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Book of Abstracts

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This publication contains the abstracts of the papers which will be presented at the Second International Cristóbal Balenciaga Conference, to take place at the Cristobal Balenciaga Museum (Getaria) on 2 and 3 October 2025. These papers represent a selection of 24 proposals, from among the 63 received, made by a Scientific Committee of recognized experts in the field according to the double blind method.

The objective was to guarantee the presentation of rigorous, quality papers and to place the study of Cristóbal Balenciaga in the field of academic research. Given the importance of Balenciaga, the selected proposals come not only from the field of fashion history, but also from other fields of study such as, for example, economy, communications, and the arts considered in their widest sense.



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I am a designer and researcher with a passion for tailoring, couture craftsmanship, artisanal textiles and local manufacturing. I studied Business and European Studies at the University of Technology, Sydney, then worked in Europe before returning to Australia to study fashion design at The Sydney Institute of Technology. After developing my independent womenswear label, I moved to Cambodia, where I established an artisanal boutique and developed an in-house programme dedicated to teaching young women pattern cutting and garment construction skills. In 2019, I moved to London where I joined the MA programme at London College of Fashion and received a Distinction for my research into how European haute couture pattern cutting and garment construction techniques were adapted by manufacturers in postwar Australia. I am now excited to build on this research and rejoin UTS for my PhD project commencing November 2024.

Cristóbal Balenciaga and Australia: Importing, Reproducing and Adapting Balenciaga Couture in Sydney, 1938-1968

Soon after establishing his business in Paris, Balenciaga was embraced by the Australian fashion press and details of each collection were promptly relayed back to receptive audiences in Sydney, Melbourne and other regional centres. These enthusiastically descriptive reports were often accompanied by photographs or illustrations and Australian women did not have to wait long before they could see and buy Balenciaga garments for themselves as models were imported and reproduced in Australia from as early as 1939.

This research aims to explore the relationships that existed between Balenciaga and his Australian licensees including independent couturiers and department stores, with their in-house ateliers, from a technical perspective. The paper begins with an overview of these relationships, describing how Balenciaga was introduced and presented in the Australian press in both editorial and advertising, before continuing with in-depth case studies of selected garments to demonstrate how Balenciaga's pattern cutting and garment construction techniques were replicated or adapted in Sydney.

A central theme of this research is the transmission, through migration, of European haute couture technical skills to Australia in the early to mid-twentieth century. In 1934, Vera Fels emigrated to Sydney from Paris and established a couture salon under the name *Germaine Rocher*, making authorised reproductions and adaptations of Parisian models. Germaine Rocher became one of "Sydney's most successful purveyors"¹ of couture until the 1960s; employing sixty dressmakers, including some recruited directly from the house of Lelong and later Mainbocher in Paris², and earning a "reputation for creating couture garments similar to, and as good as, couture garments commissioned in Paris."³ Fels travelled back to Europe biannually to buy from several couture houses, but there was something special about her connection with Balenciaga and they enjoyed a long business relationship, with Fels often choosing to wear Balenciaga

when presenting her seasonal collections of original Paris imports alongside adaptations made in her atelier.

To gain a deeper understanding of how the high level technical skill for which Balenciaga was renowned was replicated or adapted not just outside of the Balenciaga atelier but on the other side of the world and in a nascent industry, a small number of garments will be closely analysed and compared then reverse engineered to demonstrate the pattern cutting and garment construction techniques employed in their creation. Study garments include a late 1960s Balenciaga tailored coat (A9077) and a reproduction by Germaine Rocher (89/9), both in the Powerhouse Museum collection; as well as a 1950s Germaine Rocher cocktail dress (A6261) that imitates the distinctive princess line cut and use of contrasting fabrics in Balenciaga's satin evening dress (CBM 06.2002).

By examining, documenting and comparing the pattern cutting and garment construction techniques employed in the creation of Balenciaga couture in Paris and Sydney and by placing these garments in their social and historical context from a *maker's* perspective, this paper highlights the essential role played by skilled workers in the practice of licensing couture, the transfer of skills through migration as well as offering a glimpse into a little known but fascinating professional relationship.

- 1 Roger Leong, "Sydney's Most Fashionable Europeans," in *The Europeans: Emigré Artists in Australia 1930 - 1960*, ed. Roger Butler (Canberra: National Gallery of Australia, 1997), 210.
- 2 'Former Employee Restrained,' *The Sun*, December 9, 1936, 15, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article230898591>
- 3 Louise Mitchell, "The Fabulous Fifties: Glamour and Style," in *Australian Fashion Unstitched: The Last 60 Years* by Bonnie English and Liliana Pomazan (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 29.

