

NOT FOR THE FAINT OF FASHION: THE RELIGION OF RICK OWENS

RICK OWENS



RÉGNE
magazine

BEFORE THE DARKNESS WAS DIVINE: RICK OWENS AND THE ERA OF UNORIGINAL ORIGINALS

Today, Rick Owens is revered as a prophet of brutalist fashion—a designer whose vision transcends the seasonal, who sculpts garments like monuments to the post-apocalyptic sublime. But before the fog machines, the leather-wrapped platform boots, and the whispered reverence at Palais de Tokyo, Rick had a far less mythical beginning—one draped in imitation rather than innovation.

LET'S GET HONEST: RICK OWENS STARTED BY MAKING KNOCK-OFFS.

In the early '90s, long before the “glunge” (glamour + grunge) aesthetic had a name, Owens was producing low-budget garments in Los Angeles. His label, at the time, was stocked in small Hollywood boutiques and had one core strategy: recreate the runway at a retail price. Chanel-style jackets, Helmut Lang-esque shapes, Ann Demeulemeester silhouettes—all filtered through a raw, deconstructed West Coast lens. The references weren't just “inspired by”—they were near facsimiles. For a designer now worshipped for his originality, that origin is—if nothing else—deeply ironic.

He wasn't alone, of course. L.A. in the '90s was a city of high-low hustle, where streetwear kids and fashion hopefuls built labels off the back of existing icons. But while others faded, Rick transcended that moment. The turning point came when Vogue's André Leon Talley featured Owens in 2002, and his first Paris runway followed not long after, backed by Michèle Lamy (his muse and partner) and the Parisian establishment.

Still, for fashion insiders, that early chapter is hard to forget—and harder to forgive entirely. Because in fashion, imitation isn't just unoriginal—it's nearly sacrilegious. The industry thrives on reinvention, yes, but also on authorship. And Rick's initial work often blurred the line between reinterpretation and creative plagiarism.



What redeems him, perhaps, is that he never stayed there. Once in Paris, Rick Owens reinvented himself. He built a new language—one of architectural coats, sculptural leather, monastic draping, and eerie romanticism. He stopped quoting other designers and began referencing something deeper: architecture, mythology, dystopia, desire. His palette went from mimicking trends to defining them. He learned how to be subversive without imitation, how to create without compromise.

BUT THAT DOESN'T ERASE THE PAST—IT COMPLICATES IT.

The irony is rich: the man now heralded as fashion's "dark visionary" once traced other people's silhouettes. And while many prefer to gloss over that era, pretending Owens emerged fully formed from a cloud of fog and fringe, the truth is more jagged. His origin story isn't glamorous—it's gritty. It's opportunistic. It's undeniably human.

And maybe that's part of the appeal. Because if Rick Owens can go from knock-off creator to cult demi-god, perhaps there's hope for anyone trying to find their voice in a saturated, cynical industry. Still, let's not romanticize it too much. Greatness built on mimicry is still mimicry—until it isn't.

FINAL THOUGHT?

Rick Owens is a master now, but he wasn't always. And fashion, like any art form, remembers everything. Even the parts we'd rather keep in the archives.







"TECH GLADE" OR TECH GIMMICK?

A DEEP DIVE INTO

TRAVIS SCOTT & RICK OWENS' TOUR LOUNGE

Rick Owens's modular "Tech Glade" for Travis Scott's Circus Maximus/Utopia tour arrives like a portable cathedral—raw, brooding, and undeniably theatrical. With its heavy Batipan plywood frame, black French wool army blankets, and looming canopy, it evokes Owens's signature Brutalist aesthetic infused with Michèle Lamy's "woodland sanctuary" inspiration.

Travis describes it in *Architectural Digest* as "an extension of my brain ... something comfortable and all-encompassing," designed for creation, downtime, screen-time and conversation. Conceptually, it's brilliant—every piece modular, every element purposeful: plush cushions, phone-charging ports, large-screen TV and a fully integrated studio by Damien Quintard. It's backstage tech meets spiritual escape.

