

A Woman of Our Times

For Saint Laurent's Spring/Summer '19 collection, Anthony Vaccarello paves the way for a renewed sense of feminine confidence.

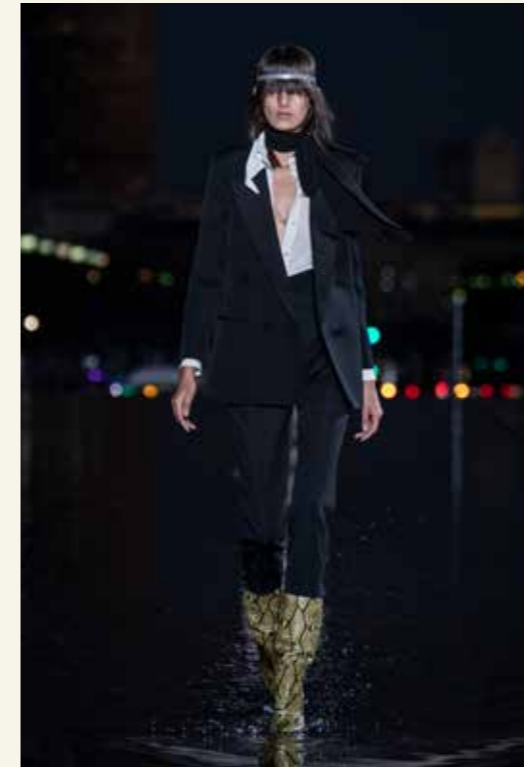


WHEN FRENCH DESIGNER Yves Saint Laurent first launched his eponymous brand in 1961, he designed pieces in a way that was unheard of in the genre of womenswear. At a time when women in pants were prohibited in public, he drew inspiration from menswear and incorporated them into the wardrobes of women. His widely exalted androgynous tuxedos coined "Le Smoking" stirred heated conversations amongst many in the '60s. The silhouette eventually went on to redefine power dressing for women.

In the almost six decades that have followed, the house has pushed forth its agenda of gender fluidity and female empowerment — an ethos that continues to ring pertinent to Saint Laurent. And the French house's powerful Spring/Summer '19 collection holds true to this very spirit.

Set against the glimmering Eiffel Tower on the open-air Trocadero, models "splashed" their way down the runway — an inch-deep, glossy, black infinity pool — flanked by a row of faux white palm trees on one end and a star-studded front row on the other. This was familiar territory for Anthony Vaccarello, who had previously showcased his Spring/Summer '18 collection on the same ground.

Clockwise from top: Shift dresses from the '60s are decorated with stars; power dressing takes a sultry turn at Saint Laurent.



The whopping 95-piece collection sought to relive the house's resplendent past through a modern perspective. In classic Saint Laurent fashion, contemporary silhouettes of '60s shift dresses get a star-spangled remake, while velvet and leather band jackets evoke '70s and '80s rock and roll. Elsewhere in the collection, another Saint Laurent signature shows itself in high hemlines that reveal liberal amounts of skin.

This season also saw Vaccarello's iteration of the house's iconic pieces, including a shortened variation of the safari jacket and the incorporation of studded lapels and other westernised influences onto the Le Smoking tuxedos. Vaccarello dived deep into the house's archives as he adorned the edges of clothing with feathers, a detail that goes as far back to 1965 when Saint Laurent first utilised them as ornaments.

The collection's accessories, too, commandeered attention on the runway. Bejewelled headbands and hats, in either burgundy or black, underscored the glamazons of the '80s, while high waist, maxi buckle belts accentuate the elegance of the female body. While translucent and transparent fabrics were rife, much of the exhibition was a paean female liberation rather than a provocative statement.

The star-studded runway saw familiar faces like Kaia Gerber, Abbey Lee Kershaw, Binx Walton who strutted down with feminine confidence in the collection's billowy and seemingly boyish silhouettes.

Imbued with an emboldened sense of freedom the collection is a reflection of the modern Saint Laurent woman. In this case, she exudes a spirit of irreverence all the while maintaining an air of elegance. "Eclecticism is freedom to build yourself, express your own personality and respect your complexity," says Vaccarello. — Sng Ler Jun



Clockwise from top left: The Le Smoking tuxedo gets appropriated for the now; hats add to the collection's rock and roll edge; a liberal show of skin makes a case for a strong woman in embrace of her body; the Saint Laurent woman is sensual yet strong as illustrated in the juxtaposition of sharp cuts and fluid lines; the leather jacket, a Saint Laurent signature draws from Western influences.

