

# signora do tempo

Em rara entrevista, MIUCCIA PRADA fala à *Vogue* Brasil sobre seu processo de criação, feminismo, sua relação com a arte e por que nunca fez plástica

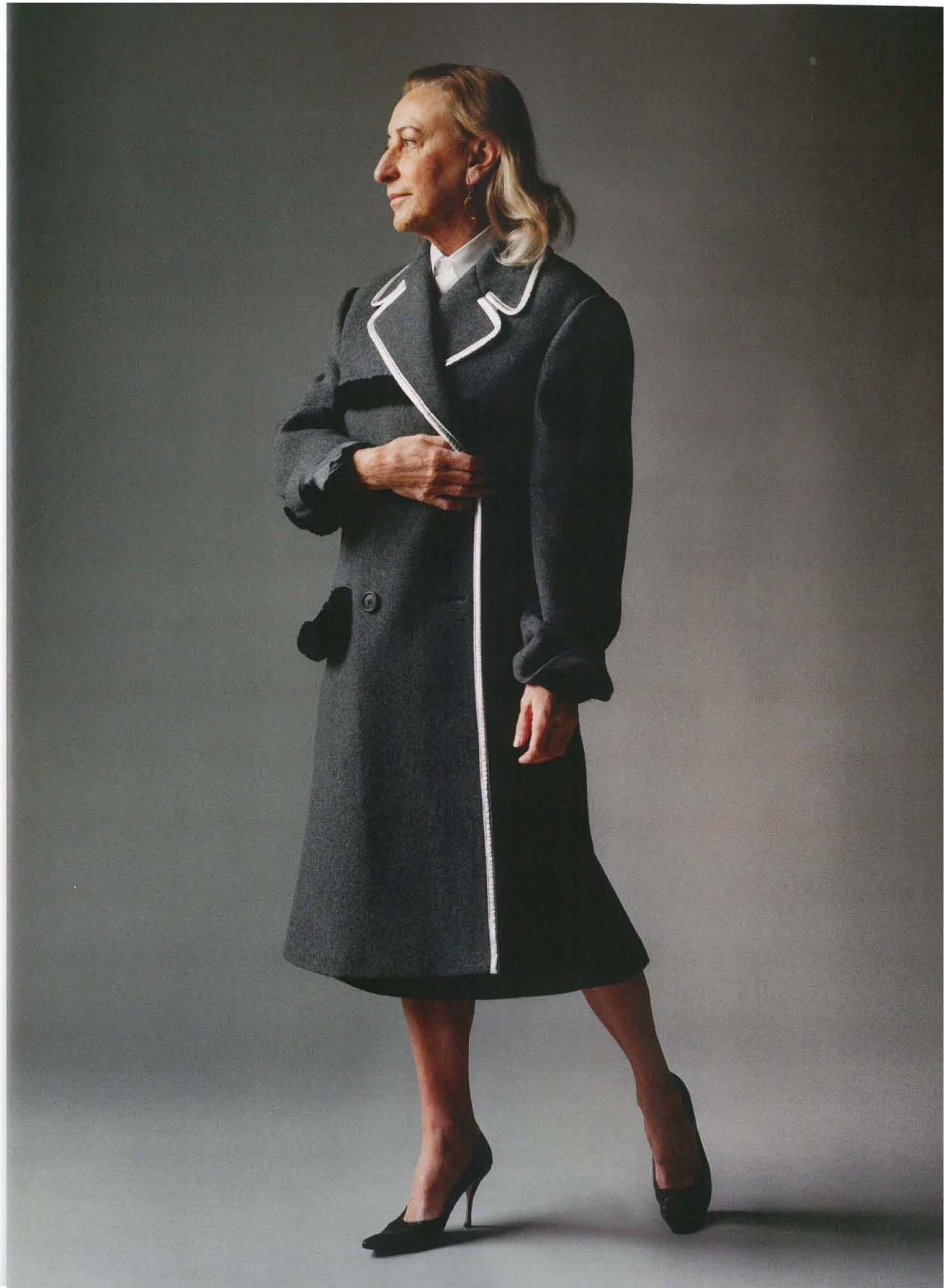
Por SILVIA ROGAR

Retrato JAMIE HAWKESWORTH

Fotos ZEE NUNES

Edição de moda PEDRO SALES

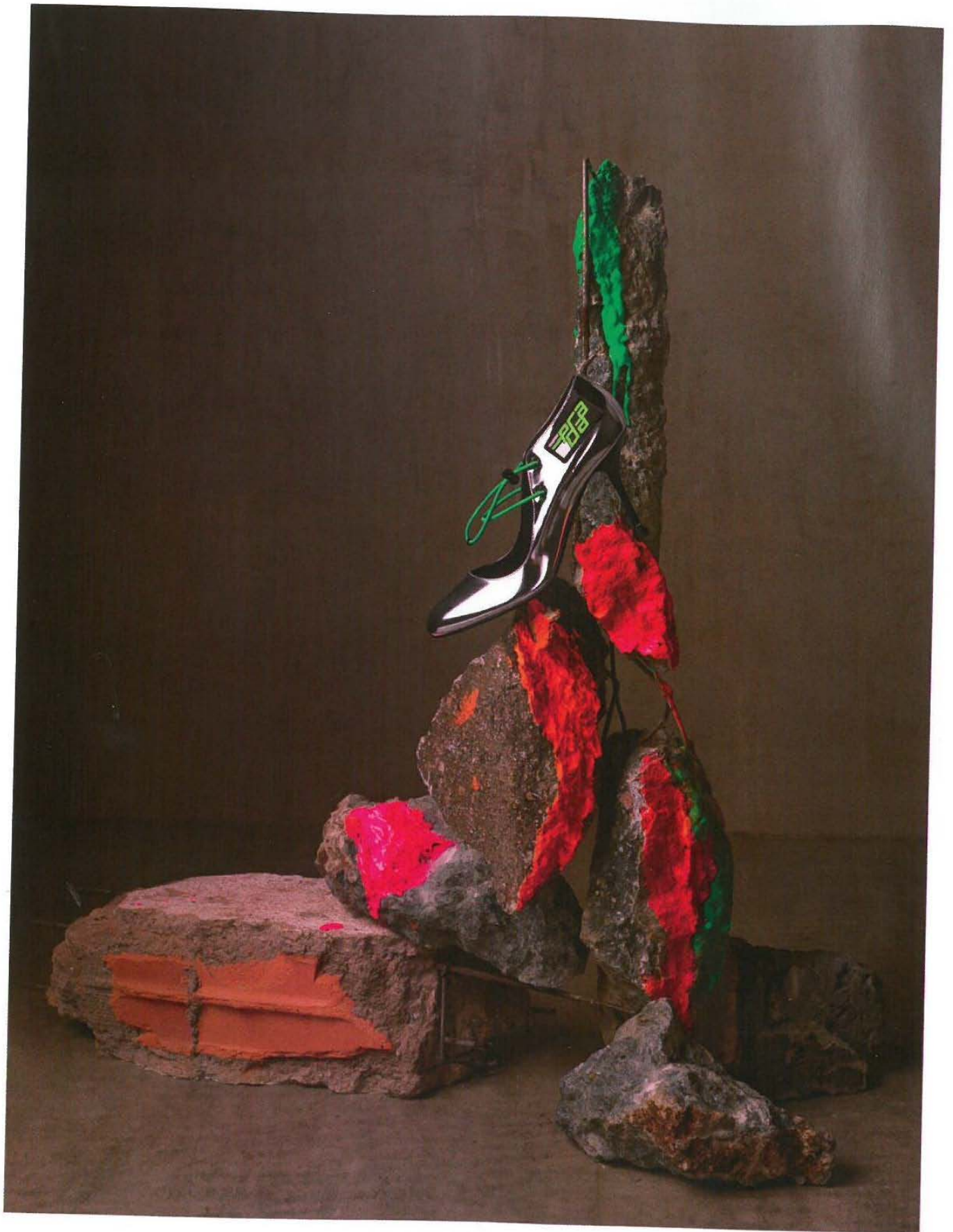
No dia 4 de maio passado, estavam reunidos numa mesma sala em Nova York dois estilistas do primeiro escalão da moda internacional (o belga Raf Simons e o americano Marc Jacobs), um duo de arquitetos laureado com o Pritzker Prize (os suíços Jacques Herzog e Pierre de Meuron), um ator premiado no Oscar deste ano (o inglês Gary Oldman), uma respeitada autora de best-sellers (a também inglesa Zadie Smith), um artista de obra provocativa (o italiano Francesco Vezzoli) e uma penca de atrizes de diferentes gerações (Uma Thurman, Claire Danes, Dakota Fanning). Quem uniu esse elenco eclético de notáveis (um reflexo de seu próprio blend de interesses e influências) foi Miuccia Prada, que levou pela primeira vez para a cidade o desfile resort da marca que carrega seu sobrenome. Sem fogos de artifício, sem “experiências” com *influencers*, sem *selfies* gratuitas na plateia, a apresentação da grife teve como cenário a Piano Factory - sede nova-iorquina da empresa italiana, com projeto da dupla Herzog & de Meuron, que deixou à mostra a estrutura de concreto da antiga fábrica.





Sarah Berger usa  
casaco de lã, vestido  
de tule, meias e  
sapatos  
(R\$ 3.230). Na  
página ao lado,  
sapatos (R\$ 3.230).  
Todas as peças  
são da coleção  
de inverno 2018/19  
da Prada

BRASILE – VOGUE MAGAZINE – PRADA – INTERVIEW +  
EDITORIAL – 31.08.2018



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Foi também em seu QG que a *Signora* Prada, como é conhecida no meio, recebeu seus convidados para um jantar em clima intimista, que terminou com Chloë Sevigny e Dakota Fanning circulando despretensiosamente pelo *rooftop* com vista espetacular da cidade. Naquela noite, sacar uma câmera de celular não poderia parecer mais *démodé*.

Reverenciada por seus pares, celebrada nas artes por sua consistente atuação na área e espécie de super-heroína para os aficionados por moda, Miuccia Prada é também presença das mais discretas. Dá raras entrevistas por ano e foge de qualquer tipo de autopromoção, mesmo em tempos de redes sociais - além de não ter Instagram próprio, não costuma aparecer nos perfis da empresa que comanda. Mesmo assim, segue como uma das maiores autoridades da moda de nosso tempo, graças a coleções sempre muito bem pensadas, que refletem em peças ultradesejáveis sua visão sobre o mundo em que vivemos. A leitura nunca é óbvia, mas está lá a cada desfile, que ela sempre encerra com um agradecimento tão rápido que é possível perdê-lo num simples piscar de olhos.

