



Fashion

a true original

IN A FAST FASHION SEASON OF SWAPS, SIGNINGS AND LUXURY BUYOUTS, COULD JEREMY SCOTT'S APPOINTMENT AT MOSCHINO BE THE ULTIMATE COUP D'ETAT?

Text by MARK JACOBS Photography by MATT JONES

Jeremy Scott's Perrier is delicious.

I am in the very white living room of his Deco-modern Hollywood Hills home where sparkling French mineral water is served in a pink glass goblet from the Madonna Inn, the baroque central California theme motel. With me is a chair covered in long white goat hair styled with an oversized Oreo cookie pillow. A fireplace is bookended by a Ronnie Cutrone lithograph of Bugs Bunny as Carmen Miranda, and a photograph by Karl Lagerfeld of a young Scott on Coco Chanel's couch; he is wearing a counterfeit Chanel T-shirt given to him when he was a teenager by a French foreign exchange student visiting Kansas City, Missouri, where he grew up.

Next to the Memphis coffee table by Ettore Sottsass is one of Scott's most prized belongings, a white bust of Ludwig van Beethoven wearing a pair of sunglasses installed with a red LCD clock. A bust of Scott himself by the sculptor Kenny Hunter poses on the bench of a '30s Art Deco piano that was a birthday present and a housewarming gift from the actor Lisa Marie. There is also a large retouched photo by the artist Kesh, a live hamburger phone, and a zebra-skin rug laid head to head with a faux zebra-skin carpet. And then there is Jeremy Scott, seated on the opposite end of a white leather sofa, under a quilted flea market blanket screen-printed with Kenny Scharf glyphs. Scott wears Thé Vert by L'Occitane and drinks delicious Perrier from the bottle. He is fresh from SoulCycle, the high-profile spin studio with the name brand instructors. He loves "Angela."

This past December, Scott was named the creative director of Moschino, the Italian fashion house founded in 1983 by the late Franco Moschino. Scott announced the appointment via Instagram with a breaking news update from Spongebob Squarepants. It was the first time the designer had agreed

to such a role since debuting his eponymous collection in 1997, despite a history of distinguished collaborations with Adidas, Longchamp, Smart Car, Linda Farrow and Swatch. The alignment was perfect - and not just because Scott was a press office intern at Moschino in New York City during his last year studying at the Pratt Institute.

Moschino is built on humour, more specifically a tongue-in-cheek response to the '80s moment when fashion discovered a haughty new grandeur; its irreverent, often "anti-fashion" runway critiques included shopping bag statement dresses, conspicuous logo play, a fragrance campaign featuring a model sipping from a perfume bottle with a straw, and several garments made of clotted teddy bears. It is also one of the original hip-hop luxury brands, winning mention in the 1995 Junior M.A.F.I.A. single Get Money, when the Notorious B.I.G. addresses his "Moschino ho"; and in the 1996 Trackmasters remix of Loungin' featuring Total, that opens with the LL Cool J rap, "I heard about your man he like to lace you wit cream, Dolce Gabbana, Moschino wit Donna jeans."

A longtime vegetarian, Scott prefers a rebellious fashion sauté. He is the outsider's insider, with a bright mini-empire built on world class otherness. In 2001, he made the symbolic relocation from Paris, where he ignited his career, to Los Angeles, where he launched it. His high-contrast designs are beloved for the way they very playfully celebrate, tweak and augment the excesses of popular culture. There are winged high tops and Smart cars; television test pattern separates; peekaboo hands sunglasses; swollen sneaker tongues; "Adults Suck Then You Are One" pullovers; a collection inspired by Gregg Araki and another romancing Pebbles and Bamm-Bamm. Fall 2014's "gym locker room couture" includes full-bleed intarsia sweaters

of the Madballs gross-out toys from the mid-'80s. The Jeremy Scott vision is approaching a zenith, particularly with the recent addition of like-minded, top-flight co-conspirators like the stylist Carlyne Cerf de Dudzele, who matched jeans and Lacroix on Vogue Editor Anna Wintour's first cover in 1986. While very much a child of fashion, Scott is a breed apart. **Your earliest collections in Paris were fashion commentary - the bubble gum pink, the gold lamé, the Jeremy Scott dollar bills?** You're right. I never really thought about it.

