



MM 85408

Bloom

March 27--August 17, 1995

**Introduction:**

Bloom surveys fashion's treatment of botany and of the brash paintbox of flowers, revealing expressions of regimen and silence, beauty and youth, new life and mortality, naturalism and allegory. In this celebration of fashion's flowers, we acknowledge art's continual joy in nature and fashion's persistent quest for beauty, both physical and metaphorical. Flowers are, we know, glorious. They carry the promise of spring, of eternal renewal. They represent a plethora of ideas, offering empirical science, the feral pith of undomesticated nature, or a garden's cultivated resplendence. With equal effect, they can act as symbols of both life and life's transience. Their "language" can refer to an explicit iconograph, or it can arouse an unspecified emotional response. A seventeenth century bodice exemplifies botanical clarity. Nineteenth century dresses embody nature's inconceivable form, the black flower. A 1950's ball gown seeks a bucolic, arcadian ideal in its pattern of clover and flowering grasses. A 1980's outfit is inspired by the graphics of Burpee seed packages.

The flowers of *Bloom* are of many kinds and of many aesthetics. They hold in common our will to represent beauty. In some instances, the flower is rendered two-dimensionally of the cloth. In others, the pattern is re-

the form to which fashion aspires, the result being a dress that is virtually transformed in a whole bloom. Moreover, flowers offer not only the allure of the visual, but also the seduction of fragrance, their invisible, almost indescribable, essence.

Edna St. Vincent Millay proclaimed, "I will be the gladdest thing under the sun! I will touch a hundred flowers and not pick one." Fashion touches a hundred flowers for our lasting joy.

## GALLERY 5:

## Metamorphosis

"This bud of love, by summer's ripening breath,  
May prove a beauteous flower when next we meet."

--Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*

Poets, artists, fashion designers, and lovers have often accounted the beloved as a flower. In the eighteenth-century, the flower emerged from the garment, beginning as textile pattern and springing into three-dimensional form in fly fringe shaped into buds and blooms consonant with the flat

pattern. In the twentieth century, Geoffrey Beene--who has likened feminine grace to the flower--transformed a printed motif into silk flowers. Haiston, like J.J. Grandville and Walter Crane in their nineteenth-century illustration, conceives of the woman wrapped in a bloom as raiment: the purple anemone of a patellate skirt flourished as a lissome flower. Hubert de Givenchy creates a rose bolero, while Romeo Gigli nurtured leaves into a skirt, and Elsa Schiaparelli's flamboyant hats subsume millinery in garland and garden. A nineteenth-century wedding dress is ornamented with fringe of lilies of the valley that spiral around the skirt; a century later, Yves Saint Laurent surrounded his bride in an effulgent bouquet of lilies.

"What's in a name? That which we call a rose  
By any other name would smell as sweet."

-- Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*

By any name, beauty is wondrous, fresh, rare, and precious, ever to find metaphor in the bloom.

## 1. French

Open robe and petticoat, 1760s

Pale lavender silk brocaded with lace and floral meanders

In the eighteenth-century, the flat pattern of textile was reinforced with three-dimensional flowers in fly fringe. Generally made in the same mill as the textile, the fly fringe's "virtual" flora match the color and patterning of the textile.

Purchase, Irene Lewisohn Bequest, 1959 (CI 59.29.1 a,b)

## 2. Hanae Mori

Evening ensemble, ca. 1982

Peony print silk chiffon with beaded embroidery

In nature, the peony is a large and dramatic flower of spring redolent of its Eastern origins. Mori exacerbates those traits in an opulent bouquet of peonies on chiffon opening in patellate layers.

Courtesy Hanae Mori, Tokyo



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3. Geoffrey Beene  
Evening ensemble. ca. 1987  
Floral printed silk crepe

Elegantly discreet, Beene transforms a tonal carnation print into three-dimensional blooms, and then plants them on a contrasting field of gray, furthering their high relief.

Courtesy Mrs. John Gutfreund

4. Gianni Versace  
Ball gown, spring-summer 1988  
Purple silk rose-patterned faille with bead and silk floss embroidered net

The three-dimensional bead embroidery of a short bubble skirt suggest the silhouette and the ornate effects of the late eighteenth-century *robe à la polonoise*. Versace's astute historicism is characteristically -to his vivid sense of contemporary forward-looking fashion. The result is a dress of astonishing richness.

Courtesy Gianni Versace

5. Jean Patou by Christian Lacroix  
"Divine Folie" gown

6. Norman Norell  
Flower coat, ca 1968  
Red, pink, purple, and white petal appliqued silk organza

In the 1960's, even the most conceptual and sober designers introduced an aspect of fantasy into their evening wear. As in a famous Balenciaga evening coat with flowers, in an alliance of plain form with immoderate surface.

Courtesy Iris Apfel

7. Hubert de Givenchy  
Evening bolero, 1952  
Scarlet silk organza and velvet with glass beads

Givenchy's first collections were characterized by a fresh, pretty *jeune fille* approach to couture: the rose bolero from his second collection expresses this pert purity. The bolero with its tremblant petals is treated as an animate object, even bracingly sprinkled with morning dew.

Isabel Shults Fund. 1994 (1994.405.2)

8. Yves Saint Laurent  
Evening gown and jacket, 1978  
Purple silk velvet with embroidered rose motif

Planting the flower at the jacket's center front, Saint Laurent makes the rose both a corsage and an emblematic transfiguration of the wearer. In the latter role, the stem with leaves as vertebra and flower as head reinforce an anthropomorphic vocabulary of flowers.

Courtesy Nan Kempner

9. Bill Blass  
Evening ensemble, fall-winter 1993

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Orange gauffered velvet jacket with sequined leaf appliqué; coordinated black silk crepe gown

Blass made this evening ensemble for autumn. He gathered actual leaves at his house in Connecticut as examples for the embroiderer. Of course, Blass's allusion is underscored as he nonchalantly permits leaves to fall from the jacket onto the accompanying skirt.

Courtesy Bill Blass, Ltd.

10. Yves Saint Laurent  
"Grapes" ensemble, fall-winter 1988-89  
Silk satin and lesage sequin embroidery

Embroideries succulent with the life of nature become three-dimensional in an expression of the virtuoso beading provided to the haute couture by Lesage.

Courtesy Yves Saint Laurent

11. Romeo Gigli  
Ensemble, 1994  
Brown and green dyed cotton gauze

Even as Daphne pursued by Apollo turned into a laurel tree, the tree was thereafter beloved by Apollo. In the transforming a woman with gauze leaves, Gigli asserts his aesthetic of the ethereal and sublime.

Courtesy Richard Martin

12. Charles James  
Evening gown, ca. 1951  
Yellow-green silk velvet and ivory silk taffeta

James's organic thinking includes the calyx that surrounds the flower. While called the "petal dress" by James, this dress was not constructed with petal shaped pieces. His allusions to nature were metaphorical, never literal.

Gift of Marietta Tree, 1965 (CI 65.36.2)

## Fleurs du Mal

The bloom is the flower's momentary climax, inevitably the high point of nature's cycle which begins with and ends with death and decay. In *The Age of Innocence*, Edith Wharton recounted Newland Archer's remorse: "Something he knew he had missed: the flower of life." Melancholy and decadence can also be associated with flowers. In particular, black flowers from the mid-nineteenth century, often naturalistic but stygian in palette, identify a language of flowers encumbered by the Victorian penchant for mourning and memorialization. As in dress of the period, art and literature also rendered flowers wistful and solemn. A gown from before World War I, in a silhouette inspired by Poiret's innovations, combines Orientalist themes with a black velvet skirt roiling with aesthetic poppies suggestive of the decadent world of Aubrey Beardsley.

Charles James, who sought to recreate the defiant aesthetics of decadence, employed a black tulip in geometric and minimalist form that was initiated by plant materials but transmogrified into a sinister flora. Yves Saint Laurent's favored flower, the daisy, often bears its customary intimations of lyrical innocence, freshness, and modesty in his fashions, but Saint Laurent also renders the daisy in black, achieving a completely opposite set of associations. "Be beautiful and be sad: commanded French poet Charles Baudelaire.

