

WWD

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The second Black Carpet Awards celebrated industry changemakers Friday night.

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Big Fun

In a light-hearted Bottega Veneta collection, Matthieu Blazy looked at fashion with the wonder of a child playing dress-up, here in dad's business suit, and what could be mom's entire scarf drawer. For more on the Milan shows, see pages 9 to 16.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ADAM KATZ SINDING

The Reviews



Bottega Veneta

After taking in Bottega Veneta's spring fashion show in Milan on Saturday night, TikTok sensation Jools Lebron proved her fashion vocabulary stretches well beyond demure, mindful and cutesy.

"Extravagant, luxurious, and full of childhood wonder," was the three-pronged review she delivered after the show, wearing sunglasses to shield her tear-stained eyes, and holding a fan to blunt the sweltering heat in the show space, where guests sat on animal-character beanbag chairs. (Full disclosure, your reviewer got an otter.)

Lebron picked up on Matthieu Blazy's seasonal narrative perfectly: Discovering the power of clothes as most humans do – by raiding their parents' closets and playing dress-up.

"The wonder you have as a kid when you try something, the first experience – it's almost like primal fashion," Blazy explained in a scrum after the show.

In his three years leading Bottega Veneta,

the French-Belgian designer has let adult fashion professionals experience wonder quite consistently with his inventive, original and fiercely chic clothes. These have been in relatively short supply this European season as a climate of uncertainty and caution hangs over the industry.

Kudos to Blazy for the kooky animal seating – Jacob Elordi got a bunny, Michelle Yeoh a ladybug – which coaxed broad smiles that wilted slightly when some guests learned the price of each one: 9,000 euros online or at Art Basel Miami.

"I wanted to have a show space that feels playful and that brings joy," Blazy said. "I was thinking about that scene in 'E.T.' when the mother goes into the bedroom, opens the closet, and you have all these stuffed animals."

Blazy's light-hearted touch extended to the clothes: comically oversized tailoring, supersized blousons and shirts, and T-shirts, pants and topcoats that started out impeccable on the first day of school, and ended up horribly wrinkled due to raucous play during recesses. ▶




The
Collections
Milan



According to him, “we need that experimental act. You know, it’s also an act of freedom..... I’ve spoken before about Frankenstein beauty, the idea of the intrepid one who tries, the one who dares, thinking like a kid.”

And so flapper dresses got mashed up with flamenco ruffles, and lumberjacket and business shirts took on the shape of a Bar jacket, or were supersized into overcoats.

In his zeal to experiment, some of Blazy’s propositions were clunky, especially the lopsided skirts that sprouted one pant leg.

But then he would redeem himself with the chic of a simple white or black shift quivering with false-eyelash fringe; a ruched, one-sleeved dress in mango-colored jersey, or a voluminous, rust-colored top with a swooping leather neckline, finished off with a full white skirt and drop earrings.

Most of the collection was daywear, and it felt like a parade of chic, urban commuters. Blazy further built up his fashion characters with little clues about their lives: Dad in a perfect suit toting his daughter’s pink backpack, or a breakfast pastry in a leather bag that evoked a paper sack. Several of the female characters – perhaps a secretary in a dental clinic, perhaps a CEO – toted flowers they bought for themselves.

“I was interested in the idea of a simple act of fashion that happens every day,” he said. “I think sometimes we don’t look at them enough.” – *Miles Socha*

