

RISD MUSEUM

Modern and Contemporary Galleries (Jun - Dec C&T Rotation),
June 30, 2014-December 1, 2014

CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Emanuel Ungaro, designer
French, b. 1933
Dress, ca. 1968
Printed wool
Gift of William McCue 1990.137.2

In this playful shift from the late 1960s, youthful design is matched with a naive, freehand style pattern, reiterating Emanuel Ungaro's fresh approach to the French fashion system. In a deliberate act to set himself apart from the status quo of Paris fashion, he forged his reputation as an expert designer of textile prints. Ungaro's distaste for the fussiness that pervaded postwar Parisian fashion is best summarized in the designer's own words: "When she embroiders her dress, she also embroiders her mind." Ungaro's youthful clientele broke away from the traditions and techniques of earlier French couture, and was willing to experiment with bold prints and abbreviated silhouettes.



Harry Angelo Co., importer
American
Textile Length, ca. 1930
Ribbed wool blend textile, discharge and over printed
Gift of L. J. Cella 1991.123.7

This apparel textile is a dynamic, graphic testament to the art of textile printing and a feat of technical expertise, combining bleached areas—known as discharge printing—on the overall green ground with overprinted yellow lines.



Found in the Providence-based A. & L. Tirocchi dress shop in the 1990s, this is one of many examples purchased by the Tirocchi sisters between the 1910s and the 1930s. The shop worked with a variety of importing companies with offices in New York and Paris. Their most important source was the Harry Angelo Company, where they purchased luxury textiles, "robes" (pre-embroidered fabrics for dresses), and Paris imports or copies of dresses.

RISD MUSEUM

Cristóbal Balenciaga, design house

Spanish, 1895-1972

Dress, ca. 1955

Plain weave striped cotton

Gift of Mrs. William C. Ford, Mrs. John F. Ball and Mrs. William Leatherman, The Elizabeth Parke Firestone Collection 1992.067.7

To meticulously align and piece a striped textile is a feat of pattern cutting and construction, for the eye will catch even the smallest imperfection. Balenciaga's tailoring mastery is apparent in this striped ensemble from the mid-1950s, which was worn by Elizabeth Parke Firestone. Considered in the 1950s to be one of the best-dressed women in the world, she was meticulous about her look and style, leaving no detail unattended, and commissioned Balenciaga for the majority of her wardrobe. Celebrated by premier fashion photographers of the day, including Cecil Beaton, Firestone was said to be radiant in pinks and blues, and most of her clothing was made in these shades.



Chloe, design house

Probably Karl Lagerfeld, designer

French, b. Germany, b. 1938

Saks Fifth Avenue, retailer

American, 20th century

Dress,

Silk

Gift of Arlene and Robert Kogod 1999.37.1

This dress owes much to the fashions of the 1940s. A hallmark of Lagerfeld's work for Chloé was the use of retro-inspired designs to add youthful appeal to his romantic dresses, and from the flirtatious small-scale print to the ruched hipline, this is a 1980s interpretation of a 1940s day dress. The figure in the pattern resembles an amalgamation of the Tin Man from the film *The Wizard of Oz*, released in 1939, which is much in keeping with the other period references seen here, and a Boshchian fantasy figure of the 16th century.



RISD MUSEUM

Christien Meindertsma, designer
Dutch, b. 1980
Black sweater (vest) FLOCKS B87 002, 2005
Wool, handknit
Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 2009.22.2

For each sweater knitted for her Open Sheep Project, Christien Meindertsma used only as much wool as one sheep could supply. She then traced each sheep by the number on its ear tag and attached the tag to the final garment. The identities of each sheep are further highlighted in sheep passports, in which the portrait, weight, and biography of the animal is documented.

Much of Meindertsma's work reveals the raw materials, processes, and producers normally invisible in our industrialized world. What would have once been common knowledge—how much fleece it takes to spin and knit a sweater—is a mystery to most contemporary consumers, who may not even associate wool with a living animal.

