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PARIS: The 95-year-old French fashion icon Pierre Cardin made an exceptionally rare appearance at Paris Couture Week, model Naomi Campbell led fashion industry insiders in criticizing designer Ulyana Sergeenko over a racist slur, and Valentino was sublime. Some highlights from Wednesday's spring-summer shows:

Pierre Cardin

Cardin, who founded his influential brand in 1950, attended a couture show by Jean Paul Gaultier that paid tribute to his styles.

The Italian-born designer is a contemporary of Christian Dior, who died in 1957. He is, along with Hubert de Givenchy, one of the last living members of the post-War fashion generation.

Age has done little to dampen the designer's famed acerbic tongue and frankness, who said the homage was a tad dramatic and remained undoubtedly the "personal" work of Gaultier.

"It was creative, but quite theatrical all the same. That's the will of Gaultier, his personality," Cardin said.

"He is an artist. I am very proud for him," he added.

Gaultier

Cardin's most famous decade, the optical 1960s, was the anchor.

Delivered against a swirling, psychedelic backdrop, bold black and white looks dominated the energetic styles that were punctuated with bright flashes of retro color.

Gaultier boldly explored the graphic avant-garde designs that made Cardin a global, household name — with the man himself looking on.

A circular black and white striped dress in silk crepe that captured the 95-year-old's signature Space Age vibe led down to theatrical tights: one white, one black.

Then the bubble dress, a Cardin invention, was evoked reverentially in a bi-color gown with double face crepe that was cut into strips on the skirt.

Cardin's designs were often used as creative starting points, and Gaultier made sure the 51 looks never felt like an archival check list.

Still, the show suffered from perhaps too many ideas — such as Asian styles, candy prints — and would have benefited from more focus.

Marion Cotillard will never forget winning the 2008 Academy Award for her portrayal of Edith Piaf in "La Vie En Rose".

Nor will the beautiful French actress forget the man who designed the iconic white mermaid gown she wore that night: Gaultier.

Arriving at his couture show in the Marais in a stylish Gaultier skirt-sweater, again in white, Cotillard reminisced to the AP that "he was part of many amazing moments in my career."

"I love him as a human being and as



Guo Pei



Elie Saab

an artist," she said.

Valentino

The rare standing ovation said it all. To the rousing sound of Maria Callas' "Tosca", designer Pierpaolo Piccioli swept away guests, including Valentino Garavani and Donatella Versace, with his sublime collection of



Jean Paul Gaultier

Style

Above and below: Models present creations by Zuhair Murad; Jean Paul Gaultier; Guo Pei; Elie Saab and Galia Lahav during the Spring/Summer 2018 fashion show on Jan 24, in Paris. (AFP)



Jean Paul Gaultier

theatrical gowns that were painted in the colors of the Renaissance.

The vivid pigments of 16th-century Italian master Pontormo — vermilion,

cerulean blue and pastel pink — added life to the archetypally "couture" silhouettes inspired by the famous Belle Epoque designer Lady Duff-Gordon.



Jean Paul Gaultier



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Fashion

PARIS



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Galia Lahav



Jean Paul

Model Naomi Campbell criticized prominent Paris-based designer Ulyana Sergeenko for casually using a racist slur.

Russian Sergeenko handwrote a note addressed to "my n — -s in Paris" alongside a smiley to her friend, blogger Miroslava Duma, who posted a photo of the note online Monday.

Sergeenko, whose new collection was shown Tuesday, said the reference was inspired by a Kanye West track with the same title.

Campbell was among those shocked and wrote "this better not be real" in reply.

Sergeenko posted an apology Tuesday that made matters worse saying "and yes, we call each other the N word sometimes when we want to believe that we are just as cool as these guys who sing it."

The house wouldn't comment to AP.

"It's really shocking to see comments from people you admire. Are they detached from reality? It's not fun to be a racist or a bigot," said Bryan Grey Yambao, also known as Bryanboy, a Filipino fashion blogger.

Elie Saab

To brush Jazz music worthy of a party hosted by F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby, Lebanese designer Elie Saab put on his dancing shoes for an exuberant ode to the Roaring Twenties.

Paris, "the city of love, the city of sin", was the setting, as models in column silhouettes slinked provocatively down a gilded stone staircase and onto the catwalk.

It wasn't just the music that was attention-grabbing.

Giant neck bows, embellished cloche hats, capes, split legs and plunging necklines came alongside cinched waists. Mini-skirts on models were richly adorned in sequins and ostrich feathers. (AP)

Large bows, hanging from the neck or tied with sweeping fabric around the waist, defined much of the aesthetic.

Huge flat feathered hats designed by Philip Treacy — that evoked the turn of the (last) century — floated by diaphanously as guests eagerly snapped their cameras.

Complex floral prints twinned with contrasting colors — such as gold, blue and plum — is an ambitious combination. That it worked in Piccioli's show, and produced a beautiful harmony is proof he is one of the best couture designers working in Paris right now.