The Collection of the Museum at FIT

Fashion Designers

Stella McCartney
Etro
Akris
SIX DESIGNER EDITIONS
Missoni
Prada
Diane von Furstenberg
From Azzedine Alaïa, Cristóbal Balenciaga, and Coco Chanel, to Alexander McQueen, Yves Saint Laurent, and Vivienne Westwood, a century's worth of fashion greats from the permanent collection of The Museum at the Fashion Institute of Technology are celebrated in this limited-edition volume. The curators of America's premier fashion museum have selected 500 masterpieces of the art of fashion. Known for its innovative and award-winning exhibitions and its outstanding permanent collection of more than 50,000 garments and accessories, The Museum at FIT in New York City is one of only a handful of museums in the world devoted to the art of fashion. The Museum has built its collection around aesthetically and historically significant “directional” fashion — the kind of clothing and accessories that move fashion forward.

In this volume, the designers are organized from A-Z: Adrian, Balenciaga, Chanel, Dior… through Xuly Bët, Yamamoto, and Zoran. Photographs of selected garments from the Museum’s permanent collection illuminate each of the featured designers, while texts by the curators at The Museum at FIT explain why each designer is important in fashion history and what is special about the individual pieces featured. In her introductory essay, director and chief curator Valerie Steele writes about the rise of the fashion museum, and the emergence of the fashion exhibition as a popular and controversial phenomenon; and both Steele and contributor Suzy Menkes provide a history of this museum’s role in the world of fashion scholarship and preservation.
Wearable art
The designers who have taken fashion to its greatest heights

Fashion Designers A–Z is available as a series of six limited Designer Editions. Each edition (a total of 11,000 copies) is bound in a fabric created by one of six designers—Akris, Etro, Stella McCartney, Missoni, Prada, or Diane von Furstenberg—and comes in a Plexiglas box. Crafted by hand at a bindery in the heart of Italy, and stamped with a unique number, every copy is an instant classic, and an addition to your fashion library that is truly one-of-a-kind.

- Features the masterpieces of over 100 designers selected from the museum’s vast archive of over 50,000 pieces, and newly photographed for this volume.
- Includes early couture pieces by Charles James, Paul Poiret, and Louiseboulanger; iconic silhouettes from Chanel, Dior, and Yves Saint Laurent; and avant-garde creations by Rick Owens, Gareth Pugh, and Yohji Yamamoto.
- Profiles of each designer and fashion house, from Adrian to Zoran, have been written by the curators at The Museum of FIT.
- In her introductory essay, Valerie Steele analyses the history of museum fashion collections from their origins in the 18th century through the mega-museum shows of today.

Valerie Steele

Valerie Steele is director and chief curator of The Museum at the Fashion Institute of Technology and founding editor of Fashion Theory. Described in The Washington Post as one of “fashion’s brainiest women,” Steele combines serious scholarship (and a Yale Ph.D.) with a rare ability to communicate with general audiences. As author, critic, editor, and public intellectual, Steele has been instrumental in creating the modern field of fashion studies.

“Valerie is cerebral. For her, I think fashion is a game of chess in high style… She has an ultra-sharp antenna for what will make history.” —Ruben Toledo
Albert Kriemler’s racecar motif pattern was created in the spirit of the devil-may-care elegance of John Frankenheimer’s 1966 movie *Grand Prix*.

**Akris Edition** (2,000 copies)
ISBN 978-3-8365-2822-1

Paisley is practically synonymous with the Etro name—and the Paisley motifs selected by Veronica Etro are classic examples.

**Etro Edition** (2,000 copies)
ISBN 978-3-8365-4301-9

The colorful zigzag-striped knit selected by Missoni exemplifies the company’s optimistic, playful approach to pattern since the 1970s.

**Missoni Edition** (2,000 copies)
ISBN 978-3-8365-4303-3

Stella McCartney’s edition is adorned with the Neon Abstract Print on cotton satin from her Summer 2013 collection. True to McCartney’s modern, fresh, style, the prints pop with color and sensuality.

**Stella McCartney Edition** (2,000 copies)
ISBN 978-3-8365-4304-0

For her edition, Miuccia Prada selected four classic prints from previous collections and re-printed them on cotton: the feminine tiny “hearts,” the Baroque-inspired “bananas,” the abstract geometric “diamonds,” and a floral reissued for Prada from the 1960 Holiday & Brown archives.

