

# EDWARD STEICHEN & ART DECO FASHION

Photography labels

Room 1

## *I will sign the pictures.*

Edward Steichen, 1923

Steichen left Paris for New York in early 1923, having decided that he would devote all his energies to photography, but still uncertain as to how to earn a living with his talents. He would soon become the society photographer of New York and Hollywood and, over the next fifteen years, actors and actresses, film directors, playwrights, athletes, novelists, poets, dancers, politicians and statesmen would pose for him. Amongst these influential figures were the Hollywood stars who helped define the fashions of the day. In 1938 *Vogue* declared that Hollywood 'is certainly the most perfect visual medium of fashion propaganda that ever existed'.

Steichen learnt to photograph with the printed page in mind, knowing his images would be raw material for the art director – to crop, often significantly, put in decorative 'frames', be juxtaposed with drawings and combined with typography. But rather than seeing these strictures as an affront, Steichen strived to create a new, hybrid art form for the page. In a pre-television era, he was working in the 'media' of the moment.

Steichen believed that photography was a new kind of art form whose potential was only beginning to be realised: not only a means of mass communication, but also a medium full of expressive possibilities. He made more than a thousand celebrity portraits for *Vanity Fair*. No other archive of its type can match it in scope and in quality.

## *Make Vogue a Louvre.*

Edward Steichen, 1926

Steichen was as prolific for *Vogue* as he was for *Vanity Fair*, producing many thousands of fashion photographs during the 1920s and 1930s. He photographed the creations of all the major fashion houses: Worth, Poiret, Lelong, Lanvin, Chanel, Vionnet, Schiaparelli, Augustabernard, Molyneux and Patou. The garments featured in the exhibition – from couturiers such as Chanel and Vionnet – illustrate the template of the modern wardrobe; including the slip dress, loose-fitting coat, sportswear, the bias-cut, and the little black dress.

Steichen photographed evening gowns, coats, hats, shoes and jewellery with equal élan, which pleased *Vogue's* editor-in-chief, Edna Woolman Chase. He could rapidly assess a garment's strengths and knew how to construct his sets to mirror and enhance them. He took his work seriously, insisting on signing his fashion pictures even though Condé Nast had proposed he make them anonymously to protect his reputation as an artist. As Steichen's great friend and brother-in-law Carl Sandburg said of him, 'He sees as many aesthetic values in certain shoe photographs for *Vogue* as in photographs of roses and foxgloves'.

Steichen's very first fashion photographs for *Vogue* seem slightly hesitant. Rapidly, however, Steichen's Pictorialist sensibility gave way to the bold lines and diagonals of Art Deco, and the photographer remained true to this aesthetic to the end. The fashion garments recall these same aesthetics, with long horizontal lines, stylised motifs and decorative chevrons represented throughout. As chief photographer at *Vogue* and *Vanity Fair* for fifteen years, he proved how art and commerce were not always antithetical; indeed, they had fertile common ground. It is no exaggeration to say that modern fashion photography began with Edward Steichen, and that the template for the modern wardrobe was established in the Art Deco period.

## *Commercial pressure is an amazing product*

Edward Steichen, 1938

Edward Steichen (1879–1973) is one of the most prolific, influential and controversial figures in the history of photography. An incessant innovator, he applied his talents to portraiture, the nude, landscape, cityscape, flowers, dance, theatre, fashion, advertising and war. Between the two world wars he revolutionised fashion photography while becoming known as 'the most famous portrait photographer in the world'.

When Steichen was offered one of commercial photography's most prestigious and lucrative posts, that of chief photographer for *Vogue* and *Vanity Fair*, the authoritative fashion and society magazines published in New York by Condé Nast, he came to the task well prepared. As an accomplished photographer, Steichen had mastered the art of portraiture, and as a versatile practitioner of other media, he brought the skills of painter and printmaker to his new tasks.

From 1923 to 1937 he photographed models in garments by the finest couturiers, including Callot Soeurs, Jeanne Paquin, Madeleine Vionnet, Jeanne Lanvin and Gabrielle 'Coco' Chanel. These garments set the tone for a new century, establishing the template for modern dressing. Bodies were lean,

## *ctive force.*

boyish and athletic, and a new style of clothing emerged called sportswear, which had less to do with sport and more to do with leisure. In came simplified garments for slim figures and cuts for fast, savvy living. In the 1920s dresses slipped easily over the head, loose and comfortable to suit a more active lifestyle. For evening they were covered in sequins and beads that shimmered and sparkled as the wearer moved. In the 1930s the short, loose silhouettes of the 1920s lengthened into figure-hugging, bias-cut silhouettes, retaining comfort and ease, while the stylised and geometric motifs reflected the Art Deco style.

*Edward Steichen and Art Deco Fashion* showcases the glamorous high fashions of the Art Deco era through a comprehensive selection of Steichen's photographs from the Condé Nast archives, together with more than forty garments and accessories from the collection of the NGV. These stunning costumes reveal the treatments and textures captured in Steichen's photographs, and include important examples from the most prominent fashion houses of the time. This exhibition presents a world first in marrying Steichen's defining photography with important couture garments of the era.

**Self-portrait with  
photographic paraphernalia,  
New York**

1929

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# For Kids

From 1923 Edward Steichen worked for fourteen years as the main photographer for two very well-known glossy magazines. He was very good at his job and many famous people wanted him to take their photos.

Why do you think famous people like to have their photographs in magazines?

**Actress Jetta Goudal wearing  
a satin gown by Lanvin**

**1923**

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York



# Actress Doris Kenyon wearing fashion by Callot

1923

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

In 1923 Steichen was offered one of the most prestigious positions in photography's commercial domain, chief photographer for Condé Nast's influential and glamorous magazines *Vanity Fair* and *Vogue*. His early fashion photographs were in the Pictorialist style, and he used soft focus and the easy elegance of the model's sinuous curved pose to create a romantic picture of femininity and fashion.

**Madame Nadine Varda  
wearing a crêpe evening  
gown by Chanel**

**1924**

**gelatin silver photograph**

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**Model Dinarzade in a dress  
by Poiret**

1924

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**Model Dinarzade wearing  
a crêpe de chine dress by  
Lanvin**

**1924**

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**Actress Alden Gay wearing  
an evening dress by Chanel**

1924

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**Actress Lucile Watson in the  
play *The Far Cry***

1924

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**Actress Helen Lyons wearing  
a gown embroidered with  
crystal beads and an ostrich  
feather scarf**

**1924**

**gelatin silver photograph**

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# Marion Morehouse wearing an evening gown by Chanel

1924

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

Steichen photographed models in garments by major couture houses, including Callot Soeurs, Jeanne Paquin, Madeleine Vionnet, Jeanne Lanvin, Elsa Schiaparelli and Gabrielle Chanel. These garments set the tone for a new century, establishing the template for modern dressing: simplified garments for slim figures in easy combinations and cuts for swift, savvy urban lifestyles.



**Model wearing a pair of  
Perugia slippers**

1924

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**Model wearing fashion  
by Molyneux**

**1925**

**gelatin silver photograph**

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# Actress Joan Clement

1924

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

During his first year at *Vogue*, Steichen continued to photograph in his long-time signature style, established as a Pictorialist portrait photographer. He did, however, modify his use of a single light source and took the light levels down considerably, using deep shadows to signify sophistication and glamour.

