

DEPARTEMENT CULTUUR, JEUGD & MEDIA

ULTIMAS 2016
Flemish Culture Prizes
www.ultimas.be

Ultima 2016 General Cultural Merit

Raf Simons

Raf Simons is a monument in the fashion world. His motto is 'I just want to do something that will change something.' His work is inspired by his vision and passion. The influence of his work has extended beyond the city of Antwerp to reach the rest of Europe and then the entire world.

As a designer of his own very personal collections, but also as an artistic director at big fashion houses like Christian Dior, Jil Sander and now Calvin Klein, he has acquired great fame worldwide.

The documentary 'Dior and I' (2014) reveals how Raf Simons gave haute couture at Dior fashion house a new identity. The film shows us how the man who usually flees the spotlight constantly strives to make the impossible possible, under great pressure and always with fervent enthusiasm and a great respect for the expertise and experience of his team.

From his first collections, he combined the classic men's suit with the style of young rebels in a unique way. Raf Simons's contribution to the fashion world is unique and personal. He is a modernist and minimalist who wants to give men and women clothing of a new kind. In his clothes, man is given a new identity, exudes great independence and incredible physicality: here is a man of today. Raf Simons has had a profound influence on the development of men's fashion worldwide. In his collections for women too, he is constantly pushing back boundaries and strengthening the personality of the modern woman. Through his creations, Raf Simons wants to tell us something about people in today's world, people whom he sees as vulnerable, questioning.

Raf Simons's style contains many references to history and art: he refers to historic and classical periods, contemporary music and art. At all levels, be it in his obsession for material, or in his search for his own shapes and proportions, he pushes everything to the limit. For Raf Simons, fashion is much more than commerce or superficial beauty, he creates an image of people, a vision of what men and women are or could be in the world. These particularities make him a source of inspiration for many designers worldwide but also for many artists outside the fashion world.