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Dr Anabela Becho is a fashion historian, curator, researcher and lecturer based in Lisbon, Portugal. She has a PhD in Design (specialising in fashion), a master's and a degree in Painting, and a graduation in Fashion Design. She is a professor of Fashion Design Criticism at the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Lisbon and has extensive experience in museology in the fashion field. She writes about fashion and art and has collaborated with several publications: *Expresso*, *Electra*, *Vogue*, *Relance*, *Elle*, *Blitz*, among others. She regularly presents her research at international conferences. She is the author of the exhibition and book *Viver a sua Vida, Georges Dambier e a Moda / Vivre sa vie, Georges Dambier et la mode* (Direção Geral do Património Cultural 2022), several articles and book chapters, including "Kindred Spirits: The Radical Poetry of Japanese and Belgian Designers", *Fashion Game Changers Reinventing the 20th Century Silhouette* (Bloomsbury 2016). Recently, she published the article "Suspending Time: Matter and Memory in Madame Grès' Pleating Technique", *Fashion Theory* (Taylor & Francis, 2024).

Balenciaga and Grès: Exploring the Form

"We can say that there is a Balenciaga silence, but I think there is a real Grès mystery."¹

Despite the unique identity of each of the designers, this paper aims to show that Cristóbal Balenciaga and Madame Grès had many moments of rapprochement, both in the chronology of events and in the strongly authorial practice that characterized them. 1937 was a milestone for both: the already mature Cristóbal Balenciaga opened his Parisian couture house and presented his first collection in Paris. That year, the context of Parisian fashion was the scene of relevant events, culminating in the success of the Pavillon de l'Élégance at the Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne; for Grès, still Alix, 1937 was also a decisive year marking her destiny indelibly, professionally and personally. The French designer presented two dresses and showed an impeccable technique and the ability to make women dream and fly as the butterflies applied to the skirt of one of the dresses. Lepidoptera is considered a symbol of transformation, renewal and change, but they also remind us of the delicate beauty of impermanence. The butterflies on Alix's 1937 dress are like an announced metamorphosis, in which the couturier was reborn as Grès in 1942. Balenciaga was also reborn in Paris, which served as the stage for his experimentations in sculptural form that would become more daring as the decades passed. *Excelsior Modes* (n° 34, Winter 1937-38) published a double page entitled "Deux robes a danser"; one of the dresses is by Alix, the other by Balenciaga. The series of photographs by Arik Népo is an ode to movement: the performative nature of these flowing dresses represents Balenciaga and Grès' artistic connection. The Chambre Syndicale de la Couture Parisienne made every effort to allow couture to pursue the activity during the Occupation; despite several interventions by Lucien Lelong, in January 1944, the Germans demanded the temporary closure of the houses Balenciaga and Grès. Madame Grès had a sculptural approach to

fabric, a more intuitive process than the methods used by Cristóbal Balenciaga, who relied on and tended to emphasise the geometry of the cut. Balenciaga worked his patterns on black canvas to better focus on form. Grès' Black pieces are like a shadow of her white dresses, with more blurred and abstract contours but no less complexity. In addition to her famous draped gowns, the whole of Madame Grès' work has a sculptural approach, namely in cuts and volumes. With a pioneering spirit, Grès anticipated some of Cristóbal Balenciaga's experimentation (like 1947 semi-fitted), for example, in the "suit with a fitted jacket at the front and loose at the back from Grès"² (*Silhouettes*, October 1943, n° 178), with the coat having a front closely following the body and a loose, draped back. Many times, even given the complexity of the cut and contemporaneity of the construction, Balenciaga and Grès' creations find resonance in contemporary fashion, namely in Japanese designers such as Yohji Yamamoto and Rei Kawakubo. After Balenciaga's closure in 1968, maison Grès expanded to five ateliers, adding professionals from two ateliers (one tailleur and one flou) coming from the Spanish designer couture house.

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¹ "On peut dire qu'il y a un silence Balenciaga, mais je pense qu'il y a un vrai mystère Grès." Becho, interview with Laurence Benaïm, September 2018.

² "Tailleur à veste ajustée devant et ample derrière de Grès."

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Campagnol is a historian specialized in fashion and textile history. From 2006 to 2014 she has been the curator of the Rubelli Historical Collection and Archives, in Venice, Italy. She joined Istituto Marangoni, Milan, in 2015 where she currently teaches History of Fashion. She is the author of: *Style from the Nile. Egyptomania in Fashion from the 18th century to the contemporary*, Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2022; *Invisible Luxuries. Forbidden Fashions in Venetian Monasteries from the 15th to the 18th Century*, (Costume Society of America Series), Lubbock : Texas Tech University Press, 2014. *New York Times* review: www.nytimes.com/2013/09/24/fashion/Fashion-in-the-Venetian-Convents-of-Old

Balenciaga & Italy. The Influence of Cristóbal Balenciaga on Italian Fashion in the 1950s and 1960s

In the 1950s, Italy was slowly recuperating after the tragedy of World War 2. The economy was being rebuilt and the reconstruction of the fashion system constituted an important part of the recovery. The fashion shows promoted in Florence by Giovan Battista Giorgini played a crucial role in presenting the new Italian designers to the internal and external markets: since 1952, thanks to the Sala Bianca events, names like Jole Veneziani, Simonetta, Fabiani, Sorelle Fontana, Carosa, Emilio Pucci and the Tessitrice dell'Isola, rapidly achieved international recognition.

Italian fashion magazines illustrated their new creations, but, side by side on their pages, the latest designs of French couturières, like Christian Dior, Pierre Balmain, Gabrielle Chanel and Cristóbal Balenciaga could also be seen.

