



Paris Haute Couture

Anne Zazzo, Olivier Sillard

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A comprehensive history of high fashion in Paris from Madame Grès and Balenciaga to Yves Saint Laurent and Yohji Yamamoto, spanning all aspects from clothing and accessories to perfume. Ever since Charles Frederick Worth dressed the Empress Eugénie in the 1860s, launching a "golden century" for dressmaking, Parisian haute couture has been a source of endless admiration and fascination. Its emphasis on exquisite design and meticulous craftsmanship propelled it to the forefront of the fashion industry. The position and practices of haute couture may have evolved over time, but the work of many contemporary couturiers reveals a strong sense of continuity, from the creations of Jeanne Lanvin and Christian Dior, through to their modern counterparts in Jean-Paul Gaultier or Viktor & Rolf. This chronological study traces the history of the esteemed couture houses of Paris, examining the role of the designer and the extraordinary craftsmanship behind the finished creations, the place of haute couture in Parisian culture, and its influence in the wider fashion industry. Particular attention is paid to the relationship between haute couture and the client, as well as the dualities in modern haute couture—its sense of exclusivity and quasi-mythical aura countered by an ever-increasing reach into popular consciousness and attainability. This volume is richly illustrated with images of the most superb pieces created by exceptional designers. Various incarnations of Chanel's timeless quilted handbag, Fath's charmingly patterned silk scarves, and Poiret's elegant perfume bottles demonstrate that haute couture encompasses far more than just clothing.

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