

Distinción

A century of fashion photography



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EXHIBITION. 2018/10/09 — 2019/01/27

The exhibition can be visited from October 9, 2018 until January 27, 2019 at the Cristóbal Balenciaga Museum. The show includes more than a hundred images by the most influential photographers on the national scene over the last 100 years. Included are notable works by Juan Gyenes, Oriol Maspons, Manel Esclusa, Maria Espeus, José Manuel Ferrater, Antoni Bernad, Manuel Outumuro, Bèla Adler & Salvador Fresneda, Txema Yeste, Eugenio Recuenco and Sergi Jasanada, among others.

The Cristóbal Balenciaga Museum hosts the exhibition *Distinción. A century of fashion photography*, produced by the Museu del Disseny de Barcelona (Barcelona Museum of Design), and which shows an important part of the fashion photography collection created by the Catalan museum in recent years. The exhibition underscores the singular nature, originality and influence of fashion photography, which extends to numerous aspects of our lives through 107 images by 37 photographers. What have been the common features of fashion photography down through the years? How has it evolved? Why does it elicit such enormous fascination? To explain it, the curator Juan Naranjo has chosen the concept of Distinction, with its double meaning: elegance – an element intrinsic to fashion – and difference, connecting with the artistic vanguards. From the period of modernism – when magazines printed on high quality paper started reproducing photographs of models and dresses – to today's digital media: seduction, provocation and glamour.

In a chronological and theme-based tour, the show explores the relationship between fashion photography, the artistic vanguards and the currents of thought that prompted social changes in each period. With this exhibition, the Cristóbal Balenciaga Museum aims to continue inter-relating complementary artistic languages while continuing to define other contexts peripheral to the figure and time of Balenciaga.

The show includes works by all of the big-name fashion photographers in Catalonia and Spain: Ramon Batlles, Camisans, Pere Casas Abarca, Compal, Josep Compté, Juan Gyenes, Hortolà, Jafer, Man, Antoni Ollé, Paul M. Pietzch, Josep Sala, Samuel Suñé, Adler & Fresneda, Pep Àvila, Antoni Bernad, Juana Biarnés, Alejandro Cabrera, Biel Capllonch, Ferran Casanova, Manel Esclusa, Maria Espeus, José Manuel Ferrater, Enric Galceran, Sergi Jasanada, Virgili Jubero, Oriol Maspons, Esperanza Moya, Xevi Muntané, Manuel Outumuro, Sergi Pons, Eugenio Recuenco, Daniel Riera, Carles Roig, César Segarra, Javier Vallhonrat and Txema Yeste.

7 spheres, 107 photographs

The 107 photographs are presented in chronological order, grouped by theme into seven sections. The exhibition ranges from the origins of the modern period of fashion photography — the early 20th century — until today, offering an extensive view of how fashion photography has evolved in Spain.



Pere Casas Abarca, 1902–1905

Photography and Fashion before the Advent of Fashion Photography

Pere Casas Abarca was one of the few Modernista creative figures who experimented with photography in the field of advertising, taking as his starting point the new model woman who dressed in the new style of her times and adopted modern ways. He did not take photographs with a view to promoting fashion but he did advocate the future approaches adopted by fashion photography, in which the atmosphere and the lifestyle shown went beyond the mere description of the clothing. His images are in keeping with the fashion photographs taken by Gustav Klimt and Mariano Fortuny, which can be regarded as the origin of modern fashion photography.

New Vision

The consolidation of haute couture in the 1930s coincided with the renewal of the visual language employed by magazines such as *D'Ací i D'Allà*, *Tricornio*, *Las cuatro estaciones*, *Imatges* and *Ford*, the media outlets that raised awareness of modern life and which were chosen by companies such as Santa Eulalia, El Dique Flotante, Badía and La Innovación to publicise their creations.

The first generation of Spanish fashion photographers emerged during this period, all of them young, among them Josep Sala, Ramón Batlles, Compal, Samuel Suñé and Antoni Ollé Pinell, who used the aesthetic devices of the New Vision, such as off-centre positioning in relation to the axis of symmetry, fragmentation and unusual



Oriol Maspons, 1956

viewpoints. Their photographs were used to illustrate articles as well as advertising by haute couturiers in these magazines that spread modernity in Spain.

Interiors and Exteriors

The pages of *Alta Costura* (Barcelona 1945-1969), the first major fashion publication that showcased fashion photography in Spain, give us insights into the feminine ideals that were used to seduce women during the long post-war period.

In the 1940s, the image presented was that of a seductive and mysterious woman with character who called to mind the great leading ladies of film. Photographers used the aesthetic employed by renowned Hollywood portrait photographers, interiors and lighting to create an intense and dramatic atmosphere that enhanced the beauty and sensuality of their subjects and gave them an air of mystery, unlike ordinary models.

During the late 1940s and the 1950s, celebrated fashion editors and photographers used urban outdoor settings to launch the image of a more earthly, modern, refined and active woman based on the New Look proposed by Christian Dior.

