

# Prada Fall Winter 21 Menswear Collection - conversation with Miuccia Prada and Raf Simons to follow

## Context:

Following the digital presentation of the Fall/Winter 2021 Prada Men's show on 17 February 2021, Prada debuted an intimate online conversation between a selection of students from colleges and universities around the world and co-creative directors Miuccia Prada and Raf Simons. Drawn from the fields of fashion, art, design, architecture and philosophy, the students form a diverse cross-section of society today. The educational institutions span three continents and include Tsinghua University, School of Architecture (Beijing, China), Bunka Fashion College (Tokyo, Japan), Hongik University, International Design School for Advanced Studies (Seoul, South Korea), Vita-Salute San Raffaele University, Faculty of Philosophy (Milan, Italy), Central Saint Martins (London, UK), Harvard University Graduate School of Design (Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA) and Fashion Institute of Technology, School of Graduate Studies, MFA Fashion Design (New York, NY, USA).

## Interviews:

**Miuccia Prada:**

**Raf Simons:**

Welcome everybody, we are happy to have this conversation with you.

**Interviewer 1:**

<<Hi, I'm Rosie Davenport from the UK. Hi, how are you?>>

**Miuccia Prada:**

<<Which school? >>

**Interviewer 1::**

<<I study fashion journalism at Central Saint Martins London.>>

**Raf Simons:**

<<Journalism, we're going to get tough questions.>>

**Interviewer 1:**

<<Maybe. I wanted to ask you, how do you resolve any disagreements you might have when you're collaborating together? >>

**Raf Simons:**

<<Ah, I love the question.>>

**Miuccia Prada:**

<<Yes, actually we don't have so many, but because between ourselves we said if you really hate something we don't do it and vice versa. So it was very clear. So when one says I don't like it, it's out of the problem.

Except one insists and the other one is convinced. But actually I knew since the beginning that we didn't have so many discussions and that's the discussion around something that is not fundamental. >>

**Raf Simons:**

<<Yes, same for me.

We are both constantly like discussing and communicating and having conversations, ongoing conversations about ideas. So for me it's completely natural that if we both think about something and it doesn't really match that we just say like, oh, skip, move on, next thing. Because there are so many more things that do match.>>

**Miuccia Prada:**

<<Or the other one convinced you. For instance, all my life I hated pinot stripes and this show is full of pinot stripes and they love it. And I said it was the one more pinot stripes.

So also what I think is good is the possibility to change your mind. I decided to do that because I wanted to have discussion and to change my mind. I always want to change my mind.

So also you start thinking in a different way because the other one suggests you ideas that maybe you didn't have. And so far for me it's a good point. Because I don't think the moment we decided to collaborate it was a decision.

So no one obliged us. So we like to do it. >>

**Interviewer 1:**

Amazing.

Thank you. Congratulations again. Thank you.

**Raf Simons:**

Hello, Celeste.

**Interviewer 2:**

Hi, good morning.

**Miuccia Prada:**

Nice to meet you.

**Raf Simons:**

How are you?

**Interviewer 2:**

<<I'm doing well. Congratulations. Thank you.

Why is spatial design so important to Prada in parallel with the clothing?>>

**Raf Simons:**

<<I think with the situation in the world right now it becomes very, very strong. The idea of environment in general. Whether it's your house, the places you visit, the places where you meet people, the public space and private space.

I think that we are encountering a situation we don't even know that we could possibly ever imagine. Having normally the freedom to move to wherever we want to. So it's obviously a very... As we constantly are in dialogue about our fashion in relation to our society it is obviously something that impacted us very much.

And out of many dialogues we kind of concluded that it was not important for us to create a narrative architectural context for this collection. More a feeling context.>>

**Miuccia Prada:**

<<For sure us designers are interested in the life of people.

So clothes is one small part. For sure the environment is even more important. So it's natural that anything that defines the life of people is an interesting subject for fashion because fashion is about the life of people.

And it's true that for instance in this case architecture helped us to describe or to tell the feelings and the ideas we had. So this kind of strange abstract place that are not inside, are not outside with material that leads a lot to tactility, to sensuality. But it is needed because it helps to define what you want to say.

