

**BETTY CATROUX
YVES SAINT LAURENT
FEMININE SINGULAR**

EXHIBITION

March 3, 2020 – October 11, 2020
Musée Yves Saint Laurent Paris
5 avenue Marceau, Paris 16^{ème}

Exhibition organized by the Musée Yves Saint Laurent Paris
In partnership with Saint Laurent

In 2020, the Musée Yves Saint Laurent Paris will be devoting a special exhibition to Betty Catroux, fashion icon and Yves Saint Laurent's 'female double.' The pieces displayed in the exhibition come from a major donation Betty Catroux has made to the Fondation Pierre Bergé – Yves Saint Laurent.

Madison Cox, president of the Fondation Pierre Bergé – Yves Saint Laurent, is giving Anthony Vaccarello *carte blanche* for this exhibition to be held at the Musée Yves Saint Laurent Paris. Anthony Vaccarello, who is currently artistic director of Saint Laurent, will approach Betty Catroux's wardrobe from an aesthetic perspective by selecting the pieces that best reveal her unique personality and ongoing influence on the label's signature style.

She lives and breathes Saint Laurent. An allure, a mystery, an almost nefarious aspect, an elusive yet desirable nature, all that underlies the house's aura, and you understand the magnitude of it when you meet Betty.
– Anthony Vaccarello

Approximately fifty designs will show the extent to which Betty Catroux embodied Yves Saint Laurent's physical ideal and an attitude echoing the 'masculine feminine style' that he was developing when they first met at the nightclub *The New Jimmy's* in 1967. Yves Saint Laurent immediately fell in love with her androgynous look, which was radically different from the usual codes of femininity and seductiveness and remains the subject of ongoing fascination.

She's perfect in my clothes. Just what I like. Long, long, long. – Yves Saint Laurent, *Women's Wear Daily*, 1968

I've always been captivated by what's masculine. Always wore jeans, a man's jacket... I don't feel like a girl or a boy, but more in a seductive position when dressed in boy's clothes. – Betty Catroux, *Antidote*, 2014

Betty Catroux, a true fashion icon, has been photographed by major artists, such as Helmut Newton, Irving Penn, Steven Meisel and Jeanloup Sieff. Personal photos and original documents will show the unique bond between Yves Saint Laurent and Betty Catroux, whom the couturier called his 'female double.'

The exhibition will also recount the full history of the signature 'Saint Laurent style,' which gained prominence in the 1960s and which the couturier would continue to explore until the haute couture house closed in 2002. The safari jacket, the jumpsuit, the trench coat, the pantsuit, and the tuxedo show how Yves Saint Laurent borrowed from the male wardrobe and adapted it for the female body. These archetypes are also intrinsically linked to the figure of Betty Catroux.

What I'm trying to make is a perfect type—a perfect type of clothing, even if it's a simple blouse or a pair of pants—and to encourage women to build around them. From season to season, I'm always varying my style around the same basic prototypes in such a way that a woman doesn't have to constantly change her wardrobe.
– Yves Saint Laurent, *Femina* (Hong Kong), 1978

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The Betty Catroux Collection: A Distinctive Donation

Betty Catroux's personal collection consists of 180 haute couture pieces, many of which were runway prototypes. In addition to these one-off items are 138 pieces that Yves Saint Laurent designed for his ready-to-wear line Yves Saint Laurent Rive Gauche as well as a collection of accessories (shoes, handbags, jewelry, etc).

This donation, which is the largest the Fondation Pierre Bergé - Yves Saint Laurent has ever received, is particularly significant because these pieces embody both the signature style that Yves Saint Laurent continually upheld and his strong bond with Betty Catroux. It also displays the full wardrobe of a fashion icon.

These pieces complete the unique legacy left by Yves Saint Laurent and Pierre Bergé when the haute couture house closed in 2002 and which the Fondation—recognized as a public utility in France—conserves and promotes.

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Guest curator: Anthony Vaccarello
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About the Fondation Pierre Bergé – Yves Saint Laurent

During a press conference on January 7, 2002, Saint Laurent announced his intention to cease his career as a couturier and close the haute couture house. On the same year the Fondation Pierre Bergé – Yves Saint Laurent was created. Recognized as being in the public interest, the Fondation's primary aim is to ensure the conservation and promotion of Yves Saint Laurent's oeuvre. The collection of approximately 34,000 objects is composed of a wide range of items related to the life and work of Yves Saint Laurent and his haute couture house. Since 2017, this unique heritage is permanently on display at the Yves Saint Laurent museums in Paris and Marrakech.

About the Musée Yves Saint Laurent Paris

Over fifteen years after the haute couture house closed, the Musée Yves Saint Laurent Paris opened in 2017. It is located in the legendary hôtel particulier at 5 avenue Marceau where Yves Saint Laurent spent nearly thirty years designing his collections from 1974 to 2002. Across 450 m², an ever-changing rotation of retrospective displays and temporary thematic exhibitions present the Fondation's rich and unique collection.

The Musée Yves Saint Laurent Paris is the first museum of this scale dedicated to the work of one of the twentieth century's greatest couturiers to open in the capital of fashion. It was granted the Appellation 'Musée de France' by the French Ministry of Culture.

About Saint Laurent

Founded in 1961, Saint Laurent is one of the most prominent fashion houses of the 20th century. Originally Maison of Haute Couture, Saint Laurent revolutionized modern fashion in 1966 with the introduction of luxury ready-to-wear under the name Saint Laurent Rive Gauche. Since its inception, Saint Laurent has held enormous influence both inside and outside the fashion industry. Saint Laurent's status as a leading fashion brand is fully established and recognized, with a very distinctive identity and strong codes that are perfectly identified and made relevant to our time. Saint Laurent brand competes globally with high-end exclusive luxury brands and occupies a leading position in the sector.

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