A *Signora* Prada é também a radical mais chique do Planeta Fashion: afeita a criar as próprias regras, costuma repetir que “faz o oposto do que as pessoas falam”. Antes de se juntar, na década de 70, ao *business* familiar fundado em 1913 por seu avô, Mario, inicialmente focado em artigos de couro, ela estudou ciência política, treinou para ser mímica e filiou-se ao Partido Comunista de seu país. Feminista desde sempre, virou a principal personificação do império que ergueu ao lado do marido, Patrizio Bertelli, integrando ano após ano listas de mulheres mais influentes do mundo. Mas, quando começou, a decisão de trabalhar com moda - assunto tido como frívolo no meio intelectual de então - não foi assim tão fácil. E é justamente este o tema do início de nossa entrevista no bar do hotel Carlyle, em Nova York, no dia seguinte ao desfile resort da Prada.

Sem um pingo de maquiagem, cabelo ao natural, vestindo um conjunto de camisa e saia com jeito de uniforme *deluxe*, ela parece cansada, mas animada - em especial quando surge por acaso no ambiente um de seus convidados da noite anterior, Jacques Herzog. “Esse foi um grande problema para mim por muitos anos. Enquanto se lutava pelos direitos das mulheres, me tornar uma estilista parecia tomar o caminho oposto”, conta. “Hoje acho este um trabalho muito sério e complexo. Por causa da mistura de culturas e nações, agora ele é particularmente interessante e particularmente difícil. Para ser um designer de moda, você tem que estar ciente de muitas coisas. Mas sempre amei tanto esse trabalho que não tive dúvidas sobre continuar ou não nele.”

“Sempre acreditei que as mulheres devem se vestir como bem entendem. Se elas quiserem sair na rua peladas, sexy, superestilosas, isso é fantástico, desde que seja por escolha própria”, diz Miuccia

Com o feminismo de volta à pauta do dia (e, desta vez, sendo incluído na pauta da moda), pergunto a ela se, na sua opinião, existe um vestir feminista. “Sempre acreditei que as mulheres devem se vestir como bem entendem. Se elas quiserem sair na rua peladas, sexy, superestilosas, isso é fantástico, desde que seja por escolha própria. Não existem limites, o limite é você fazer o que gosta. Não para procurar marido rico, como costumam dizer de brincadeira. Amo a ideia de uma mulher corajosa.”

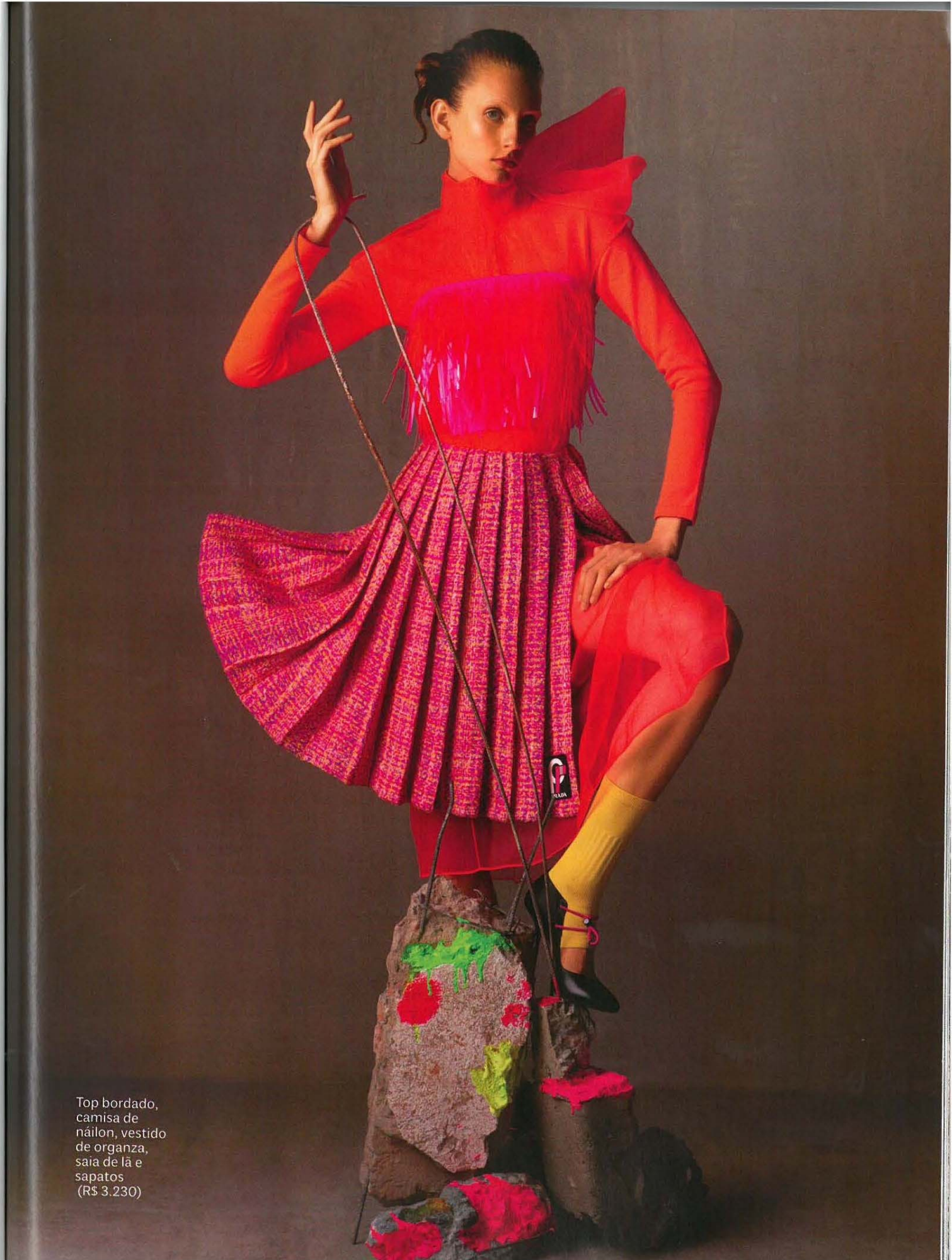
Faço mais uma ou duas perguntas sobre feminismo, e Miuccia fala delicadamente que não gostaria que a entrevista fosse focada em um assunto que é tão sério para ela. Como eu esperava, é uma figura intensa, cerebral, e seu pedido só me faz admirá-la ainda mais. “Agora que o feminismo é uma tendência, prefiro não falar sobre isso. Porque muita gente se faz de feminista só pelo slogan, e eu sou totalmente contra slogans. Eu só posso aconselhar que é sempre bom investir em sua formação e ganhar seu próprio dinheiro. Educação e não depender financeiramente de ninguém - se tiver que dar algum conselho para alguém, esses dois são suficientes.”

Estamos a dois dias do Baile do Met, e adoraria saber como a mulher que veste tantas outras nos *red carpets* (como esquecer a emocionante cena de Lupita Nyong'o recebendo o Oscar em 2014, com um longo azul da Prada?) se prepara para uma grande entrada. “Quanto mais importante o evento, mais de última hora. Umás poucas vezes preparei uma ideia antes e fiquei infeliz, gosto de escolher as coisas no último minuto”, conta. “Para o Met, tenho três opções: o mesmo modelo em três cores diferentes, para decidir dependendo do *mood*”, completa (no fim, ela apareceu com um look coberto de franjas verdes neon como as do vestido que Gigi Hadid usa na capa desta edição).

A peça é um dos carros-chefes do inverno 2018/19 da Prada, principal responsável pela onda fluorescente que invadiu a moda nesta temporada. Na coleção (que você vê nestas páginas), os tons de caneta marca-texto surgem também em tules que se misturam a itens com referências utilitárias, incluindo alguns feitos com o náilon Pocono, que é marca registrada da grife italiana. Foi com o material, jamais associado à moda de luxo até então, que Miuccia criou, em meados dos anos 80, a mochila que foi uma das pioneiras entre as *it-bags*. Quando a Prada lançou seu *prêt-à-porter* feminino, em 1988, o tecido logo migrou também para a linha de roupas, ajudando a consolidar a elegância típica da marca, que passa longe do óbvio. Chamado de “ugly beauty” ou “wrong chic”, o estilo Prada questiona o vestir convencional, sempre com humor, inteligência e um toque de kitsch. “Quando comecei, a moda era um lugar onde a vida real era algo impensável.

No cinema, você via lixo, beleza, maldade. Mas o mundo da moda ainda falava de uma beleza completamente conservadora. Então quis apresentar algo que era real, estava presente em todas as artes. Na época, soou muito estranho”, lembra. Além de contrariar os clichês do sexy, do belo, do comercial, Miuccia não acredita que a moda deva ser necessariamente confortável. “Ela precisa ser interessante, emocionante. Não gosto da ideia do conforto por si só.”

Mesmo depois de três décadas, suas coleções femininas seguem mostrando uma visão muito particular do mundo. “Todos os meus desfiles respondem a um instinto do que sinto que é relevante na vida naquele



Top bordado,  
camisa de  
náilon, vestido  
de organza,  
saia de lã e  
sapatos  
(R\$ 3.230)



Michi Czastka usa  
sobreposição de  
vestido de tulle  
bordado e vestido  
de cetim duchese.  
Na página ao lado,  
bolsa (R\$ 9.950)

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momento.” Ela não tem regras (como sempre) para o que deve entrar na passarela da Prada ou da Miu Miu, a grife que lançou em 1993, batizada com seu apelido. Volta e meia, planeja para a Prada o que, em tese, deveria estar na apresentação da mais jovem Miu Miu – e vice-versa. “Acima de tudo, eu penso em moda. E às vezes somos criticados por não sermos *brand-oriented*. Detesto a palavra marca.” E ela ainda se preocupa com a repercussão de um desfile? “Quando você se coloca em frente ao público, naturalmente espera crítica ou aprovação. Faço um trabalho que é como uma peça de teatro. Então é claro que eu me importo.” Imagino também que exista algum tipo de competição entre os estilistas, mesmo os mais experientes e talentosos. “Provavelmente sim. Não tenho ciúmes dos bons, mas sinto raiva dos *fakes*, da apreciação do *fake*.”

O tempo em que vivemos, porém, não é exatamente fácil para alguém que sempre pensou de forma radical e independente. “Hoje você não é livre. Minha fixação por este momento é porque ninguém conversa mais sobre nada. Há tantas coisas que você não pode dizer porque irá ofender esse ou aquele ou parecer pretensioso. Recentemente, cancelei 80% de uma entrevista que envolvia questões políticas sobre a Fondazione. Era um importante jornal da Alemanha, e eu disse: ‘ok, mas, se a entrevista não for interessante, não iremos publicá-la’. E eles concordaram. Eu cancelei 80% porque tudo que era interessante eu não poderia dizer.”

