

# YUIMA NAKAZATO

## Couture Collection Autumn/Winter 2022-23



On July 7, 2022, YUIMA NAKAZATO presented its 12<sup>th</sup> couture collection “BLUE” at Haute Couture Week in Paris. This was the second physical runway show held in Paris after a two-years hiatus caused by the global pandemic.

Creative direction: YUIMA NAKAZATO

Styling: Robbie Spencer

Music: Ryuichi Sakamoto, Senjan Jansen

Production support for the “BLUE” paper sculpture: Seiko Epson Corporation

\* This sculpture was made based on an A4-size sketch of the Earth drawn by Yuima Nakazato, which was then magnified 200x and printed for display. It will be recycled and reused leveraging Epson’s technology.

### Designer’s message

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My heart has been made heavy by all the things I’ve read and seen from around the world these past six months. Overcome by feelings of confusion and powerlessness, all I could do was turn away from my phone.

My hands, however, continued creating; sketching pictures, shaping clay, tearing up old fabric to be woven and dyed anew.

I suspect I found the process of trial and error, of attempting to create something with my own two hands, to bring some comfort—almost as if I were striving against this age and all its unceasing flood of digitization.

When faced with unanswerable questions, ancient peoples turned to avatars for answers.

One small ethnic group, for example, believed that birds were the personifications of the gods, watching over us from above, their cries warning of calamities to come.

In a similar vein, the shamans, who served as bridges to other worlds, were conveyors of a certain something that the rest of us could never see. Wondering what messages they would have for us in this day and age, I devoted myself to my work.

The thought occurred to me that I would like to create this collection in blue—the blue of the planet Earth.

To our eyes, the sky and the sea both appear blue, but this is nothing more than a visual phenomenon.

Dipping a piece of cloth into the ocean will not turn it blue. This color is something of a mystery—we can see it with our eyes, and yet it doesn’t really exist.

Wearing blue garments, I thought, might almost make a person feel as if they were draped in messages from one of the avatars of old.

We created this collection by using dead stock—materials without a purpose, left waiting in storage due to damage, overproduction, or a myriad of other factors.

While each of them is special, attaching actual value to them is difficult.

With a small shift in perspective, however, they can become something entirely new.

I wanted to create something beautiful from these dregs—from something that would usually be regarded as little more than industrial waste. That perspective is something I wanted to challenge through this collection.

The glimpses of sky visible through the buildings outside my window in Tokyo brought to mind the rest of our shared planet. Almost in a state of prayer, I worked towards the creation of this collection.

Yuima Nakazato

### Creating a better future through garments

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#### Dynamic design

The body is constantly engaged in a process of self-renewal. If we treat garments as extensions of our bodies, then wouldn't it make sense for them to change alongside us? This question is one that has driven Yuima throughout his career, and a hint concerning its answer came from a surprising place: the kimono. These traditional Japanese garments are never actually finished, so to speak—they are constantly being repaired, darned, and patched. Sleeves get replaced, the *obi* gets adjusted, and hems get shortened. Such potential for alteration ensures that kimonos can fit people of all shapes and sizes. With transformation built into the very heart of its existence, the kimono was perfectly suited to inspire the creation of Yuima's philosophy of dynamic design, the realization of which can be seen across the entirety of this collection.

#### TYPE-1

Developed by YUIMA NAKAZATO, the TYPE-1 garment production system eschews the traditional needle-and-thread approach and instead assembles garments using special accessories, thus enabling easy attachment and detachment of materials. By modifying the design to suit the individual, it is possible to deliver a one-of-a-kind item to many wearers. Furthermore, this system allows for only the damaged part of a garment to be replaced when necessary, an approach which greatly extends the lifetime of each piece. We believe this system encourages anyone to become a garment producer while also supporting the diversity of garment creators and wearers.

#### Rectangular patterns

All fabrics are produced as rectangles. Therefore, utilizing rectangular patterns when creating garments enables us to eliminate the fabric loss that usually occurs during production. In this collection, we tried to employ rectangular patterns wherever possible, an approach inspired by the fact that the kimono is made solely from rectangles. While a single rectangle is ill-suited to clothe the human body, a collection of rectangles joined together can result in a garment that can fit anyone. Throughout this collection, the application of western tailoring techniques further serves to create pieces that match the contours of the human body.

#### Biosmocking

Brewed Protein™ textile, a synthetic protein material specifically designed and produced by Japanese bio-startup Spiber, can freely deform a fabric's shape by precisely controlling the supercontraction (shape transformation) characteristics of a textile through digital fabrication. Fusing this approach with traditional kimono production techniques such as the use of indigo dye, lacquer, and tie-dyeing allows us to balance shape retention with flexibility and improve material biodegradability by shifting away from petroleum-based inks, resulting in a further demonstration of Biosmocking's value as a garment production technology.

While petroleum-derived materials such as polyester are able to maintain their shape via heat processing, they are difficult to dye with natural dyes. By comparison, synthetic protein materials like Brewed Protein textiles can be dyed with natural dyes, and the shape of these materials can be controlled through Biosmocking. New techniques discovered through the creation of this collection have enabled novel expressions that combine the characteristics of both natural-derived and petroleum-derived fibers. We believe that this accomplishment represents an exciting new step forward for Brewed Protein materials.

#### Respect and inheritance of craftsmanship

Through joint research with local craftsmen, we actively incorporated traditional handicrafts that supported Japanese kimono culture—such as Kiryu's split weaving, Tokushima's indigo dyeing, Kyoto's use of lacquer, and Kiryu's

horizontal embroidery—into our designs. It is our hope that adopting these methods will help inspire their preservation for future generations.

#### Utilization of surplus inventory

For this collection, we asked various companies—from fabric manufacturers to apparel brands—to let us use their surplus fabric (known in the industry as “dead stock”). We received a variety of items, ranging from damaged fabrics that could no longer be sold, to fabrics that had been consigned to storage due to lack of intended end-use. Since these sorts of materials have low (if any) perceived value, it is highly likely that they would have been discarded eventually. With this collection, however, we wanted to explore how changing perspective could enable the creation of value from something previously deemed worthless.

#### Mono-material garment production

By visiting garment processing facilities and recycling centers to see how garments disposed of as household waste or as surplus inventory are handled, we came to realize the importance of designing clothes with consideration for how they will be treated once they become waste or are upcycled.

Wherever possible, the pieces in this collection feature mono-materials, and we have also endeavored to avoid sewing different types of materials together. This approach should result in garments which are easier to recycle and which have a lower chance of ending up at a landfill or in the incinerator.

#### Hand-drawn sketches and digital printing

Once again, Yuima drew dozens of pen-and-paper design sketches this season to help visualize the abstract images in his mind. Digital textile printing technology was used to print these delicate handwritten sketches onto the fabric without losing their unique impact. Unlike regular printing, which requires the use of enormous quantities of water, digital textile printing technology is achieved using much less water, resulting in high creative expressiveness with a low environmental impact.

### **Designer profile**

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Born in 1985, Yuima Nakazato graduated from the Royal Academy of Fine Arts Antwerp in 2008, before founding YUIMA NAKAZATO Co., Ltd. in 2015. In 2016, Yuima was formally selected as a guest designer for Haute Couture Week. Since then, he has continued presenting his collections at Paris Fashion Week, offering his trademark fusion of technology and craftsmanship. From 2021, Yuima initiated the FASHION FRONTIER PROGRAM, an educational project for ambitious, next-generation fashion designers. Yuima seeks to address social issues while pursuing cutting-edge fashion through his collections presented at Haute Couture Week.

### **Information**

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Official Instagram account:

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