

THE MUSÉE DE LA MODE DE LA VILLE DE PARIS IS BEGINNING ITS EXTRA-MURAL EXHIBITION PROGRAMME AT THE MUSÉE BOURDELLE. THE MUSEUM WILL BE CLOSED FOR RENOVATION WORK UNTIL SPRING 2012.

## *Madame Grès, Couture at Work* 25 March – 24 July 2011

The Musée Galliera is launching its extra-mural exhibition programme at the Musée Bourdelle with the first Paris retrospective of the work of one of the great masters of couture, Madame Grès (1903–1993). Regarded by her peers as the tutelary spirit of the profession, Madame Grès constantly said throughout her life: 'I wanted to be a sculptor. For me, working with fabric or stone is the same thing'. Her quest led her to the ancient world, but also to North Africa and India. A fifty-year journey from Hellenistic sculpture to the intransigent minimalism she pioneered in the fashion realm.

Madame Grès' sculpted dresses could therefore not have a more fitting showcase than the Musée Bourdelle, in an exhibition bringing together some eighty creations from the Musée Galliera and private collections, and fifty original photographs.

By 1933, the designs of Germaine Krebs, the future Madame Grès, had already made a name for themselves at the Alix couture house. In 1942, she opened her own couture house, Grès, which she directed until 1988. Pursuing her ideal of the seamless garment, she invented an original and deliberately timeless economy of line and volume transforming the female figure into a goddess.

Her uncompromising creativity in her use of asymmetric, antique-style figure-moulding drapery, or fuller forms when she worked in faille or taffeta, set her apart from her contemporaries. Ignoring fleeting fads and tendencies pervading collections for a season, she preferred to 'sculpt' unique pieces and present them as a collection. The hallmark of a masterpiece by Madame Grès is its purity, and the apparent simplicity of her art always hides the extreme complexity of her skills.

*Madame Grès, Couture at Work* gives pride of place to her most emblematic pieces: the draped evening dresses for which she received the Dé d'or award in 1976. Created from the 30s to the 80s, always in jersey and often ivory or pearl grey, these sculptural dresses have radiantly withstood the test of time. Photographed by Richard Avedon and Guy Bourdin, they were widely featured in women's magazines. Her day wear – the dresses and coats of the 50s and the purified designs in double-sided wool of the 60s and 70s – are still an inspiration for couturiers and designers today. The art of Madame Grès is timeless.

**The exhibition will have a comprehensive catalogue.**

Curators:

**Olivier Saillard**, director of the Musée Galliera

**Laurent Cotta**, in charge of contemporary creation

**Sylvie Lécallier**, in charge of the photography collection



Grès, evening dress, circa 1955  
Cream and pale grey silk jersey  
© Ph. Ladet and Cl. Pignol / Galliera / Roger-Viollet

### **Key information**

#### **Musée Bourdelle**

16 rue Antoine Bourdelle  
75015 Paris  
phone 01 49 54 73 73  
[www.bourdelle.paris.fr](http://www.bourdelle.paris.fr)

**Open Tuesday to Sunday  
10.00 to 18.00  
except national holidays**

#### **Admission**

Full rate: 7 €  
Reduced rate: 5 €  
14-26 years: 3,5 €  
Under 14 years: free

#### **Press contact**

Musée Galliera

**Anne de Nesle**

assisted by Caroline Chenu

phone: +33 (0)1 56 52 86 08

email: [presse.galliera@paris.fr](mailto:presse.galliera@paris.fr)