Miuccia conta que teve uma infância calma e que lembra de si mesma como uma criança “um pouco entediada”. “Quando fiz 16 anos, eu explodi”, recorda. Explodiu tanto que veio parar no Brasil. “Fiz minha primeira viagem para a América do Sul quando ainda era muito nova, aos 16. Estive em Minas, vi os jovens de esquerda. Viajar para a América do Sul na época era muito *trendy*. Também já fui ao Peru e à Argentina porque meu filho era piloto de rally e estivemos por lá três vezes por causa dele.” Hoje sua relação com o Brasil se dá por meio do design – a loja da Prada em Miami, inaugurada em dezembro de 2017, foi decorada com peças originais de nossos modernistas Joaquim Tenreiro, Jorge Zalszupin, Zanine Caldas, Sergio Rodrigues.

Assim como a arquitetura (além do duo Herzog & de Meuron, o holandês Rem Koolhaas é colaborador frequente da Prada), a arte é assunto sério para ela. “Minha educação se deu muito mais por meio do cinema e da literatura que pela arte. Aí eu e meu marido conhecemos alguns escultores e começamos a discutir as possibilidades de mostrar as obras deles em nossos espaços em Milão”, conta. Ao lado de Bertelli, Miuccia construiu uma das coleções de arte moderna e contemporânea mais relevantes e fascinantes da Europa, com a mesma paixão, entusiasmo e comprometimento com que ergueu sua empresa de moda. O processo de aprendizado foi profundo. “Foram intensos dez anos de estudos e conhecendo artistas, o que acho que é a melhor maneira de aprender o assunto.” Em 1993, eles criaram a Fondazione Prada, para promover as artes, em suas mais diferentes formas. Depois de uma sede em Veneza, o projeto ganhou ainda mais força com a inauguração, em 2015, de um complexo em Milão, concebido pelo OMA, escritório de Rem Koolhaas, no endereço onde funcionou uma destilaria dos

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anos 10. No fim de 2016, foi a vez do Osservatorio, um espaço de exposições na cidade voltado para a fotografia, na Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II – o mesmo endereço onde o negócio da família nasceu. Como comprova o centro comercial histórico, de 1877, atualmente o sobrenome Prada é tão consistente nas artes quanto na moda.

Mãe pela primeira vez aos 39 anos (ela teve dois filhos homens com Bertelli), Miuccia conta que passou praticamente três décadas sem sair à noite. “Eu terminava de trabalhar e ia para casa. Estava sempre com meus filhos. Primeiro, porque era privilegiada, tinha essa possibilidade, meu trabalho fica a dez minutos de casa; segundo, porque eu estava mais mergulhada neles que em qualquer outra coisa. E, pelo fato de ter sido mãe mais tarde, nunca tive a sensação de estar perdendo alguma coisa.” Hoje, ela sai de vez em quando, calcula que uma noite a cada três meses. E, nessas ocasiões, é a última a ir embora. “Eu me divirto, adoro estar com outras pessoas.”

Aos 69 anos, Miuccia gosta da ideia de envelhecer. Usa “toneladas de creme” desde sempre, mas nunca se submeteu a um procedimento estético invasivo. “Nunca fiz um *lifting* ou algo do gênero porque não acho que você pareça um dia sequer mais jovem. Não quero soar intelectual, se visse algo que tivesse um grande resultado, eu o faria. Mas não vejo nada de fantástico.” Na hora de se vestir, seu foco principal é da cintura para baixo (e quem não pensaria o mesmo se tivesse *to-dos* os sapatos da Prada à disposição?), e ela raramente usa calças. “Eu fico muito melhor de calças e, quando as uso, as pessoas dizem que pareço 5 kg mais magra. Mas amo saias porque com elas me sinto livre.”

Por fim, pergunto se Miuccia irá celebrar os 30 anos do *prêt-à-porter* da Prada ou seus 40 à frente da marca. Na verdade, confesso que já imagino a resposta, visto que nem o centenário da grife ganhou comemorações. “Prefiro não saber nada sobre datas. Todo mundo faz isso a cada três anos.” Nos despedimos com um abraço caloroso, e saio do Carlyle com uma frase dela ecoando na cabeça (“gosto de fazer o oposto do que as pessoas falam”), pois na moda todo estilista costuma citar a figura que melhor define seu trabalho ou sua marca – um assunto que não veio à tona durante nossa conversa. Naquela tarde, tive a certeza de que nunca haverá personificação da “mulher Prada” igual ou melhor que Miuccia.

Top de lã,  
sobreposição  
de vestido de  
tule e vestido de  
cetim de seda

Beleza: Daniel Hernandez  
(MLages) com produtos  
Nars e Redken  
Produção de moda:  
Rogério Martinez  
e Vinicius Coni  
Direção executiva:  
Renato Guedes  
(Thinkers MGT)  
Produção executiva:  
Gustavo Donaire  
(Thinkers MGT)  
Set design: Aê Cenografia  
Assistentes de fotografia:  
Edson Luciano,  
Márcio Marcolino e  
Marcelo Salvador  
Assistentes de beleza:  
Felipe Cavalcanti  
Tratamento de imagem:  
Studio Bruno Rezende  
Agradecimentos: Singu  
e 3t Locadora

## Vogue Brasile

### La Signora del tempo: Signora Prada

In a rare interview, Miuccia Prada tells *Vogue Brasil* about her creation process, feminism, her relationship with art and why she never had a plastic surgery

By Silvia Rogar / Portrait Jamie Hawkesworth / Photos ZeeNunes / Fashion Edition Pedro Sales

On May 4 there were in the same room, in New York, two first-class fashion designers (the Belgian Raf Simons and the American Marc Jacobs), a duo of architects lauded by Pritzker Prize (the Swiss Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron), an award-winning actor at this year's Oscar (Gary Oldman), a respected best-selling author (Zadie Smith), an artist with a provocative work (Francesco Vezzoli) and a bunch of actresses from different generations (Uma Thurman, Claire Danes, Dakota Fanning). Whoever put together this eclectic cast of notables (a reflection of their own blend of interests and influences) was Miuccia Prada, who first took to the city the resort fashion show of the brand bearing her surname. With no fireworks, no "experiences" with influencers, without free selfies in the audience, Prada presentation was set down in the Piano Factory – the New York headquarters of the Italian company, with a project by the Herzog & de Meuron duo, which left visible the concrete structure of the old factory.

It was also in her HQ that Signora Prada, as she is known, received her guests for an intimate dinner, which ended with Chloë Sevigny and Dakota Fanning walking around unpretentiously on the rooftop with spectacular views of the city. That night, pulling out a cell phone camera could not seem more *démodé*.

Reverenced by her peers, celebrated in the arts for her consistent acting in the area and somewhat a superheroine for fashion aficionados, Miuccia Prada is also a discreet presence. She gives rare interviews per year and runs away from any kind of self promotion, even in these social media times – besides not having her own Instagram account, she does not usually appear on her own company profiles. Even so, she continues as one of the greatest fashion authorities of our time, thanks to collections that are always well thought out, and reflect – in ultra-desirable pieces – her vision of the world we live in. The reading is never obvious, but it is there at every fashion show, which she always closes with such a fast thank you that it is possible to lose it in a blink of an eye.

Signora Prada is also the most chic radical of the Fashion Planet: creating her own rules, she usually repeats that "she does the opposite of what people say". Before joining – in the 1970s – the family business, founded in 1913 by her grandfather Mario, initially focused on leather goods, she studied Political Science, trained to be a mimic, and joined the Italian Communist Party. Forever feminist, she has become the main personification of the empire she has built with her husband, Patrizio

Bertelli, integrating lists of the world's most influential women year after year. But when she began, the decision to work with fashion – a matter considered frivolous in that intellectual environment – was not so easy. And that is precisely the theme of the beginning of our interview, at the Carlyle hotel bar in New York, the day after the Prada resort show.

Without a hint of makeup, with natural hair, wearing a shirt and skirt suit in a deluxe uniform, she looks tired but lively – especially when one of her guests from the previous night, Jacques Herzog, happens to be there. “It was a big problem for me for many years. When everybody was fighting for women's rights, becoming a fashion designer was a bit of the opposite in the perception” she says. “Now I think that this is a very serious and complex work. Because of the mix of cultures and nations, now it is particularly interesting and particularly difficult. Today to be a fashion designer you have to be aware of so many things. But I loved this job so much that I had no doubt of continuing it or not.”

With feminism back on the agenda (and this time being included in the fashion agenda) I ask her if, in her opinion, there is a feminist dress code. “I always thought that women should wear whatever they want. I think if they want to go out naked, sexy, super stylish...Until it is your choice, it is fantastic. So there is no limit of any kind, just the limit is that you have to do what you like. I always say as a funny thing: not for searching a rich husband. I love the idea of brave women”.

I ask a couple of other questions about feminism, and Miuccia delicately says that she would not like that the interview was focused on a subject that is so serious to her. As I expected, she is an intense, cerebral woman, and her request only makes me admire her even more. “Now that feminism is a trend I prefer not to talk about it. Because everybody pretends to be a feminist just for the slogan and I am totally against slogans. I only can advise that it is always good to be more educated and to earn your own money. That is a lot: education and not depending on money from anybody – if I have to give suggestions, those two are already enough.”

We are two days away from the Met Ball, and I would love to know how the woman who wears so many others on the red carpet (how to forget Lupita Nyong'o's thrilling scene receiving the 2014 Oscar in a light blue Prada gown?) get prepared for a big entrance. “The more important the event the more last minute it is for me. It happened once or twice that I prepared an idea before and I was so unhappy because I like to pick up things at the last minute” she says. “For the Met, I have three choices. I have the same thing in three colors, depending on the mood”, she completes (in the end, she appeared with a neon green fringe look, just like Gigi Hadid's dress on the cover of this edition).

The piece is one of the stars of the 2018/19 Winter of Prada, the main responsible for the fluorescent wave that has invaded fashion this season. In the collection (which you see on these pages), the highlighter-pen tones also appear in tulle that blend into items with utilitarian references, including some made of Pocono nylon, which is Prada trademark. It was with that fabric, never associated with the luxury fashion before, that Miuccia created, in the mid-80's, the backpack that was one of the

pioneers among the It-bags. When Prada launched its women's prêt-à-porter, in 1988, the fabric soon migrated to the clothing line, helping to consolidate the typical elegance of the brand, which goes far beyond the obvious. Called "uglybeauty" or "wrongchic", Prada style questions the conventional dressing, always with humor, intelligence and a touch of kitsch. "When I started my job, fashion was the only place where real life was unthinkable. In the movies you saw trash, beauty, badness. The world of fashion was about a completely conservative beauty and then I just wanted to present something that was real and was in every art and in photography. It sounded shocking" she recalls. Besides contradicting the clichés of the sexy, the beautiful, the commercial, Miuccia does not believe that fashion should necessarily be comfortable. "Things should be interesting and exciting. I do not like the idea of comfort".

