There are few more imaginative minds in fashion today in Paris than Bruno Sialelli, who staged an inspired collection for the house of Lanvin on a crisp Wednesday morning.
Worn on a cast of several generations, and staged inside Manufacture des Gobelins, the legendary creator of one of France’s greatest royal art forms – tapestry.

“It’s a bridge between the past and the present. Between Jeanne Lanvin and myself,” explained Sialelli, after taking a long march amid thunderous applause before a series of magnificent tapestries in the Gobelins lobby.

Sialelli riffed on much of the house’s archive, from the classy silhouettes, to logos and the calligraphy he discovered in a book that founder Jeanne Lanvin had developed with one of her collaborators, French intellectual writer Louise de Vilmorin. Using those prints in ravishingly well cut dresses and silk scarves.
His cast ranged from a Lanvin veteran of two decades, Maggie Rizer – stunning in a classy black double-face cashmere coat – to Imaan Hammam in an impressive silk gown made in a striking bestiary print, all the way to Gigi and Bella Hadid, whose mum sat front row. A front-row that included naughty gal Zahia Dehar, Isabelle Huppert and Virgil Abloh.

Throughout there was an exotic affluence to the collection – bell-shaped white chiffon dresses with mini feathered capes; beautifully sculpted felt boleros; and seductive sheer negligees. Most models wearing on their heads leather versions of medieval cornets – in a Return of Martin Guerre moment. Finishing with two remarkable white coats – for a gal and a guy, in a co-ed show – made in an artfully painted white feathers.

Each model literally wafting by, as the cast had been sprayed backstage with a new private scent the designer had dreamed up.
“I was fascinated by the manner in which Jeanne Lanvin elevated herself. She was born into a poor family, and as the eldest sister had to take care of the younger ones. How she fought to improve herself. She did of course marry well, but she also had a daughter Marguerite and devoted herself to making beautiful clothes for her,” explained the designer.

The setting, moreover seemed ideal for the opulence of the clothes. Les Gobelins is, ultimately, the oldest luxury brand in France.

“It was used by Louis XIV to support French industry, and he used to wear their textiles. To encourage people to spend more on clothing and fashion. Okay! Les Gobelins is true luxury, as they let you take the time you need to make things perfectly. It’s not like, ‘Hey! we have a show in three months!’” joked Sialelli, to much laughter.

By Godfrey Deeny

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