

## COCO CHANEL



### Gabrielle "Coco" Chanel

b. 1883 Saumur, France  
d. 1971 Paris, France

"Luxury could have no other purpose than to offset simplicity."

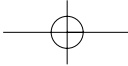
—Chanel

"Chanel ennobled 'poor' materials."

—Valerie Steele

The model as well as creator of her eponymous designs, Coco Chanel lived in slouchy sweaters, which she wore with jewels, as if she were going to a ball. Her innovations in materials and silhouettes, although they influenced haute couture for generations, have remained identified with her distinctive style.

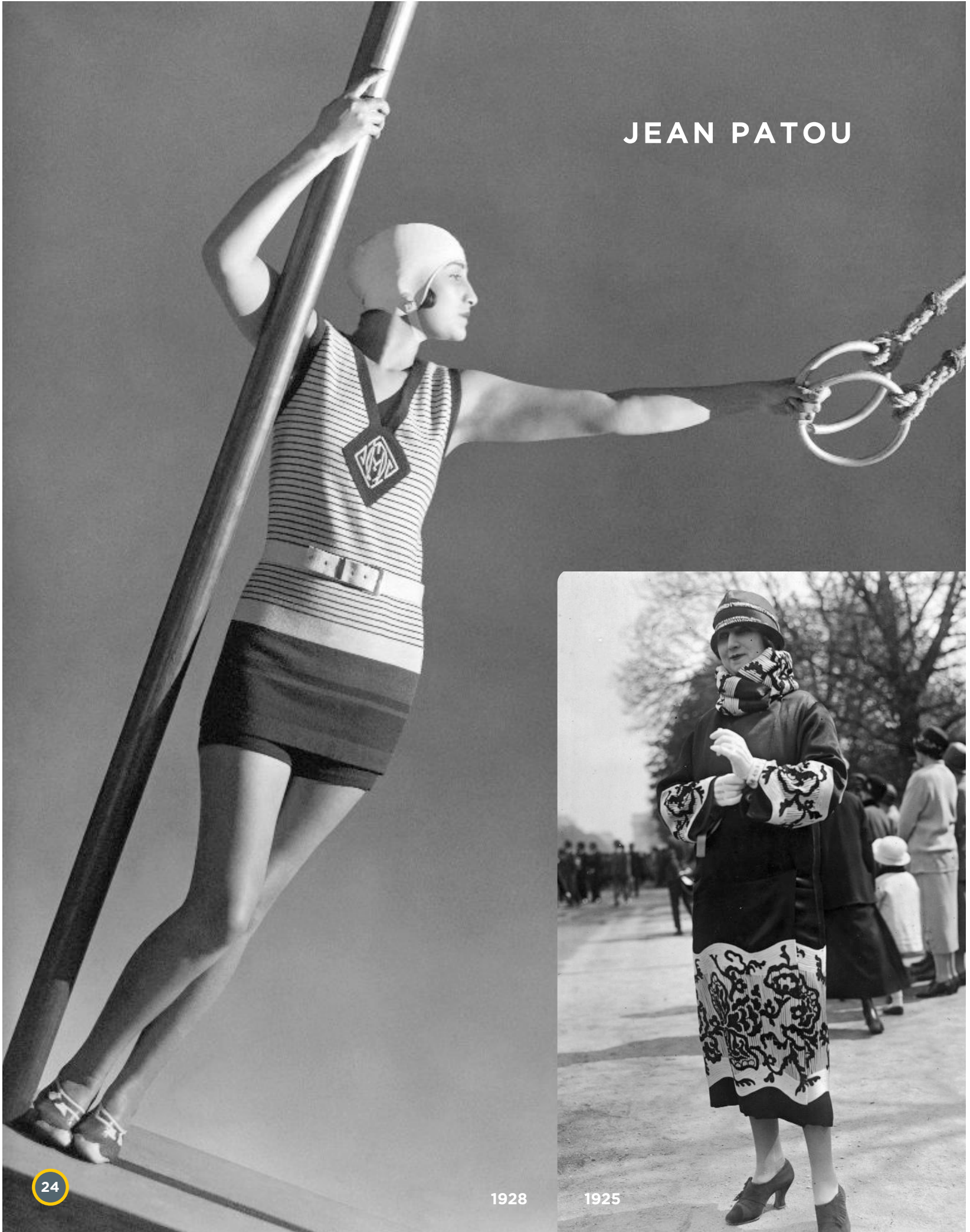
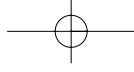
Chanel was the first designer to repurpose the use of jersey fabric, which was previously used for men's under garments. By taking the inventoried knit fabric from the renowned French textile company Rodier and designing it into a stylish oversized cardigan, Chanel revolutionized knitwear forever.









