

MUSEE CHRISTIAN DIOR, GRANVILLE

Exhibition

DIOR HATS!

The art of hats from Christian Dior to Stephen Jones

14 MAY – 30 OCTOBER 2022



By Stephen Jones, Creative Director, and Florence Müller, Curator

From the founding of his fashion house in 1947 in Paris, Christian Dior made hats an integral element of the Dior style, of French Haute Couture, and of international fashion. He saw the hat as an essential accessory to a woman's outfit. "It is really the completion of your outfit and in another way, it is very often the best way to show your personality," he told readers of his *Little Dictionary of Fashion*. In the post-war years, a new way of life threatened the very existence of hats. Lots of young women, who were now working, abandoned their hats, preferring to leave their hair free. But Dior, with his famous "New Look", dreamt of returning to the Belle Époque and the magnificent, feathered hats worn by his mother, Madeleine Dior. His nostalgic temperament inspired his vision of a flawless and perfectly coordinated elegance. The accessories and perfume had to be in harmony with the clothes, creating a "total look", which was crowned by the hat.

The Dior Haute Mode workshop, entirely dedicated to creating hats, has remained active throughout the seven decades of the fashion house's history, even when this type of activity was disappearing in many Haute Couture fashion houses. Today, it is undoubtedly the last such workshop in an Haute Couture fashion house. This exceptional place of hats in the style and history of the House of Dior took on a new dimension with the arrival of the British milliner Stephen Jones at the head of this department in 1996, alongside John Galliano, who had just become creative director at Dior. The milliner of the stars was already a star milliner. Stephen Jones has since become renowned worldwide for his unique hats, some of which have been designed for Diana, Princess of Wales, for Mick Jagger, for Meghan, Duchess of Sussex, for Rihanna, and for Celine Dion. Alongside the creative directors who have followed John Galliano (Raf Simons, then Maria Grazia Chiuri today), Stephen Jones continues to enchant the fashion world with his boundless creativity.

The Christian Dior Museum in Granville is devoting its entire exhibition for the 2022 season to the creative power and truly artistic dimension of Dior hats. This exhibition is a world first. The exceptional collection of around two hundred hats and around thirty Dior Haute Couture dresses includes pairings that create the "total look". These are complemented by around fifty fashion photographs and beauty or make-up advertisements celebrating the art of hats. These works illustrate over 70 years of history, from 1947 to 2020, and from Christian Dior to Stephen Jones. They evoke Christian Dior's early days as a hat designer in the 30s. Later, as a fashion designer, he entrusted his Haute Mode workshop to Mitzah Bricard, the absolute embodiment of the "Parisienne". With her, he gave hats back the sobriety, elegance, and requirement for simplicity that they had lost during the war.

The exhibition shows how Christian Dior's successors have brought their personal interpretations to the founder's preferred themes, including gardens, masculine-feminine chic, exoticism, theatricality, and the taste for parties...

Finally, the last part of this exhibition is devoted to the 25 years of creation by Stephen Jones as creative director of hats at Dior, in particular thanks to the loan of many documents from his personal archives. Around sixty sketches of hats and original research documents, some fifty fashion magazine cuttings, about thirty tools from Stephen Jones' Haute Mode workshop at Dior, and a film showing the milliner at work clearly demonstrate the importance of hats at Dior.

The exhibition also benefits from many loans. A selection of portraits of women in hats, from the collections of Normandy's museums, illustrates the influence of 19th-century and early 20th-century fashion and the taste for art history at Dior. In addition to items on loan from Stephen Jones and pieces belonging to the Christian Dior Museum in Granville, there are also items from Dior Couture and Parfums Christian Dior, from the Palais Galliera fashion museum in Paris, and from numerous private collectors, including Hamish Bowles, journalist for the American edition of Vogue. Other exceptional pieces complement these loans, including the grey woollen outfit and hat worn by Carla Bruni-Sarkozy when she visited London with French President Sarkozy in March 2008, sparking massive "Carlomania". Among Maria Grazia Chiuri's most recent collections for Dior are designs inspired by Christian Dior's gardening hat. Stephen Jones also wanted to recreate three of the hats that Christian Dior designed in the thirties. Created exclusively for the exhibition, these hats express the extent to which the founder of the House of Dior and the British milliner share the same creative vision.

Born in 1957, the year of Dior's death, just like him, Stephen Jones knows the importance of a hat as the finishing touch that crowns a Dior silhouette. According to Stephen Jones, the hat, like a wearable sculpture, free from any utilitarian constraints, is "the very expression of optimism".

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Open from 14 May to 30 October 2022.

Until 30 September: every day from 10:00 to 18:30. Last admission at 18:00.

From 1 October: Tuesday to Sunday and every day during French school holidays, 10:00 to 12:30 and 14:00 to 18:00. Last admission at 12:00 and 17:30.

Full price: €9

Concessions (groups of 12 or more, disabled visitors, job-seekers, and students): €7

Free for children under 12 years old.

Buy tickets online at www.musee-dior-granville.com

Inter-museum offer: each ticket for the Christian Dior Museum entitles you to a reduced-price ticket (to be claimed within one week) at the Richard Anacréon Modern Art Museum.

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