

# LACMA FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## LACMA ACQUIRES COUTURE COLLECTION SPANNING APPROXIMATELY 130 YEARS OF FASHION HISTORY



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(Los Angeles-January 8, 2013) The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) has significantly added to its twentieth-century fashion collection with the acquisition of 158 examples of fashion by couture designers dating from 1880 to 2008, made possible by dedicated museum supporter Ellen A. Michelson. Nearly fifty major fashion designers are represented in this acquisition, including Cristóbal Balenciaga, Jean Dessès, Christian Dior, Hubert de Givenchy, Christian Lacroix, Jeanne Lanvin, Yves Saint Laurent, Alexander McQueen, Jean Patou, Paul Poiret, and Paco Rabanne. The collection is especially strong in the work of Coco Chanel, Madame Grès, and Madeleine Vionnet—three icons of French fashion whose distinctive creations are of unquestionable artistic merit. LACMA's holdings of Vionnet have been additionally strengthened by the recent acquisition of the Betty Kirke Pattern Archives of Madeleine Vionnet, a gift of Betty Kirke.

The collection of 158 pieces of day and eveningwear is the latest in a series of recent gifts from Michelson, who was also a major donor toward the acquisition of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European costume collection in 2008—much of which was displayed in the acclaimed exhibition *Fashioning Fashion: European Dress in Detail, 1700–1915*; in 2010 Michelson also made possible the acquisition of twenty-eight rare examples of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European menswear and accessories. Selections from both of those collections form the basis for the planned 2016 LACMA exhibition *Reigning Men: From the Macaroni to the Metrosexual*, a groundbreaking historical survey of menswear.

“Thanks to Ellen’s ongoing generosity and dedication, LACMA has become one of the most prominent centers for the study of the history of fashion in the world,” said Michael Govan, LACMA CEO and Wallis Annenberg Director. “These extraordinary gowns by a who’s who of designers from the last 130 years effectively picks up where *Fashioning Fashion* left off, allowing the museum to tell the story of three centuries of European fashion.”

Of this transformative acquisition, Mrs. Michelson noted, “I am delighted to help build something truly special at LACMA. When the museum’s curators shared this new collection with me, I knew immediately that it was the perfect fit for the museum.”

The new costume acquisition was carefully assembled by Dominique Sirop, a haute couturier who worked closely with designers such as Yves Saint Laurent, Hubert de Givenchy, and Hanae Mori. Sirop opened his own atelier in 1996 and is a member of the exclusive *Chambre Syndicale de la Haute Couture Parisienne*. With his eye for superior cut, construction, and outstanding craftsmanship, Sirop has collected and acquired examples of innovative and influential dressmaking techniques. The collection, including examples of both evening and daywear, consists primarily of French couture—critical to the development of any museum dress collection—since France has been the leader of the fashion world for centuries.

In addition, LACMA has acquired the Betty Kirke Pattern Archives of Madeleine Vionnet, which includes priceless paper patterns, muslin toiles, research notes, slides, photographs, and other ephemera that renowned scholar Betty Kirke produced in the writing of her seminal publication, *Madeleine Vionnet*. The archives, a gift from Ms. Kirke, provide an exemplary opportunity for fashion historians to understand the significant contributions that Vionnet made toward haute couture.

### **LACMA Costume and Textiles Collection**

With more than 25,000 objects in its holdings, LACMA's Costume and Textiles Department features one of the strongest dress collections in the United States. Particularly well-represented are European textiles, fashionable dress, and accessories including the museum's extraordinary acquisition highlighted in the 2010 exhibition *Fashioning Fashion: European Dress in Detail, 1700-1915*. The exhibition traveled to the Deutsches Historisches Museum in Berlin and is currently on view at the Musée de la Mode et du Textile/Les Arts Décoratifs in Paris until April 14, 2013. The LACMA exhibition, *Breaking the Mode: Contemporary Fashion from the Permanent Collection* in 2006 presented over 100 examples of contemporary dress drawn exclusively from LACMA's collection. In 2011, LACMA acquired ten Florentine-inspired couture gowns by acclaimed American designers, Kate and Laura Mulleavy of Rodarte. The collection was displayed in the museum's European galleries in the exhibition *Rodarte: Fra Angelico Collection*.

### **About LACMA**

Since its inception in 1965, LACMA has been devoted to collecting works of art that span both history and geography and represent Los Angeles's uniquely diverse population. Today, the museum features particularly strong collections of Asian, Latin American, European, and American art, as well as a contemporary museum on its campus. With this expanded space for contemporary art, innovative collaborations with artists, and an ongoing Transformation project, LACMA is creating a truly modern lens through which to view its rich encyclopedic collection.

**Location and Contact:** 5905 Wilshire Boulevard (at Fairfax Avenue), Los Angeles, CA, 90036 | 323 857-6000 | lacma.org

**Hours:** Monday, Tuesday, Thursday: 11 am-5 pm; Friday: 11 am-8 pm; Saturday, Sunday: 10am-7 pm; closed Wednesday

**General Admission:** Adults: \$15; students 18+ with ID and senior citizens 62+: \$10

**Free General Admission:** Members; children 17 and under; after 3 pm weekdays for L.A. County residents; second Tuesday of every month; Target Free Holiday Mondays

**Images (left to right)**

Left: Madeleine Vionnet, France, 1876-1975, Evening Dress, 1925, Silk satin with gold-foiled glass bugle beads and silver metallic-wrapped thread trim, purchased with funds provided by Ellen A. Michelson, © 2012, Museum Associates, LACMA, All Rights Reserved

Second to left: Jean Dessès, France, 1904-1970, Evening Dress, 1956, Silk plain weave (organza), purchased with funds provided by Ellen A. Michelson, © 2012 Museum Associates, LACMA, All Rights Reserved

Second to right: Madame (Alix) Grès, France, 1903-1993, Evening Gown, 1987, Silk plain weave (taffeta) with stripes, purchased with funds provided by Ellen A. Michelson, © 2012 Museum Associates, LACMA, All Rights Reserved

Right: Alexander McQueen, England, 1969-2010, Evening Dress, Fall 2007, Leather with gold- and silver-metallic thread embroidery and fox fur, purchased with funds provided by Ellen A. Michelson, © 2012 Museum Associates, LACMA, All Rights Reserved

**Press Contact:** For additional information, contact LACMA Communications at [press@lacma.org](mailto:press@lacma.org) or 323 857-6522.

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