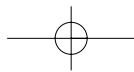


JEAN PATOU

24

1928

1925







b. 1880 Normandy, France  
d. 1936 Paris, France

"Inventor of Sweater Dressing,"  
"Father of Knitwear Design"

Jean Patou's firsts in knitwear design are numerous. He introduced the straight, white, cabled, sleeveless tennis cardigan and made a V-neck tennis sweater as a dress for Suzanne Lenglen, a tennis pro of the early 1920s.

Patou was the first designer to put his initials on clothes. A watermelon-red cotton jacket was embroidered with white thread, and he quilted his initials on shirts. His concept of monogrammed blouses was copied by Chanel and Hermès. Patou was the inventor of the twin set: two sweaters, usually a cardigan and a knitted shell bodice, worn together and coordinated by color and often a theme print. These sweaters were worn with pleated crepe-de-chine skirts, cloche hat, and bag. The white silk, knee-length pleated skirt was a signature style of the twenties.

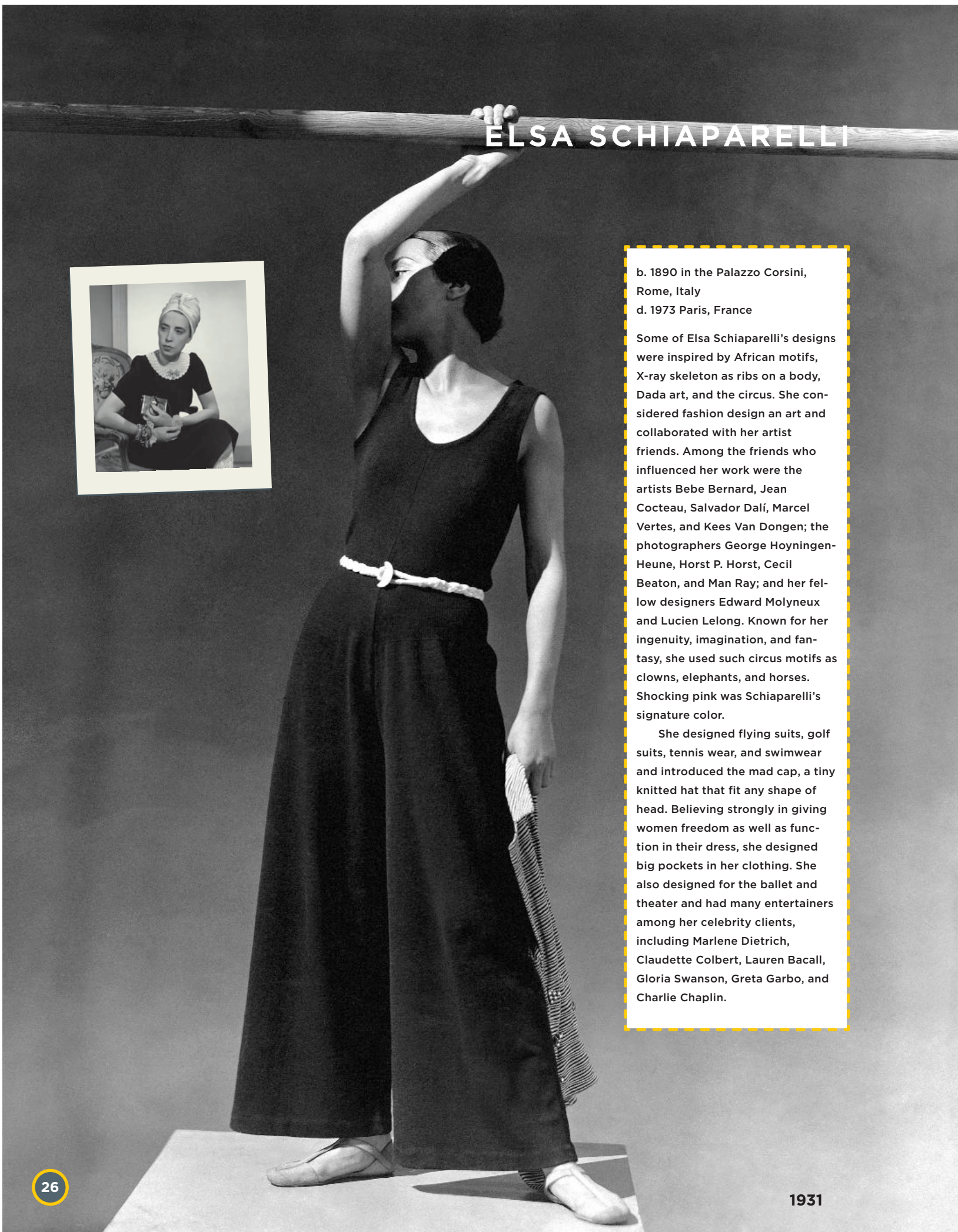
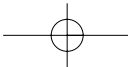
His fortunes declined in the 1930s, which some commentators have attributed to the Great Depression and the loss of the American market, but the question remains, was it a consequence of his inability to design into the new trends of the late thirties?