**Actress Betty Blythe wearing  
a crêpe dress by Lenief  
and a straw picture hat by  
Maria Guy**

**1924**

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**Model wearing evening  
sandals and a wrap by  
Drecoll; male model wearing  
shoes by McAfee**

**1926**

**gelatin silver photograph**

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# Tamaris with a large Art Deco scarf

1925

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

In Paris in 1925, the Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes heralded the arrival of Art Deco. Steichen readily embraced the aesthetics it inspired, often photographing clothing covered in bold abstract designs. In this example he also made use of a stylised 'modern' backdrop painted by artist Sonia Delaunay. When published in *Vogue*, this image carried a caption that read, 'Although these garments started as an amazing eccentricity of the mode, they have come to be regarded as a striking, but accepted version of summer chic'.

**Marion Morehouse in a dress  
by Chéruit, in Condé Nast's  
apartment**

1927

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

Marion Morehouse was a professional model and Steichen's muse during the time that he worked for Condé Nast. She embodied the 'new woman' – confident, emancipated and stylish – the epitome of the *Vogue* reader.

**Tippin Pero, Gertrude Clarke  
and Madame Lassen wearing  
dresses with the 'feeling of  
Paris couture', at Bergdorf  
Goodman**

**1928**

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York



**Actress Alice Brady dressed  
for the play *Sour Grapes***

**1926**

**gelatin silver photograph**

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**Marion Morehouse wearing a  
dress by Lelong and jewellery  
by Black, Starr and Frost**

**1925**

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**Actress Alma Rubens wearing  
fashion by Louiseboulanger**

**1925**

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**Actress Ina Claire wearing  
fashion by Louiseboulanger,  
in Frederick Lonsdale's play  
*The Last of Mrs Cheyney***

**1925**

**gelatin silver photograph**

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# Princess Youssouppoff

1924

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

Princess Youssouppoff was a member of the Russian royal family, and from 1920 she lived in exile in France. Once in Paris, she and her husband established the fashion house Irfé. Steichen's photograph of Youssouppoff is a stylish portrait of a thoroughly modern woman.

# In the Realm of Négligée, Martha Lorber and Marion Morehouse

1926

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

'This is the key to modern fashion photography. The fashion showed very clearly, but the picture offered something far more important: an image of a woman at her most attractive moment.'

Alexander Liberman, Art Director, *Vogue*

**Model wearing a black tulle  
headdress by Suzanne Talbot  
and a brocade coat with  
black fox collar**

1925

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

In the 1920s and 1930s, the chic modern style of the Art Deco period dominated fashion and fashion photography. Dance dresses in clashing colour combinations, reflective silvers, metallic threads and sequins and glowing lamé evening cloaks appeared as sumptuous graphic elements in photographs illustrated in magazines such as *Vogue* and *Vanity Fair*.

**Actress Carlotta Monterey  
wearing a diamond head  
bandeau by Cartier and  
a white ermine wrap with  
a white fox collar**

**1924**

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York



**Actress Gertrude Lawrence  
as Pierrot in André Charlot's  
play *Mignonette and  
Maiden-Glow***

1924

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

At *Vanity Fair*, Steichen made portraits of the personalities of the day. New York was the centre of American performing arts and stars of the stage were popular figures. In the early 1920s, stage actors and dancers were photographed more often than film actors. Gertrude Lawrence was a popular theatre star in London and on Broadway.

# Dancer Margaret Severn

1923

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**Dancer Gilda Gray as  
a Javanese dancer**

**1923**

**gelatin silver photograph**

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**Actor Walter Hampden  
as Cyrano**

**1923**

**gelatin silver photograph**

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**Actress Mary Eaton from  
the Follies**

**1923**

**gelatin silver photograph**

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**Mrs Fal de Saint Phalle in a  
costume by William Weaver  
for the Persian fête at the  
Plaza Hotel**

1924

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**Actor Morgan Farley as  
Clyde Griffiths in Theodore  
Dreiser's play *An American  
Tragedy***

1926

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# Evening shoes by Vida Moore

1927

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

As well as portraits and fashion photography, Edward Steichen also photographed advertising illustrations. Complex compositions, graphic styling and sophisticated lighting were hallmarks of his advertising work. Those same elements are used here to create a photograph of dancing shoes that seem to glow and sparkle like jewels.



**Actress Bessie Love dancing  
the Charleston**

**1925**

**gelatin silver photograph**

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# Dancers Leonore Hughes and Maurice Mouvét

1924

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

The looser, shorter dance dresses of the 1920s enabled women to move, and dance, with unprecedented freedom. Cabaret and nightclub dancer Lenore Hughes strikes a pose that not only shows the cut and delicacy of the fabric of her skirt to great effect, but also showcases new dance steps.

# For Kids

With bright light and dark shadows, Edward Steichen's dance photos show us interesting and beautiful movements of dancers. Choose one dancer and guess what sort of dance she is doing?

Does it look like ballet, rap, modern dancing or something else?

**Dancers Adele and Fred  
Astaire at the Trocadero Club  
1925**

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**Actress Pola Negri**

1925

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# Actress Helen Menken

1925

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# Actress Clara Bow

1929

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# Actress **Sylvia Sidney**

1929

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York



**Actress Norma Shearer  
in Ernst Lubitsch's film  
*The Student Prince***

1927

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# Actress Gloria Swanson

1924

gelatin silver photograph

The Sylvio Perlstein Collection

'At the end of the session [with Gloria Swanson], I took a piece of black lace veil and hung it in front of her face. She recognized the idea at once. Her eyes dilated, and her look was that of a leopardess lurking behind leafy shrubbery, watching her prey. You don't have to explain things to a dynamic and intelligent personality like Miss Swanson. Her mind works swiftly and intuitively.'

Edward Steichen

# For Kids

Edward Steichen created beautiful pictures of models and movie stars. He took these photographs for a magazine. Now they are in an art gallery. Do you think his pictures are art? Why?

# Actress Gertrude Lawrence

1929

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# Actress Joan Bennett

1931

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# Actress Joan Bennett

1928

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

In the latter half of the 1920s and early 1930s, as talking pictures took over as the most popular form of mass culture and entertainment, movie stars such as Joan Bennett and Anna Mae Wong were increasingly featured in the pages of *Vanity Fair*.

# Actress Anna Mae Wong

1930

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# Greta Garbo

1929

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

'When Garbo came in to pose for the *Vanity Fair* photograph, I asked her to sit on the chair. I said, "It's too bad we're doing this with that movie hairdo". At that, she put her hands up to her forehead and pushed every strand of her hair back away from her face... At that moment, the woman came out, like the sun coming out from behind dark clouds. The full beauty of her magnificent face was revealed.'

Edward Steichen



**French actor and singer  
Maurice Chevalier**

**1930**

**gelatin silver photograph**

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# Actor Gary Cooper

1930

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

As well as photographing actresses, Steichen also made portraits of the leading actors of both stage and screen for *Vanity Fair*. His images capture the characteristics associated with the stars of the day; Maurice Chevalier's legendary savoir faire, the fashionable style of William Haines and the sensuous presence of Gary Cooper.