Christien Meindertsma
Dutch, b. 1980
White sweater (cardigan), 2005
Merino wool
Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 2009.22.3

For each sweater knitted for her Open Sheep Project, Christien Meindertsma used only as much wool as one sheep could supply. She then traced each sheep by the number on its ear tag and attached the tag to the final garment. The identities of each sheep are further highlighted in sheep passports, in which the portrait, weight, and biography of the animal is documented.

Much of Meindertsma's work reveals the raw materials, processes, and producers normally invisible in our industrialized world. What would have once been common knowledge—how much fleece it takes to spin and knit a sweater—is a mystery to most contemporary consumers, who may not even associate wool with a living animal.



RISD MUSEUM

François Ducharne, manufacturer
French, 1920-present
Probably Michel Dubost, designer
French, 1879-1952
Textile Length, ca. 1920
Silk; metallic yarn
Gift of Mrs. Murray S. Danforth 44.275.3

The glistening gold yarns running through the ground of this textile heighten the sense of motion and the luminous effect of the dandelion blossoms.

In 1920, François Ducharne, a merchant who sold Lyon-produced silks in Paris and the United States, founded his own factory, hiring weaver Michel Dubost as head of the studio. Dubost was a specialist in brocaded textiles and patterned weavings, and as a former professor of design he structured this atelier as a “school for designers.” Young men and women without formal artistic training were taught textile design, working in a Paris studio deliberately located in the artists’ quarter of Montmartre

Marshall Field & Co., manufacturer
American, 20th century
Muriel King, designer
American, 1901-1977
Penmanship Print, ca. 1933
Silk; plain weave, screenprinted
Gift of Mrs. R. L. Gilpatric 60.078.9

Trained as an illustrator, Muriel King began creating dresses for herself in the early 1930s. Her clean designs and deft treatment of pattern were immediately popular as “day-into-evening” styles which, both economical and practical, could carry a woman through her day with only a change of accessories. By 1932, large department stores such as Lord & Taylor and Marshall Field & Co. began to carry her garments. A champion of a unique American style, King described the appeal of her designs as “Our natural look is our national charm.”



RISD MUSEUM

Jeanne Lanvin
French, 1867-1946
Dress, 1928
Printed silk
Gift of Mr. Rodman A. de Heeren 62.017.13

This lightweight and textured silk dress, printed with stripes, exemplifies many of the hallmarks of the designer Jeanne Lanvin. She is known for her romantic but wearable garments, and this dress exudes a childlike charm in its playful pattern and slightly oversized organza collar. The collar and the pleating at the hip nod to robe de style type of dress, an 18th-century-inspired look that Lanvin frequently presented in her collections.

The signature color of the House of Lanvin was the blue tint seen here in the stripe. Lanvin is reputed to have looked to nature and art for her palette, going so far as to open her own factory to fabricate "Lanvin blue."

B. Altman Co., retailer
American, 20th century
Dress, between 1914-1919
Cotton and linen
Gift of Mrs. Peter Westervelt 78.032.3

Day dresses similar to this smart checked-cotton example were advertised in 1919 by B. Altman Co. as "correct sports clothes" for activities such as golf and tennis. The crisp collar and cuffs lend a fresh youthful style in keeping with the retailer's intention and evoking images of vacation and leisure. Cravats, foulards, and other men's collar treatments were popular at the time on blouses as well as day dresses, imparting a masculine edge to ladies' garments for sport.



RISD MUSEUM

Bergdorf Goodman, retailer

American, est. 1899

Afternoon Dress, 1964

Printed silk

Gift of Mr. A. Middleton Gammell in memory of Suzanna Valentine Gammell 80.085.10

From the private label of the venerable New York retailer Bergdorf Goodman, this elegant black silk shift with linear white patterning represents the epitome of smart city dressing in the mid-1960s. The cut of the dress, with dolman sleeves accentuating the wavy horizontal stripes, calls to mind Japanese kimonos and iconic Finnish Marimekko prints—both popular design inspirations of the time.

