

Mode et sport d'un podium à l'autre

Press
release

Lacoste Couture Polo Dress by Freaky Debbie. Photo: David Hugonot Petit. Model: Cyrmen. Graphic design: Coline Aguettaiz and Brice Tournoux

20 Sept 2023
— 7 April 2024

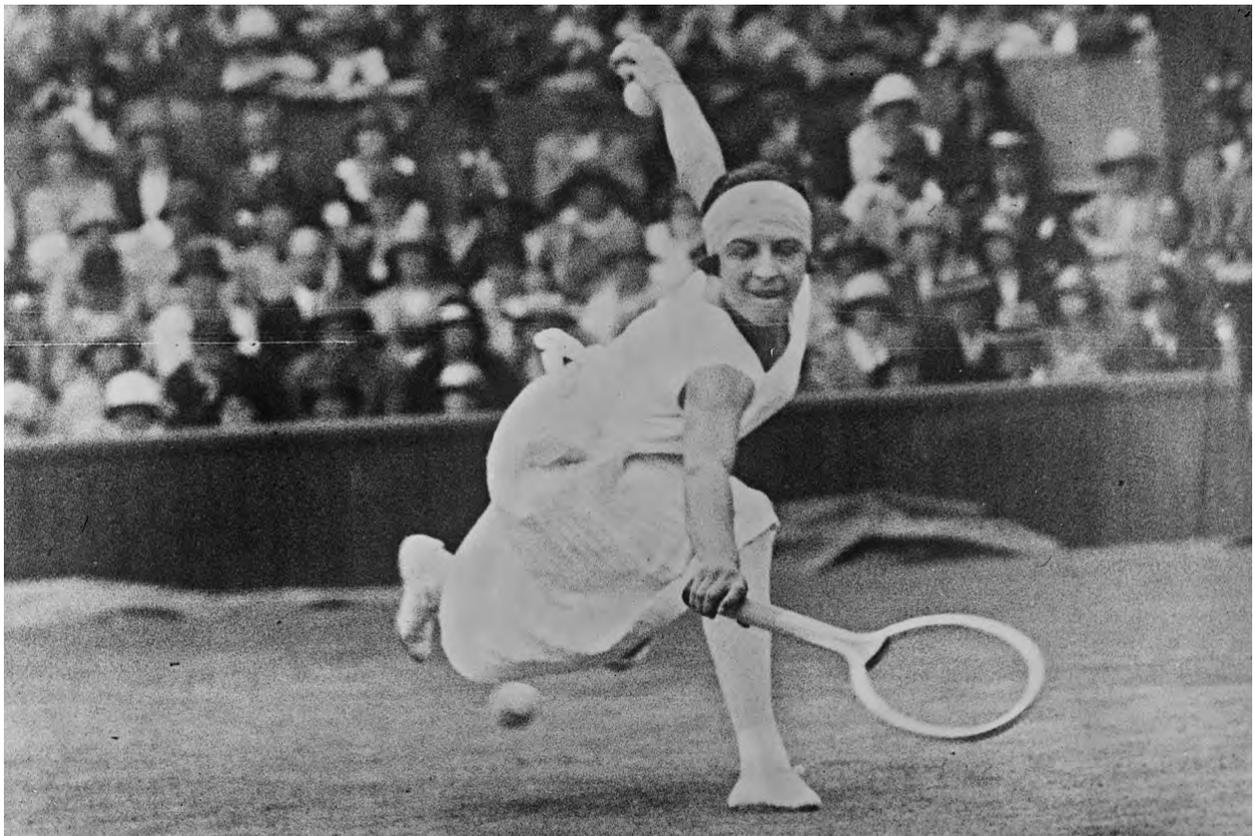


Anne Dias
Kenneth C. Griffin



MUSÉE DES ARTS
DÉCORATIFS

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1. Miss Lenglen, tennis player at Wimbledon — 26 June 1924
Glass negative
Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, département des Estampes et de la photographie
© BnF

Looking forward to the 2024 Olympics, the Musée des Arts décoratifs (Paris) presents *Fashion and Sports: From one Podium to Another* (20 September 2023 – 7 April 2024), an exhibition on the fascinating interconnections between fashion and sports from the Ancient World to the present day. This major exhibition illuminates the shared social concerns and focus on the body of the apparently unrelated worlds of fashion and sports. 450 items of clothing, accessories, photographs, sketches, magazines, posters, paintings, sculptures and videos illustrate the evolution of sportswear and its influence on contemporary fashions.

Jean Patou, Jeanne Lanvin, Gabrielle Chanel and Elsa Schiaparelli were some of the interwar fashion design pioneers who found inspiration in the world of sports. The exhibition shows how they made sportswear fashionable in a wider range of contexts, including in everyday wardrobes. The importance of comfortable clothes is a recurrent theme, explaining why tracksuits and sneakers are now ubiquitous on the streets and on the catwalk, from Balenciaga to Off-White. The exhibition was curated by Sophie Lemahieu, Keeper of the museum's post-1947 Fashion and Textiles Collections. The colourful and lively exhibition design is by BGC Studio.



