Stella McCartney Winter 2021: From houndstooth to seahorses

By Godfrey Deeny - 24 March 2021

Stella McCartney unveiled her latest collection online Tuesday, and followed up with a Stella McCartney Winter 2021 Conference and interviews devoted as much to climate as clothes.

McCartney, a long-time fashion leader in the environmental movement, used her "conference" in her drive to amplify women's voices in the struggle to stop disruptive climate change.

But first she opened with a show video, staged before no live audience - a dressed-up display that looks forward to the post-pandemic when women can finally escape lockdown again.

Shot in the concrete-bunker lower depths of the Tate Modern in London, before huge slanted concrete supports, the show opened with great flight jackets, either oversized macaroon beige, or strictly cut in bottle green.

The McCartney lady still enjoys dipping into her squeeze's wardrobe, appearing in boyfriends' houndstooth coats, made of regenerated nylon. Paired with a bold new version of the Frayme handbag with large galvanic wraparound aluminum chain.

Her cast of barely a half down gals strutting their stuff in nubby heeled boots in faux suede, some so long they become leggings.
Throughout her cut was forgiving yet always cool; especially for evening, with sleek wool cocktail dresses in twisted geometric patterns and head-to-toe popcorn 3D knits created in stretch forest-friendly viscose.

When it comes to the time for clubbing, Stella’s sirens don cut-out racy cocktails or massive disco queen-worthy flared pants. Using psychedelic club prints in fitted silk roll-necks, tracksuits, puffer jackets and short dresses with peeks of exposed skin.

All inspired by D is for Desire from the McCartney A to Z Manifesto.

Being an English designer, rain is never too far away from her thoughts, hence dramatic nylon safari jackets and a new take on the duck boot, but with a difference – techy, in putty gray and made with a solvent-free, biodegradable sole.

For her video, Stella used a dream team - shot by ace photographic duo Mert Alas and Marcus Piggott. Styled by Jane How, with make-up by Daniel Kolaric from Pat McGrath Labs and hair by Eugene Souleiman.

The house estimated that 77% of this collection is made with sustainable materials – including coats and tailoring created using wool sourced from farms selected for their high animal welfare standards and regenerative farming practices. All shown in the week that Stella unveiled her first garments made of Mylo, an animal-free, vegan leather created from mushrooms. Seconds after her show, a YouTube video featured Paris Jackson in a lingerie dress made of Mylo.
“Designed by my friend Stella McCartney, who is the queen of sustainable fashion and innovation. More than one billion animals die for fashion every year and animal agriculture is making climate change worse. That’s why Mylo is not only better for the future of fashion, but the future of our planet,” explains Jackson.

Immediately after the show, Stella chatted with Thimali Kodikara, the producer of the designer’s favorite podcast – Mothers of Invention.

“I love that you are fighting for the cause of climate change and leading with some answers, which is what with everyone is looking for,” explains Stella.

“The world is now on track for a four-degree rise,” sighs Kodikara.

“So, light hearted, easy, everyday conversations,” jokes Stella ironically, perched at a desk, with what looked like red legal case books behind her.

Their guest was Dr. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson, a marine biologist working on solutions to keep the global temperature rise below 1.5 degrees Celsius. The conversation between Maeve Higgins and Johnson focused on her research into seahorses, whose wonderful males who have pouches to carry their young, to ocean climate policy.

Her goals – about one third of the US population live in coastal cities with heatwaves and rising seas, working on Urban Ocean Lab to redesign coastal cities. When, how, where and even if one rebuilds after ecological disasters, from hurricanes to forest fires.