



{lifestyle}  
by STEPHANIE WILSON }

# HAUTE COUTURE

*Robe  
Hllébore*  
Gianfranco Ferré  
for Christian Dior  
Haute Couture  
Spring 1995

# culture

This month, Denver is home to some of the most exciting and important exhibitions in North America.

In one of the most impressive fashion house happenings to come to Denver, the Denver Art Museum presents "Dior: From Paris to the World," a sweeping retrospective opening this month.



### **Bar Suit**

Christian Dior  
Haute Couture  
Spring-Summer 1947  
*Corolle* line

Afternoon ensemble  
in shantung and  
pleated wool.



### **Palmyre**

Christian Dior  
Haute Couture  
Fall-Winter 1952,  
*Profilée* line

Satin evening gown  
embroidered with  
silver metallic thread,  
paste gemstones,  
beads, and sequins.



### **Fanny**

Christian Dior  
Haute Couture  
Fall-Winter 1953  
*Vivante* line

Celestial blue taffeta  
gala dress worn  
by Mrs. Elizabeth  
Firestone.



### **Bal Masque**

Yves Saint Laurent  
for Christian Dior  
Haute Couture  
Spring-Summer 1958  
*Trapéze* line

Short evening dress  
in point d'esprit tulle  
embroidered with jet  
beads and embellished  
with satin bows.

It's the first major Dior retrospective in the United States. When it was announced last summer, the exhibition caused a stir in the fashion world, as it was heralded by *Harper's Bazaar*, *Women's Wear Daily*, *InStyle*, and other top fashion-focused outlets around the globe.

The exhibition is curated by Florence Müller, a native Parisian and the former director of the Union Française des Arts du Costume—basically the equivalent of the Met Costume Institute in New York. She joined the Denver Art Museum (DAM) in 2015 as the Avenir Foundation Curator of Textile Art and Fashion. It's been over six years since DAM's blockbuster "Yves Saint Laurent: The Retrospective," which was Müller's first collaboration with DAM as chief curator. DAM was the exclusive US venue for that celebrated showcase of the designer's celebrated haute career, curated by the highly regarded fashion and art historian.

For this Dior showcase, Müller selected more than 200 haute couture dresses as well as accessories, photographs, original sketches, runway videos, and other archival material. Altogether, the exhibition traces the history of the iconic fashion house, starting with a profile

of its founder—Christian Dior. That is followed by looks at the brand's subsequent artistic directors: Yves-Saint Laurent, Marc Bohan, Gianfranco Ferré, John Galliano, Raf Simons, and the current Maria Grazia Chiuri—all superstars in their own rights.

"We will even have dresses from the latest collection of Maria Grazia Chiuri, which is very difficult, because it's the collection that will be on sale for the customers right now," Müller told *Artnet*, stressing the show's up-to-the-minute relevance. According to that report, one of the only ready-to-wear looks on view is the 2017 shirt emblazoned with the slogan, "We Should All Be Feminists."

For a local connection, Müller's exhibition also highlights North and South American patrons' vital role in helping establish the House of Dior's global presence. "Artistic interpretation has always been a key factor to the House of Dior's success in creating a global legacy for the French haute couture house," said Müller in a statement to the press. "Each one of the artistic directors has accomplished this during their tenure and through their visions. Visitors will witness this through thematic exhibition sections, and will



**Palladio**

Gianfranco Ferré  
for Christian Dior  
Haute Couture  
Spring-Summer 1992  
In *Balmy Summer*  
*Breezes* Collection  
Long pleated  
georgette crepe dress



John Galliano  
for Christian Dior  
Haute Couture  
Spring-Summer 2004  
Gold embroidered  
triple organza  
jacket and skirt.



John Galliano  
for Christian Dior  
Haute Couture  
Fall-Winter 2009  
Embroidered mohair  
bouclé coat.



Raf Simons  
for Christian Dior  
Haute Couture  
Fall-Winter 2012  
3/4-length duchess  
satin evening gown  
with Sterling Ruby  
SP178 shadow print

“This exhibition will encourage audiences to *think differently* about the boundaries of fashion and art, taking viewers behind the scenes to reveal Dior’s imaginative and *innovative endeavors.*”

—DAM Director Christoph Heinrich



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also begin to understand how the Americas contributed to the success of the house over a seven-decade period.”

DAM’s major exhibition is mounted with loans from the Dior Héritage Collection, many of which have rarely been seen outside of Europe. DAM Director Christoph Heinrich explained, “This exhibition will encourage audiences to think differently about the boundaries of fashion and art, and advance the museum’s commitment to taking viewers behind the scenes to reveal Dior’s imaginative and innovative endeavors.”

A little history on Christian Dior: he was an art gallerist turned celebrated courtier whose first collection arrived in Paris 1947, two years after the end of the second World War—a time when the world was hungry for a return to luxury following years of rationing. Dior’s designs shed the masculine silhouette that had been established during the war, expressing modern femininity. Dior drew inspiration from art, antiques, fashion illustrations, and his passion for gardening. The result: sophisticated designs, soft shoulders, nipped-in waists, voluminous skirts—you know the look, it’s the iconic hourglass figure



Maria Grazia Chiuri  
for Christian Dior  
Haute Couture  
Spring-Summer 2018  
“Dior Red” ball gown  
in tiered tulle fans,  
after the design Francis  
Poulenc, 1950.

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Christian  
Dior  
Founder, Artistic Director  
1946–1957  
Photo around 1948

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the masculine  
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**Yves Saint Laurent**

Dior Artistic Director  
1957–1960  
Photo around 1957



**Marc Bohan**

Dior Artistic Director  
1960–1989



**Gianfranco Ferré**

Dior Artistic Director  
1989–1997  
Photo around 1990



**Maria Grazia Chiuri**

Dior Artistic Director  
2016–Current  
Photo around 2016

of the 1950s—that ultimately led to Dior becoming the first worldwide couture house.

Overseeing the exhibition’s design is Shohei Shigematsu, a partner at the New York office of the unmatched OMA—the Office for Metropolitan Architecture founded by Rem Koolhaas (The same firm behind fashion landmarks such as Fondazione Prada in Milan). You may be familiar with some of Shigematsu’s work: he’s the man responsible for a breadth of cultural landmarks, urban spaces, and public places in North America, including the Faena Forum in Miami Beach; the Willow Campus mixed-use village for Facebook in Menlo Park; and in Toronto the largest transit-oriented development currently underway in North America. Not to mention the critically acclaimed 2015 “Manus x Machina: Fashion in the Age of Technology” exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Shigematsu built off of the bold architecture of the Frederic C. Hamilton building to showcase more than 70 years of the House of Dior’s enduring legacy. The exhibition is on view in the Anschutz and Martin and McCormick galleries

on level two of Hamilton Building, building off the bold architecture—reflective of the mountain peaks that provide the city’s backdrop as well as the intricate and geometric rock crystals found within the foothills—to showcase the innovative haute couture. **S**

## ***Dior: From Paris to the World***

Opens Nov. 19, 2018

**DENVERARTMUSEUM.ORG**

