

"I must tell you that I am not at all interested in clothes," ventured Simone de Beauvoir in 1960. "I have so many other things to think about." And yet the carefully composed ensembles of the Left Bank feminist philosopher belied her claim to sartorial nonchalance. As in fact, De Beauvoir's appearance was a deliberate articulation of her complex public/private persona—a pared-back version of the timelessly chic Parisian woman's wardrobe nuanced by markers of her bold adventures in travel, sex and intellectualism.

With her tailored tweed dresses, Persian lamb coats, and subtle yet exotic jewellery acquired on escapades abroad, she created a stylish double entendre marked by history on the one hand, yet geared towards a liberated future of her own imagining on the other.

So too does LOEWE's Fall Winter 2020 precollection gesture towards a non-conformist spirit, fascinated by culture and history yet with a yen for taking control of one's own destiny. Its key inspiration is a voluminous Victorian baby's dress, delicately pin-tucked so as to create an exaggerated A-line shape, which offers a playful lens through which to consider the pragmatic styles of a cooler weather, trans-seasonal collection.

As such, an array of classic British outerwear from trenchcoats to peacoats have been recreated through this whimsical trapeze-shaped prism. Doll-like day dresses, blouses and wide-legged trousers fan out in pleats and gathers, billowing from elbows and waists. Meanwhile, full-length shearling coats take on the wasp-waisted hourglass shape of precisely tailored riding habits, making play with their aristocratic associations and bringing in feminine sensuality. Each makes their singular statement alone, without the need for fussy layering.

The house's own personality is defined by the quiet insistence of craft bringing artful detail to everyday garments: such as an embroidered eyelet with a pearl suspended inside the fabric of a peasant's blouse, or a knitted-silk funnel neck dress embellished with a deconstructed pearl necklace.

In leather goods, the collection's spirit is articulated in the new Balloon, Horseshoe and Flamenco bags which mix functionality with playful textures and fresh outlines, and welcome the kind of charms that render utilitarian objects proudly individual.