1. Madeleine Vionnet  
Evening dress, 1917  
Black satin with self-fabric rosettes

Vionnet, the quintessential modernist, created fashion from pattern pieces that spiralled around the body. In her anomalous recourse to nature, she chose as her signature ornament the rose, finding in the flower's form a structural spiral. Thus, if only serendipitously, Vionnet perceived a natural and romantic counterpart to her rational helix.

Gift of Madame Madeleine Vionnet, 1952 (CI 52.18.5)

2. Charles James  
"Tulip", ca. 1953  
Blue-black silk satin and faille

James frequently gave names to his dresses, invariably metaphorical. The black tulip was associated with Art Nouveau decadence. Black with a blue cast was popularized by the Duke of Windsor who sought a more photogenic black.

Gift of Mrs. Robert O. Blake, 1966 (CI 66.57)





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3. Cristobal Balenciaga  
Afternoon dress, spring-summer 1963  
Black over-embroidered organdy

MM 85410

In heavily embroidered cutwork of leaves, Balenciaga allows the perforated structure to hide all seams and appear to be a wholly natural encasement. If Balenciaga's source was the black dress of Spanish custom, he adds the *finesse* of lace-like structure and the charm of the flickering transparency of arms seen through the black leaves. This dress was originally worn with a matching shawl.

Courtesy The National Museum of American History, The Smithsonian Institution

4. Yves Saint Laurent  
Cocktail ensemble, ca. 1967  
Black silk bouclé and wool bouclé over embroidered and appliqued.

A designer who luxuriates in many black motifs--including inky lace with visibility to the body, men's tuxedos modified to women, black velvet dresses, accents of black velvet bows and jet trim--submerged the joyful daisy into sensuous realm of black.

Gift of Jane Holzer, 1977 (1977.115.17 a,b)

5. Hubert de Givenchy  
Evening dress, ca. 1956  
Black silk over-embroidered velvet

Perhaps under the influence of Balenciaga and enthralled by Spanish regional garments, Givenchy created a sweetly flattering black dress of the 1950s. At a time when black was popularly associated with social extremes--a beatnik disestablishment or an haute bourgeois propriety-- Givenchy forswore his more usual light palette in homage to Balenciaga.

Gift of Rodman A. Heeren, 1961 (CI 61.54.2)

6. Yves Saint Laurent  
Chrysanthemum jacket  
spring-summer 1962

Black silk organza petals and leaves

Creating other floral embraces in jackets and stoles profuse and illusionistic in silk flowers, Saint Laurent takes the liberty in this instance of inventing an abstracted assembly of flowers and leaves in decadent black. Spiky spider mums express Saint Laurent's aestheticist declaration: "I love a dying frenzy. ... Decadence attracts me. It suggests a new world, and, for me, society's struggle between life and death is absolutely beautiful."

Gift of Lee Radziwill, 1977 (1977.157.12)

7. European  
Evening dress, 1910-14  
Black voided silk velvet, green silk velvet and black and white silk chiffon  
with gold lace

If Charles Addams and/or Edward Gorey had been fashion designers, they might have designed a dress with entangling webs and palpable golden dew along with unearthly and decadent poppies and tulips created long before the contemporary macabre, this pre-World War I gown manifests a lacy diabolic dress worthy of Theda Bara's ability to ensnare.

Isabel Shults Fund, 1981 (1981.328.7)

8. James Galanos  
Evening dress, 1987  
Green and black pin dot and striped cloqué, black silk satin, and bead embroidered black point d'esprit

Organic growth is suggested in the glossy iridescence of green and black, fertile, yet slightly defiled. Glistening flowers cover the bust with a "Kiss of the Spider Woman" provocation.

Gift of Elizabeth P. Kaiser, 1994 (1994.602.11)

1. American  
 Afternoon dress, ca. 1880-85  
 Black silk and black silk rose-pattered damask

This dress's pattern is a very specific hybrid of an alba rose with a noisette which creates a profuse buttonlike white blossom. Thus, a well-known white rose familiar since the 1840's was transformed perversely in the 1880's into a black fabric.

Gift of Mrs. Edgar V. Anderson, 1943 (CI 43.126.35)

2. Jean-Philippe Worth  
 Evening coat, 1898  
 Black cut and uncut voided silk velvet, black appliquéd and beaded white silk satin with white silk thistle-patterned damask lining

Worth gives black flowers a strong presence against a white pattern. The fabric is black cut velvet that resembles Queen Anne's Lace, transformed from the accustomed white of the wildflower into black. A secondary reference to Art Nouveau is the motif of the thistle, long a sign of fruition, but also often with a prickly, slightly invidious implication.

Gift of Mrs. William Glenn, 1945 (CI 45.95.12)

3. Jean-Philippe Worth  
 Evening dress, 1898-1900  
 Black and white voided silk velvet

Worth's black roses suggest the melancholy and wistful world of poets Charles Baudelaire and Algernon Charles Swinburne. While less innovative than his famous father--who established the standards and practices of the haute couture--Jean-Philippe Worth nonetheless was technically proficient and, in this example, demonstrates that he knew the dramatic reading of a textile in black and white.

Gift of Eva Drexel Dahlgren, 1976 (1976.258.2 a,b)

4. Paul Poiret  
 Coat, 1920-24  
 Ivory and black cashmere with rose-patterned bands

Poiret's label featured a rose and his first fragrance was called Rosine. The schematized rose appears as a signature throughout his career in woven textiles, embroideries, and prints.



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Gift of Mrs. David J. Colton. 1964 (CI 64.7.2)

MM 85411

5. Vivienne Tam  
Dress. spring-summer 1995  
Black-and-white printed cotton mesh

Tam transforms the body-conscious silhouette of the cheongsam and the imagery of the peony into a revealing contemporary idiom.

Courtesy Vivienne Tam

6. Christian Dior  
Ball gown, fall-winter 1952  
White and black voided silk velvet

Dior's recourse to silhouettes redolent of the late nineteenth-century was fostered by the exceptional quality of textiles available through the 1950s, many of which refined the textile techniques of the 19th century. In this case, Dior sustains Jean-Philippe Worth's grand gestures of pattern worthy of a Sara Bernhardt or a John Singer Sargent sitter.

Gift of Mrs. Byron C. Foy, 1955 (CI 55.76.24)

### Gallery 3: Botany

Through the long history of botanical documentation and classification in fashion, from a seventeenth-century bodice that is the microscopic examination of nature's abundance to a 1990s incorporation of the floral specimen into a dress by Koji Tatsuno- the flower has engaged fashion's scientific imagination.

Embroideries were among the first means used to create a collection of different floral types. Through history, clothing has chronicled the favor of certain flowers and plants: in a given era simple Tudor roses of the seventeenth-century to the more elaborate flowers of the eighteenth-century, to the jumble of banana trees surrounding cascades of roses inspired by the nineteenth-century. In the twentieth century, photography enables descriptive accuracy and/or hyperbole.

In the exhibition, fashion's botanical encyclopedia includes the rose, pansy, morning glory, tulip, sunflower, lilac, daffodil, poppy, chrysanthemum, carnation, violet, orchid, daisy, and dandelion, among many others. As early as the sixteenth century, European botanical gardens attempted both to include the whole known and expanding world of flora and to reconsolidate what had perished in the Garden of Eden. Modern democratic gardens display a similar regard for diversity and dominion, with respectful curiosity for nature's profusion.

1. Callot Soeurs  
Evening dress, ca. 1930  
Yellow silk satin patterned with anemones

With romantic emphasis on descriptive accuracy, this Callot Soeurs dress shows anemones. Some are imperfect, while others are the outermost bloom, verging on collapse. The effete flower signals an emotional response, but is represented by the Callot Soeurs with a clinical correctness.  
Gift of Renée C. Rinaldi and Michelle R. Rinaldi. 1977 (1977.69)

2. Chanel  
Evening gown and robe, spring 1993  
Floral printed silk mousseline

Exotic among flowers in serving as a food crop in South America, the dahlia, on importation to Europe and North America, has become a sign of its brief season of high color in late summer and fall. The dahlia's outstanding luxury and color contribute to dense patterning on chiffon elaborated by its layering on dress and jacket.

