

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Dior explores the mystical world of fairy tales

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Dancers in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles. Image credit: Dior

By NORA HOWE

French fashion house Dior is blurring the lines between time and space with a mythical, dreamlike take on its fall/winter 2021-2022 ready-to-wear collection and presentation.

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With this collection and film, Dior creative director Maria Grazia Chiuri aimed to challenge and revisit stereotypes and archetypes, creating a narrative projected into the future. To accompany and promote the digital show, Ms. Chiuri commissioned five animated teasers from five international female illustrators.

"There has always been fantasy, mystery and allure in the world of couture," said Rebecca Miller, founder/CEO at [ARTful Communication](#), New York. "To transform one's self into another time, place or character or visually express one's attitude.

"Dior's collection evokes childhood references toys, dreams and colors," she said. "The pinnacle, exultant beauty a series of evening dresses, reflecting the brand where authenticity speaks."

Disturbing Beauty

Designed by Silvia Giambone, the set of Dior's fall/winter 2021 women's show was in the heart of the Palace of Versailles' Hall of Mirrors. The mirror serves as a symbolic dimension, nodding to Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*.

Lining the catwalk, Ms. Giambone created mirrors designed to conceal those of the iconic Hall. The works were framed in metal while the reflective part was covered in wax and strewn with thorns.

The installation invites women to reinterpret femininity, creating their own identity and consciousness, regardless of others' opinions.

Disturbing Beauty Dior

In the same manner as recent Dior campaigns and presentations, Ms. Chiuri chose to blend the magic of dance with her runway presentation, bringing on Israeli dancer Sharon Eyal to choreograph the movements seen in the

collection's film debut.

Ms. Eyal's costume combines tears and scratches with a tulle dress adorned with flowers, while the other dancers' outfits appear to be skin-like bodysuits.

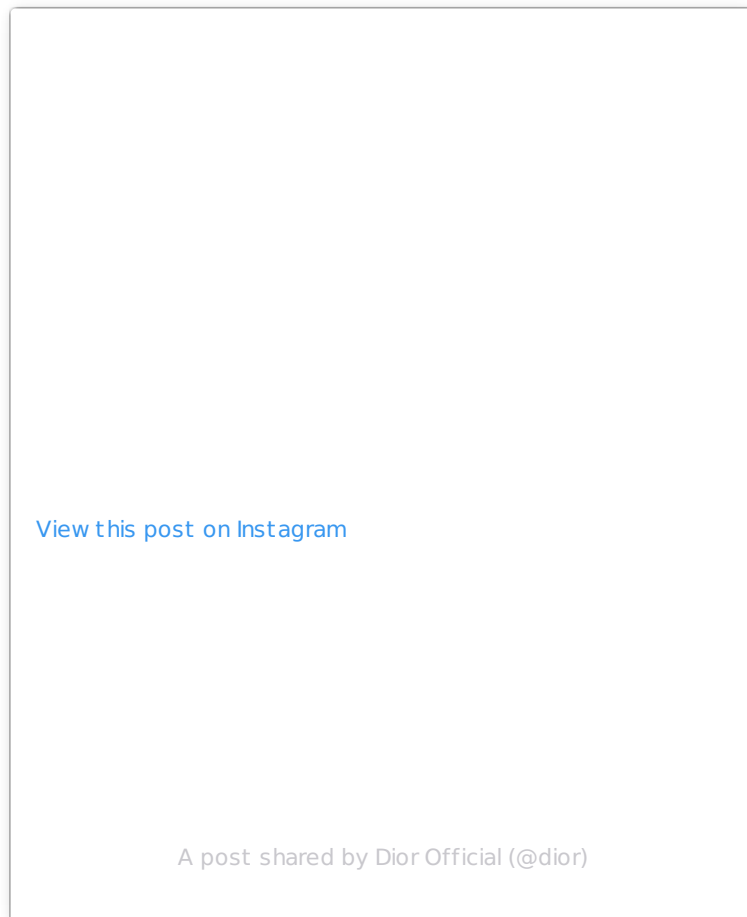
"My work with Maria Grazia is an ongoing process," Ms. Eyal says. "It is based on a deep connection blending mystery and fragility, questions and dreams.

"It is precisely the movement between those extremes that attracts me, a movement that stands out through a stratified beauty in many layers that can therefore also become disturbing and oblique not just soothing, but also food for thought."

The choreographer expressed interest in the fairytale nature of the project, citing how awareness blends with a dreamlike dimension in a meeting of extremes past and future, dreams and reality.

"The nod to fairytales enfolding mystery and magic through the artistic intermingling of film, dance, music, lighting, location and nature speaks to Dior's aesthetic," Ms. Miller said. "A bit of beauty and of beast, refined and casual, with the stroke of twelve closing the film."

To promote the collection on social media, Ms. Chiuri called on five female illustrators from different countries to share their interpretation of femininity through the art of animation: Italian-born, New York-based Teresa Cherubini; Amsterdam-based Aisha Madu; Japanese-born, London-based Noriko Okaku; Buenos Aires-based Brbara Cerro and Drme-based Marion Fayolle.



Through their perspectives, the project aimed to reflect their own personal experiences while highlighting contemporary representations of women in society.

"Dior's brand strategy to expand its customer segments is evident by their expansion of communication mediums," Ms. Miller said. "By creating animated teasers, they open up a new medium on how to creatively reach them, demonstrating their passion for design, respect of young female talent and ability to continue to evolve.

"They are strategically being more inclusive, not holding to the rigors of the old exclusivity model."

Dance and fashion

Since joining the brand, Ms. Chiuri has formed a particularly special bond between Dior and the art of dance, collaborating with Ms. Eyal on several projects.

For its cruise 2021 campaign, the brand put a dramatic spin on cultural traditions featuring a chilling and expressive filmed performance of the Pizzica Tarantata, a traditional Italian folk dance in which a spider's bite leads to a healing song and dance ([see story](#)).

Two months later, the brand released a dance tutorial with Ms. Eyal, highlighting the choreography and inspiration behind the show. While shedding light on the power of dance and art in fashion, the tutorial teaches viewers a sequence from the cruise 2021 show ([see story](#)).

Other luxury fashion houses have also shared in celebrating the art form.

In August, French label Chanel released an episode of "Inside Chanel" that examined the influence of dance on its founder's life and work, and how her love for the art form inspired her designs ([see story](#)).

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