



Experiments with style

The Milano Moda Uomo, held from January 12 to 15, is an international fashion event that no one from the industry wants to miss. **Cristiana Bonzi** reports.



The Milano Moda Uomo this year presented prêt-à-porter menswear collections for the fall/winter 2018/19 season. In all, there were 44 events and 31 fashion shows, and those like Diesel Black Gold, Neil Barrett, Marcelo Burlon County of Milan, Dsquared2, Daks, Palm Angels, GCDS and Frankie Morello, chose the Milanese catwalks to present both men's and women's lines.

Considering all the collections on show—both on and off the runway, it would be next to impossible to outline one key trend that was shared by all brands. Each followed its own inspiration, but streetwear seemed to play an important role for

most designers. There were plenty of experiments in textiles, materials and colours in the name of technology and sustainability: from Prada's black nylon—which is going to be produced in a totally recyclable version—to the Zegna's Oasi Cashmere that featured colours obtained from natural elements. On the Milano Moda Uomo's catwalk to be seen for the first time were Isabel Benenato, an Italian brand founded by Isabel Vitiello; Represent, English label born in 2012 thanks to George and Mike Heaton; Hunting World, traditional brand from New York founded by Robert M Lee in 1959; and Sartorial Monk, Italian fashion house created by Sabato Russo.

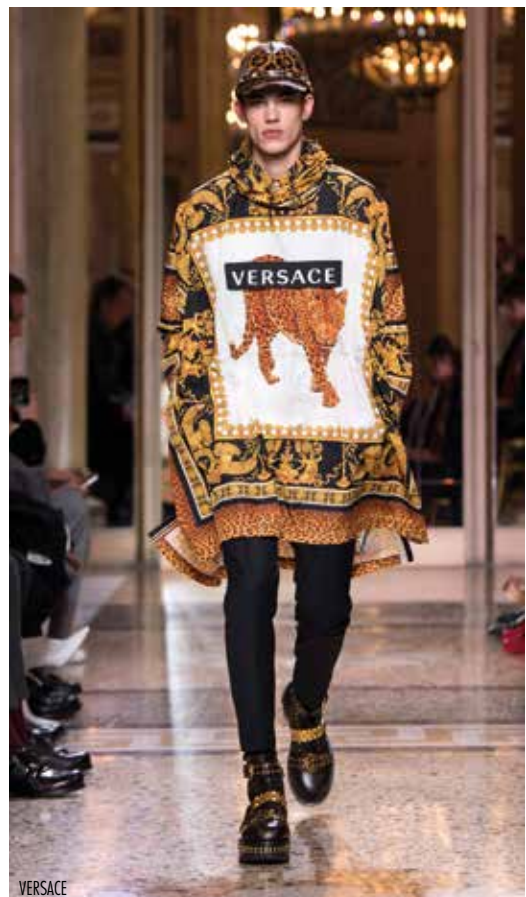
Elegant and retro

Let's look at what the major fashion houses brought on stage.

Without compromising his natural proclivity for elegance, the Giorgio Armani collection was for "men who dress carefully, without frivolity," a man "drawing on memories and adventures that he speaks of today." With nearly 100 looks in which tailoring dominated, the collection was comprehensive and included separates, outerwear and full suits. There were a lot of blazers—Armani classics—in both single and double-breasted versions and various material textures, such as the soft knitted ones. There were sharp suits, and a series of velvet tuxedos. Among those that caught the eye were classic double-breasted suits with eight buttons and fitted at the waist; a grey borg-collared jacket; a navy, double-breasted coat with eight buttons and leather patches at the shoulder; large shearling coats, loose pants, cargo/jogger pantstucked into high combat boots, a grey wool bomber and accessories including soft backpacks and earmuffs. In a collection dedicated to the elegant and contemporary globetrotter, deep ruby, beige, the grays and midnight blues came across as the key colours.