The aim of this research is to investigate how the innovative designs and silhouettes created by Balenciaga in the 1950s and 1960s were presented in Italy by the fashion press and how much its influence shaped the creations of the emerging Italian designers of the time, both from the point of view of the aesthetic and/or of the materials: the essentiality of the Fabiani designs or certain sculpted volumes that stood away from the body of Simonetta creations appear very much Balenciaga-inspired.

Crucial sources in this study are the Italian fashion magazines of these two decades: among them, the most influential were *Arianna*, *Bellezza*, *Mensile dell'alta moda e di vita italiana* — a very sophisticated magazine founded in 1941 by the "father" of Italian design, Gio Ponti — *Grazia*, and *Novità* (which in 1964 became *Vogue & Novità*, and then *Vogue Italia*).

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Dr. Kimberly Chrisman-Campbell is a fashion historian, curator, and journalist based in Los Angeles. She is the author of *Fashion Victims: Dress at the Court of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette* (Yale, 2015), *Worn on This Day: The Clothes That Made History* (Running Press, 2019), *The Way We Wed: A Global History of Wedding Fashion* (Running Press, 2020), *Red, White, and Blue on the Runway: The 1968 White House Fashion Show and the Politics of American Style* (Kent State University Press, 2022), and *Skirts: Fashioning Modern Femininity in the 20th Century* (St. Martin's Press, 2022). She has written about fashion, art, and culture for *The Atlantic*, *The Washington Post*, *Politico*, *Slate*, and *The Wall Street Journal*. She is currently writing a biography of Chester Weinberg, supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities Public Scholars program.

Chester Weinberg, Balenciaga's American Disciple

Though virtually forgotten today, Chester Weinberg was one of the leading American designers of the 1960s and 70s alongside the so-called "Three Bs" of Seventh Avenue: Beene, Brooks, and Blass. But the most influential "B" in Weinberg's career was Balenciaga, who became a friend and mentor as well as a fashion inspiration.

Weinberg first encountered Balenciaga's work in 1952, when he began traveling to Paris to sketch the couture shows as a young design assistant. It was their mutual friend, Swiss textile designer Gustav Zumsteg of Abraham Ltd., who finally introduced them some years later. Zumsteg, Balenciaga's longtime collaborator, probably encouraged Weinberg's admiration for his work, just as he tutored Weinberg in art collecting. Within the postwar fashion industry, gay men like Zumsteg, Weinberg, and Balenciaga frequently formed discreet personal and professional networks; Weinberg looked to the older men to help him navigate life as a gay man in an era when even the fashion world kept homosexuality firmly in the closet.

When Weinberg launched his namesake label in 1966, his early collections included Abraham fabrics and Balenciaga-like tailored suits, trapeze dresses, and oversized "poster" prints, which translated the master's bourgeois chic for a youthful American clientele. "Paris, except for Balenciaga, is vacant for me," Weinberg confessed at the time. "I've gone to Paris for many years, but none there has the authority to start me thinking. Except Balenciaga — I feel a similarity in his thinking."

Like Balenciaga, Weinberg was a designer's designer. He shared Balenciaga's belief that a good couturier had to be an architect, a sculptor, a painter, a musician, and a philosopher. In addition to their work and art collecting, Chester and Cristóbal shared a love of travel — and the freedom that came with it. In 1971, Weinberg spent time with him in Greece as guests of Zumsteg, who chartered a yacht there each summer. "The

way he responded to antiquity was amazing," Weinberg remembered. "He was like a present-day extension of what we were looking at."

Givenchy, for one, refused to believe that the trip had taken place; Women's Wear Daily publisher James Brady was similarly baffled, remarking that Weinberg "must have something, since he was taken up by Cristóbal Balenciaga in the master's later years and Balenciaga had little time for young men whose only qualifications were their bright blue eyes and smooth complexions." Weinberg did not have blue eyes, in fact, but he did have "something" Balenciaga recognized: talent. Unfortunately, that talent was ultimately overshadowed by questionable business and personal decisions Weinberg made after Balenciaga's death in 1972.

This paper will introduce Weinberg's Balenciaga-influenced work and trace the forgotten roots of their surprising friendship.

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Graduated in Art History from the University of Murcia, where he completed the Master's Degree in Research and Management of Historical-Artistic and Cultural Heritage. He received a Collaboration Grant from the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MEFP), carried out in the Department of Art History of the aforementioned university during the 2022/2023 academic year. Currently, he is a PhD student in the Doctorate program in History, Geography and History of Art: Society, Territory and Heritage at the University of Murcia, with a dissertation titled *Stitching the Scene: Cristóbal Balenciaga and Costume Design for Film and Theater*. His most recent publications explore intersections between fashion and cinema, including *Building icons. Fashion designers and costume design in the 60s cinema: Chanel, Givenchy and Saint Laurent*, published in Issue No. 3 of *Revista Alejandría*.