Even after three decades, her collections continue to show a very particular view of the world. "Every show is about one group of ideas or one concept. So one season is one aspect, another season is another aspect and that depends on what is in the moment". She has no rules (as always) for what must come on Prada or Miu Miu catwalk, the brand she launched in 1993, with her nickname. Every now and then she plans for Prada what, in theory, should be in the presentation of the younger Miu Miu – and vice versa. "There is fashion and I am thinking fashion. And sometimes we are criticized because we are not brand oriented. I also hate the word brand. Does she still worry about the repercussion of a show? "When you put yourself in front of people, of course you will ask for criticism or approval. I do a job like a piece of theater. You are there, you show things to the people, of course you care and you are scared. It is a job that is exposed to public. So of course you care". I also imagine that there is some sort of competition among stylists, even the most experienced and talented. "Probably, yes. I am not jealous of the good ones. But I am angry with the fake ones, the appreciation of the fake."

The moment we live in, however, is not exactly easy for someone who has always thought in a radical and independent way. "Today you are not free. I discussed last night that my fixation with this moment is that no one talks about anything anymore because there are so many things that you can't say because you will offend this or offend that or be pretentious. Recently I canceled 80% of an interview, it was a political interview out of the Fondazione. It was a very important newspaper from Germany. I said 'ok, but if it is not interesting, we will not publish it' and they agreed. After I canceled 80% because anything that was interesting I could not say".

Miuccia says that she had a calm childhood and she remembers herself as "a bit bored" child. "When I was 16 I exploded", she recalls. So much that she came to Brazil. "I did my first trip to South America when I was really young, 16. I went to Minas Gerais, I saw the young leftist people. South America was very trendy then. And I went to Peru and I have been in Argentina because my son is a car driver and we went there three times". Today her relationship with Brazil is through design – Prada store in Miami, opened in December 2017, was decorated with original pieces by our modernists Joaquim Tenreiro, Jorge Zalszupin, Zanine Caldas, Sergio Rodrigues.

Just as architecture (besides the duo Herzog & de Meuron, the Dutchman Rem Koolhaas is a frequent contributor to Prada), art is a serious matter for her. “My education was not done through art, my education was done through cinema and literature. At some point we met people who were artists and I said to my husband we should do a collection” she says. Along with Bertelli, Miuccia built one of the most relevant and fascinating collections of modern and contemporary art in Europe, with the same passion, enthusiasm and commitment with which she built her fashion company. It was a profound learning process. “It was a very intense ten years of studying and knowing artists which is the best way to learn about art”. In 1993, they created the Fondazione Prada to promote the arts in its most different forms. After a head office in Venice, the project was further strengthened by the opening, in 2015, of a complex in Milan, designed by OMA, the office of Rem Koolhaas, at the address where there was a distillery of the 1910’s. By the end of 2016, it was Osservatorio’s turn, an exhibition space in the city focused on photography, at Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II – the same address where the family business was born. As evidenced by the historic commercial center of 1877, the Prada surname is now as consistent in arts as it is in fashion.

Mother for the first time at age of 39 (she had two sons with Bertelli), Miuccia says she spent almost three decades without going out at night. “I finished work and was at home. I was always with them. First of all, I was privileged, I had the option, and second I decided because I was more steeped in them than anything else. I also had the possibility because my job is ten minutes away from the home. So in that sense I was very lucky. Also the fact that I had them late, I never had the sense that: oh, god I want to have fun. I was not feeling: oh, I am missing out”. Today, she goes out every now and then; a night every three months, she calculates. On those occasions, she is the last to leave because “I have fun. I like to stay with people.”

At 69, Miuccia likes the idea of getting old. She has always used “tons of moisturizers” but has never undergone an invasive cosmetic procedure. “Never did any lifting or anything like that because I don’t think you look one day younger. It is not because I want to be intellectual, but because I don’t think the result is so good. If I saw something that had a really great result I would do it, but I do not see any fantastic results”. At dressing time, her main focus is from the waist down (and who wouldn’t think the same, having all Prada’s shoes at disposal?), and she rarely wears pants. “I look much better in trousers, when I wear trousers people say that I look 5 kgs slimmer. But I love skirts because I feel free”.

Finally, I wonder if Miuccia will celebrate Prada’s 30-year prêt-à-porter or the 40 at the helm of the company. In fact, I confess that I had already imagined the answer, since not even the centenary of the brand was celebrated. “I prefer not to know anything about days. First of all, because everybody does it every three years”. We say goodbye with a warm hug, and I leave the Carlyle with her statement echoing in my mind (“I like to do the opposite”), because in fashion every stylist usually quotes the figure who best defines their work or brand – a subject that did not come to light during our

conversation. That afternoon, I was sure that there will never be a personification of the “Prada woman” equal to or better than Miuccia.

“I always thought that women should wear whatever they want. I think if they want to go out naked, sexy, super stylish...Until it is your choice, it is fantastic”, says Miuccia

“Never did any lifting or anything like that because I don't think you look one day younger. It is not because I want to be intellectual, but because I don't think the result is so good. If I saw something that had a really great result I would do it, but I do not see any fantastic results”

# 134 A MEETING OF THE MINDS

PHOTOGRAPH BY BRIGITTE LACOMBE

Director Agnès Varda wears a custom Prada pajama top; her own top and jewelry.



134 A MEETING OF THE MINDS  
Miuccia Prada and Cate Blanchett on  
politics, husbands, discipline, and the  
women who inspire them.  
By Penny Martin  
Additional interviews by Jenny Comita  
Photographs by Brigitte Lacombe

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# meeting of the minds

How did MIUCCIA PRADA and CATE BLANCHETT transcend their professions to become cultural icons? PENNY MARTIN eavesdrops as they discuss politics, husbands, discipline, and the women who inspire *them*. Photographs by BRIGITTE LACOMBE

When Miuccia Prada was immersing herself in the student politics of Milan at the end of the 1960s, fashion was not considered a suitable career for an educated young Italian woman of means. And when Cate Blanchett was growing up in suburban Melbourne amid the struggles for equal pay and paid maternity leave of 1970s Australia, acting seemed, at best, a navel-gazing indulgence. So the paths that young Miuccia and Cate went on to take were perhaps the most radical ones available to them—by their second-wave feminist sisters' estimation, at least. They each got married and followed their hearts' desires, doing whatever gave them pleasure.

The strategy worked out well for both of them. Since Prada took over her parents' leather goods company in the '70s, which the designer still runs with Patrizio Bertelli, whom she married in 1987, she has turned it into a \$11.4 billion enterprise, one comprising not only a hugely influential fashion label but also an increasingly important cultural institution: the Fondazione Prada, whose Rem Koolhaas-designed space in Milan opened in 2015. Blanchett was already an accomplished stage actor when she met the director Andrew Upton in 1996, and together, as the husband-and-wife artistic directors of Sydney Theatre Company, they went on to run an ambitious stage program for five years, as Blanchett's movie career went interstellar. Now a two-time Oscar winner and the recipient of a staggering 149 other awards, she is one of the actors most respected by other actors—an ambition, she says, she held from Day One.

Success may have set Prada, 69, and Blanchett, 49, apart from their respective peers, but what has made them an inspiration for other women is how their work communicates beyond appearances—Prada's by inspiring desire in her consumers, while reassuring them they have made an intelligent, discerning choice; Blanchett's through roles that provoke as well as seduce her audience. For this portfolio, the pair reversed this scenario, highlighting women whose work and lives inspire *them*, and who are pictured on the following pages.

PENNY MARTIN: Are you two old friends?

MIUCCIA PRADA: We met at the Guggenheim in 2007. The artist Francesco Vezzoli put on a play, *Right You Are (If You Think You Are)*, and Cate was in it.

CATE BLANCHETT: Yes, by Pirandello. It was something! We never rehearsed it. Everyone assembled in the morning to read the play once, and then we took over the museum. It was so risky. Elaine Stritch was there, which was the highlight of my life.

MARTIN: Mrs. Prada, is it true you studied mime?

PRADA: Yes. There was this theater in Milan called the Piccolo Teatro, where all the clever people were in the '60s, and I wanted to be with them. I was studying political science at the time, but mime sounded more interesting to me. Afterward, I hated it, but I studied for five years, and I think it taught me discipline. You know Decroux, the father of mime? One day, he limited us to only moving our fingers—the body control was extreme. »



Cate Blanchett and Miuccia Prada (from left), in conversation. Blanchett wears a Prada blouse, skirt, and shoes; Prada wears her label's designs and her own jewelry.

Styled by Sara Moonves. Hair by Cyndia Harvey at Streeters; makeup by Mary Greenwell for Giorgio Armani at Premier Hair and Make-up; manicures by Morena Sanguigni for Morgan Taylor Lacquer at BTS Talent. Set design by Andrew Tomlinson at Streeters.

PRODUCTION: VAURA HOLMES; PRODUCTION: CLAUDETTE AZIS; DIGITAL: TECHNICAL AND AESTHETIC; PHOTOGRAPHY: ASSISTANTS: DAVID COVATTA; TALENT: YOUNG KWON; PRODUCTION COORDINATOR: MOLLY FINNE; PRODUCTION ASSISTANT: ILLY BREUER; FASHION ASSISTANTS: ALIHA ALIHA; MAKEUP: FRANCESCA; HAIR: GEORGE; SET DESIGN ASSISTANT: TARA ROSTON

BLANCHETT: When you're studying something wordy like politics, the minimalism of a simple gesture can be powerful.

PRADA: In those days, I was heavily into politics and rebellion. I never set foot in the university, except for exams. I was too involved in politics.

BLANCHETT: On campus?

PRADA: No, in the Union of Women. I was active for years but hated speaking in public, so I gradually began working at my parents' company, which was the worst thing you could ever do in the '60s and '70s, as a feminist—to work in the fashion industry. I was ashamed, but I liked it so much.

MARTIN: Why ashamed? Because clothing was perceived as feminine and thus lightweight?

PRADA: Yes, the idea that fashion is stupid.

BLANCHETT: And I don't think much has changed. I still get battered if I express an interest in costume or fashion.

PRADA: It's the toughest industry to work in. But you know what has made me appreciate my job? The super-clever people around me—directors, artists, and intellectuals who appreciate the ideas. I have always believed in collaborations and made sure I worked with and supported female artists. With the Fondazione, in addition to Laurie Anderson and Goshka Macuga, we have done amazing projects with Mariko Mori, Louise Bourgeois, Nathalie Djurberg, and others. In cinema, we have worked with great female directors for the short films we commissioned for our "Miu Miu Women's Tales" series, and recently even with cartoonists in our Prada collection. It's because I'm a successful fashion designer that I'm able to realize the artwork. My job is being the anchor.

