

# Stella Jean Returns to Milan with Bhutanese Collaboration, Calls to Protect Craftsmanship

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## ? Stella Jean Spotlights Bhutanese Artisans and Calls to Save Craft?

After a three-year hiatus, **Italian-Haitian designer Stella Jean** returned to the **Milan runway** with a show that was more than fashion—it was a manifesto for the preservation of traditional craftsmanship.

"I said I would come back when I had something to say," Jean remarked backstage. True to her word, she used her comeback not just to unveil a collection but to raise awareness about the fragility of artisanal skills, in both Italy and beyond.

#### A Call to Protect Craftsmanship

Jean, celebrated for her **cross-cultural approach** that blends sharp Italian tailoring with global artisan techniques, warned that **Italian craftsmanship is vanishing** as younger generations move away from heritage trades.

"If we don't wear it, it becomes useless," Jean stressed.

She urged lawmakers to provide **fiscal benefits**—similar to those granted to fine art—for exceptional handmade garments. Such systemic support, she argued, would ensure fair wages for artisans while keeping heritage alive in the modern wardrobe.

#### **Bhutanese Artistry on the Runway**

Her comeback collection was a **dialogue between Bhutan and Milan**. Traditional **handwoven tego jackets** were layered over printed silk dresses; embroidered skirts crafted from **wild nettle fibre** were paired with contemporary tailoring; and beaded panels depicting village life were transformed into statement garments.

In a symbolic finale, Jean herself walked in a **kira**, the national dress of Bhutan, honouring the artisans at the heart of the collection.

Instead of celebrities, her **front row featured Bhutanese craftspeople**, dressed in national attire. It was a deliberate choice, flipping the fashion hierarchy to put **craft before clout**.

### A Tribute to Giorgio Armani

Jean's return was also marked with a moment of gratitude. She first debuted in 2013 at the **Armani Theatre**, invited by the late Giorgio Armani himself. At the finale, she held up a T-shirt from that debut reading:

"Grazie, Mr Armani — Stella."

"Italian fashion became the most important in the world thanks to this gentleman," she said, honouring Armani's mentorship.

#### **Fashion With Meaning**

With this Bhutanese collaboration, Stella Jean reaffirmed her belief that **fashion is not just about beauty, but about safeguarding the traditions that give it life**. Her return to Milan was not simply a runway moment—it was a **powerful reminder** that craft, community, and culture must remain central to the future of luxury.

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