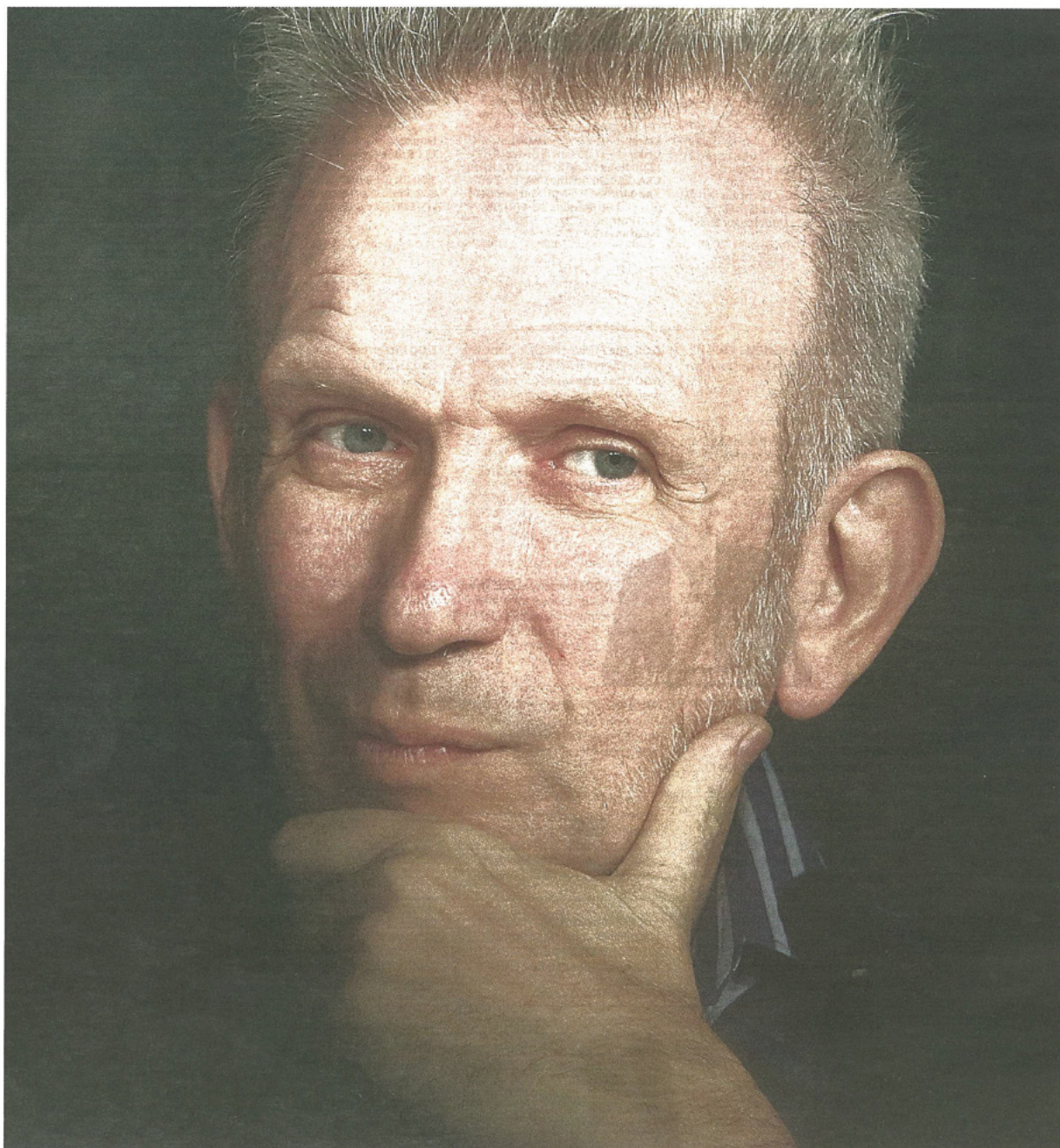


# Arts



## I was like, 'My God, will I be good for that?'

Film-loving fashion designer Jean Paul Gaultier tells **Matt Mueller** about his week as a Cannes juror