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Cristóbal Balenciaga Under the Lens of "No-Do": From Avoidance to Propaganda

The portrayal of Francoist Spain largely originates from the image created by *No-Do*, the audiovisual project responsible, for nearly forty years (1943-1981), for shaping the country's public image with a common ideological narrative, the viewing of which was obligatory when attending the cinema. Fashion, in this context, took up a significant portion of *No-Do*'s footage and was framed within what was termed as "soft news," which covered topics that appeared to be non-conflictive or harmless to the hegemonic discourse of Francoism. In most cases, fashion was presented in a mocking tone, from a frivolous and caricatured perspective, questioning its role in society. It is also important to note that the female body, and by extension its attire, was defined by a series of constant symbolic-moral arguments, clearly linked to sexuality and the gender-based dominance that society exerted over women.

Cristóbal Balenciaga possessed all the key elements to serve as a reference for the image of modernity that Franco's government sought to project: international presence, representation of Spanishness, conservative stance, Catholicism, discretion in political opinions, and collaboration with the elites of the time. However, the regime did not use his figure to reinforce the idea of national identity it aimed to create. This is evidenced by the limited information provided about him by such a prominent indoctrinating medium as *No-Do*, which only references the designer in one of its issues (Not. 1.629B, 1974), where his work and career are greatly praised in connection with the exhibition *El mundo de Balenciaga* (1974).

The main objective of this research is to analyze the guidelines that constituted the approach that *No-Do*, through the newsreel and the *Revista Imágenes*, gave to fashion in relation to the Basque couturier Cristóbal Balenciaga (1895-1972). These audiovisual documents allow us to know not only his context, but also the evolution that his image underwent over the years. Thus, it is crucial to identify the patterns characterizing his appearances in the newsreel — in most cases

expressly omitted — to clarify why the regime did not develop a laudatory narrative around the couturier as it did with creators from other fields, such as Picasso or Miró, even when they were openly opposed to the regime. Along these lines, a series of secondary objectives have been specified to facilitate the achievement of the main objective. Within this section, the professional relationships that he established with the elites of Francoist society have had to be considered, as well as the role he played in the development of haute couture. In this sense, we also wanted to provide a perspective related to personal issues that, as we maintain in this research, were a point of disagreement with the dominant moral values and the reason that presumably led to the *No-Do* screens systematically avoid mentioning the designer until his death.

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Chiara Faggella

Lund University, Sweden; Syracuse University, Florence

Chiara Faggella is a fashion historian focusing on Italy's fashion industry and its postwar trans-European connections. She was a Visiting Fellow at the European University Institute of Florence in 2019-2020 and a Research Fellow at the Politecnico di Milano in 2021-2022. From 2013 to 2022 she was an adjunct lecturer in fashion studies at Stockholm University. She currently teaches Italian fashion culture at Lund University, Sweden, and Syracuse University, Florence. She recently collaborated on the *Salvatore Ferragamo 1898-1960* exhibition and catalog and co-edited the volume *L'Italia al lavoro* with Paola Cordera (2023). Her upcoming book *Becoming Couture: The Italian Fashion Industry after the Second World War* is published by Manchester University Press.

Cristóbal Balenciaga in Florence: The Forgotten Legacy of Couture Copies

Italian fashion history tends to focus on designers and brands who achieved international fame in various moments of the twentieth century. Not much research has been done on the Italian copyist dressmakers, called 'model houses' by the press and commercial buyers, specializing in reproductions and adaptations of French couture. Since their histories did not contribute to the promotion of Made in Italy fashion, their presence was often overlooked, and with it the material traces left by their businesses.

Their stories, however, testify to the skills and abilities of the dressmakers and their employees, to the functioning of a business with trans-European connections and loyalties, and to the preferences of local customers in an emerging fashion country like Italy. This research project investigates the existence and characteristics of the numerous Balenciaga copies produced by the most prestigious dressmakers in Florence, Italy, between the 1940s and the 1960s.

Unbeknownst to many, the forgotten biographies of several dresses and gowns lying in the storage of the Museum of Costume and Fashion at Palazzo Pitti in Florence speak of the love felt by Italian women for French couture and, in particular, for the Cristóbal Balenciaga's creations. The acquisition of a portion of the late Liana Bertolli's wardrobe by the Museum serves as a springboard to reflect on the presence and persistence of Balenciaga creations in the private fashion shows held at Florentine dressmaking establishments. A standout item from this collection — a polka dot dress believed to be a Balenciaga creation — serves as a focal point for exploring the relationship between Florentine dressmakers and French haute couture. Oral histories add a further layering to the discovery that Bertolli and her fellow acquaintances admired many more Balenciaga creations during the private fashion shows held by elite Florentine ateliers.

The research is enriched by a deep dive into the Sorelle Chiostrì Archive at Biblioteca Riccardiana

in Florence. While a few lucky customers could afford original couture garments, even if only at a seasonal sale, the designs of many copies and adaptations were originally obtained as paper patterns. The latter was the preferred choice for the dressmaker Sorelle Chiostrì, whose archive of sketches and drawings was recovered thanks to the fortuitous purchase by a local antiquarian.

As the copies would often be exhibited during the Florentine social season and photographed for glamorous editorials, both Italian and international press clippings will constitute part of the sources foregrounding the study.

