dedication and high standards of excellence and craftsmanship in Haute Couture resonate deeply with our journey in developing Brewed Protein fibres. Similar to artisans who dedicate years to perfecting their techniques and handwork ability to create a unique piece, we spent nearly two decades refining our technology and fibres to attain the necessary level of precision and innovation. It was a process of constant adjustment, often down to minute details like temperature variations of just 1 degree Celsius or timing variances of a single second, all while ensuring our materials maintained impeccable quality. Additionally, in our pursuit of excellence, we went as far as designing and constructing over 800 pieces of machinery tailored specifically to our novel material, as existing machinery simply couldn't meet our needs. Although we come from different backgrounds, I believe the passion and commitment that Haute Couture designers invest in creating beautiful works of art are truly admirable. We are extremely grateful that our material has been used for such special stages, and we are honoured to contribute to their extraordinary creations.

With your technology, can you produce only fabrics or sustainable embellishments, for instance?

Yes, our technology holds the potential to produce a variety of items beyond fabrics, including beads, buttons, and glitters. We have already demonstrated this by crafting resin-like accessories from Brewed Protein material, which were showcased during Haute Couture Week. We are also developing protein materials that can function as new kinds of hide and waterproof membranes. This flexibility allows us to create a wide range of sustainable fashion products, offering new possibilities for designers and manufacturers. By fine-tuning our production process, we can transform the protein powder we create into fibres not only for apparel products but also for food ingredients, resin-like materials, films, glue, and more. This adaptability enables us to serve a wide range of industries with our innovative materials.

How might you increase the awareness about your technologies?

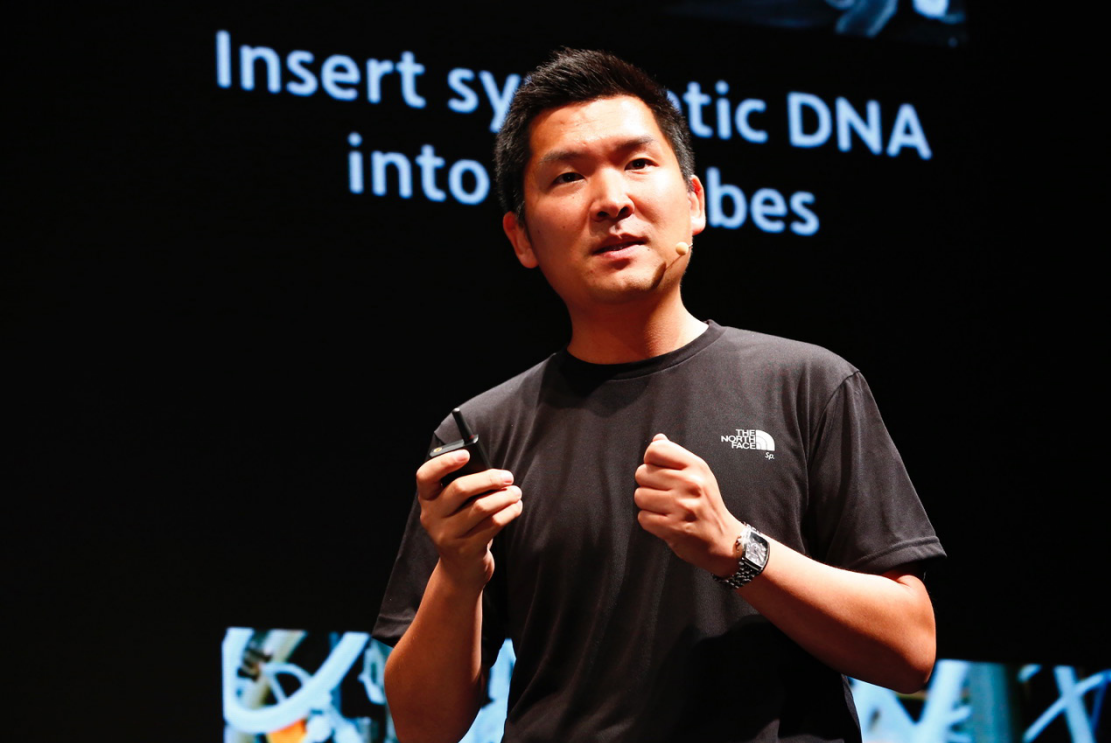
One way to raise awareness about our technologies is to partner with visionary designers and brands known for their exceptional creativity. Brewed Protein materials made its debut on the Sacai's men's runway in 2019. Since then, Yuima Nakazato has been adopting the materials into his designs through the last ten couture collections. In 2022, Eye Junya Watanabe Man released a hoodie crafted from Brewed Protein fibres, marking another significant use of the material. Our recent collaborations with Yohji Yamamoto brands and Kering Group and its Material Innovation Lab further expand our global reach and shared values. When these influential figures use and promote our materials, it naturally garners attention and builds trust among consumers. Our innovations are new and might be hard for the general public to understand at first; but seeing respected designers create amazing products with them makes it more intuitive. By showcasing impressive and stylish products made from our materials, we hope to spark interest and curiosity about Spiber and our work.

Do you use AI? In what ways do you think AI might benefit fashion?

Absolutely, we extensively utilise AI in our operations. To us, AI is as indispensable as a computer because it aids in designing our protein materials, streamlining production processes, and facilitating various creative tasks. While AI may spark debate within the fashion industry, I firmly believe it can never overshadow the value and integrity inherent in the meticulous craftsmanship of designers. I trust that those who genuinely appreciate and cherish fashion will recognise this. If we can harness AI to enhance production efficiency, optimise logistics, calculate environmental impacts, and alleviate the burdensome aspects of their work, it would be a significant step forward.

What impact might you hope to have on Haute Couture?

Once one major challenge is solved, another inevitably emerges; history has proven this. In other words, the continual exercise of creative ingenuity is vital for shaping the future. I truly believe that those who think outside the box and find creative ways to tackle today's problems are doing an enormous service to our planet and our future, regardless of their industry. I also believe that designers hold the key to adding value to both the fashion industry and society at large. By attending to the needs of each era and adeptly expressing them, designers play a crucial role. Furthermore, I see Spiber and Brewed Protein materials as embodiments of this potential. We aspire to make meaningful contributions to the world of Haute Couture, inspiring designers and creators to draw inspiration from these innovative materials and craft new visions of beauty and fashion. Ultimately, our aim is for these innovations to permeate the entire fashion industry, sparking diverse transformations.



What does a protein-made fabric have over other fabrics?

Brewed Protein fibres, as the name implies, are fibres made from protein. This animal-free, plant-derived material is uniquely created through the magic of fermentation. With their fine fibres, which can be controlled as fine as the finest cashmere or silk, they offer a unique luxurious soothing feel. When used at 100 percent, Brewed Protein fibre is less prone to pilling than cashmere or wool, doesn't fibrillate like silk, and is versatile enough to be worn in spring, fall, and winter. Of course, blending it with other materials can expand the range of textures even further. We expect our materials to be more affordable than animal fibres in the future, which should encourage more brands to adopt them. As the population grows and dynamics shift, the demand for clothing and materials continues to rise. While the aforementioned characteristics appeal to consumers, on a societal scale, we see Brewed Protein materials as potential game-changers. They offer solutions to various issues such as microplastic pollution from synthetic fibres, desertification caused by cashmere goat farming, and greenhouse gas emissions from animal agriculture. We're now ready to offer materials on a larger scale. While many in the industry are striving to improve society by developing new materials and technologies, we understand from our experiences that commercializing these materials presents its own set of challenges. Thus, we aim to create a successful case and pave the way for other innovators who share our goals.

COLETTE MACIET, AN EXCEPTIONAL PATH IN THE WINGS OF HAUTE COUTURE



Coco Chanel, Hanae Mori, Karl Lagerfeld, Hubert de Givenchy, John Galliano, Alexander McQueen, Yves Saint Laurent: Colette Maciet has worked closely beside some of the most illustrious names in Haute Couture. She joined Chanel at the age of 14 as a petite main, then became the première d'atelier to these masters. She carefully chronicles her journey in a book entitled «Haute Couture,» with a preface by Inès de la Fressange, and published by Michel Lafon.

In France in the early 1960s, school attendance was mandatory until the age of 14. After graduating, Maciet already sensed that the career ahead of her could not be learned academically. "I told my parents I didn't want to go to school anymore, and they said I had to work. I had a choice between sewing and hairdressing." The choice was quickly made. "My father's sister was working at Chanel as a première main qualifiée and asked if I could come in as an apprentice." Colette Maciet attended her first job interview at Chanel at the age of 14. "I hadn't even held a needle before going in," she admits. "I explained that I wanted to work, and that was it! It's incredible, you don't get in like that these days."

Fashion testimonies are precious. This writing and transmission work is crucial because it allows the facts to be embodied and transmitted. Colette Maciet carried out this work, with the support of her husband: "He gave me a lot of help and encouragement, as did my close circle of friends and family. They told me it was a unique career. Couturiers usually join a fashion house and spend their career there, climbing the ladder little by little," says Maciet, who did just the opposite.

«Mademoiselle Chanel used to say that one learns by doing.»

Gabrielle «Coco» Chanel revolutionised fashion by establishing the timeless codes of feminine elegance. After opening her fashion house in 1915, she moved to 31 rue Cambon in 1918. Success was instantaneous. When Colette Maciet joined the House, Gabrielle Chanel's international reputation had fully blossomed. «I learned by watching others work. Mademoiselle Chanel used to say that you learn by doing.» Maciet observed the seamstresses in action, supervised by «Monsieur Jean» Cazaubon, chef d'atelier tailleur. «Jean was my mentor. He always pushed me,» she says. Maciet progressed and became a première main qualifiée. «Once, Jean asked me to go with him to present a jacket to Mademoiselle. She said, 'Jean, I'll stay with the little girl. Then she turned to me and said, 'You're going to do what I tell you,' and started cutting.» Of Gabrielle Chanel, Maciet remembers a great rigour and sharp opinions. «Mademoiselle hated darts,» she recalls. «I always used to avoid wearing darts, it's so unattractive,» she adds with a grin. «Mademoiselle would only use soft fabrics like tweed, and we would place the fabric on top of the organza to pull the fabric in by the amount of the darts. It was supple and structured at the same time, without darts. She had found something fabulous.»

