

TRANSFORMATIONS

2022
2024

HERITAGE
AND
NEW
CREATION

IS

CRISTÓBAL BALenciAGA MUSEOA

Balenciaga TRANSMISSIONS educational and creative project

Evening dress in black silk tafeta, ca. 1952



Cristóbal Balenciaga is unanimously regarded as one of the leading and most influential couturiers of the 20th century. A tireless perfectionist, he acquired an expert command of sewing techniques and spent his life refining the construction of his creations and introducing extraordinary innovations that allowed him to gradually evolve towards simpler and purer forms. His exceptional creative talent inspired him to design models that were audacious in both their form and aesthetics, taking the world by storm and setting the indisputable trend season after season. His command of the craft earned him the respect of his colleagues and he reigned supreme in the international haute couture world until he retired.

The Cristóbal Balenciaga Museum is the first great museum in the world dedicated exclusively to a couturier, and was opened on 7 June 2011 in the town of his birth, Getaria, Spain. Seeking to explain 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 chronological extension—including, for example, the earliest existing models by the couturier—make this one of the most complete, consistent and interesting of its kind.

The figure of Cristóbal Balenciaga is central and structures the mission of the Museum, a centre that works to serve as an international benchmark for the understanding and contextualization of the artist and his work.



The contemporary nature of Cristóbal Balenciaga's legacy continues to inspire today's creators, and the Museum has the important mission to convey knowledge of his work, his technique and his values to the new generations.

Background

Since 2016, the Museum has been promoting the Balenciaga Transmissions educational and creative project, aiming to become a natural part of the curriculum of the participating schools, while aspiring to turn the Museum into a benchmark for the new designers who, thanks to the initiative, obtain a first-hand look at the couturier's place of origin, environment and work.

In a first stage and as a pilot test for the project, the Museum collaborated with BA Fashion Design Womenswear, BA Fashion Print and BA Fashion Communication students at the prestigious Central Saint Martins school in London. Both the students and their professors came to the Museum to take a first-hand look at the origins of Cristóbal Balenciaga and their enormously important part in the couturier's creations. Here they had the opportunity to explore the temporary exhibition *Coal and Velvet: Views on Popular Costumes by Ortiz Echagüe and Cristóbal Balenciaga*, the theme of the collaborative project, and to analyse a selection of pieces in the collection.

Following the study trip, and under the supervision of the instructors in each area, students documented their creative and research processes, designing a complete outfit which was then evaluated by both institutions.

The Fashion Communication students put together an online exhibition with a selection of the best works which were presented to coincide with the students' participation in the *Fashion in Motion* project at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London. The online exhibition is available for consultation on <https://artsandculture.google.com/exhibit/iAIC3vmJ2vtnLw>

Fashion in Motion aims to shine a spotlight on up-and-coming designers. The Museum organises a series of catwalks, one of which was dedicated on 24 March 2017 to fifteen outfits created by Central Saint Martins' students in the context of the Cristóbal Balenciaga Museum's educational project. For more information about this initiative, please see <https://www.vam.ac.uk/articles/fashion-in-motion-inspired-by-balenciaga>



Seika Kyoto University. Process

In a second phase of the project, during the academic year 2017-2018, the project united professors and students from six of the most prestigious international fashion design schools: Central Saint Martins UAL, (London, England), The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts (Copenhagen, Denmark), Iceland Academy of the Arts (Reykjavik, Iceland), Shenkar College of Engineering, Design and Art (Ramat Gan, Israel), Seika Kyoto University (Kyoto, Japan), and Parsons The New School of Design (New York, USA), around an experience of immersion in the philosophy, technique and biographical context of Cristóbal Balenciaga.

After their visit to the centre, direct access to certain pieces in its archive and the study of diverse digital resources, the 150 participating students set about developing their own research and creation project achieve their personal interpretation of Balenciaga's work.

Emil Bang Hoffmann. The Royal Danish Academy
Ofri Mazza. Shenkar College
Gan Chen. Central Saint Martins UAL





Teachers visit to the
Cristóbal Balenciaga Museum

The results of the process were presented in a collective exhibition running from 14 June to 2 September 2018, displaying a selection of 26 creative proposals from among those submitted by students who participated in the project.

The exhibition depicted the dialogue between the legacy conserved at the Museum, the readings of the teachers involved in these transmissions, and the personal work and talent of a new generation of creators.

In a third phase of the project, and specifically during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 academic years, the Museum ran a second edition of the project. This time there were 12 participating institutions, twice those of the previous edition, with more than 500 students involved. Joining the aforementioned schools in the programme on this occasion were: Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture (Espoo, Finland), Accademia Costume e Moda (Rome, Italy), ArtEZ University of the Arts (Arnhem, the Netherlands), Bilbao International Art & Fashion (Bilbao, Spain); IED (Madrid, Spain), and Osaka Institute of Fashion (Osaka, Japan). 40 projects resulting from this process were displayed in a collective show running from December 3, 2021, until February 7, 2022, and on the project's revamped web platform <https://www.cristobalbalenciagamuseoa.com/en/learn/fashion-school/transmissions/>

With this latest edition the Museum consolidated a strategic programme of education and creation within its mission to disseminate and which currently focuses its educational offer on higher fashion schools wishing to take a closer look at Cristóbal Balenciaga's legacy by means of an innovative and meaningful methodology and experience.

Kirsten van de Belt
ArtEZ University of the Arts



Following these first two complete experiences, and with an eye on the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 academic years, the Museum would like to expand and consolidate the Balenciaga TRANSMISSIONS project.