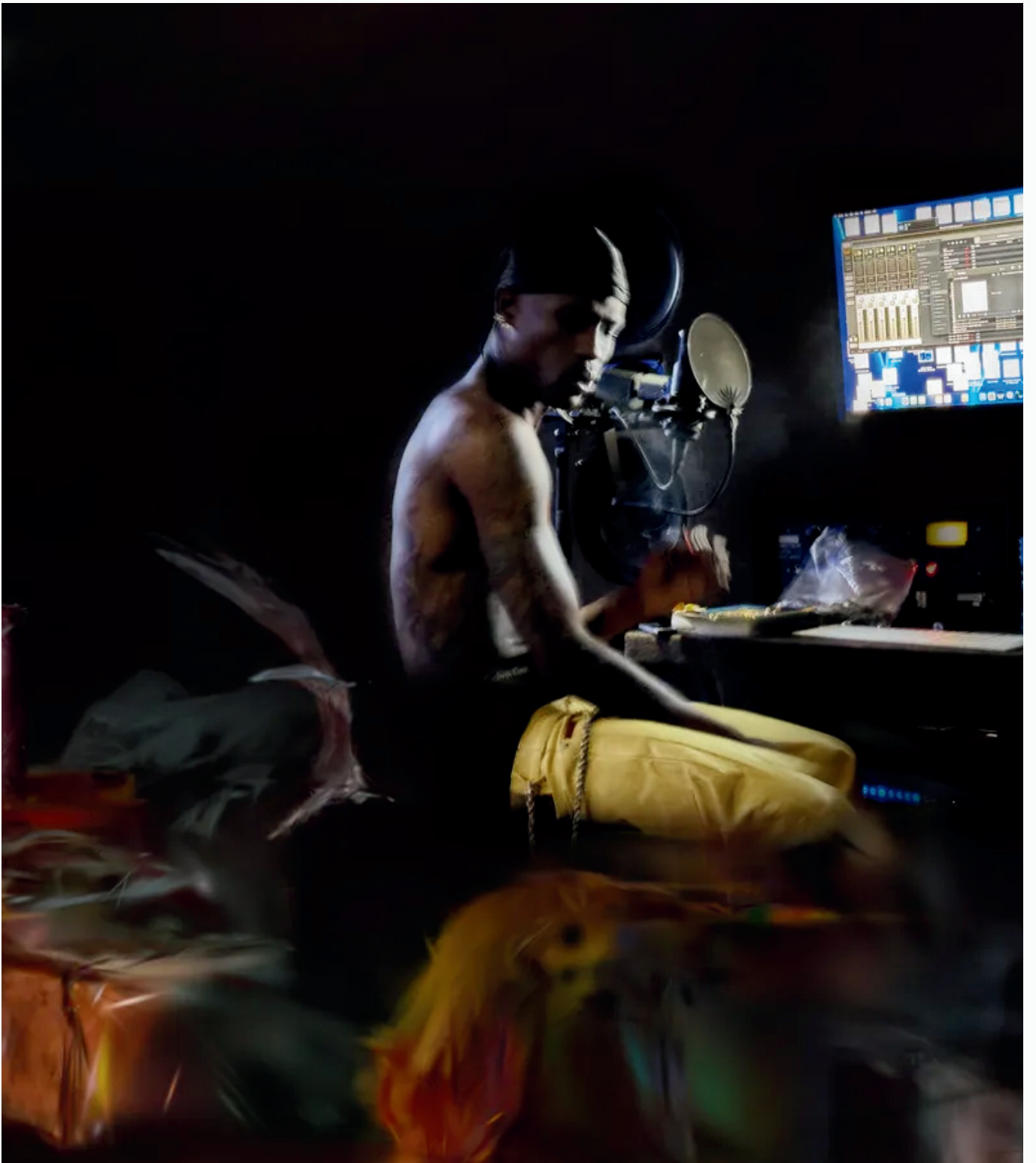
Yet its scale and gloom mirror Owens's darker theatricality. Reddit buzzed: some fans were both awed and unnerved—"scary AF," one wrote, likening it to a haunted forest teahouse. Others marveled at its portability, wondering how such an imposing structure folds onto trucks. That tension—between wonder and weariness—is central to its story.

On tour, the Tech Glade functions as a cocoon and creative hub. But for crew and roadies, it's a logistical beast. Modules must be packed, shipped, rebuilt—city after city. Utility is there, but at cost. Is it comfort? Or a cumbersome stunt?



Still, the project's lifecycle is revealing. After touring, it moves to Salon94 in New York as part of an Owens Furniture exhibit. In that shift—from backstage to gallery—the Tech Glade sheds some practicality and gains art-world legitimacy.

It transitions from tour prop to design object, blurring lines between utility and exhibit.