Movements

In the 1960s, a series of artistic, countercultural and urban subgroups emerged, among them Pop art, the Mods and hippies, movements that were organised by young people. Their opposition to war and racial, social and gender discrimination shaped the debates of the time and radically altered the concept of fashion.

The notion of movement featured prominently in fashion photography in the 1960s. Photographers began to introduce themes related to dance, with models portrayed in poses and making gestures that emulated those of ballerinas. They also revived the aesthetic of the snapshot, which revealed the movement captured by a number of photographers in the 1930s and 40s.

Stagings and Fantasies

Photography is traditionally regarded as one of the most realistic artistic genres due to its automatism, ability to suggest and its naturalism. These characteristics also make it the best medium for subverting reality. In fashion photography, reality is always manipulated, simulated or recreated. Photographers begin with the staging and projections to transport us to a remarkable expanded and idealised reality in order to convey ideas and sensations and to seduce us.

The photographers featured in this section drew their inspiration from narratives associated with film, literature and the Surrealist aesthetic, and created futuristic,



Juana Biarnés, 1960–1970



Béla Adler & Salvador Fresneda, 2009

magical, oneiric and provocative images that give us insights into erotic fantasies that reveal anguish, fear and tension and turn the ordinary into the extraordinary.

Identity and Difference

Portraiture is one of the photographic practices most in evidence in fashion magazines and among the most common on social media. The concept of the portrait shot has gradually changed. Throughout much of the 20th century, portraits as a sign of status and power predominated in fashion promotion. The sweeping changes that began in the 1960s made a new type of approach to portraiture possible and the image of the other, in a broad sense, started to appear.

Fashion editors and photographers began to play with concepts such as identity and difference as a way to associate their work with the new trends in modern thinking. These photographs endorse or flout established notions to do with class, sex, religion, taste and culture and illustrate the concepts and debates that existed at the time they were taken.

Landscapes

The urban or natural landscape, nature and artifice are concepts that have shaped some of the debates surrounding the notion of the landscape and have influenced fashion photography. Throughout much of the 20th century, New York was part of the collective imaginary as the urban landscape par excellence. Urban life and skyscrapers have often been used as settings by fashion photographers as a symbol of progress, success and modernity.

The emergence of new theories and the green movement have prompted fashion and advertising photographers to use natural, untamed spaces; wild, arid and barren lands lacking any temporal, cultural or social referents; landscapes that could be part of the future or the past; empty or ambiguous places filled with referents that spring from editors and photographers' expressions of their ideas and concepts.

The photographers

1900–1960

Ramon Batlles (Barcelona, 1901–1983)
Camisans
Pere Casas Abarca (Barcelona 1875–1958)
Compal
Josep Compté (Barcelona 1910–1987)
Juan Gyenes, (Madrid, 1912–1995)
Hortolà
Jafer
Man
Antoni Ollé (Barcelona, 1897–1981)
Paul M. Pietzch
Josep Sala (Barcelona, 1896–1962)
Samuel Suñé (Barcelona, 1888–1964)

Ramon Batlles, 1934



1960–2013

Adler & Fresneda (Bèla Adler, Barcelona, 1959 /
Salvador Fresneda, Barcelona, 1957)
Pep Àvila (Barcelona, 1968)
Antoni Bernad (Barcelona, 1944)
Juana Biarnés (Madrid, 1935)
Alejandro Cabrera (Madrid, 1954)
Biel Capllonch (Mallorca, 1964)
Ferran Casanova (Barcelona, 1979)
Manel Esclusa (Vic, 1952)
Maria Espeus (Suecia, 1949)
José Manuel Ferrater (Barcelona, 1948)
Enric Galcerán (Barcelona, 1973)
Sergi Jasanada (Barcelona, 1967)
Virgili Jubero (Barcelona, 1984)
Oriol Maspons (Barcelona, 1928–2013)
Esperanza Moya (Jaén, 1980)
Xevi Muntané (Barcelona, 1977)
Manuel Outumuro (Ourense, 1949)
Sergi Pons (Barcelona, 1970)
Eugenio Recuenco (Madrid, 1968)
Daniel Riera (Olot, 1970)
Carles Roig (Badalona, 1961)
César Segarra (Barcelona, 1986)
Javier Vallhonrat (Madrid, 1953)
Txema Yeste (Barcelona, 1972)

Images accessible for people with visual functional diversity

People with visual functional diversity can enjoy the exhibition content thanks to a series of services and resources incorporated to the exhibition content, such as laminated flyers in relief and braille, audio-descriptions and accessible guided tours.

Thanks to its programme for publics with special needs, and in collaboration with Kutxa Fundazioa, the Museum enables the access and inclusion of groups of people with specific needs to the heritage in its care.

Eugenio Recuenco, 2005



Activities around the exhibition

Cristóbal Balenciaga Museoa, in collaboration with Kutxa Kultur Moda, will present on 1st december a conference taking a closer look at the conclusions introduced in the show, result of the research carried out by several specialists involved in the exhibition project.