Courtesy Mrs. Charles Wrightsman

3. Christian Lacroix  
"Quand Même" evening ensemble  
spring-summer 1989  
Floral printed white cotton piqué, and embroidered sky blue silk



MM 85412 (Gallery 3)

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Lacroix revived the Second Empire in his admiration for winterhalter. The border patterning of roses and poppies suggests nineteenth-century still life and the exuberance of botanical displays in that period. Trained as an art historian and curator, Lacroix brings historical and art-historical resonance to his work as a fashion designer.

Courtesy Christian Lacroix

4. Christian Lacroix

"Artemis" ensemble, spring-summer 1989

Rose cotton damask with floral and lace embroidery, cotton lace and silk satin

This embroidered woman's outfit alludes to eighteenth-century menswear-like the waistcoats in the vitrine opposite-though with added elements of a botanical assortment not typical of that period.

Courtesy Christian Lacroix

5. Isaac Mizrahi

Day dress, Spring 1992

White cotton piqué printed with oversized poppy motif

Edgar Allan Poe believed the photograph conveyed absolute truth. Contemporary photographers use the camera subjectively. Noting his "preference for flowers considerably after they have passed ... perfection, when they have already begun spotting and browning and twisting on their way back to the earth," photographer Irving Penn describes his flower photographs, including a poppy chosen by Mizrahi.

Gift of Isaac Mizrahi & Co., 1992 (~~1992.259 a,b~~) (1992.259.1a,b)

6. Cristobal Balenciaga

Cocktail dress, 1946

Black silk chiffon printed with roses

Balenciaga was known for minimalist, emphatic silhouettes. When he used patterned fabrics, they were invariably bold in concept. These roses on black chiffon are not timid renderings, but grand, full-blown blooms leafless with a thorny stem.

Gift of Mrs. John Chambers Hughes, 1958 (CI 58.34.28 a.b)

7. Perry Ellis

Ensemble, 1985

Grey silk crepe de chine printed with carnations

The confident graphic image of the Burpee seed package, familiar to gardeners as packaging and as a sign of planting rows, is planted in sportswear by Perry Ellis. Elsewhere, Ellis has acknowledged Schiaparelli's trompe l'oeil and Sonia Delaunay's colorism. In this example, Ellis creates a Pop caprice by using of a familiar commercial image realized in another art form.

Courtesy Laura E. Lukowski-O'Brien

8. James Purcell

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"Carnation" dress, spring-summer 1994

White, yellow, and green hand-painted silk organza with green silk satin

While using Bucol fabric known for its technical virtuosity in the couture, Purcell makes deliberately naive rendering of a carnation, whose stem appears to spring out of the "grass" green underskirt.

Courtesy James Purcell

9. Adolfo

Evening pinafore ensemble, 1975

White silk organza hand-painted with floral bouquets

Posies of roses bedeck the ultimate spring country-girl dress in semitransparent fabric. Its unaffected pinafore silhouette plays against its delicacy and hand painting, suggesting a prairie plainness reconciles with handwork of utmost gentility.

Gift of Mrs. Mortimer Solomen, 1975 (1975.301.11a-c)

10 Adolfo

Evening pinafore ensemble, 1975

Pale-yellow silk organza hand-painted with daffodils.

In Rover Loveman's verse, it rains daffodils. The daffodil is a sign of abundance, seen wild in Impressionist visions of spring fields, and can signify remembrance, often memorial. The flower's spring plentitude makes it a facile lyrical symbol. Combined with the rusticity of the pinafore, the daffodil suggests wholesome optimism.

Gift of Mrs. Howard W. Geiger, 1994 (1994.241a-c)

11. Koji Tatsuno

Embedded leaf tunic, 1993

Latex and leaves

Courtesy Koji Tatsuno

12. Koji Tatsuno

Embedded leaf gown, 1993

Latex and leaves

Tatsuno's leaf gown refers to the traditions of papermaking, especially in Japan, like the translucent shoji screens that incorporate natural materials into a scrim. The effect is to see nature, but by means of a compacted veil.

Courtesy Koji Tatsuno

WAISTCOAT VITRINE:

MM 85413

1. French  
Waistcoat, 1790's  
Cream silk faille embroidered with silver and gold metallic thread and paillettes  
Gift of Walter Maynard, 1960 (CI 60.48.4)

2. European  
Waistcoat, 1780's  
Cream silk faille embroidered with polychrome silk floss  
Gift of Leo Van Wisten, 1965 (CI 65.17)

3. English  
Waistcoat, early eighteenth-century  
Off-white linen embroidered with silk floss and gilt thread  
Rogers Fund 1945 (45.49)

4. French  
Waistcoat, ca. 1790  
Cream silk satin with net insertions and polychrome raniculus and cornflowers embroidery  
Purchase. Irene Lewisohn Bequest, 1968 (CI 68.67.2)

5. Probably French  
Waistcoat, early nineteenth-century  
Cream silk satin embroidered with polychrome silk floss insects  
Gift of Lee Simonson, 1939 (CI 39.124.5)

6. Probably French  
Waistcoat, ca. 1733  
Rose silk brocade with polychrome silk floss and gilt metal pattern *a' la disposition*.  
Purchase. Polaire Weissman Bequest and Gifts from various donors, 1991 (1991.220)

7. French  
Waistcoat, ca. 1790  
Ivory silk satin embroidered with polychrome silk floss roses and ferns  
Purchase. Irene Lewisohn Bequest, 1968 (CI 68.67.3)

8. French  
Waistcoat, 1790's  
Creme silk satin embroidered with pastel silk floss marguerites  
Gift of Henry Dazian, 1933 (33.124.5)

9. English (textile design by Anna Maria Garthwaite; woven by Pater Lekeux)  
Waistcoat, 1747  
Blue Spitalfields silk damask brocaded with polychrome silk and gilt-metal floral pattern  
Purchase. Irene Lewisohn Bequest, 1966 (CI 66.14.2)

10. French  
Waistcoat, early 19th century  
Cream satin embroidered with green floss and metallic thread and paillettes in a grape leaf pattern  
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Van Vleck, Jr., 1961 (CI 61.1.1)



MM 85413

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Pierre Joseph Redoute

Twelve plates from Choix des plus belles fleurs, 1827

Courtesy Library of The New York Botanical Garden, Bronx, NY

Four prints to the left of the waistcoat vitrine, eight to the right  
(alternated with twelve other prints)

**SMALL VITRINE NEAR GALLERY 3:**

1. Stern brothers (American)  
Toque, ca. 1898  
Purple silk velvet trimmed with artificial violet and rhinestone buttons  
Gift of Mrs. Phillip H. Gray, (CI 50.105.1)
2. Eric Javits  
Magnolia hat, 1995  
White glazed mesh, straw, and black point d'esprit  
Courtesy Eric Javits
3. Louise (American)  
Hat, ca. 1890-93  
Natural straw embellished with artificial violets, pansies, and lavender silk chiffon  
Gift of Lucinda S. Day, 1974 (1974.243.18)
4. American  
Bonnet, ca. 1868  
Plaited straw with purple silk velvet and artificial flowers.  
Gift of Mrs. Frederick P. Chapman, 1966 (CI 66.52)
5. American  
Hat, ca. 1912-14  
Lavender net and artificial violets and orchids  
Anonymous Gift, 1935 (35.134.26)
6. Elsa Schiaparelli  
Hat, Summer 1951  
Red, pink, yellow, and white silk roses  
Gift of Mrs. Byron C. Foy, 1953 (CI 53.40.24e)
7. European  
Hat, 1900  
Artificial chrysanthemum leaves, white hydrangeas, and black silk velvet ribbon on green net  
Gift of John Kimball, 1945 (CI 45.77.3)
8. Elsa Schiaparelli  
Hat, Summer 1940  
Red, white, and blue artificial flowers with purple ribbon  
Gift of Mrs. Edna Woolman, 1940 (CI 40.101)
9. Jean Patou  
Rose hat, Spring-Summer 1986  
Pink silk organza petals on hot-pink silk satin courtesy Jean Patou  
Courtesy Jean Patou

