



ART GALLERY  
OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

FASHION  
**icons**

MASTERPIECES FROM THE COLLECTION OF  
THE MUSÉE DES ARTS DÉCORATIFS, PARIS

TRAIL FOR FAMILIES AND SCHOOLS

# *Fashion Icons presents ... Paris haute couture, 1947–2012*



The *Fashion Icons* exhibition offers you a unique experience of Parisian fashion from the past sixty years, brought to Adelaide from the French national collections at Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris. You will take a special journey through the world of *haute couture* (pronounced 'oat koo-tour'), a world of changing styles, glamour, elegance and luxury. The works have been arranged chronologically, decade by decade, beginning with the earliest from the late 1940s, through to the 2000s.

Yohji Yamamoto, *Ensemble: long skirt and jacket*, ready-to-wear, Autumn–Winter 2003, houndstooth wool, silk chiffon; Les Arts Décoratifs, Fashion and Textiles collection, gift of Yohji Yamamoto, 2006. Photo: Les Arts Décoratifs, Paris / Jean Tholance. All rights reserved

cover left detail: Comme des Garçons, *Dress*, ready-to-wear, Autumn–Winter 2012, topstitched and glued polyester felt; Les Arts Décoratifs, Fashion and Textiles collection, purchased with the aid of Louis Vuitton, 2012

cover right detail: Valentino, *Evening ensemble: cape and dress with train*, haute couture, Autumn–Winter 2007, silk organdy cape, dress of crepe and silk satin by Ostinelli; Les Arts Décoratifs, Fashion and Textiles collection, gift of Valentino, 2008. Photo: Les Arts Décoratifs, Paris / Jean Tholance. All rights reserved

## WHAT IS HAUTE COUTURE?

*Haute couture* is French for 'high' or elegant dressmaking. In France the *haute couture* label can only be legally used by design houses that have met the strict requirements set down by the *Fédération Française de la Couture*. These include having an *atelier* (workshop) in Paris that employs at least twenty staff and presenting two collections a year of both day and formal evening wear. The garments made in the *atelier* are individually fitted and made for the client. A *couturier* (head of a couture house) may also make a *prêt-à-porter* (ready-to-wear) range.

*Haute couture* works are hand-sewn by highly skilled dressmakers and feature exclusive fabrics, exquisite detail and take hundreds of hours to create. The designer may experiment with materials and construction techniques, as well as invent new silhouettes which capture the spirit of the times and influence everyday fashion. *Haute couture* designers often work like artists, taking risks, pushing boundaries and shocking their audiences ... they inspire us to look and see the world differently.

*Haute couture* is truly an art form – fashion as high art.

Christian Dior, *Mexique*, long bustier evening dress, haute couture, Autumn –Winter 1951, synthetic tulle embroidered with gold sequins and gold glass tubular beads, velvet bow; Les Arts Décoratifs, UFAC (Union Française des Arts du Costume) collections, Fashion and Textiles, gift of Mrs H. de Ayala, 1974. Photo: Les Arts Décoratifs, Paris / Jean Tholance. All rights reserved



# Welcome to the world of French haute couture

## WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN THE EXHIBITION

- the greatest names in French fashion design, including Christian Dior, Christian Lacroix and Yves Saint Laurent
  - silhouettes – the shape of the designs. Find a key work in each gallery that reflects the spirit of the decade
  - details – materials, the ‘cut’, patterns and textures
  - links to visual art – fashion inspired by historic and contemporary works of art
  - films which capture the mood of the times including *defilés* (fashion parades)
- Follow this fashion trail and make your own *haute couture* journey.

## TRY THIS

**Be creative ...** imagine yourself as a fashion designer. After being inspired by the *Fashion Icons* exhibition, visit The Studio to explore your own fashion ideas.

**Collect** your own ‘My Label’ workbook in The Studio. You can use this after your exhibition visit to create your own designs and continue your fashion design journey.

**Speak French ...** follow the tips and practise your French fashion words.

## FOR THE ART AND DESIGN STUDENT

Through your exhibition journey you can develop your understanding of visual art ideas and language.

Look and learn how fashion designers use design elements and principles, including colour, shape, texture and pattern, to manipulate, accentuate, decorate, drape and celebrate the human form.