1931

1926

25





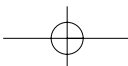
# ELSA SCHIAPARELLI



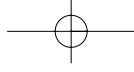
b. 1890 in the Palazzo Corsini,  
Rome, Italy  
d. 1973 Paris, France

Some of Elsa Schiaparelli's designs were inspired by African motifs, X-ray skeleton as ribs on a body, Dada art, and the circus. She considered fashion design an art and collaborated with her artist friends. Among the friends who influenced her work were the artists Bebe Bernard, Jean Cocteau, Salvador Dalí, Marcel Vertes, and Kees Van Dongen; the photographers George Hoyningen-Heune, Horst P. Horst, Cecil Beaton, and Man Ray; and her fellow designers Edward Molyneux and Lucien Lelong. Known for her ingenuity, imagination, and fantasy, she used such circus motifs as clowns, elephants, and horses. Shocking pink was Schiaparelli's signature color.

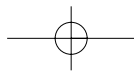
She designed flying suits, golf suits, tennis wear, and swimwear and introduced the mad cap, a tiny knitted hat that fit any shape of head. Believing strongly in giving women freedom as well as function in their dress, she designed big pockets in her clothing. She also designed for the ballet and theater and had many entertainers among her celebrity clients, including Marlene Dietrich, Claudette Colbert, Lauren Bacall, Gloria Swanson, Greta Garbo, and Charlie Chaplin.