10. Mainbocher (attributed to)  
Gloves, ca. 1938  
Black silk velvet with red and pink silk organza petals.  
Gift of Mrs. Harrison Williams, 1952 (CI 52.40.2a,b)
11. American  
Bonnet, 1880's  
Black silk net, black silk velvet ribbon and artificial roses  
Gift of Mrs. Frederick Street Hoppin, 1963 (CI 63.7.8)
12. Philippe Model  
"Double" Hat, late 1980's  
Dark gray woven straw trimmed with ribbon and artificial roses, and ivy  
Gift of Mr. Philippe Model, 1990 (1990.66.1)
13. American  
Hat, 1955-59  
Artificial roses and pink tulle  
Gift of Margot Grace Harton in memory of her mother Gertrude Keating  
Grace, 1978 (1978.235.8)
14. Hubert de Givenchy  
Hat (cache-chignon), 1958-63  
Black silk organza artificial carnation  
Gift of Janet Sloane, 1979 (1979.87.15)
15. Mme. Pauline (American)  
Turban, ca. 1945  
Pleated yellow silk jersey with silk velvet flowers  
Gift of Mrs. Frederick Street Hoppin, 1963 (CI 63.7.8)
16. Cristobal Balenciaga  
Lettuce hat, 1957  
Ombre green silk satin  
Gift of Natalie Lieberman, 1979 (1979.333)
17. Mme. Julia (French)  
Hat, 1890's  
Green silk velvet and artificial flowers  
Gift of Mrs. Lillie A. Martin, 1942 (CI 42.31.5)
- Germaine Vittu
18. Lettuce hat, 1942  
Ombre green silk  
Gift of Mrs. Alexander P. Morgan, 1972 (1972. 193)
19. Adolfo  
Headdress, 1966  
Yellow, white and blue artificial flowers  
Gift of Gladly Whitfield Solomon, 1977 (1977.412.25 c)

SHOE VITRINE:

MM 85414

Row one:

1. Marcel Rochas  
Daisy Sunglasses  
ca. 1939  
Ceramic and metal  
Gift of Paige Williams, 1984 (1984.170)
2. Isabel Canovas  
Fan, spring-summer  
1989  
Glazed green cotton  
leaves on black plastic sticks  
Gift of Isabel Canovas, 1989 (1989.208.2)
3. Probably French  
Parasol, 1860's  
Off white silk taffeta with embroidered violets and green raffia fringe  
Gift of Mrs. Janos Shoz (Helen Marshal), 1978 (1978.583.2)

Row two:

4. Gundry & Sons (English)  
Shoe, 1870's  
White silk satin hand-painted with rose and forget-me-nots  
Gift of Irene Lewisohn, 1937 (CI 37.44.19)
5. American  
Fan, ca. 1900  
Yellow silk hand painted with flowers; wooden sticks  
Gift of Mrs. Charles Hoffbauer, 1938 (CI 38.25.6)
6. American or European  
Fan, ca. 1900  
Gray silk hand painted with roses; wooden sticks  
Gift of Irene Lewisohn, 1941 (CI 41.170.69)
7. Christian Dior  
Evening shoe, 1954  
Black silk embroidered, fuchsia and green glass seed beads  
Gift of Valerian Stux-Rybar, 1980 (1980.597.36)
8. Manolo Blahnik  
Ivy evening sandal, ca. 1991  
silver leather  
Gift of Amy Fine Collins, 1994 (~~1994.490.109~~) (1994.490.10a)



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Row three:

MM 85414

9. French  
Slipper, 1830  
Brown velvet embroidered with green velvet appliques and polychrome silk floss embroidery  
Gift of Agnes Clarke, in memory of Louise Clarke, 1938 (CI 38.76.1a)
10. Hellstern & Sons (French)  
Slipper, ca. 1910  
White silk satin embroidered with white floss and glass beads  
Gift of Mrs. Edward A. Morrison, 1944 (44.52.5)
11. French  
Slipper, ca. 1927  
Aquamarine silk satin with ivory silk floss embroidery, polychrome ribbon rosettes and cotton net ruffles  
Mr. & Mrs. William A. Belden, 1988 (1988.270.2a)
12. Roger Vivier for Christian Dior  
Evening shoe, ca. 1955  
Yellow silk satin with metallic thread and polychrome floss embroidery  
Gift of Valerian Stux-Rybar, 1979 (1979.472.22 b)
13. Roger Vivier for Christian Dior  
Evening shoe, ca. 1960  
White silk organza and tulle with organza flowers, green floss and rhinestones embroidery  
Gift of Valerian Stux-Rybar, 1979 (1979.472.10b)
14. Roger Vivier for Christian Dior  
Evening sandal, 1958  
Shocking pink and green silk satin  
Gift of Valerian Stux-Rybar, 1979 (1979.472.7b)
15. Carey Adina  
Flowerpot bag, 1995  
Pink and green silk satin with rhinestones  
Courtesy Carey Adina
16. Walter Steiger (Italian)  
Evening sandal, early 1970's  
Scarlet silk satin  
Gift of Gladys Whitfield Solomon, 1977 (1977.412.51 b)

Row four:

17. Italian  
Gaiter, 1830's  
Blue and black cotton sateen embroidered with polychrome silk floss  
Roger Fund, 1926 (26.56.78)
18. Hellstern & Sons (French)  
Shoe, ca. 1911  
Blue-green silk brocade with pewter buckle  
Gift of Mrs. George Kent, 1945 (CI 45.36.12 b)

MM 85414

19. French or American  
Mule, ca. 1927  
Pink silk satin embroidered with polychrome satin ribbon  
Gift of Mrs. Peter E. Guernsey, 1989 (1989.163.2a)
20. F. Pinet (French)  
Evening slipper, ca. 1926  
Salmon-pink silk satin embroidered with polychrome silk floss  
Gift of Mrs. James A. Cole, 1973 (1973.112 a)
21. Roger Vivier for Christian Dior  
Evening pump, 1957  
Hot pink silk organza with yellow organza pansy and silver metallic thread  
embroidery  
Gift of Valerian Stux-Rybar, 1979 (1979.472.6b)
22. Judith Leiber  
Tomato minaudiere and pillbox, 1993  
Red rhinestones, semi-precious stones and gilt metal  
Courtesy Judith Leiber
- Herbert Levine
- 
23. Sandal, 1968  
Green plastic grass with clear plastic vamp  
Gift of Beth Levine, 1976 (1976.166.7a)
24. Judith Leiber  
Rose miaudiere, 1994  
Red rhinestones, semi-precious stones and gilt metal  
Courtesy Judith Leiber

## 1. French

Dinner dress, ca. 1877

Ivory and gold moss-rose patterned silk brocade and pale aqua silk faille

Moss roses, distinctive in the mossy growth on their calyx lobes, hips, and flower stalks, suggest a life force of the plant in addition to the flower. Such life is implied in a dress that shows only the buds, the splendid anticipation of full-blown beauty. Sir Walter Scott in *Lady of the Lake* (1810) wrote, "the rose is fairest when 'tis budding new."

Gift of Mary Pierrepont Beckwith, 1969 (CI 69.33.3 a,b)

## 2. Charles Frederick Worth

Ball gown, 1885

White silk satin with silver brocaded rose motif

The influence of French botanical painter Pierre Joseph Redoute's faithful depictions of roses with thorny stems can be seen in this Worth gown, which applies a similar pictorial precision in brittle metallic on silk.

Gift of Orme Wilson and R. Thornton Wilson, in memory of their mother, Mrs. Caroline Schermerhorn Astor Wilson, 1949 (49.3.23 a,b)

## 3. Robert of Paris

Evening dress, 1914

Green silk satin, ivory lace, and pink chiffon rosettes

In the early 20th century, tiny fabric rosettes rambled and climbed into fashion, millinery, accessories. Their presence here testifies to such popularity.

Gift of Mrs. Van S. Merle-Smith, 1941 (CI 41.110.313)

## 4. Christian Dior

Ball gown, spring-summer 1956

White silk chiffon printed with all over pattern of yellow roses

Though Dior, the gardener, loved the bloom on the stem, Dior as a fashion designer also prized flowers in a cluster and thus used the rose as a full bouquet. Dior's spring 1954 collection was known as Lily of the Valley and emphasized both nature and the softness of materials.

