



PRESS RELEASE

AZZEDINE ALAÏA
COLLECTOR
ADRIAN and ALAÏA
The art of tailoring

Under the direction of Olivier Saillard

Exhibition from January 21th, to June 23rd 2019

Press contact :
alaia@2e-bureau.com
presse@alaia.fr



ADRIAN AND ALAÏA THE ART OF TAILORING

In its first parallel exhibition, Association Azzedine Alaïa presents the work of Azzedine Alaïa and Gilbert Adrian, a designer held in great esteem by Azzedine Alaïa.

Curated by Association Azzedine Alaïa under the direction of Olivier Saillard, the exhibition highlights the subtle transmission of elegance and style that can happen between two great couturiers even when separated by decades and continents as they both focus on executing the same garments - the construction of the jacket.

Seen here through touch and exploration of fabric and form, one can follow the unspoken heritage moving from a master's eye to the hand of another master as only the best of talents can do. Presented in a pairing of a number of suits over the course of their respective careers, two great couturiers share their unique dialogue in fabric and cut.

Gilbert Adrian who would be known simply as Adrian throughout his career, was the head of costumes at MGM in Hollywood during the "golden age" of movies through the 1930's. His work became synonymous with Hollywood glamour and the silver screen. Adrian's talent ranged from Jean Harlow's vamp wardrobe in *Dinner at Eight*, the costumes for the *Wizard of Oz*, to his tour de force wardrobe for the entire cast of 1939's *The Women*.

So in demand were his designs that in the 1940's, Adrian left Hollywood to establish a couture design house in New York where his look of the strong tailored suits worn by Katherine Hepburn, Greta Garbo, and Joan Crawford established American Fashion during the 1940's and 1950's.

Azzedine Alaïa, arrived in Paris in the 1960's. In spite of his youthful lack of funding his gifted eye for the unique was always open. Azzedine Alaïa started collecting art, design, and fashion as he practiced his craft. While only in his 20's, he purchased an exceptional ancient Coptic head from a small shop to discover only later that it had belonged to the countess of Greffulhe, muse of Marcel Proust, a talisman that stayed with him his entire life. At the closure of the great house of Cristobal Balenciaga he collected masterpieces he could not stand to see disappear. He was the first to collect Jean Prouvé.

Alaïa would also go on to become a major collector of Adrian's work.

Artist, costume designer and couturier, Adrian was admired by Azzedine Alaïa for his sophisticated technical constructions, his couture Parisian detail in craftsmanship and cut, his use of fabric and his imaginative wit.

But it was Adrian's broad shouldered and narrow waisted power suit of the 1940's that pioneered a revolution in the way women dressed that most struck the young Alaïa. From his native Tunisia in the 1950's he had admired the Parisian women as elegant, strong and invincible. The Alaïa aesthetic would grow more powerful from that memory. Alaïa had studied to sculpt and mold, now it would begin to inform his personal style.



In 1979 when in his atelier Rue Belchasse, an Alaïa couture customer, the baroness Cécile de Rothschild brought a close friend in: Greta Garbo. The circle was perfect, a milestone in Azzedine Alaïa 's life. The reclusive Greta Garbo who had worn the suits of Adrian in the 40's, had Alaïa sew a pair of trousers and an oversize navy cashmere overcoat. He would often talk about that encounter - a beautiful and powerful woman in flat shoes. A few years ago, at auction, he was able to buy back the coat he had made for her. Now, a treasured part of the Alaïa collection.

Sharing many sympathies with Adrian in the execution of design, and a shared obsession for perfection in the art of tailoring, Azzedine Alaïa would spent nights around the same black jacket and never be satisfied, looking for perfection. Trained as a sculptor, he became the master of cut and fit.

Alaïa's fashion collection of masters of couture is one of the strongest departments in the Association Azzedine Alaïa's archives, along side Azzedine Alaïa's own work. The present exhibition is a selection from a small part of Adrian's work collected over the years by Alaïa.

In conjunction with the exhibition, two films will be shown highlighting the talents of Adrian and Alaïa.

The Women, 1939 - starring Norma Shearer, Joan Crawford, Rosalind Russell, Joan Fontaine, Paulette Goddard and many feminine extras modeling Adrian's designs.

A view to a kill, 1985 – a James Bond movie, where Azzedine Alaïa made the costumes for Grace Jones as the character May Day.



L'ASSOCIATION AZZEDINE ALAÏA

Azzedine Alaïa lived a life filled with fashion, art, design, architecture, music and theatre.

Mr. Alaïa had been an avid collector in the creative and cultural disciplines for the past fifty years. In 2007, he set about to preserve his own work and his large holdings by founding the Association Azzedine Alaïa to become the Foundation Azzedine Alaïa with his lifetime partner, the painter Christoph Von Weyhe, and his close friend of forty years, the publisher Carla Sozzani.

Through engagement with a variety of cultural institutions, the Foundation will assume the patronage of the cultural programs of the Association and will continue all relevant public functions that the Association has supported for the past 11 years.

The Foundation's treasures will continue to be housed in Paris. Exhibitions of Alaïa's own work and his collections will be held in Paris, 18 rue de la Verrerie, where he lived and work, and in Sidi Bou Saïd, the town he loved so dearly. In Paris there will also be a library and a bookshop of fashion and cultural history for research and development, and funding of scholarships for promising visionaries in fashion.