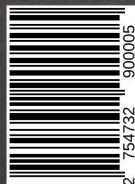


5' ELEVEN"

SPRING SUMMER 2023

Miao Ziyi
wearing KENZO

UK £22



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PRINTED IN THE UK

ROKSANDA ILINČIĆ

words by CHARLIE NEWMAN

portrait by QUENTIN JONAS

In a world of fickle trends and questionable capital one thing remains constant – the seasons. In the fashion world, an industry that celebrates and survives off change, only a small handful of designers continue to push their customers out of their comfort zone whilst simultaneously serving them flawless designs they can't live without season after season. Serbian-born (in what was then Yugoslavia), but London-based designer, Roksanda Ilinčić is one of them.

Born in Belgrade, Ilinčić has always found joy and solace in the freedom of expression. As a child she would meticulously watch and guide her mother as she got ready, *"I think that my mum would have been a fashion designer in a different life. Fashion was always a big passion and she had an intuitive way of dressing up and enjoying it in a very free and creative way."* Even now she recognizes the profound influence her mother has on her designs today, *"I guess that was something I was observing from a young age and is still present within my collections. That connection with family, with roots and a sense of belonging."*

Her mother also passed on her appreciation for art onto her daughter, an area of interest she explored further when studying History of Art at high school, and which lit somewhat of an *"awakening"* inside of her. Ilinčić then delved that bit further into it and went on to study Architecture at the Faculty of Applied Arts at the University of Arts in Belgrade, all the while pouring over the pages of fashion magazines. Time and time again she would read about the lauded Master's degree in womenswear at Central Saint Martins, and so in 1999 she enrolled, joining the long list of celebrated alumni who were also taught under the esteemed late Fashion Design Professor Louise Wilson, a list Ilinčić believes is a *"pure testament to her and how incredible she was."* Whilst some young designers crumbled under Louise's *"tough mother love"* style of teaching, Ilinčić thrived, sharing a *"special bond"* with her *"unorthodox"* teacher. New to England, she was something of an outsider at CSM but this only caught Louise's eye even more, *"She liked it when people were different, different points of view, different cultures, different languages."* Whilst Ilinčić misses

Louise's presence greatly, she's never lost sight of the vision Louise so encouraged, a vision celebrating multiculturalism imbued through a multi-disciplinary approach to fashion design.

Ilinčić may describe CSM as a *"groundbreaking"* opportunity for her, but nevertheless she still stuck to her roots, never swaying too far from her architectural eye. It's impossible to ignore how much both art and architecture inform her designs – the way they move through and encompass the space, how they support the form. Her designs reach far beyond style and transform fabric into sculpture. Her design process is centred upon *"creating something that feels like a building, creating a space, that is taking a space and creating a language into a space."* For Ilinčić, architecture is all about *"bringing a certain sanctuary, refuge or place that is protecting us from the outside the world and I always try to embody this in my designs. I always want women to feel the same wearing my designs, in their own homes and safe places."* She favours *"fluid architecture that doesn't have many walls, a space to breathe and air to flow."* and this is evident in her flagship store on Mount Street, founded in 2014 and designed in collaboration with Sir David Adjaye. Her designs are constructed with the same values, *"I rarely have a corset, only if I have to. I always try different ways to make things light. Anything that is particularly sculptural or voluminous I always cheat and use particular fabrications or lots of padding with petticoats and support that is happening underneath the dress."*