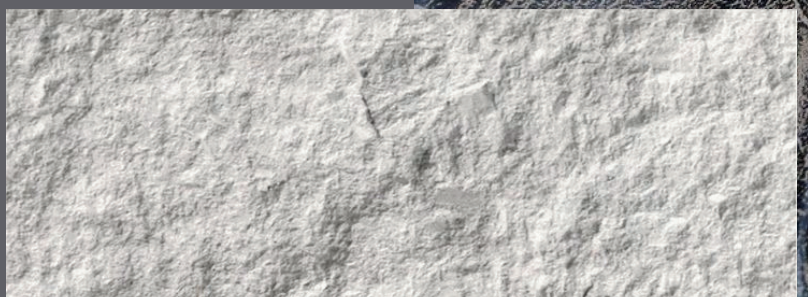


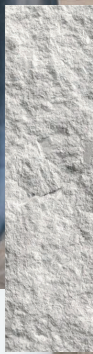




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RICK OWENS







PORTERVILLE FW24: DYSTOPIAN UTOPIA DRAPED IN PERSONAL HISTORY

Rick Owens chose a deeply personal setting for Porterville—his cavernous Paris home—marking 25 years since his brand's inception and anchoring the collection in autobiographical weight. Named after his California hometown, Owens uproots us into a world shaped by a harsh childhood, intolerance, and operatic escapism—where both brutality and sanctuary exist in tension .

This collection is less about color, more about surface. Heavy cashmere knit bodysuits cocoon models in softness, while recycled alpaca and merino "spacesuits" feel otherworldly. Shearling capelets and mohair coats recall military blankets from Owens's early LA days—plush yet protective, draped yet defined. The denim pieces are standout: 13oz Japanese denim is treated with wax and foil, rendering it stiff yet shimmering—raw technique meets couture sheen.

Owens's mastery lies in contradiction. Shoulders swell into horned, insectoid forms; boots inflate into alien-like extensions; padded shapes and rounded orb stoles hover around bodies like ritual sculptures. He toys with proportion: cropped bombers tighten the waist while ballooned pants distort the leg, all underpinned by gloved rigidity—a brutalist fantasy grounded in fabric .

Every piece feels tactile, elemental: hoses of rubber, liquid-leather jackets with blistered lamb texture, dense wool outer shirts praised for their heft and structure by wearers .

What makes Porterville uniquely Rick is its narrative layering. It's not dystopian for dystopia's sake—it's sculpted storytelling. From childhood regret to futurist mythos, Owens fuses biography with brutality. He rejects "airport beauty," pairing fashion's sharp edge with emotional sincerity . His aesthetic remains authoritarian yet inclusive—villainous but hopeful, sculptural but tactile, brutal yet compassionate .

What makes Porterville FW24 not just compelling, but quietly revolutionary, is the way Rick Owens reușește să transforme codurile personale în declarații universale. This isn't fashion for fashion's sake. It's design rooted in autobiography, in tension, in a search for protection—and ultimately, liberation.

What makes Porterville FW24 so compelling is its refusal to separate fashion from the personal narrative. Rick Owens doesn't design to please the industry—he designs to excavate himself. This collection is not a return home in the sentimental sense, but a confrontation with it. Porterville, his hometown, becomes more than a location; it becomes a symbol of repression, queerness, tension, and ultimately, transformation. The clothes reflect that journey. They're not garments; they're emotional artifacts—built not only to clothe, but to shield, to challenge, and to liberate.

The silhouettes speak in volumes—literally and metaphorically. Inflated shoulders, horned sleeves, cocooned capes, orb-like stoles, and architectural boots don't follow the body—they redefine it. In Rick's world, beauty doesn't lie in the outline of the human form but in its distortion. These exaggerated proportions are not meant to flatter—they're meant to declare. It's a kind of sartorial defiance, where softness and aggression exist in the same breath.

Texture is everything. Materials are chosen not for trend, but for sensation. Waxed Japanese denim crackles like industrial foil under the lights, while washed calfskin collapses softly, offering both armor and vulnerability. Recycled bicycle tires are transformed into ritualistic skirts; boiled wools and heavy mohair feel like modern relics. There's an intimacy to the fabrics—these aren't just to be seen, but to be worn, touched, lived in. Owens isn't designing seasonal pieces; he's sculpting emotional infrastructure.

What further sets this collection apart is Owens' ability to seamlessly integrate subcultural codes into high fashion without diluting their meaning. Collaborations with underground artisans—latex bootmakers, BDSM-inspired leather workers—don't come off as costume or provocation. They feel fluent, lived-in, respectful. His work doesn't appropriate—it amplifies the language of the outsider, elevating it with reverence and intent.