On January 10, 1971, Coco Chanel passed away at the Ritz, where she was staying. She was 87 years old. The collection she was preparing at the time was presented posthumously on January 26, 1971 to unanimous acclaim from the French and international press. From then on, the members of the ateliers carried on their work and continued to dress customers, scrupulously applying the ideas and wishes that Gabrielle Chanel had enacted her whole career. «Monsieur Jean then recommended me for a position as première d'atelier at Hanae Mori,» she recalls. In 1977, Hanae Mori presented her first collection in Paris, subsequently becoming the first Japanese Member of the Chambre Syndicale de la Haute Couture. As a première d'atelier at the age of 30, Maciet discovered new techniques, a new approach and perfected her art: «I was in charge of around 20 girls, and I distributed the work. It was the first time I'd done canvases because Mademoiselle didn't do sketches. It was a major shift.»

«Karl's sketches were so precise, clear and detailed».

On September 15, 1982, Chanel issued a press release stating, «The life and imagination of the Chanel haute couture collection will benefit from the artistic direction of Karl Lagerfeld from January 1983.» The House shakes its feathers and restructures itself. «Mr Paquito Sala was appointed to the Tailleur department and I was called to take over the Flou,» says Maciet. Lagerfeld presented his first collection for Chanel on January 25, 1983. The collection opened with three models, three suits, in blue, white and red, and was accompanied by the music of Edith Piaf and Charles Trenet. «I've kept the spirit of Chanel, but I've given it a little up-to-date edge,» said Lagerfeld to the press. The light, the customers, the glitz – and the work. Backstage, Colette Maciet and her teams were busy. «We were backstage. There's always finishing touches to be done. It was my life, I loved it. I spent a lot of nights working on the collections.»

«Karl was so sharp,» she adds. «Everyone received clear, detailed sketches. We made our canvas. Then, when we presented it to him, he would choose the fabric, the buttons... Then it would go to the production department and it would be distributed... His flaw was that he was never on time.» She worked there until 1990. She occasionally received job offers. «Of course, I always turned them down. I don't know if Karl heard these calls, or if someone told him. But he, who had always loved my drapes, suddenly didn't like them any more.»

«I styled Audrey Hepburn, Monsieur de Givenchy's close friend.»

In 1952, Hubert de Givenchy left Schiaparelli and founded his own fashion house, which joined the LVMH stable in 1988. "I was sad to leave Chanel, but if I had stayed, I would never have met Monsieur de Givenchy. Her voice softens as she mentions his name. "He was so generous, kind and well-mannered. I had to say hello in the morning and if I didn't, the secretary would call to ask if I was sulking," she recalls, noting that they celebrated Christmas and New Year's Eve. The approach was easy. She stayed with Hubert de Givenchy for 4.5 years as a *première d'atelier*, discovering and understanding a different creative approach. «I dressed Audrey Hepburn,» she recalls. She was a very good friend of Monsieur de Givenchy. Fittings took place in the grand salons, or at Monsieur's home on rue de Grenelle. I once went alone to Switzerland for fittings.

Hubert de Givenchy retired in 1995. John Galliano, a British tornado of creativity, took the reins of the House in a flash. He presented his first show on January 21, 1996, at the Porte d'Auteuil racecourse, and joined Dior in October of the same year. «When John Galliano arrived, everything changed except the teams. I kept my girls,» she explains. As *première d'atelier*, Maciet remembers a pivotal moment: a saturated contrast between Messieurs de Givenchy and Galliano. "Imagine a *première main* at her table, she has 50 centimetres to work with. When we started doing four-metre-long trains, we had to adapt," she says. At Givenchy, Colette Maciet then witnessed the arrival of Alexander McQueen. "McQueen knew how to work. He had been a tailor and he knew how to sew. And the sketches he drew were good," though she recalls that his character was far less gentle than that of the House's founder. "He shouted at everyone," she recalls.

Fashion creation was booming. Vogue Paris described Spring-Summer 1997 Haute Couture Week as a "Big Bang." Maciet evolved against a backdrop of creative whirlwinds. The collections by Martin Margiela and Comme des Garçons questioned the creation and aesthetics of clothing.

«And Monsieur Saint Laurent said, 'Take care of Colette, she's the apple of my eye.'»

One morning, the phone rang: «Yves Saint Laurent is looking for a *première d'atelier*.» Maciet applied promptly and met «Madame Muñoz,» Anne-Marie Muñoz, an emblematic figure at Saint Laurent who was studio director until Yves Saint Laurent's departure in 2002. «On my first day at Saint Laurent, Madame Muñoz introduced me to Monsieur Saint Laurent. He took me into his office next to the studio and said, looking at the Haute Couture director, Take care of Colette, she's the apple of my eye.»

Working with Georgette Capelli, chef d'atelier flou, Colette was again introduced to new methods. «Monsieur would put his sketches on the floor and tell us to choose what spoke to us, what we wanted to do,» she remembers. «Once, Georgette and I took the same sketch and our results were completely different.» Bringing a sketch or an idea to life involves perception, reflection and analysis. «I remember making a jumpsuit when Monsieur Saint Laurent had sketched an evening coat. He chose to keep the jumpsuit in the collection. Sometimes, the *première d'atelier* can change the designer's idea.

On Monday, January 7, 2002, Yves Saint Laurent held a press conference. Forty-four years after his first "Trapèze" collection, he announced the end of his career. Once he had left, Maciet worked briefly at Jean Paul Gaultier and then at Nina Ricci. "I brought along Martine Perez, who was part of my team at Saint Laurent. I promoted her to *seconde d'atelier*." In 2005, they launched Couture & Co Paris, which continued until 2019. "We have worked with several houses, including Givenchy and Dior. When Pierre Bergé founded the Yves Saint Laurent Museum in Marrakech, he turned to Maciet to reproduce pieces including the Saharienne, the Mondrian dress, "I explained to him that it was difficult to recreate something that had been made 30 years ago! A daunting task, but perfectly achievable for someone who has known nothing but meticulousness and detail throughout her career. "The people in the studio were able to find certain patterns. For the little tassels on the safari jacket, we undid those on the model and Mr Bergé had them redone in Marrakech. He knew what he wanted." "All the greats are gone," she remarks after listing the illustrious names that have punctuated her trajectory. The audacious ideas of these greats that she has known were brought to life thanks to the work of the seamstresses and dress-makers, the different crafts that constitute an atelier. The hands that turn sketches into reality and put ideas into motion.

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

the aura of

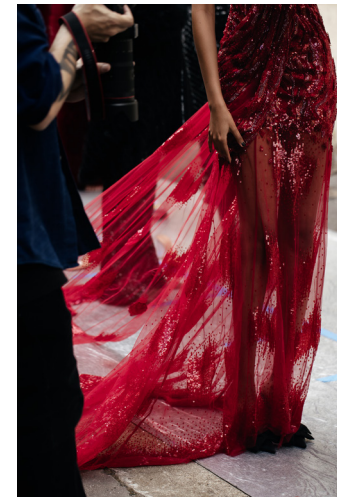
Rahul Mishra



THE INDIAN DESIGNER RAHUL MISHRA SET HIMSELF A CHALLENGING TASK FOR HIS FALL/WINTER 2024-2025 HAUTE COUTURE COLLECTION: ENCAPSULATING THE ELUSIVE CONCEPT OF ONE'S AURA. IT'S SOMETHING HE'S CONSIDERED AS AN INSPIRATION, BUT HE WAITED UNTIL NOW FOR THE RIGHT TIME, THE RIGHT FRAME OF MIND TO EXECUTE A VISION PHILOSOPHISING ABOUT THE SPIRIT. AT THE RÉFECTOIRE DES CORDELIERS, A PROCESSION OF DIVINE BEINGS SASHAYED THROUGH AN AUDITORIUM REVEALING HIS INTERPRETATION OF AN AURA AS A PHYSICAL ENTITY. THERE WERE SUGGESTIONS OF HINDU DEITIES AND PATTERNS THAT MAPPED THE FLOW OF ENERGY. EVERYTHING WAS PAINSTAKINGLY LABORED OVER, FROM INITIAL INSPIRATION TO THE OUTCOME.



"WITH THIS COLLECTION, WE ARE TRYING TO LIMIT AURA TO A PHYSICAL BEING. IT IS SOMETHING THAT EXISTS OUTSIDE OF OUR IMAGINATION, SO WE STARTED PLAYING WITH DIFFERENT DIMENSIONS AND IDEAS BEHIND THIS [TO EXPLAIN IT TO THE VIEWER]," SAID MISHRA, ON A VIDEO CALL FROM HIS OFFICE IN NEW DELHI, INDIA, WHERE HE WAS FINALISING THE COLLECTION BEFORE TRAVELLING TO PARIS.



