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PARIS HAUTE COUTURE SHOWS
NEW YOUNG PONY CLUB
MARK GONZALES
THE MAN BEHIND THE STROKES
ALL THOMPSON'S PARTIES - DIE PARTY THREE
CHRISTOPHE DELOSTER, SALVATORE FERRAGAMO
THE BEST OF BAGS, JEANS & PENDANTS
BASS & BIDE'S WINTISH STYLE



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The Godfather - Karl Lagerfeld



Karl Lagerfeld is in a curious position that few ever experience. Like Lindsay Lohan, Amy Winehouse and many of the other spiralling starlets and models who've played muse for him, his every move and word is newsworthy. There are whole websites dedicated to his more outlandish

quotes and he has played himself in 37 movies and television shows. He is known as the Godfather of fashion, or the Kaiser, and after a series of season spanning interviews with the designer, Oyster learned why.

Karl Lagerfeld is a legend in his own time; an icon whose signature powdered ponytail, high collar and skinny suit frequently pop up in Halloween costumes and cartoon parodies. He is highly recognisable and infinitely quotable: an eccentric figurehead for an eccentric industry. At one point or another, Lagerfeld has been blamed for every fashion ill. In the 1990s it was the promotion of anorexia. Nearly everyone has heard about that day (pre weight loss, no less) that he lowered his glasses, stared a feminist journalist right in the eye and told her "clothes look better on bones." Though while it is a great story, it never actually happened. Now the use of fur is his hot button issue, and he actually did defend the practice by suggesting "hunters in the north? make a living killing those beasts who would kill us if they could." When Lagerfeld makes such bizarre statements, or deadpans to a nervous interviewer that he "has no human feelings", it seems as if there might be a sense of humour beneath the icy exterior.

That humour certainly shone out in his latest collection for Chanel - serious and seriously elegant, its cravats, ruffles and ladylike tailoring was punctured in the middle by a set of several, graphically printed, skin-tight onesies. They clung to models' bodies like a series of sharp exclamation marks in the midst of a show that was otherwise so graceful it bordered on austere. Overall, the presentation felt like a modernist take on the Victorian mourning mode, infused with a lightness of touch that made its lace, slim lines and frills look less funereal. Oyster asked him if the past had been a major influence.

"No, what past, what past? There is no past," he told us, before slightly revising his claim. "It's the idea of a certain kind of past, it was the men who put men into dark suits with white shirts and white caps, instead of having the free, 18th century, colourful looks for men before. There's this alternate idea that's very Chanel, very powerful." Of the decadent and dramatic ruffles and cuffs that spilled like whipped cream down collars and sleeves, Lagerfeld explains:

"I only explored oversized to make it different and make a kind of jewellery out of it. But instead of in the past where it was a touch too short and sleek, this is all detachable and it's like a new kind of jewellery out of say wool, knit lace and everything."

On top of his work for Chanel, which includes Autumn/Winter, Spring/Summer Ready to Wear and Haute Couture collections as well as Cruise and Metiers d'Art, Lagerfeld designs fur for Fendi (a move which caused the PETA to throw pies at him in 2001; they missed and hit Calvin Klein), runs his eponymous label, has his K by Karl Lagerfeld diffusion line and frequently forays into the world of perfume. As you would expect from someone who holds down the equivalent of eight full time jobs, Lagerfeld has a lot to say when it comes to time.

"Only busy people find time," he tells Oyster. "You never ask someone who's doing nothing to help you or do something for you. Only busy people have time." After his Haute Couture show, a few months prior, Lagerfeld explained to us, "I don't carry around a watch that tells me how much time a collection takes and how much work it takes. You do what you can do, when you can do it. You

know I am helped by marvellous people. It's teamwork. It's a job I love to do," he goes on to add, to our surprise, "I am lucky I can do it in the most perfect conditions with no budget restriction."

The first time we spoke to Lagerfeld this season, he was personally unfazed by the global financial crisis stating, "I was never told or asked about the recession, I don't know what it means. The owner of Chanel came to me and said, '2009 - no problem for you - you do whatever you want.' You know I don't care about budgets." Nonetheless, Lagerfeld is well aware of the effect the global financial crisis has on others and he utilises this distress as a motivation to make beautiful things. "I think feeling good about fashion is exactly what we need, because if you read the newspapers the feeling is not that happy," he told Oyster after his Ready to Wear show.