It requires so much.>>

**Interviewer 2:**

<<There's so many moving parts. But I see in your work both Roth and independently and with Prada both fashion and architecture as a vehicle for communicating emotion and story most of the time to different scales.

**Raf Simons:**

<<Very much our aim.>>

**Miuccia Prada:**

<<For sure I am and he also more and more want to express ideas and possibly good ideas, intelligent ideas through fashion in general.>>

**Interviewer 2**

Can I just say I appreciated the choreography as well.

The playfulness of the movement. I've been dying to see that in a fashion show. Thank you.

Thank you so much. Thank you so much.

**Raf Simons:**

Thank you Celeste.

**Interviewer 2**

Thank you. Take care. Bye-bye.

**Raf Simons:**

<<Hello Elisa.>>

**Interviewer 3**

Hi. Hi.

**Raf Simons:**

<<How are you?>>

**Interviewer 3**

<<I'm doing good.>>

**Miuccia Prada:**

<<Very nice to meet you.>>

**Interviewer 3**

<<Thank you for having us.>>

**Miuccia Prada:**

<<Which school you come from?>>

**Interviewer 3**

<<I'm studying fashion design at Bunka Fashion College in Tokyo.>>

**Raf Simons:**

<<Great. What year?>>

**Interviewer 3**

<<I'm in my third year.>>

**Raf Simons:**

<<Okay, great. Going well? >>

**Interviewer 3**

<<Yeah, I'm doing good. I'm doing good. I'm trying my best.>>

**Raf Simons:**

<<Fantastic. Looking forward.>>

**Miuccia Prada:**

<<Still liking the choice?>>

**Interviewer 3**

<<I do. I'm passionate about what I'm doing.>>

**Miuccia Prada:**

<<Great. That's the most important thing.>>

**Interviewer 3**

<<Yeah. So in your previous question and answer session you have mentioned how impactful technology is in our lives.

Almost as an extension of ourselves. But there are many types of technology. Technology in materials, production, marketing or even logistics of distribution.

So from all of those in this new collection which technological innovation has impacted the most and why?>>

**Raf Simons:**

<<If I have to be honest, I think that this collection has been mainly dealing with other technology aspects. Because it's a collection I think very much connected to the feelings of the human being and very much related to our world right now. I think because it was a collection that was dealing a lot with the idea of the emotions from the human being towards what's happening in the world.

I think that we were more looking at an opposite of technological kind of sensibility I would almost say. Because it's very much about tactility. It's very much about contrasts architecturally as well as senses.

As well as in the clothes itself.>>

**Miuccia Prada:**

<<I think that the technology it's more in the way fashion now how it connects you to people. So the fact that now we are here with you, that for me at least was a huge change.

Because instead of having real people in a physical show, you have to deal with... We are searching for humanity in a relationship like we are doing now. And that will depend from technology. So what interests me a lot at the moment how make technology at the service of your idea and your feelings.

That not you are at the service of technology, but vice versa. Technology is an instrument. So we have to use it in the best way possible to transmit your feeling, your ideas and so on.

Talking about material technicalities. There are technicalities that are not technological or you can call them technological. If you mean experience, different way of working things, different material, different approach.

But probably it's not what people think about technology when we do for instance in Ireland that was a technological material. But because we aim a lot to human senses, feelings. Probably the technology entered from another side, the one expressed to you before.>>

**Raf Simons:**

<<And then obviously because of the world situation, technology is automatically so present in our world in order to be able to show our work right now. Because we can't really do real shows. So it makes you think about how feelings, visuals are possibly picked up worldwide or showed worldwide through technology.

And I think that's very new for all of us in fashion because we are so used to the live experience of a show.>>

**Miuccia Prada:**

<<Actually I would say that even the physical space is so much the opposite of technology. Of course it requires maybe a lot of technology to build it, but the impact that you want to give was like of this abstract space of colour, material, tactile that you don't know if it's inside or outside.

It's an extra space but full of feelings and humanity I would say.>>

**Interviewer 3**

<<Okay, thank you so much for the answer. Thank you so much.>>

**Raf Simons:**

<<Nice to meet you. Hello Faris.>>

**Interviewer 4**

<<I'm Faris from Morocco and I study menswear design at St. Joseph Martians in London.>>

Great. And I wanted to ask you, so from what I've seen from the runway it seems like you've created a kind of community and on your last show you talked about the Prada uniform. So for you what is the new menswear Prada uniform?