MODELS EMBODY TRIMURTI, THE TRINITY OF SUPREME DIVINITY IN HINDUISM, WHICH REPRESENTS CREATION, PRESERVATION, AND DESTRUCTION. AN ALL-BLACK DRESS FEATURES TWO SIDES WITH THE MODEL FORMING THE CENTREPIECE. ANOTHER INTERPRETATION: STEEL WIRE ERECTS A PANEL OF GOSSAMER LIGHT TULLE THAT IS HAND-PAINTED TO REPRESENT A FACE BEFORE BEING HAND-EMBROIDERED WITH SINGLE-THREAD EMBROIDERY BY SKILLED ARTISANS. GLASS BEADS AND SEQUINS MIRROR AN INFRARED MAP OF THE BODY WITH BLACK RADIATING INTO WHITE FROM THE BODY'S CORE. TO CONJURE SOMETHING THAT EXISTS SOLELY BEYOND OUR IMAGINATION, THE DESIGNER SOUGHT TO SIMPLIFY HIS PALETTE BY STRIPPING THINGS BACK TO BLACK, IN CONTRAST TO HIS TYPICALLY POLYCHROMATIC CREATIONS. HE RECALLED THE WORKS OF VINCENT VAN GOGH AND CLAUDE MONET AS LESSONS IN TELEGRAPHING THE INTANGIBILITY OF HUMAN EMOTIONS. ON A VISUAL LEVEL, IT EXPLAINS A DRESS BUILT FROM PAINTERLY BRUSHSTROKES OF THE FEMALE FORM.



WHAT WAS THE **STARTING** POINT FOR THIS COLLECTION?

THERE IS A BEAUTIFUL QUOTE IN HINDU SCRIPTURE THAT SAYS, «THE SOUL NEVER TAKES BIRTH AND NEVER DIES AT ANY TIME, NOR DOES IT COME INTO BEING AGAIN WHEN THE BODY IS CREATED.» IT LED ME TO THINK ABOUT ETERNITY AND INFINITY WHEN WE HAVE NO IDEA OF WHEN WE STARTED OR WHEN WE ENDED. AS HUMAN BEINGS, WE HAVE A PHYSICAL DIMENSION AND THERE'S AN AURA, WHICH IS LIKE AN EXTRA DIMENSION. THIS WAS VERY DIFFICULT TO ACHIEVE THROUGH CLOTHING. BUT FASHION IS LIKE AN AURA: WHEN YOU WEAR SOMETHING IT CREATES A PERSONALITY. WE WANTED TO CREATE A VISIBLE FORCE OF AURA. WE STARTED TO THINK ABOUT HOW WE CAN CREATE A TEXTURE THAT IS MORE TACTILE AND MORE THREE-DIMENSIONAL.

HOW DID YOU COMMUNICATE YOUR **INSPIRATION** THROUGH CLOTHING?

FIRST, WE STARTED THINKING ABOUT THE HUMAN BODY. THEN, WE THOUGHT ABOUT AURA, THE EXTRA DIMENSION. IT'S LIKE SEEING SOMETHING THROUGH AN INFRARED CAMERA WHERE YOU CAN SEE DIFFERENT LAYERS OF HEAT EMITTING FROM THE BODY, SO THE BODY SOMEHOW MOVES OUT OF THE PHYSICAL DIMENSION THAT IS VISIBLE TO US AND INTO SOMETHING MORE. WE LOOKED AT ARTWORKS WHERE YOU COULD SEE HOW THE FLOW OF ENERGY IS EMITTED FROM A BODY; HOW IT HAS NO STARTING POINT AND NO ENDING POINT.

WE LOOKED AT FACES AS A SYMBOLIC REPRESENTATION OF ONE'S AURA. IN HINDU MYTHOLOGY, LORD BHRAMA HAS FOUR HEADS. IT IS SAID THAT HE CAN SEE THE PAST, THE PRESENT, AND THE FUTURE AT THE SAME TIME. THERE IS ALSO A DEMON KING CALLED RAVANA, [WHO COULD ASSUME THE FORM OF ANYTHING THAT HE DESIRED]. WE STARTED CREATING THESE DIMENSIONS WHERE IT LOOKS LIKE THE MODEL IS WEARING MULTIPLE HEADS AT THE SAME TIME. SIMILARLY, WE STARTED PAINTING SOME HEADS ON TULLE THAT ARE ATTACHED TO METAL WIRES. THEY ARE THEN HAND-EMBROIDERED. IT SHOWS HOW A PERSON WITH A STRONG AURA CAN LOOK AT THE PAST, THE PRESENT, AND THE FUTURE AT ONCE.

DO YOU THINK **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE** POSES A THREAT TO HAUTE COUTURE?

AS TIME PASSES, THERE IS SO MUCH MORE MECHANISATION THAT AI WILL PROBABLY CHANGE THE WAY THE WORLD LOOKS BEYOND RECOGNITION IN THE COMING YEARS. HOWEVER, HAUTE COUTURE HAS NEVER BEEN AS VALUABLE AS IT IS TODAY, AND AI AND TECHNOLOGY WILL ONLY CREATE MORE VALUE FOR IT. COUTURE IS COMPLETED BY HAND, TO PRECISION. IT'S NOT INCH BY INCH OR MILLIMETRE BY MILLIMETRE BUT ALMOST NANOMETRE BY NANOMETRE.

FURTHERMORE, WHEN YOU LOOK AT TOMORROW'S WORLD, WHERE EMPLOYMENT WILL BE A HUGE FOCUS, ESPECIALLY IN A COUNTRY LIKE INDIA, COUTURE BECOMES VERY IMPORTANT AS IT CAN PROVIDE SO MUCH EMPLOYMENT. WE WORK WITH A TEAM OF ALMOST 1,000 ARTISANS AND CRAFTSPEOPLE. LAST SEASON, ONE OF THE MEN WHO WORKED ON THE EMBROIDERY IN THE COLLECTION TRAVELLED TO PARIS FOR THE SHOW. HE HAS ONLY EVER COMPLETED PRIMARY EDUCATION BUT TODAY, HIS DAUGHTER STUDIES IN LONDON. FOR CRAFTSPEOPLE IN INDIA, COUTURE ALLOWS THEM TO DREAM. THEY CAN TAKE CARE OF THEIR KIDS AND ALLOW THEM TO LIVE THEIR DREAMS THROUGH THE ART AND BEAUTY THAT THEY CREATE. COUTURE ENABLES THEM AND EMPOWERS THEM, AND THEIR FAMILIES. IN THAT WAY, COUTURE IS THE ONLY THING THAT CAN CREATE FASHION BEYOND VANITY.

Mikimoto

masterful pearl craftsmanship

ON TUESDAY, JUNE 25TH, MIKIMOTO UNVEILS ITS NEW HAUTE JOAILLERIE COLLECTION DURING HAUTE COUTURE WEEK. DRIVEN BY THE PRECEPTS OF ITS FOUNDER, KOKICHI MIKIMOTO, INVENTOR OF THE CULTURED PEARL, THE HOUSE PURSUES ITS QUEST FOR BEAUTY AND EXCELLENCE, ACHIEVED THROUGH EXCEPTIONAL CRAFTSMANSHIP.



PLACE VENDÔME, THE BEATING HEART OF FINE JEWELLERY, IS HOME TO MIKIMOTO'S PARIS BOUTIQUE. EACH PIECE ON DISPLAY IN THIS PEARLY-WALLED STORE BEARS WITNESS TO METICULOUS CRAFTSMANSHIP AND THE EXCEPTIONAL QUALITY OF THE PEARLS. «WE ONLY KEEP TEN PERCENT OF THE PEARLS WE HARVEST,» EXPLAINS FLAVIÈNE BARBIER, THE COMPANY'S GENERAL MANAGER SINCE 1997. SHE BEGAN HER CAREER LEARNING HER TRADE WITH THE GREAT NAMES IN JEWELLERY BEFORE TAKING OVER THE REINS OF THE MIKIMOTO HOUSE, «THE GREATEST,» SHE SAYS WITH A SMILE. SHE EXPLAINS THAT FOUNDER KOKICHI MIKIMOTO WORKED FOR 30 YEARS BEFORE SUCCEEDING IN CULTIVATING THE FIRST SEMI-SPHERICAL PEARL IN 1893. HE WAS A PIONEER, REGISTERING THE WORLD'S FIRST BIOLOGICAL PATENT. A PIONEER, MR MIKIMOTO PURCHASED THE POOR-QUALITY PEARLS AND BURNED THEM IN PUBLIC. THIS QUEST FOR PERFECTION HAS BEEN AN ESSENTIAL PILLAR OF THE HOUSE SINCE IT WAS FOUNDED. EVEN TODAY, THE METICULOUS SORTING OF THE PEARLS COLLECTED IS AN OBVIOUS EXAMPLE. «THE PEARLS WE KEEP MUST BE COMPLETELY CIRCULAR, WITHOUT MARKS OR FLAWS. ONLY THE HUMAN EYE CAN DISTINGUISH THE NACRE AND LUSTRE OF MIKIMOTO PEARLS,» BARBIER EXPLAINS.

«PEARLS REQUIRE AN EDUCATION. JUST AS WE EDUCATE OURSELVES IN OTHER ARTS, WE EDUCATE OURSELVES ABOUT BEAUTY.»

ENTITLED «THE BOWS,» THE HOUSE'S NEW HAUTE JOAILLERIE COLLECTION CELEBRATES THE SOPHISTICATED ELEGANCE OF BOWS AND RIBBON, KEY ELEMENTS IN THE HAUTE COUTURE RANGE. «THE KNOT REPRESENTS ELEGANCE,» SAYS BARBIER. THE KNOT EPITOMISES BOTH PRESTIGE AND FREE CREATIVITY, WHETHER THE PAGEANTRY OF THE COURT, YVES SAINT LAURENT'S SYMBOL OF FEMININE EMANCIPATION, OR THE EXTRAVAGANCE AND SWIRLING CREATIVITY OF JOHN GALLIANO AT CHRISTIAN DIOR. THIS THEME ALSO ECHOES THE KNOT METICULOUSLY INTEGRATED BETWEEN EACH PEARL IN A MIKIMOTO PIECE, A SYMBOL OF EXCEPTIONAL CRAFTSMANSHIP AND TRADITION.