Despite the economic turmoil, Lagerfeld tells Oyster that the rich traditions of the House of Chanel will not suffer. "I only know the situation of Chanel; I don't know of the other houses. So, on general ideas of the business, well I only take care of my personal Chanel Haute Couture. Haute Couture will remain important for the image and for the prestige," he explains. This is fortunate because Chanel, as the world's largest employer of couturiers, is singlehandedly preserving many artisanal skills and practices (from hand beading and pleating to creating cloth flowers) that would otherwise be washed away by the tide of fast fashion and mass production. Indeed other Haute Couture houses have to go to Chanel's specialist staff to get certain pieces made or finished. "You know Chanel has the biggest Haute Couture clientele in the world," Lagerfeld assures us.

While fronting Chanel may be Lagerfeld's biggest claim to fame, it is his notorious eccentricity that has kept him in the public eye. Lagerfeld has a power and poise to him that his contemporaries, so frequently tanned and grinning, lack. He represents everyone's idea of fashion as a frosty industry. In short, Lagerfeld is profoundly intimidating. And yet, he is at his most captivating when he publishes a diet book that would be impossible to follow without a personal chef, talks about his 80-something strong iPod collection ("Metronomy, Franz Ferdinand, that's what I'm listening to most at the moment," he tells Oyster), or waxes lyrical on the style merits of Beth Ditto as opposed to Heidi Klum. He holds the weird firmly in his glacial embrace, and in doing so seems more human.

Karl Lagerfeld has spent years igniting both ends of the fashion spectrum. He is simultaneously preserving the craft of Haute Couture while he paves the way for high street fashion with his H&M collaboration and more recent diffusion line. Given what he has done for the industry, it's no wonder he's called The Godfather. Personally, however, he thinks the nickname might be understating it.

"I'm just a Godfather?" he laughs. "That's okay, at least I'm a very nice one."

Interviews by Katharina Kowalewski

Words by Alyx Gorman

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PARIS
AW 07/08



Fall/Winter 2007/2008 exhibited
a return to a wide range
of textures and
textures. The
designer's goal
was to create a
collection that
was both elegant
and comfortable.
The collection
was inspired by
the work of
American artist
Georgia O'Keeffe.
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CHECKMATE

The final inspiration for the series is classic, classic, but not in the usual sense. The design elements are a mix of traditional and modern, with a focus on texture and color. The plaid patterns are a mix of traditional and modern, with a focus on texture and color. The plaid patterns are a mix of traditional and modern, with a focus on texture and color. The plaid patterns are a mix of traditional and modern, with a focus on texture and color.



GO EAST

Clothes mixing gems in dress—waxed like
 order with Japanese-origami application—warmed
 wisdom of Christian Dior's label Issue Culture.
 show designers make up-dress by Rod McQueen.
 items in mixed styles and approach on points of
 color of their hand-painted silk draped down the
 skirt. Models walked around in a line of white
 -heavy heels and on-curved a model's skin on
 The Dior show took the spectators on a journey to
 the past. Ten years ago, John Galiano took the
 reputation to a new level by taking the Issue
 Culture collection and once again, Galiano is
 back at what he does best—taking us in different
 worlds and cultures, all with an impeccable
 respect for the clothing.

The Christian Dior show has been completely
 inspired by the Japanese culture, art and music.
 But combined with Galiano's unique
 vision to Japan, and provided the theme for
 his 1991 collection as the designer for Christian
 Dior. The designer to describe this event with a
 specific look collection and not all of the
 respective, it's really the right choice. Choosing
 his style was not the same as past, creative
 and imagination, especially after Dior's history
 with the Paris show. The difference here was
 between Galiano—the freedom to provide us to
 show something special, unusual, of new, but
 ultimately, after, without losing the support.
 The final story of the show had to not only
 show of Galiano but also had to give us a
 glimpse of the past of Dior's influence.

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