1. Silvia Ventosa

Head of the Textile and Fashion Department at the Museu del Disseny de Barcelona, and joint curator of the exhibition.
Perspective: The collection

2. Juan Navarro

Curator of the exhibition.
Perspective: The exhibition.

3. Daniel Riera

Photographer.
Perspective: Fashion photography today.

Images available for the press

Photography and Fashion before the Advent of Fashion



Pere Casas Abarca (1875-1958)
1902-1903
Silver gelatin on baryta paper,
printed in 1902-1903
11,4 x 8,4 cm
Purchased in 2013
MTIB 4.174/14

New Vision



Ramón Batlles (1901-1983)
Barcelona, 1934
El Dique Flotante collection
Silver gelatin on baryta paper,
printed in 1934
22,2 x 16,4 cm
Purchased in 2013
MTIB 4.195/14

Interiors and Exteriors



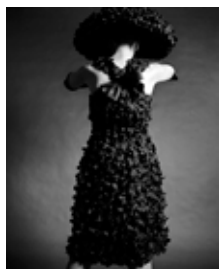
Juan Gyenes (1912-1995)
Madrid, 1950
Dress by Rosina
Silver gelatin on baryta paper,
printed in 1950
MDB2

Interiors and Exteriors



Oriol Maspons (1928-2013)
Barcelona, 1956
Dress by Saint Eulalia
Silver gelatin on baryta paper,
printed in 2012
40,7 x 40,7 cm
Donation: Oriol Maspons, 2013
MTIB 3.895/13

Movements



Oriol Maspons (1928-2013)
Barcelona, 1966
Pertegaz collection
Silver gelatin on baryta paper,
printed in 2012
50,2 x 40,5 cm
Donation: Oriol Maspons, 2013
MTIB 3.885/13

Movements



Antoni Bernad (1944)
Barcelona, 1968
Lambda on baryta paper, printed in 2012
94,4 x 70,3 cm
Donation: Antoni Bernad, 2012
MTIB 3.856/12

Movements



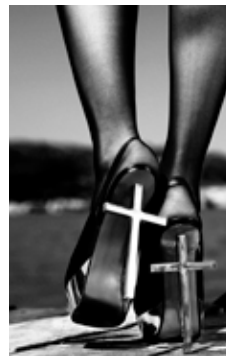
Juana Biarnés (1935)
Madrid, 1960-1970
Dress by Miguel Rueda
Silver gelatin on baryta paper,
printed in 1960-1970
24 x 18,1 cm
Purchased in 2013
MTIB 4.210/14

Stagings and Fantasies



Eugenio Recueno (1968)
Cinderella, 2005
Giclée on UltraSmooth Fine Art cotton
paper, printed in 2012
43,2 x 56,5 cm
Donation: Eugenio Recueno, 2015
MTIB 3.879/13

Stagings and Fantasies



Txema Yeste (1972)
There Somewhere
Delta del Ebro, 2011
Giclée on Photo Rag Baryta paper,
printed in 2012
102,9 x 67,9 cm
Donation: Txema Yeste, 2012
MTIB 3.822/12

Identity and Difference



Enric Galceran (1973)
Bali, 2006
Giclée on Fine Art Baryta paper,
printed in 2013
77 x 105,2 cm
Donation: Enric Galceran, 2013
MTIB 4.043/13

Identity and Difference



Bèla Adler & Salvador Fresneda
(1959 y 1957)
Barcelona, 2009
Giclée on Photo Rag paper, printed in 2012
20 x 87 cm
Donation: Bèla Adler & Salvador Fresneda,
2013
MTIB 4.006/13

Landscapes



Manuel Outumuro (1949)
Tokio, 1995
GicléeGiclée on Fine Art paper,
printed in 2010
50,1 x 40,1 cm
Donation: Manuel Outumuro, 2010
MTIB 3.629/10

Landscapes



Txema Yeste (1972)
Gala
Cadaqués, 2009
GicléeGiclée on Photo Rag Baryta paper,
printed in 2012
47,1 x 70,6 cm
Donation: Txema Yeste, 2012
MTIB 3.807/12

The Cristóbal Balenciaga Museum



Exterior del Museo Cristóbal Balenciaga en Getaria. © Cristóbal Balenciaga Museoa.

The Cristóbal Balenciaga Museum, opened on 7 June 2011, is located in the town where the couturier was born, in commemoration of those early years of his professional training and maturing in order to understand his contributions to the world of fashion.

With the aim of explaining Balenciaga's life and work, his relevance in the history of fashion and design, and the contemporaneity of his legacy, the Museum houses a unique collection. Its large size – almost 3,000 pieces which continue to rise in number thanks to loans and donations – and its wide-ranging formal and chronical extension – including, for example, the earliest existing models by the couturier – make this one of the most complete, consistent and interesting of its kind.

Another of the collection's exceptional values lies in the origin of the pieces. It goes without saying that Balenciaga's major international clients were outstanding social figures in the central decades of the 20th century: Mona Von Bismarck, Bunny Mellon, Patricia López Wilshaw, Barbara Hutton, Princess de Réthy, Grace Kelly and Madame Bricard all wore some of the models now featuring in the Archives.