1927





## CLAIRE McCARDELL



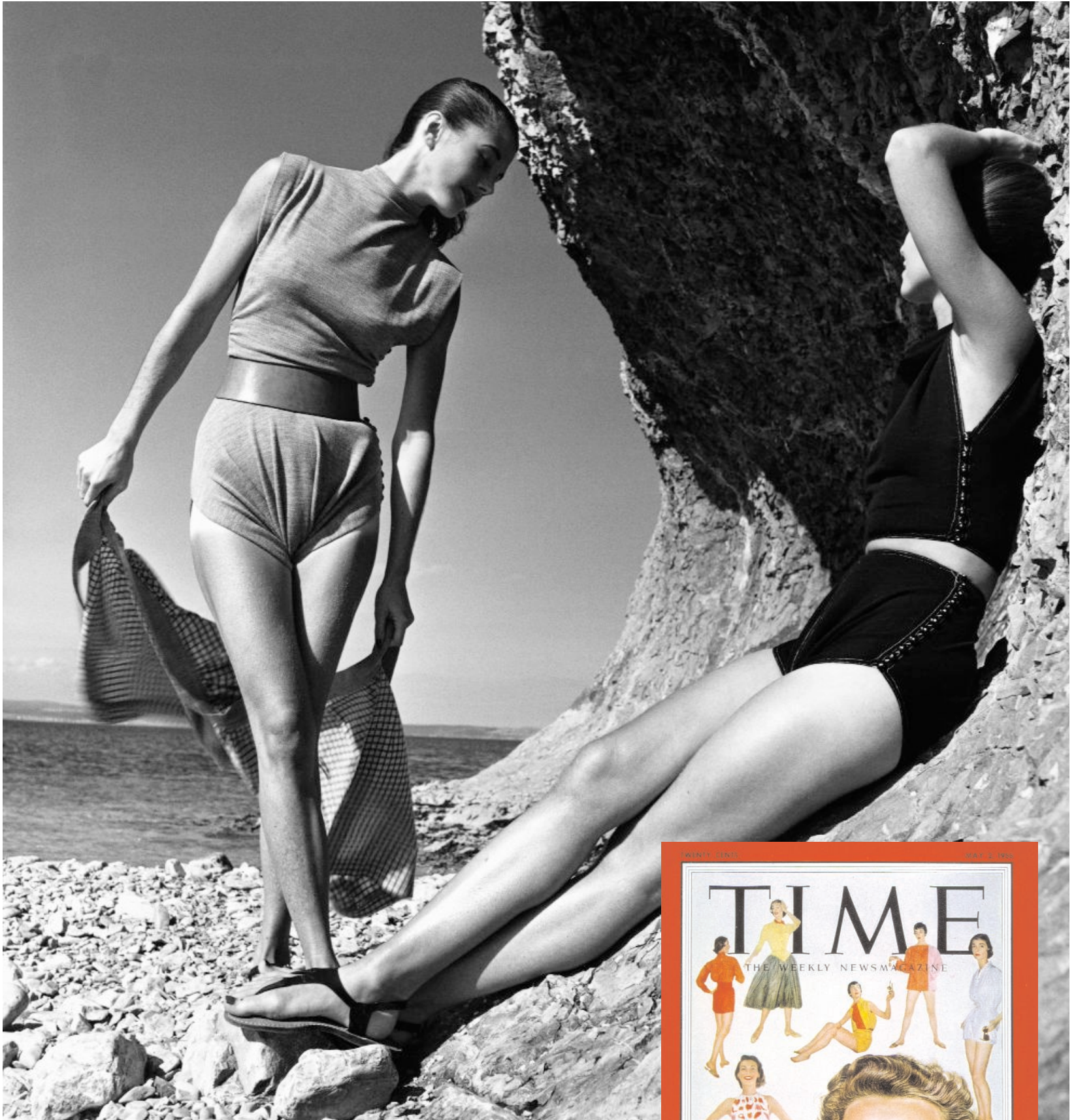
b. 1905 Frederick, Maryland  
d. 1958 New York, New York

“Mother of American Sportswear”

Growing up with three brothers, Claire McCardell was inspired by the comfort and easy practicality of men’s wear. Her interest in sports led her to design apparel for swimming, skiing, tennis, and other athletic activities. However, she also designed both casual and formal dresses. Madame Vionnet was a major influence on her designs.

In 1944, she received the Council of Fashion Designers of America (CFDA) award, and in 1946, the Golden Thimble award. In 1958, she was inducted posthumously into the Coty Hall of Fame, the highest award in American fashion until it was disbanded in 1985.







## BONNIE CASHIN



b. 1908 Fresno, California  
d. 2000 New York, New York

The daughter of a custom dressmaker, Bonnie Cashin began to design her own clothes as a child. In her senior year of high school, she auditioned for a Hollywood chorus line, but instead of becoming a dancer was hired as the troupe's costume designer. This position prefigured a period in her career when she designed costumes for the film industry. Her designs for the consumer market introduced American ingenuity to fashion. Inspired by an interest in travel, she collected Chinese jackets, Indian saris, and native hats. Her comfortable, layered wardrobes for travel used such fabrics as wool jersey, knits, tweeds, cashmere, canvas, and leather. Interchangeable separates were a contribution to the practical travel wardrobe.

Among her knitwear innovations were a new silhouette: the tunic length in double-thick cashmere, large enough to wear over another sweater, an example of her layered look; a funnel neck sweater to be worn as a turtleneck or hood; a hooded sweater in bold stripes with matching knit shorts; the long-sleeved tunic pull-on, to be belted; the long knit skirt; a miniskirt; a sleeveless knit shell; knit long johns for ski country; and knit kimonos and Noh coats to wear as an outer layer.