«IN TOKYO, 30 DESIGNERS WORK TOGETHER IN THE ATELIERS TO BRING THESE UNIQUE CREATIONS TO LIFE. A MAJOR RESEARCH PROJECT WAS CARRIED OUT ON MIKIMOTO ARCHIVES, ART DECO DRAWINGS, WHICH HAVE BEEN REWORKED,» EXPLAINS BARBIER. «THEY ARE ALL UNIQUE PIECES. THE STONES ARE VERY IMPORTANT AND CANNOT BE RECOVERED.» THE PIECES ARE MADE IN THE MIKIMOTO WORKSHOP IN JAPAN. THEN, THE HOUSE USUALLY PRESENTS ITS HAUTE JOAILLERIE COLLECTIONS IN ITS PARIS BOUTIQUE. THIS SEASON, THE PIECES WILL CROSS THE PLACE VENDÔME TO BE EXHIBITED AT THE HÔTEL D'ÉVREUX, BY INVITATION ONLY. THE COLLECTION WILL FIRST BE EXHIBITED IN PARIS, FOLLOWED BY A SECOND PRESENTATION IN TOKYO.

«IT'S THE EYE, IT'S THE HAND. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE WILL HAVE A HARD TIME WITH US.»

BEHIND THE SCENES AT PLACE VENDÔME, EXPERT HANDS ARE IN FULL SWING. RACHID JAMMOUA, AFFECTIONATELY NICKNAMED MONSIEUR RACHID, OR «OUR ARTIST» AS BARBIER INTRODUCES HIM, HAS BEEN EMBODYING AND MAGNIFYING THIS CRAFT FOR MORE THAN 30 YEARS, WITH A PRECISION AND DEXTERITY THAT HAVE BECOME LEGENDARY. JAMMOUA CAN MAKE A NECKLACE IN 20 MINUTES THAT WOULD NORMALLY TAKE SEVERAL HOURS TO ASSEMBLE FOR NONEXPERT HANDS. «I DON'T USE A NEEDLE. I JUST COAT THE WIRE WITH A MIXTURE OF GLUE AND THREAD IT ON,» HE EXPLAINS. HE BEGAN HIS APPRENTICESHIP STUDYING WITH THE VENERABLE SUZUKI-SAN, A JOURNEY THAT LED HIM TO THE UNITED STATES AND JAPAN TO PERFECT HIS CRAFT. HE REMAINS THE ONLY ONE WHO MASTERS THIS EXCEPTIONAL SKILL WITH SUCH AGILITY IN PARIS. HE STARTED TRANSMITTING HIS KNOWLEDGE FOUR YEARS AGO AND IS STILL THE ONLY ONE WHO ADJUSTS NECKLACES ON CUSTOMERS. «IT CALMS ME DOWN,» SAYS THE EXCEPTIONAL CRAFTSMAN WITH A WIDE GRIN. THE REGULAR CUSTOMERS OF THE HOUSE KNOW HIM WELL. «CUSTOMERS ASK 'IS MR RACHID IN?' I REALLY ADMIRE HIS WORK. HE DOES THINGS WITHOUT LOOKING LIKE HE'S DOING THEM,» SAYS BARBIER, EYEING JAMMOUA WITH WARMTH. «IT'S THE EYE, IT'S THE HAND. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE WILL HAVE A HARD TIME HERE,» SHE INSISTS.

«PEARLS ARE A REAL DANGER. ONCE YOU START, IT'S DIFFICULT TO RESIST.

«PEARLS ARE VERY INTIMATE. YOU HEAT IT WITH YOUR SKIN, THEN IT COOLS DOWN. YOU NESTLE AGAINST IT,» EXPLAINS BARBIER. AT MIKIMOTO, EACH PEARL IS FAR MORE THAN A PIECE OF JEWELLERY: IT'S A HERITAGE, A TRADITION TRANSMITTED FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION. «YOU HAVE TO BE CAREFUL ABOUT THE FRAGRANCE. BUT WHEN A YOUNG GIRL INHERITS HER MOTHER'S PEARLS, SHE TAKES GREAT CARE OF THEM,» SHE EXPLAINS. THE HOUSE HAS STOOD THE TEST OF TIME THROUGH ELEGANCE AND RESTRAINT. «OUR CUSTOMERS DON'T NEED ANY SHOWBOATING. WHEN YOU KNOW OUR EXPERTISE AND OUR EXACTING STANDARDS, THERE'S NO NEED TO GO OVERBOARD,» SHE SAYS.

IN THE WORLD OF HAUTE JOAILLERIE, MIKIMOTO HAS EARNED ITS REPUTATION AS THE GUARDIAN OF THE SEA'S TREASURES. BEHIND EACH CREATION STAND DEDICATED CRAFTSMEN LIKE JAMMOUA, WHOSE EXCEPTIONAL SKILLS MAGNIFY EXCEPTIONAL MATERIALS. MIKIMOTO'S INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION SPEAKS FOR ITSELF: «OTHER BOUTIQUES ON PLACE VENDÔME SOMETIMES DIRECT THEIR CUSTOMERS INTERESTED IN PEARLS TO OUR BOUTIQUE. IT EVEN HAPPENS THAT THE SALESWOMEN PERSONALLY ACCOMPANY CUSTOMERS TO OUR DOOR. THIS IS THE MIKIMOTO PEARL.»

Alexis Mabille

dazzling couture





WHAT IS THE **SPIRIT** OF THIS COLLECTION?

THE COLLECTION IS BEING PRESENTED AT THE LIDO, WHICH I RE-DECORATED LAST YEAR, TO CREATE A 360-DEGREE EXPERIENCE, TO BE NESTLED IN A WORLD THAT COMBINES HAUTE COUTURE AND INTERIOR DESIGN. THE IDEA IS TO SET UP THE SHOW IN A LARGE SALON, USING WATER, LIGHT AND SOUND EFFECTS TO MAXIMISE THE SCENIC EFFECT. THE MODELS WILL PARADE LIKE GUESTS AT A PARTY. HENCE THE NAME «CHAMPAGNE,» REFLECTING THE IDEA OF A SPARKLING, MISCHIEVOUS PRESENCE, BUT ONE THAT'S ALSO SELF-ASSURED. IT MAY NOT BE A FESTIVE MOOD AT THE MOMENT, BUT THE PARTY SPIRIT IS WHAT PEOPLE NEED MOST. IT'S A BURST OF POSITIVITY. THE IMPORTANT THING IS TO BRING OUT THE FUN IN EVERYONE AND LIVEN THINGS UP. FASHION IS ALL ABOUT CREATING LIGHT. AND THAT'S PART OF MY DNA. THE PALETTE IS THERE FOR CUSTOMERS WHO NEED TO ADD A LITTLE THEATRICALITY THROUGH HAUTE COUTURE.

HOW DID YOU **CONCEIVE** IT?

IT'S A STATE OF MIND, A TYPOLOGY OF ATTITUDES: THERE ARE AROUND 40 PASSAGES, WITH STRONG CHARACTERS. WHICH EXPLAINS THE IDEA OF THE CHAMPAGNE BUBBLE. I DID A LOT OF WORK WITH SHINE, SPARKLE, MATTE METALLICS, LAMÉ FABRICS, MICRO SEQUINS THAT GIVE THE ILLUSION OF A PLAIN LACQUER, EMBROIDERY WITH MOSAIC EFFECTS... THE PALETTE IS FAIRLY WINTER-LIKE, WITH WHITES THAT RISE IN TONE TOWARDS GOLDS, PLATINUM SILVERS, PINKISH GOLDS, GOLDEN BROWNS, BRONZES AND MORE. THE COLLECTION IS GRAPHIC, BUT ALSO DEDICATED TO THE NIGHT AND THE PARTY. WITH LONG LEGS, SLITS, SKIRT MOVEMENT, VOLUMES AND BEADING AS IF THEY WERE JEWELS. DRESSES ARE TRANSFORMED INTO NECKLACES.

WHAT **TECHNICAL CHALLENGES** HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED?

EACH COLLECTION HAS ITS OWN REQUIREMENTS AND COMPLI-CATIONS. THE LUREX THREADS TEND TO PULL, SO YOU HAVE TO CHANGE THE NEEDLES AND ONLY USE NEW, VERY SHARP NEEDLES, BECAUSE THEY SLIP BETWEEN THE THREADS; SOMETIMES, WITH THE SEQUINS, YOU HAVE TO SEW THEM BACK ON BY HAND, SO YOU CUT ALL THE SEQUINS OFF THE SEAMS AND OPEN AND SEW EVERYTHING BACK ON BY HAND. THE IDEA IS TO ACHIEVE AN INVISIBLE EFFECT AND GIVE THE SENSATION THAT THE DRESS IS COMPLETELY MOULDED AROUND THE BODY. THIS EXPLAINS THE STRIP OF HORSEHAIR USED TO ROLL UP A COLLAR OR HEM. EVERYTHING THAT SEEMS SO SIMPLE IS THE RESULT OF COMPLEX WORK IN THE ATELIER, NOTABLY WHEN IT COMES TO VOLUMES.

WHAT **DRIVES YOU** TO KEEP PURSUING THIS CAREER?