The variety of archival, oral, and documentary sources will reconstruct Balenciaga's influence in post-war Florence, the reception of his creations on the Italian market, and whether the ability to reproduce his creations shaped the skills of Florentine dressmakers in the long run. Ultimately, the research project reclaims the overlooked contributions of Florentine dressmakers and repositions their work within the broader history of 20th-century couture, revealing the hidden transnational impact of Balenciaga's legacy, transcending national borders and shaping the evolution of Italian craftsmanship in postwar Europe.

Dr. Daniele Gennaioli

Professor of Fashion History and Coordinator of the Fashion Department at UDIT University. His PhD thesis in Arts and Social Sciences from the Polytechnic University of Madrid focuses on the relationship between Spanish fashion and American magazines during the Franco regime, especially during the years of *desarrollo*. He published several contributions in academic journals such as *ZoneModa Journal*, *Historia Contemporánea*, and *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies*.

Dr. Tommaso Mozzati

Associate Professor at the Dipartimento di Lettere of the University of Perugia, he was a fellow at the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence, Mias-Casa de Velázquez in Madrid, the Metropolitan Museum of New York, and Villa I Tatti-The Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies. His research focuses on Spanish cultural policy between the Sixties and the Seventies, during the years of *desarrollo*: on this topic, he published several articles in international art history journals, such as *Archivo Español de Arte*, *Sculpture Journal*, and *Met Bulletin*.

The World of Balenciaga: Reconstructing the Spanish Contribution to the 1974 Exhibition

In 1972, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York ("the Met") appointed Diana Vreeland as special consultant of the Costume Institute. Aged 69, she left behind a long career in the editorial world, which began in 1937 as fashion editor for *Harper's Bazaar*. Just a few months after her appointment, her proposal to hold a major retrospective dedicated to the wardrobe of the Duke of Windsor would fail. As a result, the former *Vogue* editor-in-chief mobilized an influential network of European contacts to organize *The World of Balenciaga*, the first of twelve exhibitions she curated until 1984, in less than a year and made her debut at the MET. The retrospective opened on March 23, 1973. The iconic garments of the late designer from Getaria were presented in a spectacular display along the rooms of the New York institution.

Already in 1974, the exhibition was restaged in Madrid (from February 20 to April 5) at the *Palacio de Bibliotecas y Museos* (Palace of Libraries and Museums), one of the most official spaces available to the *Dirección General de Bellas Artes* (General Directorate of Fine Arts). This was a consequence of the huge success of the Met show. Immediately after its opening, Spanish authorities thought about transferring it to Madrid, according to widespread trend in the cultural policies of the *Ministerio de Educación Nacional* (then, *Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia*) between the 1960s and 1970s. The proposal was supported by the *Círculo de Escritores de la Moda* (Fashion Writers Circle), an independent group that included figures such as journalist Pilar Comín. The presidency of the exhibition was entrusted to Carmen Polo de Franco, confirming the institutional relevance of the event.

Moreover, a *Comité de Damas* (Ladies' Committee) was created as a support group for the exhibition's organization. Thanks to its efforts, a selection of paintings from the Prado Museum, as well as works from private collections, were displayed alongside Balenciaga's dresses. The aim was to offer a more complex idea of *hispanidad*,

according to a trend that, along the *desarrollo* years, reclaimed the pantheon of national artistic glories for the country's modern times and projected an updated image of Spain abroad. Likewise, the documents related to the exhibition declare that Balenciaga should be presented as an "universal artist [...] one of the most distinguished Spaniards of all time."

Analysing *El mundo de Balenciaga* and its resonance thanks to unpublished materials from the *Archivo General de la Administración* (General Archive of the Administration), this contribution will explore how an event originally conceived for an American audience was reinterpreted for a Spanish public.

Dr. Sofia Gnoli

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Sofia Gnoli is an Associate Professor at IULM University in Milan, where she teaches the History of Fashion, Sociology of Events and Creative Industries Archives. She is also a member of the PhD in Visual and Media Studies Committee. She writes for *Repubblica*, *La Stampa*, *Il Venerdì* and *Vogue Italia*. Curator of historic archives including that of Federico Forquet. Fashion consultant for TV documentaries as *Moda: una rivoluzione italiana* (Sky Original, 2024). For the *Parco Archeologico del Colosseo* she curated the exhibition *Rara Avis. Moda in volo alle Uccelliere Farnesiane*. Among her publications: *Moda. Dalla nascita della haute-couture a oggi* (Carocci, 2020), *The Origins of Italian Fashion 1900-1945* (V&A Publishing, 2014). Her main research interests are fashion studies, fashion history, fashion and communication, sociology of fashion, heritage, and fashion journalism.

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Balenciaga's Heritage in Italian Fashion. The Federico Forquet and Roberto Capucci Cases Between Aesthetics and Marketing

The aim of this research is to explore the enduring heritage of Spanish couturier Cristóbal Balenciaga and its profound impact on post-World War II Italian fashion, both in terms of aesthetics and marketing. This study examines how Balenciaga's architectural approach to fashion, characterized by sculptural proportions and clarity of form, deeply influenced prominent Italian couturiers, from Mila Schön and Simonetta to Roberto Capucci.

