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PRESENTS

JEAN PAUL GAULTIER'S LAST SHOW

A 52' DOCUMENTARY

DIRECTED BY LOÏC PRIGENT
PRODUCED BY BANGUMI & DERALF

PROVISIONAL DELIVERY : JULY 2020

SYNOPSIS

To celebrate his 50 years in couture, Jean Paul Gaultier held his last-ever catwalk show at the Théâtre du Châtelet on 22 January 2020.

For this documentary, Loïc Prigent had exclusive access to film French fashion's most famous troublemaker during the run-up and the show itself - an exuberant virtuoso performance that took a look back at his career and proved that the designer was still brimming over with creative ideas. The documentary also takes the opportunity to revisit 50 years of looks that caused a sensation and became fashion classics including conical bustiers, striped T-shirts, tattoo prints and man-skirts.

Jean Paul Gaultier's 50 years of iconic designs are recounted by the couturier himself and people who have been with him since the beginning - friends, models, journalists, artists and staff - in a fun, lively fast-moving format.



INTRODUCTION

On 24 April 1970, Jean Paul Gaultier celebrated his 18th birthday. That same day, Pierre Cardin telephoned him in person to tell him he had been accepted for a trainee post at his couture house. The career of one of the greatest names in French fashion had begun.

In January 2020, Jean Paul Gaultier celebrated his 50 years in design with a spectacular catwalk show of new designs at the Théâtre du Châtelet. Attended by a hand-picked audience - only 1700 invitations were issued - it celebrated 50 years in which the designer questioned standards of beauty, defied expectations and subverted definitions of elegance. Other couture houses set up museums about their heritage or write their histories: Jean Paul Gaultier opted to present his heritage via a wacky, exuberant 60-minute show that interspersed traditional catwalk presentations with eccentric performances - not so much revisiting his archive as rifling it, remixing and chopping up his designs and adding fresh twists.

JEAN PAUL GAULTIER, A FRENCH COUTURE HOUSE

A week before the show, Loïc Prigent filmed the couturier in the hectic atmosphere of the workrooms, where the staff were busy finishing Monsieur Gaultier's creations. Each design was brand-new but inspired by the couturier's emblematic looks - punk tutus, trompe-l'œil jacquard fabrics, leather biker jackets, timeless striped Breton T-shirts and conical bustiers. The head seamstress describes how the great designer works, and says how complex his garments are to make. His former press officer recalls the seething excitement of the 1980s and 1990s, when Prince would come to the show and insist on sitting in the back row to have the best view of attractive members of the audience.

EMBLEMATIC DESIGNS

Few couturiers can boast that they have designed so many iconic garments. The 60-minute show is divided into tableaux, each illustrating an important moment in Jean Paul Gaultier's design career. His first iconic look was tutus with biker jackets, which featured in his début catwalk show in 1976. For the collection, Jean Paul Gaultier mixed fabrics, working with materials recovered from the building where his grandmother lived. It was also the first time he put a striped Breton T-shirt - the most iconic of all his designs - on the catwalk. The show got a bad press - his avant-garde stance was roundly derided - and he sold absolutely nothing.

In 1983, he unleashed another scandal when he put corsets on the catwalk with his conical bustiers. He was vilified both by women who accused him of having a retrograde conception of the female body and saw corsets as a symbol of male fantasies of physical domination and female submissiveness, and Americans who were offended by the way he brought sadomasochistic practices into the public arena. But his conical bustiers hit the big time when Madonna wore them on her Blonde Ambition world tour. The popularity of Jean Paul Gaultier's socially transgressive designs skyrocketed. His work coincided with a wave of sexual liberation.