New Edition

The Museum has therefore devised a special programme for a limited number of exclusive international Fashion Schools to take part in a research and creation project based on the Cristóbal Balenciaga Museum's collection, its exhibition and archives, as set out below.

Objectives

Amongst others, the objectives of the project are to:

- Transmit the knowledge, values, techniques and creative heritage of Cristóbal Balenciaga to a new generation of young designers through the direct study of his work.
- Showcase the revolutionary proposals of Cristóbal Balenciaga and his constructive and formal experimentation as a source of new creativity, acquiring tools for the research, documentation and analysis of sources, trends and evolution of the female silhouette, and resources for developing concepts and design based on formal innovation.
- Delve deeper into creative exploration and systems for adapting and interpreting silhouettes, making imaginative use of forms and volumes, images and aesthetics, construction and techniques, materials and colours, using the work of Cristóbal Balenciaga as an example.
- Use the creation of a look as an experimental ground in which each student implements and develops the ability to communicate design ideas through the reinterpretation of silhouettes. Students will prepare and present a sketchbook of inspirational material and one garment.

These aspects will form the basis of the Museum's evaluation of the students' work, an evaluation detailed below.

Thematic Framework of the Project

As far as subject is concerned, the project will turn the focus on an aspect unquestionably constituting one of Cristóbal Balenciaga's main contributions to the history of fashion: the introduction of new silhouettes composed of fabric, air and body, with which women could identify.

The same year that Christian Dior captivated the world with his New Look, a nostalgic revival of the romantic 19th-century silhouettes (a line Balenciaga had previously experimented with), Balenciaga set out on a different road, opting for fluid lines, curved backs and volumes which defied the conventions of the moment. The tonneau line of 1947, the semi-fit of 1951, the balloon skirt of 1953, the tunic of 1955, the sack dress and the baby-doll of 1957 soon became landmarks in the history of western fashion.

Mainly from the 1950s, each of Balenciaga's collections set a trend and introduced extraordinary innovations built on a foundation of meticulous, intelligent dressmaking. The fact that we can still see his designs on 21st-century catwalks is a nod to the timelessness of his contributions.

Balenciaga's experiments with construction would reach the height of their expression in the 1960s. The couturier used his mastery of tailoring techniques and extensive knowledge of fabrics to conceive increasingly purer and more abstract silhouettes. This progressive constructive simplification culminated in his extraordinary late-1960s gowns and impeccably tailored suits and day dresses that stood out for their architectural forms. These perfect models of austere beauty fled from superfluous decoration and brought distinction to the women who wore them.

Through this project students will discover the couturier's creative path and how the different silhouettes evolved, breaking away from established forms.

Coat in ivory and black Batavia twill and mohair, 1952
 Dress in black wool crepe, 1957
 Day dress in orange wool crepe, ca. 1958



Phase III

Students' Personal Project

Dates:
January-March 2023
January-March 2024

Estimated dedication:
Two months

Over a period of two months (8 weeks) at their respective schools, the participants will proceed with their own process of research and creation in order to create their own individual project, the results of which will be a sketchbook and an outfit taking its inspiration from the knowledge acquired.

Supervised by instructors in each area, the students will work on their ideas and develop them into deliverable materials. They will reproduce one of the pieces from the collection in toile to give them a better idea of Cristóbal Balenciaga's work, designing and producing a full look, tailored garment included, and including all of the support materials used (toiles, sketches, memories, pictures, etc.) to document their research and creation process. The finished project will be assessed jointly by both institutions, the school and the Museum. The project must be completely made by the student and nobody else.

Phase IV

Assessment, Selection and Submission

Dates:
March 2023
March 2024

Estimated duration:
One week

Every academic year the professors (first) and Museum staff (second) will select the garments that will be shown to the public, either in the project web catalogue or in a physical installation at the Museum. The short-term installation and/or exhibition will take place in the Museum only at the end of the two-year period.

The assessment will mainly focus on the student's ability to apply techniques and aesthetics in order to present a design with new silhouettes, the methods of adaptation and interpretation used, and their study of and reference to the processes employed by Cristóbal Balenciaga as follows:

- Research and documentation of sources for developing concepts and designs based on formal innovation.
- Analysis of sources and evolution of the feminine silhouette with a view to applying new techniques and aesthetics for the presentation of new silhouettes as well as analysis of and reference to the processes introduced by Cristóbal Balenciaga in this regard. Specify how the contents of the study trip, or its transmission, are embedded in the creative process.
- Innovation and experimentation related to forms and volumes, images and aesthetics, construction and techniques, materials and colours, etc.
- Technical competence. Suitability of the patterns, the fabric, and the finish.
- Environmental criteria. From the fabric selection to the pattern creation.
- Communication and presentation. Suitability of the global view of the final selection.



Amanda Johanne Linde.
The Royal Danish Academy

See Student Programme info for details on Deliverables / Portfolio

The estimated costs for the schools, or for the students where appropriately, would be approximately:

Bilbao-Getaria-Bilbao bus service*

- Minibus (with seating for a maximum of 25 people): 465 €/per bus
- Standard bus (with seating for a maximum of 55 people): 515 €/per bus

Youth Hostel accommodation

- <https://www.hostelgetaria.com>
- <http://zarautzhostel.com>

Lunch bag

- Lunch bag with a sandwich, piece of fruit and soft drink: 8 € per student

Fabrics for practical exercises

- Day 2: Moulage exercise: 15 € per student
- Day 3: Haute couture techniques exercise: 35 € per student

* Bilbao is the closest international airport to Getaria

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