Drawing on archival resources from the Federico Forquet Archive and the Roberto Capucci Foundation, the research highlights Balenciaga's direct mentorship of Federico Forquet, who worked as his assistant for three seasons. Forquet's designs reflect Balenciaga's aristocratic and architectural aesthetic, as well as his commitment to couture. Like Balenciaga, Forquet chose to preserve the integrity of his artistic vision rather than embrace prêt-à-porter, maintaining a focus on handcrafted, exclusive pieces and preserving their vision of elegance over commercial expansion.

From a marketing perspective, the research delves into how Balenciaga's heritage reshaped the concept of exclusivity in fashion by emphasizing artisanal craftsmanship and intimate, private presentations. This strategy contrasted with the more public runway shows of the time and influenced some Italian designers to adopt a similar approach, positioning their brands as symbols of luxury and personal attention to detail. This concept of exclusivity and personalization has strongly resonated with Italian fashion marketing, where many brands still focus on the idea of artisanal luxury and a storytelling centered on attention to detail and uncompromising quality.

This study, apart from documentary sources, relies on the relevant literature on fashion history and fashion marketing. It contributes to a deeper understanding of how Balenciaga's legacy shaped the development of Italian couture and luxury branding in the postwar period.

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Alexandra Handjian

Independent researcher, Paris

I am the daughter of Michèle and Armand Handjian. They worked both in the fashion industry in the 60s. I grew up among fabrics and collection. My father was the founder of a prêt à porter de luxe house in Paris in 1956. My mother was a model for haute couture houses from 1956 starting with Bruyère to 1966 with Ungaro and Courrèges and specially Balenciaga from 1959 to June 1963. I got a Master of Business Management in 1992 from la Sorbonne and a certificate of Sustainable Business Management from the University of Cambridge Institute in 2024. And I worked as a private banker for 25 years.

The purpose of my research and my paper is to share the light on the work and life of the models that make "rendre vivant" enliven Balenciaga creations and ideas. Although Balenciaga garments are well known, women who was modelling are invisible. I want to highlight their stories back to the 60s and the friendship life in the cabin.

Models of the 60s at Maison Balenciaga Couture in Paris: Life and Testimonies

The purpose of this research is to highlight the working conditions of the "cabin models" and their role in the development of Balenciaga's brand in Paris and abroad. In other words, my objective is to make "the invisible visible" by naming some of them.

I will provide an analysis of the professional experience of 4 of them: Michèle, Sabine, Monique and Anna who were cabin models between 1959 and 1963 at Balenciaga Couture. They were in their 20s.

The document will go through their lives from outside the cabin to their experiences in the Balenciaga Maison de couture. It will cover the following sections:

I. Who Are They?

This section will provide detailed information about their biography.

- How and why did they turn to be models in the 60s? Family stories and background?
- Why did they apply to be a model at Balenciaga Couture?
- Testimony of Anna E. and souvenirs of Michèle S., Monique R. and Sabine N.
- What remains of their professional life at Balenciaga? How do they view this period?

II. Professional Skills and Working Conditions

This section will provide insights on what was expected from them at the Maison de Couture.

- What was the job of a cabin model? How were Balenciaga models different?
- How did the recruitment process work? Were there specific recruitment criteria? who was in charge? Did Cristóbal Balenciaga intervene during this process?

- What was the daily life of a cabin model?
i.e wages, hours, expectations, interaction with other departments: salesperson, dresser, sewing workshops and the “Direction”: Mr Esperza, Mademoiselle Renée and Cristóbal Balenciaga, himself.
- Focus on some internal special events, as for example, “Catherinettes” tradition for the unmarried woman turning 25 years old,
- What was the place of the “star” models: who were they? How were they selected and were there differences with other models in their daily working conditions? How were they perceived by the other cabin models?

III. Cabin Models as Critical Assets to the Development of the Brand Outside Paris

This section will show how the cabin models played an essential role in the development of the Balenciaga brand outside Paris and France.

Famous photographers like Tim Kublin or Cecil Beaton, who were close friends of Balenciaga, used to shoot Balenciaga’s models in beautiful outfits. Some of these pictures are still online and used in Photo books as the last one in tribute to Kublin. This section will provide some insights on:

- What was Balenciaga view about photography?
- How did the models perceive the shooting exercise? How were the photos valued in their career?
- How did the photographers influence the professional career of cabin models?

They all have been so proud to act as cabin model for Cristóbal Balenciaga. No need to say that the 4 of them kept an eternal positive souvenir of their young years spent avenue Georges V.

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Katrín María Káradóttir

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Katrín María Káradóttir is formally educated in tailoring and dressmaking and she also studied fashion design in Paris where she gathered professional experience with houses such as John Galiano and Lutz Huelle. Katrín is a slow fashion pioneer in Iceland and won the Indriði Award in 2013 for her work at ELLA, awarded by the Icelandic association of fashion designers for quality and excellence. She has 20 years' experience in teaching, holds a MA degree in Arts Education and in her research focuses on crafts, sustainability and higher education. Katrín is currently a Professor at the Iceland University of the Arts in Reykjavík where she teaches fashion design and history of fashion.