I LOVE DRAWING. AT THE BEGINNING, I'M QUITE ISOLATED, AND THEN THE COLLECTION TAKES SHAPE IN THE HANDS OF THE ARTISANS. EACH TIME, THE KEY IS TO TRANSCRIBE THE RESEARCH, TO TORTURE THE FABRIC TO ACHIEVE OUR GOALS. PLUS, HAUTE COUTURE ALLOWS YOU TO CREATE A VERY SPECIAL BOND WITH YOUR CLIENTS. THERE'S A WHOLE NEW DYNAMIC. SINCE COVID, EVENINGWEAR HAS COME BACK TO THE FORE. IT'S AS IF THIS GREAT PHYSICAL VOID HAS DEMONSTRATED TO PEOPLE THAT IT'S IMPORTANT TO LOOK THEIR BEST. WHETHER CALIFORNIAN, CHINESE OR FROM THE MIDDLE EAST, HAUTE COUTURE CLIENTS APPRECIATE THE EXCLUSIVITY, AND ENJOY A WEEK OF FASHION, ART AND CULTURE. HAUTE COUTURE WEEK HAS BECOME A CELEBRATION ONCE AGAIN. MY CLIENTS ALSO INCLUDE ECCENTRIC, PLAYFUL MEN. IT'S AS IF THEY'RE SCRIPTING THEMSELVES: THEY'RE ASSERTING THEMSELVES AS CURATORS, THEIR WARDROBE IS REFERENCED IN BOOKS, THEY'RE DEFINING THEMSELVES MORE AND MORE THROUGH AN ALMOST MUSEUM-LIKE APPROACH, RESPECTING THE CLOTHES THEY BUY. THE MORE THEY MEET UP AT DINNERS, LAUNCHES AND FASHION SHOWS, THE MORE THEY IDENTIFY WITH EACH OTHER. WE ACT AS THEIR CONCIERGE, POINTING OUT NEW PLACES AND FINDING THEM THE FINEST VENUES. THE ESSENTIAL POINT IS TO OFFER THEM A WHOLE EXPERIENCE.



welcome to

Charles de Vilmorin's world

AFTER HIS DEBUT HAUTE COUTURE RUNWAY SHOW LAST JULY AND THE INTRODUCTION OF A READY-TO-WEAR LINE IN MARCH, CHARLES DE VILMORIN IS BACK FOR FALL-WINTER 2024. THE 27-YEAR-OLD DESIGNER IS AS CONFIDENT AS EVER, EXHIBITING MORE MATURITY IN HIS APPROACH AS EACH YEAR PASSES. THIS SEASON, HE TURNED HIS LENS TO AGATHA CHRISTIE AND TIM BURTON, WHERE POIROT MEETS SLEEPY HOLLOW. HE CAST A MOODY AIR OF MYSTERY OVER THE PROCEEDINGS, WORKING WITH CONSTRAINED PROPORTIONS AND NARROW SILHOUETTES TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION OF SOMETHING LARGER THAN LIFE – OF HEROES AND VILLAINS.

WHILE DE VILMORIN IMBUES THE RARIFIED WORLD OF COUTURE WITH A SUBVERSIVE STREAK, HE DOESN'T COMPROMISE THE TRADITIONAL VALUES OF THE DISCIPLINE. HERE, HE WANTED TO FURTHER HIS AFFINITY FOR SAVOIR-FAIRE. IN TERMS OF FABRICATION, THE STUDIO SPENT TIME DEVELOPING ITS OWN JACQUARD. THEY ARE HAND PAINTED WITH THE DESIGNER'S SIGNATURE ARTWORKS. FOR HEADPIECES AND ACCESSORIES, HE COLLABORATED WITH VARIOUS EMBROIDERERS AND PLUMETIERS (FEATHER ARTISANS) TO BRING EACH LOOK TO LIFE.

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE US TO KNOW ABOUT THIS COLLECTION?

THIS COLLECTION IS MY SECOND SHOW, SO I WANTED TO TELL A STORY, TO MAKE A SHOW LIKE A FILM, JUST AS I'VE ALREADY BEEN ABLE TO TELL STORIES THROUGH MY VARIOUS HAUTE COUTURE PRESENTATION VIDEOS. IT'S IMPORTANT THIS SEASON TO SHOW THE VERY ESSENCE OF MY BRAND WITH AN ULTRA-NARRATIVE SHOW. I WANTED TO TELL A STORY INSPIRED BY THE WORLD OF AGATHA CHRISTIE OR TIM BURTON, WHERE A MURDER HAS BEEN COMMITTED AND THE VICTIM'S RELATIVES FIND THEMSELVES SUMMONED TO THE CULPRIT'S FINAL TRIAL.

WHERE DO YOU SOURCE INSPIRATION FOR YOUR COLLECTIONS?

FOR THIS COLLECTION, I DREW A LOT OF INSPIRATION FROM 1980S HORROR FILMS, FROM EVIL, AUSTERE CREATURES THAT WE FIND VISUALLY DISTURBING. I WANTED TO BRING OUT THE CINEMATIC SIDE OF THE 1980S, WHICH, IN GENERAL, INSPIRES ME ENORMOUSLY. THE MUSIC COMPOSED ESPECIALLY FOR THE SHOW IS ALSO VERY NARRATIVE-DRIVEN.

HOW IMPORTANT IS **HAUTE COUTURE IN 2024**?

IN MY OPINION, HAUTE COUTURE AIMS TO TRANSPORT PEOPLE AWAY FROM REALITY, TO TELL STORIES SO THAT THEY CAN ESCAPE FOR A MOMENT AND DREAM. IT'S ALSO AN OPPORTUNITY TO PUT THE SPOTLIGHT BACK ON TRADITIONAL SKILLS AND SAVOIR-FAIRE BECAUSE, IN THIS DIGITAL AGE, IT'S EASY TO LOSE SIGHT OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THESE SKILLS.

WHAT DO YOU **HOPE** FOR THE FASHION INDUSTRY FOR THE REST OF 2024 AND BEYOND?

I HOPE THAT THE FASHION INDUSTRY WILL CONTINUE TO MAKE PEOPLE DREAM, AS IT HAS ALREADY DONE AT MANY SHOWS THIS YEAR, AND THAT DESIGNERS WILL ALSO FEEL AS FREE AS POSSIBLE TO CONVEY THEIR MESSAGE AS THEY SEE FIT. BUT ALSO, THAT IT BECOMES AS ECO-RESPONSIBLE AS POSSIBLE – TO IMAGINE A BETTER WORLD

Alaïa Kuramata

Weightlessness



«I DON'T DO SKETCHES. I DRAW EVERYTHING IN MY HEAD. THE IMAGERY ALWAYS COMES FIRST. WHEN YOU DRAW, YOU TEND TO WORRY ABOUT THE PERIPHERAL ASPECTS (...) AND BEFORE YOU KNOW IT, THAT COULD END UP REPLACING THE MORE ESSENTIAL ISSUES TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT.» SO SAID SHIRO KURAMATA, THE JAPANESE DESIGNER (1934-1991), TO WHOM THE AZZEDINE ALAÏA FOUNDATION PAYS TRIBUTE IN A DOUBLE EXHIBITION FEATURING DRESSES BY THE COUTURIER AND PIECES OF FURNITURE FROM HIS PERSONAL COLLECTION, SUCH AS PYRAMID (1968), LUMINOUS CHAIR (1969), OBA-Q (1972), GLASS CHAIR (1976), HOW HIGH IS THE MOON (1986) AND TWILIGHT TIME (1985).

IN AN INTRICATE POLYCHROME RESONANCE, THE BODY TAKES CENTRE STAGE THROUGH DRESSES AND OBJECTS – ARMCHAIRS, LAMPS, CHAIRS, TABLES – THAT SEEM WEIGHTLESS. SOME 20 PIECES ILLUMINATE THE VIEWER'S EYES IN THIS POETIC CONFRONTATION WITH THE DESIGNER'S CREATIONS, WHICH APPEAR AS THOUGH BRAND NEW, ON THE VERGE OF ABSTRACTION AND MATTER. «THE BIGGEST PROBLEM,» EXPLAINED THE JAPANESE DESIGNER, «IS GRAVITY, AND WE NEED TO THINK OF A WAY TO ERASE IT.» THE LIGHTING RUNS RIGHT ACROSS THE CREATIONS, ENGAGING IN AN INTIMATE CONVERSATION BETWEEN A KNITTED METAL SOFA, THE FAMOUS «HOW HIGH IS THE MOON,» AND A LUREX KNIT DRESS, A PYRAMID-SHAPED SHELF AND AN HAUTE COUTURE MODEL MADE ENTIRELY OF STRIPS. THE MAGIC LIES THERE, IN THESE SHARED VALUES, THIS DOUBLE SEARCH FOR STRUCTURE MADE INVISIBLE AND SO PRESENT AT THE SAME TIME. IT'S AS IF, BY SKETCHING THEIR LINES IN SPACE, THEY ARE COMMITTING THEIR SHARED VISION TO TALENT AND GRACE. WHAT IS PERHAPS MOST WONDERFUL IS HOW AZZEDINE ALAIA EXPRESSES HIMSELF AS A COLLECTOR, WHOSE POINT OF VIEW IS HERE MASTERFULLY REDEFINED BY CARLA SOZZANI AND OLIVIER SAILLARD. «IN 1993, I WANTED TO BREAK AWAY FROM THE SYSTEM IMPOSED BY THE SEASONAL RUNWAY SHOWS AND CONCENTRATE ON THE CLOTHES INSTEAD OF TINY CHANGES IN FASHION. I THINK I CAN SAY THAT MY PIECES ARE TIMELESS,» HE SAYS. FAR FROM SEEING TIME AS A REFUGE, HE HAS NEVER STOPPED EXPLORING ALL ITS POSSIBILITIES, AND THIS EXHIBITION REVEALS HIS QUEST FOR INFINITY THROUGH MATERIALS AND MOVEMENT.