**Miuccia Prada:**

<<The fact is that not each season we talk about the same subject.

And the idea for us designers, any season, any collection you respond to stimulus that comes from the world and so on. And so if it's something, a uniform that is always still there but the focus of this collection was about physicality against construction. So I don't know which is the new uniform except you want to talk about the Long John as a uniform.>>

**Raf Simons:**

<<But I don't think there was any connection in relation to how we perceive uniforms theoretically. But obviously it could be seen as a uniform in the sense that there was a uniformity literally from the first to the last silhouette because they all wear a Long John. At the Long John to be represented something in a way completely disconnected from a uniform it's completely the opposite almost I think.>>

**Miuccia Prada:**

<<No, actually it's interesting because it was a uniform in the show but definitely Long John is not a uniform.

**Interviewer 4**

<<Yes, yeah. So it's kind of a mysterious.>>

**Raf Simons:**

<<Mysterious? Mysterious piece as well at the same time. You find them mysterious?>>

**Interviewer 4**

<<Yeah, because as you said... >>

**Raf Simons:**

<<I like that.>>

**Miuccia Prada:**

<<Yes, absolutely.>>

**Raf Simons:**

<<I love that.>>

**Miuccia Prada:**

<<Very good. But it's not very often that we find or you can find in fashion something that is so flexible so with different many facets.

So that is a good example of fashion for me because like with one piece you can express so many things and living open to any possibility. So actually we are very satisfied about it.>>

**Interviewer 4**

<<Thank you so much.>>

**Miuccia Prada:**

<<Thank you.>>

**Raf Simons:**

<<Thank you, Faris. Hello, Cameron.>>

**Interviewer 5**

<<Hi.>>

**Miuccia Prada:**

<<How are you?>>

**Raf Simons:**

<<Nice to meet you. >>

**Interviewer 5**

<<Good, thank you. Nervous>>

**Miuccia Prada:**

<<No, no. Us too. >>

**Interviewer 5**

<<I'm Cameron Stolt from the United States studying fashion design at the Fashion Institute of Technology School of Graduate Studies in New York. Thank you so much for having me.>>

**Raf Simons:**

<<Thank you for coming. What year are you in?>>

**Interviewer 5**

<<It's my second year. It's the last year of the MFA.>>

**Raf Simons:**

<<Great. Okay, I'm curious what you want to ask.>>

**Interviewer 5**

<<What I wanted to know, what are some of the ways, if any, in which you strived to make this collection feel more personal, valuable or perhaps respond to fashion's current call for authenticity?>>

**Raf Simons:**

<<At all times, no matter what situation we are in. The other part of the question, I think it is very connected to our personal feelings especially with how we feel about what's going on right now for all of us, for everybody in the world. And I think more than ever, we very much felt like how can we express that in clothes, in the environment in which we are going to present the clothes? This personal psychology of how you deal with the situation in the world.>>

**Miuccia Prada:**

<<Actually, this time it was particularly the architecture was particularly relevant because basically at least us, I live kind of secluded. So this really correspond to this moment where you are inside the bubble and this space is not an inside, it's not an outside, it's not nature, but it's not even an inside. So it's an abstract space full basically of feelings, sensibilities, warmth, sensuality and tough.>>

**Interviewer 5**

<<Your personal values and authenticity throughout this entire conversation regardless. So it's great to hear and it's been really wonderful.>>

**Raf Simons:**

<<Confirmed.>>

**Interviewer 5**

<<Thank you.>>

**Raf Simons:**

<<Thank you very much, Cameron.>>



**Miuccia Prada:**

<<Hi. Good morning. Good morning.>>

**Raf Simons:**

<<Hi, Papa, how are you? Hi, I'm fine.>>

**Interviewer 6**

<<Hello, Mrs. Prada. >>

**Raf Simons:**

<<Are you studying in New York?>>

**Interviewer 6**

<<Yes, I am. What course? I am fashion design MFA, School of Graduate Studies.>>

**Raf Simons:**

<<Oh, great. Which year?>>

**Interviewer 6**

<<Final year.>>

**Raf Simons:**

<<Oh, great. Good luck. We are happy to meet you.>>

**Miuccia Prada:**

<<Very happy.>>

**Interviewer 6**

<<Same. >>

**Raf Simons:**

<<I'm curious what you want to ask us. I'll be easy, I promise.>>

**Miuccia Prada:**

<<You can be difficult.>>

**Interviewer 6**

<<Okay. As leading global luxury designers, in what ways can luxury exist or thrive in the absence of wealth?>>