"Transmissions" and Iceland University of the Arts

This paper examines Cristóbal Balenciaga's influence through the educational initiative *Transmissions*, in the context of the philosophy and values underpinning the fashion program at the Iceland University of the Arts (IUA). The *Transmissions* project has provided students and educators with a unique opportunity to engage with Balenciaga's material techniques, particularly his innovative approach to cutting and sewing, offering valuable insights into his legacy. Amidst the global environmental crises driven by overproduction, Balenciaga's philosophy of craftsmanship and quality of materials leads to sustainability that stands in stark contrast to the principles of fast fashion, making it especially relevant in contemporary discourse.

A key focus of this paper is the exploration of the tacit knowledge, values, and craftsmanship inherent in Cristóbal Balenciaga's garment-making — skills that are deeply appreciated by IUA students. The research inquires how Balenciaga's legacy continues to resonate with IUA students and faculty, influencing their own practices and perspectives on fashion. In addition, I reflect on my own practice-based experience as an educator in the program, analysing how the lessons learned during the Balenciaga workshops have informed and improved my teaching methods.

The paper also highlights the exemplary efforts of the Cristóbal Balenciaga Museum in making its archives accessible to students, allowing them to learn from the master's groundbreaking work and innovations. Rather than keeping his techniques shrouded in secrecy, the museum fosters the dissemination of Balenciaga's knowledge, adding to the magic and mystique of his work. This open exchange enriches students' understanding and encourages them to aspire to mastery — not only for career success but also for the intrinsic satisfaction of excelling in their craft, in the spirit of Balenciaga's uncompromising dedication to excellence.

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David E. Lázaro

The Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut

David E. (Ned) Lazaro is the Associate Curator of Costume and Textiles at the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art in Hartford, Connecticut. He holds a master's degree in fashion and textile history from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Ned has researched, published, lectured, and taught on various aspects of dress history from the seventeenth through twentieth centuries. His research focuses on design history, the aesthetics of fashion, and identity formation.

Wearing Balenciaga: Two Connecticut Clients

This talk proposes to contextualize the ownership of several garments, now in the collection of the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, Connecticut, designed by Cristóbal Balenciaga (1895-1972) and worn by two American women. Dresses, suits, coats, and hats dating to the 1950s and 1960s from both the designer's Spanish and French houses are discussed and compared to other, known couture clothing and higher-end ready-to-wear examples worn by Emily Hall Tremaine (1908-1987) and Bluma Bassevitch (1909-1990). The resulting analysis provides insight into the wardrobes of two artistically minded clients with ties to the state of Connecticut and, more central to this symposium, suggests a framework for ownership of Balenciaga and EISA clothing in the American northeast. The designer's creations figured prominently in a "uniform" for both social and business obligations for these women and were often worn beyond their debut season.

Emily Hall Tremaine lived in New York City, but had a summer home in Madison, Connecticut. She and her husband became avid collectors of modern art. Long a customer of haute couture, her wardrobe mirrored the international life she led, with examples from Lelong, Vionnet, Fortuny/Nigrin, and Fath; all worn between the late 1920s and the mid-1950s. Beginning in the mid-1950s Tremaine began buying designs from Balenciaga, and are the most numerous, surviving garments she wore through the mid-1960s. Into the later 1960s and 1970s, she wore designs by Andre Courrèges, Hannae Mori, and Halston.

Bluma Rose Bassevitch lived in West Hartford, Connecticut in a modernist home designed and built by Robert Carroll May (a student of Frank Lloyd Wright) in 1954, and furnished in part with textiles designed by Dorothy Liebes (1897-1972). Here she pursued her interest and passion as an artist. Her wardrobe included four EISA garments (two sack dresses and two suits) and a Balenciaga pillbox-style hat. Bassevitch was also a customer of other Parisian couture houses,

such as Jacques Griffe. She supplemented her more limited couture wardrobe with designs from higher-end American ready-to-wear designs by Pauline Trigère, Bonnie Cashin, and Adele Simpson.

For this client-centered, place-based approach to the study of Balenciaga, I draw upon heretofore little-studied material culture and archival papers at the museum, primary and secondary research on the two wearers, and important, published secondary sources written by scholars in the past 20 years on haute couture in general and Balenciaga in particular.¹ This paper's unique perspective centers on the context for adoption of Balenciaga garments into the wardrobes of two American women during a time of great social and sartorial change, thereby offering a more nuanced view of the designer's US customer base at the same time as his own design aesthetic was evolving.

¹ A partial bibliography includes *Fashion Theory* 25, Vol. 4 (2021); Cristóbal Balenciaga Museoa, *Balenciaga*. Paris: Editions du Regard, 2011; and several published works by authors Lesley Ellis Miller, Véronique Pouillard, and Alexandra Palmer.

Dr. José Ángel Medina Murua

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José Ángel Medina Murua is Design Profesor in the School of Architecture of the Universidad de Navarra, since 2006. He also has been involved in the Direction of this School as Dean, between 2012 and 2015, and as Vicedean since 2023. He has been lecturer in different Universities as Politécnico de Monterrey, México, PUCE in Quito and ETH Zurich. Since 2020 he is de Director of the Basque Institute of Architecture. His academic activity is completed with the profesional praxis of architecture.