ALAÏA/KURAMATA LIGHTNESS IN CREATION
CURATED BY CARLA SOZZANI AND OLIVIER SAILLARD

AZZEDINE ALAÏA FOUNDATION
18, RUE DE LA VERRERIE, 75004 UNTIL JANUARY 12, 2025

Iris Van Herpen

dressing the soul



«BETWEEN HUMAN AND NONHUMAN, DREAM AND REALITY,» SAYS THE PERFORMER MISS FAME, STANDING IN FRONT OF ONE OF IRIS VAN HERPEN'S INSTALLATIONS. THERE'S A KIND OF ENCHANTMENT, A FEELING OF GRACE, WHEN YOU ENTER IRIS VAN HERPEN'S UNIVERSE. WAVES, SKY AND CLOUDS FORM THE ORGANIC SETTING FOR AN HAUTE COUTURE THAT DRESSES THE HEAD AS WELL AS THE BODY. «I COULD SEE THE INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH THROUGHOUT MY WHOLE BODY OF WORK, BUT I WAS MISSING SOMETHING THAT HAD ALWAYS BEEN A PART OF ME: MY LOVE OF SCULPTURE AND PAINTING,» SAYS IRIS VAN HERPEN, COMMITTED TO FINDING THE MECHANICS BEHIND INTERWOVEN FLUIDS IN DANCE.

LIKE NEO-ANTIQUE ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIGS RIPPLING AGAIN, DRAWING US INTO THEIR ODYSSEY. AND SO IT IS WITH THIS HYBRID SHOW, SET TO MUSIC BY SALVADOR BREED: THE MANNEQUINS, ESCAPING FROM THE FRAME, DANCE, MOTIONLESS, SUSPENDED IN SPACE. ON THE THEME OF «ANCIENT ANCESTORS» OR «UNFOLDING TIME,» REALITY EXPANDS, IMMATERIALLY SUBLIMATED BY 3D PLEATING EFFECTS, CELESTIAL WAVES AND HAND-SEWN BREATH. THESE ARE DRESSES, SCULPTURES PERFECTLY MOULDED ONTO THE SKIN, SPIDERS WEAVING THEIR WEBS IN THE MOON, TRANSLUCENT CHIMERAS, SPIDER-LIKE MERMAIDS; THEY LINE UP ALONGSIDE PANELS OF TULLE IN RELIEF, HIGHLIGHTING BOTH INNOVATION AND POETIC INSPIRATION IN CRAFTSMANSHIP, AND NATURE INDEED. VAN HERPEN SOUGHT THE LIGHT IN HER OWN GARDEN, ONCE AGAIN TRANSCENDING HER OWN UNIVERSE TO FIND THE MAGIC OF FUSION IN ARCHITECTURE, SPACE, SEA, ART AND DANCE. AS UNIVERSAL AS IT IS UNIQUE.

«FOR A LONG TIME, I'VE BEEN WORKING ON EXPANDING PEOPLE'S PERCEPTION OF HOW FASHION AND ART CAN BE SYMBIOTIC. THIS IS THE NATURAL NEXT STEP FOR ME TO REALLY SHOW WHAT I MEAN,» SHE SAYS, LIKENING HER PREFERRED PROCESS OF MOULAGE, OR DRAPING DIRECTLY ON THE MANNEQUIN, TO SCULPTING. «EVEN THOUGH WE CALL ONE PRACTICE HAUTE COUTURE AND THE OTHER ART, TO ME, IT'S ONE UNIVERSE.»



Victor & Rolf

couture abstractions

EUCLIDEAN GEOMETRY IN NIGHT OWL MODE? CONSTRUCTIVIST MINSTRELS? RUBIK'S CUBE TURNED INTO DRESSES? THE DESIGNERS TALK «ABSURDISM,» ONCE AGAIN QUESTIONING THE PLACE OF THE BODY WITHIN SPACE, ITS TENSIONS, DYSFUNCTIONS AND EXAGGERATIONS, SOMEWHERE BETWEEN COMIC STRIPS AND SCIENCE FICTION.



IN HAUTE ABSTRACTION, PRESENTED AT THE GRAND HÔTEL, IN A PURPLE-CARPETED RING, THE BODY PERFORMS A CIRCUS, TRAINED IN THE STYLISTIC EXERCISES OF TWO HAUTE COUTURE GEOMETERS. ENMESHED IN A 3D TRIANGLE, LITERALLY BOXED IN A PARALLELEPIPED, THE MUTANT BODY HAS ALWAYS BEEN AT THE HEART OF VIKTOR AND ROLF'S OBSESSIONS. HERE, IN A FLASHBACK TO 'ATOMIC BOMB' (FALL-WINTER 1998), WHICH ERUPTED IN THE SHAPE OF NUCLEAR MUSHROOMS, AND FOLLOWING FROM 'SURREAL SHOULDER' (FALL-WINTER 2022), THIS NEW LIBRARY OF SHAPES COMBINES THE ART OF THE STRAIGHT LINE WITH AN IMPRESSIVE LESSON IN POST-MODERN GEOMETRY, METICULOUS MASTERY MATCHED WITH A PERFORMANCE FLAIR.

OVERSIZED LINES, FRAGMENTS, QUADRILATERALS AND WACKY TRIANGLES EVOKE THE SHARP EDGES OF GARETH PUGH (CARBON LIFE), NOT TO MENTION THE STRIPES OF LEIGH BOWERY. A VERTIGINOUS TILT OF A JACKET, ASYMMETRICAL HORN SLEEVES, GIANT BOWS, A GLOBE BLOUSE – ONE CAN'T HELP BUT THINK OF THE DANCE COSTUMES THAT HAVE TURNED CHOREOGRAPHY INTO A FIELD OF EXPERIMENTATION. HERE, THE MIND CIRCLES BACK ON RÉGINE CHOPINOT AND JEAN PAUL GAULTIER (1985), WALTER VAN BEIREINDONCK IN SOUS APPARENCE (2012), REI KAWABUBO FOR MERCE CUNNINGHAM (1998), AND EVEN EARLIER, THE RESEARCH OF OSKAR SCHLEMMER, PIONEER OF THE BAUHAUS AND OF THE BALLET TRIADIQUE GIVEN IN 1922, WHOSE GEOMETRIC COSTUMES RESPONDED TO THE «PLEASURE OF PLAYING WITH SHAPES, COLOURS AND NEW MATERIALS.»





AT THE MUSÉE DES ARTS DÉCORATIFS, ARDAZAEI'S BAHAREH ARDAKANI PRESENTED, 'CALABI-YAU: THE HIDDEN DIMENSIONS.' HER FALL/WINTER 2024-2025 COLLECTION DRAWS ITS TITLE FROM A THEORY IN SPATIAL GEOMETRY THAT REFERENCES PARTS POSSIBLY NOT YET DISCOVERED BY SUPERSTRING THEORY, ANOTHER THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK. THE SWEDISH-IRANIAN HAUTE COUTURE AND READY-TO-WEAR DESIGNER REASONED THAT IN HAUTE COUTURE, LIKE IN SPATIAL GEOMETRY, SILHOUETTES AND SHAPES CAN SURPRISE AND CIRCUMVENT EXPECTATIONS IN HOW THEY ARE CONSTRUCTED AND MANIPULATED MATERIALS.

IN ADDITION TO HER INTEREST IN SCIENCE (PAST COLLECTIONS HAVE LOOKED AT NATURE AND LUMINESCENCE), FOR HER FIRST SHOW ON THE OFFICIAL CALENDAR, ARDAKANI SUMMARIZES SOME OF HER SIGNATURES. THERE'S HER AFFINITY FOR SCULPTURAL DESIGN IN A LONG SCULPTURAL DRESS EMBELLISHED WITH INTRICATE HAND EMBROIDERY BY LESAGE REFERENCING CALABI-YAU FORMS. THERE'S HER INTEREST IN GEMOLOGY, WHICH SHE STUDIED IN ANTWERP AFTER OBTAINING A DEGREE IN MATHEMATICS AND DESIGN ENGINEERING, WHICH IS EXPRESSED THROUGH GLASS BEAD AND SEQUIN EMBROIDERY. THERE'S ALSO HER ECO-CONSCIOUS APPROACH; SEE THE GOTS-CERTIFIED DRESS IN SILK FAILLE AND PRINTED SILK SATIN BLOSSOMS CUT AS HALF FLOWERS AND HALF CALABI-YAU MANIFOLDS. SPEAKING OF, FALL-WINTER 2024'S READY-TO-WEAR COLLECTION WAS FULLY GOTS-CERTIFIED. AND TO THINK ARDAKANI IS ONLY GETTING STARTED.

«HAUTE COUTURE IS A LIFELONG EDUCATION. I WILL NEVER FINISH BEING GOOD AT THIS. THERE WILL ALWAYS BE LEVELS TO EXPLORE, AND THINGS THAT I HAVE TO LEARN. THERE WILL ALWAYS BE MORE TO LOOK INTO AND UNDERSTAND,» SAID ARDAKANI FROM HER ATELIER LOCATED IN THE CENTRE OF PARIS ON RUE SAINT-FLORENTIN.

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

THIS IS A DEEP DIVE INTO MY FASCINATION FOR STRING THEORY AND MATHEMATICS. IT EXPLORES THE IDEA THAT THE UNIVERSE EXISTS IN MORE DIMENSIONS THAN HUMANS CAN SEE. THROUGH THE YEARS, PHYSICISTS AND MATHEMATICIANS HAVE BEEN STUDYING THE VARIATION OF DIMENSIONS THAT EXIST THAT THE HUMAN EYE CAN SEE. ONE ILLUSTRATION OF THIS IS THE CALABI-YAU MANIFOLD. I WANTED TO TRANSLATE THIS IDEA OF SHAPE INTO THE COLLECTION. I'M PLAYING WITH IDEAS OF SCULPTURE SHAPED BY DIFFERENT HAUTE COUTURE TECHNIQUES AND SAVOIR-FAIRE THAT MANIPULATE FABRICS INTO NEW SHAPES. YOU HAVE SILHOUETTES THAT ARE VERY DETAILED BUT ARE PRESENTED AS ABSTRACT SHAPES. IT'S LOOKING AT HOW SILHOUETTES CAN BE INTERESTING IN EVERY SENSE, THAT IN EVERY KIND OF VIEW YOU HAVE OF THE GARMENT THERE IS SOME MOVEMENT OR LIGHT DIFFRACTION. WHAT'S BEEN MOST INTERESTING WITH THIS COLLECTION IS THE CONSTRUCTION BEHIND THE MATHEMATICS AND CALCULATIONS THAT WE COMPLETED TO BE PRECISE WITH HOW WE'VE BUILT THE SILHOUETTES AND SHAPES.

