

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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