There is a calculated discomfort that runs through Porterville. The casting, the silhouettes, the color palette—it's all designed to dislodge expectations. But rather than alienate, this discomfort invites. It forces the viewer to reconsider the boundaries of elegance, to embrace asymmetry, to acknowledge beauty in unease. Owens doesn't offer fantasy; he offers truth wrapped in design.

Ultimately, what makes Porterville FW24 work so potently is its emotional clarity. Behind every exaggerated form and heavy textile is a raw, personal motive. These aren't clothes built for commerce—they're built for catharsis. Owens shows us that fashion doesn't have to flatter the body to empower it. It just has to reflect the soul—and maybe protect it a little too.





ETERNAL STRUGGLE IN FABRIC: RICK OWENS' SISYPHUS SHOW UNPACKED

Rick Owens' Sisyphus collection debuted at Palais de Tokyo with an intensity that felt like a philosophical ambush. Strobe lights and industrial percussion transformed the space into a living paradox: part dystopian ritual, part runway rebellion. In this immersive terrain, the clothes didn't just appear—they surfaced, as if born from grit and existential grind.

From the first look, the show broadcast complexity: raw-hemmed tunics slashed into ethereal togas, earth-toned wools layered over bare torsos, and bondage-like straps draped across skin, echoing the myth of endless labor. It wasn't fashion mimicking philosophy—it was clothing embodying it. Tunics fell apart by design, skirts morphing from broken jeans, their frayed edges dangling like reminders of defeat and persistence .

Texture played the lead role. Dolly-hewn wools, parachute-like plastics, cracked bronze denim, chain-link skirts—the materials were mechanical but emotional, cold yet tactile. Owens chose surfaces that invite touch but resist tidy interpretation . Even the new footwear, massive translucent-soled boots and chunky runner hybrids, carried the weight of ritual and utility—tools made for hauling unseen boulders .

For insiders, the show felt brutally honest. Owens tapped into collective frustration—industry fatigue, emotional exhaustion—with the relentless beat and palette of grit. As one writer noted, the scene induced a “panicked trance,” a visceral echo of daily struggle . On Reddit, fans noted how the garments felt alive on the form; one praised the inclusive casting for showing how Owens' layers work across body types .

Despite the darkness, Sisyphus offered liberation through defiance. The shredded hems and deconstructed shapes didn't signal breakdown—they signaled freedom. By letting fabric unravel, Owens granted the wearer space to unravel—and rebuild. It was brutal, yes—but visionary in its composure.

Ultimately, Sisyphus succeeds because it isn't fashion dressed as depth—it's depth laid bare in fashion. These silhouettes ask viewers to confront tension: between armor and vulnerability, repetition and revolution. Owens didn't offer easy comfort—he offered catharsis. And in a world drowning in comfort, that's rare.





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SOBRIETY IN REBELLION: RICK OWENS' FW25 CONCORDIANS UNVEILED

Rick Owens' Fall/Winter 2025 presentation at Palais de Tokyo offered a striking pivot—a moment where his signature dystopian signature met a rare moment of introspective sobriety. In a season dominated by over-the-top spectacle, Concordians felt like a quiet wake-up call: still unapologetically Rick, but with an unexpected layer of introspection and refined restraint.

Walking in to David Bowie's multilingual "Heroes," the show's tone was set: a ritual of unity and fortitude in fragmented times. Models emerged in leather-lined bombers, their round shoulders and exaggerated collars referencing Owens's collaborations with Rimowa. These weren't just additions—they were structural reinforcements, a study in texture-forward utility that felt both intimate and fortified.

Central to Concordians was a balance between Owens's classic theatricality and real-world wearability. Leather fringe shorts, crafted by laser-cut artisanal techniques and layered beneath utilitarian chaps, recalled medieval chainmail—brutal and protective, but profoundly human. Meanwhile, rubber and chain-link skirts functioned as modern armor, and bronzed, cracked-surface denim hinted at urban decay meeting couture finish.

Owens drew from his own story—Solitude in Concordia, Italy—channeling it as creative fuel. The collection felt less like disruptive noise and more like a meditation on isolation's power to shape resilience. Modular layering, mixed textiles, and a muted palette gave depth without excess. Black remained dominant, but it felt tempered—warmer, more considered.

This season, Owens's proportions demanded attention: bombastic collars juxtaposed with sleek pants; voluminous outerwear over sharply tailored lines. It was a stark reminder that his signature is not shock—it's contradiction. Where Porterville roared with sculptural bravado, Concordians whispered with refined might. Critically, this collection performs a delicate dance between radical integrity and wearability. Owens reminded us that rebellion need not always be a shout—it can be a quiet shift in texture, a structural choice, or a tone change. Concordians is not fashion as spectacle, but fashion as thoughtful armor.