Gift of Mrs. Byron C. Foy, 1956 (CI 56.60.5 a,b)

## 5. Hanae Mori

Evening gown, spring-summer 1989

Bright yellow silk taffeta

The ruffle that spirals around the body is crimped at its inner edge in the fashion traditionally used in the making of silk flower petals, corroborating the form of the silk rose that is actually present on the sleeve. Mori frequently refers to flowers East and West, employing three-dimensional floral forms, textile prints, and embroidered plants, flowers, and butterflies, and textile prints of flowers.

Courtesy Hanae Mori



MM 85415 (Gallery 1)

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**Isabel Stewart**  
1870-1890  
This dress was made for the actress Isabel Stewart in 1870. It is a fine example of the fashion of the time, with its long train and high collar.

**Queen Victoria**  
1819-1901  
This dress was made for Queen Victoria in 1840. It is a fine example of the fashion of the time, with its long train and high collar.

**Christina Regina**  
1826-1861  
This dress was made for Christina Regina in 1840. It is a fine example of the fashion of the time, with its long train and high collar.

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**Christina Regina**  
1826-1861  
This dress was made for Christina Regina in 1840. It is a fine example of the fashion of the time, with its long train and high collar.

6. Maggy Rouff  
Ball gown, 1950-51  
Black silk voile with appliqués of roses

MM 85415

A sophisticated strapless black voile gown is perhaps too severely modernist to stand alone for Maggie Rouff and she accompanied the structural gesture with the overt femininity of chiffon roses in a techniques like that of the 1910s and 1920s. The gown equivocates between a modernist austerity and the evocative flowers of memory.

Gift of Mrs. Richard B. Englund, 1979 (1979.43.4)

7. Christian Dior  
Evening gown, 1951  
White silk chiffon printed with large pink rose garlands

"Next to his work as a fashion designer Christian loves his weekly 'return to the land.'" wrote biographers Elie Raboudrin and Alice Chavane of Dior's avidity for gardening. Roses on chiffon are necessarily indistinct, like the

19th-century chinés, but Dior, the man passionate for flowers and fashion, could likely identify each with utmost clarity, rendered in different states of maturity.

Gift of Mrs. Byron C. Foy, 1953 (CI 53.40.25 a-c)

8. Cristobal Balenciaga  
Ball gown, winter 1947-48  
Pleated rose pink silk taffeta trimmed with matching roses

Keenly historicist, Balenciaga invented a fantasy of eighteenth-century court dress, knowing that Marie-Antoinette favored overdresses with swags anchored by roses. Sustained by wide panniers also appropriated from the eighteenth-century, Balenciaga renewed the rococo rose for the 1940s and 1950s.

Gift of Lisa and Jody Green, in memory of their loving mother, Mrs Ethel S. Greene, 1958 (CI 58.13.6 a,b)

9. Cristobal Balenciaga  
Evening dress and wrap, spring-summer 1958  
Off-white silk with silk floss and bugle bead embroidered pink rose appliqués

Fashion historian Marie-Andrée Jouve has traced these roses, each cut out and applied to the silk ground with silk floss and bugle beads, to the flowers in Zurbaran's *Miracle of the Porziuncula* in Cadiz. In this proposal, Balenciaga acknowledged art, but he was also deeply aware of fashion history as well.

Gift of Rachel L. Mellon, 1987 (1987.134.7 a,b)

MM185415

10. Jeanne Lanvin  
Party dress, 1937  
Off white organdy with pink ruffled carnations

Known for mother-daughter dressing without cloying sentimentality. Lanvin frequently used flowers, in various scales, to unify the young woman's dress and the grown-up's.

Gift of Mrs. John Cambers Hughes, 1958 (CI 58.34.19a,b)

Isaac Mizrahi

11. Evening dress. Spring 1995

For Mizrahi, the rose is the opportunity to swirl and swivel shape-creating volutes and volumes of schematized form. His flowers are attributable to their garden source, despite this reductive abstraction.

Courtesy Isaac Mizrahi

NOT IN PHOTOGRAPH

- Boué Soeurs  
Evening dress, 1920s  
Black lace over pink silk satin with polychrome silk ribbon rosettes

Silk ribbon rosettes were the signature of the Boué Soeurs. Caroline Rennolds Milbank refers to the Boué Soeurs' design ethos as "a pure flight of fancy." It was an imagination shrewdly distilled of lingerie dresses with frail flowers, changeable taffeta robes de style, and the spring colors pixillated by metallic ribbons that caught glimmers of light.

Purchase. Irene Lewisohn and Alice L. Crowley Bequests, 1994 (1994.204.1)

GALLERY 5 VITRINE:

MM85416

Walter Crane

Flowers from Shakespeare's Garden: A Posy from the Plays, 1906

The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1972  
(1972.655.25)

Walter Crane

A Flower Wedding, Described by Two Wallflowers, 1905

The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1972  
(1972.655.26)

Walter Crane

Flora's Feast, 1889

Gift of Mrs. Edward Robinson, 1923 (23.53.1)

Walter Crane

A Floral Fantasy in and Old English Garden, 1899

The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1966 (66.546.4)

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GALLERY 5 WALL:

J.J. Grandville

Les fleurs animées. 1867

The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Irene Lewisohn Library Collection

Ten Colored prints



MM 85416 (Gallery 5)



1. Mariano Fortuny  
Evening coat, 1930s  
Garnet silk velvet stamped with foliate design in gold

Fortuny derived this sinuous floral from a textile design by the fifteenth-century painter Jacopo Bellini. Of course, it was not uncommon in the Renaissance for painters to be employed for textile design as well as panel or mural painting.

Gift of Mrs. Ernest Frederick Eidlitz, 1975 (1975.382)

2. Jean-Philippe Worth  
Evening cape, ca. 1910  
Dull orange silk brocaded in gold, blue, and green garland motif

Though at the dawn of the new century the House of Worth was intractably conservative--and had dismissed the revolutionary Paul Poiret--even its discreet taste bowed to the waves of Orientalism prompted by Diaghilev and the Ballets Russes to create a highly colored evening cape *a la perse*.

Gift of Mrs. Francis Coleman and Mrs. Charles H. Erhart, Jr., 1975 (1975.383.1)

3. Callot Soeurs (attributed to)  
Evening gown, ca. 1910  
Raspberry silk satin brocaded with gold

This gown suggests the Directoire with its raised waist and columnar body. Its textile opulence speaks, however, more directly of its own era, with hints of exoticism and the rich textile combinations and complications of the early twentieth century.

Gift of Agnes Miles Carpenter, 1940 (CI 40.27.2)

4. Callot Soeurs  
Evening dress, fall-winter 1920-21  
Polychrome floral patterned silk lamé and gold corded lace

Twentieth-century florals tend toward abstraction at the century's beginning, tulips and lilies became calligraphic whips and the roses become the crescent forms of the Wiener Werkstatte. For the Callot Soeurs, the flower is subject to generality and abstraction, but it retains its connection to opulence, evident in this instance in luxurious silk lamé.

Gift of David Toser, 1977 (1977.303.1)



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MM 85417 (Gallery 2)

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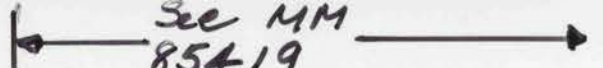
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5. Traina-Norell  
Sack-back evening dress. 1958  
Royal-blue silk printed with multicolored roses

Normally, a designer introducing a radical new silhouette—as the sack dress was in 1958—uses a conservative textile, but Norell chose a vivid and graphic material risking boldness in pattern and silhouette. The risk would prove judicious, as both the graphic signs and loose silhouette launched here prevailed in the 1960's.

Gift of Betty Furness. 1986 (1986.517.4a,b)

6. Emilio Pucci  
Day Ensemble. 1966  
Floral and butterfly patterned synthetic knit

Pucci may begin with a floral observation, but his graphic sensibility determines the result, a bold, highly stylized patterning. His priorities are decorative-art and design configurations after nature, not nature itself.

Gift of Betty Furness. 1986 (1986.517.7 a-e)

7. American  
Dress, 1967  
Pink, yellow, purple, and green floral printed paper

The paper dress was a fad prompted by a zeal for inexpensive, disposable apparel that would accord to a culture of transience. That same culture favored emphatic signs. A Pop flower was an abbreviated symbol with circular center, scalloped petals, and outline of leaf sprig. Dress and design

assumed life's ephemerality and succinct symbols of communication.