# Actor William Haines

c. 1930

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**Marion Morehouse wearing  
a riding habit**

1927

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**Lee Miller wearing fashion by  
Chanel and a hat by Reboux**

**1928**

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**Models June Cox and Lee  
Miller on George Baher's  
yacht, wearing navy blazers  
and white flannel skirts**

**1928**

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**On George Baher's yacht.  
June Cox wearing unidentified  
fashion; E. Vogt wearing  
fashion by Chanel and a hat  
by Reboux; Lee Miller wearing  
a dress by Mae and Hattie  
Green and a scarf by Chanel;  
Hanna-Lee Sherman wearing  
unidentified fashion**

**1928**

**gelatin silver photograph**

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

An important change in fashion photography at this time was the use of outdoor locations. Today we almost expect to see fashion photographs taken outside the studio, but in the 1920s this was an innovation. The kinds of locations selected reflect changes in the activities that modern women engaged in: the new dance styles, work, sport and all kinds of outdoor activities.

**Belmont Racetrack, New York.  
In front, model wearing a hat  
and a wool coat by Lanvin.  
Left, model wearing a coat by  
Worth and a hat by Suzanne  
Talbot; the two other models  
wearing fashion by Molyneux  
1926  
gelatin silver photograph**

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

To complement her new lifestyle and activities, the modern woman required a whole new wardrobe. The modern coat, based on the flat construction and loose shape of kimonos, was an innovative addition to day wear. Steichen's glamorisation in this photograph of the lifestyle has a commercial imperative: to sell the outfits and accessories worn by the models.



# Actress Lili Damita

1928

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**Singer and actress**

**Louise Brooks**

1928

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

Louise Brooks was one of the great stars of the silent picture era, enjoying celebrity in America and internationally. She epitomises the liberated ways of the 'flapper' with her bobbed hair and make-up and by the 'man style' coat she is wearing.

**Model Jule André wearing  
fashion by Daisy Garson**

**1928**

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**Model Jule André wearing a  
dress by Vionnet and a toque  
by Reboux**

1927

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

'I felt that, when a great dressmaker like Vionnet created a gown, it was entitled to a presentation as dignified as the gown itself, and I selected models with that in view.'

Edward Steichen

**Marion Morehouse wearing  
a crêpe dress by Chanel and  
diamond cuff bracelets by  
Black Starr and Frost**

**1926**

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**Model Dorothy Smart  
wearing a black velvet hat  
by Madame Agnès**

**1926**

**gelatin silver photograph**

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**Actresses Norma and  
Constance Talmadge**

**1927**

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**Marion Morehouse in a dress  
by Louiseboulanger with  
jewellery by Mauboussin  
1929  
gelatin silver photograph**

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

During the 1920s, Steichen was part of a dynamic team that brought modernism to the pages of *Vogue* and *Vanity Fair* in America. As the magazines changed, so did Steichen's photography. From 1928, he increasingly simplified the settings in which he photographed fashion, favouring pared-back studio settings or the interiors of elegant modernist homes.



**Marion Morehouse wearing  
a dress by Chéruit and  
jewellery by Black, Starr  
and Frost, next to a piano  
designed by Steichen**

1928

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

'The greatest model I ever photographed was Marion Morehouse. Miss Morehouse was no more interested in fashion than I was. But when she put on the clothes that were to be photographed, she transformed herself into a woman who really would wear that gown or that riding habit or whatever the outfit was.'

Edward Steichen

**CONDÉ NAST PUBLICATIONS, New York**  
American, established 1909–

**Vogue**

March, 1926

Magazine: colour photo-offset lithograph,  
typesetting

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**CONDÉ NAST PUBLICATIONS, New York**  
American, established 1909–

**Vogue**

November, 1925

Magazine: colour photo-offset lithograph,  
typesetting

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

The cover illustration showing women applying make-up first appeared in the 1920s. While evidence of wearing make-up once implied vulgarity, in the 1920s black kohl and mascara, thinly drawn eyebrows and heart-shaped, deep-red mouths had become synonymous with elegance and confidence. Theatre and movie stars were used to promote beauty products and putting on powder and lipstick in public represented the ultimate in sophistication.

**CONDÉ NAST PUBLICATIONS, New York**  
American, established 1909–

**Vanity Fair**

June, 1926

Magazine: colour photo-offset lithograph,  
typesetting

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**CONDÉ NAST PUBLICATIONS, New York**  
American, established 1909–

**Vogue**

June, 1929

Magazine: colour photo-offset lithograph,  
typesetting

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**CONDÉ NAST PUBLICATIONS, New York**  
American, established 1909–

**Vogue**

August, 1928

Magazine: colour photo-offset lithograph,  
typesetting

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**(FRANCE / BELGIUM)**

**Bag**

c. 1930

glass, marcasite, metal, acetate (lining)

Purchased, 2005

2005.406



For day, a flat slim bag was worn under the arm or held in the hand. For evening, bags were smaller, glamorous and tactile in sequins and beads. Day or night, the flat bag could be pressed against the wearer's outfit in order to add a graphic jewel to their ensemble, as in Steichen's Model wearing evening sandals and a wrap by Drecol, 1926.

# CONDÉ NAST PUBLICATIONS, New York

American, established 1909–

## Vogue

January, 1931

Magazine: colour photo-offset lithograph,  
typesetting

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**CONDÉ NAST PUBLICATIONS, New York**  
American, established 1909–

**Vogue**

March, 1931

Magazine: colour photo-offset lithograph,  
typesetting

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

The exotic aesthetic of African art became a popular source of inspiration for many Art Deco artists. This highly stylised cover illustration by Eduardo Garcia Benito is suggestive of an African mask. In the 1920s and 30s, masks became popular to collect, and the influence of their bold, abstracted design had far-reaching influence on the decorative and graphic arts of the period.

**(ENGLAND)**

**Bag**

**1922-26**

**silk, glass beads**

Private Collection of Shag, Melbourne

In 1922, Howard Carter's discovery of Tutankhamen's tomb spurred a craze for Egyptian motifs on fashion, decorative arts and design. Here, stylised lotus flowers in vivid colours stem from a central medallion citing the influence of Egyptomania. Classical scrolls and fringing at its base call to mind the classical influences of the Art Deco period.

**Edward Steichen America's  
foremost photographer**

c.1935-6

# EDWARD STEICHEN & ART DECO FASHION

**Fashion labels**

Room 2



# **CHANEL, Paris** fashion house

1914–39, 1954–

## **Gabrielle CHANEL** designer

France 1883–1971

### **Dress**

1924

silk, glass beads

Purchased, NGV Foundation, 2013

In 1926, *Vogue* likened Chanel's little black dress to the Model T Ford. Both were reflective of an approach to design and living that focused on speed, efficiency and elegance. Clothes were designed to move. Chanel's dress slid easily over the uncorseted body. 'I wanted', wrote Chanel, 'to give women comfortable clothes that would flow with her body'. In black, it not only cited the new urban uniforms of shopgirls and professional men, investing it with sobriety and gravitas, but also remained chic, flattering, seductive and mysterious. Its staggered vertical-beaded ribbons reflected Art Deco's characteristic geometric stylisation.

The headpieces and accessories on the mannequins in this exhibition have been designed by Marion Boyce and Gareth Blaha

# **J. F. TAILOR & SON, Bristol milliner**

active 1920s

## **Hat**

c. 1924

straw, metallic thread, feathers, silk, metal wire

Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of David Syme & Co. Limited, Fellow, 1977      D92-1977

The first years of the 1920s saw the most eclectic variety of hats. Broad-brimmed hats were typically straw, but could also be covered in gold lamé, lace and feathers in order to add glamour and lustre.