**Miuccia Prada:**

<<I'm ready to answer to you because this is a question that, of course, it's always in my thoughts because I was born wanting to be political and after I finished being a fashion designer and I have to say that the two things really don't go together so well.

So what we can do is eventually make it more open to people, give more possibilities, more inclusion.>>

**Raf Simons:**

<<I think the same. It can be an example indeed for inclusivity and for positivism.

But I would also be interested to hear, in this case, your thoughts about your own question. How do you feel about it?>>

**Interviewer 6**

<<I think it's very interesting because, I mean, coming from Ghana, we have luxury designers, right? But then when you look at places like France or Paris and Milan, the things that make fashion luxurious, for example, a mink coat doesn't necessarily translate to, you know, the Ghanaian woman who is seasonally in like heat, right? So we have to also try and find ways to value our local textiles. For example, in Ghana, we have kente fabric.

This is slowly becoming a luxurious fabric. So in terms of valuing our artisanal crafts, but then also partnering with global brands like Prada, for example, who's doing amazing work. You have Prada Group, which does things from architecture.

I did research on Prada, very interesting. But these are ways that we can collaborate in terms of designers coming together and then seeing how we can translate luxury to Africans, for example.>>

**Miuccia Prada:**

<<Yes, that's for sure.

I totally agree. I think we have to do that. It's very relevant. It's the duty of everybody, so.>>

**Raf Simons:**

<<Great,>>

**Interviewer 6**

<<thank you so much. >>

**Raf Simons:**

<<Thank you very much.>>

**Miuccia Prada:**

<<So if you have anything to propose, please.>>

**Raf Simons:**

<<Stay in touch.>>

**Interviewer 6**

<<Okay, I'll be in touch.>>

**Raf Simons:**

<<Great. Bye-bye. Thank you.>>

**Interviewer 6**

<<Nice to meet you.>>

**Miuccia Prada:**

<<Nice to meet you.>>

**Interviewer 7**

<<I'm Xinyi from China and I study architecture at Tsinghua University in Beijing.

Actually, I'm always wondering that in a society of increasing insecurity, will fashion design become more reserved or bold?>>

**Miuccia Prada:**

<<I think that it goes to the meaning of clothes in general. So clothes help define your personality, what you want to show in life. So in general, clothes, sometimes it expresses power, sometimes it expresses sexuality, sometimes it expresses rebellion, sometimes it can express any kind of variation or nuance of your thinking.

So of course, probably in this moment, the fact that you are maybe alone, it changes a bit in the sense of comfort. But I see that still the clothes, actually the reason of the clothes are the fact that they can help express you better your ideas, your personality, what you want to show to the world, what you want to hide. In that sense, that is the role of clothes.

And if in this moment, because you are more in danger, maybe you want some different clothes, but for instance, I'm not. Personally, I didn't change any attitude towards the way I dress because probably what I think is more important that the consolation of comfort.>>

**Raf Simons:**

<<For us as fashion designers, obviously we still like to express different aspects that clothing can mean for a human being at whatever moment in time.

