



***Balenciaga master of lace***

***19 March – 18 September***

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Cristóbal Balenciaga Museum presents, on the year of its fifth anniversary, the "Balenciaga master of lace" exhibition. Co-produced with the Cité Internationale de la Dentelle et de la Mode de Calais, France, and curated by Catherine Join-Diéterle, Honorary Curator of French Heritage and former director of the Palais Galliera, the exhibition highlights, for the first time, the relevance of lace in Cristóbal Balenciaga's production.

In this exhibition, lace, a traditional fabric associated with the exclusive luxury of the most powerful classes until its mechanisation, is the perfect example to show how Balenciaga's creativity and industrial technology can join forces to re-introduce and extol a material creating other uses, new applications and even revolutionary silhouettes.

With lace, Cristóbal Balenciaga manages, like with no other fabric, to combine the three elements: body, air and fabric. The couturier reinterprets this traditional material, recapturing for it a place of honour in the context of contemporary fashion.

## EXHIBITION

The exhibition occupies the second floor of the main building and will be open to the public from 19 March to 18 September 2016. Throughout the exhibition, distributed among three rooms, which exhibit more than 60 garment items, fabric samples, images, documentation and educational resources, the deep textile knowledge of Cristóbal Balenciaga is palpable. The couturier, based on the research of traditional materials – such as those that were part of his private collection – and collaborating with the industry in the search for new possibilities, was capable of magnificently materialising the innovative volumes and silhouettes that characterise his creations.

### Lace in the work of Cristóbal Balenciaga

Since his origins in San Sebastian until his recognition in Paris, lace had a constant presence in the different models created by Cristóbal Balenciaga. The exhibition shows the couturier's first years, which reflect his inspiration, marked by his infancy in Getaria, in 1900, when lace was used abundantly in both evening and daytime garments.

Throughout the exhibition we will see how during his entire professional career Balenciaga used this precious fabric for dresses, jackets, suits, boleros, coats and *deshabillés* without distinguishing its application in a specific item of clothing created to be worn at a specific time of the day. For morning suits, the couturier fits a narrow embroidered lace on a blouse, while, made with mohair wool, lace becomes a fabric for semi-tight afternoon outfits. For the evening, Balenciaga always uses extremely fine *chantilly* in different colours.

The couturier completed his models with lace accessories such as gloves, hats, shoes, scarves or shawls with which he delicately highlighted the feminine nature of his creations.

### Reinterpretation of a traditional fabric

The exhibition also reveals the stylistic originality of the master who contributed to the revolution of fashion during the years 1950-1960. Using lace like any other fabric, Balenciaga designed shirt dresses, baby dolls, *colonnes* and tunics. He knew how to highlight the transparency of lace, or transform it with abundant embroidery. He thus created new silhouettes, fluid lines and surprising volumes that contrasted with what had been established by tradition.

Colour also has its importance in the exhibition: Black, in particular that of the *chantilly*-type lace, allowed Balenciaga to multiply the effects of transparency, but we can also find lively tones such as violet, purple or fuchsia, or dusty tones

in his creations. This means that lace goes through many transformations and innovations, in some cases by hand-painting the large patterns of the ivory lace in brown tones and in others embroidering the white lace with small ribbons called *comètes* by the Lesage firm.

For the lace of his models, Balenciaga worked with the famous Marescot, Brivet, Hurel and Dognin firms. The couturier appreciates all types of laces, from the thicker ones that are reminiscent of duchess lace to the finer *chantilly*-type laces. The patterns of the lace evolve with the changing fashions and Balenciaga applies them innovatively. Embroiders such as Lesage, René Begué or Andrée Bosin become collaborators of the couturier and totally transform these materials thanks to a wide variety of techniques. Lace can be pearled, with sequins, decorated with flowers in relief, hand-painted; on some occasions these embroideries are as voluminous as wool, similar to tweed, or very dense where the lace or tulle substrate disappears.

### **Industry as an ally of Balenciaga's creativity**

Balenciaga's creativity uses the thriving textile industry of lace to extol the material. The exhibition highlights the important development of the mechanical lace industry in Calais, France, which employed, in the early 20th century, more than 30,000 people.

The first tulle looms that made it possible to create a continuous net without patterns were made in England in the early 19th century. These looms were illegally introduced into France from 1816 onwards, where Calais and northern France were their main destination. One of the technological achievements lay in the adaptation, in 1834, of a Leavers-type loom to another invention: the Jacquard mechanism, a system of perforated cardboard pieces used since the 18th century in the silk industry. These pieces of cardboard, which contained the information necessary for the machine's movements, made it possible to simultaneously make the patterns and the substrate.

Today, in France, only the cities of Calais and Caudry preserve the know-how and the manufacture of this exceptional material thanks to these machines, some of them hundreds of years old.

## **EDUCATIONAL SPACES AND SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES**

Balenciaga's mastery in relation to fabrics is a topic that, although this exhibition focuses on a specific example, goes far beyond it. His deep knowledge of traditional materials allowed Balenciaga to extract from them new possibilities to build his creations and when this was no longer possible, he evolved them until he brought new properties out of them that adapted to his needs.

In this respect, the exhibition will be complemented with conferences, courses and activities aimed at broadening its approach and to create a context richer in facets and points of view, from the historical perspective, today's perspective and future trends.

### **Educational spaces in the exhibition**

As a novelty, the exhibition will include three integrated educational spaces, one per room, which encourage the participation of visitors of all ages to learn about the qualities of lace fabric through touch, the possibilities of transforming the silhouette through games or the communicative value of clothing by trying on a Balenciaga replica.