# (ENGLAND)

## Hat

c. 1925

silk net, straw ribbon

Gift of Miss Irene Mitchell, 1975

D8-1975

The golden tape-lace *Hat* combines two head forms. The Russian *kokoshnik* merges with the shape of the turban. The crown-like headdress, which was introduced by Russian émigrés into Paris following the Bolshevik Revolution, gave its shape to the tiara of the 1920s and was often sewn onto turbans, toques and cloches of the period. In the 1920s movie stars and celebrities wore the turban repeatedly. Pulled low over the forehead, turbans framed dark, heavily made-up eyes, enhancing the glamour and seductive appeal of movie stars such as Gloria Swanson and Pola Negri.

# FRANCE

## Evening coat

c. 1925

silk, metallic thread, rayon (lining)

The Schofield Collection.

Purchased with the assistance of

a special grant from the Government of Victoria, 1974     D235-1974

The flat forms of modern garments provided broad panes for extravagant patterns. Textile design became increasingly bold, with technology evolving the potential for textile patterns. The loose cut of this coat flaunts a fabric of woven golden-stylised flowers over printed naive floral motifs. *Tamaris with large Art Deco scarf, 1925*, shows Steichen embracing these same aesthetics.

# **MADELEINE VIONNET, Paris**

couture house

est. 1912

**Madeleine VIONNET** designer

France 1876–1975

## **Evening dress**

1924

silk tulle, metallic thread, silk and metallic thread lamé

Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of David Syme & Co. Limited, Fellow, 1977 D20.a-b-1979

Couturier Madeleine Vionnet's client stated, 'Once on, the clothes moved. They were very easy to dance in'. Vionnet's designs were suited to the popular dances of the time, such as the Foxtrot, the Waltz and the Tango, which were characterised by long, continuous flowing movements by partners in unison. Tear-shaped scallops gradually increase in size from the shoulders towards the hem, resulting in a full skirt for easy movement. Each scallop features an embroidered stylised rose in metallic thread, a favourite motif of the designer and a recurring motif during the period.

## (ENGLAND / FRANCE)

### Dress

c. 1926

silk, glass, diamanté, metallic thread, glass beads, metal, cotton

Purchased, 1971

D158-1971

Popular dances in the 1920s included The Black Bottom and the Charleston. These dances were considered immoral and provocative due to their exaggerated gestures. Short clusters of loosely-strung beads are applied to the bodice of this *Dress* to tremble with movement. The skirt is given fullness and swing with the insertion of triangular godets and curvaceous ribbons of glittering beading through the hips and centre front.

## (FRANCE)

### **Tabard**

c. 1924

silk, glass beads, gelatin sequins

Gift of Miss Vivian Pearl, 1968

1565-D5

This *Tabard* repeats a geometric pattern that anticipates the design of the Chrysler building completed in 1928. A mosaic of silver beads over midnight blue sequins evokes the upwards movement of the skyscraper, reflecting the era's obsession with constructed symbols of industrial progress.



## **(FRANCE)**

### **Dress**

c. 1927

silk, gelatin sequins, glass and plastic beads

The Schofield Collection.

Purchased with the assistance of

a special grant from the Government of Victoria, 1974      D253-1974

The energy and exuberance of new dances like the Charleston and The Black Bottom could be expressed easily in the loose, short fashions of the day. In the skirt of this *Dress*, tear-shaped paillettes are applied in vertical ribbons, each by a single thread, to quiver and gently tinkle as the wearer moved.

# **(ENGLAND)**

## **Dress**

c. 1925

silk, rayon, cotton, gelatin sequins, glass beads

The Schofield Collection.

Purchased with the assistance of

a special grant from the Government of Victoria, 1974     D246-1974

The Art Deco style traversed art and design, with a modernist preference for geometric lines and stylised motifs. It revered the machine while remembering tradition. It cited avant-garde movements Cubism, Fauvism, Futurism and Constructivism, while representing a life of speed and celebration of industry with diagonal and rectilinear lines. Surfaces shimmered in reflective textiles or clashed in loud colours, as in this dress with stylised pink-sequined roses spliced within black and silver chevron, below a bodice of shimmering silver diamantés.

**(ENGLAND)**

**Shoes**

c. 1925

leather, linen, metallic thread, metal

Gift of Dr Norman Wettenhall, 1968

1571.a-b-D5

## **For Kids**

In the 1920s many people loved to dance. Evening dresses were decorated with sequins, gold threads and beads. This made them sparkle and the women stand out when they danced. What do you wear when you dance?

**FRANCE**

**Evening dress**

1925

silk, metallic thread, glass beads, diamantés,  
gelatin sequins

Gift of Mrs Gordon Landy, 1983

CT33-1983

**MARSHALL AND SNELGROVE,**  
**London manufacturer and retailer**  
**1848–1973**

**Evening dress**

c. 1925

silk, gelatin sequins, glass beads

The Schofield Collection.

Purchased with the assistance of a special grant  
from the Government of Victoria, 1974

D234-1974

# UNITED STATES

## Shoes

c. 1935

silk, metallic thread, leather, metal buckle

Gift from an anonymous Estate, 1984

CT17.a-b-1984

# **JAUNTÉE PLAYTIME HATS,**

**California** milliner

active 1920s

## **Cloche**

c. 1928

rabbit fur felt, synthetic (lining), cotton

Gift of Miss Anne Ross, 1983

CT29-1983

The cloche is probably the most iconic hat of the 1920s. Typically made of straw, fabrics and especially felt, the high bulbous crowns lent themselves to experimentation with pleating, beading, embroidery, appliqué and trimming. Here, brown velvet ribbon is woven through yellow felt to create a decorative motif. Soft, hugging cloches reflected the casualness and ease of 1920s dressing.



**TRÉVELL** milliner

active 1920s

**Cloche**

c. 1925

straw, silk, wool, leather, cotton, metallic thread

Purchased, 1984

CT174-1984

# (ENGLAND)

## Dress

c. 1924

silk, glass beads, silk thread (embroidery)

The Schofield Collection.

Purchased with the assistance of

a special grant from the Government of Victoria, 1974    D231-1974

Couturiers Jean Patou, Jeanne Lanvin and Gabrielle Chanel were particularly well-known for their innovative sportswear. Chanel's separates commonly featured pockets that freed women from the burden of handbags. Often placed at the hips, the pockets promoted a wholly different stance – rounded back, sunken shoulders, outstretched neck and bent knees – which became known as the Chanel slouch. Lanvin also designed casual day dresses, as seen in Steichen's image *Model Dinarzade wearing a crêpe de chine dress by Lanvin, 1924*.

# **LABORDE & COMPANY, Paris**

fashion house

active 1920s

## **Coat**

c. 1927

wool, silk, resin, glass and diamanté buttons

Gift of Miss E. M. Anderson, 1963

471-D5

The vogue for outdoor activities saw couturiers produce ready-to-wear garments known as sportswear. Not necessarily worn for competitive activities, sportswear carried connotations of chic, leisure, the open air, relaxation and affluence. Many new fashions appeared at the racetrack. Photographs taken at the races were widely published and played an essential role in disseminating fashion trends.

# AUSTRALIA

## Coat

c. 1924

wool, silk/cotton (lining)

The Schofield Collection.