2. Briol —
Lacoste advertising
poster
1933
© Archives Lacoste

3. Ladies two piece
bathing costume
(gown and drawers) —
c. 1900, France
wool twill, wool muslin
© Les Arts Décoratifs /
Christophe Dellière

Sports before sports

The exhibition layout is chronological even if there are also a number of thematic sections. A circular space introduces the Ancient world, when sports were associated with nakedness. Medieval tournaments exemplify the Middle Ages, and the *jeu de paume* represents the Early Modern period. While medieval illustrations show that clothing helped to identify a jousting company, the *jeu de paume* emphasises the contradictory pull of comfort and elegance during a game. We can see that the white apparel still associated with tennis today has its roots in this game.

En selle ou en garde !

The first physical regimens were developed to help aristocrats hone such useful skills as hunting, archery or fencing. Looking at their outfits in context, we can see that while these leisure activities were synonymous with refinement, they also gave rise to new apparel,

notably riding breeches for women. Pictorial representations of historical figures – including Marie-Antoinette – illustrate this point.

Before sportswear became a byword for comfort

Participation in sports increased in the early 19th century in the wake of the hygienists' promotion of the health benefits of physical activity. The rise of gymnastics is examined in this context, followed by team sports and the introduction of football and rugby shirts. Late 19th and early 20th century wool jerseys are exhibited alongside the first studded football boots and cleats for athletics. In contrast, women's sportswear focused on elegant tennis, golfing and croquet gowns. At the end of the 19th century, the individual sports favoured by the higher classes presented an opportunity for social distinction. Turn of the century paintings and photographs – notably those of Jacques-Henri Lartigue – comically point to the gulf separating the outfits of the first sporting women, with their oversized hats, from contemporary notions of active wear. Cycling soon became popular with both sexes, and the bloomers worn by cycling ladies suggest that it even fostered the emancipation of women.



3.

From bathers to swimmers

Attitudes to bathing and swimming helped to shape contemporary attitudes to clothing. Immersed in watery sounds and images, visitors discover the impact of these practices on ideas of modesty and perspectives on the body. From the bathing costumes of the late 19th century, which covered much of the body, to the first bikinis of the 1940s, female swimmers helped to make skimpier, form-fitting swimwear more acceptable. Two piece swimsuits were popular with champion women swimmers in the interwar period, before they became fashion items. Swimwear also prompted explorations of unisex clothing in the 1930s, when the bathing suits of men and women could look much the same. The exhibition also introduces us to contemporary innovations, notably the Speedo bodysuit, considered akin to a form of “technological doping” in 2008 after its wearers beat a number of records.

4. Cyd Jouny
(1968-, shoe designer) —
Soho trainers
(Autumn – Winter 1993)
Tandem trainers
(Spring – Summer 1993)
France
Suede, leather, cotton,
alcantara, perforated
leather, inlaid and
overlaid with metallised
leather
© Les Arts Décoratifs /
Jean Tholance

5. Neyret —
Two piece swimsuit
1930s
Jacquard wool, jersey
wool, metal clasps
© Les Arts Décoratifs /
Christophe Dellière



4.



5.

The origins of sportswear

The interwar years were crucial for the relationship between fashion and sports. The first clothes specifically designed as active wear started to appear, among them the classic Lacoste polo shirt. Fascinated by sporting events, great designers also began to devise clothes that combined comfort and elegance, drawing inspiration from the world of sports. Jean Patou, Jeanne Lanvin, Elsa Schiaparelli and Gabrielle Chanel were actively involved in the creation of sportswear, as it was known even then.

Gliding on ice and on the streets

The exhibition explores a range of activities loosely connected to the idea of “gliding” over a surface. Winter sports (mountain climbing, ice skating, skiing) spurred technical innovations while also making trousers increasingly acceptable items of clothing for women. From the gorgeous Hermès “sweaters” of the 1930s to the ski suits worn by Club Med ski instructors in the 1980s, the exhibition presents a whole new world of fashion. Surfing and skateboarding, so central to the countercultures of the second half of the 20th century, have pride of place. Both were associated with specific styles of dress which the luxury fashion industry was quick to pick up, as evidenced by a couture surfing suit. Indeed, both sports became so popular that they were incorporated into the Olympic games. This presents a challenge for sportswear designers: how best to approach a sport rooted in rebellion and a thirst for freedom?



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6. Maria Grazia Chiuri for Dior — Jacket, top and shorts; Ready-to-wear Spring – Summer 2022 France Viscose © Paris, Dior Heritage Collection.