WHERE DO YOU LOOK FOR **INSPIRATION**?

WHEN I STARTED, IT WAS GEOLOGY AND GEMSTONES, WHICH BECAME AN ENDLESS SOURCE OF INSPIRATION — AND IT STILL IS FOR THIS COLLECTION BECAUSE THEY CAPTURE BEAUTY BEYOND TIME, BEYOND EVERYTHING THAT STRESSES US. I REALIZED THAT YOU NEEDED THE RIGHT INGREDIENTS TO MAKE SOMETHING SUBLIME SO THE GEMSTONES BECAME ONE PART OF IT BECAUSE YOU HAVE THIS AMOUNT OF TIME CAPTURED ON THE INSIDE AND A RADIANCE ON THE OUTSIDE THAT CREATES BEAUTY.

FROM THERE, I THOUGHT ABOUT HOW I CONNECT THIS TO MYSELF. I HAVE MY PERSIAN SIDE — I WAS BORN IN TEHRAN, IRAN. I GREW UP IN SWEDEN, WHERE THEY HAVE VIEWS ABOUT TECHNOLOGY AND SUSTAINABILITY. THERE, THERE IS ALSO A MODERN AND MINIMALISTIC APPROACH TO DESIGN, WHICH IS IN CONTRAST TO THE PERSIAN SIDE THAT IS MORE EXTRAVAGANT, RICH, AND DETAILED. TO COMBINE THESE ELEMENTS AND TO MAKE IT A REALITY, I NEEDED FRENCH SAVOIR-FAIRE AND CRAFTSMANSHIP.

HOW IMPORTANT IS HAUTE COUTURE IN **2024**?

HAUTE COUTURE IS LIKE A LANGUAGE THAT YOU HAVE TO LEARN THROUGH LIFE. IT'S A LIFETIME EDUCATION. I WILL NEVER FINISH BEING GOOD AT THIS. THERE WILL ALWAYS BE LEVELS TO EXPLORE, AND THINGS I MUST LEARN. THERE WILL ALWAYS BE MORE TO LOOK INTO AND UNDERSTAND. THIS LEVEL OF CRAFTSMANSHIP ALLOWS YOU TO KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING BECAUSE YOU START QUESTIONING WHY THINGS ARE MADE IN A CERTAIN WAY. THE CARE THAT IS A CENTRAL PART OF CREATING COUTURE IS IMPORTANT FOR PEOPLE TO REALISE; THAT THERE MUST BE A SINCERE VISION AND PASSION FOR SOMETHING LIKE THIS.

HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE PRESENTING ON THE **OFFICIAL CALENDAR** FOR THE FIRST TIME?

IT'S A DREAM COME TRUE. IT GIVES ME THE STRENGTH TO CONTINUE WITH THE VISION THAT I HAVE. IT'S A VERY IMPORTANT MILESTONE THAT MOTIVATES ME TO MOVE TOWARDS THE FUTURE.

WHAT ARE YOUR **HOPES** FOR YOUR BRAND IN THE YEARS TO COME?

WHEN I STARTED, IT WAS JUST ME IN A SMALL ROOM IN MY APARTMENT, SKETCHING WITH THE IDEA OF CREATING A FASHION HOUSE WITH THE AMBITION OF QUESTIONING THINGS IN THE PROCESS. I HAD TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO FIND THE RIGHT SUPPLIERS TO MAKE FABRICS, HOW TO PRODUCE GARMENTS FROM SCRATCH, AND HOW TO DIG INTO THE FINER DETAILS OF HAVING A HAUTE COUTURE AND READY-TO-WEAR BUSINESS. IT'S WONDERFUL TO HAVE AMAZING CRAFTSMANSHIP AND WORK WITH HERITAGE COMPANIES BUT, AT THE SAME TIME, I'M VERY KEEN ON HOW TO MAINTAIN AN ECO-FRIENDLY APPROACH. TODAY, WE'RE A GOTS-CERTIFIED BRAND AND I WANT TO CONTINUE TO CREATE ORGANIC LUXURY THAT DOESN'T COMPROMISE ON DESIGN.

PRESENTED BY THE FASHION CREATION STUDIO, THE CHANEL FALL-WINTER 2024/25 HAUTE COUTURE COLLECTION PAYS TRIBUTE TO THE PALAIS GARNIER, IN PARIS. PLAYING A KEY ROLE EVER SINCE ITS CREATION, IN BOTH THE HISTORY OF FASHION AND THE HOUSE, THIS HOTSPOT OF PERFORMANCE AND ELEGANCE, WHERE EVERYTHING IS ABOUT GLANCES, GAZES AND PUTTING ONESELF ON DISPLAY, IS TODAY HOSTING THE CHANEL RUNWAY SHOW. SOPHISTICATED, LUXURIOUS, THEATRICAL, THE COLLECTION REVEALS ITSELF IN THE OUTSIDE CORRIDORS SURROUNDING THE AUDITORIUM, TRANSFORMED FOR THE OCCASION INTO RED VELVET OPERA BOXES. USUAL LANDMARKS ARE MODIFIED, PERCEPTIONS ARE REVERSED, THE EXPERIENCE OF THE PALAIS GARNIER IS RENEWED. A SET DESIGNED BY THE DIRECTOR CHRISTOPHE HONORÉ.

HERE, THE WORLDS OF HAUTE COUTURE AND OPERA MINGLE. FEATHERS, TASSELS, CABOCHONS AND EMBROIDERED FLOWERS, PRECIOUS BRAIDS, LACQUERED JERSEY, SUPPLE TWEEDS, SILKY VELVET, ILLUSION TULLE, TAFFETA AND DUCHESSE SATIN: OPULENT MATERIALS THAT DELICATELY RUSTLE. THE VOLUMES ARE DIAPHANOUS, THE SLEEVES PUFFED, AND THE FLOUNCES PLEATED. RICHLY EMBROIDERED, THE COLLECTION IMBUES THE HOUSE CODES WITH A ROMANTIC TWIST. A CHANEL SUIT WITH BOX PLEATS REVISITED IN BURGUNDY TWEED TRIMMED WITH WHITE SATIN, A BLACK CORDUROY TUXEDO AND A WHITE BLOUSE WITH AN EMBROIDERED PLASTRON, A BLACK SUIT WITH A LONG CULOTTE AND A SHORT, FITTED JACKET WITH SHOULDERS SWATHED IN BLACK FEATHERS, DANCE AMONG LONG COATS, VOLUMINOUS CAPES AND EVENING GOWNS, EVOKING A MODERNISED STAGE TRADITION AND A CERTAIN SCIENCE OF PAGEANTRY.

MATTE, GLOSSY, LACQUERED: LIGHT REIGNS SUPREME. A PALETTE OF BLACK, GOLD, SILVER, IVORY, FUCHSIA, PALE PINK, CELADON HINTS AT THE MOST SPLENDID OF SOIREEs. IN THIS INSTITUTION, WE SEE, WE ARE SEEN, WE EXPERIENCE EMOTIONS. IT'S ALSO A PLACE FOR DANCE. AS MAJOR PATRON OF THE OPÉRA NATIONAL DE PARIS SINCE 2023, PATRON OF THE BALLET DE L'OPÉRA SINCE 2021 AND PATRON OF THE DANCE SEASON'S OPENING GALA SINCE 2018, CHANEL IS DEEPLY INVOLVED. ITS HISTORY, ASSOCIATED WITH THAT OF THE DISCIPLINE, THE AVANT-GARDE BALLETS OF YESTERDAY AND TODAY, AND INTIMATELY LINKED, IN ITS VERY CREATION, TO THAT OF MOVEMENT, HAS ATTESTED TO THIS FOR OVER A HUNDRED YEARS. WITH A TUTU, PIERROT OUTFITS, NODS TO THE BALLETS LE TRAIN BLEU (1924) AND APOLLON MUSAGÈTE (1928) – FOR WHICH GABRIELLE CHANEL CREATED THE REVOLUTIONARY COSTUMES – DRESSES FOR DIVAS, PRINCESSES AND BRIDES, THE FALL-WINTER 2024/25 HAUTE COUTURE COLLECTION LEADS US INTO A WORLD WHERE CLOTHES DRESS THE SPACE AS MUCH AS THEY CONQUER IT.

AGAINST THIS VIBRANT BACKDROP, THE CHANEL FALL-WINTER 2024/25 HAUTE COUTURE COLLECTION SHOWCASES THE TECHNICAL EXPERTISE, VIRTUOSITY AND SENSITIVITY OF THE CHANEL HAUTE COUTURE ATELIERS WHERE SOME 150 PEOPLE WORK IN SIX ATELIERS AT 31, RUE CAMBON, NEXT TO THE CHANEL FASHION CREATION STUDIO AND CLOSE TO THE PALAIS GARNIER.

Anatomy

BETWEEN GRAPHICS AND STORYTELLING, LINES AND ARABESQUES, HAUTE JOAILLERIE EXTENDS THE LIMITS OF EXCEPTIONAL CRAFTSMANSHIP.



