

FASHION



Philipp Plein hits town, Oscar de la Renta, Monse team up



The Philipp Plein fashion collection is modeled during Fashion Week in New York, Monday. — AP/AFP photos

Philipp Plein promised something different for his first turn at New York Fashion Week and delivered with a huge crowd packed into the monolithic main branch of the public library, live music courtesy of Nas and The Kills - and Madonna turning up last minute on his front row. Dynamic designing duo Laura Kim and Fernando Garcia, meanwhile, performed a high-wire act, presenting not one but both of their fashion lines - Oscar de la Renta and Monse - simultaneously. Carolina Herrera called her show her "white shirt" moment, a celebration of her favorite garment. And Proenza Schouler said adieu to New York for now as it prepares to show in Paris. Some of Monday's highlights:

The Plein circus in town

Plein, reveling in his disruptor status and usually a mainstay in Milan, didn't disappoint. Social media viral sensation Jeremy Meeks, the "hot felon," was on his runway alongside rappers and an army of people dressed as Statues of Liberty entertained his guests, along with Times Square's Naked Cowboy. The German designer promised and delivered something different, with a hashtag rallying cry of his very own launched days in advance on Instagram: "Let's Make NYFW Great Again." Did his giant black and silver puffer coats and luxe sportswear deliver? It was a tad hard to see the clothes from the cheap seats, but Plein the businessman is making a retail push into the US market, coveting consumers here as his discerning next step.

"This dream came true for me tonight," Plein said, making the unusual move of addressing the crowd before the show after Nas performed to help get everyone all warmed up. "Even my girlfriend is here and she didn't have a seat." The point? "It's all about having fun," the affable Plein told the horde. And you know what? It kinda was. Madonna was accompanied by photographer Steven Klein and joined in the crowd by Kylie Jenner, Tiffany Trump (Secret Service in tow) and Paris Hilton. The handsome, blue-eyed California con Meeks, with the teardrop tattoo on his face, was joined on the meandering runway by rapper Desiigner and graffiti artist Alec Monopoly, who goes anonymous by covering his face with a bandanna.

So why New York?

"I killed Milan. I did the biggest shows ever in Milan. There was nobody who could really compete with us anymore, so the next step was to come over to New York. America is one of the biggest economies in the world. We're coming to America, and the people that ask all these questions tonight, 'Who the (bleep) is Philipp Plein?' You know, I'm here to answer the ques-

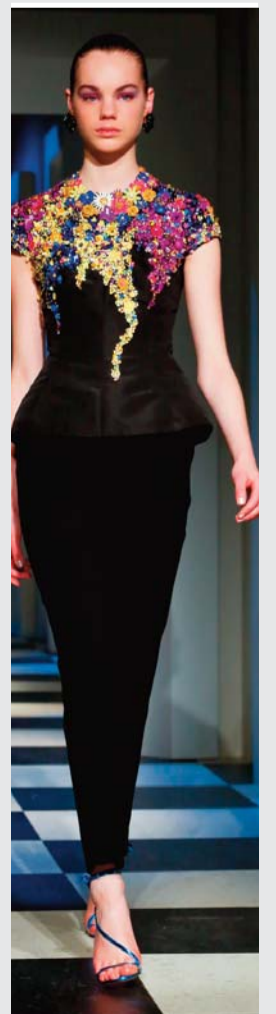
tion," Plein said in an interview backstage before the show. "It will take a while before they get to know us, but that's why we're here." Meeks' searing blue eyes and perfect cheekbones lit up the runway after doing the same on the internet in 2014, after his arrest for gun possession in a gang sweep in Stockton, California. Police there posted his mugshot on Facebook and women went wild. He had a record for auto theft and has served time in both state and federal prisons, so why put him in a fashion show? "We're all bad boys," Plein said. "I'm a bad boy."



Seeing double, at Oscar de la Renta

It was a highly unique fashion show, born of highly unique circumstances. In September, Laura Kim and Fernando Garcia were named co-creative directors at Oscar de la Renta, replacing Peter Copping at the venerable luxury label. It was a return to the company where they'd both begun their careers. In the meantime, they'd launched their own fledgling label, Monse, which fast became a celebrity favorite (and Kim had worked briefly at Carolina Herrera). On Monday evening, they pulled off the feat of showing their two, quite different lines together in one big show. It did not go entirely as planned: A huge silver curtain, meant to pull back dramatically for the de la Renta section, got stuck and stayed stubbornly put on one side.

But the clothes themselves definitely impressed. The first item down the runway for Monse was a ruffled white shirt with oversized, cascading sleeves and bared shoulders. Exposed shoulders were a theme; dresses or sweaters, as in a roomy black turtleneck, often had one



Models walk the runway for the Carolina Herrera collection during, New York Fashion Week.