Purchased with the assistance of a special grant  
from the Government of Victoria, 1974

D230-1974

## **For Kids**

These clothes are designed to be worn during the day. They are not as fancy as evening clothes and are more relaxed and comfortable to wear. They might have been worn to horseraces or on a yacht at the beach. Can you find photographs of people wearing day clothes?

**(FRANCE)**

**Evening coat**

c. 1925

silk, metallic thread, viscose, linen (stiffening),  
cotton (padding)

The Schofield Collection.

Purchased with the assistance of

a special grant from the Government of Victoria, 1974      D240-1974

**(ENGLAND)**

**Evening cape**

c. 1924

silk crepe, silk velvet, cotton and cotton/wool  
(interlining), glass beads, diamantés, silk thread  
(embroidery)

The Schofield Collection.

Purchased with the assistance of

a special grant from the Government of Victoria, 1974      D250-1974

# **LANVIN, Paris** couture house

est. 1909

**Jeanne LANVIN** designer

France 1867–1946

## **Coat**

1926

silk, metal sequins

Private Collection, Melbourne

Art Deco fashion drew its inspiration from many sources, including the mythical Orient imagined in the costumes of the Ballets Russes and the fashions of Paul Poiret. The gold-sequined motifs on Jeanne Lanvin's Coat recall Chinese motifs, while their mounting on black taffeta may have drawn inspiration from Japanese lacquer cabinets.



# **PAQUIN, Paris** couture house

est. 1891

## **Madame Joseph PAQUIN** designer

France 1891–1956

### **Evening cloak**

1920 spring-summer

silk, metallic lace, silk/metallic thread, glass beads, gelatin sequins

Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of David Syme & Co. Limited, Fellow, 1979 D17-1979

Curator Jun. Kanai argues that Japanese dress was the basis of the modern Western wardrobe and that the kimono in particular, with its flat construction, loose shape and emphasis on textile design, heralded the modern coat. Here, examples by leading couturiers such as Jeanne Paquin and Callot Soeurs show evidence of the influence of the kimono in their loose-fitting cloaks and jackets. Art Deco designers were also heavily influenced by Japanese *ukiyo-e*, which were woodblock prints in stylised flattened forms. Their influence is evident in the application of stylised flattened motifs, particularly the rose.

# **CALLOT SOEURS, Paris**

couture house

1895–1937

**Marie CALLOT GERBER** designer

France c. 1870–1927

## **Evening coat**

c. 1924

silk lamé

Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of David Syme & Co. Limited, Fellow, 1979      D16-1979

Steichen photographed models in garments by major fashion designers, including Callot Soeurs, Jeanne Paquin, Madeleine Vionnet, Jeanne Lanvin, Elsa Schiaparelli and Gabrielle Chanel. In the history of fashion, this has been the only period when the majority of fashion houses were led by women.

# **BELGIUM**

## **Shoes**

c. 1925

silk, leather, glass button

Gift of Miss Nina Bagot, 1972

D97.a-b-1972

Shortened skirts led to greater attention on footwear. Shoes, which had previously been hidden under long skirts, took on a new visibility in the Art Deco period. Fashioned from luxurious textiles, accents of silver and gold were added to reflect the light, while the cross-bar strap allowed maximum comfort and mobility. This style of shoe continued into the 1930s with variation introduced through differing motifs, textiles or surface patterns.

# **DELMAN, London shoemaker**

est. 1919

## **Shoes**

c. 1937

silk, leather, metal buckle, diamantés

Gift of Miss Irene Mitchell, 1975

D40.a-b-1975

**BALL & WELCH, Melbourne retailer**

1855–1976

**C. F. BALLY & CO. LTD, Switzerland**

shoemaker

1907–99

**Evening shoes**

1930

leather, wood, cardboard, silk, metallic thread,  
gelatin sequins

Gift of Rowena Clarke, 1982

CT65.a-b-1982



# EDWARD STEICHEN & ART DECO FASHION

Photography labels

Room 2

**Filmmaker**  
**Josef von Sternberg**  
1931  
gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York



# **Actor Conrad Veidt**

1929

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# Bronx Zoo curator Raymond Ditmars

1932

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

*Vanity Fair* was the cultural vanguard of the Art Deco period. Its pages were filled with literary articles, avant-garde works of art and celebrity portraits of writers, poets, actors and politicians. It was a celebration of creative thinking. Among this erudite selection is a striking portrait of the curator of the Bronx Zoo, shown with one of the snakes in his care.

# For Kids

Edward Steichen created photographs of 'Great Men'. They included actors, politicians and writers. The man with a snake wrapped around his arm worked at a zoo.

Can you find clues about some of the other people and what they did?

**Writer H. L. Mencken**

1926

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**Writer H. G. Wells**

1931

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# **French writer Paul Morand**

1929

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# **Writer Sinclair Lewis**

1932

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# Poet William Butler Yeats

1932

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York



# French writer Colette

1935

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# Aviator Amelia Earhart

1931

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

*At Vanity Fair*, Steichen made portraits of the celebrities of the day. Amelia Earhart was a famous aviator. Steichen photographed her at the height of her fame, the year before she became the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean. Six years later she disappeared at sea while attempting to fly solo around the world.

# **Tennis player Helen Wills**

1929

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**Heavyweight boxing  
champion Jack Dempsey**

1926

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**Actor and playwright  
Noel Coward**

1932

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**Filmmaker King Vidor and  
his wife, the actress Eleanor  
Boardman**

1927

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# Actors Lynn Fontanne and Alfred Lunt

1931

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

In the 1920s, New York was the centre of the performing arts in America and stage actors were celebrity figures. Couple Lynn Fontanne and Alfred Lunt were Broadway stars of such renown that in 1933 Noel Coward wrote the play *Design for Living* for them to perform.

**Producer Irving Thalberg**

1927

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York



# **Actor Adolphe Menjou**

1925

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# **Actor Harold Lloyd**

1927

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**Singer Al Jolson**

1928

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**Actor Henry Hull in the play**  
***The Youngest***

1923

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**Actor W. C. Fields at the  
Ziegfeld Follies**

1925

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# **Playwright George S. Kaufman**

1930

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# Martha Graham in Primitive mysteries

1931

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

Photographing dancers enabled Steichen to work with subjects who understood the communicative possibilities of physical movement. Avant-garde dancer Martha Graham was a favourite subject of Steichen's. His description of working with her reveals a collaboration between photographer and sitter: 'Martha Graham comes up with ideas so fast it's hard to keep pace. She understood that I couldn't photograph her while she was dancing [so] she produced a combination of dancing, choreography, and heroic sculpture'.

# **Dancer Tilly Losch**

1930

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York



# **Actress Alla Nazimova**

1931

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# **Dancer Patricia Bowman**

1932

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# **Dancer Harriet Hoctor**

1932

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**Actress Fay Bainter in the  
Louis Verneuil's play *Jealousy*  
1928**

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# **Dancer Helen Tamiris**

1930

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**Actress Helen Lyons wearing  
fashion by Mado and  
jewellery by Marcus**

1929

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# **The Marchioness of Milford Haven**

1931

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**Marion Morehouse in a crêpe  
wrap with white fox collar by  
Augustabernard**

1929

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

‘Every woman de Meyer photographs looks like a model. You [Steichen] make every model look like a woman.’