Christian Dior, *Adélaïde*, evening ensemble, coat and long dress in two parts, haute couture, Spring–Summer 1948, silk satin coat with gold metallic braid trim, cotton and synthetic tulle bodice with silk satin, synthetic tulle skirt; Les Arts Décoratifs, UFAC collection, Fashion and Textiles, gift of Elinor Brodie, 1969. Photo: Les Arts Décoratifs, Paris / Jean Tholance. All rights reserved



## 1947 ... A NEW LOOK

### *sloping shoulders*

The first works in the exhibition introduce us to the glamorous world of *haute couture*. The first couturier we meet is Christian Dior, whose early designs celebrated the shape of the 'ideal' female form.

### CHRISTIAN DIOR BAR SUIT, SPRING – SUMMER 1947

### *tailored jacket*

### *narrow waist*

#### DID YOU KNOW?

Dior's idea for the *Bar suit* was '*La Ligne Corolle*' – the 'corolla' line, meaning that the line of the skirt 'fans out' like the petals of a flower. The *Adélaïde* gown was described as a 'glorious creation' when it was first shown. It has more than seventy metres of tulle (net) in the skirt alone! While it would be lovely if the *Adélaïde* gown had been designed specifically for our city, it is in fact named after Marie Adélaïde de France (1732–1800), daughter of King Louis XV of France, who spent her early years at the palace of Versailles, south-west of Paris. The city of Adelaide is named after Queen Adelaide, wife of King William IV, the British king at the time when the colony of South Australia was established in 1836.

#### SPEAK FRENCH

pronounce Adelaide the 'French' way – 'add-ell-ay-eed'

*couturier* – 'koo-toor-ee-ay'

*élégant* – 'ell-ay-gohn' (elegant)

### *'La Ligne Corolle'*

### *full skirt*

Christian Dior, *Bar suit*, haute couture, Spring–Summer 1947, shantung jacket, skirt pleated in wool crepe by Gerondeau and Cie; Les Arts Décoratifs, Ufac (Union Française des Arts du Costume) collection, Fashion and Textiles, gift of Christian Dior, 1958. Photo: Les Arts Décoratifs, Paris / Jean Tholance. All rights reserved



## INTO THE 1950s

After the hardship and rationing of the Second World War (1939–1945), which resulted in plain and economical fashion designs, Dior's *New Look* (1947) helped to revive the French fashion industry and heralded a return to more luxurious styles. In the 1950s French designers reclaimed the reputation of Paris as fashion capital of the world. Features of 1950s fashion included:

- silhouettes – longer hemlines and 'hourglass' shapes, with skirts becoming slimmer towards the end of the decade
- details – exquisite, hand-stitched embroidery
- extravagant ball gowns and glamorous evening wear
- the 1954 reopening of Gabrielle Chanel's fashion house, featuring her classic suit with its short boxy jacket and slim skirt.

### CRISTOBAL BALENCIAGA LONG EVENING DRESS, AUTUMN – WINTER 1954–55



#### DID YOU KNOW?

Underneath much 1950s fashion women wore undergarments such as girdles and 'bullet' bras, which helped to give their figures the desired 'hourglass' shape.

#### WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- beautiful embroidered details
- fashions designed for different times of the day – day, cocktail and evening wear
- the film of Christian Dior in his fashion house.

#### SPEAK FRENCH

*Balenciaga* – 'Ber-larn-sia-ga'  
*une robe de soirée* – 'oon rohb der swa-ray'  
(an evening dress)

#### LATER

Imagine either your own evening dress or men's suit design to wear to an extravagant ball.

*silk taffeta*

*voluminous skirt*

Balenciaga, evening gown, Autumn – Winter 1954, photograph of registered design, Balenciaga Archives Paris

## THE 1960s

*'la mode' is French  
for fashion*

The 'swinging' sixties are remembered as a time of social change, pop music, space travel and student protests. Fashion was designed for younger adults and new trends included:

- silhouettes became simplified with slim, straight lines
  - the 'mini' skirt
  - bold colours and fabrics patterned with geometric shapes
- synthetic fabrics and experimentation with materials like paper and metal.

### PACO RABANNE EVENING DRESS – MINI, SPRING – SUMMER 1968

*très chic*

#### DID YOU KNOW?

Paco Rabanne was called 'the metalworker' because he used a blowtorch to make some of his metal creations, and didn't do a lot of sewing. Rabanne trained as an architect and worked as a jeweller before he became a fashion designer.

#### WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- other pieces with a 'space-age' theme
- the shapes of clothing from the 1960s
- the unusual materials used to create outfits.

