

Maison Margiela

PARIS

'Artisanal' Collection

Autumn – Winter 2018

Through its ongoing study of seductions in the millennial era, Maison Margiela arrives at an image of nomadic glamour. The Artisanal women's collection for Autumn - Winter 2018 observes a parallel between the timeless spartan wanderer and the perpetually-connected follower of the technological age. Creative director John Galiano detects and portrays a new tribe: neo-digital natives. Borne out of the contemporary primordial need for constant portable connection, they roam the virtual reality of electronic devices and social media, seduced by curated images of glamour. This online illusion provokes a plugged-in desire for authenticity: the artisanal, organic and tactile. A new sense of awareness.

Amalgamating codes established in recent Artisanal collections, the idea of nomadic glamour is interpreted in a trans-mutative way of cutting. *Décortiqué* – the Maison's term for reducing a garment to its core structure – evolves into *the memory of one garment within another*. Here, the glamorous outline of a gentleman's morning coat is cut asymmetrically into a full black felt cape. A classic dance skirt in coral foam migrates into a jacket. Through incisions, a cardboard-coloured t-shirt with pin-tuck pleats evokes the motif of a safari jacket. Electrified by techno sorbet colours, volumes magnify and multiply in copious nomadic layering: swaddled in foam, down and *capitonnage*, swathed in stockings, and scratched together with Velcro. X-ray motifs are transferred to diamond-cut grid embroideries in clear material and serve as shift dresses.

Echoing the idea of *reverse dressing* expressed throughout the collection, the *reverse swatching* method is formally introduced in garments where lining materials exchange places with fine fabrics like crin. A similar sentiment materialises in skirts fashioned from quilted bin-liners, or vintage silk scarves and slip dresses needle-punched onto recycled silk-infused cotton wool by industrial machinists, effectively *appropriating the inappropriate*. Ge Ba, an old Chinese fabrication created from clothes and furnishing scraps bonded with rice glue, appears in shift dresses. Reflecting a focus on the hand-spun, a textile composed from home-dyed and home-spun wool hand-felted into organza takes form in an oversized caban.

Technique

Nomadic glamour is expressed through cuts, volumes and layers. Through a transformative process, Maison Margiela's established deconstruction technique of *décortiqué* is taken a step further, effectively cutting the image of one garment into another. In this transition, staple pieces also transform in purpose: skirts become jackets or sleeves turn into scarves, drawing on the notion of *appropriating the inappropriate*. The nomadic idea of taking life on the road is conveyed in abundant layering where garments interweave and mutate. Here, *reverse dressing* – a house term – allows for the exchange of pieces conventionally worn as top or bottom layers. It informs the method of *reverse swatching* where lining materials and fine fabrics swap places, also referencing an Artisanal process known as *anonymity of the lining*. Seams are largely foregone, while traditional fastenings are replaced by scratch closures.

Materials

The image of nomadic glamour is evoked in humble materials such as felt, foam, bin-liners, stockings, upholstery furnishings, wadding and stuffing, and Velcro scratching. Ge Ba, the ancient Chinese expert recycling method in which discarded pieces of fabrics are bonded together with rice glue, represents a fundamental approach to Artisanal repurposing. An organic mode is further employed in a home-grown hand-felted organza fabric created by Dutch artist Claudy Jongstra. This rootsy sense of fabrication is contrasted by clear material featuring x-ray prints by British artist Katerina Jebb, and by elevated materials: tweed, bouclé, and fine vintage wools from men's tailoring, as well as crin, organza, tulle, satin and goat's hair. Fabrics from opposite poles of the spectrum merge in garments created from vintage silk scarves and silk slip dresses industrially needle-punched onto recycled silk-infused cotton wool.

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Palette

Conceived in the contrasting meeting between nomadic dress and state of the art of technology, a retro-futuristic palette is expressed in techno sorbet colours, reflected in the familiarity of the metallic pastels of vintage cars. Juxtaposed with the black, white and grey hues of the authentic man's wardrobe – and the natural shades of felt, toile and recycled fabrics scraps – they manifest themselves across tan, yellow, coral, orange, lilac, green, pistachio, blue and Klein blue.

Accessories

Drawing on an image of nomadic layering, clear material is introduced. Diamond-cut and assembled by hand, the transparent lozenges interlink in brigandine panes, part jewellery and part shift dress. Some feature x-ray motifs by the British artist Katerina Jebb printed onto the clear material. A figurative window to our core, the artwork reflects the deconstruction of surface layers developed through recent collection at Maison Margiela in techniques such as *décortiqué* and *the memory of*. Headpieces in chrome, 3-D printed with resin composite and hand-assembled, take the form of virtual reality headsets *bricolaged* from *the memory of* bicycle helmets and vintage headphones. Tinted in techno sorbet colours, they evoke the metallic gloss of a vintage car. Tech body clips in plastic are designed to hold electronic devices, which live-stream close-ups of the look at which they are directed in real time during the show.

Shoes

The Artisanal women's collection for autumn/winter 2018 features three new shoe designs. Dipped in silicone, platform shoes with a sixteen-centimetre heel appear in red, white, black and Klein blue, sometimes worn with socks likewise dipped in silicone. Platform Tabi shoes are covered in stretch fabric hand-brushed with latex paint in black, red, Klein blue, pale green, coral, pale blue and pale purple. Faintly crakow-tipped platform Tabi shoes in metallic patent materialise in ankle-strap or Mary Jane versions, some covered in coloured stockings, others in coloured stockings hand-brushed with latex paint.

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