**Prada Edition** (2,000 copies)
ISBN 978-3-8365-4300-2

Printed on cotton canvas, the Signature Chain Link print selected by Diane von Furstenberg epitomizes the designer’s balance between retro glamour and modern chic. The first print ever designed by DVF, the Chain Link has been a classic since it was launched in 1972.

**Diane von Furstenberg Edition** (1,000 copies)
ISBN 978-3-8365-4303-3

To see the full variety of fabrics for each designer, visit a Taschen store near you.

**This teaser is produced at the actual size and using the same paper stock and inks as the book.**
Fashion has always held up a mirror to society. Or should I say an X-ray?

Just as Sigmund Freud analyzed the inner soul within the outer shell, so clothes are now believed to have a far deeper meaning than appearance suggests.

Told through the language of clothes, the twentieth century has been the story of women’s liberation—literally, when corsets were unlaced to free the body and Coco Chanel fashioned malleable clothes from men’s jersey underwear; and figuratively, when Yves Saint Laurent embraced the pantsuit and women stood shoulder to padded shoulder with men in the workplace.

The American woman has been particularly sensitive to the changing world, whether as a Hollywood beauty, dressed by Adrian on or off the silver screen, or as a free thinker in minimalist Calvin Klein designs that streamlined the career wardrobe and seemed destined to equip the wearer to smash the glass ceiling.

The Fashion Institute of Technology has edited its powerful collection just as today’s woman refines her wardrobe, to state who she is and what she stands for.

The Museum in New York City has embraced the sculptural style of Cristóbal Balenciaga, for postwar women who still liked it haute; the sweet romance of Christian Dior’s nostalgic vision; the famously savage beauty of Alexander McQueen; the punk politics of Vivienne Westwood; and the flat-plane Japanese clothes, breaking dramatically with Western style, of Rei Kawakubo or Yohji Yamamoto.

Men’s fashion is also on the agenda: The male icon has gone through radical transformation too, from thin white Ziggy Stardust through Jean Paul Gaultier’s man as sex object to rappers and metrosexuals.

As well as selecting five hundred pieces out of fifty thousand in the museum’s archives, the curators explain why these are key to the unfolding story of changing style. The museum has thus metaphorically X-rayed its own collection to get under fashion’s skin.

Foreword
Suzy Menkes
Yves Saint Laurent

Yves Saint Laurent is one of the great names in fashion history. Born in Algeria in 1936, he moved to Paris as a teenager during the 1950s and was taken under the wing of Christian Dior. In 1957, at the age of 21, he was named head of the house after Dior's sudden death. While his first collection was a triumph, subsequent seasons were viewed as too avant-garde. After a traumatic stint in the army and his firing from Dior, Saint Laurent returned to Paris in 1970. Four years later, following Dior's sudden death, he was named head of Dior's house. Together with his friend, close collaborator, and business partner, the late Halston, he created a new look that epitomized the best of twentieth-century fashion and style. A prodigious sketcher, Saint Laurent was a modernist who re-contextualized many items of functional clothing, such as safari jackets and men's tuxedos, into chic and feminine wardrobe staples. Saint Laurent also produced sweepingly exotic and four years later, following Dior's sudden death, he was named head of Dior's house. Together with his friend, close collaborator, and business partner, the late Halston, he created a new look that epitomized the best of twentieth-century fashion and style. A prodigious sketcher, Saint Laurent was a modernist who re-contextualized many items of functional clothing, such as safari jackets and men's tuxedos, into chic and feminine wardrobe staples. Saint Laurent also produced sweepingly exotic and

Paco Rabanne

Paco Rabanne is one of the most influential designers of the 1960s. Born to a Spanish family in Paris in 1934, he studied at the École des Beaux-Arts and was influenced by the music of the Beatles. Rabanne's approach to design was revolutionary, using his knowledge of aerospace and industrial design to create garments that were at once avant-garde and futuristic. His metallic dresses, made of paper, leather, rubber, and even fabric, were characterized by their bold geometric shapes and the use of chainmail techniques. Rabanne continued to present clothing collections, with later work incorporating a wider range of materials and colors. His unique vision of fashion paved the way for a new generation of designers and helped to establish the role of the couturier as an artist in the modern era.
Cristóbal Balenciaga (1895–1972) was one of the greatest couturiers in the history of fashion. Born in the Basque country of Spain, Balenciaga opened fashion houses in Barcelona and Madrid before the Spanish Civil War forced him to move to Paris in 1937. From the beginning, he achieved success with the most discriminating clients, including the Duchess of Windsor, Pauline de Rothschild, Gloria Guinness, and Mona Bismarck.