Condé Nast, Publisher, *Vogue* and *Vanity Fair*



**Model wearing fashion  
by Schiaparelli**

1931

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**Princess Nathalie Paley  
wearing sandals by Shoecraft**

1934

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**Model wearing a dinner  
dress by Rose Clark and  
sandals by Premier**

1934

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# Actress Constance Bennett

1932

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

Hollywood studios hired fashion designers to produce the costumes worn in movies and to dress their stars. The influence of Hollywood fashion grew swiftly as women emulated the style of the silver screen stars, such as Joan and Constance Bennett and Mary Pickford.

# Model in a sequined gown

1933

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

In the 1930s the shorter silhouettes of the 1920s lengthened into figure-hugging gowns that combined an ease of movement with the stylised decorative motifs synonymous with Art Deco. Steichen's photography, for both *Vogue* and *Vanity Fair*, illustrated these trends in images that linked high-end fashion with ideals of glamour and sophistication.

**Model Peggy Boughton  
wearing a gown by Lelong  
and a necklace from Cartier**

1930

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

‘Good fashion models have the qualities inherent in a good actress, and the photographer is wise if he makes use of this ability by giving it a chance to work.’

Edward Steichen

# **Actress Mary Heberden**

1935

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# **Model in a dress by Chanel**

1932

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

Steichen often imbued the settings of his photographs with a sense of affluence and sophistication to complement the garments that he photographed. Each photograph in this group offers a glimpse of the 'high life'. In this image he has posed his model, wearing a gown by Chanel, nonchalantly in a Marcel Breuer chair, effortlessly pairing two avant-garde European designers of the period.



# **Actress Mary Pickford**

1934

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**Models wearing evening  
gowns**

**1933**

**gelatin silver photograph**

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**Marion Morehouse in a dress  
by Vionnet**

1930

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# **Marion Morehouse and unidentified model wearing dresses by Vionnet**

1930

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

The long dresses and sensual bias-cut of 1930s fashion highlighted the lean silhouette of glamorous sophistication. These elements are a feature in Edward Steichen's photography, while the fashion examples in this exhibition reveal the striking colour combinations popular at the time.

**Models Mary Taylor in a  
chiffon gown and Anne  
Whitehead in a moiré dress;  
mirrored stairway designed  
by Diego de Suarez**

1934

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

*Vogue* was the guide to elegance, and its photographs had to incarnate not only the latest trends in women's fashion, but also an entire lifestyle. Condé Nast, driven by an aesthetic sensibility, wanted to educate the tastes of readers on both sides of the Atlantic through the articles and photographs in his magazines.

# Composer George Gershwin

1931

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

George Gershwin was a well-known composer by the 1930s. From 1918 he collaborated with his brother Ira, who wrote lyrics, to write musical reviews, scores for musical stage shows and, later, movie musicals.

# **Conductor Leopold Stokowski**

1930

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# **Pianist Vladimir Horowitz**

1929

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York



# **Black: Model Margaret Horan in a black dress by Jay-Thorpe**

1935

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

'A Steichen photograph is first a study of light. The secret power of his work is in his instinctive knowledge of the exact moment when illumination fully reveals the subject.'

Alexander Liberman, Art Director *Vogue*

**Black: Model Frances Douelon  
in a black jersey gown**

1935

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**Actress Ilka Chase in a long  
moiré housecoat, jewellery  
from Black Starr and  
Frost-Gorham**

1933

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**Models Harriet Hamil and  
Eleanor Barry wearing  
dinner gowns**

1932

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**Actress Norma Shearer  
wearing an ermine coat by  
Hattie Carnegie**

1933

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# White (centre Gwili André)

1935

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

*White* was the key image illustrating an editorial piece on white garments and accessories featured in the 1 January 1936 issue of *Vogue*. For this photoshoot, which was in his New York studio, Steichen brought together the unlikely elements of a tiled wall, a sand floor and a large white horse with three elegantly dressed models in a Surrealist-inspired image. At this time the Surrealist influence could also be seen in the illustrated covers of *Vogue* and *Vanity Fair*.

# Mrs Robert Johnson in a coat with mink collar

1934

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

Steichen valued the input of his peers at *Vogue*, particularly that of fashion editor Carmel Snow. As he explained, 'I always felt grateful to Carmel Snow for the real interest she showed in fashion photography', and for showing him 'the essential fashion feature of each garment'. In this case this was the lustrous fur and undulating line of the collar, which he has highlighted with a striking graphic backdrop.

**Model Mary Oakes wearing  
a leopard fur coat by  
Revillon Frères**

**1933**

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York



**Model Mary Oakes wearing  
fashion by Jay-Thorpe**

1933

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# **Model Jane Powell in front of a Cadillac at 10 Gracie Square**

1935

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

Throughout the opening decades of the twentieth century, Steichen continued to be a prolific photographer, exhibiting and publishing his creative work as well as establishing himself as one of the most innovative commercial photographers of the day. Excited by the products of the modern age, seen here in the streamlined cars of the period, Steichen found that photographing fashion and advertisements offered unexpected creative opportunities. Indeed, as he declared in 1938, 'Commercial pressure is an amazing, productive force'.

**Mrs William Wetmore in a  
dress by Rose Amado and  
a bonnet by Sally Victor**

**1933**

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# **Model Elizabeth Blair in the Steuben Glass Shop**

1935

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**Model Betty McLauchlen  
in Carroll Carstairs Gallery**

1935

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# **Actress Rose Hobart in a dress by Henri Bendel at the St Regis Hotel**

1935

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

The different locations Steichen selected for his photographs were integral to the 'stories' he constructed in his photoshoots. As noted by photography curator Carol Squires, 'Well into his career in fashion photography, Steichen sought new locations, themes, and compositional strategies, photographing in smart New York art galleries, sleek modern apartments and chic hotels'.

# **Model wearing a straw hat by Reboux and jewellery from Mauboussin**

1932

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

To highlight the essential features of a garment or accessory, in this case hats, Steichen carefully considered his choice of backdrop. For a hat with a dramatic graphic line he selected a plain background, but for this intricately detailed hat by Reboux he used faceted mirrors so it can be viewed from all angles.

**Model wearing a tucked,  
black silk taffeta dress and  
an Agnès off-the-face taffeta  
hat**

1935

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York



**Mrs Walter Maynard wearing  
a blouse by Kargère and  
a hat by John-Frederics**

1933

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**Model Elizabeth Blair  
in a seersucker dress**

1934

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**Princess Nathalie Paley  
wearing a suit by Lelong and  
a hat by Reboux**

1934

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**Actress Gwili André wearing  
a hat by Rose Descat and  
jewellery from Tiffany**

1936

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York



**The renowned ballroom  
dancing team Antonio de  
Marco and Renée de Marco**

1935

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# Mexican-American actress Armida

1930

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

Steichen was a master of lighting, changing his approach to create new and beautiful effects. As he explained, 'For one whole year, I used daylight plus one light. Then gradually, added lights, one at a time, until, in the later years of my work for *Vogue* and *Vanity Fair*, there were lights going all over the place'.

# **Actor Leslie Howard**

1934

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York



# Charlie Chaplin

1934

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

'The Charlie Chaplin picture was made the second time I photographed him. When Chaplin arrived that afternoon, he was in a chipper, gay, and dancing mood.'

Edward Steichen

# For Kids

Edward Steichen liked to take portraits of actors and show us something about their personalities. In these photos who would you like to meet?

Do you have a question you would like to ask them?

