

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Dolce & Gabbana encourages young talents with designer spotlight

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London-based South Korean designer Sohee Park with Domenico Dolce and Stefano Gabbana. Image courtesy of Dolce & Gabbana

By NORA HOWE

Italian fashion house Dolce & Gabbana is committed to fostering the next generation of fashion designers and creatives by supporting emerging brand Miss Sohee in its debut at Milan Fashion Week.

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As part of this dedication to lifting up young designers, South Korean designer Sohee Park presented her newest Miss Sohee collection inside the Dolce & Gabbana Alta Moda studio on Feb. 24. Accompanying the project is a dedicated film that invites audiences inside Ms. Park's world, her inspiration and her creative process.

D&G x Miss Sohee

Originally from South Korea, Ms. Park is now based in London, where she is surrounded by friends who inspire her to create. She founded her label while attending London's Central Saint Martins.

Inside one room of her studio, the film unveils mood boards, notes and sketchbooks that make up Ms. Park's creative process. In a separate room, artisans hand-embroider various materials as the designer likens embroidery to painting, only with beads and fabric.

Ms. Park grew up watching her grandmother sew traditional embroideries by hand, which now serves as a foundation for her artisanal methods and sharp attention to detail.

The South Korean designer spends a significant amount of time in the sketching process

While embroidery is the star of the majority of her designs, Ms. Park admits sketching is the most important stage of her process.

"I sketch and illustrate a lot before moving onto the design," Ms. Park says in the film. "Sometimes I get inspired by my own drawings.

"Then when a dress is on the model, I get to see the result of months of hard work," she says. "It is magical."

In working with Domenico Dolce and Stefano Gabbana to prepare for Milan Fashion Week, Ms. Park was granted complete freedom to execute her vision for the collection.

Ms. Park was inspired by Korean folk art, specifically Minhwa, an art form traditionally produced by unknown artists without classical training.

Tapping into her love of the natural world and the elements frequently depicted in Minhwa art, Ms. Park's designs feature tigers, flowers, butterflies, waves and mountains using Swarovski crystal to form sparkling silhouettes.

The colors found in the collection pay tribute to traditional Korean shades of red, blue, black, white and gold.

"I wanted to explore the elements that I love and use those elements in my designs," Ms. Park says. "This collection, in a word, is my dream."

Adhering to a sustainable vision, the designer used hansan mosi, which is made from locally sourced hemp in the Hansan region of South Korea. It is also included in UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage.



Many of Ms. Park's designs for her fall/winter 2022 collection took inspiration from traditional Korean motifs. Image credit: Dolce & Gabbana

Upcycled textiles from Dolce & Gabbana's archive as well as plant-based materials, such as pineapple leather and Abaca, were used in the collection.

A number of high-profile celebrities have appeared on red carpets and at notable events wearing Miss Sohee designs, such as Ariana Grande and Cardi B.

Emerging talent

Like Dolce & Gabbana, many luxury fashion houses understand the importance of supporting young creatives and emerging designers to become the future leaders of the fashion industry.

In November 2020, Italian fashion house Gucci showcased its own collection and the work of 15 emerging designers through a digital film festival, #GucciFest.

In addition to its own seven-part miniseries highlighting its spring/summer 2021 collection, Gucci provided a platform for the group of young creatives to showcase their designs in the form of short films ([see story](#)).

Italian fashion label Valentino partnered with the nonprofit Camera Nazionale della Moda Italiana to feature emerging designers during Milan Fashion Week in an ongoing series.

Season to season, a young guest designer will present their collection on Valentino's Instagram page, [@maisonvalentino](#).

The series began during Milan Fashion Week this February with Italian designer Marco Rambaldi, who has already established a dedicated following and prioritizes inclusive casting in his shows. He was selected to kick off the new digital series by Mr. Piccioli and Jacopo Venturini, CEO at Valentino ([see story](#)).

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