

EVERYTHING'S COMING UP ERDEM

HOW DOES A DESIGNER CELEBRATE A TEN-YEAR ANNIVERSARY? IN THE CHICEST WAY POSSIBLE OF COURSE - WITH HIS FIRST BOUTIQUE. AS ERDEM MORALIOGLU, WHOSE EPONYMOUS LINE TURNS TEN THIS YEAR, PREPARES TO OPEN UP SHOP IN LONDON'S MAYFAIR, SLT CATCHES UP WITH BRITAIN'S TOP TALENT TO TALK ART, HIS FALL COLLECTION AND THE BOOK HE JUST CAN'T PUT DOWN.

Words: Julia Seidl

If you're heading to London this summer, before you check out the Audrey Hepburn exhibit at the National Portrait Gallery or tuck into a plate of steak tartare at The Ivy's recently refurbished dining room, your first destination should be Mayfair or more specifically, South Audley Street. Nestled amongst the posh shops and Michelin-starred restaurants that make up the tony boulevard is Erdem Moralioglu's first boutique. "It's amazing to have the opportunity to create a space that is about my women; an actual world that you can walk into," says the designer with an air of paternal protection over his clients and flagship store.

Who are Erdem's women and what will that world entail? For both his celebrated fans (Keira Knightley, Diane Kruger and The Duchess of Cambridge to name a few) to the every day woman that prefers her evening wear with a floral feminine spin, the space will be a reflection of his appetite for refinement mixed with his signature twists - think a mosaic doorstep embedded with his new logo that was inspired by a Victorian alphabet. Included in the layout will be a bespoke department for making fashion fairytales come true, as well as a section to house the wares of Britain's biggest accessory talents including custom shoes by Nicholas Kirkwood and sunglasses by Linda Farrow.

For Erdem, it's a dream come true, one that started in the suburbs of Montreal, Canada. "My parents would take my sister and I to The Nutcracker as a child and I remember getting home and making little paper doll outfits," says the designer of his first attempts at creation. A calling for a bigger and brighter world brought him to London to study fashion design at the prestigious Royal College



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of Art, where he started his line one year after graduation. Now, only ten short years later, Erdem's mantle is overflowing with awards including his most recent honor, Womenswear Designer of the Year, which he won last December at the British Fashion Awards. Despite the prestige those moments bring with them, it's the big picture that brings a sense of pride to the designer. "The first time I saw someone I didn't know wearing one of my dresses on the street - that was when I realised it was getting bigger," he says. "What makes me feel the proudest is how the studio is growing. When I started in 2005 it was just me and now we are a team of over 40 people; it's an exciting time."

At his fall show during London Fashion Week, Erdem treated guests to a peek into his world - the world of a collector. Books are what capture the designer's attention, an obsession he once called unhealthy. "I cherish 'Allure' by Diana Vreeland which my mum gave to me and I'm currently reading 'Portraits and Observations: The Essays of Truman Capote.' I love Capote, his stories are so well-observed." But it wasn't his favourite authors or their tales that inspired his latest collection. Instead the idea of collecting in and of itself was his starting point. An exhibition by artist Robin Brown at the Frieze Masters in





London last year made a lasting impression. “I was captivated. The apartment Robin created for this fictional art collector living in 1960’s Paris was so detailed and precise; you got a complete sense of the character from the space.” With Robin’s help, the pair recreated a similar scene on his runway. Stacked suitcases overflowing with vintage copies of *Paris Match*, well-worn sofas and faded floral wallpaper surrounded models as they assumed his character – a cross between former screen stars, Italian actress Claudia Cardinale and German-Austrian actress Romy Schneider, says Erdem. “She’s from a good family in the fifties, trying to be an artist or a writer, or get married. She’s cut up things from her grandmother’s wardrobe and stitched them together with upholstery or sofa fabric, taken apart an old ocelot coat and repaired it with part of a shearling coat.” And so, frayed hemlines, needle punched wool blended into rich, saturated jacquards and shaggy tweeds took centre stage. “I wanted it to look as if she has come undone, a sort of faded glamour.” Perhaps his fall runway was a dress rehearsal for his first shop, a chance for Erdem to narrate a whole world of his own for one day only. If that’s the case, except a well-curated wonderland to welcome you inside his South Audley address. © www.erdem.com



Top: Looks from Erdem’s FW 2015 runway available at Per Lei Couture. Left: Favourite author, Truman Capote and German actress Romy Schneider. Above: “Allure” by Diana Vreeland.