

NATASHA ZINKO X DUOLTD

“SOBER” PART II – SPRING / SUMMER 2021

LONDON, United Kingdom—Dark times call for darker fashion. As the world continues to grapple with its new normal, the summer sun has ostensibly set on our brief sense of optimism. Longer nights are drawing in as the creeping chill of fear can be felt around the world. Perhaps, however, the only thing to fear is ‘fear’ itself. For Spring / Summer 2021, Natasha Zinko and DUOLtd is an exploration of that very notion, creating a pastiche of the hallmarks of fear and phobias; a satire of horror-genre iconography; a mirror held up to the absurdity of spooky terror and angst. The current news cycle, after all, makes scary movies seem like comic cartoons. An upcoming US presidential election and a possible second lockdown is the real, much more terrifying version of Nightmare Before Christmas.

This is the dark sequel to last season’s exploration of freedom, love and a spiritual sobriety told through a lens of the Great American Road trip, the ultimate symbol of optimism in reaching a hallowed destination—even more loaded with romance and longing given widespread international travel bans. This season, however, American Horror Story seems more apropos. The rosiness has dissipated into something altogether more gothic, much closer to home. The common tropes of bad omens, superstitions and gothic horror are given an irreverent spin.

The Addams Family, the seminal early ‘90s flick about a family unconcerned with fitting in, is a key point of reference. There are sinister floral Wednesday Addams dresses, perpendicular Gomez-like tailoring and long, sensual after-dark Morticia-esque gowns. Prairie-style dresses that seem frothy and girly at first, are in fact complete with shadows of themselves—two dresses sewn together to create a dual nature; dark and light; good and bad. Elsewhere, there are Beetlejuice striped silk robes, lilac-and-lemon lace artfully slashed and spliced together, as well as upcycled denim with a distinctly Frankensteinian spirit and plenty of austere black tailoring—sexy and sensual in equal measure.

Bats are also a leitmotif throughout the collection. Widely considered a cipher for ominous horror, they in fact represent the perception of things others cannot see, courtesy of their echo-location and ability to navigate in darkness. Here, they appear patent leather panels on the back of long, straight-cut tweed coats (a subversion of the terrifying Ladies Who Lunch uniform), dramatic caped wings on a suite of black tailoring, and even as fluttering wings on the back of DUOLtd’s signature mohair lumberjack shirts. They are also a metaphor for the collection’s hidden details. Look closer at a purple puffball dress, complete with frothy petticoat, and you’ll notice the print is made up of fanged kisses. Jewellery subtly and literally gives the middle-finger.

The number 13 and its association with Hollywood slasher-flicks may be considered unlucky to some—in fact there’s a word for the fear of it: triskaidekaphobia—but for Natasha and Ivan, it has always been a lucky number. Herein lies the playful double-takes of familiar symbols and American iconography, retold through personal experiences and cross-generational values. Elsewhere, a manic black cat is turned into a patchwork motif—inspired by the feral feline friend that Natasha and Ivan made during lockdown in their Odessa neighbourhood. Not everything is as it seems.

As a global pandemic brought the world to a sobering standstill, many designers have been socially distanced from their creative collaborators. For Natasha, however, the last few months have been spent with most important creative teammate: her teenage son, Ivan, design director of DUO Ltd. This collection is somewhat a sequel to the SS21 menswear collection, across-generational dialogue and reflection of the mood of the moment. The mother-and-son duo worked on every aspect of the collection together, from research to the imagery, stripping away outside influences and doubling down on common ground. It's been quality time with a creative output, an organic antidote to the pervasive, contrived attempts to be relevant to a youthful Gen Z clientele that so often plagues other fashion brands.

Chez Zinko, it's simply second nature. In fact, you could call it Zinko Family Values.

KEY STOCKIST LIST

SELFRIDGES - LONDON

HARRODS - LONDON

HARRODS MEN'S - LONDON

MAXFIELD - LOS ANGELES

THE WEBSTER - NEW YORK

LUISA VIA ROMA - FLORENCE

TOM GREYHOUND - PARIS

BIOGRAPHY

Natasha Zinko is a London based Fine Jewellery and Ready-to-Wear Designer. She is a graduate of Central Saint Martins, where she studied Jewellery Design. In September 2012, Natasha Zinko Launched her namesake RTW Collection which was immediately picked up by TSUM, Browns and Maxfields. DUO, the Men's Collection is a collaborative design with Natasha and her son Ivan G. Duo was launched in Spring 2019. The Collection is shown in conjunction with the Natasha Zinko Collection during Fashion Week.