



POETRY IN MOTION

CHANEL's latest cruise collection pays homage to Jean Cocteau and counterculture.

BY **DAVID SARIC**

The *Carrières de Lumières*—an erstwhile quarry that provided highly valued stone building materials during the 19th century—has since been transformed into a site for multidisciplinary artistic presentations. In 1959, famed French poet and occasional filmmaker Jean Cocteau decided to shoot his cinematic project *Testament of Orpheus* in this barren location, which provided a compelling backdrop for 80 minutes of poetic musings by the *L'Ange Heurtebise* scribe. It seems fitting that CHANEL Artistic Director of Fashion Collections Virginie Viard, who gleaned inspiration from Cocteau when designing her Cruise 2022 collection for the brand, decided to stage the presentation in the alabaster confines of the *Carrières de Lumières* this past May.

Being a fan of *Testament of Orpheus* got Viard thinking about how the essence of his final motion picture could be translated through clothing. “The simplicity, the precision, and the poetry of Cocteau’s film made me want to create a very clean collection with a very distinct two-tone palette made up of bright white and deep black,” notes Viard. The stark polarity between the two hues is manifested in a very graphic outing full of contrast, where a black frayed-edge tweed jacket was paired with a white skirt embellished with graphic drawings, and a black mesh spaghetti strap mini dress was layered atop a long-sleeved white jersey t-shirt for an haute daytime ensemble.



Viard was also keen to reimagine the extreme modernist aesthetic of Cocteau’s film. “I wanted something quite rock... a look that recalls as much the modernity of the ’60s as that of punk.” This was achieved with fringed embellishments done in leather, sequins, and intricate beadwork, as well as fishnet stockings. The face of Parisian model Lola Nikon was printed on t-shirts, echoing the band merchandise sold at concerts, while wide braids on tweed suits and pointed Mary Janes further reinforced the defiant aesthetics on display.

Vanessa Paradis, a long-standing Maison ambassador, sat front row during the presentation, taking in both the astonishing scenography and the sartorial splendour in its totality. “I’m in wonderment here in the *Carrières de Lumières*, which is so powerful and historic,” she exclaims. As the models strutted down the staircase toward an exclusive selection of guests, Paradis was awestruck by how “feminine beauty was totally epitomized,” and also pointed out the fluidity of garments—

particularly the feathered frocks—that emphasized movement in a graceful manner.

This season, Viard also showcased her deeply rooted reverence for founder Gabrielle Chanel, allowing elements of her recently restored apartment at 31 rue Cambon to be subtly included in the collection. “Because it was there that Gabrielle Chanel housed her favourite bestiary, her lions, female sphinxes, but also deer, which are printed, along with other symbols of the House, on a long negligee-style dress in pink-beige and black crêpe,” she reveals. Another significant element of this residence is how it used to host many evenings with Gabrielle’s closest confidants, including Cocteau. “Ultimately, through her friendships, it is Chanel, the woman, that I love more and more—her life gives us access to characters just as extraordinary as herself.” *CHANEL’s Cruise 2022 will be exclusively available at the brand’s boutiques beginning in November.*

Photography by Mottie Rouge, courtesy of CHANEL