



# THE KRYSTYNA CAMPBELL PRETTY FASHION EXHIBITION

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I travelled to Melbourne in March to see this wonderful exhibition at the NGV.

In 2016, Krystyna Campbell-Pretty donated her \$1.4 million haute couture collection to the National Gallery of Victoria, in memory of her late husband Harold Campbell-Pretty. Highlights from this fashion gift are displayed at the Gallery until July 14<sup>th</sup> this year.

The exhibition, which is free, includes iconic garments from many of the most respected fashion houses in the world, including Dior, Chanel, Yves Saint Laurent, and Alexander McQueen. The display starts with Worth gowns from 1890 and finishes with a Dior summer outfit from 2019.

Included are accessories, shoes, hats, jewellery and the fashion publications that derived from the wonderful world of fashion and design over these years. The Collection highlights the way in which design is both a process and a system. There are designer sketches, workbooks, studio drawings, collection guides, client books, embroidery samples and press clippings.

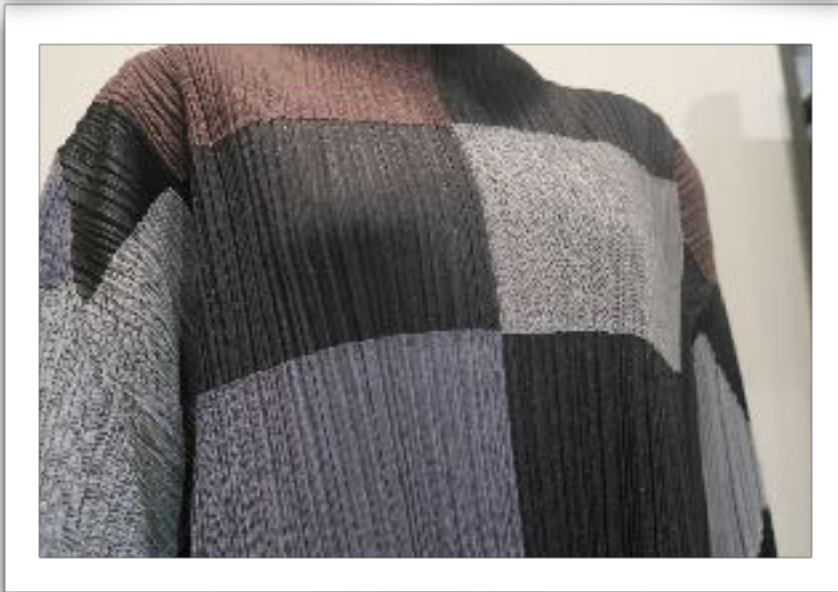
Adding to the appeal of the exhibition, is that the Gallery display is in regular NGV galleries, surrounded by artwork associated with each era of the garments on display. This allows exploration of the social and cultural significance of many of these historic garments.



Charles Frederick Worth, and “The Afternoon Dress” 1890.  
Worth, an Englishman, was known for his lavish textiles, and signing  
the waistband of each dress as an artist would.



Issey Miyake,  
Tokyo 1996, with  
pleat detail –  
used to create  
comfortable,  
practical and  
beautiful design.





An entire gallery IS dedicated to “The Little Black Dress” made famous by Coco Chanel and featuring six of her designs. Initially “Vogue” called the design “Chanel’s Ford” after the Model T that only came in black!

The Schiaparelli “Hall of Mirrors” jacket and dress in the forefront (1973) was purchased by a woman working in a department store – Vera loved the work of Elsa Schiaparelli and one of her best-known clients, Wallis Simpson. She saved her money to purchase this outfit, wore it many times after she married, and passed it on to her granddaughter when she turned 21. It remained in the family until purchased for the NGV by Krystyna Campbell-Pretty.



This 1990 Yves St Laurent outfit, featuring rock crystal and glass, was purchased by Mouna Ayoub, a wealthy socialite and businesswoman.

She allegedly filled two apartments with her collection of haute couture and never wore the same outfit twice!

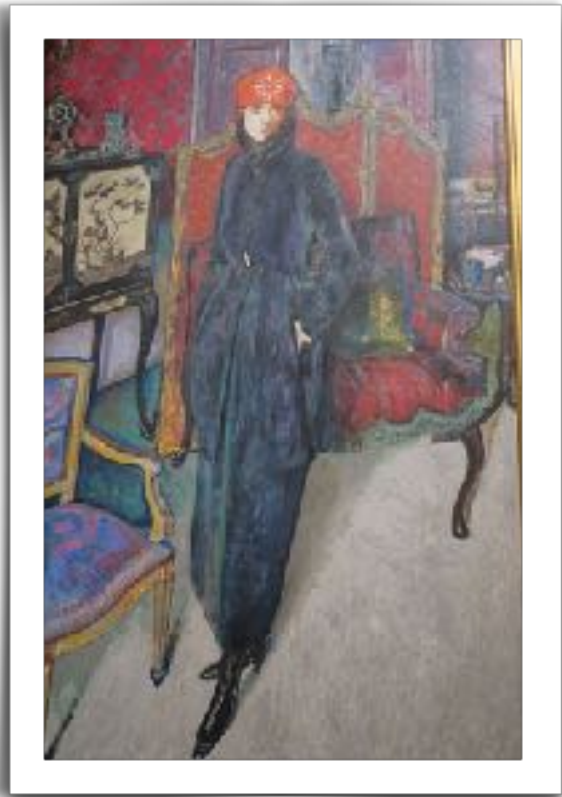




Of course, the Jazz Age lifted hemlines and shoe design became important for all night dancing. Accessories are also part of this comprehensive exhibition.



Yes, these are actually handbags.....



This "Speakeasy" evening coat is from the Prohibition era and has a large built in back pocket to stow liquor. In the same gallery there is an exquisite painting of Nancy Cunard from the same era.



Fashion Journalism also features in the Exhibition – this Christian Dior 1955 “Village Party” Cocktail dress is in a fashion illustration for “Retail Swiss”. The embroidery detail is exquisite.





A favourite of mine is Alexander McQueen, one of the most provocative and original designers of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. He often tackled unsettling subjects, and his early work using the prince of Wales check and play on menswear tradition speaks to his background in bespoke tailoring on London's Saville Row.



Alexander McQueen  
2006 "Widows of  
Culloden" collection.

The integration of the  
usual exhibition space  
with the collection is  
very appealing.

Below are designs juxtaposed with a Carlo Bugatti Chair circa 1902.



The final dress in the collection is a 2019 summer outfit designed by Maria Grazia Chiuri, the first female creative director and seventh designer at Christian Dior. She does not apologise for being overtly feminine in her design.