Courtesy Mike Dyckman

8. Christian Francis Roth  
"School Girl" dress, 1991  
Yellow, red, and green cotton velveteen with tulip and grass pattern

Roth presents the paradox of an ingenuous appearance achieved through extraordinary skill. While the pattern on the dress seems as naive as a child's drawing, Roth uses a method of applique' for the tulip's design. Consolidating structure and floral pattern, Roth introduces function into the tulip bloom by placing it as a pocket.

Courtesy Amy Fine Collins

1. English  
Robe and petticoat. 1770's

Off-white Spitalfields silk damask brocaded with floral motifs

Huge carnation heads and buds alternate in this Spitalfields silk which shows the flower in stages of maturity, an anthropomorphic connection to the ages of humankind, the Shakespearean seven ages that was a popular subject of art and textile at this time. Yet further, the flower is seen from several points of view as well.

Gift of Joan F. Wilson, in memory of Isabel Marindin Ferguson. 1980 (1980.600 a.b)

2. American

Dinner dress, late 1860s  
Champagne shot silk with floral chiné pattern

Cornflowers assume verisimilitude, despite the characteristic of the chiné technique to blur form, through descriptive color, form, and lighting.

Gift of Chauncey Stillman. 1960 (CI 60.6.1)

3. American

Dress, ca. 1882  
Cream silk faille brocaded in floral pattern

In this depiction of roses and carnations, the weaver changes the proportions of the floral to their foliage emphasizing the importance of the bloom as a primary identifier in botany.

Gift of Blanche De Vries. 1958 (CI 58.1.1)

4. Doucet

Mantle, ca. 1890  
Chrysanthemum patterned brocade with dark yellow velvet and fur trim

The chrysanthemum is the national flower of Japan and originates from the Far East. Among the most hybridized of flowers, it is represented in great variety in Eastern and eastern imagery. Like many artists and designers of the turn of the century, Doucet was profoundly influenced by imagery of the East. Designing largely for the stage and women of the theatre, Doucet favored grandeur.

5. Jean-Philippe Worth

Ball gown, ca. 1898  
Pale yellow slipper satin embroidered with purple silk floss

Worth creates this dress of majestic dignity in accordance with the style of the period. The silhouette incorporates a broad border of patterned silk, cut atypically for the period on the bias.

Gift of The Estate of Anne Morgan. 1952 (CI 52.60.6 a.b)



MM 85418 (Gallery 3)

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See MM 85412

6. English  
Dress. ca. 1840  
Mustard yellow cotton printed with floral pattern

The printing process of early nineteenth century cottons allowed for perfect detail. In this dress, pansies veining and the beard of each flower are clearly rendered with only a slight stylization to the wandering stems. The concomitant realism in literature and art encouraged a realism in textiles for dress.

Purchase. Irene Lewisohn Bequest. 1984 (1984.436)

7. Katharine Hamnett  
Man's suit. Spring/Summer 1992  
Cotton printed with daisy motif

The sunflower, with its round center surrounded by many petals, lends itself to visual abstraction. Its historical referencing, especially for menswear, is highly complex by the 1990s: it recalls 1960s daisy representations along with "the peacock revolution" in menswear; and the 1960s daisies in turn hark back further to the sunflowers of dandy Liberty Style.

Courtesy Katharine Hamnett

8. Issac Mizrahi  
Pantsuit. 1992  
Yellow rose printed ivory wool

Mizrahi's gargantuan rose isolated on its white field alludes to the suite of Irving Penn photographs of flowers commissioned by Diana Vreeland for Vogue. In turn, the Penn photographs with their isolated blooms against a stark white ground, continued an aesthetic convention begun by botanical illustrators.

Courtesy of Issac Mizrahi

9. English  
Morning dress. ca. 1844  
Polychrome floral printed sheer off-white wool

Nineteenth-century textile artists for dress incorporated a wide variety of observed phenomena, including flowers. Their sensitivity to accurate description allowed for consolidations, such as banana tree, palm frond, and rose.

Gift of Estate of Marcia Sand, 1979 (1979.385.2)

10. Gianni Versace  
Evening dress. spring-summer 1988  
Yellow and purple silk with carnation motif and green trepunto rose overpattern

Distinctive among flowers, the carnation is often represented in naturalistic detail but with a color shift. Such a shift is plausible because of the real carnation's ability to absorb vivid inks and thus change in color. Versace superimposes floral forms, manipulating a layered overpattern in the manner of contemporary painting.

## Exotic and Stylized Flowers

The flower, in many instances, has inspired fresh invention in fashion, offering an abundant opportunity to stylize and re-create the garden varieties. In particular, the blossoms associated with the fertile imagery of Ancient Near East—especially tulips, carnations, and to a lesser extent, the old rose—entered the Western art not with scientific botanical accuracy but with the fantastical qualities that result from inventive translation into pattern. Thus, early eighteenth-century silks reinvented nature with bizarre decorations that transformed the flower into linear ornamentation and fashioned elaborate phantasmic flora. Menswear—which banished floral decoration only after the "great male renunciation" of the nineteenth century—imposed decorative design on the floral cosmos.

Even the ingenious flowers of Pop Art and 1960s "flower power" and "flower children" suggest the application of floral shape to specific cultural identification and urgency. In a recent dress by Christian Francis Roth, the tulip is turned in a childlike cipher that is consistent with the tradition of flowers as expressive tokens.

The garden is the regimented organization of flowers. Formal gardens, in particular, impose a lawful system on nature's disorder. Similarly, the design pattern prescribed on nature is a dialogue between the wild flower and humankind's impulse to organization.

## 1. French

Men's suit, 1770s

Brown voided velvet and white silk satin embroidered with polychrome silk floss

Men's attire of the 18th century relished the voluptuous richness of textile and design that would be expelled from menswear in the bourgeois century to follow. In the 1770s, the flowers that confer extravagant pattern can still be recognized, but they have been embellished to the point of fantasy.

Rogers Fund, 1932 (32.35.12 a-c)

## 2. English (?)

Open Robe and Petticoat, ca. 1760

Hand-painted cream silk moiré

This eighteenth-century dress conflates Chinese-style painting technique and Indian printed-textiles patterns, suggesting the eclecticism of the rococo. Recent technical analysis of the garment indicates that, while dependent upon Eastern inspiration, it originates completely in the West.

Courtesy Cora Ginsburg, Inc.

## 3. French

Men's suit, 1780s

Brown voided velvet embroidered with polychrome silk floss

Embroidery with silk floss was performed *a la disposition*, created in predetermined pattern shapes, thus to accord fully with the silhouette and outlines of the suit. Even the embroidered buttons reiterate on a secondary scale the florals of the jacket.

Purchase, Irene Lewisohn Bequest, 1961 (CI 61.13.12 a-c)

MM 85419 (Gallery 2)



**French**  
Marie, ca. 1800  
Ivory silk with gold and silver  
embroidered applique  
The flowers of Art Nouveau are  
stylized and elongated. The style  
is a special feature of the era, and  
the ornamental lines and motifs  
are used and arranged in a  
decorative fashion. Thus, the  
flowers resemble the Art  
Nouveau whiplash lines that  
back up the

**Jean-Charles Worth**  
Court ensemble, 1873  
White silk with gold and silver  
beige brocade floral embroidery and  
gold trim  
The delivery of gold on white brocade  
is the main element of the style. The  
Worth's dresses are of global  
inspiration. Chinese patterns, especially  
in Europe, find their way  
into the fashion world.

**Pierre Balmain**  
Evening gown, 1953  
Ivory silk with gold and silver  
brocade floral pattern  
Balmain offers new trends in color,  
the sparkling cascade of brocade  
and the intricate details of  
floral motifs. These large flowers are  
reminiscent of the ornate  
brocade of the 19th century.

**French**  
Gown, ca. 1910  
White and embroidered with  
purple flowers and blue  
Indian and Turkish motifs and silk  
are used in quantity in the  
Empire. Empire gowns of white  
silk with other ornamental  
floral motifs. In the 19th century,  
silk and flowers are combined with  
brocade in a way of artistic  
contrast between the East and  
West.