MARTIN: Cate, your story reads less like one of rebellion than of destiny. Weren't you acting, directing, and producing when you were still at school?

BLANCHETT: Yes, but it's like I never chose acting. Even coming out of drama school, I said I would give it five years. Every time I've been pregnant, I've said I'm going back to finish my university degree—I studied fine arts and economics. You know, theater and cinema may be fundamental to the national cultural identity in the U.K. or Italy, but in Australia acting or writing is so utterly irrelevant to the fabric of society.

PRADA: What is valued there?

BLANCHETT: Physical exercise—they like a triumph over the elements. That and when people achieve things overseas. They don't appreciate it when it's in their own backyard.

MARTIN: You spent five years as co-artistic director of Sydney Theatre Company with your husband, Andrew Upton. That's something you and Miuccia share—you both brought your husbands into your working lives.

BLANCHETT: Well, my husband brought me into his world. You both push each other, for better or worse.

PRADA: I probably wouldn't have done this job had I not met my husband. Everything has happened between us, but we're still together, after more than 40 years!

MARTIN: Most people would think working with one's husband would end a marriage. What's the secret?

PRADA: I have no idea. It's mysterious.

BLANCHETT: For me, it's having a common goal, even if you're running at it from completely different directions.

MARTIN: So if your national culture didn't particularly champion cinema, Cate, were films something you grew up perceiving as foreign?

BLANCHETT: Yes, growing up with just a few TV channels in the '70s and '80s, what one consumed on a Saturday afternoon were B-grade American films. My taste is really eclectic as a result. Bette Davis, Gregory Peck... and Anna Magnani and Giulietta Masina, when I eventually saw them, whom I absolutely loved. On the small screen, I worshipped Lucille Ball.

PRADA: I started when I was a really small kid. My father brought us to the cinema to see Westerns. Soon enough, I was going all the time: three movies a day! My education was Antonioni, Godard, Buñuel... Now I probably watch a film a night, in bed. Alice Rohrwacher's new one, *Happy as Lazzaro*, is very good. Alice can suspend time. Watching her films, you're always torn between the delicacy of her humanity and the roughness of reality.

BLANCHETT: To be honest, some of the most profoundly formative experiences I've had were with dance—when I first watched butoh, it blew my mind.

PRADA: One of the best weeks of my life was in Venice, where Pina Bausch was performing every day—it was incredible.

MARTIN: Do you think the fact that it was a female-led company made it resonate with you?

PRADA: The power was in seeing the body used in a different way. Do you ever suffer from the feminine position, being a woman, Cate? It's possibly because I come from a privileged position, but I never felt inferior to a man.

BLANCHETT: Sometimes, in England, I have a double sense of inferiority—I'm female and I'm Australian, from the colonies. But I rarely think about my gender until it's pointed out to me, generally in interviews. The adjectives that are applied to me—I'm "forceful" or I "take no prisoners," all because I express an opinion that I was asked for.

MARTIN: Often, the subtle, practical things are the most insidious. I was struck by what the director Agnès Varda said during the talk she gave in Venice a few summers ago to accompany her film for Miu Miu's "Women's Tales." She explained that even though she was an accepted figure of 1960s cinema in France, and married to Jacques Demy, she couldn't get cameramen and sound guys to carry out her instructions on set. To the extent that she had to set up her own production company.

BLANCHETT: From a positive perspective, having to create your own context really tests your need to do a project. It might take longer, but finding your own way in creates work that's specific to that structure; it's quintessentially yours.

PRADA: Agnès is such an incredible woman. *Cléo From 5 to 7* impressed me enormously in my youth. Her work has been, and is still now, so experimental. A good example is her latest, *Faces Places*. It is quite remarkable that she still has the energy, the spirit, and the need for such a project.

MARTIN: I gather that since Alejandro Iñárritu's virtual reality piece, *Carne y Arena*, was shown at the Fondazione Prada last year, you plan to experiment more with VR and other alternative forms of cinema. Have you any dreams of directing?

PRADA: No! But a fashion show is kind of a movie.

### Goshka and Laurie

*Laurie Anderson's creative pursuits might seem a bit all over the map. She stages experimental performances, creates gorgeously disorienting virtual reality environments, makes documentary films, writes and performs music, invents high-tech instruments, and has authored six books. But according to the 71-year-old staple of the downtown New York scene, these varied practices are unified by a common approach. "I aspire to be an anthropologist in everything I do," she says. "I try to understand not just the work that I'm making but how it fits into the rest of the world." A prime example: For Dal Vivo, the multimedia project she created with the Fondazione Prada in 1998, she visited Milan's San Vittore prison—with Miuccia Prada in tow—to get acquainted with a bank robber, whom she then transported through a video feed to the exhibition space in real time.*

*The practice of Polish-born, London-based Goshka Macuga—which combines sculpture, photography, performance, and exhibition design—is, like Anderson's, impossible to pigeonhole. Macuga is often thought of as both an artist and a curator, because her large-scale installations sometimes incorporate the work of other artists, but that description is not entirely accurate. She's not so much presenting existing art, she says, as "using it as raw material for my own art, to advance my own narrative." For To the Son of Man Who Ate the Scroll, staged at the Fondazione Prada in 2016, for example, she displayed large-scale pieces from the foundation's collection—works by Phyllida Barlow, Lucio Fontana, Alberto Giacometti, and others—alongside a remarkably lifelike android of her own design, which delivered a speech amalgamated from bits and pieces of well-known orations from the past. The model for said robot: her boyfriend. "Male artists for generations used women they had relationships with as inspiration for their work," she says. "My decision to use my partner was very much following the same old canon." JENNY COMITA*

The multimedia artists Goshka Macuga and Laurie Anderson (from left) have created projects for the Fondazione Prada.

Macuga wears a Prada coat, shirt, pants, and shoes. Anderson wears her own clothing and boots.

MARTIN: In which you are the director. How do you choose the directors for your "Women's Tales" films, several of whom were photographed for this story—Ava DuVernay, Agnès Varda, Alice Rohrwacher—as well as people like Miranda July, Crystal Moselle, and Naomi Kawase?

PRADA: I didn't want the "Women's Tales" to be purely commercial. Ava, for example, is an inspiration because she's never afraid to stand up for what she believes in.

MARTIN: You've always been quite clear about keeping your art and fashion projects separate from one another.

PRADA: In the beginning, I kept them separate because I wanted the respect of the art world. I'll collaborate with anyone, but I draw the line at decorating a bag with someone else's artwork.

MARTIN: What about the other way around? You made costumes for Baz Luhrmann's *The Great Gatsby*, costumes for New York's Metropolitan Opera.

PRADA: Well, it's rare that I'm asked, and, actually, costume design is a completely different job from fashion. There's so much "You can't do it like this." »

MACUGA: HAIR BY DAVID HARBORLOW FOR HAIR BY SAM MCKNIGHT AT STREETERS; MAKEUP BY ATHENA PIGNON FOR CHARLOTTE TILBURY BEAUTY AT BRYANT ARTISTS; ANDERSON: SITTINGS EDITOR: SAM WALKER; HAIR BY LINDA SHALABI FOR REDKEN AT SEE MANAGEMENT; MAKEUP BY MISHA SHAHZADA AT SEE MANAGEMENT; PHOTOGRAPHY ASSISTANTS: DAVID COVENEY, THE YOUNG KWOK, CHRIS JOHNSON, LAVINIA LONGINESI



MARTIN: Cate, one of the most memorable costume moments has to be from the film *Elizabeth*, when a character is struggling to get out of a poisoned corset before it kills her. In fact, a good number of the awards for which you've been nominated are for playing real people: Bob Dylan, Katharine Hepburn, Veronica Guerin, as well as Elizabeth I.

BLANCHETT: Often, the audience thinks it takes more homework to play a real person, and, as they like to see how hard people have worked, they think it makes you more worthy of an award. I'm not interested in "the work" in terms of what it costs me personally. Art is not instructional, I think: It's provocative. As such, my job is to be inconsistent, impolite, and disruptive.

PRADA: Meanwhile, the media wants an explanation, a definition that will stay the same forever. At this moment, everything is being simplified—politics, life. But life is complicated; I am complicated, and my interests are varied—from the super cheap to the elevated. That's why artists envy my job, or yours, because we do things quickly, and afterward we change.

MARTIN: Still, there are some underlying values that never change. They're what make other women continue to look to you as role models. BLANCHETT: There is a bottom line, yes. I have my own set of political beliefs, and hopefully a moral backbone. But when I was at university, thinking about what I wanted to do, I decided the only two things I wanted were to travel and to have the respect of my peers—whether that meant being an actor, an architect, or a gallerist.

PRADA: As I get older, I do like to teach young girls about life, and I do have expectations of myself: What can I do that is clever, that is interesting, new, and fun? But other people's expectations, I care less about. Your main obligation is to yourself. We are our own best competitors. ♦

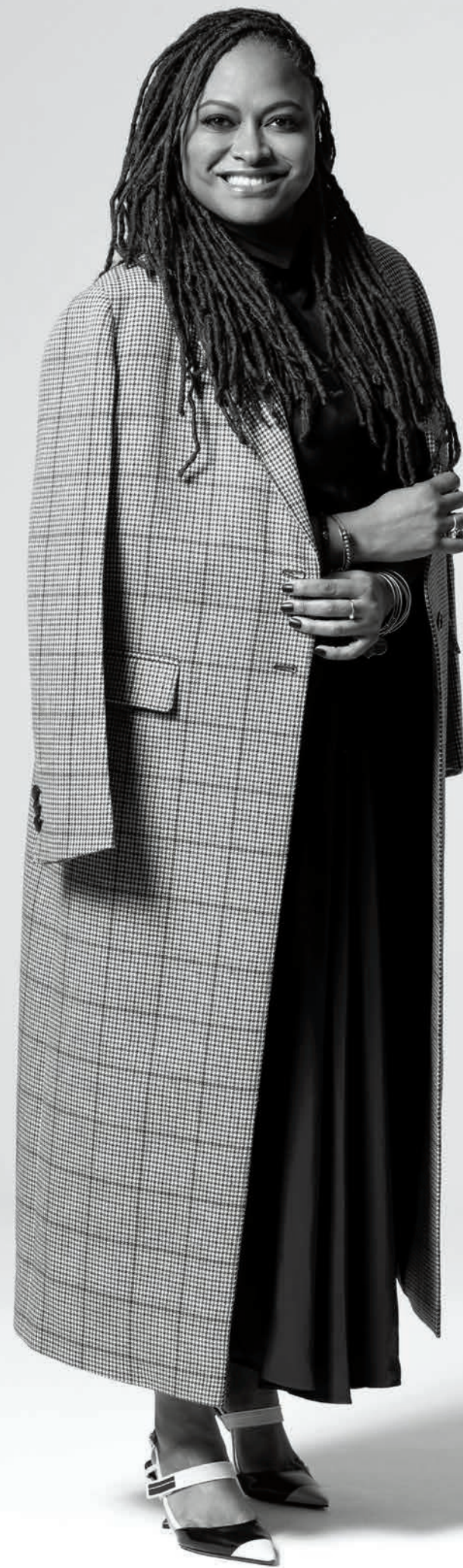
### Ava, Agnès, and Alice

For a young filmmaker, scoring a major award at the Sundance Film Festival is generally an express ticket to the Hollywood stratosphere. But in 2012, when Ava DuVernay—now widely known as the powerhouse behind *Selma* and *A Wrinkle in Time*—won the festival's best director prize for her quietly devastating second feature, *Middle of Nowhere*, she had, she says, "a very different experience than my male counterparts. There were very few opportunities for me, very few people knocking on my door to give me work. I only had two offers, actually, and one of them was from Miuccia Prada." The resulting project, *The Door*, was the fifth in the "Miu Miu Women's Tales" series, which aims to empower female directors by commissioning, funding, and showcasing their short films.