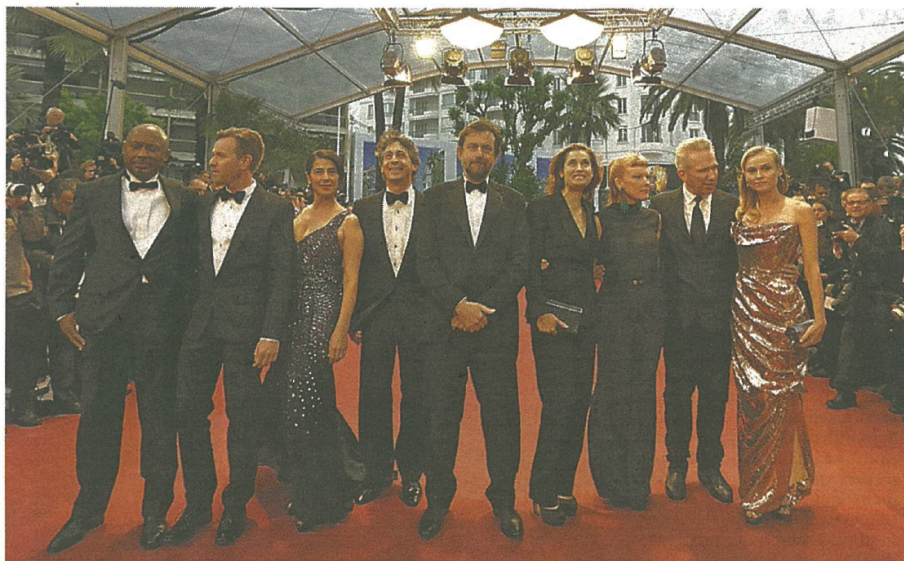


**O**n the top floor of world cinema's most famous bunker, the Palais des Festivals, Jean Paul Gaultier, the French designer renowned for Madonna's cone bra, bringing man-skirts into the style lexicon and the torso-shaped bottles of his successful fragrance line, ushers me into the private sanctum for this year's Cannes competition jury. His blond-grey hair is spiked to attention and he's decked out in a classic French-striped top under a striped cardigan, greeting me with the enthusiasm of someone who's thrilled to be here. "I feel very 'appy," he agrees. Recalling his first meeting with the other jurors two days previous, he mistakenly calls 2012's jury chief "Nino Moretti" then laughs as he corrects himself: "But why he is called Nanni? It's feminine, Nanni, but he's not feminine!"

Gaultier is this year's wild-card juror alongside actors Ewan McGregor, Diane Kruger, Hiam Abbass and Emmanuelle Devos and film-makers Alexander Payne, Andrea Arnold, Raoul Peck and Moretti. The first fashion designer to be asked, he has served as head costume designer on Peter Greenaway's *The Cook, The Thief, His Wife & Her Lover*, Jeunet & Caro's *The City of Lost Children*, Luc Besson's *The Fifth Element* and Pedro Almodóvar's *Bad Education*, as well as doing selected wardrobe on *The Skin I Live In* but admits that when the festival called him six weeks ago, "I was definitely surprised. I was like, 'My God, will I be good for that? I don't know'. But I love cinema so my highs will be like the ones of the public. I will be very spontaneous in how I react. The thing is that I don't have anything to gain. I am not in the cinema business so I don't have to think, 'Oh, I have to be good with that director'."

He's the first fashion designer to be asked. "I was scared by the fact that I'm not a film professional, even if I did costumes for Almodóvar, Jeunet and Caro, Besson, it's not the same thing."

Naturally, Gaultier can't discuss any competition titles or the talent connected to them, but it's not on the cards anyway as he insists he arrived in Cannes with no prior knowledge about which films had been selected. He only discovered last night that his friend Marion Cotillard, who he dresses as well as Audrey Tautou and Catherine Deneuve, is in competition with Jacques Audiard's *Rust and Bone*.



LOIC VENNANCE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

**Making the cut:** (clockwise from left) Jean Paul Gaultier; the designer (second right) with his fellow Cannes competition jurors (from left) Raoul Peck, Ewan Mc Gregor, Hiam Abbass, Alexander Payne, Nanni Moretti, Emmanuelle Devos, Andrea Arnold and Diane Kruger; with German actress Kruger ..

