

Ahluwalia

AW21: *Traces*

In place of a physical show, AW₂₁ sees Ahluwalia presenting short film *Traces* in collaboration with musician Cktrl. Directed by Stephen Isaac Wilson with choreography by Holly Blakey, styling by Nell Kalonji, casting by Troy Casting and production design by Chris Melgram, the film captures the spirit of brotherhood and unity seen in the garments through synchronised movement performed to an exclusive score composed for this occasion by Cktrl.

The film is also accompanied by a look book, shot by frequent Ahluwalia collaborator, Laurence Ellis.

Like many of us, Priya Ahluwalia has taken all the extra time spent at home over the past year as an opportunity to grow her personal library. One book that particularly made an impact on the designer was *Home Going*, Yaa Gyasi's moving tale of two sisters born in the 1700s and separated at birth. The book follows the generations of both sister's families through years, noting the powerful influences past experiences of our ancestors can have on our lives. "It showed how we move around the world and that the things from the past always follow us around," she says. The strong impression from the pages spurred Priya on looking at migration as a societal process that leads to new ideas and new schools of thought, with the Harlem Renaissance as the prime example.

However, Ahluwalia's exploration of the Harlem Renaissance era wasn't about replicating the silhouettes or design stories of the times. Instead, it was reflected in the way she designed her AW₂₁ collection. The notion of syncretism—a merging of different elements—has always been at the core of Ahluwalia since its inception through upcycling. This season, it's taken to the next level through the hybridisation of the garments, as puffer jackets become reversible and contrasting textiles combine into one. The label's signature patchwork button-ups bring together bamboo silk with deadstock shirting, while the graphic jumpers are made in a mix of repurposed knit and sweatshirt fabrics.

With this collection being the brand's biggest one yet, Priya also explored the variety of menswear and all of its categories. "The uncertainty in the world has made me think way outside of the circle of boundaries of what I know and to consider what's going on everywhere, and not just around me," she notes. This means not only delving into both the formal and casual aspects, but also offering pieces for a variety of weather conditions.

When it comes to the palette for the season, Priya looked at the colouristic tendencies of seminal Black artists Kerry James Marshall and Jacob Lawrence. Just like their paintings, looks from Ahluwalia AW21 ground the vibrant colours by juxtaposing them against black and brown. The prints continue the story of waves seen in SS21, while also adding new chapters with the use of digital printing onto 100% recycled fabrics made from plastic bottles. While creating her last film *Joy*, presented in partnership with Gucci Fest, Ahluwalia's stylist Nell Kalonji was spray-painting custom accessories on top of sheets of paper which were later scanned and transformed into the patterns for the ombré pieces in this collection. The graphic lines that created the patterns of repurposed textiles were inspired by migration maps of the world.

This season also marks the debut of Ahluwalia's new emblem which has universal symbolism that transcends place or time – a compass-like insignia made out of four afro-combs pointing to each of the four corners of the world.

Words

Dino Bonacic

Traces Film Credits:

Director

Stephen Issac-Wilson

Creative Director

Priya Ahluwalia

Starring And Music By

Cktrl

Producer

Ella Toal-Gangar

Executive Producers

NTS & Rik Green @ Pulse Films

Supported By

Dropbox

Models

Salim, Ronald, Michael, Mumin, Jason & Emmanuel

Director of Photography

Harry Wheeler

Production Designer
Christopher Melgram

Choreography
Holly Blakey

Casting Director
Troy Casting

Stylist
Nell Kalonji

Edit
Gregory Hayes @ White House Post

Grade
Jason Wallis

Production Company
Pulse Films

Ahluwalia Studio Manager
Femi Akinrinde

Production Manager
Rachel Bashford

1st Assistant Director
Elle Lotherington

Steadicam Operator
Richard J Lewis

Gaffer
Bill Rae Smith

Make Up & Grooming
Bari Khalique

Sound Tech
Alexander Archer

Styling Assistant
Nicola Neri

Make Up & Grooming Assistants
Ayse Gonen & Maeve Mcelholm

1st Assistant Camera

Kate Eccarius

2nd Assistant Director

Philips Nortey

Production Runners

Yasmin Tippett & Flynn Horne

Loader

Rory Power

Sparks

Ana Vilar- Bergua & Sam Baker

Trainee Spark

Nonso Onwuta

Camera Trainee

Lucrezia Pollice

Art Department Assistants

Levi Hinds, Joe Winter & Madison Wells

Air Medic Uk Ltd

Greig Wyllie

Location Scout

ETG Projects LTD

Research Assistant

Zara Manzoor

Credit and Title Design

Dennis Mcinnes

Look book Credits:

Photographer

Laurence Ellis

Models

CKTRL, Jason & Samer

Stylist

Nell Kalonji

Casting Director

Troy Casting

Movement Director

Holly Blakey

Make Up & Grooming

Bari Khalique

Art Director

Christopher Melgram

On Set Art Director

Levi Hinds

Ahluwalia Studio Manager

Femi Akinrinde

Photography Assistants

Sam Binyim & Karolina Burlikowska

Art Department Assistant

Zara Forrester

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