Elsewhere at LFW: Ozwald Boateng, Clements Ribeiro, Johannes Warnke and Banshee of Savile Row

By Godfrey Deeny  -  23 February 2022

Far from the established runways, London Fashion Week threw up a bunch off cool surprises, from Ozwald Boateng showing off-calendar; a Clements Ribeiro come back; and debuts by an Irish tailor and a German romanticist.

Ozwald Boateng
A gala evening celebrating black influence by Ozwald Boateng, who took over the Savoy Theatre on the Strand and packed the stage with a slew of major black British music and film stars.

The mononymous Goldie, musical producer and DJ, sauntered about the stage in a copper silk lounge jacket, while Idris Elba took the final passage in the crispest anthracite suit with silk black shirt. Elba looked great.

The show marked the first by Boateng – Savile Row’s first black tailor – in over 12 years, and began with an extended drum solo before photo montages of great black heroes – rappers, actors, politicians, sports heroes and footballers.

Before a masked model appeared in one of Boateng’s signature slim-line suits whose chalk patterns appeared on the exterior. Followed by lots of silvery jumpsuits, weekend shorts and silk pajama looks for guys and girls.

In a mammoth co-ed show of over 100 looks, he also showed lots of deep purple sharp suits, cocktail dresses and hipster grand dame blouses.

“There are more people of color in the industry now then I have ever known before. I was always the only Black person in the room, for decades, and I’ve been to I don’t know how many events — like the Fashion Awards. Now it’s a wholly different experience. It's actually quite mind boggling for me, and also exciting and great to see how the business has shifted and changed,” Boateng told the Evening Standard pre-show.

Back in 1995, aged only 28, Boateng established his own store on Savile Row. So his celebration of black culture which became the effective grand finale of London Fashion Week, was also a moment to reflect on the staying power of Boateng, a true fashion icon in his own right.

Clements Ribeiro

Unmatched quality, multi-colored stripes and scores of chevrons at Clements Ribeiro, where designer Inacio Ribeiro unveiled his second knitwear collection since relaunching his brand last year.
Once again, Clements Ribeiro is manufacturing its collection with Barrie, the renowned cashmere specialist that is owned by Paraffection, the Chanel group company that acquired over a dozen specialist artisans and luxury suppliers that includes Lesage, Gossens, Massaro and Maison Michel.

Entirely produced in cashmere, the result is a cool collection of beautifully made tanks, cardigans, jumpers and twinsets, with the entry level price 400 pounds for a tank.

“Working with Barrie has been a great experience. The quality is second to none. And they know how to handle bright graphic colors, which is what Clements Ribeiro is all about,” explained Brazilian-born Inacio.

Presented inside 14 Cavendish Square, a delightfully wrecked grand mansion, and the scene in December of Dior Men’s pre-show cocktail party, the collection had an instant sense of optimism and commercial credibility. As guests sipped on bubbly, a small team of Brazilian dancers performed before the stockmen in the mansion’s upstairs drawing room.

Suzanne Clements met Inacio on their first day at Central Saint Martins, married in 1992 and opened their own brand in 1993. They were twice nominated as British Designer of the Year and in 2000 were named creative directors of Cacharel, significantly reviving the southern French brand during their seven-year-stint. These days, Suzanne has turned her hand to fine art, with Inacio concentrating on fashion design.

A skill which he still clearly commands, given the charm and style of this collection.

Banshee of Savile Row
A key element in London will always be about tailoring though Irish-born Banshee of Savile Row approaches the tradition with a fresh twist – creating gentlemanly bespoke tailoring for women.

The fledgling brand staged its first show in a Mayfair Gallery this weekend, and there was certainly plenty of posh panache about the clothes.

From the crimson linen suit made with a cutaway, six-button officer’s mess jacket and the soft belted rose-hued jackets to a great midnight blue velvet theatre coat and, best of all, a flawlessly draped pink seersucker suit made with a double-breasted jacket and a single-pleat pants, paired with a tuxedo shirt.

Jaunty and coltish, and somehow just right for the current London mood of pulling together very spruce looks.

Johannes Warnke

One happening new talent in London is Johannes Warnke, whose his first full collection was inspired by Wim Wenders’ iconic film Wings of Desire.

Like Wenders, Warnke is a German, whose sense of German spiritualism wafted through this collection.

Presented inside a small bedroom in The Londoner Hotel in Leicester Square, Warnke’s angels poised with curvy wings, shoulder extensions and swirling ruffles.

His materials were equally original – cruelty free silk, Tencel, or recycled parachute fabrics.

“I wanted that sense of mystery and romanticism that the film has. Along with the sense that you can realize your dreams,” commented the 27-year-old German.

Warnke has already generated plenty of attention. London’s greatest stylist – Katie Grand - shot his look book, and there’s a video in the offing. Next stop is Paris and Grand’s fete for her magazine Perfect.