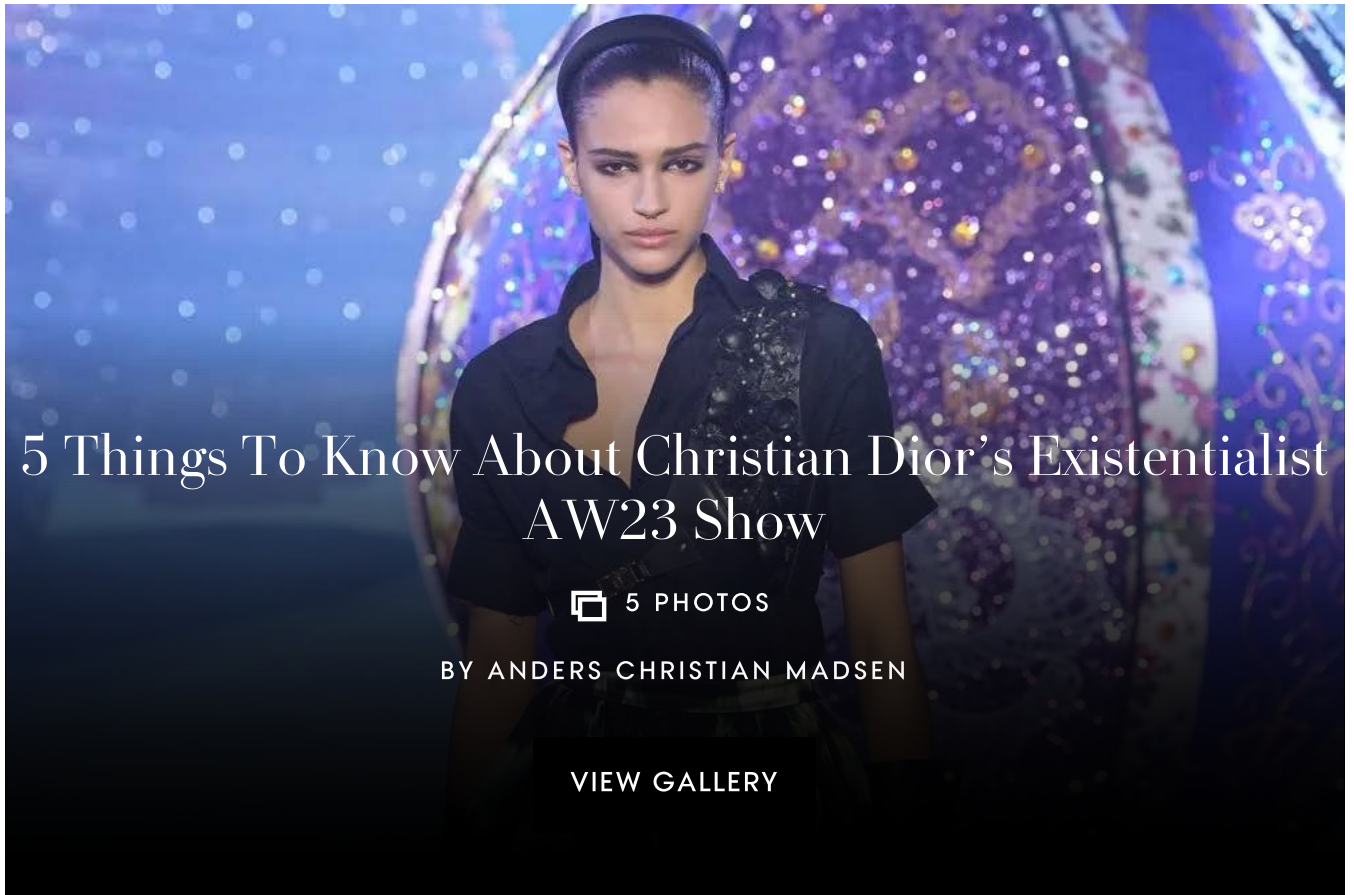
