

Sonia Rykiel's Manifesto

By [Godfrey Deeny](#) - January 18, 2018

Talk about being true to your roots. Sonia Rykiel, the ultimate St Germain brand, which celebrates its 50th anniversary this year, recalled the year of its founding in a novel fete this week.



The event was a salient lesson in the wisdom of respecting your own DNA: the late Sonia Rykiel was an author herself, who placed novels in her shop windows long before Colette ever got the idea of mixing product categories in a fashion store.

There was practically fashion gridlock inside Rykiel's St Germain flagship for Manifesto – a iconoclastic party that celebrated not just the house's half century but the most famous year in the neighborhood's history – 1968, when student protestors sealed the fate of French president Charles de Gaulle.

It also recalled the late Madame Rykiel's love of literature – by covering the façade with a massive painting of a bookcase crammed with thousands of white-covered books. Patrons were encouraged to write jolis mots – as ushers protected them with umbrellas from the heavy rain.

“James Joyce Loves Rykiel!” wrote one wag, in reference to the Irish Nobel Prize winner for Literature who once lived around the corner.



Designers Jean-Charles de Castelbajac, Jean Colonna, Julie de Libran – the house's creative director – Sonia's daughter Nathalie Rykiel and Serge Ruffieux, currently helming Carven just around the corner packed into the boutique. So full, it almost felt like Grand Central Station at rush hour.

“This is very much part of our whole Rykiel culture,” smiled CEO Jean Marc Loubier, a noted collector himself of 1968 student protest posters.

Proof too of just how fluid the world's fashion seasons have become. This was the opening night of Paris Menswear season – but the biggest party was by the Left Bank's most famous feminist brand.

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