

ART AS FASHION

DANIEL SCHEFFLER CELEBRATES THE UNIQUE CREATIVE MAGIC PERFORMED BY THE HOUSE OF ISSEY MIYAKE

When Yoshiyuki Miyamae was appointed as the official designer for Issey Miyake in 2011, the fashion elite held their proverbial breath. After his humble beginnings in Paris, Mr Issey Miyake had been holding the rudder of the now global brand for 40 years.

Although Mr Miyake was to continue to meticulously oversee his empire, there were musings on how a youngster like Miyamae would be able to grab hold of such powerful reins and offer something new to the innovative and ever-so leftfield brand.

But of course, the Bunka Fashion College graduate had been groomed for this position since he first joined the Miyake Design Studio in 2001. Under revered

creative director Dai Fujiwara, who joined Issey Miyake in 1994, Miyamae had perfected the art of creating clothing for a new generation. In Paris in October 2012, he revealed his first singular collection to the world. The press celebrated the aesthetic and the design, so strong and yet so Miyake-inspired, and also the orthodox Japanese methods and fabrics that Miyamae had used.



For the latest collection, Autumn Winter 2013, Issey Miyake used the inspiration of patterns and colours of landscapes as seen from the perspective of a bird, or plane. And so the pieces give one the feeling of flight the moment you put them on. The collection, according to Miyake's PR, is an "ever changing mosaic of vibrantly coloured flower meadows, fields of golden wheat, dark green of forests, the reflections of deep-mirrored lakes, creating moving checkered patterns".

As with the brand's usual poetic nature and forward-thinking, the fabric and landscape evoke "a changing world which moves according to the mood of those who inhabit it". Dividing the collection into abstract notions relating strongly to the physical world, like 'Glen' and 'Meadow', the new collection gallops from bold colour statements to sensitive and tender ornamentation.



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The collection streaks across different landscapes with elegance and a silent meditative nod ... from large (and small) glen checkered patterns with stripes woven into one, to a unique “single piece of cloth method” for coats and jackets using three yarns of varying thickness. The range includes multi-colour blocked tartan checks and uses original hollow fibers to create oversized blousons with zips with single and double breasted fitted jackets. Sheer inspiration...

The Miyake Design Studio's first collection was held in New York in 1971 and the brand then featured in Paris Fashion Week with an Autumn Winter collection. The men's range, Issey Miyake Men, came to the market in 1978 and a year later the flagship store opened in Paris on the famed rue Saint Germain. Now, Issey Miyake stores are found all over Asia, the Middle East, Europe and the US. The brand has expanded just enough to maintain exclusivity by offering only limited runs of each collection. The addition of watches and fragrances have brought new customers into the Issey Miyake family, but, interestingly enough, some of the Issey Miyake appeal and quantities are limited, like the new bag collection, a special collaboration with Japanese designer, Hikaru Matsumura, which is based on baseball gloves.

And then there is one of Issey Miyake's most revered side brands, Pleats Please. Introduced in 1993 as a stand-alone brand,



it celebrated its 20th birthday this year. The line is positioned to “embody fundamental concepts of Issey Miyake – where the true value of design lies in its integration into the everyday life and comfort of the wearer”. The product showcases the traditional process of pleating in a modern and innovative way. In March, “HAPPY ANNIVERSARY”, a visual series for the 20th anniversary of Pleats Please Issey Miyake by Taku Satoh Design Office Inc, won a gold prize at the Art Director's Club annual awards. It's just another celebration for a brand that has consistently created highly technical, yet very beautiful works of art.

Issey Miyake's fundamental philosophy is to focus on two seemingly conflicting ideals: imagination and technology. As counter intuitive as it seems, the two concepts complement each other with a robust uniqueness in the fashion industry and this is what makes Issey Miyake's designs true artforms. Every design challenges the conventional idea of garment making and in that way highlights the relationship between body and cloth.

In every piece, Mr Miyake considers “spirit of creation, curiosity and universal expression”. And this is what sets his brand apart.

For more information on Issey Miyake, visit isseymiyake.com 



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