# Actor Douglas Fairbanks, Jr

1933

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

In the 1930s, talking pictures became the most popular form of mass culture and entertainment. Consequently, film stars such as Douglas Fairbanks Jr and Lesley Howard were featured increasingly in the pages of *Vanity Fair*, as much for their celebrity lifestyles as for their movie roles.

# Marlene Dietrich

1934

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

Marlene Dietrich was one of the legendary movie stars of the 1930s. Her career began in Germany, but it was in Hollywood that she became renowned for her aura of glamour and sensuality. Steichen's photograph uses the dramatic lighting, seen in movies of the time, to highlight her striking features and seductive persona.

# Actress Joan Crawford in a dress by Schiaparelli

1932

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

Steichen's portraits of actors take advantage of his subject's capacity to project a particular character or attitude. His photograph of Joan Crawford for the October 1932 issue of *Vogue* embodies the cool glamour of the film noir characters that she was known for playing.

# **Actress Joan Bennett**

1935

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# Actress Loretta Young

1931

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

Steichen was an innovative portrait photographer. Using his considerable personal charm he worked with his subjects to get the best out of them. Describing this process, he wrote, 'Never let the sitter get bored, never let on that you are at a loss, even if you are. Ideas will come up as you work. Never lose control of your sitter. Keep moving. Keep taking pictures. Many of them. Then when you know you have it, stop'.

**Musical comedy actress**

**June Walker**

1928

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York



# **French actress Annabella**

1934

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**Actress Elisabeth Bergner  
in the play *Escape Me Never***

1935

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# **Actress Elissa Landi**

1933

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# **Actress Katharine Hepburn wearing a coat by Clare Potter**

1933

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

When magazines began to use movie stars in fashion photographs, Hollywood began to exert an influence on fashion trends.

Katharine Hepburn was a celebrated actress and Hollywood icon and in Steichen's photograph she is shown as a thoroughly modern woman: stylish, athletic and supremely confident.

# **Mexican actress Lupe Vélez**

1932

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# **Actress Lois Moran**

1933

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# **Actress ZaSu Pitts**

1930

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# **Actress Jeanette MacDonald**

1933

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York



**Actress Lillian Gish in the  
play *Within the Gates***

1934

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# Filmmaker Ernst Lubitsch

c. 1935

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**Conductor and composer  
Werner Janssen**

1934

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# Italian writer Luigi Pirandello

1935

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**New York City Park**  
**Commissioner Robert Moses**

1935

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# **Playwright Eugene O'Neill**

1934

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**Author and diplomat**

**Harold Nicolson**

1933

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# **Actor Paul Robeson**

1930s

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York



**Heavyweight boxing  
champion Primo Carnera**

1934

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# **Actor Louis Hayward**

**1935**

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# Model posing for 'Beauty Primer' on hand and nail care

1934

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

In keeping with the ideals of the 'new photography', Steichen used sharp focus, dramatic light and shadow, and unexpected compositions. He developed fashion photography for the machine age, albeit a breathtakingly beautiful and elegant version.

# **Model wearing sandals**

1934

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# On the *Lurline*, to Hawaii

1934

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

A combination of increased leisure time in the 1920s and 1930s alongside the development of theories of hygiene saw more people spending more time outdoors. 'Sportswear' carried connotations of chic, leisure, the open air, relaxation and affluence. Edward Steichen's stunning photography for *Vogue* and *Vanity Fair* captured it all.

# **Actress Miriam Hopkins**

1933

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**Actor Douglas Fairbanks Jr  
and his wife, the actress  
Joan Crawford**

**1931**

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# Olympic diver Katherine Rawls

1931

gelatin silver photograph

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

Olympic diver Katherine Rawls was photographed for the 1 September 1932 issue of *Vanity Fair*. This striking modernist picture uses the compositional elements of 'new photography' and perfectly shows the tight-fitting one-piece swimsuits worn for sport and leisure.



**CONDÉ NAST PUBLICATIONS, New York**  
American, established 1909–

**Vogue**

January, 1936

Magazine: colour photo-offset lithograph,  
typesetting

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# CONDÉ NAST PUBLICATIONS, New York

American, established 1909–

**Vogue**

June, 1937

Magazine: colour photo-offset lithograph,  
typesetting

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**CONDÉ NAST PUBLICATIONS, New York**  
American, established 1909–

**Vogue**

July 1932

Magazine: colour photo-offset lithograph,  
typesetting

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

Edward Steichen produced the first photographic cover for *Vogue* in 1932. It featured a tanned figure with a beachball, which became the symbol of the new type of athletic, active, healthy woman.

# CONDÉ NAST PUBLICATIONS, New York

American, established 1909–

**Vogue**

1937

Magazine: colour photo-offset lithograph,  
typesetting

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**CONDÉ NAST PUBLICATIONS, New York**  
American, established 1909–

**Vogue**

July 1932

Magazine: colour photo-offset lithograph,  
typesetting

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

Edward Steichen produced the first photographic cover for Vogue in 1932. It featured a tanned figure with a beach ball, which became the symbol of the new type of athletic, active, healthy woman.

# CONDÉ NAST PUBLICATIONS, New York

American, established 1909–

## Vogue

January, 1935

Magazine: colour photo-offset lithograph,  
typesetting

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York



**CONDÉ NAST PUBLICATIONS, New York**  
American, established 1909–

**Vogue**

March, 1934

Magazine: colour photo-offset lithograph,  
typesetting

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

By the mid-1930s, photography dominated the covers of *Vogue*. Photography, which had already established its presence inside the magazine, was now seen as the best way to communicate its contents. According to *Vogue*'s publisher Condé Nast, the cover, 'Should serve as an eloquent barker on behalf of the show that goes on within the pages of the magazine'.

# CONDÉ NAST PUBLICATIONS, New York

American, established 1909–

## Vanity Fair

March, 1934

Magazine: colour photo-offset lithograph,  
typesetting

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**CONDÉ NAST PUBLICATIONS, New York**  
American, established 1909–

**Vogue**

November, 1932

Magazine: colour photo-offset lithograph,  
typesetting

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

# CONDÉ NAST PUBLICATIONS, New York

American, established 1909–

**Vogue**

August, 1932

Magazine: colour photo-offset lithograph,  
typesetting

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York

**CONDÉ NAST PUBLICATIONS, New York**  
American, established 1909–

**Vogue**

January, 1932

Magazine: colour photo-offset lithograph,  
typesetting

Condé Nast Archive, Condé Nast Publications, Inc., New York



# EDWARD STEICHEN & ART DECO FASHION

**Fashion labels**

Room 1



# **CALLOT SOEURS, Paris**

couture house

1895–1937

**Marie CALLOT GERBER** designer

France c. 1870–1927

## **Dress**

c. 1925

silk, glass beads, metallic thread

Gift of Martin Kamer, 2013

Callot Soeurs had exhibited at the 1925 Paris Exposition with oriental-inspired garments using striking colour combinations and oriental motifs. Such unusual colour combinations had been adopted by couturiers following the Ballets Russes' first performance in Paris in 1909, and Callot Soeurs was particularly renowned for their modern application. The boldly coloured strap work combines neoclassical with oriental influences.

# **SELMA KEMP, New York**

fashion house

active c. 1934– c. 1943

## **Dress**

c. 1937

rayon tulle, acetate, metallic/cotton ribbon

The Schofield Collection.

