

People & Places



Valentino



Jean Paul Gaultier

PARIS: Fake fur and authentic celebrities got all the attention at Jean Paul Gaultier's fall-winter collection, while Elie's Saab couture reached creative heights by channeling Chinese mysticism during the final day of fall-winter 2019 couture displays.

Here are some of Wednesday's highlights:

Jean Paul Gaultier
In a corseted gown, singer Christina Aguilera held court at Gaultier's fur-themed, fur-less show with "RuPaul's Drag Race" stars Violet Chachki and Miss Fame, as well as French cinema icon Catherine Deneuve.

Last November, animal rights groups hailed Gaultier's announcement that he is joining the growing ranks of designers to ban fur from their collections. Gaultier used this as a muse for a playful fall-winter collection that used feathers to mimic real fur on 1980s-themed looks with a funky retro soundtrack and flashes of bright color.

An oversize Russian winter fur hat, or chapka, looked initially like the genuine article and shimmered alongside a red "fox" bubble jacket. They were, so said the program notes, all constructed in marabou feathers.

Leopard print graced a billowing chiffon gown, geometric zebra stripes jazzed up diaphanous pant look, and all this was followed by a "panther" coat with oversize collar that was made with jacquard.

A blood red silk coat, which was the strongest look in an excessively theatrical display, opened up with its wide collar as if to evoke a carcass cut open, albeit in a very elegant way.

Gaultier's program notes have become legendary over the years. Each season, guests pour over the house cards that humorously detail the couture looks with tongue-in-cheek word plays and rhyming puns.

"Downtown Abyss", "Black Panther", "Grey of Thrones" and "Mein Hair" were among some of the quirky couture look titles in this season's lot - all the work of wordsmith Raphael Ciotti.

Ciotti, a 36-year-old screen and stage writer who co-wrote the Gaultier "Fashion Freak Show" musical, says he has been penning the couture notes for several years after first meeting the humor-loving designer during a television show a decade ago.

"He realized we had exactly the same sense of humor and so asked me to write his program notes. He just tells me the show theme and then (I) have free creative rein," Ciotti told The Associated Press. "I try to make as many jokes as possible in each look."

Elie Saab
Amid mysterious clouds of Persian blue mist, Elie Saab fashioned up a standout couture collection Wednesday using the symbolism of China.

The Lebanese designer reimagined traditional Chinese drawings through embroideries with sequins, paillettes

and sparkle that depicted fauna and flora; elements, the house said, that represent powerful protective spirits in Eastern legend.

"Nature, through mystical creatures and divine characters, sparked the curiosity of the designer, inspiring him to translate them into his very own art," it added.

Long diaphanous tulle, velvet and chiffon trains brought a magical romance to Saab's bread-and-butter silhouette of sexy, cinched waist gowns.

Models with decorated tiaras walked to Asian traditional music. There was some sophisticated and thoughtful fashion designs amid the show production - for instance, the famed Chinese traditional dress, the Cheongsam, was re-imagined in a light tuxedo-style with a provocatively open bust.

The fashion industry can be a polluting one, as it puts a myriad of people on airplanes across the world for fashion seasons that promote clothes to be discarded as soon as they become passe.

But there are some moments of ecological reflection. One initiative at Elie Saab had front row editors impressed.

This season, there were no program notes on the seats, ones which often

comprise wads of thick, color-printed photos and detailed texts, and often end up in the trash as soon as the critics have finished their reviews.

In their place Wednesday was a giant - and mysterious - barcode on each invitation.

It provoked bemusement from invitees. Each guest was instructed by Saab's staff to hover their phone camera over the barcode, and then an option automatically appeared to load up

the notes electronically to a web browser, saving plenty of trees in the process.

Models stormed the runway in animal prints, neon dresses and designs that played with optical illusions

at Jean Paul Gaultier's Haute Couture collection on Wednesday, set to a banging 1990s euro dance soundtrack.

Gaultier - who joined the fur-free trend late last year at a time when brands like Burberry or Gucci are also dropping pelts - evoked an array of wildlife with animal prints including a panther coat and geometric, zebra-striped dresses.

In a warm, party atmosphere, the audience - which included US pop singer Christina Aguilera - cheered on French model Cindy Bruna, dressed in a pleated aniseed-coloured chiffon dress and Coco Rocha in her monochrome dress and vest, a mix of wool and a python pattern.

Notable stand-outs included a quilted cape made of neon green satin, laid on the model's head like a tent, oversized long collars used as sleeveless jackets and enormous, faux-fur chapka hats.

Presented in Gaultier's Paris headquarters, the collection included dresses with endless dots of colour, creating the optical illusion of movement. (Agencies)

Combined caption for pics A-K Above and below: Models present creations by Valentino, Elie Saab, Jean Paul Gaultier and Dior during the Fall-Winter 2020 fashion show in Paris on July 3. (AP)

Style

Jean Paul Gaultier



Elie Saab



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Valentino



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