In a moment where indulgence saturates the runway, Rick Owens offered clarity. This was not a retreat but a reset—proof that power can lie in subtlety, and that sophistication can coexist with edge. Concordians isn't just a collection; it's a statement: rebellion is richer when it's grounded.



MICHELE LAMY: THE ENIGMATIC POWERHOUSE BEHIND THE OWENS EMPIRE

She moves through fashion's undercurrents like a modern-day oracle—unpredictable, uncontrollable, unforgettable. Born in Jura, France, in 1944 to a lineage steeped in couture craftsmanship (her grandfather worked for Poiret), Michele Lamy began life far from fashion's centers. She studied law, defended clients, and even tutored under philosopher Gilles Deleuze before swapping courtrooms for the energy of '70s New York and '80s Los Angeles.

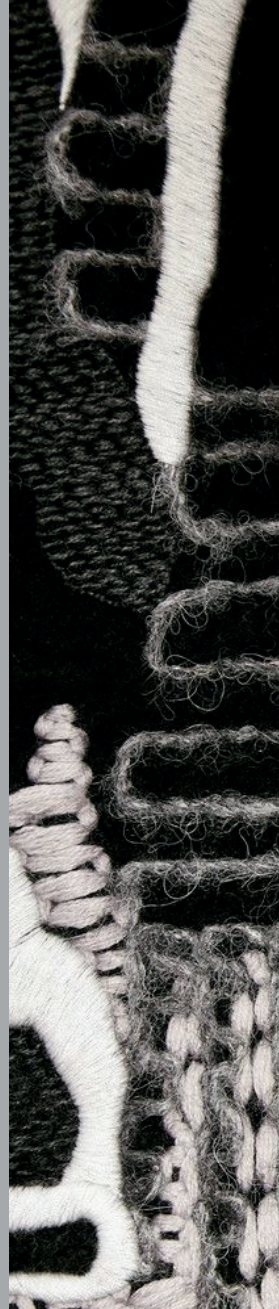
In LA she founded a cult-label and ran iconic nightlife spots like Café des Artistes—venues that pulsed with Bohemian freedom long before "cool" became a hashtag . It was here that a young Rick Owens entered her orbit as a pattern-cutter, and their partnership—business, personal, mythical—was forged . He credits her blunt realism and adventurous spirit as the spark that lit his creative fire.

Lamy despises the passive "muse" label—she's a collaborator, strategist, provocateur. Rick calls her "a mate more than a muse," acknowledging an equal that challenges him. She brought to the table her LA no-prisoners attitude, her bold aesthetic—tattooed fingers, gold grills, layered gothic-punk style—and the performance-art sensibility that has since become the Owens world's lifeblood .

It was Lamy who pushed Rick into underground subculture, from fetish scenes to boxing rings, threading his runway and furniture collections with authenticity and raw energy . She isn't a shadow on the runway; she's the texture behind it. As Vogue noted: "She can make a Costco feel as exotic as the moon" .

Her signature? A carefully assembled armor of statement accessories—weighty rings, sculptural headpieces, black kohl accents—paired with dramatic layers in rich fabrics and textures. She glides in oversized drapery, stark leather, tribal prints, and heavy jewelry—each piece telling a story of resilience and rebellion .





Her look is gothic priestess meets punk philosopher: black, but lit with flashes of gold. Tattoos peek from sleeves as punctuation. Her gold teeth flash between wise smiles. She carries herself like performance art—alive, alert, always watching—but never seeking attention. Instead, she commands it.

Michele Lamy turned Owens into a cultural juggernaut. She introduced boxing as ritual—a physical metaphor woven into runways and installations. Her furniture line, Lamyland, and installations at Venice Biennale brought brutalist tactility to art spaces

. She also mentors emerging talent: her early backing helped Gareth Pugh add luxury textures to his dark theatricality . She shows up in FKA Twigs' videos, LAVASCAR's albums, and museum shows—reminding us performance and fashion are inseparable.

Yes, she's grandiose. At times, the theatricality can border on performance art more than product. But that's precisely the point. In a world chasing virality, Lamy reminds us that presence is power. Her look isn't for the faint-hearted—it's a full-body proposition: think rebellion, ritual, intelligence, and raw sensuality all wrapped in black wool.

She doesn't carry Rick's head as a bag for shock alone—it's a statement: fashion is myth-making, and she writes the legend.