7. Peter Knapp — Ulla Danielsen in an André Courrèges jacket (Winter 1971-1972) for Elle, Saint-Moritz, 1970 © Peter Knapp

Sportswear: the new normal

In the second half of the 20th century, sportswear became ubiquitous and started to become integral to the wardrobes of men and women alike. Fashion designers themselves had very close ties with sporting competitions. Indeed, some designers had a sports career before moving on to the catwalk. René Lacoste immediately comes to mind, but other figures are more unexpected, including such illustrious names as Emilio Pucci, who was on the 1936 Italian Olympic team, and Ottavio Missoni, a champion 400 metre runner. Other designers, from André Courrèges to Issey Miyake, and from Balmain to Lanvi, worked closely with the sports world, outfitting athletes in the Olympic games. However, sportswear really took off in the 1980s and 1990s, as bodybuilding and aerobics shaped new ideals of physical beauty.

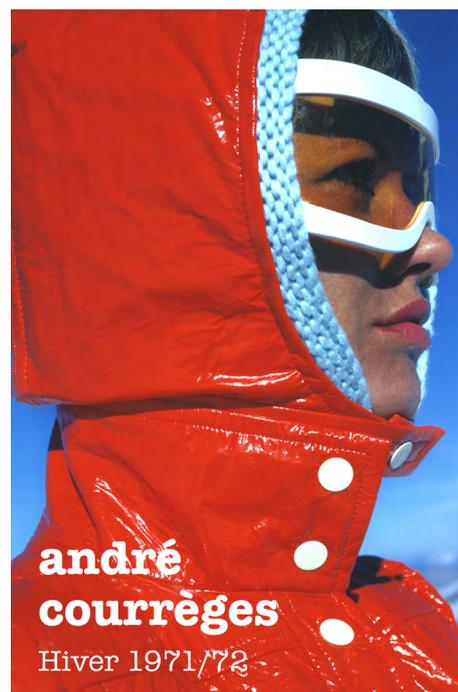
Gyms opened their doors in large numbers to an influx of customers eager to sculpt their bodies and achieve healthy, youthful silhouette. This ideal travelled from the USA to France where it was incarnated by the celebrity duo Véronique and Davina. Tracksuits, originally intended for athletes in training, became staples of urban wardrobes, especially under the influence of the hip-hop movement and fashion designers like Sonia Rykiel. During this period, “tennis shoes” also came to be known as “sneakers”: from Stan Smith’s emblematic trainers to the latest collectables, the exhibition displays this evolution on one of its walls.

Colours and logos

The exhibition emphasises the many roles of colour and logos in fashion, from the blue outfits of French sports teams to the uses of neon colours. A Lacoste polo shirt entirely made up of crocodile logos and designed by the Campana brothers illustrates the fashion world’s “logomania”.

Ready, steady, go... Fashion!

At the centre of the exhibition is a contemporary fashion “running track” overhung with golden rings in homage to the Olympics. Photographs show some of the sports stars who have been particularly inspirational for fashion designers, including Zinedine Zidane for Dior, and Naomi Osaka for Louis Vuitton.



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8. Koché and Nike —
 Koché x Nike
 Couture Dress
 Ready-to- Wear
 Autumn – Winter
 2019-2020
 Jersey, crystals,
 embroidery
 © Paris, Koché

9. Jeanne Lanvin
 (1867-1946) —
 Drawing in gouache
 “1928 Winter Sport”
 Collection
 © Patrimoine Lanvin



8.

Models walk up and down the track clad in the designs of some of the prestigious couturiers who have drawn inspiration from the rich and diverse world of sports: we catch a glimpse of a football motif on outfits by Comme des Garçons and Paco Rabanne, a baseball jacket in a collection presented by Off-White... We also discover that athletes themselves brought fashion to the sporting world, including Serena Williams and Andre Agassi, who sported bold outfits on the tennis court, and Surya Bonaly, who wore Christian Lacroix designs at ice skating competitions. In the background, podiums illuminate the increasing number of collaborations between great sportswear brands and fashion designers. In 2003, Adidas and Yohji Yamamoto pioneered this new type of joint venture with the Y-3 collection. Other collaborations are also presented, notably those of Lacoste and Freaky Debbie, Gucci and Adidas, and Balmain and Puma. Last but not least, the spectators in the stands use their outfits to project a certain image at a sporting event. From the elegant dresses that ladies wore at the races in 1900 to the



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football shirts of the RC-Lens football team's supporters, practices have seen major changes over the years.

As René Lacoste quipped: “It’s not enough to play and win. Style also matters.”

This exhibition’s celebration of creativity and innovation offers us a unique perspective on the porous boundaries between past, present and future. It reminds us that fashion and sports are not separate worlds but interconnected forces that shape our everyday lives. It also invites us to celebrate the bold leaps of those who shaped this history, helping us to imagine a future in which fashion and sports will continue to inspire us and each other.

Useful Information

— Press contacts

Isabelle Mendoza
Guillaume Del Rio
+ 33 (0) 1 44 55 58 78
presse@madparis.fr

— Curator

Sophie Lemahieu,
Curator
Fashion and Textile Collections
From 1947 to nowadays

#modeetsport

— Les Arts Décoratifs

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107 rue de Rivoli, 75001 Paris
+33 (0) 1 44 55 57 50
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— École Camondo

266 boulevard Raspail, 75014 Paris
+33 (0) 1 43 35 44 28

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266 boulevard Raspail, 75014 Paris
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