Nicolas Di Felice breathes new life into Courrèges

By Dominique Muret - 3 March 2021

Wednesday saw a successful return to the runway for Courrèges, now led by Nicolas Di Felice. With its collection for Fall/Winter 2021-22, presented as part of Paris' virtual fashion week, the renowned brand started a new chapter, unveiling a fresh and youthful wardrobe that tapped into the current fashion zeitgeist without renouncing the label's origins.
Graphical effects, ultra-short silhouettes, geometric lines, colour blocking, vinyl and leather all jostled for attention, and among it all, one could see the Courrèges DNA that brusquely propelled fashion into the future more than half a century ago. Presenting little easy-to-wear pieces that were never boring and demonstrated a real attention to detail, the house's new creative director reimagined its codes with a contemporary twist, all while tapping into the heritage of André and Coqueline Courrèges, particularly the couple's creative early years.

The runway in itself was a manifesto to this new era, with the models walking in a giant, immaculately white open-air cube, observed only by a camera placed at the centre of the structure. At the end of the show, the space, La Station – Gare des Mines, in the Parisian suburb of Aubervilliers, was besieged by a handful of youths, who clambered over its smooth, white walls to join the party.

Walking the perimeter of this futuristic setting with carefree ease, this season's Courrèges girl looked to have leapt straight out of the 1960s and into the world of today, which she took to with natural confidence. Combining caps, zip-up jumpers and thigh-length seven-league boots with ultra-short outfits and big black glasses, she made for a particularly seductive sight.

The famous A-line minidress with large pockets was interpreted as a number of different pieces, mixing a stretch jersey top with a wool crepe bottom, in some looks. These were essentially offered in black or white, but also in pale pink and bright red. The wardrobe included other Courrèges classics too, from A-line miniskirts to short coats, via pieces in leather or vinyl and little jackets with rivets, which sometimes featured large fur collars.
Circles and checks appeared on the tops of certain jumpsuits and dresses in wool crepe. The geometric circular motif also popped up in low-cut dresses, and in leather pants and tops with cut-outs. Other looks worthy of note included 70s-style tunic and pant combos, as well as loose coats featuring a large check inspired by a pattern from 1963. And don't forget the vintage touch added by large square suitcases (without wheels!), which were branded with the house's logo and carried by hand by the models.

Since being sold by its founders in 2011, this is the third relaunch attempt undertaken by the fashion house, owned as of 2017 by Artémis, the Pinault family's investment firm. Suffice to say then, this latest endeavour promises to be an interesting challenge for Belgian-born Di Felice, who previously worked with Nicolas Ghesquière at Balenciaga and Louis Vuitton, and Raf Simons at Christian Dior, before joining Courrèges.