

Press Release

Brooklyn Museum



Terry O'Neill (British, born 1938), Raquel Welch in a Pierre Cardin outfit featuring a miniskirt and necklace in blue vinyl, worn with a Plexiglas visor, 1970. Image courtesy of Iconic Images. © Terry O'Neill / Iconic Images

The Brooklyn Museum Announces First New York Retrospective in 40 Years of Innovative Fashion Designer Pierre Cardin

Opening on the 50th anniversary of the Apollo moon landing, *Pierre Cardin: Future Fashion* focuses on the seven-decade career of pioneer of Space Age fashion and futuristic design

On view July 20, 2019–January 5, 2020

Pierre Cardin: Future Fashion traces the legendary career of one of the fashion world's most innovative designers, one whose futuristic designs and trailblazing efforts to democratize high fashion for the masses pushed the boundaries of the industry for more than seven decades. The retrospective exhibition features over 170 objects that date from the 1950s to the present, including haute couture and ready-to-wear garments, accessories, photographs, film, and other materials drawn primarily from the Pierre Cardin archive. *Pierre Cardin: Future Fashion*, curated by Matthew Yokobosky, Senior Curator of Fashion and Material Culture, Brooklyn Museum, will reveal how the designer's bold, futuristic aesthetic had a

pervasive influence not only on fashion, but on other forms of design that extended beyond clothing to furniture, industrial design, and more.

Pierre Cardin (French, b. 1922) is best known for his avant-garde Space Age designs and pioneering advances in ready-to-wear and unisex fashion. Cardin's fascination with new technologies and the international fervor of the 1960s Space Race visibly influenced his couture apparel, which subsequently became emblematic of the era. His clothing designs, which featured geometric silhouettes and were often made from unconventional materials, were worn by international models and film stars from Brigitte Bardot and Lauren Bacall to Alain Delon, Jacqueline Kennedy, and Raquel Welch. Fueled by an appetite for experimentation and "breaking the mold," he was one of the first European designers to show in Japan, China, and Vietnam and license his name, using it to brand an expansive line of products on a global scale.

"At the Brooklyn Museum, we're dedicated to telling the stories of trailblazers from across the art world, and that's exactly what Pierre Cardin is," says Anne Pasternak, Shelby White and Leon Levy Director, Brooklyn Museum. "The storied French couturier has built a name for himself through his futuristic designs. His forward-thinking approaches to fashion and business have consistently established trends and practices in his field, making him one of the most influential designers of this generation."

"Throughout his decades-long career, Pierre Cardin has proved to be a master tailor and designer, as well as an intuitive businessman," says Matthew Yokobosky, Senior Curator of Fashion and Material Culture, Brooklyn Museum. "He truly is a twentieth-century renaissance man whose work has advanced fashion and design while continuously giving society a new and breathtaking vision of what the future might look like."

The exhibition is organized chronologically, surveying pivotal moments throughout Cardin's career. Included are recognizable pieces like the designer's "target dress," from his 1960s "Cosmocorps" collection; his investigations into unisex garment design and trendsetting menswear, such as the collarless suit jacket with slender "cylinder" pants; and clothing made for film and theater, such as the costumes worn by Mia Farrow in *A Dandy in Aspic* (1968) and by the iconic French actress Jeanne Moreau in *Bay of Angels* (*La baie des anges*) (1963). Film clips from his famous fashion shows at Espace Pierre Cardin (1970 onward), the Great Wall of China (1979), and Moscow's Red Square (1991) are also featured.

While Cardin was one of the few couturiers who was able to draw, cut, sew, fit, and finish his own clothing, his designs went far beyond garments; he also designed furniture, lighting, and automobile interiors. Rarely seen "couture" furniture and home decor, as well as custom accessories including hats, jewelry, shoes, and sunglasses will be shown alongside archival photographs and excerpts from television, documentaries, and feature films. To put Cardin's work in a larger historical context, scenes from early films that attempted to anticipate what the future would look like will also be on view. These include such films as *A Trip to the Moon* (1903), by French magician Georges Méliès, and *Things to Come* (1936), by visionary filmmaker William Cameron Menzies. The costume, set, and lighting designs for these films compliment Cardin's futuristic fashions, providing a fuller picture of the fascination with outer space that dominated popular culture during the period.

Pierre Cardin

Trained in his teens as a tailor, Cardin lived in Vichy, France, during World War II and served in the Red Cross. Following the war, he moved to Paris, working at Maison Paquin and briefly at Elsa Schiaparelli before joining Christian Dior's groundbreaking house in 1947. In 1950, Cardin founded his own fashion house, focusing first on costume design and then on haute couture. His ability to sculpt fabric with an architectural sensibility, which became his signature, was complimented by his love of geometry. For Cardin's landmark 1964 "Cosmocorps" collection, he designed futuristic looks using vinyl, metallic fabrics, large zippers, and hats that resembled astronauts' helmets. Since then, he has continuously turned to futurism and new technologies for inspiration. Cardin introduced his own fabric in 1968, aptly named "Cardine," which embraced a future of synthetic fabrics by molding a bonded, uncrushable Dynel fiber into three-dimensional patterns. In 1971, Cardin took an inspirational trip to NASA, where he became the only civilian in history to wear an original space suit worn by an Apollo 13 astronaut.

Cardin was the first couturier to launch a prêt-à-porter (ready-to-wear) collection, in 1958 at Parisian department store Printemps, and later to create a much-copied unisex clothing line. In the late 1960s, Cardin began to license his own name. The financial success of this unprecedented move allowed him to become one of the few designers to own his company outright. Through the years, the Pierre Cardin name appeared on over 850 licensed products, and, as a result, became one of the most recognized brands in the world. Entering new markets, Cardin—also a great diplomat—put on highly touted mega-fashion shows, featuring 300 "looks" on the Great Wall of China (1979), and in Moscow's Red Square (1991), which was attended by over 200,000 people.

During the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, Cardin continued making clothes. He designed jackets and coats with extreme shoulder details that drew from designs as diverse as Chinese architecture and American football uniforms. Cardin also employed parabolic forms coupled with stretch jersey to "reshape" the body, which led to the invention of his signature biomorphic dresses. He has won numerous accolades not only for his fashion, including three Cartier Golden Thimble awards, but also for his humanitarian efforts. He is also the only fashion designer who has been admitted to the Académie des Beaux-Arts in Paris. In his lifetime Cardin has achieved an astonishing level of success, and at the age of 96 continues to walk to his office each morning and approach design with inventiveness and wonder.

This is a timed, ticketed exhibition. Information about ticket prices is forthcoming.

Pierre Cardin: Future Fashion is curated and designed by Matthew Yokobosky, Senior Curator of Fashion and Material Culture, Brooklyn Museum.

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