Russian Fashion Designer Valentin Yudashkin Dies at 59

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Fashion designer Valentin Yudashkin shows his collection during Moscow Fashion Week 2022. **Kirill Zykov / Moskva News Agency**

Fashion designer Valentin Yudashkin, whose elegant dresses gave Russian fashion a star in the constellation of international haute couture, died Tuesday in Moscow at the age of 59. The cause of death was cancer, which he had been battling since 2016.

Yudashkin was born in a small town outside Moscow. He graduated from the Moscow Industrial Vocational School with two diplomas that portended his future career: One was on the history of fashion and the second on make-up and decorative cosmetics.

He was already a star in the late 1980s when he dressed the first lady of the Soviet Union, Raisa Gorbacheva. A few years later in 1991, he had his first show in Paris called Fabergé, which was received with accolades and launched his career in Europe. In 1994 he launched a prêt-á-porter line, followed by a collection of fragrances in 1995. In 1996 he was given membership in the Syndicate of High Fashion in Paris, the first and only Russian designer so honored.

Yudashkin's haute couture collections were renowned for their elegance, with flowing lines in luxurious fabrics often embroidered with beads, pearls, gold piping and semiprecious stones. But he also broke fashion conventions by starting a line of jeans and expanding his ready-to-wear lines. In 1994 and 1996 he designed uniforms for the Russian Olympic and football teams. He also designed uniforms for the Russian military in 2008.

Yudashkin's career was not without controversy. In 2012 and 2018 Yudashkin was one of Vladimir Putin's many official supporters during his election campaigns. In March 2022 the Fédération de la Haute Couture et de la Mode in Paris removed Yudashkin's designs from a virtual showing, reportedly because he did not speak out against Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Yudashkin's clothes have been acquired by many museums in Russia and around the world, including the State Historical Museum in Moscow, the Musée de la Mode et du Textile in Paris, the California Museum of Fashion and the Metropolitan Museum in New York.

He received many awards over the years, including Merited Artist of the Russian Federation, People's Artist of the Russian Federation; Award of the Russian Government in Science and Technology for his innovations in mechanized clothing design and manufacture; two Orders for Services to the Homeland; and Chevalier, Ordre des Arts et des Lettres and Chevalier, Légion d'Honneur (France).

His death comes days after that of Vladislav "Slava" Zaitsev, the Soviet Union's first internationally acclaimed fashion designer, who [died](#) Sunday at the age of 85.

Yudashkin at the time expressed his sympathy and noted that he had worked under Zaitsev's tutelage when starting out.

Funeral arrangements have not yet been announced.

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