### **Workshops for families and DYS**

On the other hand there will be activities for families such as the *Lattices* workshop given by the Maushaus collective (17 April) and the *Textiles and creative electronics* workshop which will include lace given by artist Paola Guimerans (15 May). In addition to 2 more activities for adults: one for the creation of a printed lace blouse by artist Virginia Ameztoy (23 and 24 May) and another for working with recycled materials by Tytti Thusberg.

### **Master Class**

There will also be a Master Class aimed at a professional audience, dedicated to the analysis and use of fabrics, by Javier Martín, modelling manager at the Spanish DELPOZO firm. This last activity will take place from 27 to 29 May and the registration period will soon be opened.

In order to consult the educational activities or to take part in the workshops, you can call the Museum 943, write to [didaktika@crislobalbalenciagamuseoa.com](mailto:didaktika@crislobalbalenciagamuseoa.com) or consult the website.

## **CURATORS AND COLLABORATORS**

In 2016, the year of its fifth anniversary, the Cristóbal Balenciaga Museum will host the "Balenciaga master of lace" exhibition presented in Calais in the year 2015. This exhibition was very well received by the public and is now adapted to the spaces of the Museum in Getaria. The exhibition has been co-produced between the Cristóbal Balenciaga Museum and Cité Internationale de la Dentelle et de la Mode de Calais.

### **Curators:**

Catherine Join-Diéterle, Honorary Curator of French Heritage and former director of the Palais Galliera Museum.

PhD in History of Art, general heritage curator, she directed the Galliera museum from 1989 to 2009. In 2007 she created the Fashion and Suit chair at the Louvre school. She has curated a number of exhibitions: "Robes du soir", "Givenchy", "Marlene Dietrich", "Sous l'Empire des crinolines"... and in 2012 "L'Envers du décor" for the CNCS (The National Center of Stage Costume) in Moulins.

Shazia Boucher, curator of the Cité Internationale de la Dentelle et de la Mode de Calais, associated curator.

Igor Uria, director of the Cristóbal Balenciaga Museum collections, associated curator.

### **Collaborators:**

The exhibition is part of the "Conversations" programme by Donostia/San Sebastian 2016 and includes the collaboration of Archives Balenciaga Paris and Lesage Paris.

## **CATALOGUE**

Under the direction of Catherine Join-Diéterle, curator of the exhibition, and the coordination of Miren Vives Almandoz, director of the Cristóbal Balenciaga Museum, the catalogue of the "Balenciaga through lace" exhibition provides a new perspective on the haute couture master's work.

Bilingual Spanish/Basque catalogue  
120 illustrated pages  
Format: 21 x 23 cm  
Edition: Cristóbal Balenciaga Foundation  
Price: €25

Prologue by Hubert de Givenchy  
Texts by Catherine Join-Diéterle, Sophie HenWood-Nivet and Amalia Descalzo

## **PRACTICAL INFORMATION**

Museo Cristóbal Balenciaga  
Aldamar Parkea 6  
2008 Getaria

### **Timetables**

MARCH-MAY AND OCTOBER  
Tuesday to Friday 10:00-17:00  
Weekends and holidays 10:00-19:00

JUNE-SEPTEMBER  
Tuesday to Sunday 10:00-19:00  
July and August open every day

### **Prices**

GENERAL €10

FREE  
Friends of the Museum  
Children (up to 9)  
Members of the ICOM

10 % Discount  
Groups of more than 10 people  
Large families

REDUCED  
Young people up to 18  
Retirees and pensioners  
Students and Teachers  
Unemployed

## **Visits**

### **Commented visits**

The Museum offers free guided tours on weekends and holidays. Registration must be done individually at the Museum reception, before the time of the visit and until the maximum number of people is reached (maximum 20 people). The purchase of a ticket is essential.

Timetables

Morning 12:30

Afternoon 17:00

Languages

Basque - Saturdays morning session. Sundays afternoon session

Spanish - Saturdays afternoon session. Sundays morning session

Holidays - Consult language

### **Tailored thematic visits**

The museum offers the possibility of personalising the experience of the visit. Visitors, accompanied by a museum guide, can deepen their knowledge of the "Balenciaga through lace" exhibition from a more advanced perspective and can learn more about the haute couture master's technique.

Period: All year round

Duration: 1 h 15 min.

### **Visits with the curator**

A guided tour of the "Balenciaga through lace" exhibition led by the head of the collections at the Museum. Visitors will have the chance to appreciate Cristóbal Balenciaga's creations through the eyes of someone who has specialist knowledge of his work.

Period: depending on availability

Duration: 1 h 30 min.

[www.cristobalbalenciagamuseoa.com](http://www.cristobalbalenciagamuseoa.com)



## **Cristóbal Balenciaga Museum**

The Cristóbal Balenciaga Museum opened on 7 June 2011 in the town of Getaria (Spain), becoming the world's first great museum of its type dedicated exclusively to a couturier. Its mission is to disseminate and highlight the importance of the figure and work of this brilliant designer in artistic creation in general and in the world of fashion and haute couture in particular.

The museum is home to the most relevant collection of creations by Cristóbal Balenciaga at an international level, both due to the number and quality of the items included and to the timespan they cover.

In the museum's spaces, in addition to exhibiting, in rotation, a representative selection of his collections, there are temporary exhibitions linked to fashion and educational and leisure activities.

### **Further information:**

#### **Communication Cristóbal Balenciaga Museoa**

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