Not models but prominent millennials walked down the catwalk of the Dolce&Gabbana show, titled King's Angels. The "new kings"—as they are considered by Domenico Dolce and Stefano Gabbana—are well-known celebrities's sons, social media stars, music artists and footballers, with many of them wearing crowns. Just to name a few: Instagram star Cameron Dallas, Puff Daddy's son—rapper Christian Combs and Roberto Rossellini, Isabella's son, besides footballer Paulo Dybala and singer Austin Mahone. Cherubims and seraphims were embroidered, printed, airbrushed on chenille sweatsuits, velvet sweaters, damask suits, inlaid furs, pinstriped overcoats, jacquard tuxedos. Because, "everyone has his/her own angel."

Meanwhile, it was Back to the Nineties and to the iconic black nylon—interpreted by the co-designers Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec, Konstantin Grcic, Herzog and De Meuron, and Rem Koolhaas—for Prada. On an industrial metal catwalk in the new Prada Warehouse venue(not far from Fondazione Prada), the men's and women's 45 looks showed a minimalist wardrobe that marked a return to the "utilitarian, rational and industrial



soul" of the brand, as Miuccia Prada announced before the show. It was a palette of mustard, mud-brown, orange and blue, padded hoodies with wide zipper pockets, snap-front jackets, loose pants and rain caps all with the classic triangle logo; sharp, boxy suits layered over knits with micro-geometric patterns; painted patch-pocket overcoats and jackets in leather for both genders with workwear-style Prada tags at the breast pocket; sculptural coats with rounded shoulders. Besides the nylon—that the fashion house is trying to make totally recyclable—floral prints, abstract checker board and ring prints created the Hawaiian-style shirts and shorts. Accessories, too, were all there and included the messenger bag in nylon or leather, square backpacks together with small, leather bags.

In the modular vein

Alessandro Sartori has kept perfecting the path he defined for Ermenegildo Zegna Couture by devising a modular wardrobe that fuses sports and tailoring, indoors and outdoors, keeping the quest for excellence as a frame. The silhouette was sharp yet soft, and geometric necklines and the carved 'n curved lapels characterised the upper part of the body.

The sense of precise ease was captured in the new *one 1/2 breasted* construction, halfway between single and double-breasted, used for jackets as well as coats. The duvet took the form of a wool anorak, knitwear doubled as outerwear, while matching blousons and trousers were a rapid substitute for the suit.

For the first time, even the brighter tones were present in the new *Oasi Cashmere*, which featured an innovative sustainable dyeing process exclusively developed by Lanificio Zegna, where colours were obtained only from natural elements such as flowers, herbs, wood, leaves and roots, reflecting the principles and values of the Oasi Zegna. Also, the colour palette was inspired by the Oasis's environment: a mix of neutral tones of edelweiss white, pebble grey, birch beige with notes of vicuña, bulb red, pine green and dashes of crocus purple, chanterelle yellow, azalea orange. XXX, as symbol of the manual craft of Ermenegildo Zegna Couture, was used extensively as a jacquard or a logo on clothing and accessories such as technical leather bags, backpacks and shoes, while Pelle Tessuta—the exclusive Zegna-woven leather fabric—came for the first time in herringbone patterns on briefcases and bags.



The Versace collection was all about playing with the house codes and re-interpreting them through younger eyes to celebrate the art of individuality. Printing was key, and styling unexpected. Looks blended with elements that went from work to play; the bathrobe became outerwear worn over sharply-tailored suits. Mix-and-match tartan prints of different colours created unexpected new patterns in suits and coats, while pants were super-tight or loose, but all cut short, way above the ankle. Basketball jerseys were crafted from the finest silk, masculine tartan was complemented by flamboyant prints, silk cushion inserts were placed on cotton sweatshirts. Launched at this show also was the new iconic sneakers with its unmissable chain-link sole that spoke directly to the millennial generation. It was an original design element reinforcing the link between the tailored and the casual, and the many different sides of the Versace man.