Although established for more than thirty years on the avenue George V, Balenciaga remained inspired by the artistic culture of Spain. His famous “Infanta” ball gown of 1939, for example, paid homage to Velázquez’s masterpieces, Las Meninas. Similarly, his boleros and flaring skirts echoed, respectively, the clothing worn by matadors and flamenco dancers. Later in his career, the voluminous shapes of traditional ecclesiastical dress would be central to his work. While his early work tended to follow the lines of the body (albeit sometimes overlaid with complex constructions of drapery or surface decoration), over time his work acquired an abstract, sculptural simplicity.

By the early 1950s, Balenciaga had developed a semi-fitted jacket with a fluid, comfortable line that flattered a variety of body types. His balloon dresses, sack dresses, and baby doll dresses were equally instrumental in moving fashion away from its obsession with the hourglass silhouette.

Cristóbal Balenciaga closed his couture house in 1968, believing that elegance was irrelevant in the face of a rising youth culture. Yet his explorations in volume, shape, and form revolutionized fashion. His contemporary, Christian Dior, aptly described him as “the master of us all.”

In 1986 when Jacques Bogart S.A. acquired the rights to the Balenciaga label, he revived the brand as a ready-to-wear line. Designer Nicolas Ghesquière, who was born in 1971, a year before Balenciaga died, presented his first collection for the House of Balenciaga in 1997.

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“Of all the couturiers, Dior was the Watteau of dressmaking. Balenciaga is fashion’s Picasso...” — Cecil Beaton, costume designer

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—V.S.
Issey Miyake

It’s about an elegance being tinged with a bit of Parisian d’Adoption, le créateur fabric-and-steel constructions, inspired Owens to make American sculptor Lee Bontecou, known for her skirts: Grey silk crêpe

Depuis, Owens a remporté de nombreux prix, ouvert des boutiques indépendantes sente son premier défilé en septembre 2002 pendant la New York Fashion Week.


Ralph Lauren, par exemple, est connu pour ses pantalons et vestes formelles à la poche et à la aile angulaires, et le fourrur, mais à l’inverse, Revillon ne semblait pas être la maison idéale pour Owens puisqu’il privilégie respecté fourreur Revillon. Fabricant de vêtements en fourrure de luxe plutôt guinées, Owens a révolutionné le look du fourreur dès sa première collection présentée à New York en 1994, laissant des traces de ses icônes comme une silhouette élancée et étroite, parfois contrairement à des vestes sculpturales.

Stephen Burrows (b. 1943)

Born in Newark, New Jersey, Stephen Burrows graduated from the Fashion Institute of Technology, New York, in 1966. Aimed at achieving international acclaim, he is best known for his vibrant use of color, and construction techniques, allowing Miyake to make some of the most extraordinary designs. He employed snaps and lacing. He left his machine-stitched seams exposed and used employing scissors and then customize it to her liking. Today, the A-POC concept has focus on research and other projects such as his specialty line A-POC (an acronym for "Art, Process, Object, Concept").

In 1994 and 1999, Miyake stopped designing his collections, choosing instead to work on his conceptual lines. In 1999, he founded A-POC, an acronym for "Art, Process, Object, Concept," with the goal of creating unique experiments. He has worked with artists such as Rik Oostenbroek, Tim Hawkinson, and Cai Guo-Qiang to design unique Pleats Please works.

Elsa Schiaparelli (1890–1973) is among the most original figures in the history of twentieth-century fashion. She had a forty-year career that began in 1926, but she is best remembered for her Surrealist-inspired designs of the 1930s. Despite the fact that Schiaparelli worked in the traditional method of applying decorative, two-dimensional images to the surfaces of her clothing rather than employing innovative construction techniques, she was a revolutionary designer who became the first couturier to integrate sophisticated and complex artistic concepts into highly wearable material. Schiaparelli viewed the creation of clothing in terms of artistic inspiration and regarded fashion as much more than a craft, stating in her autobiography, Shocking Life, that “dress designing… is to me not a profession, but an art.”

