

This Milan Fashion Week would've gone down as the one in which Miuccia Prada and Raf Simons announced a new partnership to co-creative direct Prada, but for one thing: the spreading anxiety about the coronavirus. As the shows were taking place, worry over an outbreak of cases in small towns across the Lombardy region overshadowed even this most monumental of fashion developments. And so a season that started with Alessandro Michele's merry ode to the fashion spectacle for Gucci ended with a Giorgio Armani show inside a teatro entirely emptied of spectators

MILAN FASHION WEEK 2020



“Don’t panic” is the message we’re hearing from officials, and, aesthetically speaking at least, Milan’s designers had their backs. Talents as different as Bottega Veneta’s Daniel Lee and Luke and Lucie Meier at Jil Sander landed on fringe as one of the season’s key motifs, sending the message that whimsy and frivolity are as essential as a jacket, shirt, and tie. “We can be strong and feminine at the same time,” is how Miuccia Prada put it.



Gucci

“Inserting viewers in the action would seem a distinctly 21st-century phenomenon, but Michele found himself connecting it with childhood. Last season he paid tribute to Gucci’s Tom Ford days; there were slip dresses, exposed bras, and ’70s-by-way-of-the-’90s pantsuits—the clothes that made Michele fall in love with fashion. Here, he looked further back, taking cues from “the perfection” of little girls’ clothes—pinafore dresses, school uniforms—and, it seemed, from the outfits of those little girls’ minders, nuns to nurses included.” —Nicole Phelps

Handcrafts can provide a different kind of satisfaction in a troubled time. Domenico Dolce and Stefano Gabbana saluted the craftspeople so integral to their success with handmade clothes that conjured warm feelings of home. Marni’s Francesco Risso was off on his own trip, but he too was turned on by the hands-on act of making. The collection was collaged from beginning to end, and had an appealing earthy quality. Maybe because many of the pieces were patchworked from remnants, the clothes look like they had already lived interesting lives. Risso should keep pushing in this direction; in the future, the circular economy will depend on vivid imaginations like his.

Elsewhere, the sweep of the Moncler Genius project continued to impress. But it was the intimacy of Silvia Venturini Fendi’s collection for Fendi that charmed. Having worked side by side with Karl Lagerfeld for many years, she articulated with this hyper-feminine and size-inclusive show (the sole example in Milan) that she has her own vital contributions to make.