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a building, creating a space,
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Just like her designs, when it comes to Ilinčić's shop all does not meet the eye. Unlike the neighbouring luxury brands that surround her Mayfair flagship, from the outside you would be forgiven for thinking it is a gallery, for you won't find a faceless mannequin donning one of her best-selling dresses in the store window, but a piece of art or sculpture by one of her resident female artists. Ilinčić admits that *"eyebrows were raised"* when she chose to make this bold business move, but it worked. *"What is so wonderful is that the customers responded to it so well. Those art pieces that I was presenting in the window didn't push them away, on the contrary it made them more curious to come in and discover the whole story."* Today luxury brands are hungry for artist collaborations but it was Ilinčić who forged this pioneering path from the very outset of her career. *"At the time when I started this whole dialogue with my customers and people in the industry, it was hard to persuade artists or people working with different disciplines to join me and create something unique and special. I'm a true believer that when you get many hands, many minds, many souls, many hearts involved in the same project, that's when the project is the best. So it took some persuasion at the beginning, but I give credit to London because there are so many creatives here who are very open-minded, maybe more open-minded than other places in the world. I was lucky enough to find my people early on and slowly build a legacy and space where people and artists are comfortable to come and join and present something out of their comfort zone."*

Nestled within the epicentre of London's influential galleries, Roksanda Ilinčić has created her very own little gallery, *"A little platform for different female artists, particularly young ones that are still there to be discovered."* She purposefully chose to highlight female artists *"because the presentation and diversity of women in art and crafts is something that we need to address."* Her passion is so palpable, it begs the question whether she too would like to practice art herself? *"I'm sure there is an artist in me... but somehow I struggle with finding the time to create a safe space in the studio where I can paint. Even during the pandemic with the company and with everything going on, sadly I couldn't create the space for me to paint but I'm sure the time will come. Maybe when I retire I will suddenly decide I want to be an artist. I feel like life is very fast and very demanding. I think that we live in quite an interesting historical moment in time. Finding the time to dedicate yourself to painting, sculpting and art pieces is precious."* In the meantime she turns to the Turner Prize winning artist Veronica Ryan, the ceramicist Julie Nelson and Ljubica 'Cuca' Sokić, another Serbian woman with an *"incredible colour sense"* for inspiration, as well as visiting Studio Voltaire and the Alison Jacques gallery.

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Forever raising women up, Ilinčić feels the significance of sharing her story to create an exchange with her customers. *"I think this is very important for anybody buying into fashion to know and to understand because I'm not creating just clothes, I'm creating a world, an emotion, a certain idea and I think that's what people are coming to buy and that's what luxury fashion is all about. It's an ethereal moment that you can't quite grasp and we can't quite put our finger on, but we keep coming back for it. I think the female art narrative and point of view in both art and fashion is my strength and something I wanted to set up from the beginning. So here I am many years later with women in the shop window."*

Behind Ilinčić's fabled store window you'll find her signature sculptural silhouettes bathed in a neutral palette punctuated with daring dashes of electric colour. Come suit or dress, a Roksanda Ilinčić look is destined to strike up conversation. It is the latter that launched her career for when she joined the non-profit talent incubator Fashion East over twenty years ago, dresses were not du jour, but her vivid flashes of colour proved there was fun to be found in dressing up. Her distinctive voice in an overcrowded field of blurred fashion trends is a voice that resonates with successful and intellectual women across the world from Michelle Obama, to the Duchess of Cambridge and Cate Blanchett. But what does a brand whose very core is embedded within elevated sophistication and glamour do when the world is swept by a pandemic and reaches for tracksuits over trouser suits? With agility and grace, Roksanda responded promptly, setting up her e-commerce site and expanding her knitwear and tops collections and making her customers Zoom meeting ready. Even during a time where we collectively lost a sense of reality, Ilinčić reminded us that *"fashion is there to support us."*

“You can look at FASHION and guess where it’s coming from and why. I’m always trying to TRANSLATE what’s going on around us INTO the clothing.

“I’m creating a WORLD, an EMOTION, a certain IDEA and I think that’s what people are coming to buy and that’s what LUXURY FASHION is all about.”