Purchased with the assistance of a special grant  
from the Government of Victoria, 1974

D481-1974

# AUSTRALIA

## Evening dress

c. 1930

silk, metallic thread, cotton, rayon

The Schofield Collection.

Purchased with the assistance of a special grant  
from the Government of Victoria, 1974

D255-1974

# (ENGLAND)

## Dress

c. 1935

silk, resin and enamel on metal buckle

The Schofield Collection.

Purchased with the assistance of a special  
grant from the Government of Victoria, 1974

D258.a-b-1974

The Motion Picture Code of 1930, commonly known as the Hays Code, forbade undue exposure of flesh in an effort to shape society's moral standards. This may be one of the reasons that the deep V-front and back necklines of the 1920s became used exclusively as a back detail on dresses in the 1930s. Steichen's photographs often highlight the sensuality of women's backs and the back details of their dresses. *Actress Constance Bennett, 1932*, shows a deep V-back neckline framing the sitter's back.

# AUSTRALIA

## Evening dress

c. 1935

silk

Gift of Miss Irene Mitchell, 1975

D29-1975

In the 1930s long horizontal lines, curving forms and absence of ornament were designed to evoke visual speed. In this *Dress* colourful stripes are manipulated into sunburst sprays, while its overtly feminine form is retained through bias-cut panels.

**(ENGLAND)**

**Evening dress**

c. 1935

silk

Gift of Mrs V. Askew, 1988

CT27-1988

Historian Christian Esquevin argues that Hollywood films reintroduced sex appeal into Parisian fashion following the boyish fashion of the 1920s. Yet it was the application of Vionnet's bias-cut to Hollywood gowns that timeless cinema styles were created. In the 1930s, fashionable dresses became both figure-hugging and floor-length. The combination of Parisian techniques and Hollywood glamour helped shape the most influential fashion role model and silhouette of the decade, which became known as the Hollywood Line.

## **For Kids**

In the 1930s lots of people in America and Australia discovered how much fun it was to go to the movies. Cinemas were called picture palaces and talking movies had just been invented. People began trying to dress like their favourite movie stars. Do you know anyone who dresses like a movie star?

## **(ENGLAND)**

### **Dress**

c. 1927

silk

The Schofield Collection.

Purchased with the assistance of

a special grant from the Government of Victoria, 1974      D254-1974

This indecisive handkerchief hemline peaks and dips, hinting at the floor-length hemlines that would become fashionable in the 1930s. Its light chiffon flutters easily with movement. Perfect for the Tango, it combines a floral-printed textile with geometric-triangle insertions, lined with horizontal tucks. The combination of floral and geometric motifs was characteristic of the Art Deco style.



**Edgar-William BRANDT** designer

France 1880–1960

**VERRERIE DE NANCY, Nancy**

manufacturer

France 1878–1925

**Temptation, standard lamp**

***La Tentation, torchère***

c. 1925

glass (etched), patinated bronze

Bequest of Mrs Joan Henderson (Vickie) Monks  
in memory of Victor and Hilda H. Climas, 1998

1998.256.a-b

**(ENGLAND)**

**Evening coat**

c. 1927

silk velvet, metallic thread, silk charmeuse (lining)

Gift of Judy Rutherford, 2011

2011.440

# **(FRANCE)**

## **Tippet and muff**

c. 1935

fur (colobus monkey), silk crepe, silk (braid),  
resin clasp

Gift of Jana Purcell, 2012

2012.159.a-b

Hollywood starlets wore garments with a strong bold shoulder line, narrow waists and slim hips. Shoulders were emphasised with the capelet, prettily perched over the evening or afternoon dress; and, in jackets and coats, the shoulder line became more fiercely delineated. Another means of emphasising the shoulders was with the tippet, a decorative wrap worn over a tailored suit or dress to add drama and colour. This tippet and muff is made from monkey fur, dyed acid turquoise to dramatic effect.

## For Kids

Some items of clothing had very special names.

A *muff* kept your hands warm on cold days.

A *tippet* is a big collar that sits over your shoulders.

What is the unusual material they are made from?

**FRANCE**

**Jacket**

c. 1933

silk, gelatin sequins

Purchased NGV Foundation, 2012

2012.260

# Jacques-Emile RUHLMANN

designer

France 1879–1933

## **Tivo, chair**

c. 1918

Macassar Ebony (*Diospyros discolor*), wood,  
ivory, velvet, other materials

Purchased, NGV Women's Association, 2008

2008.97

## **Lady's writing desk**

***Bureau de dame***

c. 1920

Macassar Ebony (*Diospyros discolor*), wood,  
ivory, silver electroplate, silk tassels

Purchased with the assistance of

the NGV Women's Association and Paula Fox, 2007

2007.709.a-d

# **MADELEINE VIONNET, Paris**

couture house

est. 1912

**Madeleine VIONNET** designer

France 1876–1975

## **Coat**

1936–38

wool, cotton, enamel on metal button

Gift of Mrs A. G. Pringle, 1982

CT185-1982

These bold geometric lines are characteristically Art Deco with the green enamel button providing a jewel at its neckline. Steichen's image of actress Gwili André features accompanying millinery of peaked triangles, which shows a novel application of Art Deco's geometric forms.

# FRANCE

## Coat

c. 1938

rayon/silk velvet, silk (lining)

Gift of Mrs A. Varcoe-Cocks, 1968

1847-D5

In April 1936, *Weldon's Good Taste* wrote, 'The dinner dress and the *robe de cinema* is ankle length, opening from neck to hem to reveal a foundation of different colour'. This *Coat* may be a *robe de cinema*, reflecting the social activities and pastimes that led to different types of dressing. In the United States in 1930, an average of eighty million viewers attended the cinema every week. The coat's chevron effect, created from the vertically striped fabric, cites a strong Art Deco motif.



# **ASBURY MILLS, New York**

manufacturer

1920–60

**Annette KELLERMAN** designer

Australia 1887–1975, worked in England and  
United States 1904–70

## **Swimsuit**

c. 1920

wool, shell button

Purchased, 2002

2002.184

The combination of increased leisure time in the 1920s and 1930s alongside developing theories on health saw more people spending more time outdoors. One of the most significant developments occurred in swimwear. Annette Kellerman, an Australian champion swimmer, wore the men's multi-piece stretch jumpsuit as it offered increased speed and comfort in the water. By 1920, Astbury Mills had begun producing the wool-knit maillot, a tight-fitting one-piece swimsuit with tank-style top and high-cut legs. It was marketed as the Annette Kellerman and dominated swimwear.

## **For Kids**

People had free time to play and swim at the beach in the 1920s and 1930s. These bathers were made from knitted sheep's wool. They were itchy and became baggy and heavy when they got wet. How are they different to the bathers you wear?

**JANTZEN KNITTING MILLS,**  
**Portland manufacturer**  
1918-54

**Swimsuit**  
1921  
wool, cotton

Purchased, 2004

2004.565

**(FRANCE)**

**Beach pyjama**

1930s

silk

Australian National Maritime Museum

Beach pyjamas were said to be inspired by the wide-leg cut of men's sailor pants and appeared at beaches and casinos in 1929. Ridiculed, sung about, and prohibited by the Church, pyjamas were finally accepted when they were overtly feminised. By 1931, *Vogue* declared they could be worn to formal dinners and even the theatre and were adapted into evening wear by fashion designers such as Elsa Schiaparelli.