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Paris Fashion Week, Reviewed by Someone Who Wears the Same Sweatshirt Every Day

Genny Sheara, Editor-in-Chief

The headline doesn't exaggerate. I'm writing this in khaki cargo pants. Join me as I vicariously experience haute couture from the Chardin laundry room.

Flannel, Fringe, and Denim: Louis Vuitton

With the first official show of the week, Louis Vuitton showcased their menswear Fall-Winter collection nearly a year after appointing Pharrell Williams as men's creative director. Artist and Sioux Tribe Activist Dee Jay Two Bears collaborated with Williams on the show's accessories, to center not only the Americana aesthetic but Native American history and artistry. The show both opened and crescendoed to a close with musical performances from Native Voices of Resistance.

Donning a cream cowboy hat, blue jeans and a bejeweled 'LV' belt buckle for his runway bow, Williams' "American Western-inspired" collection was made all the more star-spangled by its celebrity front row. The A-listers, such as recent 'Maestro' actor Bradley Cooper, often contribute to the fashion week buzz perhaps as much as the models themselves, and this season was no exception.

Cameras focused their flashes on often-elusive popstar Zayn Malik, who would join Williams for the Kenzo show in a checkered blue suit. (The author would like to note their personal favorite celebrity looks from night one go to Karlie Kloss' coat with black-and-white candy cane trim, and Quavo's Louis Vuitton patterned suit with a matching scarf.)



Annabelle DeGuzman-Carino

Whereas the brand's 2023 menswear collection looked to be a bit bulkier and saturated—such as the oversized puffer coats and trapper hats, and colorful and abstract prints respectively—this week's silhouettes tended toward being sleeker while still maintaining their angles. Given that they initially began as a luggage brand, it felt appropriate that the bags were consistently spectacular (see: the brown cowhide purse.)

I know it's not technically a ready-to-wear collection, but I would do anything to walk around in a pair of those "Texas" embroidered boots from this showcase. Even a single boot.

Valentino, Revisited

Valentino's collection, dubbed "The Narratives," explicitly sought to revisit and redefine masculinity. But with silhouettes that still largely relied on perfectly work-appropriate blazers and polos, I couldn't help but feel a tad underwhelmed. For a total reimagining of masculinity, these looks felt strangely conservative.

Furthermore, compared to 2023's Fall-Winter season, many of Pierpaolo Piccioli's signature designs that have defined the modern Valentino—dramatic volume, feathered headpieces, dangling jewelry—were absent from this collection. What would it look like to be just as daring with menswear?

I did enjoy the decision to move to layered pops of color—particularly the bright blue and pink turtlenecks—rather than the monochrome looks of their Spring-Summer 2024 menswear collection. I found the handbag accessories to consistently be my favorite part of each outfit, especially the red purse in look no. 45. But in an age where people have already been using fashion to explore gender in more radical ways, both personally and societally, this show felt more like Valentino catching up than innovating.

Hermès, Herald of the Chevron Suit

Hermès' focus this season was on precision and transformation, as throughout Véronique Nichanian's tenure as men's universe artistic director, she has consistently emphasized revitalization and "forward movement." Yet, the adaptability and reversibility promised in some of the garments were obfuscated by a largely static runway. Everything was zipped up, buttoned up, or under a scarf!

The sophistication and engineered exactness that was advertised as transformation's contrast, though, was certainly there. At some points reminiscent of 2019 Alexander McQueen, with high-waisted belts and checkered suits, there were lots of particularly sharply-tailored vests and jackets. With three or four different visible lapels, this no. 8 look wins for "surest to keep your neck warm."

Even as I watched and rewatched the runway walks, I couldn't bring myself to love the muted chartreuse that became one of the few dashes of color in this collection. The one thing I really felt was out of place was this quarter zip-bucket hat combo with brownish shimmer blotted on.

Dior's Dance of the Knights

Borrowing equal inspiration from masculine eveningwear and Russian ballet, Dior's 2024 menswear collection opted for a bit more subtlety in displaying both its influences and the clothes themselves. At its best moments, the show featured gorgeous floor-length robes on a saucer-like platform. The set itself was a high point, a dramatically lit black box theater like something out of a Rothko.

At its clunkiest, leather jackets paired gray sweatpant shorts and pointe-esque shoes in a subdued lilac. I say pointe-esque because the straps of the shoes look more similar to seat belt nylon than a delicate ribbon. To be fair to Dior, choosing Prokofiev's most famous composition as your musical accompaniment is doomed to make the visuals pale in comparison.

But overall, many of the looks' dazzling details won me over; menswear isn't often seen with this many crystals, and it was a welcome extravagance. Other smaller moments—a white ruffle on the sleeve, Rococo print on the gray coat—were personal highlights.

As a fashion dilettante, it was all appropriately Paris to me.