

StandingGround

Autumn/ Winter 2023

For Autumn/Winter 2023, Standing Ground elaborates on form, silhouette and tailoring through intricate, refined evening wear. Fashion East continues its support of Standing Ground by debuting this second collection as the designer's first catwalk presentation. For Autumn/Winter, Standing Ground delivers sumptuous forms and assertive proportions which remain attentive to posture and motion. Histories of figuration, whether ancient or ancestral, are abstracted and animated in work that fortifies presence.

This collection is centred on Standing Ground's rigorous fusion of form and fit. Deceptive minimalism shrouds a complex construction. Tailored coats in wool and Donegal tweed from Molloy & Sons exemplify this, unifying the smooth and strict: each is corseted and hip-padded with wool moulded onto the form. This treatment of material allows the form beneath to assume intensified dimension. In these coats, hip pads are tilted forward, echoing striding stone figures of antiquity and their evocation of movement. Similarly, Standing Ground's columnar jersey dresses – in myriad fabrics, including exquisite silk jerseys, donated by Mario Boselli – return in corseted structures, with the material's envelopment conjuring both a flush, unbroken shell and a slippery, hand-poured effect. While the original jersey iterations were inscribed with padded bands, here they are supplanted by roiling beadwork. Snatching the hip and swinging – they are tendrilous, loosely vertebral.

Classical postures and traditional fabrics – such as velvet, tweed, and duchess satin – are deftly twisted to the sensual and preternatural makings of Standing Ground. A gestural sense of torsion permeates the work. The asymmetric neckline of a garnet red satin gown, mirrored in a dove grey evening top and beryl blue minidress, induce a natural, windswept torque. Echoing the capstones of Ireland's ancient dolmens, these lines are also broad and avian; elegantly orchidaceous. With double duchess satin cut on the bias, Standing Ground's material handling maximises this effect of pliant, fanlike contortion.

Lotus pink velvet appears spectral and opalescent in a floor-length gown. Its reflection is enhanced by padded bands which trace the body in fluent, lustrous crescents. Swathes of padded duchess satin form opulent stoles in brilliant pink and rich burgundy. In these fabrics and forms, Standing Ground continues the alien allurements of blended temporalities. Approaches to posture and volume distil figural crosscurrents that are in some way eternal or enduring – whether Palaeolithic figurines or silhouettes from the 1500s or 1950s.

The introduction of separates, such as tops, skirts and jumpsuits, are particular departures. Each is imbued with distinctively mellow lavishness, seen in grey satin or holographic jersey. Like a stone held to light, Standing Ground's palette shapeshifts in potency. Continuity is seen in variegated greys while tourmaline and conch pearl pinks are luminous counterparts to titanium blues, opaque black, umber, and the cornerstone of maroon. In concentrated forms and acute construction, Standing Ground captures a mode of evening wear that is entirely singular: austere and luxuriant; concise and majestic; seductive and stoic.

The funding to make this collection has been generously provided by Kildare Village, allowing Standing Ground to develop its commitment to tailoring and craft. Kildare Village, a member of The Bicester Collection, has a long-standing dedication to supporting Irish talent, having provided Michael Stewart with a bursary to attend the Royal College of Art in London in 2015-2017. The Bicester Collection comprises 11 distinctive shopping destinations in Europe and China.

Established in 2022 by Michael Stewart, Standing Ground creates modern evening wear, custom garments, and body ornaments. Standing Ground's practice is informed by the specificity of the body, featuring draping, sculpting and craft techniques. The Irish designer attends to proportion, silhouette, and material, placing ancient histories in dialogue with envisioned futures. Michael Stewart graduated from the Royal College of Art in 2017 and will be presenting his second collection with Fashion East this season.

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Credits

Stylist & Consultant

Tallulah Harlech

Casting

Emma Matell at MA+

Casting Assistant

Oliwia Jancerowicz

Make-Up

Terry Barber using MAC

Hair

Mark Hampton using Bumble and bumble

Nails

Sabrina Gayle

Music

Susumu Yokota

Tights

FALKE

Production

Sophie Baillavoine at CEBE

Writer

Alex Bennett

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The Truman Brewery

Sarah Ann Smith, Gulsun Metin, Rosemary Murray, Kristina Vaišaite, Anja Huttunen,
Ligita Mačiuliene, Elona Juršienė, Aya Hosawaka, Ineta Zickiene, Kopsia Chen, Rosa Bonner Morgan

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