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TATE TANKS
MATTY BOVAN

OUTPUT INFORMATION

Title:
Tate Tanks

Output Type:
K – Design

Year:
2017

Month:
February

Research Groups:
Fashion & Sustainability



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION STATEMENT

Bovan's 2017 Autumn/Winter collection combines influences from medieval York with cinematic references from Dune, Alien, and Blade Runner. This fusing of sci-fi and ancient influences is a vehicle for positing a more fundamental idea: that what we call 'the present' is always a collision of past and future, and that clothes are the clearest expression of this. Pre-industrial meets post-industrial, natural materials combining with fluorescent synthetics in a collection that critiques corporate identity by making labels that give the unique handmade designs a mass-manufactured appearance.

Bovan fuses the medieval and futuristic, mixing dystopian aesthetics with kitchen-sink craft, embracing 'taboo' fabrics like velour and aertex. Some pieces are produced with an old Eighties knitting machine, using punch cards to create motifs in discordant colours and textures. Scrim skirts incorporate belts made from mountaineering cord and industrial buckles, their tertiary colours enlivened with metallic thread and iridescent sequins. Asymmetric handmade acrylic visors and jewellery made from driftwood, diamanté and bits of chandelier accompany bags provided by Coach, customised with paint, machine embroidery and appliqué.

The collection appeared in Tate Tanks, Tate Modern, as part of Fashion East, an initiative supporting emerging designers. Seen by 600 people, Women's Wear Daily covered the collection in their 22/02/2017 issue.

This 2017 Autumn/Winter collection was shortlisted for Emerging Talent: Womenswear at The British Fashion Awards 2017. American Vogue voted Bovan one of the top ten shows of London's Fall 2017 collection. The British Fashion Awards recognises creativity and innovation in fashion, celebrating individuals whose imagination and creativity transforms the possibilities of fashion today. The BFA 2018 voting body, comprising 2000 key members of the fashion industry from 32 countries, was invited to submit their preferences for each award. Nominations were made in ten categories, with the five brands/individuals receiving the most nominations shortlisted in each.

MATTY BOVAN

Autumn/Winter 2017

This season sees a significant focus on knit, with many of the pieces built from rectangular sections of wool. Some have been knitted or crocheted by hand. Others have been produced on an old Eighties knitting machine using punch cards to create repeat motifs, often in deliberately clashing colours and textures, such as soft pink lambswool flowers on dark green acrylic. Both knit and woven textiles have been torn, punctured and boil-washed to create thickened, felted finishes with hairy or scratchy textures.

The knit sections have been produced using end-of-run yarns, whose scarcity gives the finished pieces a relic-like, almost sacrosanct quality. Similarly in the jewellery, the use of driftwood as a found object shaped by history makes it impossible to recreate or mass-produce. Each piece is individually worked and exists as a one-off.

Two preoccupations drove the development of this collection. One was the designer's interest in medieval history, which he ascribes to growing up in the ancient city of York. This influence is present throughout in the predominantly earthy and mossy colours and boiled-wool textures; in specific shapes, such as the hybrid hoodie/doublet; and most explicitly in the prints made from 14th-century woodcuts of witches, dragons and devils.

The other was science-fiction films set in dystopian futures – Blade Runner, Dune and the Alien series – where a faceless corporation is ultimately revealed to be the biggest monster of all. This is reflected in the BOVAN CORPORATION patches that appear throughout the collection. The logo is also a tongue-in-cheek acknowledgement that these individually worked pieces could never be mass-produced in a corporate fashion.

The futuristic influences vie with the ancient to create something which can't be placed anywhere but in the present. Scrim skirts are built around belts made from mountaineering cord and industrial buckles. Wools in drudgy grass and clay colours are enlivened with metallic thread, iridescent details and sequins. The preindustrial landscape meets the postindustrial as natural materials intertwine with fluorescent synthetics.

Accessories include handmade acrylic visors, slightly sci-fi but asymmetric like the rest of the collection; jewellery made from driftwood, diamanté and bits of chandelier; bags provided by Coach customised with paint, machine embroidery and appliqué, with straps made from woven mountaineering cord; and spray-painted hiking shoes.

Of his emphasis on unique pieces, Matty comments: 'One of the bonuses of being a young designer is that you can make things more special. Each individual garment presents its own challenges when it comes to creating it, and the fun is in making it work.' Each piece also offers an opportunity to push the limits of the designer's own taste. 'I like finding ways of taking something that might otherwise be a bit gross and making it attractive. There's a lot of marl wool in this collection because when I was a student it was something the tutors always treated as off-limits. I keep asking myself, can I do that? And if the answer is no, then that's when it's most exciting.'

By Murray Healy













Keywords:

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Key Dates:

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Funding:

Fashion East

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Links:

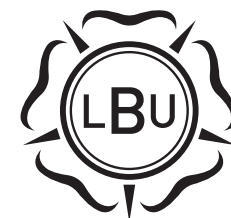
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