Fashion informs us too, a principle she clings dearly too. *“I’m constantly tuned in with everything that is happening around us and Louise is definitely somebody who was always underlining this. Knowing what is going on culturally in the world of fashion, politics, the economy is a must. I couldn’t agree more because fashion doesn’t exist separately from the world. You can look at fashion and guess where it’s coming from and why. I’m always trying to translate what’s going on around us into the clothing. This might not be immediately visible but it’s definitely there. I think that’s one of the reasons why I’m still around, why my brand has longevity because of the understanding of what’s happening in society and tying it in with fashion.”* She also cites the importance of a plan and a dream when creating a legacy, because without one it’s all too easy to get distracted.

With a fully established and authentic aesthetic comes the freedom to explore. Since first showing at London Fashion Week in 2005, Ilinčić has since partnered with Fila and Barbour as well designing the first NFT dress available to purchase in GBP. Whilst some designers may be fearful of avatar clothing, Ilinčić saw it as *“an opportunity to experience something in a totally different world through Artificial Intelligence. It’s fascinating to do something at the very beginning, to not know where it’s going to go, how far it’s going to go. I really wanted to be one of the first people to try.”*

As her fashion-obsessed daughter approaches the age of 12, Ilinčić is all the more conscious of *“the implications that are facing our children... We need to learn how to shop and buy better and not just produce for the sake of money, but for the sake of art and beauty. For the sake of lifting our spirits through fashion and our society and culture.”* Just as Ilinčić’s mother passed on the fashion-forward baton, so too does she with her own daughter, however this time you don’t have to be related to reap the rewards. You might not be able to inherit her fabulous wardrobe but you can come extremely close at the Roksanda Ilinčić boutique.

Visit the Roksanda store in person at 9 Mount Street, W1K 3NG or online.



photographed by **EDWIN S FREYER** *styled by* **TASHA ARGUILE**

with **DORRIT LI** *wearing*
'ROSALIE' rose will jacket by **ROKSANDA.**

right page
'ROWENA' black orange and merlot wool jacket,
pink viscose polo neck, 'CANTORILLA' black wool trousers and
'DAGMAR' black leather bag (worn as a belt), all by **ROKSANDA.**
Black silk slip on shoes by **ROKSANDA x Acupuncture 1993.**

Shot at Dulwich Picture Gallery, London



Dutch Paintings

MAKING A MARK

The seventeenth-century Dutch Republic saw the growth of a new urban middle class eager to buy art. While this market could be beneficial to painters, it also created fierce competition and this forced artists to specialise in new subjects ranging from landscape to still life, domestic interiors to seascapes. Jan van Huysum's depictions of flowers in vases were greatly admired by collectors and sold for huge sums. These elegant arrangements could take up to two months to complete and were rendered with astonishing detail. This precision by using fine brushes – which were ideal for delicate water droplets, the delicate hair veins of a leaf.

Look out for the blue birds in this room to discover a fiction with reality.





