



Models present creation by Dries Van Noten during the Women's Spring-Summer 2020 Ready-to-Wear collection fashion show in Paris.

Call girl show on Paris catwalk as Epstein police raid model agency

French label Guy Laroche has raised eyebrows by celebrating prostitution in its Paris fashion week show just a day after police in the city raided a modeling agency linked to the Epstein scandal. Designer Richard Rene defended “cocking a snook” at political correctness by lionizing the notorious French pimp, Fernande Grudet, known as Madame Claude, and the band of sexually “free girls” she ran during the 1960s and 1970s.

Detectives searched the offices of Karin Models, which was formerly owned by French tycoon Jean-Luc Brunel, who has been accused of procuring young girls for disgraced US billionaire Jeffrey Epstein. They also carried out a raid Tuesday on Epstein's luxury Paris home not far from the Arc de Triomphe, a judicial source told AFP. The New York financier committed suicide last month in jail while facing charges of sexually trafficking minors.

Madame Claude operated a high-class call girl agency in Paris in the 1960s and 1970s that counted several heads of state among its clients. She claimed to have helped the French government by passing secrets revealed under the sheets to its intelligence services. Most of the girls on her books were

former models and actresses. Rene told AFP that the show was a reaction to what he felt was a growing atmosphere of uptight puritanism.

‘You can’t say anything’

“It’s cocking a snoot at the times which we live in, when you can’t say anything anymore or do anything. I find that troubling. “I thought it would be interesting to give a nod to all the boy and girls who sold their bodies and who are often denigrated, and to talk of that time of freedom and (sexual) liberty,” the designer added. “We shouldn’t mix things up. #MeToo is about sexual aggression, and people being forced. These were people who decided to sell their bodies. It was a free choice,” he added.

Rene was inspired to do the show because the label's founder, Laroche, designed the clothes for the 1977 French film, “Madame Claude”, based on Grudet's bestselling memoirs. A sequel was made four years later. With US actress Eva Longoria of “Desperate Housewives” fame watching in the front row, Rene sent out a collection of often tight white and brown 1970s-inspired power dresses and jackets with large shoulders, often decorated with prints of the label's logo from the time.

He said it was a homage to girls that for “a few 500 franc notes added to the luster of France”. The old French banknote also appeared on swimming costumes in the spring summer collection and on dresses and boots. “I found it quite funny,” Rene said. “When you had 500 francs then you thought you were rich. “It is a part of (our) history,” he added. “Madame Claude offered her girls as a luxury (service), not on the streets. You have to give people the liberty to do what they want,” the designer said. —AFP

Sick Kylie Jenner pulls out of Paris fashion week

Makeup mogul Kylie Jenner on Wednesday pulled out of Paris Fashion Week where she was due to launch a new cosmetics line with French luxury brand Balmain. Jenner, 22, said on Twitter that she was sick and unable to travel to Paris to launch the collection as planned on Friday with Balmain Creative Director Olivier Rousteing. The “Keeping Up with the Kardashians” star did not give details of her illness but celebrity website TMZ.com said she was admitted to a Los Angeles area hospital earlier this week with what an unidentified source described as severe flu-like symptoms, including nausea and dizziness.

Jenner's representatives did not return a request for comment on Wednesday. “Unfortunately I’m really sick and unable to travel. I’m heartbroken to be missing this show ... Creating this collection with Olivier has been a dream,” she said on Twitter. Jenner, whose lip gloss kits and other cosmetics have made her a billionaire, was due to launch the Kylie X Balmain line of eye-shadows, lip liner and lip gloss on Friday at the Paris fashion show. The line is to be worn by Balmain models walking the runway for the Spring Summer 2020 collection. Jenner was also absent from the Emmy awards show in Los Angeles on Sunday where she was due to present an award with Kim Kardashian and her model sister Kendall. — Reuters