

## AZ Factory with Molly Molloy and Lucinda Chambers

Unveiled exclusively at Paris Fashion Week at the Fondation Cartier: a new AZ Factory collection, created in partnership with the long-term collaborators Molly Molloy and Lucinda Chambers. Comparable to an art gallery, AZ Factory selects independent designers and creatives who resonate with Alber Elbaz's foundational concept of 'smart fashion that cares.' These designers are given a visiting role based on shared values – in this case, quality, circularity, handcraftsmanship, upcycling, empowerment of women - and together with the AZ atelier team craft a new collection and stage a show.

This project, and the expertise provided by AZ Factory, offered Molloy and Chambers the chance to further explore their deep interest in material and design innovation. "You really feel Alber's presence," Chambers says, of her experience working with AZ Factory, "And this felt like such a meeting of the minds." The pair were motivated by the synergies between their own work and that of the late Elbaz; the twists on archetypal femininity, the fluidity, the lush fabrications, the interest in draping and in architectural forms, sculptural details, and offbeat volumes. The collection, which they present as "Paris, seen through the eyes of their sensibility," became about paying respectful homage to Elbaz's legacy, and the values of AZ Factory, while looking resolutely to the future.

Layering is a key part of the collection, and many silhouettes feature a range of items created using distinct deadstock fabrications left over from Elbaz's era. A compact jersey dress, with a ruffle detail down the front, is paired with striking winged gloves, in rich deadstock duchess satin. A padded gilet, constructed to look as if it has been effortlessly tied around the body, comes in faux leather, and playfully offsets the classicism of a white poplin shirt and navy draped jersey skirt. Silhouettes are never predictable – shirts have extra movement at the back, skirts flare beautifully, trousers come with exaggerated turn-ups or dropped crotches, and padded waist-warmers dissect roomy kaftans and tailored coats in boucle, giving shape and line. Throughout the collection, there are drapes and details that nod to couture - ruffles that turn into sleeves, bows that twist into stoles. Upcycled shell-suits are cut to cascade into ruffles on tops.

Molloy and Chambers saw the opportunity to explore new territory, thanks to the AZ Factory studio's expertise with eveningwear and dresses. A billowing, architectural skirt in wool gabardine looks elegant and surprising when paired with a cropped, form-fitting, faux leather parka with detachable sleeves. A long black dress with lace details, nods to the classic negligee. A jersey bottle green draped dress hugs the body. A red velvet dress is slashed away at the back, revealing skin. Finally, a timeless red bishop sleeve dress with intricate gathers flows around the hips, wrists and ankles.

Prints are whimsical and yet considered, nodding both to heritage Italian patterns and pop art. A rope print, with snaking lines of purple and yellow, shines on a long, pleated dress. It comes also in black, and burgundy, with flashes of turquoise and green. A similar rope motif appears on double-sided knits – ultra-soft and fuzzy – which take the form of dresses, matching skirts and tops, hats and super long scarfs. There is also a pill print, with mesmerising repeated spheres, and a hand-drawn twist on a check, featuring squiggling lines, which is used on a pleated crepe dress. Stripes appear on a tight-fitting fine merino knit dress, styled with leggings with a delicate flare to help suggest elongation. Other knits include dynamic intarsias, melange sweaters with piping, textural jacquards and ultra-soft ribbed wools.

Recycling and reusing – a common value shared by both AZ Factory and Molloy and Chambers – is central to the collection. Accessories make use of deadstock leather. Bags include a bucket style, in sumptuous leather, featuring the pill print, and new versions of Molloy and Chamber's now iconic woven bags, created in collaboration with a tribe of Columbia weavers that the duo have worked with for years, giving the women consistent income and creative commissions. Finally, AZ Factory is proud to unveil a limited edition run of 35 one-of-a-kind stools, crafted in wood, with panels of deadstock leather and intricate mosaic tiling. They were created in a multi-faceted creative collaboration between Molloy, Chambers, the Milan-based architecture and design studio FERRILLOBELLI, and the historical expert mosaic company Friul Mosaic, who used hand-cut natural coloured enamels from recycled glass powder to decorate each stool with patterns from the collection. They stand like totems amongst the clothing – paying homage to colour, form, and the ethos of collaboration and artistic exchange that underpins this project.

**About AZ Factory**

Believing in smart fashion that cares, AZ Factory was founded by the late Alber Elbaz with Richemont in 2020 to 'create beautiful, practical, and solutions-driven fashion that works for everyone'.

Anchored in the highest disciplines of style and savoir-faire, AZ Factory's universe seamlessly blends traditional craftsmanship with forward-looking applications and technology in quest of true innovation.

Since 2022, AZ Factory has evolved into a multi-disciplinary platform that goes beyond the conventional fashion blueprint, daringly supporting creation and young talent as a creative collective with a curatorial approach.

Recent collaborations include Thebe Magugu, Ester Manas, Club Domani, Cyril Bourez, Lutz Huelle and Tennessy Thoreson.

**About Molly Molloy**

Molly Molloy worked as design director at Marni, joining the company in 2006 as head of womenswear and went on to become design director of womenswear. During her time at Marni, Molly was also co-editor of the bi-annual publication Parterre De Rois.

**About Lucinda Chambers**

Lucinda Chambers is a London-based creative consultant and stylist. She worked at British Vogue as fashion director for 25 years.

Lucinda has played a key part in establishing many luxury fashion brands, including Prada and Marni from inception.

**Music:** Wladimir Schall

**Casting :** Sylvie Gueguen

**Hair:** Michal Bielecki

**Makeup:** Carole Colombani

**Nails:** Liza Papas

**With the support of:**



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