#### SPEAK FRENCH

*très chic* – 'tray sheek' (very stylish)

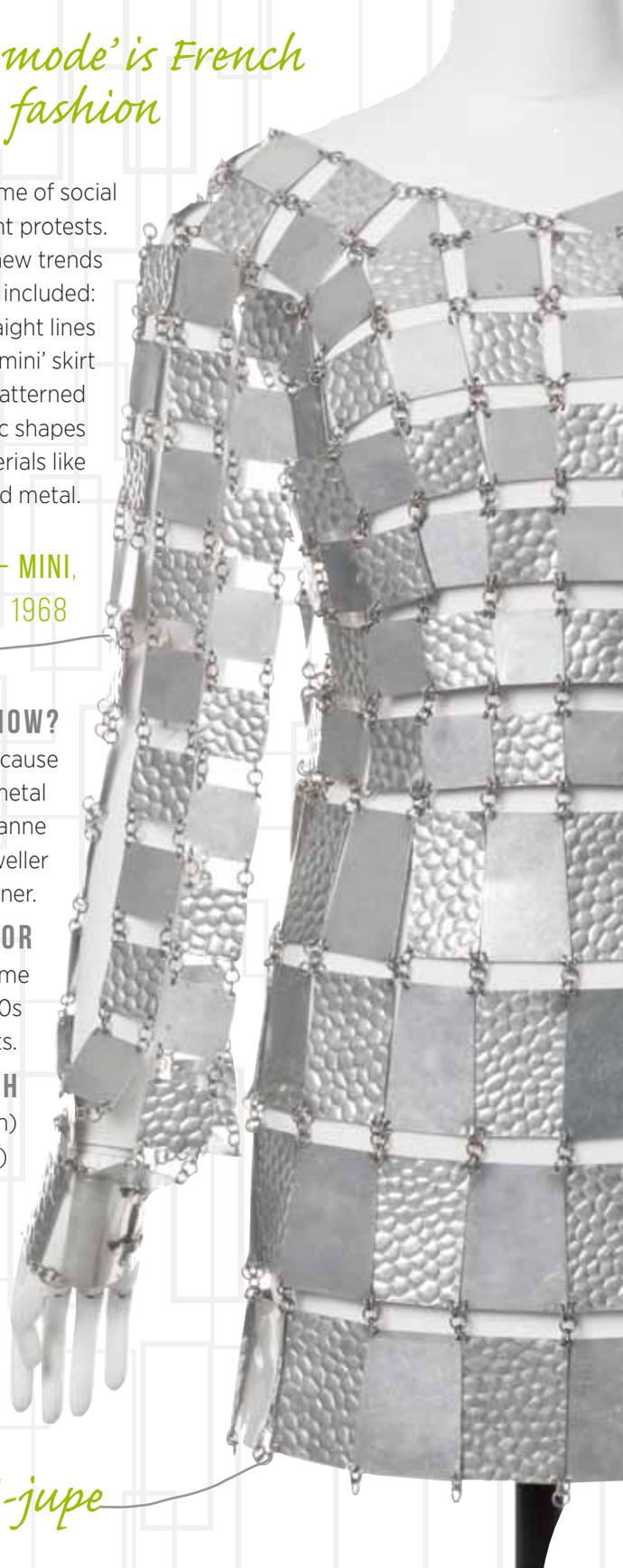
*une mini-jupe* – 'oon meenee joop' (a mini skirt)

#### LATER

In The Studio or at home, you might like to design your own 1960s-inspired garments.

Paco Rabanne, *Evening dress - mini, ready to wear*, Spring–Summer 1968, beaten or smooth aluminium plates, aluminium links; Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Ufac (Union Française des Arts du Costume) collections, Fashion and Textiles. Photo: Les Arts Décoratifs, Paris / Jean Tholance. All rights reserved

*mini-jupe*





## THE 1970s

## *un chapeau*

This decade saw social and cultural changes, including the growth of the feminist, environment and peace movements, both in France and globally. The 'hippy' look of the late 1960s continued, along with an interest in 'ethnic' fashion, such as the Indian 'caftan'. In the 1970s, everyday fashion had links to popular music, for example, 'disco' looks such as jumpsuits, while later styles were inspired by 'punk' rock. Fashion trends from the era included:

- silhouettes – varying skirt lengths, mini, midi and maxi
- colour – over the decade there was shift from bright colours and patterns towards more earthy tones
  - a variety of styles, from nostalgic looks with 'floaty' skirts, to tight figure-hugging 'disco' outfits.