Following a formula

Coding, decoding and recoding the Fendi formula: FF logo, Pequin stripes, Fendi stamp, Fendi yellow were explored. Intarsia and *gheronatura* were brought on a sportier ground. There were roomy

intarsia blousons, square jackets, ultrasound duvets; lounge suits, rubber anoraks, intarsia sweatshirts; striped shirts, glazed coats. Everything was reversible: to double the use, and to cut the weight by half.

Accessorising made life easier. There were knit-backpacks, shearling suitcases, wearable bags, camera cases, mini-bags for passports and errands, lounge sneakers and FF rubber loafers. Finally, there was the rubber shopper bag heralding FF values in bold type: family, faithful, freedom, fancy, fabulous.

That was the result of the collaboration with Scottish artist @hey_reilly—the third guest artist to work with the Fendi men's collection, after painter Sue Tilley in 2017 and illustrator and sculptor John Booth in 2016—who was responsible for digital remix artworks and graphics featured throughout the collection re-appropriating fashion iconography with pop cultural phenomena. He remixed the house FF logo and the season's fabrics: an eclectic digital photo collage featuring Prince of Wales and herringbone wools, swatches of Astro Turf, celestial night skies, hammers, cartoon bananas, and even a racehorse's behind. The collage was translated into a myriad fabrications and styles across ready-



to-wear and accessories—from reversible nylon and cashmere faux-fur jackets to drawstring moon boots, silk satin shirts, coated canvas luggage, printed leather zip pouches, and an elasticated umbrella hat.

Legacy from Britain

Meanwhile, for the first time, Daks presented a co-ed fashion show, choosing Milano Moda Uomo as its favourite stage and skipping the February schedule of the London Fashion Week. No wonder that creative director, Filippo Scuffi, who designed the collection—deeply rooted in the brand's British legacy—took inspiration from a meeting between a man and a woman on a luxurious British steam train on a romantic winter afternoon, an intense embrace between two people sharing the same values.

It was also an aesthetic embrace, as more than ever the two collections were closely linked, with similar materials, fabrics and colour palettes—a multitude of rich and romantic colours such as green, burgundy, red and rust, with touches of ochre yellow—as well as iconic outfits as the suit and the double-breasted overcoat. Alongside the iconic house

check, a bespoke and innovative check has been designed exclusively for this season and runs through both the men's and women's collections.

Knitwear—merino and Shetland wool—was used to anchor the theme of Britishness through the use of materials and patterns. The core fabrics were woven throughout both the men's and women's knitwear pieces, with the use of jacquard in the same design and colour as the exclusive Daks fabrics. Details evoking English style were key this season: fabric flowers were scattered on jacket lapels and delicate gold details adorned the belts. The bags were created in the same exclusive fabrics as the clothing, in on-trend shapes and models in a combination of leathers.

From the spiritual to the classic

It was a co-ed runway also for Frankie Morello, which marked Nicholas Poggioli's debut as artistic director for both men's and women's collections. The theme for this season was the path of a spiritual evolution that the Frankie Morello women and men undertake together, a travel that starts from the alienating chaos of modern metropolis leading to Mount Everest. Black and dark shades



characterised the urban look with leather, studs, used denim, metallic shirts for him; and all black tulle and leather, mini-dresses, cuissards, vinyl bodices, long skirts for her. On the way to the mountains, the style embraced Nepalese-minded looks, icy tones, blue and purple shades, handmade carpets' patterns and white fox fur details.

For the men's and women's collection, Giuliano Calza immersed GCDS in sparks of which fairy tales were made through music, themes and iconographic references conceived and executed in collaboration with Disney. Along with Peter and the Wolf and Dumbo, it was a cathartic and initiatory journey of streetwear as freedom, as a further possibility, a fabulous place where everyone can stage his or her own story. Shirts, oversized pants, hi-tech details, sports wardrobe with touches of tartan, logomania prevailing and again hoods and boots, fake fur monsters, oversized bomber, embroidery, decorations, chemisier, pink, light blue and mohair wool meant that a new optimistic perspective was in the air.

