

# BALMAIN

## PARIS

### Balmain Men Fall 2024

Once you've seen our Balmain Men Fall 2024 runway, you definitely won't be surprised to hear that the mood board for this collection was very, very colorful. In particular, we tacked up quite a few vibrant inspirations from those *sapeurs* who had pledged to keep true to the ten commandments of the *Société des Ambianceurs et des Personnes Élégantes*. Their spectacular style, which relies on an exuberant mix of tailored French silhouettes and colorful African patterns, is believed to have originated in Brazzaville during the 1960s, and it quickly became popular across the entire continent. Six decades later, the striking dandy stylings of modern *sapeurs* continue to command attention on the streets of Kinshasa, Paris and Harlem. Inspired by that positive example of blending together the very best of many cultures, for this latest Balmain Men's offerings we've paired our atelier's expertise in tailoring and craft with the a host of influences from all across the world.

#### **American Music**

As with almost every one of this house's collections, my team and I continue to channel the powerful spirit of American musicians. This runway riffs on a full century's worth of African-American musical genius, with sleeve-garters inspired by the impeccable elegance of Tony Jackson, the daring ragtime, blues and Tin-Pan-Alley composer who created the standard uniform for pianists of the early 1900s. The models' durags and the many plays on silver and golden grills recall the hip-hop and rap artists that I grew up listening to. The new Espion, a limited-edition oversized wrap-around frame from Balmain Eyewear, imparts hip-hop's requisite VIP attitude.

#### **Collaboration With Prince Gyasi**

I'm especially thrilled to introduce some special collaborations for next season. Most notably, we've partnered once again with an incredibly talented artist, Prince Gyasi. Prince was responsible for one of my favorite Balmain campaigns, the Petit-Prince themed shooting for Fall 2022—and ever since then, I've been determined to figure out the best way to include his extraordinarily vivid vision in our designs. For this collection, we began working together by selecting a handful of hyperchromatic masterpieces that Prince shot in his hometown of Accra, Ghana. Determined to match his level of inventive artistry, my team and I pushed ourselves to interpret those photos in fresh and surprising ways. So, not only have we created enormous colorful prints of his work, we've also used textile silhouettes to echo Prince's beautiful portraits. In addition, the runway's models give life to Prince's images and we've also managed to combine models, patterns and 3D imaging for an exceptionally multi-layered spin on one of my favorite shots. I am very pleased to see just how perfectly Prince's images complement the many other artistic references for Fall 2024, particularly the polka-dot and linear op-art patterns and surrealistic close-ups of oversized eyes, lips and kisses.

Ibby Njoya is another African talent adding his vision to this collection. Based in London, Ibby is the Cameroonian artist and set designer who dreamt up the color-filled environments of Balmain's Fall 2023 campaign. For next fall, Ibby has created electric patterns of rich color blends for next fall's clothing and accessories.

### **The Balmain Vision of Luxury**

The artisans of this house's incredible atelier have supplied the embellishment, draping and tailoring needed to meld these many influences into the unmistakable luxury vision of Balmain. Our most savvy clients will take the time to note the many tiny details that set these creations apart, but it's immediately clear to all that this collection's luxury is anything but quiet. We're not interested in duplicating whatever might be the current trend—instead, we continue to build on Pierre Balmain's audacious vision of blending the highest level of Parisian couture artistry with timeless designs that are open to a host of global, forward-looking influences.

### **Joy, Love and Confidence**

This is something that I've highlighted in past notes and, yes, I'm going to repeat it, once again: we could all use a little bit more joy today. I believe that the joy that my team, our partners and I experienced while creating this collection is very much reflected in the final designs. Prints, overlaps and patterns add many unexpected winks and clever touches of humor. The surrealistic symbols often rely on the age-old symbols of love: lips and kisses (and my own special favorite is the multiple lip pattern that was created by "smacks" from each member of the Balmain team). And those many oversized irises? Well, I believe they continue our message of the need to open our eyes, in order to clearly witness and celebrate the many different beauties overlapping and blending together in today's world.

And, more than anything—this is a collection that mirrors the liberating confidence of today's new men's luxury customer. Over my many years of overseeing many Balmain runways, I've witnessed more than a few changes in our marketplace. One evolution that I've very much enjoyed witnessing is the ever-increasing freedom that men feel as they progress to dressing just exactly how they want to dress. Generations of women have been pulling their boyfriend jeans and tops from their partners' wardrobes. Today's secure male finally knows that same freedom of embracing new colors, patterns and silhouettes—he's finally borrowing from the girlfriends' closet, sure of himself and no longer worried about the whispers of outmoded conservative judgements.