And I think right now, this collection is talking a lot about tactility and the literal, physical feeling clothes can have. Thinking about aspects such as comfort, protection, beauty in general. For that reason, this collection deals with juxtaposition of color, juxtaposition of softness and harness to express the reality of the world and at the same time express the possible feeling that everybody has dealing with this isolation>>

**Interviewer 7**

<<I really like what you shared, thank you very much>>

**Raf Simons:**

<<Thank you Hello silvia>>

**Interviewer 7**

<<Hi thank you>>

**Miuccia Prada:**

<<You come from San Raffaele>>

**Interviewer 7**

<<Yes I study philosophy in san raffaele university in milano

I would like to ask this question, could fashion mean a performance through which we witness the continuous and countless creation of our identities>>

**Miuccia Prada:**

<<Yes I would say yes>>

**Raf Simons:**

<<I think we are both big believers of that>>

**Miuccia Prada:**

<<The sense of fashion is exactly that one, to be able to express your idea your thoughts your changes and so on. It's the only real sense of fashion and what makes me feel that I do a job that makes sense is that one>>

**Interviewer 7**

<<I mean in fact that fashion is the opportunity to stage on one's own personalities in its multiple aspects in an open dialog in which the most disparate elements come together, the desire to anticipate the future but also the memory of the past, art, daily life, different materials, fabrics and different elements passion gives us back in the presence of a jacket, pants, shoes>>

**Miuccia Prada:**

<<You should teach fashion>>

**Raf Simons:**

<<I would love to add the feelings and the thoughts you are dealing with at the moment in time that it's happening, because fashion is always so much about the moment in time it's happening. And I find interesting question, because when we were filming the runway, because obviously we can't do a real show, there was a certain perception that we both have about how to present the collection basically. So that amplifies immediately how boys are in an environment, how they are walking and everything.

And one thing happened which was not planned at all, and that's what I love so much about fashion, and I think it's in relation to your question. What I want to say is that we don't always want to control so much only. We take the control in a creative sense, because we are decisive on what we want.

But then I think it's also interesting what can possibly come out of it and what can happen that you were not planning. And I think with this show it was very much the case. As you could see these dancing moments, it was something very spontaneous.

This was not at all something that was planned a long time in advance. We were in the spaces during the filming, and I could feel the kind of moments of boys being in these spaces, feeling very happy in a way, very excited. I don't know, it was almost kind of like a physical feeling, disconnected from anything else.

And I just thought at one point like, oh yeah, maybe it's your own personal club or something. Right now lots of people are so constricted and they cannot go to the places where they like to go to enjoy themselves. At the same time, one just starts dancing, and then at the end we had this idea to do this, which I think is the beauty about fashion, that it

can kind of just suddenly also flip to something so disconnected almost from how you were kind of maybe planning it.  
And then in the future, once it's out, the audience connects.>>

**Interviewer 7**

<<And it is in this sense that fashion is a valid tool to understand who we are at all times.>>

**Miuccia Prada:**

<<If it could do that, it's even better.

I think more vice versa. I think it's very interesting because maybe you wear something and you didn't expect you could be also that personality. For me, the game of clothes is a fantastic game.

I did it, I use it in my life. I think it's really when I am in good mood, of course. To see how you change the perception even of yourself, not only you want to represent something that maybe you are not, just to confuse people, but also it changes the way you perceive yourself. That I never thought about.>>

**Interviewer 7**

<<Thank you for the opportunity. >>

**Miuccia Prada:**

<<Thank you.>>

**Raf Simons:**

<<Thank you to you. Thank you. Good morning.>>

**Interviewer 8**

<<Good morning. >>

**Raf Simons:**

<<How are you?>>

**Interviewer 8**

<<Nice to meet you. I'm Ian from the United States and I study architecture at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design in Cambridge.

I'm wondering who is Prada designing this collection for? >>

**Raf Simons:**

<<The hardest question that could possibly be asked for me is if somebody asks me, who do you design for? Because I think that for many, many years, maybe even like the first one and a half decades of my own brand, I very often really designed with somebody in mind thinking that's the person that I designed for. And at one point, I think it becomes a completely different thing that you design, obviously you design for an audience, a person, but it's also very disconnected one way or another. So I see it more as an audience that can connect to what we design for so many different reasons and in so many different ways,

purely for its aesthetic, for its content, for its, you know, like whatever the reason for the person is.

So therefore, I find it more and more difficult to kind of define the actual audience. It's too broad, it's not one audience, it's for anybody who is basically interested or feel connected.>>

**Miuccia Prada:**

<<Me, the opposite, because I always thought about having object in mind.

Actually, I saw clothes more as object themselves than on bodies. And eventually, I thought about what I like, so maybe it was not the correct way, but I always wanted to do what I like, what I thought it was right, responding to various suggestions. So I don't have the problem because I never thought about who is my clientele, who is the people who is going.

