Balmain: Around the world in 80 outfits

By Godfrey Deeny -  9 March 2021

You can’t keep a good showman down. And few are better fashion fantasists than Olivier Rousteing of Balmain, whose latest collection was an homage to the one thing all of us have been gasping for – travel.

His show video on Monday evening, the eighth day of the 10-day Paris Fashion Week, opened with the outline of a plane fuselage. ‘Now boarding’ reading on a ticker tape. A e-invitation read ‘Balmain: Above & Beyond.’ The final destination? ‘The World,’ according to the ticket.

Lockdown be damned, Rousteing and his team pulled together a series of great sets. Opening with a score of monitors set up in an ice field, before the cast suddenly began walking on top of the wings of an Air France passenger jet.

Fighter-pilot jumpsuits; or their cords used in all manner of cocktails, S&M frocks or boiler suits. Most of the cast carrying logo suitcases and weekender bags.

Party-warrior fashion at its best, before the night owls all marched right under a massive jet liner in an immense hangar. Off for a weekend of intense clubbing in power blousons, sexy cargo pants, and super hero aviator assemblages, gathered together inside an enormous engine room.

Self-confidence is certainly a requirement to wear Rousteing’s Balmain. But if you have it then you can own most rooms you walk into. Even on another planet.

The cast ended the evening walking on an illuminated gang plank, perched in outer space before a gigantic dark star.

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In truth, this collection could have done with a good edit, but one can forgive Olivier his self-indulgence. His fashion suggests and invents another universe of design, desire and devilment and for that, this designer deserves plenty of respect.

Olivier Rousteing is the Jules Verne of fashion.

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