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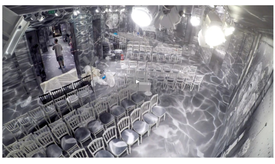
TIMELAPSE

Inside 30 Avenue Montaigne, white and pearl gray – the decorator Victor Grandpierre's signature colors – gave way to a Surrealist decor by the artist Penny Slinger.

This spectacular transformation – a chiaroscuro dominated by black - took place on the occasion of the Dior Autumn-Winter 2019-2020 Haute Couture show by Maria Grazia Chiuri.



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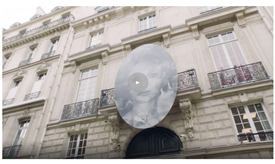
AMBIANCE



02
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(RE)INCARNATIONS

Metamorphosed. The *hôtel particulier* of 30 Avenue Montaigne, the scene of the Autumn-Winter 2019-2020 Haute Couture show by Maria Grazia Chiuri, celebrated the feminine personalities who, with their talent and elegance, brought the house to life through its collections, from 1946 onwards. A fantastical universe enshrouded in mystery paid homage to Monsieur Dior's heritage and his passion for architecture.

© Adrien Dirand

At the entrance, on the hôtel particulier's iconic façade, a medallion revealed a feminine visage that welcomed guests and gazed after them as they passed. Bewitching and enigmatic, this magic cameo transformed into a multitude of feminine figures, reflecting the work of Penny Slinger, the feminist artist whose inspirations are rooted in Surrealism and Dadaism. Her works denounce the power of patriarchy and question women's liberation through the female body, symbolism, desire and dreams.

Throughout this spectacular, immersive setting, clouded in mist and chiaroscuro dominated by black, set to Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* reinterpreted by Max Richter, Christian Dior's historic salons were adorned with natural elements. Earth, water, fire, air, crystal and rocks were the backdrops for dazzling caryatids, inspired by the female statues that ornament and support ancient Greek temples and selected Parisian façades. Capturing its sinuous branches like creepers up the mansion's grand staircase, a gigantic tree stood majestically, while a sumptuously lush rose garden — a celebration of Christian Dior's love for flowers and gardens – blossomed in the heart of this chimerical decor.

Penny Slinger brought back to life all the women who have inhabited 30 Avenue Montaigne with their spirit, passion and beauty, from the couturier's beloved sister, Catherine Dior, to the virtuoso petites mains and loyal clients, precious friends and magnificent muses like Dior's own caryatid of elegance, Mitzah Bricard. And so it was that these sculptural apparitions, dressed in flames, roses or butterflies, emerged, fusing with the architecture of the place, haunting each space with their magnetic presence. A symbiosis in which they embody and carry, literally, the House.

As an echo, the Surrealist artist signed the show's final look, a dolthouse reinterpretation, gilded in gold leaf, of Dior's hôtel particulier.

An alchemy of femininity and architecture, heritage and «mimesis» imagination, of magical intensity.

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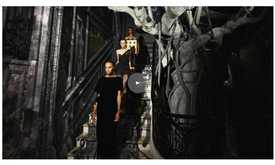
THE SHOW VIDEO



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THE SHOW LOOKS

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THE ARCHITECTURE OF DREAMS

This afternoon at 30 Avenue Montaigne in Paris, Maria Grazia Chiuri presented her Autumn-Winter 2019-2020 Haute Couture collection, a contemporary tribute to the fundamentals of couture. Discover the press kit.

© Camille Vivier

Questioning the form and function of clothing, the architect Bernard Rudofsky's reflections inspired Maria Grazia Chiuri's neo-conceptual vision of Haute Couture as an ant destined to dress bodies that are always unique and invested with a singular identity. Following on from this modern thinker, who grants a central place to the relationship between couture and architecture – two disciplines having to do with the human body and its proportions – Maria Grazia Chiuri presents her Autumn-Winter 2019-2020 Haute Couture collection in Dior's hôtel particulier. The House's birthplace – 30, Avenue Montaigne – is where every Dior Artistic Director has worked in strict collaboration with the Ateliers.

Among the inspirations for this collection are the powerful black-and-white works of Penny Slinger – the feminist artist who created the scenography for the show that recounts the potent alchemy of fire, air and water in the heart of a hostile and mysterious nature populated by feminine creatures. They have always shouldered the «weight of the world», like a contemporary iteration of caryatids, the sculptures embodying female forms that support the architecture of ancient temples and decorate certain Parisian edifices, draped in tunics with pure lines. Much like the one white dress Maria Grazia Chiuri designed for a collection that explores the pluralistic power of black. *"I could write an entire book on black,"* Christian Dior declared in his *Little Dictionary of Fashion*. The "peplos" – the tunic «worn «on Ancient Greece – has no defined, constructed cut. It's the body that gives it its form. In his final collection, Christian Dior returned to this elemental form of draping, dialoguing between notions of couture and of architecture, from «fluid to tailoring. In echo, an interrogation still resonates today: *"Are Clothes Modern?"* underscoring Haute Couture's capacity to question modernity.

Designing a collection almost entirely in black, punctuated by rare colors that reveal its power, implies a return to fundamentals, to the foundations of Haute Couture, and confronting it against contemporary lifestyles. Black demands perfection and here it gives life to transformable capes. Each dress is an edifice that reveals its structure, the bone structure that supports and defines it. *"We don't need a new way of building, we need a new way of life,"* Bernard Rudofsky argued. By the same token, this collection etches out an unprecedented landscape, making it possible to question notions about the body, clothing and habitats. Haute Couture becomes a creative laboratory for thinking differently about clothing and its relationship to time and space.

"These caryatids, which the director Agnès Varda filmed poetically in the streets of Paris for her documentary *"Les Dites Caryatides"* (in English, "The So-Called Caryatids", 1984), inspired Maria Grazia Chiuri for her Haute Couture creations.

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INVITATION

Tomorrow the House will present its Autumn-Winter 2019-2020 Haute Couture collection in a place dear to Christian Dior. Stay tuned to follow the event.