I do what I think makes sense, and who wants, buys it, uses it, and after they do whatever they want. Sometimes they ask me, do you, are you upset when you see somebody in a clothes that doesn't look good? I say no, first of all, I never judge people from the way they dress, never. Believe it or not, it's true.

I only notice when something is particularly inspiring, but after it's not my object anymore, it's there, and people do whatever they want. So actually, I don't have that problem because I never did anything for anybody. Also, I always said that I hate when you say you have your icon, I never had an icon, and I don't like the idea of icon.

I just do what I think it makes sense to me, of course. And also I said, the more I'm open to the world, the more I am, let's say, intelligent, the more I am in contact with the reality, the more probably what I do makes sense to people. And if they buy it, means that what they do makes sense to them.>>

**Raf Simons:**

<<I'm very fascinated to see how people apply the clothes. I can be extremely inspired with anybody who wears the clothes in a way that's completely different from how I proposed it, for example. I find it actually rather challenging, and sometimes it's part of the drive to continue as well.

So for me, there is a connection to an audience, but in a way, it's also very abstracted. It can be just somebody I pick up in the street, or in a magazine, another person who kind of does something else with it. But it's not that it's kind of like disrupting my way of thinking about the creative process.

That is, in a way, I think a bit like you, like this is how I see it.>>

**Interviewer 8**

<<Thank you. Thank you.>>

**Raf Simons:**

<<Thank you very much. Hello, Mubin, how are you?>>

**Interviewer 9**

<<Nice to meet you.>>

**Raf Simons:**

<<Nice to meet you too.>>

**Miuccia Prada:**

<<Thank you for staying so late, because I'm afraid it's very late there.>>

**Interviewer 9**

<<Yeah, in Korea it's quite night now. >>

**Miuccia Prada:**

<<Yes, but you are young, so it's not a problem.>>

**Interviewer 9**

<<No, it's fine. So let me introduce myself. I'm Mubin from South Korea.

I study design management at Pony University in Seoul. So firstly, I really enjoyed the collection, especially the values, patterns, and pocket with gloves impressed me. So my question is, how do you find the balance between your preference and commercial value and current trend? Thank you.>>

**Miuccia Prada:**

<<It's definitely the core of our work, because even if we are creative people, our job is a commercial job, because we sell clothes. So as much as creative you can be, our job is to serve the need of people, is to do something that corresponds to your idea, but also that people should buy. That is really the most important point and very much today. Basically, the old aspect of being a fashion designer is exactly that kind of combination between freedom of expression, creativity, and reality.>>

**Raf Simons:**

<<You know, I think when you are for a long time doing the fashion job, you are well aware that the desires you have to design can sometimes be very extreme, and you are aware that that is very often very disconnected from the reality of what you sell. But I think that for us, being in it for a long time, it's more a matter of balancing it.

But I'm also never really thinking about designing something with the idea that it couldn't sell. But what I perceive as something that I really think that it's great on a person, maybe it's then not a majority of people always who want that. But then I'm also happy to kind of balance that with the things from which I know that it's for much more people.>>

**Interviewer 9**

<<Sometimes I'm confused about that. Should I follow the trend or should I follow my preference to design? >>

**Miuccia Prada:**

<<You should follow yourself. Everybody should follow themselves.

That is for me, it's crucial and fundamental. Clothes are an expression of your idea, your personality. Once I remember, somebody asked, how can I be elegant? Know yourself, be yourself, then you know exactly what you want and what you need.

That for me, it's crucial. I know it's difficult because you need to know yourself, which is not easy, but it's fundamental in the life of people in general. Like you have to choose your job, you have to choose your ideas, and you have to choose who you are.

And after the choice of the fashion is so easy. But if you are lost, you don't know who you are. Of course, anytime you can take a different personality.

But for sure, person is the only very important thing. The clothes, it's at the service of your life and you as a person.>>

**Interviewer 9**

<<Thank you so much.>>

**Miuccia Prada:**

<<Thank you.>>

**Raf Simons:**

<<Thank you, Mubin.>>

**Interviewer 9**

<<Thank you. Bye-bye.>>