Two days after the last show of Paris Fashion Week, and the official end to the international runway season, leave it to Stella McCartney to unveil her latest collection on Thursday afternoon and in the most novel of locations. In the garden of Houghton Hall, the stately home of Britain’s first prime minister, Sir Robert Walpole.
One suspect the legendarily energetic Sir Robert would have loved the collection – a contrasting blend of panache, enveloping silhouettes and kickey prints. All staged on a cast marching around the garden of Houghton Hall, with its elegant Water Tower in the background.

Shot by noted photographic duo of Mert and Marcus, the show captured the bustling energy of McCartney style, as the models strode intensely past the famed land art sculpture of Richard Long – an immense stretch of Cornish slate that looks practically sewn into the grass.

With the majority of the collection composed of repurposed materials, key looks included BMX-style detailing with ribs and seams used in geometric sporty tight dresses; figure-hugging jackets; bicycle shorts and safari jackets. Punched up with great prints like the Photoshop assemblage of seashells and conches.

Very much still the designer leader of the sustainability movement, McCartney made lingerie and swimwear in sustainable Aquafil Econyl in her latest use of eco-friendly materials.

All anchored by new hipster wide-strap flip flops; and topped by graphic retro futurist shades, and show to great effect before this Palladian style country house.

In a word, Stella's arrival at LVMH seems to have unleashed a fresh burst of creative energy from the UK-born designer. Harnessing her origins in an idealistic setting to create a collection that flatters even as it empowers.

Ten years ago, there were some bitter fashionistas who regarded Stella as something of a crank because of her insistence on using sustainable methods. Now, she looks to have been extremely prescient, and way ahead of her time. Sir Robert, who had the longest run in power of any PM, over 20 years, would have admired that.

By Godfrey Deeny

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