Born to a conservative, aristocratic Roman family, Schiaparelli exhibited early signs of rebelliousness and artistic inclination that would become the cornerstones of her creativity. At age fourteen, for example, she was sent to a convent for publishing a set of erotic poems; she was released only after going on a hunger strike. Ten years later, she married the eccentric theosophist Count William de Wendt de Kerlor, a mere two days after hearing his lecture in London on “the powers of the soul over the body, magic, and eternal youth.” Within two years, the couple moved to New York, had a child, and divorced. With no money and an infant to support, Schiaparelli took a series of odd jobs that in 1922 landed her in Paris, the city she would thereafter consider her home. By 1926, she began a business selling chic and playful sportswear. Five years later, at the height of the Depression, Schiaparelli opened her couture house on the rue de la Paix.

During the apex of her creativity, the years 1934 to 1940, Schiaparelli incorporated Surrealist motifs in her designs and collaborated with such artists as Salvador Dalí and Jean Cocteau, as well as artisans such as Albert Lesage and Jean Clément. Schiaparelli was enthralled by the Surrealists’ exploration of the unconscious and their creation of works filled with strange, and sometimes shocking, dream imagery. Unlike the male Surrealists, however, she did not focus on issues of sexual repression and violence. Instead, she explored questions of female disguise and masquerade, distancing herself from Dalí and Max Ernst, among others, by incorporating the more playful and witty aspects of Surrealism’s eroticism.

Beginning in 1937, Schiaparelli pioneered the concept of seasonal collections created around a single, unified theme such as Circus, Butterflies, Pagan, Astrology, Commedia dell’arte, and Music. Not only did these collections convey Schiaparelli’s originality, they presaged the current trend among designers to create thematic runway presentations. – P.M.
Diane von Furstenberg

Née Diane Simone Michelle Halfin à Bruxelles en Belgique, Diane von Furstenberg est une des forces motrices de l’industrie de la mode. Elle est surtout connue pour avoir inventé la robe-portefeuille, modèle qui, depuis sa création en 1976, est devenue un véritable classique. Elle a d’abord été connue simplement sous ses initiales DVF. Le vêtement qui l’a rendue célèbre, avant même son premier mariage, Diane von Furstenberg savait qu’elle voulait être une designer. Elle a rapidement pris la route de l’influence et a continué à s’épanouir en tant que designer. Elle est aussi connue pour sa ligne de parfums, qui sont une extension de sa vision esthétique et sa passion pour la mode. Elle a toujours été une des figures les plus influentes de la mode contemporaine.

La robe-portefeuille, qui est une robe facile à porter et à porter avec des chaussures de tous types, a été un succès immédiat et a été portée par un grand nombre de femmes célèbres. Elle est restée populaire et a continué à être portée par de nombreuses stars de la mode. Elle a également été adaptée en diverses éditions, avec des variations de couleurs, de formes et de matériaux. Diane von Furstenberg a continué à développer sa ligne de mode, en incluant des vêtements pour femmes d’âge moyen et plus, ainsi que des accessoires et des parfums. Elle a également fondé divers autres labels de mode, qui ont continué à être populaires et à être portés par de nombreuses femmes dans le monde entier.

Diane von Furstenberg est également connue pour sa passion pour la mode et sa dedicazione à la perfection. Elle a toujours cherché à créer des vêtements qui combinaient le style et la fonctionnalité, tout en les rendant accessibles à tous les gens. Elle a fait de la mode une expression de la personnalité et du style des femmes, et a continué à être une des designers de mode les plus influents du monde. Elle est devenue un symbole de l’émancipation des femmes et de la prise de conscience de leur rôle dans la société. Elle a également été une voix forte pour la cause de l’égalité des droits des femmes et elle a été un modèle pour de nombreuses femmes dans le monde entier.

Diane von Furstenberg est une designers de mode qui a su combiner la passion et la compétence de la mode avec une vision innovante. Elle a créé des vêtements qui ont changé le monde de la mode et qui continuent à faire la mode aujourd’hui. Elle est une figure emblématique de la mode contemporaine et une inspiratrice pour de nombreuses femmes dans le monde entier.
“The Fashion Institute of Technology has edited its powerful collection just as today’s woman refines her wardrobe, to state who she is and what she stands for.” — Suzy Menkes