



Models present creations for Lanvin during the 2014/2015 Autumn/Winter ready-to-wear collection fashion show, on February 27, 2014 in Paris.



# Rihanna

## eyes Paris fashion industry

She may sing "Please Don't Stop The Music," but the music at the Balmain show had well and truly stopped when seven-time Grammy Award-winner Rihanna sneaked in the back door, after everyone had left. That is, apart from a handful of people. Here are the highlights of Thursday's fall-winter ready-to-wear shows.

### Rihanna's surprise visit at Balmain

The singer, who had plum lips and wore a revealingly plunging terre verte belted Balmain jacket, arrived at Paris' Hotel de Ville with heavy security, and was greeted by friend and designer Olivier Rousteign, who hugged her and gushed: "She's the hottest girl in the world." The well-dressed Barbadian superstar has her eyes set on the fashion industry - and not just as the face of Balmain. She caused a stir earlier this month when she said wants to launch her own fashion label. And when asked Thursday if she was here to get inspiration for her own brand, she hinted she's attending Paris Fashion Week to get ideas. "I love Balmain and can be inspired by (Rousteign's) clothes. I'm inspired by everything here (in Paris)," she told the Associated Press, her only comments before being whisked away. Rihanna is no stranger to the industry: she's created collections for two fashion labels before for Armani in 2011, and for high-street brand River Island. She may hope to tread a path similar to rapper Kanye West, who now has his own fashion brand, shows in Paris and is a regular attendee at runway shows. Could this be a reconnaissance mission?

Zebra stripes, leopard print, beaded jackets mixed with khaki colors, flak pockets and safari pants. Yes, this was Africa - at least, Balmain's opulent and decadent version of it. And the exotic musing helped Rousteign

produce a subtler collection than usual. The brashness was still there of course in a citrus yellow fleece sweater or in the waists which were cinched to within an inch of life. But the fall-winter collection saw some of the best looks seen so far this season, like a petrol blue knotted rope sheath with a regal-feel twinned with beige cuffs that resembled African bracelets. L'afrigue, c'est chic!

### Rihanna upstages Catherine Deneuve

Rihanna caused a media scrum as she entered the Lanvin show in a beige trilby hat. With the sort of fame the pop star possesses, it's inevitable that even the most iconic of vintage stars will be upstaged. It was the case with Catherine Deneuve, a main fixture at Paris Fashion Week, who looked nonplussed in her front row seat as people busied around the singer. One thing's certain: the "Belle de Jour" star won't

be too bothered, since at 70, she's seen it all before.

### Lanvin uses fur like cotton

To the set of an age-old movie studio with flood lighting Alber Elbaz produced yet another symphony of excitement, nostalgia and innovation for Lanvin. The show in the Left bank Ecole des Beaux-Arts was varied - Elbaz famously designs to give women as much choice as possible. The first aria: feathered riding hats alongside black, brown and white asymmetrical tweed coats had a swagger of the 18th century, with horizontal lines and fringing that was so loose it looked feathered. The conclusion was 1930s satin dress nostalgia. But the best segment was the fur climax. Elbaz used fur as if it were to be found on trees: in skirts, jackets, dresses - and even a black fur rucksack that had fashion insiders gasping. Then he had button down fur bands and lapels - and one model capped it all by sporting a gray fur bust.

### Nina Ricci

The Nina Ricci show progressed from covered up chic to complete see-through in a feminine show that channeled designer Peter Copping's fascination with the vintage and romantic. And, of course, the signature flowers. Nostalgic colors like silvery purple, deep plum and burgundy mixed up with sequined dresses with hints of the 1930s. Elsewhere, there were some dropped waists and one great black and white flying jacket with huge 1970s lapels. The use of fur was notable, appearing inventively as luxuriant streaks or insets on capes and jackets. The final series of high, sheer gowns had a feel of a sensual prude that might have been borrowed from Valentino. — AP



Rihanna arrives at the Paris Fashion Week in Paris. — AP/AFP photos

