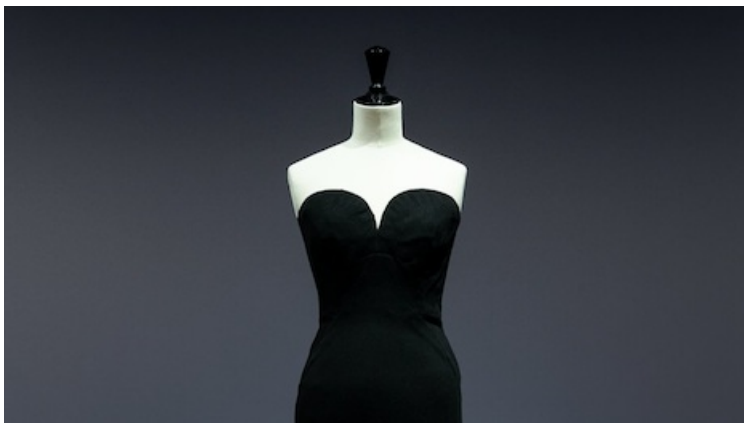


APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Kering honors famed designer Balenciaga, lover of black, with career-spanning show in The Hague

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Balenciaga in Black: An exhibition at the Kunstmuseum Den Haag, Netherlands, with a selection of more than 100 archival pieces until March 5. Image credit: Balenciaga

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

A career-spanning exhibit of historical garments from Balenciaga is currently on view in the Netherlands, honoring one of the greats in fashion whose house is now part of French luxury conglomerate Kering.

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Balenciaga in Black at the Kunstmuseum Den Haag pays tribute to the late designer and his favorite color black. Interestingly enough, the exhibition is situated in The Hague, the seat of the Dutch government and not in the country's capital of Amsterdam.

Under the helm of current creative director Demna Gvasalia and the support of brand ambassadors such as Justin Bieber, Kim Kardashian and South Korean actress Han Sohee, **Balenciaga** is "the hottest high fashion brand on the planet right now," according to *Vogue*, but it all started with the original, Cristbal Balenciaga.

Back in black

Spanish-born Balenciaga (1895-1972) presented his first catwalk collection in 1937 and earned a place at the top of the designer pack in the mid-20th century with colleagues and admirers such as Coco Chanel and Christian Dior.

The new exhibit focuses attention on the high point in the designer's career during the 1950s and 60s, when he created groundbreaking sculptural designs.

While everyone else focused on nipped wasp waists, Balenciaga's clothing was voluminous and free.

More than 100 archival garments on loan from the Paris Galliera and Maison Balenciaga include items from the barrel collection, a taffeta balloon dress and a sack dress, all in Balenciaga's signature black.

The designer was obsessed with black, taking cues from the Catholic attire, embroidery favored by the Habsburg rulers and lace mantilla scarves of his Spanish heritage.

Indeed, he even made many of his toiles test versions of garments in black instead of the standard unbleached

cotton muslin.

Balenciaga thought black was the perfect vehicle to showcase his artistry and complicated designs, putting the textures and details on full display without the distraction of color.

Balenciaga in Black, the largest collection from the designer ever shown in the Netherlands, is at the Kunstmuseum Den Haag through March 5.

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