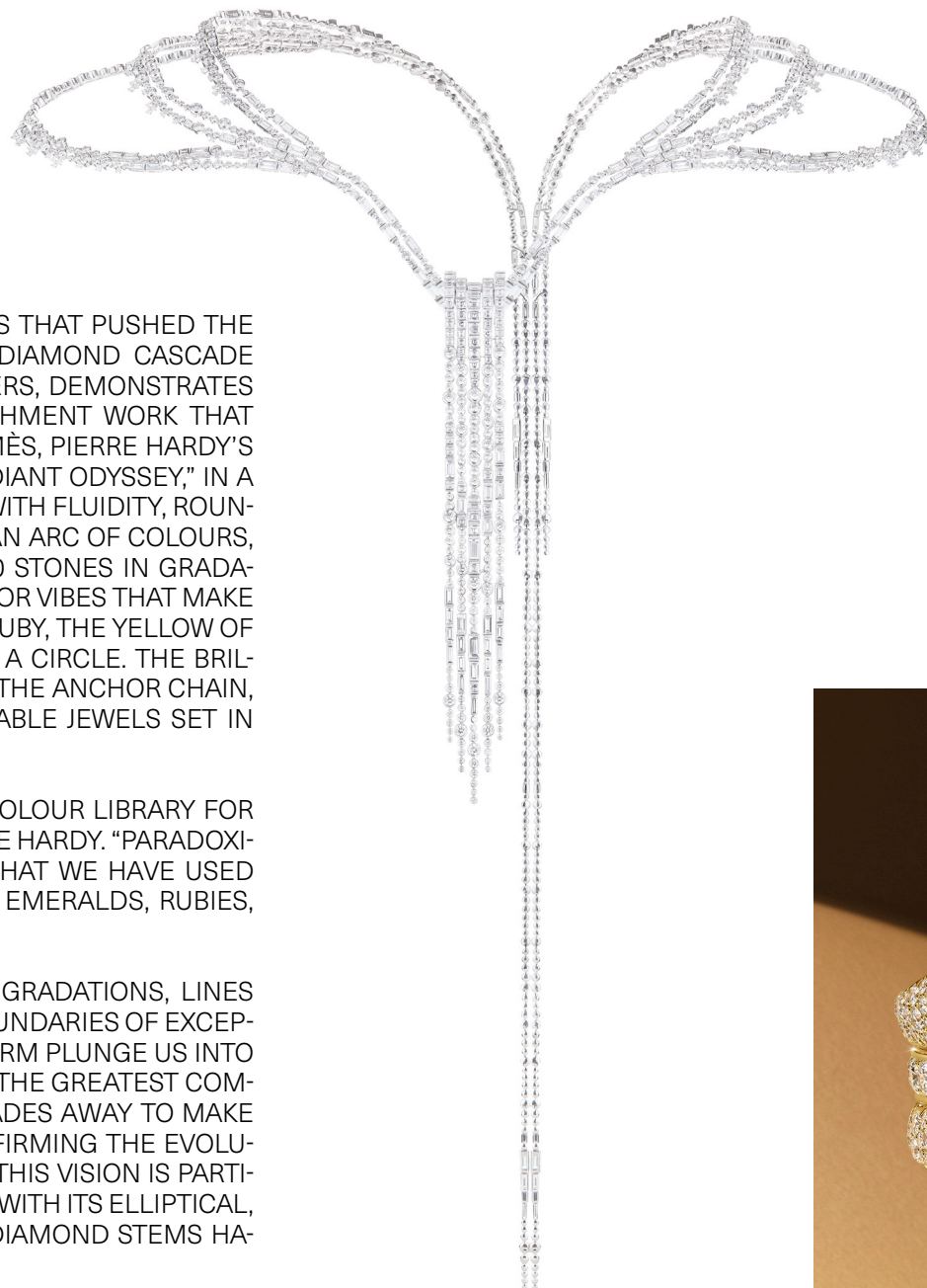
of light

"SHE WAS INSPIRED BY THE WATERS: ICELAND, STRONG, POWERFUL, RAW, IN THE RUSH OF A WATERFALL, SHE SAW A DIAMOND NECKLACE, IN THE SURGE OF WAVES, SHOULDER JEWELLERY, IN THE HEART OF A GLACIER, A ROCK CRYSTAL BRACELET SEEMINGLY SCULPTED BY THE PASSAGE OF WATER." THIS IS HOW BOUCHERON DESCRIBES THE HAUTE JOAILLERIE COLLECTION DESIGNED BY CLAIRE CHOISNE AND PRESENTED DURING THE WEEK OF LUSTRE AND LIGHT THAT IS DRAWING TO A CLOSE. THE MAISON'S 26 HAUTE JOAILLERIE CREATIONS IN TRIBUTE TO WATER, ONCE AGAIN DEFYING THE LAWS OF WEIGHTLESSNESS AND RADIATION.

PARIS WAS THE STAGE FOR THIS MAGIC, WITH COLLECTIONS THAT PUSHED THE LIMITS OF CRAFTSMANSHIP AND VIRTUOSITY. A 148 CM DIAMOND CASCADE NECKLACE, THE LONGEST PIECE EVER MADE BY THE ATELIERS, DEMONSTRATES THIS LESSON IN EXCELLENCE, MAGNIFIED BY THE ENMESHMENT WORK THAT REQUIRED MORE THAN 3,000 HOURS OF LABOUR. FOR HERMÈS, PIERRE HARDY'S SHAPES OF COLOUR COLLECTION IS AN "ECLECTIC AND RADIANT ODYSSEY," IN A POWERFUL PLAY OF ILLUSION THAT COMBINES GEOMETRY WITH FLUIDITY, ROUNDNESS WITH LINE AND POLYCHROME EXPLORATIONS. LIKE AN ARC OF COLOURS, HERMÈS DIAPRÉS, COMPRISES A NECKLACE SET WITH 1400 STONES IN GRADATIONS ALONG WITH SECTIONS TITLED FRESH PAINT AND COLOR VIBES THAT MAKE UP THIS BOLD SYMPHONY, ASSOCIATING A SQUARE WITH A RUBY, THE YELLOW OF A BERYL WITH A TRIANGLE, THE BLUE OF A SAPPHIRE WITH A CIRCLE. THE BRILLIANCE IS THERE, REVISITED BY THE HOUSE'S CODES – LIKE THE ANCHOR CHAIN, THE BIRKIN AND KELLY BAGS, WHICH HAVE BECOME VERITABLE JEWELS SET IN STONE.

"COLOUR IS VERY PRESENT AT HERMÈS; THERE IS EVEN A COLOUR LIBRARY FOR SILK THAT LISTS UP TO 75,000 REFERENCES," EXPLAINS PIERRE HARDY. "PARADOXICALLY, THIS IS THE FIRST TIME IN THE HOUSE'S HISTORY THAT WE HAVE USED SUCH A WIDE VARIETY OF STONES FOR HAUTE JOAILLERIE: EMERALDS, RUBIES, SAPPHIRES AND DIAMONDS..."

BETWEEN GRAPHICS AND STORYTELLING, PATTERNS AND GRADATIONS, LINES AND ARABESQUES, HAUTE JOAILLERIE PUSHES BACK THE BOUNDARIES OF EXCEPTIONAL CRAFTSMANSHIP. CLEAN LINES AND CLARITY OF FORM PLUNGE US INTO A WORLD THAT COMBINES THE GREATEST SIMPLICITY WITH THE GREATEST COMPLEXITY. WITH CHAUMET'S KNIFE EDGE, THE STRUCTURE FADES AWAY TO MAKE WAY FOR LIGHT, ITS ABSOLUTE, MAGNETIC RADIANCE, CONFIRMING THE EVOLUTION OF THE HOUSE AND ITS NEW PROMISES OF ETERNITY. THIS VISION IS PARTICULARLY SUBLIME IN THE JARDIN DE PIERRERIES NECKLACE, WITH ITS ELLIPTICAL, LANCEOLATE, OBLONG OR SERRATED LEAVES, ITS MOBILE DIAMOND STEMS HALOED BY PURPLE SAPPHIRES BLOOMING ON THE SKIN.



a
conver- -sation
with

a

conversation
Yuima Nakazato

with

An exclusive conversation with Yuima Nakazato, founder of Yuima Nakazato for Haute Couture Week.

«This collection is inspired by the Opera Idomeneo written by Mozart. Because I designed the costumes for the Opera Idomeneo. This is also a story about ancient war, so for me, the armor and the tailoring is a very symbolic item»



Front cover

©Elie Saab Haute Couture
©Franck Sorbier
©Iulia Matei
©Aelis
©Charles de Vilmorin
©Juana Martin
©Robert Wun

Page 03
©Iulia Matei

Page 11
©Phill Taylor

Page 18
@ideservecouture

Pages 35;38
©Charlotte Debaugé

Page 46
©Gilles Maciet

Page 55
©Rahul Mishra

Pages 54;55;56;57
©Tara Levy

Pages 60;61
©Mikimoto

Pages 64;65;66;67
©Alexis Mabille FW 2024-2025

Pages 70;71
©Charles de Vilmorin show

Pages 74;75;77;78
©Saï - Stéphane Aït Ouarab

Pages 80;01;83
©Frank Bohbot

Pages 84;85;86;87
©Victor & Rolf FW 2024-2025

Page 88
©Ardazaei FW 2024-2025

Pages 94;95
©Vito Fernicola - Messika

Page 97
©Boucheron
©Chaumet
©De beers

Back cover

©Balenciaga FW 2024-2025
©Tara Levy
©Tara Levy
©Frank Bohbot
©Iulia Matei
©Tara Levy



DEFI
LA MODE DE FRANCE

L'ORÉAL
PARIS

ACCOR

