

Cultural Daily

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Celebrating the American Dream: 50 Years of Ralph Lauren

Darlene Conte · Thursday, September 13th, 2018

Every day the news brings another cringe-worthy story, it feels like a nightmare from which we cannot awaken. Now, more than ever, we need something to believe in. We need, I dare say, some kind of miracle. You may think a fashion show is an unlikely place to find such a miracle, but after watching a humble man from the Bronx look back on his career last Friday night, it may be the sign we need.

Ralph Lauren has been an icon in the fashion industry for 50 years. That's five decades of inspiration, one-hundred fashion weeks of new lines that helped to define the style of three generations of men and women. He has single-handedly reinvented the industry by branching out to home furnishings, textiles and even paint. He has brought about change, not through his own hubris in talking about how great he is, but by quietly remaining true to his vision to live his dream and by doing so, reminding us to dream too.

Where better to celebrate a half-century of defining the style of our country than Central Park's Bethesda Terrace? It's architecture and beauty laid the perfect backdrop as the models descended the grand staircase, the clothes and the venue a mirror reflection of one another. The runway transcended its usual boundaries as the men, women, and children walked on Persian rugs, weaving through each other in vintage fabrics and patchwork tweed. Wide-collared jackets reflected turn of the century style in menswear while the women's dresses mixed gypsy boho prints with luxurious velvet that whispered Gatsby. It was quintessential Lauren; understated, eclectic, inventive, classic, and inviting. The couture gave way to ready to wear, and the second half of the show was no less inspired.

Comfortable jeans and colorful jackets, wool sweaters and scarves, all classic Lauren. Models of all ages and ethnicities began engaging with each other and the audience, and with all pretense dropped, the stoic strut was replaced by walking and smiling earnestly, and in the process, they transformed to become people with whom we could identify. They weren't simply showing the clothes of Ralph Lauren, they were telling the story of who we are as Americans, reminding us that the sum is greater than its parts.

Of course, the terrace was lined with celebrities excited to be sharing this special night. Among them were Steven Spielberg, Kate Capshaw, Robert DeNiro, Oprah Winfrey, Gayle King, Pierce Brosnan, Anna Wintour, Jessica Chastain, Anne Hathaway, Tom Hiddleston, Rose Byrne, Martha Stewart, Anderson Cooper, not to mention fashion icons Dianne Von Furstenberg, Vera Wang, Calvin Klein, and Donna Karan, all paying tribute to the man who has been out front for half a

century. Mr. Lauren took his bow at the end, embraced by his family and clearly moved by the outpouring of love and respect for all that he has accomplished. Later in the evening, Oprah Winfrey toasted him, saying, “The show was a bonus... The real reason we are all here is not for the show, it’s because of you... Your work these past 50 years has told the story of lives, the lives that we live and the lives that we aspire to. You care about the things that matter... Home... Freedom... Integrity.”

Ralph Lauren, the man, and the brand stand for these ideals because he believes in them, they are woven into the fabric of the clothes and the company. This remarkable anniversary show reminds us that has changed the way the world perceives us as Americans. There lies Mr. Lauren’s philosophy that goes beyond the scope of fashion, he lives and breathes the great line from Shakespeare, “We are the dreamers of the dream.”

Can it be that simple? What if how you perceive the world can help change it for the better? What is clear is this... The definition of a miracle is *an amazing product or achievement, or an outstanding example of something*. Ralph Lauren has achieved a miracle, and last night he reminded us that he always invites us to take that journey with him and it has made all the difference.

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