

Shocking!

The surreal world of Elsa Schiaparelli

Press
release



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— Jan 22, 2023

Horst P Horst, *Vogite USA*, March 15th, 1937


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Schiaparelli

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MUSÉE DES ARTS
DÉCORATIFS

Shocking!

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“Being able to work with artists such as Béb   B  rard, Jean Cocteau, Salvador Dal  , Vert  s and Van Dongen, with photographers like Honingen-Huene, Horst, Cecil Beaton and Man Ray was thrilling. We felt helped, encouraged, way beyond the material and dull reality of the making of a dress to sell”.

Shocking life, Elsa Schiaparelli – 1954



1. Elsa Schiaparelli —
Details of the “Phoebus”
Cloak
Winter 1937-1938
Wool, silk and embroidery
Mus  e des Arts d  coratifs
   Val  rie Belin

From July 6th, 2022, to January 22nd, 2023, the Mus  e des Arts D  coratifs in Paris will celebrate the bold and exciting creations of Italian couturi  re Elsa Schiaparelli (b. September 10th, 1890, Rome – d. November 13th, 1973, Paris), who drew much of her inspiration from her close ties to the Parisian avant-garde of the 1920s and 1930s. Nearly 20 years since the last retrospective devoted to Schiaparelli at the Mus  e des Arts D  coratifs, the time has come to revisit this extraordinary designer’s work, her innovative sense of feminine style, her sophisticated, often eccentric designs, and the thrill that she brought to the world of fashion.

Shocking! The surreal world of Elsa Schiaparelli brings together 520 works including 272 silhouettes and accessories by Schiaparelli herself, displayed alongside iconic paintings, sculptures, jewelry, perfumes, ceramics, posters, and photographs by the likes of Schiaparelli’s dear friends and contemporaries: Man Ray, Salvador Dal  , Jean Cocteau, Meret Oppenheim and Elsa Triolet. The retrospective, a highlight of the 2022/2023 Exhibition Calendar, will also showcase creations designed in honor of Schiaparelli by fashion icons including Yves Saint Laurent, Azzedine Ala  a, John Galliano and Christian Lacroix. Daniel Roseberry, artistic director of the House of Schiaparelli since 2019, also boldly interprets the heritage of Elsa Schiaparelli with a design of his own. The poetic and immersive scenography of ***Shocking! The surreal world of Elsa Schiaparelli*** has been entrusted to Nathalie Crini  re. The exhibition will be presented in the Christine & Stephen A. Schwarzman fashion galleries of the Mus  e des Arts D  coratifs.

2. Elsa Schiaparelli —
Evening gown
 Summer 1939
 Silk
 Musée des Arts décoratifs
 © Les Arts Décoratifs /
 Christophe Dellière

3. Jean Clément —
Necklace
 1938
 Golden metal
 mounted on fabric
 Musée des Arts décoratifs
 © Les Arts Décoratifs /
 Jean Tholance
 © Adagp, Paris, 2022

4. Leonor Fini &
 Fernand Guéry-Colas —
Shocking perfume bottle
 1937
 Crystal and glass
 © Schiaparelli Archives
 © Adagp, Paris, 2022

In contemporary times, the creative dialogue that exists between fashion and art has become a matter of fact, and very few have done more to shape this conversation than Elsa Schiaparelli, an “inspired” seamstress as she often referred to herself. Raised in a humanist and erudite environment, Elsa Schiaparelli embraced fashion through her deep fascination with art and artists. She became a creator of image, playing with haute couture designs, fashioning evening dresses, styling street clothes, dressing sports models, crafting accessories and mixing perfumes. Avoiding the dullness of “society,” Schiaparelli was free to explore her inspirations, particularly through her friendships with artists, many of whom considered Schiaparelli to be a full-fledged artist in her own right.



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Displayed on two levels, the exhibition is organized both thematically and chronologically around key moments in the career of Elsa Schiaparelli, linking her most remarkable collections from year to year with the works of friends and contemporaries who inspired her fashion designs. These works are placed throughout the exhibition, punctuating important stages in Schiaparelli’s life and the evolution of her design. The introductory room, a vast and immersive space, is dedicated to the drawings of the couturière which number in their hundreds, conveying the extent of her work. The awakening of the artist in fashion and modernity is explored alongside the defining role that designer Paul Poiret played as a mentor in Schiaparelli’s life beginning in 1922.



5.

5. Elsa Schiaparelli in collaboration with Salvador Dalí — *Evening gown* 1937 Silk © Philadelphia Museum of Art

6. George Platt Lynes — *Salvador Dalí* 1939 Photograph © Estate of George Platt Lynes

7. Salvador Dalí — *Telephone powder compact* 1935 Resin and metal © Schiaparelli Archives © Salvador Dalí, Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí / Adagp, Paris

Elsa Schiaparelli went on to design her *trompe l'œil* patterned sweaters, an idea as brilliant as it is radical, which awakened in her a taste for Art Deco, particularly after her contact with Jean Dunand, who designed for Schiaparelli a refined dress with lacquer painted pleats. Schiaparelli then inaugurates a series of collaborations with a variety of artists including Ela Triolet, Jean Cocteau and Salvador Dalí. She develops her acute sense of detail through models largely inspired by the Surrealist aesthetic, introducing marvelous patterns and materials in transparent plastics, crawfish shaped buttons, “drawer pockets,” and lobsters. She inspires Man Ray and becomes his model as seen through the many photographs that testify to this fruitful relationship.

