

# RUNWAY REVIEW – FENDI COUTURE SS24



Photo- Isidore Montag/Vogue Runway

"I was thinking of Karl's futurism with Fendi," remarked Kim Jones on the inspiration behind his latest couture collection. Since stepping into the role of Artistic Director of couture and womenswear at Fendi in 2020, a position previously held by Karl Lagerfeld, Jones has nurtured the house's rich Italian heritage- fusing its signature styles with his own forward-looking vision.

He has also bolstered its demand amongst high-profile celebrity clientele, with Emma Stone recently gracing the Governors Awards in a pink sequinned set from Fendi's FW23 Couture Collection.

Whilst brands such as Daniel Roseberry's Schiaparelli forecast a future that entails gadget-encrusted garments and Sébastien Meyer's Coperni continues to integrate robotics into their ready-to-wear runway collections, Kim Jones's take on the future is refreshingly simplistic and meaningful. This year's show notes read "The Fendi approach to the person wearing couture is to reaffirm their humanity," and in the 39-piece collection that ensued, the implicit harmony between body and dress was particularly profound.

On January 25th 2024, Fendi's SS24 Haute Couture show was staged inside the 19th century Palais Brongniart, formerly the stock exchange of Paris. A star-studded crowd gathered inside including the likes of Zendaya, Reese Witherspoon and her daughter Ava Phillippe.

Whispers of anticipation drew to a diminuendo as a droning soundtrack supervised by Jones' long-time collaborator Max Richter reverberated loudly against the Palais' white walls. The collection commenced with a melange of monochromatic black, white and brown ensembles. The audience was

immediately thrust into a world where structural simplicity took precedence, a paired-back approach to haute couture.

The opening look, a strapless sheath dress which extended towards the ankles was austere yet pragmatic.

Using a new geometric 'Scatola' (box) silhouette adapted by the brand, it was followed in close succession by a series of harness 'Shibari' style necklines featuring identical knots that framed the décolletage, billowing column skirts and ribbed knitwear that clung to the contours of the body. The understated appeal of Look No.7 proved that tailored trousers never go out of vogue nor does the tasteful marriage between black and white.

The Fendi atelier then continued to embrace the collection's overarching mood of modernity through their meticulous application of intricate embroidery and ornate beading on light yet structured textiles such as Vacuna wool, mohair, cashmere and sumptuous silk gazar.

Anthropomorphic allusions were at the forefront of this collection. The venue was transformed into a textural playground as eye-catching croc-embossed leather enhanced black garments and overlapping feathery filaments merged to mimic the appearance of Fendi's signature fur. The trompe l'oeil techniques used to replicate the appearance of this fur marked a milestone in the modernisation of the brand. This aspect was particularly pertinent following the announcement that fur has been formally banned from the upcoming London Fashion Week and the worldwide proliferation of fur-free alternatives. Look 16, consisting of a brown, voluptuous coat, aspired to triumphantly convey this contemporary take on fabricating faux fur yet failed to match the level of grandeur that the real fur coats of Lagerfeld's controversial 'Haute Fourrure' Fendi Couture show had achieved in 2015.

Other borrowed elements from the Fendi archives, included its characteristic brown and teal hues and the use of Astrakhan fur, yet they were designed in a manner that juxtaposed prior creativity with Kim Jones' current innovation, thus the ethos of this collection centred around the prospect of the future, rather than dwelling on the past.

A mesmerising mix of diaphanous dresses in hues of pale pink, grey and white were then put on display. Composed of sheer, gauzy silks and chiffons, they were reminiscent of Roman romanticism yet on closer inspection these ethereal silhouettes encapsulated Jones's vision of "precision and emotion at once," thus tapping into the emotive 'humanism' element of the show through their delicate draping and use of trains which mirrored the wearer's movements with an Elysian fluidity.

The accessories accompanying the collection were designed by Delfina Delettrez Fendi, who created frameless white gold eyewear that was representative of the futuristic dialogue underscoring the show.

Her mother, the matriarch of the Fendi family, Silvia Venturini Fendi, also unveiled dainty micro purses, compact clutches and the latest iterations of her iconic baguette bag, which were replete with mink linings, selleria stitches, sequin embossed exteriors and 18-karat gold hardware.

The metallic accents and flashes of silver that have been especially ubiquitous this season also punctuated and imbued the collection, as seen in the pointed silver kitten heels worn by each model, the panels of silver adorning black gowns and the opulent opera gloves which featured cascading silver sequins.

The collection culminated with a strapless silver beaded dress. An opulent, luminous number that emanated a seemingly celestial effortless glow, despite the hours of craftsmanship it inevitably took to create. It reinforced the understated, streamlined sophistication that pervaded this season's show.

Kim Jones' SS24 couture collection was rendered through sheer simplicity and an unwavering commitment to fortifying the future of fashion while staying true to the fundamentals behind Fendi's 99-year-strong Italian heritage. As this season's haute couture collection concluded on a contemplative note, it imparted the sentiment that luxury can often be found in subtlety and in embracing our relationships with ourselves as well as the natural world - both of which were reflected in today's striking showcase.



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