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4. Spanish (?)  
Gown, ca. 1810-12  
White pina cloth embroidered with polychrome silk floss

Indian and Turkish cottons and silks entered Europe in quantity in the First Empire. Empire gowns of newly chaste silhouette often employed circumspect floral motifs. In this instance, stylized exotic flowers are merged with scallop shells in a sign of aesthetic synthesis between the East and neoclassicism combined.

Gift of Mrs. Aline Bernstein, 1946 (~~46.17~~) (C.1.46.17)

5. Pierre Balmain

Evening gown, 1953  
Ivory peau de soie with sequin- and bead-embroidered floral pattern

Balmain offers two motifs in one: both the tumbling cascade of tendril-twisted tiny flowers and the buoyant garlands of flowers blown open with serrated petals. These principal flowers are embroidered facsimiles of blooms seen in glazed tiles and cloisonné enamels.

Gift of Jean Sinclair Tailor, 1964 (CI 64.13.2)

6. French  
Mantle, ca. 1889  
Ivory silk satin with tulip-patterned embroidered appliqués

The flowers of Art Nouveau were attenuated and languorous. The tulip was a special favorite of the era, encouraging the stretched stems and torpid blossoms that nod downward in a melancholy heaviness. Thus, the flower resembles the Art Nouveau whiplash form that turns back on itself.

Gift of Mrs. Howard Crosby Brokaw, 1960 (CI 60.42.13)

7. Jean-Charles Worth  
Court ensemble, 1925  
White silk satin with gold and silver bugle-beaded floral embroidery and gold lamé

The delicacy of gold on white bespeaks the court restraint of the epoch. But Worth's flowers are of global reference, perhaps Chinese peonies, undeniably Eastern floral and design matrix.

Gift of Mrs. Harrison Williams, Lady Mendle, and Mrs. Eaton Munn, 1946 (CI 46.4.20 a-c)

8. Red and silver floral patterned silk brocade

The tradition of Renaissance textiles, known not only from extant textiles but particularly from their representation in Renaissance painting, offered a rich convergence of East and West and sumptuous floral pattern. Renewed textile grandeur in the 1950s returned many abstracting floral designs to favor.

Gift of Gillis MacGil, 1961 (CI 61.6.2 a.b)

9. French

M14 85419

Evening robe, ca. 1893-95

Red velvet and red-and-white voided velvet with white Mongolian lamb lining

An unusual ciselé velvet with scrolling floral and raised foliate pattern is comprised of cut and uncut loops of silk that evoke late Renaissance meanders. Yet its indisputable historical resonance is also compatible with the emerging Art Nouveau of a like abstraction of the flower within a curvilinear *horror vacui*.

Gift of Cornelia Van Auken Chapin, 1953 (CI 53.60.8)

1. Halston  
 Petal gown, 1981  
 Purple silk organza

While the anemone offers only one layer of petals, Halston complicates nature by providing two layers. One of Halston's mentors was Charles James: he continued James's preoccupation with nature as archetype for forms of dress, even the most ethereal.

Courtesy Mai V. Hallingby

2. Adelle Lutz  
 Girl's Pinafore, 1986  
 Green synthetic grass

The "grass family" children are darling. Perhaps if Walter Crane were inventing tales for children today, he would consider including them in *Flora's Feast*. The traditional pinafore of a Kate Greenaway past takes on a contemporary application in a medium akin to astroturf.

Courtesy Adelle Lutz

3. Adelle Lutz  
 Boy's Coveralls  
 Green synthetic grass

This pastoral outfit provides a complete disguise, its wear becomes a true child of nature.

Courtesy Adelle Lutz

4. Adelle Lutz  
 Ivy Suit, 1986  
 Green synthetic ivy leaves on wool with bark printed cotton

From the urban camouflage collection created for the film *True Stories*. Lutz's sardonic and likable outfit plays on the role of "ivy" as a menswear style associated initially with the Ivy League and later with suburban conservatism.

Courtesy Adelle Lutz

5. Willa Kim  
 Potato and lettuce ensemble, 1988  
 Handpainted silk organza

Grandville's metamorphic flowers and Walter Crane's "masque of flowers" are alluded to in Kim's potato ensemble. The nursery rhyme goes, "Mary, Mary, quite contrary, how does your garden grow? With silver bells and cockle shells, and pretty maids all in a row." Kim has created an ironic ensemble for such a pretty maid

Courtesy The Museum at the Fashion Institute of Technology.

Joseph Conran and Philip Treacy



MM 85420 (Gallery 5)

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See MM 85409

6. Rose hat, 1992  
Pink silk

MM 85420

Faced with the vexing problems of Cecil Beaton's memorable standard of 1956 for the Ascot scene from *My Fair Lady* in black and white, Conran invented a floral fantasy that began with the woman rising out of the horizon with their disembodied hats appearing first as a surreal garden. Conran and Treacy attribute inspiration to Irving Penn's flower photographs initially published monumentally on the white pages of *American Vogue* under the editorship of Dianna Vreeland.

Courtesy Academy Costumes

7. Joseph Conran and Philip Treacy  
Poppy hat, 1992  
Red glazed silk organza with stripped coq feathers

In the theater-costume collaboration of Conran and Treacy, there is an analogy to the working relationship of couturier with milliner, the former suggesting, but the latter being given great latitude of interpretation. For example, Treacy, a milliner of grand drama under all circumstances, employs in the poppy hat his favored featherwork, burning and stripping the feathers.

Courtesy Joseph Conran

8. Hanae Mori  
Evening dress, spring-summer 1988  
White silk faille and yellow tulle

Mori realizes the cheerful geometry of the daisy, employing the tulle underskirt as the yellow eye of the daisy with surrounding white petal hem.

Courtesy Hanae Mori

9. Hanae Mori  
"Woman in Rose" evening dress, spring-summer 1988  
Pink silk gazar and green silk faille

The pink gazar is twisted into a rose form on the sleeve. Yet the wearer becomes even more completely the rose as the green leaf-like overskirt completes her transfiguration. Like Daphne's transformation into a tree, the woman is encompassed in the rose. Thus she, in Shakespeare's words, "wears the rose of youth."

Courtesy Hanae Mori

10. Anthony Muto  
Evening dress, 1960  
Antique silk flowers

Seeking a patina akin to memory, Muto used only old, faded silk roses. The structure of Muto's dress is the brusque simplicity of the 1960s, but its decoration yearns to hark back to earlier, perhaps more deluxe, times. This paradox makes Muto's dress indicative of an era torn between Space Age and Age of Innocence.

Gift of Anthony Muto, 1994 (1994.595.3)

11. Valentino  
Evening dress, ca. 1968  
White cotton organdy embroidered with lilies of the valley

Valentino creates what is in silhouette a plain dress. In fact, its minimalist temperance is an effective foil to the unabashed luxuriance of the flower decoration.

Gift of Lyn Revson, 1975 (1975.346.12 a,b)

12. American  
Wedding gown, 1877  
Ivory silk faille, silk net and artificial flowers

Betrothal, traditionally associated with spring and fruition, is embodied in a dress that is the season's cornucopia of flowers. Silk lilies of the valley are strung together to create a floral fringe.

Gift of Mrs. Wm. Floyd Nichols and Mrs. B. Langdon Tyler, 1975 (1975.248.1 a-h)

13. Yves Saint Laurent  
Wedding ensemble, spring-summer 1980  
White organdy with sequinned lilies

Saint Laurent's bouquet is a swathing circuit of tissue in which the figure within is treated as yet another flower fully incorporated among the lilies. Many rites of passage--marriage, graduation, funeral--involve flowers and surround the individual in a plentiful sheath of flowers.

Courtesy Yves Saint Laurent

## Roses

The rose surpasses all other blooms in the visual imagination. Though Gertrude Stein's truism that "a rose is a rose is a rose" bears reason, it is challenged by the rose's considerable capability to proliferate in form. Symbolic and sentimental, the rose has long been cultivated in the garden. Its multiplicity of forms it assumes in fashion testifies to its aesthetic versatility: the empirical rose of an eighteenth-century dress is clearly identifiable as scientifically accurate, especially when juxtaposed with highly stylized meanders; the rosette appears as a spiralling of fabric in a deliberately naive schematic three-dimensional representation by Maggie Rouff or in the refined ribbon rose that is the signature floral of the Boue' Soeurs. Just after World War II, Diana Vreeland directed a visitor to Paris to bring back one artisanal silk rose, knowing that the bloom, if perfectly formed, would represent the couture's postwar restoration. Though nature's rose is ever in Shakespeare's words, "Woman are as roses, whose fair flower being once displayed, doth fall that very hour."-fashion's fabricated rose has survived.