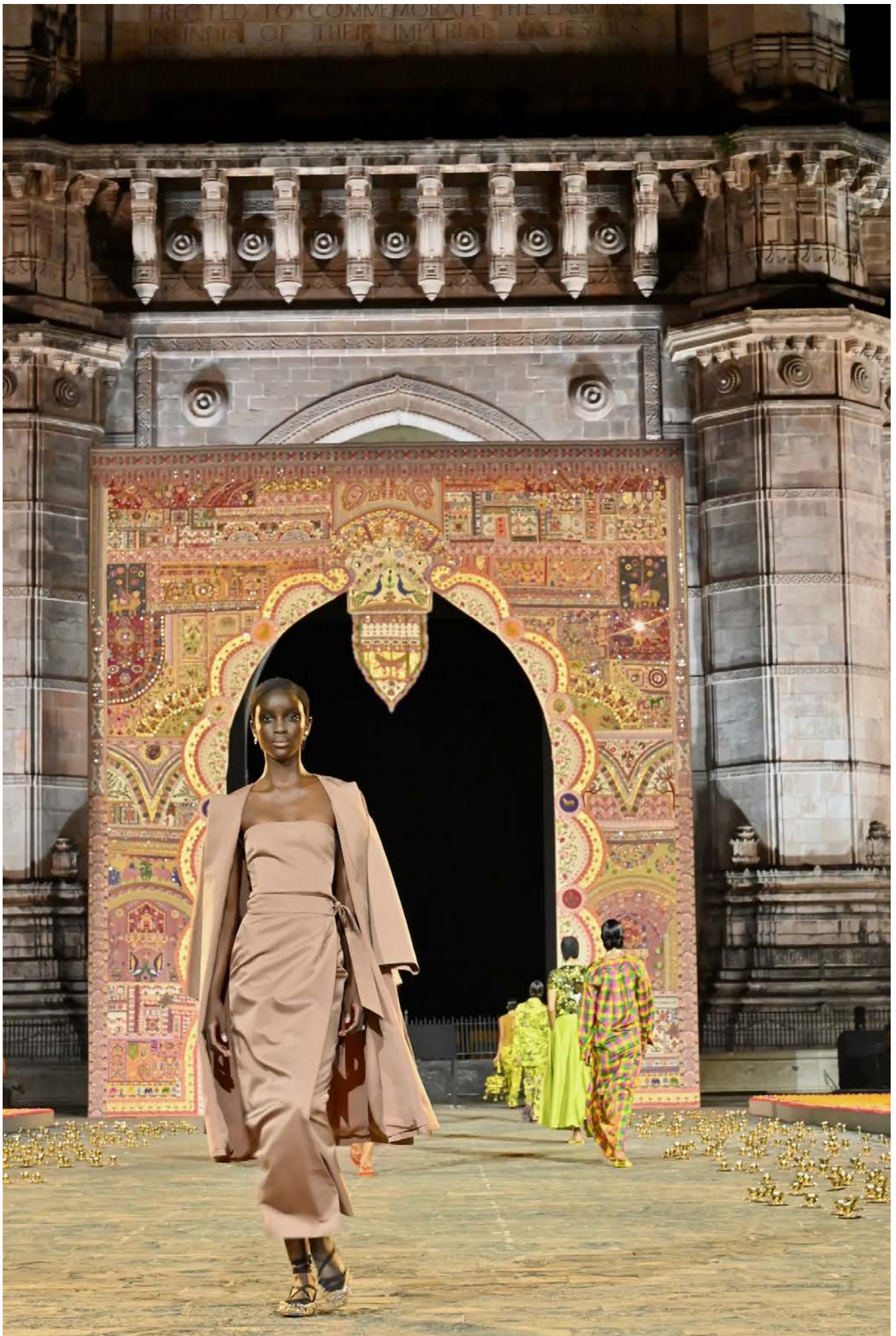


