

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

"French-at-heart" Japanese designer Kenzo Takada passes away at 81

October 5, 2020



Japanese-born designer Kenzo Takada has passed away in Paris. Image credit: LVMH

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

Kenzo Takada, the French-Japanese designer and founder of his eponymous luxury label, has passed away at the age of 81.

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Mr. Takada died on Oct. 4 in Paris due to COVID-19 complications, according to reports. His death comes in the middle of Paris Fashion Week, and less than a year after the designer had launched a new high-end lifestyle brand.

"For half a century, Mr. Takada has been an emblematic personality in the fashion industry always infusing creativity and color into the world," said Sylvie Colin, CEO of LVMH's Kenzo, in a statement. "Today, his optimism, zest for life and generosity continue to be pillars of our Maison.

"He will be greatly missed and always remembered," she said.

Kenzo legacy

Mr. Takada was born in Japan on Feb. 27, 1939. He began his fashion education at Tokyo's Bunka Fashion College in 1958 and first arrived in Paris in 1965.

By the early 1970s, the designer was presenting his early collections and had one of his pieces featured on the cover of Elle magazine. His flagship store, Kenzo, opened in the Place des Victoires in fall 1976.



Kenzo Takada, center, launched a new brand earlier this year. Image credit: K3

In the 1980s, Mr. Takada began experimenting with perfumes before eventually launching a full women's fragrance line. He also debuted menswear collections and men's perfumes.

Mr. Takada's designs were known for bright colors and bold, contrasting prints. Among his inspirations were the painter Henri Rousseau, designer Yves Saint Laurent and his own international travels ([see story](#)).

In 1993, French luxury conglomerate LVMH purchased the Kenzo brand.

"Kenzo Takada has, from the 1970s, infused into fashion a tone of poetic lightness and sweet freedom which inspired many designers after him," said Bernard Arnault, chairman and CEO at LVMH, in a statement. "In this fresh and spontaneous spirit, he also durably renewed the world of perfume.

"The House he had established, Kenzo, still explores his vision," he said. "I'm very sad to learn about his passing and express my sincerest sympathy to his family and friends."

Although Mr. Takada would retire from his label in 1999, he maintained close relationships with his successors.

[View this post on Instagram](#)

TRIBUTE TO OUR FOUNDER It is with immense sadness that KENZO has learned of the passing of our founder, Kenzo Takada. For half a century, Mr. Takada has been an emblematic personality in the fashion industry - always infusing creativity and color into the world. Today, his optimism, zest for life and generosity continue to be pillars

of our Maison. He will be greatly missed and always remembered. 1. Kenzo Takada, photomaton 2. Kenzo Takada Fall-Winter 1978 show 3. KENZO Fall-Winter 1982, Peter Lindbergh @therealpetperlindbergh 4. KENZO 1983, Hans Feurer @hansfeurer 5. KENZO 30th Anniversary Show, 1990

A post shared by KENZO (@kenzo) on Oct 5, 2020 at 9:21am...

Instagram tribute from Kenzo

For spring/summer 2018, Kenzo's then-creative directors Carol Lim and Humberto Leon explored the Asian heritage they shared with Mr. Takada. Following a runway show with an entirely Asian cast, the label further explored this theme through a marketing effort that brings together a number of Asian talents ([see story](#)).

In January 2020, Mr. Takada announced his latest creative venture, K3, a luxury home and lifestyle brand. Described by the brand's site as a "French-at-heart Japanese designer," Mr. Takada served as K3's artistic director until his death.

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