

FORM + FUNCTION

Prada has enlisted four luminaries from the worlds of architecture and design to interpret the house's iconic black nylon for a new initiative dubbed Prada Invites.

Photography
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NYLON FRONTPACK
(\$1,560. SELECT
PRADA BOUTIQUES)

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FRONTPACK REM KOOLHAAS

Rem Koolhaas has a longstanding relationship with Prada, having played a key role in designing Milan's Fondazione Prada through his firm, OMA. Prada Invites took Koolhaas's relationship with the Italian brand to the next level by enabling him to cross over from architectural design into fashion, a longtime dream for the Dutch creative.

"I've always been dying to design fashion," Koolhaas says, adding that it never felt like a plausible industry for him while growing up in Holland. "When [Prada] asked me to do something, I immediately had the idea, and immediately did it." That idea was to create a black nylon carryall, reminiscent of Prada's backpack from 1984, but with a literal twist. Koolhaas's design is meant to be worn in front, providing a more intimate sense of ownership over the items within, as well as a method to avoid accidentally bumping your bag into your surroundings.

Koolhaas notes that the mass-produced backpacks we see today have led to people carrying far more objects than before, and moreover, in a completely disorganized manner. (Here, he pantomimes waiting behind someone in line at the airport as they sort through their bags.) Thus, he says, the frontpack "was also based on a longstanding anthropological observation. So anthropology and fashion came together in a good, single moment."



REM KOOLHAAS

Portrait courtesy Prada

PORTFOLIO RONAN & ERWAN BOUROULLEC

Brothers Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec are particularly captivated by the movements brought about by inanimate objects. They find a common thread here between the arts of furniture design and fashion. "What you wear or what you sit on dramatically changes the way you move or the posture of your body," they note. Furthermore, they're intrigued by the juxtaposition between movement and stillness. For their contribution to Prada Invites, the French brothers created a shoulder bag – the kind worn by art students to carry and transport art – honing in on the image of a sharply cut rectangle swinging like a pendulum as the wearer walks around.

Known for their knack for "poetic practicality," the brothers were a fitting choice to reinterpret the use of industrial black nylon. For them, Prada's innovation makes the brand a mutually obvious fit. "Prada has always proven that they make clothing for the sake of change and expanding new perimeters," they say of their fondness for the Italian label's open-minded attitude toward shapes.

For the Bouroullecs, these notions of bustling motion and placid inactivity leave a sentimental impression. "We make a number of projects," they say, "and they all create a very intense emotional relationship with themselves, but also with us."



Portrait courtesy Prada

RONAN BOUROULLEC



NYLON PORTFOLIO
(\$1,130, SELECT
PRADA BOUTIQUES)

NYLON APRON WITH
POCKETS (\$1,790,
SELECT PRADA
BOUTIQUES)

APRON KONSTANTIN GRIC

"If it came down to choosing between one or the other, I'd always value simplicity over minimalism," says industrial designer Konstantin Grcic. "In relation to everyday life, the term minimalism carries a negative notion of abstinence—even doctrine—whereas simplicity stands for enlightenment." Much of Grcic's work has revolved around this dichotomy, and his work for Prada also adds the ideas of practicality and versatility.

For Prada Invites, the German designer created a multi-pocketed fisherman's vest that can also be used as a hood or an apron, inspired by artist Joseph Beuys's uniform, which Grcic describes as a "trilby hat, fishing vest, and long, fur-lined coat." Beuys lived and taught in a West German town not far from Wuppertal, where Grcic grew up during the 1970s. "His particular uniform became an iconic look for the artist's anti-establishment attitude, which really attracted me as a teenager—like punk rock," Grcic says. He paired this inspiration with a nod to Prada's original 1984 nylon backpack.

"There is no contradiction between fashion and practicality," Grcic says of the two concepts, for which the varying intersections (sometimes fully overlapping, other times humorously distant) are the crux of Prada Invites. "Function is the intelligence of a product. Intelligence produces beauty."



KONSTANTIN GRIC

Portrait courtesy Prada

COAT HERZOG & DE MEURON

Architects Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron created a shirt wrapped in lettering, as well as a jacket with buttons also covered in the text from an ancient language. In a joint statement, they explain: "Text is perceived as design, pattern, or decoration, comparable to the once-potent symbols and signs, now tattooed on human bodies without number." The pieces touch on the dilution of language in an age when terms like "alternative facts" and "fake news" abound.

"It is the nature of language to be used and abused, and it is up to us to sharpen our perception when faced with the flood of information that wants to persuade," Herzog says. Calling out ads, politics, and "so-called" news, he emphasizes the respect we should have for words: "It's so important to be aware of what we're doing when we speak or write, namely, that we always take a stand and have an agenda." To him, both understanding and expressing are imperative.



JACQUES HERZOG



PIERRE DE MEURON

NYLON COAT (\$2,340,
SELECT PRADA
BOUTIQUES)