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Maria Grazia Chiuri's destination Cruise shows for Dior celebrate the craftsmanship of artisans and heritage ateliers around the world, from Seville to Athens. For 2023, fans of Dior and dazzling handiwork alike are in for a treat, as today the Parisian maison

staged a pre-fall show in Mumbai, in celebration of India's excellence in embroidery, embellishment and textiles. Laura Hawkins was in the heat-drenched city to take in the spectacular show alongside local A-listers and international stars.





Rubina A. Khan/Getty Images



The show was held at Mumbai's Gateway of India monument

The relationship between India and Dior goes back to the time of the Parisian maison's founder, who in 1955 designed the asymmetric sari-inspired Soirée de Lahore dress, adorned with metallic thread and diamanté crystals. The brand's subsequent creative directors have also been captivated by the country. Marc Bohan staged Dior fashion shows in Mumbai and Delhi in April 1962 (where models exited an Air India plane wearing haute couture and floral garlands) and Gianfranco Ferré, who travelled from Milan to India in the early '70s, looked to India's vibrant jewel tones and embellishments in his 1996 Indian Passion collection. For pre-fall 2023, Chiuri presented her collection outdoors in the balmy evening heat at the historic Gateway of India, a ceremonial arch-monument built in the early 20th century in the style of 16th-century Gujarati architecture, which is the most popular tourist attraction in the city. The catwalk was lined with carpets of vibrant marigolds, and had its own miniature arch adorned with a patchwork of fabrics, a nod to Toran, a decorative tradition of suspending welcoming wall hangings at the entrance to Indian homes.



Rubina A. Khan/Getty Images



Dior collaborated with female trailblazers on the ground

The collection celebrated Dior's collaboration with the Chanakya School of Craft, a Byculla-based nonprofit founded by Monica Shah and Karishma Swali in 2016, where more than 700 women have enrolled in an embroidery curriculum encompassing more than 100 types of stitching. It forms part of the embroidery house Chanakya Atelier, which Chiuri first began working with two decades ago. During her creative tenure at Dior, she has collaborated with the Chanakya School of Craft on breathtaking ready-to-wear and textile art for several recent haute couture shows in collaboration with artists Judy Chicago, Eva Jospin, Olesia Trofymenko, Mickalene Thomas and Indian artists Madhvi and Manu Parekh. Before the show, guests toured the Chanakya School of Craft's ateliers, where students and master artisans demonstrated their skill in crochet, metal work, beading, block painting and embroidery.



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The collection celebrated Indian sartorial tradition

Think of the collection as sartorial cartography, mapping and tracing the artistic traditions and visual landscapes of India. It abounded in relaxed day- and eveningwear looks, which were also worn on the front row by Dior's Indian A-listers: Nehru collar shirting and bar jackets, sari-inspired asymmetric gowns and lean tabards, opulent evening jackets in jewel-tone silks woven by sari artisans in Tamil Nadu and pencil skirts swathed in dense sequins, beading and Zardozi, embroidery in metallic thread. "The idea was to work in a pure line," explained Chiuri backstage. A Dior Toile de Jouy fabric was reimagined with a tropical Indian landscape, a striking pink somewhere between fuchsia and neon celebrated Indian rani pink, and peacock and floral prints evoked Bollywood film posters



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It was an A-list affair

A host of global A-listers sat front row at Dior's show, from Sonam Kapoor to Naomi Ackie, Jessie Buckley to British *Vogue* cover star and birthday girl Simone Ashley, Cara Delevingne to Charithra Chandran, Maisie Williams to Laetitia Casta. Kapoor's top Mumbai tip? "Chaat at Elco." The A-list energy doesn't stop at the Dior show. This weekend also sees the opening of the Nita Mukesh Ambani Cultural Centre gallery, a hotly anticipated cultural landmark bankrolled by the billionaire Ambani family.



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Pearls are a girl's best friend

Like Jaipur, Mumbai has a long history connected to jewellery making and the diamond trade. But on the runway in the Indian city, Chiuri advocated for strings of pearls worn as chokers, whether with a casual white vest top or a woven silk shirt.

Fashion

Dior

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