It's a program that Agnès Varda would surely have welcomed when she was just starting out. The now 90-year-old Belgian-born director and photographer, often referred to as the grandmother of *la nouvelle vague*, made her first film, *La Pointe Courte*, in 1954. Shot on a shoestring by the self-trained 26-year-old, it was a hugely influential precursor to the iconoclastic midcentury movement—which soon became synonymous with a cadre of male directors, including her close friend Jean-Luc Godard and her husband, Jacques Demy. Varda, the genre's sole female auteur, never received the mainstream, international fame afforded to the New Wave boys' club, but she has continued to work, ambitiously and prolifically, for more than half a century. She has racked up more than 50 directing credits, including her 2017 documentary *Faces Places*—for which she became the oldest-ever female Oscar nominee—and *Les 3 Boutons*, her "Women's Tales" short, starring a braces-wearing 14-year-old and an enormous hot pink ballgown.

An eccentric frock is also at the center of Alice Rohrwacher's gorgeously surreal "Women's Tales" film, *De Djess*, which features the Italian director's older sister, the actress Alba Rohrwacher, and her then 8-year-old daughter, Anita, who voices the titular, anthropomorphized garment. Rohrwacher makes a point of working with Alba whenever possible, having cast her in both *The Wonders*, which won the Grand Prix at the Cannes Film Festival in 2014, and her newest film, *Happy as Lazzaro*, which won best screenplay at the festival this year. "We share an imagination," says Rohrwacher of her sister, with whom she grew up on a honey farm in rural Tuscany. "You've heard of a wolf pack? We're a woman pack." J.C.

The filmmakers Ava DuVernay, Agnès Varda, and Alice Rohrwacher (from left) are contributors to the "Miu Miu Women's Tales" series, curated by the Fondazione Prada, in Milan. DuVernay wears a Prada coat, dress, and shoes; her own jewelry. Varda wears a custom Prada pajama top and shoes; her own top and jewelry. Rohrwacher wears a Prada jacket, T-shirt, pants, and sneakers.



DUVERNAY: STYLING: EDITOR: SAM WALKER; HAIR: BY MARLENE FORD; MAKEUP: BY UDO HARDA; STYLING: EDITOR: CLEMENCE LOBERT; HAIR: BY CYRIL LALOUE; AT OPEN TALENT PARIS; MAKEUP: BY MICHAEL NOBLETT; AT CALISTO AGENCY; ONSET PRODUCTION: MILENA LE MAO; ROHRWACHER: STYLING: EDITOR: CARLOTTA TABARONI; HAIR: BY ALESSANDRO REBECCI; AT GREEN APPLE ITALIA; MAKEUP: BY LETIZIA CARNEVALE; AT GREEN APPLE ITALIA; PHOTOGRAPHY ASSISTANTS: DAVID COVENTRY, FRED LAM, TAEYOUNG KWON, STEFANO FACCA, LAVINIA LONGINESI

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## Women of Influence: Cate Blanchett and Miuccia Prada In Conversation





### **Full Text:**

When Miuccia Prada was immersing herself in the student politics of Milan at the end of the 1960s, fashion was not considered a suitable career for an educated young Italian woman of means. And when Cate Blanchett was growing up in suburban Melbourne amid the struggles for equal pay and paid maternity leave of 1970s Australia, acting seemed, at best, a navel-gazing indulgence. So the paths that young Miuccia and Cate went on to take were perhaps the most radical ones available to them—by their second-wave feminist sisters' estimation, at least. They each got married and followed their hearts' desires, doing whatever gave them pleasure.

The strategy worked out well for both of them. Since Prada took over her parents' leather goods company in the '70s, which the designer still runs with Patrizio Bertelli, whom she married in 1987, she has turned it into a \$11.4 billion enterprise, one comprising not only a hugely influential fashion label but also an increasingly important cultural institution: the Fondazione Prada, whose Rem Koolhaas–designed space in Milan opened in

2015. Blanchett was already an accomplished stage actor when she met the director Andrew Upton in 1996, and together, as the husband-and-wife artistic directors of Sydney Theatre Company, they went on to run an ambitious stage program for five years, as Blanchett's movie career went interstellar. Now a two-time Oscar winner and the recipient of a staggering 149 other awards, she is one of the actors most respected by other actors—an ambition, she says, she held from Day One. Success may have set Prada, 69, and Blanchett, 49, apart from their respective peers, but what has made them an inspiration for other women is how their work communicates beyond appearances—Prada's by inspiring desire in her consumers, while reassuring them they have made an intelligent, discerning choice; Blanchett's through roles that provoke as well as seduce her audience. For this portfolio, the pair reversed this scenario, highlighting women whose work and lives inspire them, and who are pictured below. Penny Martin: Are you two old friends?

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Cate Blanchett: Yes, by Pirandello. It was something! We never rehearsed it. Everyone assembled in the morning to read the play once, and then we took over the museum. It was so risky. Elaine Stritch was there, which was the highlight of my life.

Martin: Mrs. Prada, is it true you studied mime?

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Martin: Why ashamed? Because clothing was perceived as feminine and thus lightweight?

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Blanchett: For me, it’s having a common goal, even if you’re running at it from completely different directions.

Martin: So if your national culture didn’t particularly champion cinema, Cate, were films something you grew up perceiving as foreign?

Blanchett: Yes, growing up with just a few TV channels in the ’70s and ’80s, what one consumed on a Saturday afternoon were B-grade American films. My taste is really eclectic as a result. Bette Davis, Gregory Peck...and Anna Magnani and Giulietta Masina, when I eventually saw them, whom I absolutely loved. On the small screen, I worshipped Lucille Ball.

Prada: I started when I was a really small kid. My father brought us to the cinema to see Westerns. Soon enough, I was going all the time: three movies a day! My education was Antonioni, Godard, Buñuel...Now I probably

watch a film a night, in bed. Alice

Rohrwacher's new one, *Happy as Lazzaro*,

is very good. Alice can suspend time. Watching her films, you're always torn between the delicacy of her humanity and the roughness of reality.

Blanchett: To be honest, some of the most profoundly formative experiences I've had were with dance—when I first watched *butoh*, it blew my mind.

Prada: One of the best weeks of my life was in Venice, where Pina Bausch was performing every day—it was incredible.

Martin: Do you think the fact that it was a female-led company made it resonate with you?

Prada: The power was in seeing the body used in a different way. Do you ever suffer from the feminine position, being a woman, Cate? It's possibly because I come from a privileged position, but I never felt inferior to a man.

Blanchett: Sometimes, in England, I have a double sense of inferiority—I'm female and I'm Australian, from the colonies. But I rarely think about my gender until it's pointed out to me, generally in interviews. The adjectives that are applied to me—I'm "forceful" or I "take no prisoners," all because I express an opinion that I was asked for.

Martin: Often, the subtle, practical things are the most insidious. I was struck by what the director Agnès Varda said during the talk she gave in Venice a few summers ago to accompany her film for Miu Miu's "Women's Tales." She explained that even though she was an accepted figure of 1960s cinema in France, and married to Jacques Demy, she couldn't get cameramen and sound guys to carry out her instructions on set. To the extent that she had to set up her own production company.

Blanchett: From a positive perspective, having to create your own context really tests your need to do a project. It might take longer, but finding your own way in creates work that's specific to that structure; it's quintessentially yours.

Prada: Agnès is such an incredible woman. *Cléo From 5 to 7* impressed me enormously in my youth. Her work has been, and is still now, so experimental. A good example is her latest, *Faces Places*. It is quite remarkable that she still has the energy, the spirit, and the need for such a project.

Martin: I gather that since Alejandro Iñárritu's virtual reality piece, *Carne y Arena*, was shown at the Fondazione Prada last year, you plan to experiment more with VR and other alternative forms of cinema. Have you any dreams of directing?

Prada: No! But a fashion show is kind of a movie. Martin: In which you are the director. How do you choose the directors for your "Women's Tales" films, several of whom were photographed for this story—Ava DuVernay, Agnès Varda, Alice Rohrwacher—as well as people like Miranda July, Crystal Moselle, and Naomi Kawase?

Prada: I didn't want the "Women's Tales" to be purely commercial. Ava, for example, is an inspiration because she's never afraid to stand up for what she believes in.



Martin: You've always been quite clear about keeping your art and fashion

projects separate from one another.

Prada: In the beginning, I kept them separate because I wanted the respect of the art world. I'll collaborate with anyone, but I draw the line at decorating a bag with someone else's artwork.

Martin: What about the other way around? You made costumes for Baz Luhrmann's *The Great Gatsby*, costumes for New York's Metropolitan Opera.

Prada: Well, it's rare that I'm asked, and, actually, costume design is a completely different job from fashion. There's so much "You can't do it like this."

Martin: Cate, one of the most memorable costume moments has to be from the film *Elizabeth*, when a character is struggling to get out of a poisoned corset before it kills her. In fact, a good number of the awards for which you've been nominated are for playing real people: Bob Dylan, Katharine Hepburn, Veronica Guerin, as well as Elizabeth I.

Blanchett: Often, the audience thinks it takes more homework to play a real person, and, as they like to see how hard people have worked, they think it makes you more worthy of an award. I'm not interested in "the work" in terms of what it costs me personally. Art is not instructional, I think: It's provocative. As such, my job is to be inconsistent, impolite, and disruptive.