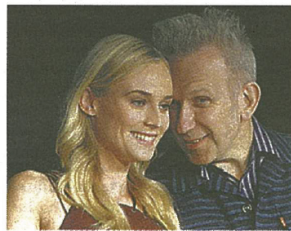
When I let slip that David Cronenberg's *Cosmopolis* is also part of the line-up, he feigns alarm: "Oh, that is already knowing too much!... My best experiences with movies have come when I didn't know what to see. Maybe I liked the poster and went because of that..." – Gaultier starts to giggle – "or sometimes I would not go because of that. I used to be quite rebellious about what I would see. When Jane Campion won in Cannes for *The Piano*, I was like, 'Oh, maybe I will not like it, because she has a Palme...' When I saw it, of course it was a fabulous movie. But I prefer to have no expectations."

**G**aultier's path into fashion began with cinema. His grandmother introduced him to Forties and Fifties French cinema, and when he was 12, he watched a 1945 Jacques Becker drama about the French fashion world, *Falbalas* (*Paris Frills*), that left a lasting impression. "When I saw the movie, I say, 'Ah! I want to do that!'" he explains. "Not to direct, not to be actor... not to be actress, either! It was about a couturier who was in love with his muse and it showed the models and fashion shows of the time and I say, 'I want to do what he is doing'. It was to do with seeing fashion moving, and also the idea of the muse." Films have been a source of inspiration over the years, from *The Great Gatsby* to *Once Upon a Time in the West* "with the long coats", and Gaultier has had several famous muses, not least Madonna, for whom he's designed two complete tours and parts of two more.

"I remember when I first met her in Paris, she had so many costumes in her show that are looking like mine," says Gaultier. "I said, 'It's better I do it for you for real.' She didn't say anything but after she call me and say [adopts Madonna's slightly whiny accent], 'Gaultier, I'm happy for you to do that.' If she didn't choose me, I should kill the

other designer she was using, hahaha! But I am very lucky that, even with people I was doing costumes for movies, like Almodóvar, I started out as fan."

Gaultier has history with Cannes too, having helped create one of its most enduring red-carpet images when Madonna, on the Croisette in 1991 for *In Bed with Madonna*, turned on the steps of the Palais "at just the right moment" and pulled aside her red-silk cloak to reveal the white cone-shaped bra and shorts she was wearing beneath. "I think she worked out before where



GUILLAUME HERCULE/LEVEPA

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all the photographers could get the bet image... But there was so much hysteria when she arrived, so many people screaming and shouting, and she was frightened. We arrived from the Cap D'Antibes hotel in a little boat and I could see she was so scared. It was the first time I ever see her like this. It was something like a nightmare to be honest." Gaultier was wearing a black toredor outfit – in other words, defying the festival's strict black-tie dress code for men – but "they didn't say anything because I was with Madonna! She was more security than security!" He's been "rejected" from the red carpet two times hence though, once for wearing shorts with his tuxedo jacket, the other time a kilt.

Besides men in skirts and conical bras, another of Gaultier's legacies is

being one of the first designers to bring unusual-looking and mixed-race models onto the catwalk. "I always did that because there is not only one kind of beauty. People are so codified – it's sad," he told me a few months ago at the Rio de Janeiro Film Festival, where we sat on the rooftop of his Ipanema hotel with his friend, former model Farida Khelfa, who was presenting her French TV documentary about the designer. In the UK, of course, Gaultier is also fondly remembered for co-presenting Eurotrash alongside Antoine de Caunes. De Caunes, who speaks perfect English, put on his thick, jokey French accent. Gaultier, on the other hand, didn't fake his at all.

"I was not acting," he said in Brazil. "I didn't understand that I was 'the gay one'. I didn't realise I was saying everything in a funny way. But I loved doing the show. It's a good souvenir."

And the Cannes jury will be another souvenir for Gaultier. He finds himself very taken by British director Andrea Arnold – "I love *Fish Tank* and she is quite funny" – and plans to see one film outside of the competition, *Confessions of a Child of the Century* in which Pete Doherty plays a debauched 19th-century libertine, mostly because he's keen to "see how he plays" (I've seen it and the answer is: not well). But the Paris-based designer, who recently turned 60, mostly intends to keep a low profile during the festival. There are jury meetings to attend every other day, but the stripes-loving designer insists he'll be giving Cannes' nightly round of dinners, receptions and ritzy bashes a wide berth.

"If I watch a film where I know the actor or actress or director and I go to an event for them, I won't be able to speak to her or say anything, apart from, 'Bonjour! Ca va?'" he says, laughing. "I am not an actor, I cannot control my feelings so they will know from my face what I think about their film!" We'll find out this Sunday the films that Gaultier and his fellow jurors have admired the most.