Cashin was the recipient of numerous design awards, including the Coty "Winnie" and Neiman Marcus awards in 1950, and three top Coty American Fashion Critics' awards, in 1960, 1961 (special award), and 1968 (return award). In 1972, she was inducted into the Coty Hall of Fame, and in 2001 was honored posthumously with a plaque on Seventh Avenue's Fashion Walk of Fame in New York City. The Bonnie Cashin Foundation (<http://www.bonniecashinfoundation.org>) preserves her legacy and sponsors design innovation.



1972





1953



1965



1980



1968

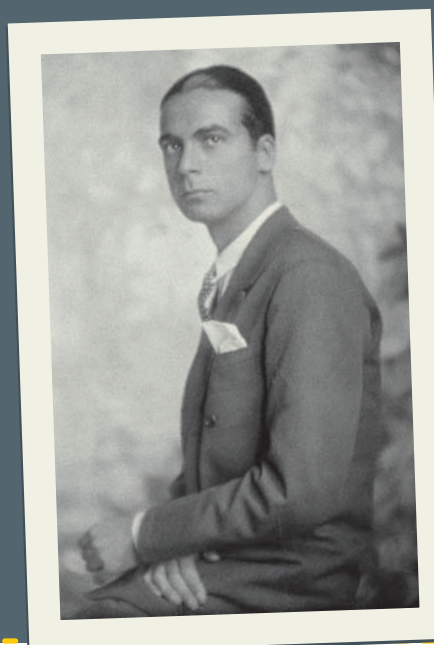




32

1938

## CRISTÒBAL BALENCIAGA



### Cristòbal Balenciaga Eisaguirre

b. 1895 Guetaria, Spain

d. 1972 Valencia, Spain

“Sculptor and Architect  
of Fashion”

Cristòbal Balenciaga's career began when he was very young. The son of a seamstress, he became the protégé of a Spanish marquise when he complimented her on her designer outfit. She encouraged him to make a copy, which she wore. In his mid-teens, he went to Paris to study the work of the leading designers there and returned to Spain to open his own atelier.

Balenciaga lived for the precision of cut in his fashions. Both Spanish and French influences can be seen in his designs. Balenciaga's color palette reflects the works of the earlier Spanish painters Goya and Zurbaran, and he was inspired by the painting *Women and Bird in the Night* by Miró, his contemporary. He also drew inspiration from the embroidery on matadors' costumes. The paintings of the French master Manet and the sculptor Brancusi, who worked in Paris, are examples of his inspirations from France.



## MADAME ALIX GRÈS



### Germaine Emilie Krebs

b. 1903 Paris, France  
d. 1993 South of France

Opting for a career in dressmaking when her family thwarted her ambition to become a sculptor, Madame Alix Grès, as she later came to be known, developed a mastery of draping in wools and wool jersey. Her gowns had a Grecian look because of the tiny multiple pleating that became a hallmark of her style.

Her designs, which remained consistent throughout her career, are characterized by asymmetrical draping; the use of yards of fabric for her gowns and hooded capes; dolman and kimono sleeves; deep V-necks, slashed to the waistline, and cowl necklines; and a fine silk jersey, which she developed with her fabric mill suppliers.

In 1947 she was awarded membership in the Legion d'Honneur, and in 1976, received the Golden Thimble award, presented by a jury of Parisian fashion editors for having the most beautiful collection that year.

1958





## MAINBOCHER



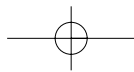
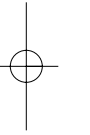
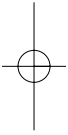
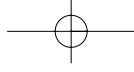
### Main Rousseau Bocher

b. 1891 Chicago, Illinois  
d. 1976 New York, New York

Mainbocher dressed the who's who of American society, including Mrs. Alfred Gwynne Vanderbilt, Mrs. Winston (C. Z.) Guest, Mrs. Cole Porter, Mrs. Henry Ford II, Mrs. William Paley, and Baroness Wiltraud Von Furstenberg, and designed costumes for such actresses as Mary Martin, Lynn Fontanne, Ruth Gordon, and Ethel Merman. Known for exclusivity—only the select few were invited to view his seasonal collections—luxurious materials, high-quality standards, and commensurately high prices, his designs focused on evening wear. Mainbocher introduced the strapless evening gown. He also designed women's uniforms for the military and for service organizations.