Prada: Meanwhile, the media wants an explanation, a definition that will stay the same forever. At this moment, everything is being simplified—politics, life. But life is complicated; I am complicated, and my interests are varied—from the super cheap to the elevated. That's why artists envy my job, or yours, because we do things quickly, and afterward we change.

Martin: Still, there are some underlying values that never change. They're what make other women continue to look to you as role models.

Blanchett: There is a bottom line, yes. I have my own set of political beliefs, and hopefully a moral backbone. But when I was at university, thinking about what I wanted to do, I decided the only two things I wanted were to travel and to have the respect of my peers—whether that meant being an actor, an architect, or a gallerist.

Prada: As I get older, I do like to teach young girls about life, and I do have expectations of myself: What can I do that is clever, that is interesting, new, and fun? But other people's expectations, I care less about. Your main obligation is to yourself. We are our own best competitors.

[strillo]

## INCONTRO DI MENTI

La regista Agnès Varda indossa una giacca del pigiama Prada su misura; giacca e gioielli suoi.

Miuccia Prada e Cate Blanchett parlano di politica, mariti, disciplina e le donne che le ispirano.

*Di Penny Martin*

*Interviste integrative di Jenny Comita*

*Fotografie di Brigitte Lacombe*

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## INCONTRO DI MENTI

Com'è che MIUCCIA PRADA e CATE BLANCHETT sono riuscite a trascendere la loro professione per diventare icone culturali?

PENNY MARTIN origlia mentre discutono di politica, mariti, disciplina e delle donne che le ispirano.

Quando Miuccia Prada si immergeva nella politica studentesca di Milano, alla fine degli anni '60, la moda non era considerata una carriera adatta a una ragazza italiana colta e benestante. E quando Cate Blanchett era ragazza, nella periferia di Melbourne tra le lotte per la parità dei salari e il congedo di maternità pagato dell'Australia degli anni '70, recitare sembrava, nella migliore delle ipotesi, un piacere troppo introspettivo. Così le strade che le giovani Miuccia e Cate finirono per scegliere erano forse le più radicali che avessero a disposizione— quanto meno a giudizio delle loro sorelle femministe di seconda ondata. Si sono sposate e hanno seguito i desideri del loro cuore, facendo tutto quello che procurava loro piacere.

La strategia ha funzionato bene per entrambe. Da quando, negli anni '70, la stilista ha assunto le redini della pelletteria dei genitori, che tuttora dirige con Patrizio Bertelli, diventato suo marito nel 1987, l'ha trasformata in un'impresa da 11,4 miliardi di dollari, che oltre a un marchio di moda di influenza enorme comprende anche un'istituzione culturale sempre più importante: la Fondazione Prada, la cui sede, progettata da Rem Koolhaas è stata inaugurata a Milano nel 2015. Blanchett era già un'attrice teatrale di talento nel 1996, quando conobbe il regista Andrew Upton, e insieme, diventati marito e moglie, hanno gestito per cinque anni ambiziosi programmi teatrali in qualità di direttori artistici della Sydney Theatre Company, mentre la carriera cinematografica di lei diventava interstellare. Premiata due volte con l'Oscar e vincitrice di un impressionante numero di 149 altri riconoscimenti, è tra gli attori più rispettati dagli altri attori — ambizione che dice di aver nutrito fin dal primo giorno.

Forse il successo ha differenziato Prada, 69 anni, e Blanchett, 49, dalle loro pari, ma ciò che le ha fatte diventare un'ispirazione per le altre donne è il modo in cui il loro lavoro comunica al di là delle apparenze — quello di Prada accendendo il desiderio nelle sue consumatrici, e rassicurandole al contempo sul fatto di aver fatto una scelta intelligente, da intenditrici; quello della Blanchett attraverso i ruoli che provocano e seducono il suo pubblico. Per questo articolo, le due hanno invertito lo scenario, dando risalto alle donne che le ispirano con il loro lavoro e con la loro vita, e che sono ritratte nelle pagine seguenti.

PENNY MARTIN: Siete due vecchie amiche?

MIUCCIA PRADA: Ci siamo incontrate al Guggenheim nel 2007. L'artista Francesco Vezzoli ha allestito una commedia, *Right You Are (If You Think You Are)*, e Cate ne faceva parte.

CATE BLANCHETT: Sì, di Pirandello. Che impresa! Non abbiamo fatto prove. Ci siamo ritrovati tutti al mattino per leggere la commedia una volta, e poi abbiamo invaso il museo. È stato molto rischioso. C'era Elaine Stritch, è stato uno dei momenti clou della mia vita.

MARTIN: Signora Prada, è vero che ha studiato mimo?

PRADA: Sì. C'era questo teatro a Milano che si chiamava Piccolo Teatro, dov'era tutta la gente intelligente negli anni '60, e io volevo stare con loro. All'epoca studiavo scienze politiche, ma il mimo mi sembrava più interessante. Dopo l'ho odiato ma l'ho studiato per cinque anni, e penso che mi abbia insegnato la disciplina. Conosce Decroux, il padre del mimo? Un giorno ci impose di muovere soltanto le dita — il controllo del corpo era estremo.

BLANCHETT: Quando studi qualcosa che si basa sulle parole come la politica, il minimalismo di un semplice gesto può essere potente.

PRADA: A quei tempi, ero molto impegnata nella politica e nella ribellione. Non mettevo mai piede all'università se non per gli esami. Ero troppo impegnata in politica.

BLANCHETT: All'interno del campus?

PRADA: No, nel Sindacato femminile. Sono stata attiva per anni ma detestavo parlare in pubblico, così poco per volta ho iniziato a lavorare nell'azienda dei miei genitori, che era la cosa peggiore che una femminista potesse fare, negli anni '60 e '70 — lavorare nel settore della moda. Me ne vergognavo ma mi piaceva moltissimo.

MARTIN: Perché si vergognava? Perché l'abbigliamento era percepito come qualcosa di femminile e leggero?

PRADA: Sì, l'idea che la moda sia stupida.

BLANCHETT: E non credo che sia cambiato molto. Vengo ancora maltrattata se esprimo un interesse per i costumi o per la moda.

PRADA: È il settore più difficile in cui lavorare. Ma sapete che cosa mi ha fatto apprezzare il mio lavoro? Le persone super intelligenti intorno a me — registi, artisti e intellettuali che apprezzano le idee. Ho sempre creduto nelle collaborazioni e ho fatto in modo di lavorare con artiste donne e di sostenerle. Con la Fondazione, oltre a Laurie Anderson e Goshka Macuga, abbiamo realizzato progetti straordinari con Mariko Mori, Louise Bourgeois, Nathalie Djurberg, e altre. Nel campo del cinema, abbiamo collaborato con registe fantastiche per i cortometraggi che commissioniamo per la nostra serie "Miu Miu Women's Tales", e recentemente anche con alcune fumettiste per la collezione Prada. È perché sono una stilista di successo che riesco a realizzare il lavoro artistico. Il mio lavoro consiste nel fare da ancora.

MARTIN: Cate, la sua sembra più una storia di destino che di ribellione. Non recitava, dirigeva e produceva già mentre era ancora a scuola?

BLANCHETT: Sì, ma è come se non avessi mai scelto la recitazione. Anche appena uscita dalla scuola di recitazione, mi sono detta che vi avrei dedicato cinque anni. Ogni volta che sono rimasta incinta, ho detto che sarei tornata a finire la mia laurea universitaria — ho studiato belle arti ed economia. Sa, forse il teatro e il cinema sono fondamentali per l'identità culturale nazionale in Regno Unito o in Italia, ma in Australia recitare o scrivere è assolutamente irrilevante per il tessuto della società.

PRADA: Che cosa viene apprezzato in quel paese?

BLANCHETT: L'attività fisica — gli piace il trionfo sugli elementi. Quello e quando le persone ottengono dei risultati all'estero. Non lo apprezzano quando succede in casa loro.

MARTIN: È stata per cinque anni direttore artistico della Sydney Theatre Company con suo marito, Andrew Upton. È una cosa che lei e Miuccia avete in comune — avete portato i vostri mariti nella vostra vita lavorativa.

BLANCHETT: Beh, mio marito mi ha portato nel suo mondo. Ci si spinge l'un l'altro, nel bene e nel male.

PRADA: Probabilmente non avrei fatto questo lavoro se non avessi incontrato mio marito. Tra di noi è successo di tutto ma siamo ancora insieme, dopo più di 40 anni!

MARTIN: La maggior parte della gente penserebbe che lavorare con il proprio marito sia la tomba del matrimonio. Qual è il segreto?

PRADA: Non ne ho idea. È misterioso.

BLANCHETT: Per me, è avere un obiettivo comune, anche se corri verso quel traguardo da direzioni completamente diverse.

MARTIN: Allora, se la sua cultura nazionale non sosteneva particolarmente il cinema, Cate, i film sono qualcosa che da ragazza percepiva come stranieri?

BLANCHETT: Sì, crescendo con qualche canale televisivo soltanto negli anni '70 e '80, quello che si consumava in un sabato pomeriggio erano film americani di serie B. Il risultato è che il mio gusto è molto eclettico. Bette Davis, Gregory Peck... e Anna Magnani e Giulietta Masina, quando alla fine le vidi, mi piacevano da impazzire. Sul piccolo schermo, adoravo Lucille Ball.

PRADA: Io ho cominciato da piccolissima. Mio padre ci portava al cinema a vedere i western. E di lì a poco, ci andavo continuamente: tre film al giorno! La mia educazione è stata Antonioni, Godard, Buñuel... Adesso magari guardo un film alla sera, a letto. Il nuovo di Alice Rohrwacher, *Lazzaro felice*, è molto bello. Alice riesce a sospendere il tempo. Guardando i suoi film, sei sempre strattonata tra la delicatezza della sua umanità e la durezza della realtà.

BLANCHETT: A essere sincera, alcune delle esperienze più profondamente formative che abbia avuto sono state con la danza — quando ho visto per la prima volta il buto, mi ha lasciato esterrefatta.

PRADA: Una delle più belle settimane della mia vita è stata a Venezia, dove Pina Bausch si esibiva tutti i giorni — è stato incredibile.

MARTIN: Pensa che le risuonasse per il fatto che era una compagnia diretta da una donna?

PRADA: La forza stava nel vedere il corpo usato in modo diverso. Soffri mai per la tua posizione femminile, per il fatto di essere donna, Cate? Forse perché vengo da una posizione privilegiata, ma io non mi sono mai sentita inferiore a un uomo.