Finding inspiration in sunny California landscapes, Alessandro Dell'Acqua's collection for N°21 aligned the basics of a classic wardrobe: melton coat, straight pants, caban jacket, parka,

sweaters, jeans, stripe shirt. Yet, all the pieces underwent a transformation for they were rethought in the light of a consciously-sought renewal that went beyond both the rules of social ritual and fashion buzz. The parka in tartan plaid or in heavy cotton had a plush padding; knits deconstructed into thick bulky sweaters or into part-mohair part-chiné wool gilet vests; stripe shirts sported small postcard appliqués or all-over prints and crumpled effects; light melton coats had raw edges or neoprene linings, cabans colour-contrast piping; fine ribbons and bows served for hugging shirt collars and pant belts; bleached jeans were worn with shirts in the same fabric, while classic style shoes and boots in leather or pony skin were tweaked with a running sole.

A new tribe altogether

In the Diesel Black Gold collection, 'A new tribe' gathered different influences collected around the globe and combined into a lineup. One saw an eclectic wardrobe where brand's urban contemporary codes were updated through a multi-ethnic filter that underlines fashion's unifying power. In general, a bohemian feel influenced the





overall silhouette and the lineup focused on tactile textures to suggest artisanal craftsmanship.

For him, tunics inspired the fit of men's shirts and sweaters, paired with straight and slim pants. The brand's signature staples such as leather jackets, bombers, military peacoats and denim pants were embellished with inserts in multicolour Navajo carpet patterns, while a patchwork of different shearlings defined the eye-catching Mongolian coats. Military quilted garments were reworked with an Eskimo spirit and Native American stone studs were combined with hardware for multi-ethnic decors. Detachable Navajo blanket linings appeared on separates, leather biker jackets were embellished with fringes, new outerwear styles mixed the silhouette of an urban

bomber with Mexican and Peruvian Baja sweaters cut in tunic-like boxy silhouettes.

For her, the ethnic and peasant spirit was to find in the flared pants with high side-slits and moked dresses crafted from a range of fabrics including cotton canvas, suede, chambray and denim, embellished with embroideries, as well as paisley prints and ikat jacquards. Wool flannel and vintage washed denim dresses were cut in flared silhouettes referring Afghan Nuristan styles. The Chinese and Vietnamese multicolour Hmong skirts were rendered in striped cotton canvas and denim patchworks, while denim pants were embellished with embroideries inspired by Syrian and Palestinian designs and suede, leather and denim tops echoed the shapes of Syrian tunics.



Around the world

Dean and Dan Caten added another chapter to the nomad design story of Dsquared2 lacing their narrative with brand heritage. Seen on stage, like at a rodeo, were red-and-black check, tricked out denim and swathes of prints. Shirts in checks, silk, denim and stretch gabardine. By the elegant side, there were tailored jackets and pants featuring leather smile piping and a Mongolian coat. Denim, tailored and leather pants had a new silhouette, with a high waist. Long tunic shirts, parkas and peacoats, shearlings in traditional black and cream rugged styles, oversized knits featured Westin motif jacquards go with sequin neck ties and socks in shades of mint and antique rose, black heavy shoes with engraved medallions on the top.

Elsewhere, knowing no boundaries or distinctions, following no principles but only one's intuition with naïveté and wonder. That was the theme of the Marni collection featuring opposites all mixed up, such as micro, macro and everything in between, S, M, L, XL thrown together randomly, big sneakers. Suggestions of style and materials came from travelling around the world: Chinese brocades, Indian ikats, African stripes, English tweeds. Smoked and printed duvet, gigantic anoraks, knitted caps, overblown duffle coats, Masai sandals at the feet follow different states of mind with the boldness of immediate gestures.**FF**