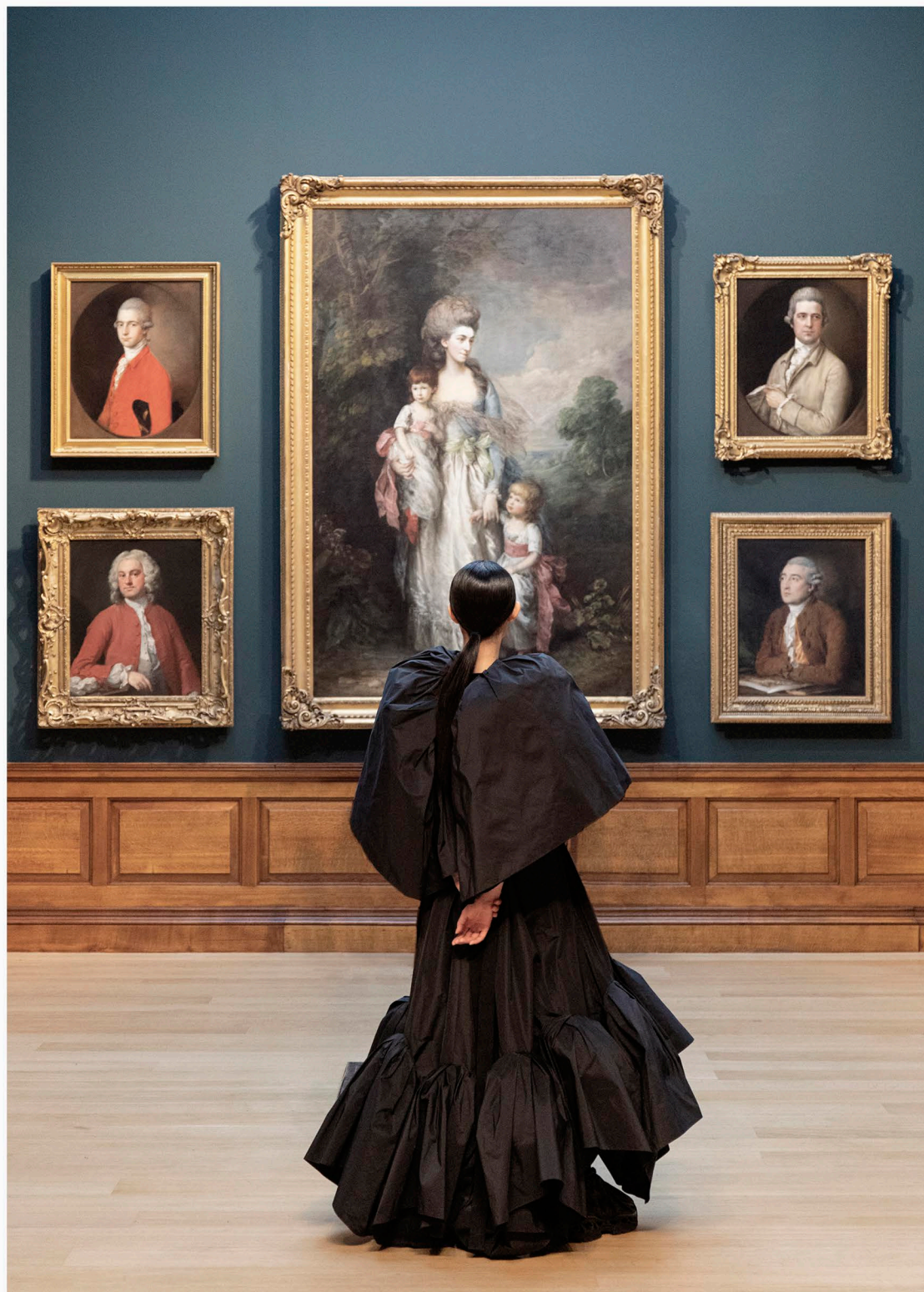
'ZITA' lime taffeta dress (worn as top), 'CANTORILLA' cream wool trousers and cream leather loafers by ROKSANDA.

left page

'DAYANA' black wool mohair and duchess satin jacket, orchid viscose polo neck and 'BELLADONA' orchid taffeta skirt by ROKSANDA. Black silk slip on shoes by ROKSANDA x Acupuncture 1993.



*Black viscose polo neck, 'VELORA' sunflower taffeta top
and 'CANTORILLA' black wool trousers by ROKSANDA.*



*'ZANDER' black taffeta dress by ROKSANDA.
Black leather shoes by ROKSANDA x Acupuncture 1993.*



*'ALTAGRACIA' flower printed silk twill dress by ROKSANDA.
Black silk slip on shoes by ROKSANDA x Acupuncture 1993.*

*right page
'FOLAMI' tropics washed silk satin dress and 'DIA' quartz leather bag by ROKSANDA.
Pink silk slip shoes by ROKSANDA x Acupuncture 1993.*







*'NOELANT' black taffeta dress by ROKSANDA.
Black leather shoes by ROKSANDA x Acupuncture 1993. Black tights by FALKE.*

*Makeup by AMY WRIGHT at Caren Agency using Armani Beauty.
Hair by PHILIPPE THOLIMET at David Artists using Hair by Sam McKnight.
Dorrit appears courtesy of Select Model London.*

DULWICH PORTRAIT GALLERY

words by PHOEBE MINSON

On a spring afternoon if you're a city dweller craving open space, new blossoms, and a decent spot for dog-watching, you'd be silly to overlook the grounds of the world's first purpose-built public gallery.

