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CRISTÓBAL BALENCIAGA MUSEOA

TEMPORARY EXHIBITION

Rachel
L. Mellon
Collection

27 MAY / 2017 – 25 JANUARY / 2018

One of the special joys of my life was knowing Cristóbal Balenciaga. He was a dear friend. He designed my clothes for more than ten years. He understood luxury and simplicity with profound sensitivity. His evening dresses and coats were indescribably fascinating. His daytime designs perfectly adapted to the life of his clients. Being a working gardener, I had big cotton or linen blouses with plain blue denim skirts. His charm, smile, and dedication to design were reflected in his calm presence.

Rachel L. Mellon

Rachel Lambert Mellon (1910–2014), known as Bunny, was one of the grand dames of high society in 20th century America. Heiress to a major fortune, philanthropist, art collector, designer of gardens (among others, the White House *Rose Garden*), personal friend of the Kennedy family, and wife of banking magnate and prominent patron of the arts, Paul Mellon, Mrs. Mellon was the archetype of Balenciaga's clientele – wealthy, sensitive, and exclusive.

Her extraordinary life features a permanent search for beauty, which she collected and surrounded herself with. She saw it in works of art, rare books, precious objects, jewelry, gardens, carefully staged environments, or her own wardrobe, which for more than a decade she trust to Balenciaga.

In addition to a great client, Bunny Mellon was also a personal friend of Balenciaga, a relationship that was reflected in the adaptations and special designs that were made at the *Maison* for her and which Balenciaga himself transferred to Huber de Givenchy at his retirement.

Cristóbal Balenciaga Museoa currently home to a large part of the creations that Balenciaga made for Mrs. Mellon, whose legacy is the most important collection originating from a single donor in the museum's archives.

The *Rachel L. Mellon Collection* exhibition, under the direction of Hubert de Givenchy and with the collaboration of Eloy Martínez de la Pera and Igor Uria as associate curators, presents to the public a careful selection of garments and documents that offers a different perspective of Balenciaga's Haute Couture, through the personal filter of this extraordinary lady's taste and way of life.