

FLAMENCO BAILE: A CELEBRATION OF LIFE

The Spanish dance brought fun back to the catwalk one step at a time

Among the world's problems and instability, the fashion industry, like never before, wants to return back to its roots: entertainment. There is no better way to do this than turning the catwalk into a dancefloor, with the fun flamenco trend. Derived from the word "flamma" meaning flame, the traditional Spanish dance, which emerged in the fifteenth century, captivates the public with its passion.

In the SS 18 collections, flamenco translates in polka dot patterns, romantic ruffles and poppy red garments. The floaty ruffles, characteristic of flamenco skirts, confer lightness to the designs; the polka dots represent the theatrical side of the dance, while the red colour transmits the intensity of its emotions.

The most compelling example of this, would be the collection of the French designer Simon Porte Jacquemus. The models of his collection moved to the rhythm of the conga in fringe hem pareo skirts, maxi straw sunbrims and one shoulder strap tops with polka dot appliques. Alegria!

Vaccarello for Saint Laurent and Giambattista Valli, on the other hand, interpreted the trend with ruffles ensembles. Saint Laurent opted for a blouse with frill details adorned with golden polka dots; while Valli reinterpreted the classic bata de cola gown in a Ballet Slipper nuance. It is not the first time that the Spanish dance trend is seen in the French house, as it was started in 1978 by Yves Saint Laurent himself with the iconic flamenco dress.

"the girl of Saint Laurent-she wants to have fun, she wants to enjoy life!"

Vaccarello says.





Marco De Vincenzo, instead, translated the folkloristic dance trend by using its distinctive poppy red colour in matching long sleeved v neck shirt with velvet detail and gored skirt with high split. The resemblance with the typical costumes would have allowed the model to swing along the catwalk.

The joyful flamenco image portrayed by the designers on the catwalk, only shows one side of this complex cultural phenomenon. The roots of the dance, despite its cheerful ways, are bound to the sufferings of oppressed populations such as gypsies, which popularized the baile as a form of protest.

“flamenco is a weapon of cultural resistance”

says the fashion historian Valerie Steele.

Therefore, the trend is not only a form of escapism from reality, but also a subtle way to challenge tough times by celebrating the essence of life.

Jacquemus efficiently captured this dualism in his minimal, yet extremely feminine collection. The designer, chose to pay homage to his roots by reinterpreting his French heritage in the brightness of colours and simplicity of the shapes. The collection, additionally, was a sublime hymn to life with a melancholic undertone. A combination which embodies the true flamenco spirit, as well as the designer creative vision.

The flamenco trend stands for authenticity, against any convention of a fast paced society. The cultural tradition behind the trend, in particular the romantic of the nineteenth century, inspired the Spanish designer Cristobal Balenciaga, who

throughout his career, frequently used it as a reference in his designs. An example of this, can be found in his smoky-brown gauze dress of summer 1962, or in his flamenco inspired accessories such as the flower hat.

The folkloristic dance trend is not exclusively seasonal; it is an attitude, which breaks the routine with its energy. The flamenco tributes from designers for spring summer 18, did not come as a surprise. Madonna, in her 1987 music video “La Isla Bonita”, popularized flamenco fashion among the public by wearing a red bata de cola dress with black polka dots. In 2004, the trend re-emerged in the popular movie “Dirty Dancing: Havana Nights”; where the music, choreographies and costumes were all about the Spanish and Latin American dance heritage.

The multiple references to flamenco in movies, music videos and designer collections are clear evidence of the folkloristic dance proliferation. The dance power to turn difficult circumstances into a moment of divertissement, appointed it as the ultimate reverie of our time.



For this reason, after the Spring Summer 18 collection we will not only wear polka dots, but we’ll also all proudly be flamenco aficionados. *Camilla Morgante*