He was the only American member of the *Chambre Syndicale de la Couture* in Paris until Ralph Rucci joined in 2002.







## CHRISTIAN DIOR



b. 1905 Normandy, France  
d. 1957 Montecatini, Italy

“... to be well dressed is to know one’s self. It is not a question of having many dresses but of an intelligent choosing and love of beautiful clothes. Elegance is taste and care.” —Dior, *New York Times*, October 24, 1957, p. 1

Although schooled in political science, Christian Dior was a lover of the arts, music, and theater. He settled on a career in fashion in 1935, and when he opened his own atelier 11 years later, he became an immediate influence on post-World War II fashion. Dior knitwear is epitomized by sweaters bound with mink or other fur. During the knit craze of the 1960s, Marc Bohan designed designed knitwear such as a matching turtleneck dickey and seaman’s caps in oversize rugged knits. In 1947, he received the Neiman Marcus award for distinguished service in the field of fashion, a yearly award now recognized as the Oscar of fashion.



## NORMAN NORELL



### Norman David Levinson

b. 1900 Noblesville, Indiana  
d. 1972 New York, New York

The first designer to show long evening skirts with sweaters, Norman Norell saw the sweater as being a trim, easy fashion that is appropriate for wartime. He designed dinner dresses with glistening paillettes, to be worn in a casual manner. In 1942, he was a recipient of the Coty American Fashion Critics' award, and in 1956, he was inducted into the Coty Hall of Fame.



1968

37



## MISSONI



### Rosita Jelmini Missoni

b. 1931 Golasecca, Italy

### Ottavio "Tai" Missoni

b. 1921 Ragusa, Italy

"The Missonis elevated knitted clothes into an art form."

—*NY Times*, Bernadine Morris

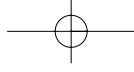
The Missonis created their own sweaters based on genius, simplicity, and imagination. Blending colors, yarns, technical ingenuity, and their Italian heritage of design, they founded one of the greatest knitwear companies, which remains a leader in knitwear today. Their designs are known for colorful, bright space-dye and zigzag patterns.

Internationally recognized for their talent in knitwear apparel, the home, and accessories, the Missonis have received numerous awards. In 1990, Fashion Group International honored Rosita Missoni with the International Award at the Seventh Night of Stars. In 1994, Tai and Rosita were awarded the Pitti Imagine Prize, honoring them for 40 years of their unique style and design of colorful, creative knitwear made for international fashion. Most recently, in 2005, Rosita received the Elle Deco International Design award for the second time.









## BENETTON



### Luciano Benetton

b. 1935, Treviso, Italy

### Giuliana Benetton

b. 1938, Treviso, Italy

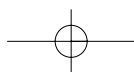
### Gilberto Benetton

b. 1941, Treviso, Italy

### Carlo Benetton

b. 1943, Treviso, Italy

The Benetton Group, SpA, was founded by Luciano, Gilberto, Carlo, and Giuliana Benetton; they are all siblings and the business is family run. Giuliana started creating sweaters on her home knitting machine when she was just a teenager. She collaborated with her brother Luciano, and he sold her bright-colored sweaters during a time when mostly drab-colored clothing was available. Luciano then purchased a factory and pioneered the process of dyeing finished garments to order. A proven marketing genius, Luciano developed the image of the Benetton business, with provocative ad campaigns under the company name, the United Colors of Benetton. The company embraced global unity, environmental harmony, and proudly conserved the cultural heritage of their Italian homeland, Veneto. Following a decade-long run as the worldwide leader in knitwear manufacturing during the 1980s, the company saw declining sales. However, it now has more than 5,000 stores in 120 countries.







1966

Più bella è la maglia  
più bella sembrate



*Questo che presentiamo  
è uno dei tanti modelli  
LADY GODIVA che le  
Maglierie Benetton hanno preparato  
per l'eleganza della donna italiana*



Maglierie benetton

PONZANO (Treviso)



1983

41