Gold lamé is funny?

Especially at that moment when everything was minimal and gold was totally tacky for people. And so was fur. And I did a show of all gold and all mink fur. It was not expected.

You were talking to fashion people about fashion?

And they couldn't handle it. The fashion establishment thought it was hideous and tacky and did not get it. And then all of the young people got it and loved it and shot the clothes and styled the clothes and wore the clothes. And Bjork and Isabella Blow wore the clothes. It was my fourth show, so I do have to forgive people for not having a large enough body of work to understand what something means for me. And frankly, for most people it was my second show, because they only knew my white show which was one season before it. It was also a different world. It wasn't as media-ized and Internet-ed as it is today. But it was great. I did an extremely controversial show using elements that are ultimately not controversial! Gold just seemed so disgusting.

The bubble gum collection was called "Establishment?"

Yes, that show was about this is the establishment, this is what it looks like. This whole pink show and a riff on Lacroix and the pouf and pink poodles and the whole tra-la-la fashion thing.

Do you feel like a part of the fashion establishment

after being named as the head of a major house?

No. Isn't that funny? Who knows. Maybe I just have an outsider mentality. Maybe I'm used to being an outsider. Maybe I want to be an outsider. But I don't look at it like that. I just continue to create my own little world, my own little thing, and I'm very grateful and happy when people like it.

On your first visit to Milan upon beginning work at Moschino, you didn't get to visit the Moschino archives until the last minute, and then only for a brief walk-through. Yet while reverential, you didn't find it crucial. Why not?

I have a very clear understanding of what the brand is, what it's been, what it could be. I just needed to start work. I don't mean to sound dismissive - it's not that I'm not happy that they're there and that I don't look forward to spending time looking through them, but I am creating for today.

You have a great ease about this new role?

There's nothing to be scared of. There is a similar enough quality between what Franco stood for and who I am. In all of the huge long history of fashion, there are very few people who have ever had humor as part of their brand DNA. To have a satirical approach to fashion itself, where fashion becomes the commentary, that's a whole extra thing. Schiaparelli and Jean Paul Gaultier also have elements of humor, but not political social satire revolving around fashion itself. I function in a world of icons and iconography. That's how I see the world, that's how I live in the world, and that's how I express the world. And those icons can be McDonald's Golden Arches, Madonna, or a stop sign. They are around us all of the time. I like to take those things and create something new that's instantly recognizable and surprising. I think a lot of his work played with icons as well.

Your vision is very focused.

I'm glad to hear that. I don't really dissect it. Of course there's reasoning and mathematics to it, but this is just the way my brain works. I try to do what I purely believe is exciting. I try to put things out in the world that I think are missing. I try to shine the light on things that deserve to be shown. I think about things I would want to wear. I think about what my friends around me would like to wear. And all of those friends are different types. There are some that are mega-pop stars and there are some that are just cool people that most everyone won't have the good fortune to know. **Part of the Moschino brand DNA comes from Franco's response to fashion in the '80s. Is that perspective timeless or does today call for new humour and a new critical perspective?**

Fashion has only become more culturally relevant. It's more intense. It's that times a million. Now you go on everyone's Instagram and it's like, 'This present from Donatella! And these things at my shoot! And these Chanel buckles!'

Your first Moschino pre-collection stayed true to the brand's classic perspective. Pre-collections themselves are hilarious.

Ruh-dic-u-lous. What are these people trying to do to me? [laughs]

Had you ever done a pre-collection before?

Hell, no! Why would I bother! It's the most ridiculous thing in the world.

How is the collection different than prefall?