The exhibition continues with thematic collections that Elsa Schiaparelli initiates alone around sources of inspiration that are dear to her – Italian antiquity, nature and music.



6.

The *Pagan Collection* gives a nod to Antiquity with references to Ovid’s metamorphoses while the *Butterfly Collection* is an ode to insects (a source of inspiration she shares with Surrealist artists) and the *Music Collection* from 1939 seems to infinitely stretch and extend the silhouette of the modern woman. The mythical collaboration formed between Elsa Schiaparelli and Salvador Dalí, enhanced by a taste for scandal and artistic provocation, is highlighted in a room dedicated to Dalí, showcasing his iconic “Lobster Dress” or the famous “Hat Shoe,” a sort of Surrealist fascinator.

The second floor opens onto the reconstruction of Elsa Schiaparelli’s couture salons, then located at 21 Place Vendôme in Paris, which she inaugurated in 1935. For interior design and decorations, Schiaparelli calls upon Jean-Michel Frank for his sleek, ultra-chic and elegant lines. There, she dresses the planet’s most extravagant ladies and quickly acquires an international reputation



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8. Marcel Vertès —
Schiaparelli,
21 place Vendôme
 1953
 Gluing and painting
 on panel
 © Schiaparelli Archives

9. Elsa Schiaparelli —
Evening coat
 Winter 1938-1939
 Wool, silk and china
 Musée des Arts décoratifs
 © Les Arts Décoratifs /
 Christophe Dellière

The perfume cage delicately showcases her original olfactory creations, including the legendary “Shocking” which becomes a worldwide success, demonstrating the incredible marketing sense of its creator.

Emphasis is also placed on the intricate and luxurious art of embroidery and Schiaparelli’s taste for the works of Maison Lesage, founded in 1924, who created bespoke embroideries for her and other important fashion houses and continues to do so. The collections from 1938 to 1939 summon the imagination with the likes of the “commedia dell’arte,” inspired by the characters of the colorful 18th century Italian comedy, the *Astrological Collection*, which blends Baroque references linked to Versailles with the Sun King celebrating the 17th century, and lastly, the *Circus Collection* with its sumptuous boleros embroidered with horses, acrobats, and elephants. Pre-war designs show a rather narrow cigarette-like silhouette while post-war designs are looser and more constructed.



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The journey ends with the contemporary silhouette created by Daniel Roseberry with a spectacular finale that translates the Surrealist inspiration of the fashion houses eminent founder with sensitivity and strength.

In just twenty-five years, Elsa Schiaparelli turned fashion into a natural element of the avant-garde; a playground in which she recreated the interaction between women and femininity, allure and spirit, while remaining strikingly relevant today. She embodied a vision of a bright and vibrant Paris, curious about everything, enjoying each novelty that came her way. It is this freedom that *Shocking! The surreal world of Elsa Schiaparelli* offers to the visitor – freedom to create, freedom to converse, freedom to be oneself – through models, jewelry, and thousands of drawings, all of which were donated by Elsa Schiaparelli to l’Union Française des Arts du Costume in 1973, whose holdings are now preserved by the Musée des Arts Décoratifs. As a final modern gesture, the Musée des Arts Décoratifs continues to preserve the timeless works of Elsa Schiaparelli and thus, allows her art and design to live on.

Support is provided by Marina Kellen French and the Anna-Maria & Stephen Kellen Foundation.

Useful information

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#ExpoSchiaparelli
#SchiaparelliExhibition

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— Musée des Arts Décoratifs

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Métro: Palais-Royal, Pyramides,
Tuileries

Hours

Permanent collections:
→ Tuesday to Sunday
11 am–6 pm
Temporary exhibitions:
→ Tuesday and Wednesday
11 am–6 pm
→ Open late on Thursdays until 9 pm,
Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays until
8 pm

Rates

→ general entrance fee: €14
→ reduced entrance fee: €10
→ free admission for under 26

— Musée Nissim de Camondo

Olivier Gabet, Director of Museum
63 rue de Monceau, 75008 Paris
+33 (0) 1 53 89 06 40
Open 10 am–5:30 pm
Closed Monday and Tuesday
→ general entrance fee: €12
→ reduced entrance fee: €9

— Library

Stéphanie Rivoire, Director
of Library and Resources
107 rue de Rivoli, 75001 Paris
+33 (0) 1 44 55 59 36
Open Tuesday to Friday 10 am–6 pm

— Visitor engagement

→ Activities for individuals

Reservation via the online ticketing

→ Activities for groups

Information and reservations
→ Young public, families, schools:
jeune@madparis.fr / 01 44 55 59 26
→ Adult public, higher education,
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→ Conferences, round tables and colloquiums

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— Museum shop

105 rue de Rivoli, 75001 Paris
+33 (0) 1 42 60 64 94
Open 11 am–18:30 pm
Open late on Thursdays until 9 pm
Closed Monday

— Loulou, restaurant

107 rue de Rivoli, 75001 Paris
or access via the Carrousel gardens
Open daily 12 pm–2 am
+33 (0) 1 42 60 41 96

— Le Camondo, restaurant

61 bis rue de Monceau, 75008 Paris
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the day
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