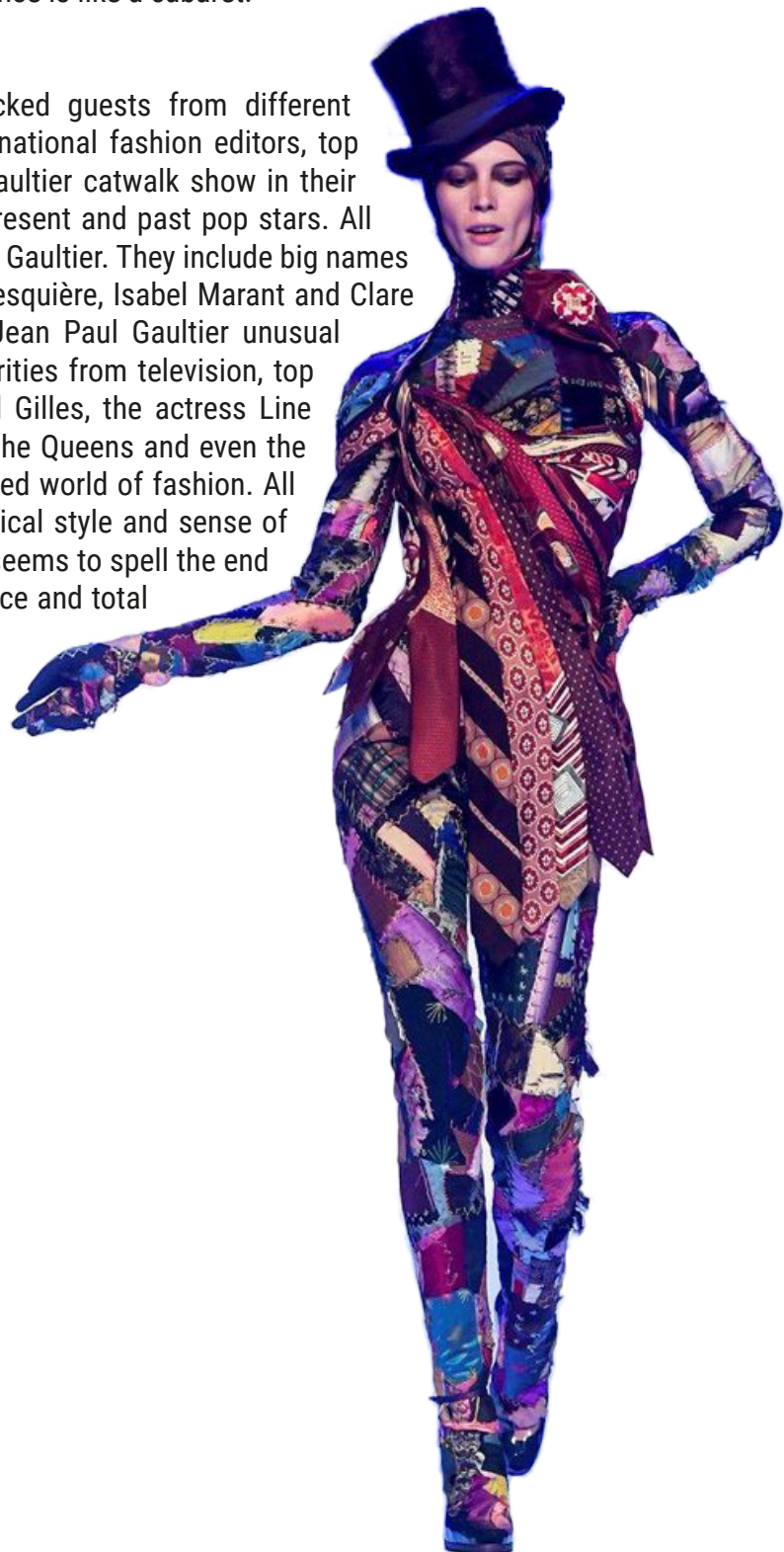
A year later, the show «Et Dieu créa l'homme» («And God created Man»), featuring man-skirts, also created a furore. But this time it was a success: in next to no time, he had sold 3,000 skirts for men. In 1989, Jean Paul Gaultier designed the second-skin bodysuit. The AIDS years had begun, and despite the humorous touches he incorporated into the design, times had changed.



A THEATRICAL CATWALK SHOW

On the day of the show, we catch up with Jean Paul Gaultier's entire gang backstage at the Théâtre du Châtelet - his favourite models Claude, Anna, Julia, Coco Rocha, Naomi Campbell, Estelle Lefébure and many others, and some of his illustrious guests - Amanda Lear, Antoine de Caunes, Kiddy Smile and Paris Jackson, Michael Jackson's daughter. It's an emotional moment. As model after model rehearses her turn, Jean Paul Gaultier keeps the ideas coming, making suggestions and thinking up additional touches. There are so many people backstage that it is almost impossible to move around: the ambience is like a cabaret.

In the gradually filling auditorium, hand-picked guests from different worlds rub shoulders with each other - international fashion editors, top models who have done many a Jean Paul Gaultier catwalk show in their time, heroes of punk, great photographers, present and past pop stars. All of them are friends and admirers of Jean Paul Gaultier. They include big names in fashion such as Anna Wintour, Nicolas Ghesquière, Isabel Marant and Clare Waight Keller from Givenchy. What makes Jean Paul Gaultier unusual is the way he has brought mainstream celebrities from television, top sportspeople and artists such as Pierre and Gilles, the actress Line Renaud, the singer Chris from Christine and the Queens and even the ex-footballer Djibril Cissé together in the closed world of fashion. All of them talk enthusiastically about his theatrical style and sense of humour, and are moved by the way the show seems to spell the end of an era and an ageless spirit of independence and total creative freedom.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

To make sure we covered all aspects of the event and did not miss anything happening behind the scenes or in the auditorium, four film crews were used during the show. Seated interviews with a selection of historical eye-witnesses will be added in at the editing stage to lend perspective and provide breaks from the frenetic pace of the catwalk show.

As well as following his last catwalk show to the very end, the documentary will retrace Jean Paul Gaultier's development as a designer in detail. Besides behind-the-scenes footage and seated interviews, material from private and public archives will be added during editing to allow us to alternate between past and present and draw comparisons between this show and the original designs.

I have filmed Jean Paul Gaultier a lot over the years, so of course I am familiar with his obsessions. But I am still dazzled, amazed, bewildered and startled by his endlessly playful imagination and utter determination to keep on creating come what may. He will be a huge loss to fashion. But before we realize quite what a big gap he will leave, let us have fun trying to take in the whole of his incredibly full career and undiminished vitality in one go.



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