

Costume Institute's Fall 2016 Exhibition to Focus on Recently Collected Masterworks

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New York City, NY - The Costume Institute's Fall 2016 exhibition, ***Masterworks: Unpacking Fashion***, on view in the Anna Wintour Costume Center from November 18, 2016, through February 5, 2017, will feature significant acquisitions of the past 10 years. The show, curated by Assistant Curator Jessica Regan with support from Curator in Charge Andrew Bolton, will explore how the department has honed its collecting strategy to amass masterworks of the highest aesthetic and technical quality, including iconic works by designers who have changed the course of fashion history and advanced fashion as an art form.

"Our mission is to present fashion as a living art that interprets history, becomes part of the historical process, and inspires subsequent art," said Mr. Bolton. "Over the seven decades since The Costume Institute became part of The Met in 1946, our collecting strategy has shifted from creating a collection of Western high fashion that is encyclopedic in breadth to one focused on acquiring a body of masterworks."

Exhibition Overview

The exhibition will highlight approximately 60 of these masterworks from the early 18th century to the present, which The Costume Institute has acquired since its last acquisitions show, *blog.mode: addressing fashion*, in 2007.

The main Lizzie and Jonathan Tisch Gallery will be organized chronologically with ensembles shown in packing crates and on palettes, as though they have just arrived at The Met. Each object—primarily women's wear, as well as some men's wear ensembles and a selection of accessories—will be accompanied by an in-depth explanation of its significance within the canon of fashion history. Some newly acquired objects will be paired with pieces already in the collection to illustrate the enduring influence of certain master couturiers and iconic historical silhouettes. A recently acquired John Galliano for Maison Margiela dress from 2015 will be paired with a Cristobal Balenciaga gown from 1964. A Halston evening gown from the 1980s, new to the collection, will be juxtaposed with a Vionnet gown from the 1930s.

The Carl and Iris Barrel Apfel Gallery will feature some of the ensembles donated by designers in honor of Harold Koda upon his retirement as Curator in Charge of The Costume Institute in January 2016.

"While fashion is often derided for its ephemerality, its quick responsiveness to change ensures that it is an immediate expression of the spirit of its time—a vivid reflection of social, cultural, and political circumstances, and of shifting ideals of beauty," said Ms. Regan. "The masterworks we've chosen to highlight are among many we have collected in the past decade that draw on forms, motifs, and themes of the past, reinterpreting fashion history in ways that resonate in the present."

Designers in the exhibition will include Azzedine Alaïa, Cristóbal Balenciaga, Geoffrey Beene, Thom Browne, Sarah Burton (Alexander McQueen), Antonio del Castillo (Lanvin-Castillo), Hussein Chalayan, Tom Ford, Jean Paul Gaultier, John Galliano (John Galliano and Maison Margiela), Nicolas Ghesquière (Balenciaga), Halston, Charles James, Rei Kawakubo (Comme des Garçons), Karl Lagerfeld (House of Chanel), Jeanne Lanvin, Christian Louboutin, Maison Margiela, Alexander McQueen, Issey Miyake, Paul Poiret, Zandra Rhodes, Yves Saint Laurent (House of Dior), Elsa Schiaparelli, Raf Simons (House of Dior), Hedi Slimane (Saint Laurent), Noritaka Tatehana, Philip Treacy, Iris van Herpen, Viktor Horsting and Rolf Snoeren (Viktor & Rolf), Gianni Versace, Madeleine Vionnet, Vivienne Westwood & Malcolm McLaren (Let it Rock), Jean-Philippe Worth (House of Worth), and Yohji Yamamoto.

The exhibition will be featured on the Museum's website, as well as on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter using #FashionMasterworks.

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