## Label Copy for Gallery 1:

## 1. French

Robe à la française, ca. 1775

Cream silk brocade with polychrome bizarre scrolling and old rose motif

This floral design equivocates between naturalism and stylization: the standard centifolia (cabbage rose or *rose de peintre*) is naturalistic at bloom, stem, and leaves, but the surround is abstracted. The roses' sculpted shading suggests the weaver's proficiency with an emerging naturalism as well as with stylization.

Purchase, Irene Lewisohn Bequest, 1960 (CI 60.40.1 a.b)

## 2. American

Evening gown, 1885-1888

Cream silk satin with polychrome rose motif

Painter John La Farge hoped that in scrutinizing nature "the painting itself might in turn be a living thing." As this Ruskinian truth to nature was triumphant in American art of the period, it was also the aesthetic of American dress. In this instance, the centifolia rose is juxtaposed with a naturalistic leaf pattern.

Gift of Edith Walker, 1941 (CI 41.65.1 a.b)



MM 85421 (Gallery 1)

See MM 85415



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3. American  
Day dress, ca. 1856  
Green silk gauze with woven chiné floral ribbon bands

The predilection to naturalism was so strong in mid-nineteenth-century American textiles that even the inherent cloudiness or blurring of the chiné technique did not deter the naturalistic impulse. New rose types, reflected in Severin Rosen's American floral paintings of the period, stimulated empirical study even in a paradoxically obscuring medium.

Gift of Mrs. Frederick van Beuren Joy, in memory of Mrs. Jacob Harsen Halsted. 1983 (1983.479.6 a-d)

4. French  
Dress, ca. 1858  
Green moiré and chiné floral striped silk with crocheted fringe

Accurate botanical depiction struggled against the distortions of the warp-printed chiné technique, but the zeal for accuracy in representation was unquenchable. The decade of Henry David Thoreau's *Walden* (1854) and Adolphe Braun's *Fleurs photographiées* was not about to abrogate nature, no matter what the textile and pictorial challenge.

Gift of Frederic Edward Gibert. 1962 (CI 62.34)

5. American or European  
Dress, 1850s  
Green and red chiné floral striped silk taffeta

By the 1850s, representation of the flower included not just the bloom, but also an in-depth observation of the plant. Thus, bands of rose heads alternate with bands of determinedly naturalistic rose leaves. The foliage displays leaf rust in engrossed botanical analysis.

Gift of Claire Lorraine Wilson. 1942 (CI 42.76.2 a,b)

6. Mme. O'Donovan (American)  
Wedding dress, November 1889  
Off-white rose-patterned silk damask

In 1882, H. B. Ellwanger's book *The Rose* identified nearly a thousand varieties. However, 19th-century Americans continued to love and cultivate rambling and climbing roses for the informal American garden, prizing their flowering abundance and freedom. Thus, rambling roses in a twiggy pattern with their simpler, wilder bloom grow up a wedding dress, rather than cascade down in the more accustomed pattern.

Gift of Louise M. Byrne. 1978 (1978.106)

## 1. English

Jacket, ca. 1616

Natural linen embroidered with botanical pattern in polychrome and gilt floss

Empirical botany dominates a 17th-century jacket in which the floral and vegetal motifs are accounted for with scientific clarity, but assembled along traditional continuous meanders. Like 17th-century still-life painting, in its global outreach and analytical approach, the jacket suggests both abundance and taxonomy.

Rogers Fund, 1923 (23.170.1)

## 2. English

Robe à l'anglaise, ca. 1750

White linen with polychrome embroidery

Drawn to documentary rendering, the embroidery of this dress is yet faintly stylized in its display of varied floral samples executed in the Chinese taste. The Chinoiserie extends as well to the vases represented.

Purchase, Irene Lewisohn Bequest, 1966 (CI 66.34)

## 3. European

Open robe with matching underskirt and fichu, ca. 1798

Off-white mull embroidered in floral motif with polychrome silk floss

This transitional garment, leading toward to the round gown of the Directoire but still disposed to the open robe style of the eighteenth-century, confines its sprigged botanical assortment to the borders of the over robe and petticoat:

Purchase, Irene Lewisohn and Alice L. Crowley Bequests, 1992 (1992.119.1 a-c)

## 4. Christian Dior

Evening dress, summer 1952

White silk organza embroidered in marguerite pattern with silk floss

French daisies festoon a Dior dress in evidence of the haute couture's tour-de-force skills of embroidery and detailed luxury. That a dress might be delicately pictorial is a triumph of couture's skill. Moreover, the artistry of the rich materials in embroidery was at its apogee in the 1950's. Never

again would such metier and finesse apply to clothing in such abundance.

Gift of Mrs. Byron C. Foy, 1955 (CI 55.76.20abc)



MM 8542.2 (Gallery 3)

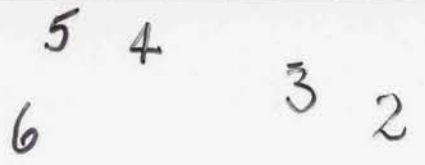
**Botany**

Through the long history of botanical documentation and classification in fashion—from a seventeenth-century bodice that is the microscopic examination of nature's abundance to a 1990s incorporation of the floral specimen into a dress by Koji Yamamoto—the flower has engaged fashion's scientific imagination.

Embroideries were among the first means used to create a collection of diverse floral types; an elaborate repertoire of hand stitches made possible a true miniature rendering of flowers almost whole, with veined leaf patterns and petals in high relief. By the eighteenth century, it was technically possible to create realistic representations in woven textiles. But it was not until the nineteenth century that fabrics reflected the vogue for explicit description of a wide range of floral types. Through history, clothing has chronicled the *loss of certain flowers and plants in a given era*—from the simple Tudor roses of the seventeenth century, to the more elaborate floral clusters of the eighteenth century, to the jumble of baroque trees surrounding cascades of roses inspired by the international expositions of the nineteenth century. In the twentieth century, photography has enabled descriptive accuracy and/or hyperbole.

In this exhibition, fashion's botanical encyclopedia includes the rose, pansy, morning glory, tulip, safflower, lily, daffodil, poppy, chrysanthemum, carnation, violet, orchid, daisy, and dandelion, among many others. As early as the sixteenth century, European botanical gardens attempted both to include the whole known and expanding world of flora and to reconcile what had perished in the Garden of Eden. Modern democratic gardens display a similar regard for diversity and dominion, with respectful curiosity for nature's production.

See MM  
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## 5. Christian Dior

Ball gown, ca. 1950

White silk organza embroidered in grass and clover pattern with silk floss

Dior believed his fashion represented optimism and innocence. An avid gardener, Dior sought the pastoral as a modern naïveté, imagining the contemporary woman as a rustic Rima with the natural grace afforded by clover and weedy grasses on silk organza.

Gift of Mrs. David Kluger, 1960 (CI 60.21.1 a,b)

## 6. English

Dress, ca. 1780

Off-white silk brocaded with floral motifs

Jean-Jacques Rousseau's world of exalted nature, reports from the New World, and the popular stories of *Paul et Virginie* enchanted Europe in its quest for a restored Eden. The botanical specificity of dress of the era was both a document and a desire, not only identifying the bloom in color, but also providing fastidious representation of stem and leaf.

Anonymous gift, 1937 (37.33)

## 7. American

At-home gown, ca. 1893

Cream flowered silk taffeta and lace

The World's Columbian Exposition (1893) prompted not only the revival of Columbus' "discovery," but also the eighteenth century and, in particular, the dress of Martha Washington. An example of undress of the nineteenth-century, this American at-home gown consciously revives the 18th century in its shape, rococo baskets hanging from blue ribbon bows and swagged garlands, and attached lace engageants to emphasize its historicist effect.

Gift of V. Everett Macy Estate, 1937 (CI 37.51.11)