### YVES SAINT LAURENT PICASSO, SHORT EVENING DRESS AND HAT, AUTUMN – WINTER 1979

#### DID YOU KNOW?

Saint Laurent developed several collections inspired by artists such as his 1960s Mondrian dress. This dress was inspired by Picasso's designs for the ballet *Parade* from 1917.

Couturiers used specialist French *ateliers* for details such as embroidery, beading and exquisite fabrics.

## *bold colour*

#### WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- metallic fabrics
- designs inspired by art history and cross-cultural influences
- jumpsuits (one-piece garments) in the 1970s gallery

#### SPEAK FRENCH

*Yves Saint Laurent* – 'Eve Saint Lor-rong'

*prêt-à-porter* – 'pray-tah-poor-tay'

(ready-to-wear)

*un chapeau* – 'uhn shap-oh' (a hat)

*un atelier* – 'uhn nah-tel-i-yay' (a workshop)

#### LATER

Develop a fashion design based on your favourite artist's work.

Yves Saint Laurent, *Picasso, short evening dress and hat*, haute couture, Autumn-Winter 1979, shimmering silk faille by Taroni, satin silk printed applique by Brossin de Méré; satin silk belt by Moreau; woollen felt hat decorated with feathers; Les Arts Décoratifs, Fashion and Textiles collection, purchase, 1993. Photo: Les Arts Décoratifs, Paris / Jean Tholance. All rights reserved

## THE 1980s

### *une capuche*

This was the decade of diverse cultural and fashion trends. The economic boom of the early 1980s saw a rise in consumerism and a taste for glamorous looks – glitzy styles and bold colours. Lycra clothing, worn for aerobics and dance classes, became part of everyday wear. Fashion themes during the 1980s included:

- silhouettes – ‘big’ flamboyant looks with oversize forms as well as figure-hugging designs inspired by sportswear
- details – printed and knit fabrics
- the influence of Japanese designers

### *jersey fabric*

### AZZEDINE ALAÏA SHEATH DRESS WITH HOOD, AUTUMN – WINTER 1986

### *près du corps – figure hugging*

#### DID YOU KNOW?

Alaïa’s work was very popular with top models and celebrities from the era.

A similar dress was once worn by Princess Stephanie of Monaco on a *Vogue* magazine cover.

#### WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- ‘asymmetric’ designs
- Japanese designers such as Kawakubo, Miyake, Yamamoto
- a famous face from art history printed on a 1980s dress

#### SPEAK FRENCH

*la coupe* – ‘lah coop’ (the cut – the way fabric is cut so that it will hang on the body in the desired way)

*une capuche* – ‘oon ka-poosh’ (a hood)

*le corps de la femme* – ‘ler corr der la fum’ (the female form)

*près du corps* – ‘pray do corr’ (figure-hugging)

#### LATER

Create an ‘asymmetric’ garment design, where one side is different in shape from the other.



## THE 1990s

### *'combinaison-pantalon'*

In the final decade of the twentieth century fashion design seemed to be looking both backwards and forwards for inspiration. Designers drew on history and reinterpreted styles from decades past. New technologies led to 'high-tech' materials, which presented new possibilities for printed and moulded fabrics. Features from this decade include:

- silhouettes – uncluttered forms, as well as extravagant creations
- details – imaginative prints and sumptuous embroidery
- the impact of men's *haute couture*

### WALTER VAN BEIRENDONCK FOR WILD & LETHAL TRASH, ENSEMBLE, AUTUMN – WINTER 1996



#### DID YOU KNOW?

Strong graphics are a feature of Van Beirendonck's designs. He has worked on a variety of art and design projects involving collaborations with other designers, including Australia's Marc Newson. He is interested in contemporary social issues, and has designed for Amnesty International.

### *'trompe l'œil'* *print on mesh*

#### SPEAK FRENCH

*un combinaison-pantalon* – 'uhn combin-ay-zon pan-tah-lohn' (a jumpsuit)

*trompe-l'œil* – 'tromp loy' (a 'trick of the eye' – an image designed to look like the real thing!)

*une perruque* – 'oon pair-ook' (a wig)

#### LATER

Design your own fun men's fashion garment.

# INTO THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY ... MORE MEN'S FASHION DESIGN

While the history of French fashion has been dominated by styles for women, several contemporary designers now include imaginative garments for men in their collections. Traditionally, tailors have hand-made men's suits and shirts, often in subtle and conservative fabrics. Designers now play with ideas about how men can dress, providing opportunities for men to express their personality and style through their clothing.

