



PRESS RELEASE

AZZEDINE ALAÏA
ANOTHER WAY TO LOOK
AT FASHION
THE TATI COLLECTION.

Under the direction of Olivier Saillard

Exhibition from July 1st 2019, to January 5th 2020

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Azzedine Alaïa's curiosity for exploring all things new and unique is legendary. His wide-ranging interests in art, architecture, music, and global cultures would often bring forward new and unexpected insights into both contemporary dialogue and the tempo of the times.

Fashion and art always influenced his approach to couture. So it was not unusual that in 1991, art once again opened another path, expanding the world of Alaïa's fashion.

As always, his eye saw the pulse of the times. Inspired by his friend Julian Schnabel's paintings, Alaïa took couture to the street.

"It happened thanks to my friend Julian Schnabel, he wanted to make paintings with the vichy check fabric that was in fact the signature emblem of Tati"

Alaïa's spontaneous and fresh approach to fashion led him to create what would later become a marketing model - collaborations between high fashion and street fashion - appearing for the first time on the Alaïa runway with the Tati collection.

As he would later say when asked about the Spring Summer '91 collection, the Tati collaboration gave him "Une autre pensée sur la mode".

"With Tati I learned many things, another way to look at fashion"

Prior to 1981, Alaïa enjoyed the rarefied world of couture. With his small and unique Maison at Rue Belchasse, he created one of a kind clothing for the French haute monde. In 1982, with the release of his ready-to-wear line and founding his company under the label Alaïa Paris, his design approach evolved to incorporate a wider clientele. This gave him far greater recognition in the world of fashion and the reward of two Oscars for Best Designer. Even from this expanded point of view, nothing coming from the Maison Alaïa at this time would ever be considered in touch with *Le Plus Bas Prix*.

So it was to a stunned audience that Azzedine Alaïa introduced the Spring-Summer collection of 1991 - now called The TATI Collection - in which he used the trademark pink and white *vichy* check print fabric of the popular shopping store TATI, where every day Parisians would hunt for the best bargains. *Le Plus Bas Prix*.

The history of the TATI stores was a part of Paris, part of the vibrant democratic life of the city, and a part of his own journey from Tunisia through the working class neighborhoods where the TATI checked pattern could be seen. On trips home to Tunisia, Alaïa would see stuffed into the luggage bags of his fellow Tunisians the egalitarian colors of the pink and white *vichy* check print.

To join his world of Parisian couture with the streets of Paris was his pride. In conversations with Tati for the use of the pink and white fabric, Alaïa discovered the founder of Tati was also a Tunisian. He would add the black and white and the blue and white patterns, something new for Tati, exclusive to the Alaïa collection, and he would offer his designs to customers at the lowest price in a small collection consisting of a bag, a T shirt, and a pair of espadrilles to be sold at TATI stores.

"What excited me was to attach my name, and the world of haute couture, with this brand that represented bargain clothing and bargain prices. When I would fly home to Tunisia, I would see travelers at Paris' Orly airport with huge Tati bags, full to the brim. I wanted to design something of good quality for this clientele, who until now could not afford my clothes." – Azzedine Alaïa

The Alaïa - Tati print collection is today seen as legendary in the history of fashion.



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 12 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 worked, and in Sidi Bou Saïd, the town he loved so dearly. In Paris there is a bookshop of fashion and cultural history. There will be also a library for research and development, and funding of scholarships for promising visionaries in fashion.