

EMILIA WICKSTEAD

Autumn Winter 2022

Moving to Milan during her formative teenage years had a profound impact on Emilia's design aesthetic. She became infatuated by the city's architecture and the mirrored sartorial codes of Milanese women, whose style melded tradition and rigour with femininity, modernity, and discreet glamour.

For Autumn Winter 2022 Emilia conjures a modern-day muse who, in keeping with these women, leads a multi-layered lifestyle. The collection is Emilia's take on contemporary women's wardrobes, re-interpreted from and informed by the women of the past.

At the same time, the season is also a love letter to the masterful cinematography of Italian film director Michelangelo Antonioni. His entrancing visual vocabulary combined the imposing, modernist architecture of mid-century Italy with the elegance of the fashionable bourgeoisie. Particular attention is paid to two of Antonioni's seminal films: *L'Avventura* (1960) and *La Notte* (1961), along with their leading muse, the actress Monica Vitti, whose enigmatic spirit is captured in the collection.

Boundaries between day wear and evening wear, masculine and feminine are blurred. The opening looks are Emilia's take on power dressing; Exaggerated suits, rendered in tactile mohair, have a handsome effect. Sober brown and camel shades are juxtaposed with powder pink. Flannel tailoring is contrasted with playful crop tops.

The austerity of the day and the opulence of the night become one. A houndstooth overcoat is thrown over a crepe slip dress and opera gloves. A collared merino knit is paired with a voluminous duchesse satin skirt. Knee high socks are worn with satin slingbacks. The overall effect is insouciant, but pristine. Glamorous, but not fussy.

Chocolate brown effortlessly translates from day to night (Emilia has always found brown to be a romantic and seductive colour), whilst monochromatic black is punctuated by sumptuous hues of burgundy, fuchsia, rose and chartreuse.

A timeless, silk georgette slip dress directly references the party outfit worn by Monica Vitti in *La Notte*, later updated with swinging, hand-sewn crystals. A signature silhouette of peplum dresses worn over straight pencil skirts is inspired by 1960's eveningwear styles in *L'Avventura*, along with scooped, triangular necklines. Delicate lace is blown up, appliquéd and cut to clean, almost graphic shapes. There is a sense of simplicity and essentialism which undercuts the lavish atmosphere.

A blue baroque printed evening gown inspired by wallpaper is cut to exacting proportions, simulating the contrasts between grandeur and simplicity in Milanese interiors. The narrative threads of fashion and architecture intertwine. A sequence of satin eveningwear looks printed with a painterly check are inspired by recurring checkerboard motifs in Antonioni's films, in which squares are spliced into windowpanes, tiles, floors, and even cut into grass.

This print is blown up to oversize proportions in the film's backdrop. Like the vast cityscapes of Antonioni's work, the checkerboard set has an almost hypnotic effect. Yet the eye is drawn distinctly to the woman. Her self-assured vigour and poise holds the frame and commands attention.

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CREDITS

Styling: Kate Phelan
Film: DUCK
Set Design: Josh Stovell
Photography: Edd Horder
Casting: Maria Giulia Azario
Music: Sound & Sons
Hair: Tosh for L'Oréal Professionnel
Beauty: Naoko Scintu for By Terry
Nails: courtesy of Nailberry and LeSalon
Jewellery: Jessica McCormack
Hosiery: FALKE
Underwear: Commando

CAST

Sonya @ Premier
Emmanuelle @ The Hive
Nyarach @ PRM
Grace @ Models1
Jacquetta @ VIVA
Miriam @ Milk
Awuoi @ PRM
Wang @ Titanium

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