*'les motifs fleuris'*

## COMME DES GARÇONS HOMMES PLUS, SPRING – SUMMER 2006

### DID YOU KNOW?

This design takes the traditional silhouette of the men's suit and experiments with decorative colour and pattern on the surface. The textile print features the 'lip-and-tongue' image from the logo of the Rolling Stones rock band, as well as flowers and dots.

### WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- the way the jacket is faded compared with the trousers
- your favourite men's garment in the exhibition
- other examples of contemporary fashion borrowing from the past.

### SPEAK FRENCH

*Comme des Garçons* – 'kohm day gah-sohn' (like boys)

*hommes* – 'ohm' (men)

note: when speaking French don't pronounce the 's' at the end of a word.

### LATER

Imagine and design other ways you could change a traditional men's suit into a creative fashion statement.

*'textile imprimé'*

Comme des Garçons Hommes Plus, *Two-piece suit*,  
Spring–Summer 2006 © Comme des Garçons /  
Jean-François José



## 1990s CONTINUED

A *grand couturier* is a designer who has met the requirements of the *haute couture* name, and is head of a fashion house. A *créateur* is a fashion designer with their own label who shows and markets their creations without having the status of *couturier*. Today, there are a number of officially recognised and highly regarded *créateurs* and only a few registered *haute couture* houses.

### COMME DES GARÇONS BUMP DRESS, SPRING – SUMMER 1996

*gingham – ‘vichy’*

#### DID YOU KNOW?

The founder of Comme des Garçons is Japanese designer Rei Kawakubo. Her work has been described as ‘anti-fashion’ for the way it challenges more traditional ideas about feminine silhouettes. She has been considered more of a sculptor and her designs feature experimental 3D forms.

The *Bump dress* is made from a single piece of fabric, padded to create unnatural ‘bumps and lumps’. Gingham cotton, which is checked and in France called *vichy*, is recognised as an authentic, everyday fabric. It became more popular after 1959 when French actress Brigitte Bardot chose it for her wedding gown.

*padded forms*

#### WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- contrasting styles – from ‘minimalist’, ultra-simple shapes, to lavish, highly decorative gowns
- fantasy styled creations
- the way in which 1990s fashion relates to the human form.

#### SPEAK FRENCH

*créateur* – ‘cray-ah-ter’ (creator, designer)

*soie* – ‘swa’ (silk)

*tissu* – ‘tiss-oo’ (fabric)

*‘anti-fashion’*

#### LATER

Develop your own fashion ideas inspired by your favourite 1990s pieces.

*asymmetric design*

Comme des Garçons, *Bump dress*, padded dress, ready to wear, Spring–Summer 1997, synthetic gingham jersey, polyester wadding; Les Arts Décoratifs, Fashion and Textiles collection, purchased in 2005



## 2000 UNTIL NOW

As you come towards the end of your *haute couture* journey, you will see that contemporary designers continue to invent and push the boundaries of what fashion can be. French *créateurs* also have a deep respect for and continue to be inspired by their rich history, designing styles and motifs that are repeated through the decades. *Haute couture* today stills holds onto the timeless traditions of the past including:

- a love of exquisite fabrics
- the finest hand-sewing
- a deep understanding of technique – cutting, draping and styling

### *les motifs*

#### CHRISTIAN LACROIX EVENING DRESS, SPRING–SUMMER 2000

##### DID YOU KNOW?

Lacroix studied art history at university, before becoming a fashion designer. His love of art, opera and theatre has inspired many of his collections, and he is known for his extravagant and theatrical creations.

### *pois*

##### WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- the spiral effect created by the swirling line and patchwork prints in this gown
- other designs from the 2000s which reflect the *haute couture* traditions of elegance and luxury

### *géométriques*

##### SPEAK FRENCH

*un style attrayant* – ‘uhn steel aht-tray-ohn’ (an eye-catching design)  
*un mélange de motifs* – ‘uhn may-lonj der moh-teef’ (a mixture of patterns)

##### LATER

Imagine and design your own ‘over-the-top’ creation, using a mixture of patterns and shapes. You could use ‘*les pois*’ dots or ‘*les rayures*’ stripes.