BLANCHETT: Qualche volta, in Inghilterra, ho provato un duplice senso di inferiorità— sono femmina e sono australiana, delle colonie. Ma penso raramente al mio genere finché non mi viene fatto notare, generalmente nelle interviste. Gli aggettivi che mi vengono applicati — sono “energica” o “non faccio prigionieri”, tutto perché esprimo un’opinione che mi è stata chiesta.

MARTIN: Spesso, le cose sottili, pratiche sono le più insidiose. Mi ha colpito quello che ha detto la regista Agnès Varda durante il discorso che ha tenuto a Venezia qualche estate fa per accompagnare il suo film per “Women’s Tales” di Miu Miu. Ha spiegato che anche se era una figura accettata del cinema degli anni ’60 in Francia, e sposata con Jacques Demy, non riusciva a farsi ubbidire dai cameramen e dai tecnici del suono. Al punto che ha dovuto costituire la sua casa di produzione.

BLANCHETT: In una prospettiva positiva, dover creare il tuo contesto mette veramente alla prova il tuo bisogno di realizzare un progetto. Può volerci più tempo ma se trovi la tua strada per entrarci crei un lavoro che è specifico per quella struttura; è assolutamente tuo.

PRADA: Agnès è una donna veramente incredibile. Da giovane, *Cléo dalle 5 alle 7* mi ha colpito molto. Il suo lavoro è stato, ed è ancora, molto sperimentale. Un valido esempio è il suo ultimo film, *Visages, Villages*. È straordinario che abbia ancora l’energia, lo spirito e il bisogno di un progetto del genere.

MARTIN: Deduco che dopo che l’anno scorso alla Fondazione Prada è stata presentata l’installazione in realtà virtuale di Alejandro Iñárritu, *Carne y Arena*, ha intenzione di sperimentare di più con la VR e altre forme alternative di cinema. Sogna di fare la regista?

PRADA: No! Ma una sfilata di moda è un po’ come un film.

MARTIN: In cui lei è la regista. Come sceglie le registe per i suoi film “Women’s Tales”, varie delle quali sono state fotografate per questo articolo —Ava DuVernay, Agnès Varda, Alice Rohrwacher — e nomi come Miranda July, Crystal Moselle, e Naomi Kawase?

PRADA: Non volevo che i “Women’s Tales” fossero puramente commerciali. Ava, per esempio, è un’ispirazione perché non ha mai paura di difendere quello in cui crede.

MARTIN: È sempre stata molto chiara riguardo a tenere i progetti artistici e di moda separati gli uni dagli altri.

PRADA: All’inizio, li ho tenuti separati perché volevo il rispetto del mondo dell’arte. Collaboro con chiunque, ma traccio il confine quando si tratta di decorare una borsa con l’opera d’arte di qualcun altro.

MARTIN: E viceversa? Ha realizzato i costumi per *Il grande Gatsby* di Baz Luhrmann, costumi per il Metropolitan Opera di New York.

PRADA: Beh, è raro che me lo chiedano e in realtà realizzare costumi è un lavoro completamente diverso dalla moda. C’è molto “questo non lo puoi fare così.”

MARTIN: Cate, uno dei momenti più memorabili per quanto riguarda i costumi dev’essere quello del film *Elizabeth*, in cui un personaggio si dibatte per uscire da un corsetto avvelenato prima che la uccida. In effetti, molti dei premi a cui è stata candidata sono per le sue interpretazioni di persone reali: Bob Dylan, Katharine Hepburn, Veronica Guerin, e anche Elisabetta I.

BLANCHETT: Spesso, il pubblico pensa che ci voglia più lavoro per interpretare una persona vera, e dato che ama vedere quanto impegno ci hanno messo gli attori, pensa che ti renda più meritevole di un premio. A me non interessa “il lavoro” in termini di quanto mi costa a livello personale. L’arte

non è informativa, penso: è provocatoria. In questo senso, il mio lavoro è essere incoerente, sgarbata e disturbante.

PRADA: Nel frattempo, i media vogliono una spiegazione, una definizione che rimanga la stessa per sempre. In questo momento, si semplifica tutto — la politica, la vita. Ma la vita è complicata; io sono complicata e i miei interessi vari, da quelli più dozzinali a quelli più alti. È per questo che gli artisti invidiano il mio lavoro, o il tuo, perché facciamo le cose in fretta, e poi cambiamo.

MARTIN: Però, ci sono dei valori di fondo che non cambiano mai. Sono il motivo per cui le altre donne continuano a guardare a voi come modelli di ruolo.

BLANCHETT: C'è una morale, sì. Ho le mie convinzioni politiche, e dei fondamenti morali, spero. Ma quando ero all'università, pensando a quello che volevo fare, decisi che le uniche due cose che volevo erano viaggiare e ottenere il rispetto dei colleghi — che facessi l'attrice, l'architetto, o la gallerista.

PRADA: Invecchiando, mi piace dare insegnamenti di vita alle ragazze giovani, e ho aspettative nei confronti di me stessa: che cosa posso fare che sia intelligente, interessante, nuovo e divertente? Ma delle aspettative degli altri mi importa di meno. L'obbligo principale è essere se stessi. Siamo i migliori rivali di noi stessi.

## **Goehka e Laurie**

*Le attività creative di Laurie Anderson potrebbero sembrare un po' incoerenti. Allestisce performance sperimentali, crea ambienti in realtà virtuale meravigliosamente disorientanti, realizza documentari, scrive e suona musica, inventa strumenti high-tech, ed è autrice di sei libri. Ma secondo la 71enne, uno dei capisaldi della scena della downtown newyorchese, queste diverse pratiche sono unificate da un approccio comune. "Aspiro a essere un'antropologa in tutto quello che faccio", dice. "Cerco di capire non soltanto il lavoro che sto realizzando ma come si inserisce nel resto del mondo." Un esempio molto calzante: per Dal Vivo, il progetto multimediale che ha creato per la Fondazione Prada nel 1998, ha fatto visita al carcere di San Vittore — con Miuccia Prada al seguito — per conoscere un rapinatore di banche, che ha poi trasportato in tempo reale nello spazio espositivo attraverso un segnale video.*

*L'attività di Goshka Macuga, nata in Polonia e residente a Londra — che combina scultura, performance, e progetti espositivi — è, come quella di Anderson, impossibile da catalogare. Macuga è spesso considerata sia artista che curatrice, perché le sue installazioni di grandi dimensioni incorporano a volte il lavoro di altri artisti, ma questa descrizione non è del tutto precisa. Lei dice che non presenta arte esistente bensì "la uso come materia prima per la mia arte, per far progredire la mia narrativa." Per To the Son of Man Who Ate the Scroll, allestita alla Fondazione Prada nel 2016, per esempio, ha esposto opere di grande formato della collezione della fondazione — di Phyllida Barlow, Lucio Fontana, Alberto Giacometti e altri — accanto a un androide dall'aspetto straordinariamente veritiero creato da lei, che teneva un discorso fatto di brani di famose orazioni del passato. Il modello per questo robot: il suo ragazzo. "Gli artisti uomini hanno usato per generazioni le donne con cui avevano una relazione come ispirazione per il loro lavoro", osserva. "La mia decisione di usare il mio compagno segue più o meno lo stesso canone antico."*

JENNY COMITA

## **Ava, Agnès e Alice**

*Per una giovane regista, vincere un premio importante al Sundance Film Festival è generalmente un biglietto per la stratosfera di Hollywood. Ma nel 2012, quando Ava DuVernay — ora conosciuta al grande pubblico come autrice di Selma e Nelle pieghe del tempo — ha vinto il premio del festival alla miglior regia per la sua seconda pellicola, pacatamente devastante, Middle of Nowhere, ha vissuto, “un’esperienza molto diversa dalle mie controparti maschili. C’erano pochissime opportunità per me, pochissime persone che bussavano alla mia porta per offrirmi del lavoro. Ho ricevuto solo due offerte, in realtà, una era di Miuccia Prada.” Il progetto che ne è scaturito, The Door, era il quinto capitolo della serie “Miu Miu Women’s Tales”, che ha l’obiettivo di dare voce a registe donne commissionando, finanziando e presentando i loro corti.*

*È un programma che Agnès Varda avrebbe sicuramente gradito, quando era alle prime armi. La regista e fotografa belga, ora novantenne, spesso chiamata la nonna della nouvelle vague, ha realizzato il suo primo film, La Pointe Courte, nel 1954. Girato con un budget limitatissimo dalle ventiseienne autodidatta, è stato un precursore di grandissima influenza del movimento iconoclastico della metà del Novecento — che presto divenne sinonimo di una serie di registi, tra cui l’amico intimo Jean-Luc Godard e il marito Jacques Demy. Varda, unica autrice del genere, non ha mai ottenuto l’ampia fama internazionale riservata al club maschile della Nouvelle Vague, ma ha continuato a lavorare, in modo ambizioso e prolifico, per più di mezzo secolo. Ha all’attivo oltre 50 lavori da regista, tra cui il documentario del 2017 Visages, Villages — per il quale è diventata la più vecchia donna candidata all’Oscar — e Les 3 Boutons, il suo corto per “Women’s Tales”, che vede protagonista una quattordicenne con l’apparecchio e un enorme abito da ballo rosa shocking. Un vestito eccentrico è al centro anche del film realizzato da Alice Rohrwacher per “Women’s Tales”, De Djess, meravigliosamente surreale e interpretato dalla sorella maggiore della regista italiana, l’attrice Alba Rohrwacher, e da sua figlia Anita, che aveva allora 8 anni e che dà la voce al capo di abbigliamento antropomorfizzato del titolo. Rohrwacher ci tiene a lavorare con Alba ogni volta che è possibile, e l’ha scelta per Le meraviglie, che ha vinto il Gran Premio al Festival del cinema di Cannes nel 2014, e per il suo ultimo film, Lazzaro felice, che ha vinto il premio per la miglior sceneggiatura al festival di quest’anno. “Abbiamo in comune l’immaginazione”, dice Rohrwacher a proposito della sorella, con cui è cresciuta in un allevamento di api nella Toscana rurale. “Avete sentito parlare di un branco di lupi? Noi siamo un branco di donne.” j.c.*

Le artiste multimediali Goshka Macuga e Laurie Anderson (da sinistra) hanno creato progetti per la Fondazione Prada.

Macuga indossa cappotto, camicia, pantaloni e scarpe Prada. Anderson indossa abbigliamento e stivali suoi.

Le cineaste Ava DuVernay, Agnès Varda e Alice Rohrwacher (da sinistra) hanno contribuito alla serie “Miu Miu Women’s Tales”, curata dalla Fondazione Prada, a Milano. DuVernay indossa cappotto, abito e scarpe Prada; gioielli suoi. Varda indossa una giacca del pigiama su misura e scarpe Prada; top e gioielli suoi. Rohrwacher indossa giacca, T-shirt, pantaloni e sneakers Prada.