

# 16ARLINGTON

True glamour is, arguably, so innate that it can easily be shrugged off; slipped out of, for a moment. What happens when a young fashion house, typified by out-and-out maximalism - arguably the only London label proposing it - is forced to consider 'easy'?

For Spring/Summer '21, 16Arlington presents a body of work unlike any their ever-growing fanbase has seen from the label. It's an ode to beauty, anchored by the tension between two conflicting ideas: a total fluidity of ease, and an exacting, almost *agonising* approach to design details. Think: a duvet-like lilac quilted ball gown, set against rigorously constructed leather corsetry. A timely response to the call for 'new glamour.'

At the outset of the design process - the chapter which, as any creative knows, truly emanates from the heart - Marco Capaldo and Federica Cavenati were compelled to explore the powerful and spiritual allure of the ocean. They were, as they put it, "drawn to water." It's a sentiment that lives in the collection literally - sea-shell accessories, tie-dyed feathers hand-treated in the designers' bathroom - and figuratively, via a tangible sense of rebirth.

Like their peers across London's creative class, Capaldo and Cavenati - a real-life couple, as well as a creative partnership - conceived of this project at home. The home they share together, and within which they spend their days exploring the interesting tensions between their distinct aesthetic preferences and intense mood-shifts. While their shared aesthetic dreamscape is typically one of excess; thrust into the enforced domesticity of lockdown the designers' instincts have contorted. They describe a near-repulsion at the idea of total extravagance, at a time where the very idea of evening-wear - their heartland - has been rendered abstract.

A new sense of revision has come into play - a conscious *taking-away*.

16Arlington's muse has willingly succumbed to an all-new *satiny-slouch*. She's swathed in bias-cut crushed velvet, soft yellow, liquid-like silk and ultra-rich chocolate brown leather. Evening dresses are present - they couldn't not be! - though this season they're rendered in light 'summer tech' fabrics which emanate from bamboo. In opposition to this newly discovered lightness-of-being, there's an unavoidable sense of *restriction*, which is more-than-nodded-to through arresting corsetry stories. Even here, though, Capaldo and Cavenati have achieved a lighter-than-ever leather, rendering these pieces which appear as the collection's heavy-duty accents, easy.

There's a marked sense of *staying power* in the way Capaldo and Cavenati design - ultimately, they're fashion fans. Their perennial reference points and fanatical celebration of nightlife are fashion mainstays, and it's afforded them their network of ardent devotees - from Jennifer Lopez to Lady Gaga by way of Lizzo. This season they've lusted after 90s design: the visual style signifiers they grew up with, a kind of raw elegance.

Anyone who has spent a moment in their uniquely sparkling company will know that the 16Arlington duo are the epitome of eternal optimists. The drama and the disco will return - but the label is forever changed.

## **CREDITS**

**Photographer:** Gwen Trannoy

**Styling:** Karen Clarkson at The Wall Group

**Hair:** Sam McKnight at Premier

**Make-up:** Ammy Drammeh

**Nails:** Naima Coleman

**Casting:** Shelley Durkan

**Set Design:** Staci Lee

**PR:** Raven