Dulwich Picture Gallery is nestled between two parks, Belair and Dulwich. Opened in 1817 to the public, the gallery was designed by Sir John Soane (whose home in Holborn is a similarly spectacular jewel). The famed architect used the innovative method of overhead skylights to illuminate the prized collection of Old Master paintings, which were developed and added to over 200 years by (primarily) Edward Alleyn, Sir Francis Bourgeois, and Noel Desenfans. Early visitors to the gallery included Vincent Van Gogh, JMW Turner, John Constable, and Charles Dickens, so you're in great company.

The curator, Helen Hillyard, has been immersed in life at Dulwich Picture Gallery since she left the National Gallery in 2015. A specialist in European Old Master paintings, Dulwich Picture Gallery had her name written all over it, or in Hillyard's own words: *"If you work with Old Master paintings Dulwich Picture Gallery is the place to be, it's got a fantastic collection and it's so unusual and unexpected for it to be just twenty minutes from Brixton. There's a real sense of place, it's very distinctive, [with] unique architecture, amazing art collection – there's just nowhere else quite like it and it's one of the only galleries in London with a park attached. Be amongst trees and be amongst art, it's a mindful place."*

You'd be forgiven for not realising that in the melting pot of South London is an art collection rich in French, Italian and Spanish Baroque paintings and British portraits from Tudor times to the 19th century. The 'icon' of the collection, as Hillyard refers to her, is Rembrandt's 'Girl at the Window' (which was stolen and then recovered in 1966). *"So richly painted. Rembrandt had a real skill for depicting human warmth and emotion and communicating it through paint. When I stand in front of it, I feel a real empathetic connection."*

It was agreed by us both that there is something important about contemporary women viewing historical women in paintings. Understanding the historical context to some extent but perhaps more interestingly bringing the contemporary context to meet the sitter. There's a delicate exchange between the viewer, sitter, and artists, when works are taken out of context, works once intended to be viewed by men are now viewed by women. Hillyard, who has arrived here via a degree in History of Art, was quick to point out that, *"Looking at paintings is like time travel, you look at paintings and you can go back in time – but the paintings aren't necessarily fixed in time, we add to them in the contemporary moment, bringing a contemporary perspective. Art history adds so much depth and wider information to the objects."*

One of the things that Dulwich Picture Gallery does exceptionally well at is focussing on artists that have been overlooked or underappreciated. A current exhibition of works by Lithuanian artist M.K. Čiurlionis is a perfect example, a highly regarded painter in his native country and yet virtually unknown to a UK audience. Hillyard notes that people often need the familiarity of recognisable artwork for their comfort, and then to be introduced to new perspectives for their growth and Dulwich Picture Gallery focuses on these two things when curating their exhibition programme.

A little closer to home, the Deptford-based artist Anthony Daley presents a new body of work inspired by his lifelong fascination with the work of Rubens, the 17th century Flemish painter, as part of a new programme at Dulwich Picture Gallery called 'Unlocking Paintings'. Daley explores his lifelong interest in the work of Rubens in a collection called 'Son of Rubens' curated by Lisa Anderson, Managing Director of the Black Cultural Archives. This exhibition is an inspiring look into how the art of old can continue to influence, energize, and refresh contemporary works.

If you're looking for rest, restoration, inspiration and creativity, Dulwich Picture Gallery is calling your name, as Helen said to me as we ended our conversation, *"In Central London, only here can you be amongst trees and be amongst art, it's a mindful place."*



*'OPHELIA' lime taffeta
dress by ROKSANDA.
Black silk slip on shoes by
ROKSANDA x Acupuncture 1993.*