### *rayures*

detail: Christian Lacroix, *Long sheath evening dress with train, haute couture*, Spring–Summer 2000, sleeves, neck and modesty panel in silk tulle; reinforced bodice and patchwork sheath of printed silk crepe strips, held with wired sheaths in satin silk; Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Fashion and Textile collections, gift of the house of Christian Lacroix-Paris and Simon, Jérôme, Léon Falic-Bal Harbour, Florida, 2009. Photo: Les Arts Décoratifs, Paris / Jean Tholance. All rights reserved



# COUTURE FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

*Haute couture* today still explores the question that Christian Dior sought to answer in his *New Look* of 1947 – how to create a style that celebrates the human form and reflects the spirit of the times? The *Fashion Icons* exhibition presents a fascinating journey through the world of French fashion. Before you leave, take time to think about what you have seen and learnt. Which of the exquisite creations or innovative designs you have seen along the way do you like most?

## DOLCE & GABBANA, CORSET DRESS, SPRING – SUMMER 2007

### DID YOU KNOW?

Dolce & Gabbana once described their style as ‘New Millennium cool’, and they are considered by Hollywood celebrities to be the most popular contemporary designers. A corset dress made by them was worn by Lady Gaga in the video clip for her song *Paparazzi*, and took some 350 hours to make. It shows the role of designers in continuing to challenge our perceptions of fashion and the forms it can take.

*metallic*

### WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- which designs do you think will be remembered as classic looks of the twenty-first century?

*curvaceous form*

### SPEAK FRENCH

*métallique* – ‘meh-tal-eek’ (metallic)

*de haute technologie* – ‘der oht tek-nol-oh-jee’  
(hi-tech)

*futuriste* – ‘foo-too-rist’ (futuristic)

### LATER

Make a list of your fashion predictions for the future. Imagine and create your own high-tech, futuristic designs.

*futuristic*

Hubert Barrère for Dolce & Gabbana, *Short bustier evening dress*, haute couture, Spring-Summer 2007, chrome plated lambskin, polyester resin, organza; Les Arts Décoratifs, Fashion and Textiles collection, gift of Dolce & Gabbana, 2008. Photo: Les Arts Décoratifs, Paris / Jean Tholance. All rights reserved



Want to learn more by following the work of key designers featured in the exhibition? Here are some names to look for.

ALEXANDER MCQUEEN  
ANDRÉ COURRÈGES  
AZZEDINE ALAÏA  
CHANEL  
CHARLES JAMES  
CHLOÉ  
CHRISTIAN DIOR  
CHRISTIAN LACROIX  
COMME DES GARÇONS  
CRISTÓBAL BALENCIAGA  
DOLCE & GABBANA  
DRIES VAN NOTEN  
EMANUEL UNGARO  
EMILIO PUCCI  
GUY LAROCHE  
HELMUT LANG  
HUBERT DE GIVENCHY  
ISSEY MIYAKE  
JEAN PAUL GAULTIER  
JOHN GALLIANO  
KARL LAGERFELD  
KENZO  
LANVIN  
PACO RABANNE  
PIERRE CARDIN  
THIERRY MUGLER  
VALENTINO  
VIVIENNE WESTWOOD  
YOHJI YAMAMOTO  
YVES SAINT LAURENT

## OVER TO YOU

*You've been on the Fashion Icons journey ... what now?*

**Visit The Studio** on the lower ground floor of the Gallery and explore your own creative fashion ideas.

**Collect** a 'My Label' designer's journal and start designing!

**Want to know more** about your favourite designers and their creations?

- Visit the exhibition website <http://fashionicons.com.au/>
- Look for exciting workshops and events at the Gallery during the exhibition.
- Search online for the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris.

Did you enjoy the French language experience? Perhaps you could learn to speak French in the future.

## SO YOU WANT TO BE A FASHION DESIGNER?

**Study** Art or Design at school and look for ways to explore your creativity in your own time.

**Draw** or play with colour, shape and pattern using the techniques you enjoy, such as collage, drawing or watercolour.

**Make** fashion illustrations, learn to sew and experiment with your own designs.

**Explore** and respond to art and fashion history in books and online.

**Create** a 'look book' of ideas and inspiration to keep.

*Bonne Chance!*



*A tip from Adelaide fashion designer Jaimie Sortino*

*Stay true to yourself as a designer ... Always be inspired, surround yourself with good people and of course be passionate and work hard.*

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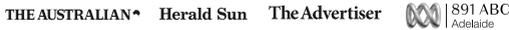
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