Olivier Rousteing

Paris

20 January 2024

### **Prince Gyasi On Collaborating With Olivier Rousteing For Balmain Men 2024**

"When Olivier called me to propose working together on this collaboration, there was absolutely no need to think it over. I was immediately on board. From our many conversations over the years, I've grown to realize that Olivier and I share a deep connection and a common vision. Perhaps that's ultimately due to the fact that, no matter how successful we may ultimately be, both Olivier and I seem destined to always remain outsiders. After all, there are not a lot of decision makers in the art or fashion world who look like us. I am so happy with what that common distinctive outlook allowed Olivier and me to create. And I love how the vibrancy of the entire Balmain runway echoes and complements our designs. Just like Olivier, I am thrilled to share our work with everyone else today—hopefully, we will end up surprising, exciting and pleasing a lot of people."

**Press and photos:** [stephanie@kcdworldwide.fr](mailto:stephanie@kcdworldwide.fr)

### **The Ten Commandments of the *Société des Ambianceurs et des Personnes Élégantes***

1. Thou shalt be a *sapeur* here on earth with humans and in heaven with your creator God.
2. Thou shalt subdue the *ngayas* (non-knowers), the *nbendés* (ignorant), the *tindongos* (the aimless talkers) on earth, underground, at sea and in the heavens.
3. Thou shalt honor the *sapeur's* style in every place.
4. The ways of the *sapeur* are impenetrable to anyone who does not know the rule of three, the trilogy of completed and unfinished colors.
5. Thou shalt never yield.
6. Thou shalt adopt the most rigorous clothing and personal hygiene.
7. Thou shalt never be a tribalist, nor a nationalist, nor a racist.
8. Thou shalt never be violent or insolent.
9. Thou shalt obey the precepts of civility of the *sapeur* and respect for the elders.
10. Through your ten commandments, *sapeur*, thou shalt colonize all those who fear *sapeurs*.

### **About Balmain**

More than 75 years ago, when Pierre Balmain first introduced his “New French Style,” it immediately became clear to all that his eponymous house was offering a distinctly fresh, bold, and feminine conception of haute couture, one which broke with many of the well-established conventions of the era. His audaciousness paid off. Pierre Balmain became one of the handful of young French talents who ushered in the mid-century golden age of couture and helped to re-establish Paris as the world’s fashion capital. Since 2011, Balmain Creative Director Olivier Rousteing has been inventively building upon Pierre Balmain’s extraordinary legacy, while always remaining true to his own determination to design clothes that reflect the way his inclusive, powerful, and global Balmain Army wishes to live today. The result is a unique and instantly recognizable Balmain silhouette, style and attitude that highlights the singular craftsmanship of the house’s celebrated ateliers, while consistently referencing a rich Parisian heritage.

### **About Prince Gyasi**

Prince Gyasi (b.1995; Accra, Ghana) is a self-taught visual artist who shot his first photographs, aged just 16, on an old iPhone. With no other tool than his telephone, he wanted to show the predominance of ideas over material in order to convey emotions. Gyasi’s work is at once deeply personal and community focused, offering viewers a counter-narrative to dominant Western notions of “Africa” and beauty. Taking a sledgehammer to the rules of fine-art photography, Gyasi invites his audience into a hyper-colorful universe influenced by his own experiences of the neurological phenomenon synesthesia, which causes him to associate colors with words – for Gyasi, Wednesdays are aquamarine. From afar, his striking photographs can at first appear as paintings, a tongue-in-cheek rejection of internecine notions of photography’s secondary status within fine art. Prince is also committed to showing the nobility and grace of Black skin. Prince Gyasi’s work is included in some of the most prominent Contemporary art collections in the world, including the Pinault Foundation (Paris) and Jean Pigozzi’s, Museo de Arte do Rio (Rio de Janeiro). Recent exhibitions include a solo show at the 2022 edition of the Kyotographie photography festival in Kyoto, Japan, group shows at the Museo de Arte do Rio de Janeiro (2022) and the Pole of Contemporary Art of Cannes (2022). The artist has been a speaker at Oxford University for the 2019 Skoll World Forum and has collaborated with Apple, Converse, Balmain, Off-White, Vanity Fair and GQ US. Prince Gyasi shot the 2024 Pirelli calendar. He was the first African artist to shoot that iconic calendar.

### **About Ibby Njoya**

Ibby Njoya is a British-Cameroonian Artist and Set Designer based in London. After attending the Brit School and receiving a BA in illustration, Njoya has rapidly made his mark in the fashion industry for his collaborative work with image makers including Paolo Roversi, Rafael Pavarotti, Ibrahim Kamara and Imruh Asha to name a few. Njoya is fascinated by the process of conceptualising, getting lost in the mundane and allowing for ideas to bloom through conversation and meditation.

### **Balmain Men Fall 2024 Runway Credits**

- **Styling:** Imruh Asha
- **Casting:** Anita Bitton
- **Hair:** Ilham Mestour for Balmain Hair
- **Make Up:** Marieke Thibault for @MACCosmetics
- **Production:** La Mode En Images