Prefall was an appetizer. The collection is the main course.

Why is Moschino different than Jeremy Scott?

For Moschino, it's a decadent glamorous woman. My Jeremy Scott girl is a pop star—you're a rock group, you're a girl group, you're a weird crazy male band that never existed but should have. I see Moschino having a richness, where as mine doesn't have to be rich. It can be scary or grimy or gross. Moschino seems like an obvious option for the aging-up Jeremy Scott girl like Katy Perry. She used to be all soft serve ice cream cones but as she matures her look streamlines. If she still wants some of that pop star playfulness now she has Moschino. And she loves Moschino already. And she was thrilled about this, actually. Her particularly.

Are the pop stars already claiming pieces?

Miley is really obsessed with the jacket bag with the sleeves. Rita is obsessed with the cow backpack. And as far as Nicki is concerned, she loves all Moschino. She's a Moschino girl. She has a really interesting take on the brand and its significance because of its huge hip-hop relevance. It's a reference from Biggie Smalls and all of the things she listened to when she was growing up.

Celebrities are a bizarre breed. Yet you have always been very at ease with them.

I think of myself as the Pop Star Whisperer. I just seem to have really good relations with pop stars, especially a female diva. I don't ever have any problems. I've always been able to handle it. [laughs]

Who have you wanted to meet that for whatever reason you haven't been able to get close to?

I would love to meet Dolly Parton.

You've never met? That seems unlikely.

I met a lookalike at Katy's birthday party that I thought was her and then Katy burst my bubble. But it looked so much like her and she was singing this song and it seemed so real. And then I told the fake Dolly, "I just saw you at the Hollywood Bowl! I can't believe we're meeting!"

Who else?

The president and first lady. They're pop culture icons. And I love Hillary Clinton.

I love the Madballs sweaters.

The green one is Slobulous.

Isn't he the biggest star in the Madballs universe?

I only like icons.

How do you plan to reinterpret the Moschino teddy bears?

I will surprise you.

Soon?

Not that soon but soon enough.

Have you tasted Moschino parfum?

[laughs] No, but I think that's the best campaign of all time.

Have you tasted a diamond?

No.

Do you have an affection for Bijan?

Of course. Who doesn't?

What is your fantasy remodel for Maison Moschino, the brand's hotel in Milan?

Next question.

What is your fantasy for a Los Angeles Moschino flagship store?

An LA store would be very close and near and dear to my heart and I would want to make it very special.

What advice did fellow Los Angeles resident Hedi Slimane give you about Moschino?

He's been a friend for a long time and I thought I should talk to him because he's obviously been through this a couple of times. He was super sweet, like a total sweetheart big brother. He was like 'this is going to be amazing, I totally get it, I think the young people are going to get it, it's so smart'. He thought it was a perfect fit. And then we talked about how things work for him working from here. I wasn't hesitating but it made me feel nice and peaceful about it.

Is it ever tricky to recognise the silliness of fashion while making a life of it?

No. Of course I realise how ridiculous it is.

But you fully live it.

I am and I'm not. I am in some respects but I'm still an outsider. I think I'm more of a pop guy than a fashion guy even though by trade I'm a fashion designer. I don't only go to restaurants that fashion people go to. I don't only do things that fashion people do. I still do my own thing.

Are you pierced?

No.

Your ears?

Well yes, but I haven't worn earrings for so long.

Do you have any tattoos?

No. I'm very rare for not having tattoos.

Why do you text and e-mail in all caps?

Because I think it looks better that way.

When did that start?

I've been doing it forever. I think I'm generally very excited so I think it expresses my excitement. But I also just like the way it looks.

You said that your New Year's trip to Maui was your first vacation ever. What does that mean?

E-v-e-r. It means prior to that I had never as an adult taken a vacation where I'm not doing work, singing for my supper or obliged to do an interview. I was not obliged to do anything except be where I was and rest. It was wonderful. Heaven.

Are you good with quiet?

I am.

