Nicolas Di Felice revisits Courrèges' classic codes with a festival spirit

By Triana Alonso  ·  30 September 2021

A festival-like atmosphere overtook the Bois de Vincennes on Wednesday, September 29. As well as its usual morning joggers, cyclists and dogwalkers, the green lung of western Paris welcomed a select group of guests attending the latest Courrèges show from Nicolas Di Felice. Parading along the park's damp walkways, they made a pilgrimage to the heart of the forest, a journey which inevitably recalled the come-and-go of concert attendees usually seen in the immense green space, known for its summer music festivals and free parties.
The idea was to take the show's guests on a journey into the festival memories of the designer, who led attendees, all of whom carried invitations in the form of metal bracelets – a clear nod to music festival wristbands – to a grassy esplanade where he had painted a large square in white paint on the ground, prefiguring the refined and minimalistic tone of the show. The designer's chosen decor was both monumental and festive, in a similar vein to his first show as the brand's creative director, which was also hosted on the outskirts of the French capital, at "La Station," in Aubervilliers, this March.

As though planned by the brand itself, the clouds that had been threatening rain dissipated, revealing a sun-brightened blue sky just as the first notes of the compositions by musician and friend of Di Felice, Erwan Sene, began to play, signaling the start of the show presenting the designer's latest collection, "Both of Us Knowing." Just in case, the brand had provided its guests with white logo rain ponchos, which will now probably have to wait until the next festival season to be worn by their recipients. Among the attendees, one could pick out actress Agathe Rousselle, who plays the protagonist in the award winning film, Titane; fashion designer Ludovic de Saint Sernin, and businessman François Pinault, accompanied by his son, François-Henri Pinault, the current CEO of the Kering group. Courrèges has belonged to Artémis, the holding company run by the family of French millionaires, since 2017.
Di Felice bet on a strong opening for the show, sending out contemporary reinterpretations of Courrèges' heritage and vocabulary, manifested in three effective capes with simple, geometric patterns, inspired by a circular design from 1968, a triangular piece from 1969 and a square silhouette from 1995. Taking full advantage of the skill and craftsmanship of the atelier offered by the brand founded by André and Coqueline Courrèges in 1961, the designer created exaggerated proportions that covered the whole body.

There was also a logic of contrasts that was reflected in looks combining parkas and bombers with the brand's classic overcoats or its instantly recognizable A-line miniskirts, some of which were offered in fun, pop versions featuring diagonal stripes and double pockets, while others were strictly black and offered side cut-outs at the hips. This sensual showing of skin continued in low-waisted jeans and in dresses and tops featuring triangular cut-outs over the chest. In addition, a "Loop" theme based on the blending of different fabrics was brought into miniscule tops, dresses, skirts and even this season's bag, which is inspired by the straps of a Courrèges dress from 1976, a piece acquired by Di Felice himself years ago.
In combination with ribbed garments and pieces in the house's characteristic vinyl, models with thick black eyeliner sported caps that matched their all-over single-color looks, or XXL earrings, as well as over-the-knee disco boots. The close of the show came with the arrival of three light, asymmetrical looks made out of a simple strip of cloth. As for the techno-inspired color palette, it ranged from intense silver and pale yellow to sky blue and pink, the favorite color of André Courrèges. Indeed, the tributes were everywhere on a day when the brand's history was also channeled into the launch of its new perfumes.

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