Joakin Aramendy

School of Architecture, Universidad de Navarra

Joakin Aramendy is a student of the Master's Degree in Architecture (enabling qualification) at the University of Navarra, Madrid campus. He completed his Bachelor's Final Project, titled Coser el Espacio: A Study of Cristóbal Balenciaga's Workshops in San Sebastián, under the supervision of Professor José Ángel Medina Murua.

Balenciaga and Architecture in San Sebastián

The purpose of this research project is to examine Balenciaga's use of architectural spaces in San Sebastian and its surrounding areas. This investigation includes notable architectural sites, such as the house in Igueldo and the spaces that Balenciaga used in his early years as his workshop and storefront.

For existing resources, we have access to photographs and other visual documents located in the municipal archives. Previous research on the Igueldo house includes a doctoral thesis, which we plan to review and adapt for this study. Additionally, recent research conducted for a television series has examined related buildings, and we aim to verify the accuracy of the series' portrayal of these spaces.

A deeper understanding of these locations will help clarify longstanding doubts and provide new insights into Balenciaga's connections with contemporary artists, photographers, and architects of his time.

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The Lorenzo Riva-Archive in Barthesian Perspective

In this investigation, I will analyze unsigned drawings from the Lorenzo Riva-archive at the Historical Archive of the Basque Country. My goal is to classify and discuss them as material regards Cristóbal Balenciaga's design processes. My analytical starting point refers to Roland Barthes' essay "Langage et vêtement" (1959, 1993). Here, the author emphasizes theoretical arguments that hinder a systematical and formal analysis of the common clothes. At the same time, he identifies a type of drawing which would allow shaping this type of analysis for the first time.

The Lorenzo Riva-archive contains unsigned drawings which represent garments created by Balenciaga. We will examine if and to which point they adjust to the typology identified by Barthes in 1959. My question is this: If some of these drawings conform to this typology, and could be chronologically classified, it may be possible to expand the formal analysis of the Balenciaga's clothes. This is: deeper analyze when certain elements appear and disappear, what elements are reused in clothes from different seasons, etc.

For this research, I will take into account, among others, secondary sources written by Andy Stafford (1998) and Nicole Pellegrin (2005). Both authors defend the validity and usefulness of Roland Barthes' multidisciplinary research on clothing and fashion. For both, also, the so-called body of writing about clothing and fashion in Barthes is composed of different texts directed to different audiences which were published before and after his seminal work *The Fashion System* (1985 [1967]). In addition, I will pay attention as well Emmanuelle Dirix's article "The Role of Drawing in Fashion" (2013) which contains a useful analysis due to explaining the functions that drawings have in fashion until today.

Dr. Gemma Muñoz Domínguez

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Gemma Muñoz Domínguez is an associate professor of Fashion Branding at Villanueva University. She has more than ten years of professional experience in the fashion industry and advertising. In recent years, she has published several academic articles related to brand co-creation in digital environments, fashion film, brand heritage or the use of hashtags as identity, extension and expansion of brands, for example. She also develops her academic activity as Honorary Collaborator of the Department of Applied Communication at the Complutense University of Madrid, where she obtained her doctorate degree in 2023, as well as being an external collaborator of the Centre for Research on Fashion and Contemporary Phenomena (CIMF) of the Villanueva University.

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Paloma Díaz Soloaga is a full professor of Intangible assets and Fashion at Complutense University, she has been visiting professor at Harvard University, FIT in NY, University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, and Glasgow Caledonian University. Director of the Degree in Fashion Communication and Management at Villanueva University for more than 15 years. Author of *Introduction to Organizational Culture* Ed. Síntesis, 2019; *Communication and Fashion Brands Management* Ed. Gustavo Gili, 2014 among others, as well as more than 40 academic articles. Member of the Editorial Board of *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*. Jury of the International Fashion Film Festivals of La Jolla, Canada and Madrid.

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Journalist trained in Seville and specialized in Corporate, Institutional and Political Communication at the Complutense University of Madrid. He has been part of private institutions managing the communication of the Círculo Mercantil e Industrial de Sevilla, as well as relevant multinationals such as WPP or Llorente y Cuenca. On the other hand, he has worked in conventional media, working as a radio presenter and collaborating in magazines. Currently, he is editor and section head at *Diario Hércules*. He combines these functions with his role as a pre-doctoral researcher, carrying out his thesis on Communication and Fashion under the supervision of Dr. Paloma Díaz Soloaga and Dr. María Villanueva Cobo del Prado, as well as being an external collaborator of the Centre for Research on Fashion and Contemporary Phenomena (CIMF) of the Villanueva University.

Conceptual Foundations of Cristóbal Balenciaga's Legacy in Disney +'s "Cristóbal Balenciaga" Series: Brand Preservation over Time

Heritage brands are distinct in that they are about both history and history in the making (Urde et al, 2007, p.7). A heritage brand has a story to tell and, although the Balenciaga name is well known around the world and has enjoyed great popularity in recent decades, not all the target audience the brand has set out to acquire is aware of the Basque origins of its founder.

Some authors have proposed different approaches to revitalise heritage brands (Dion and Mazzalovo, 2016), but when, who, how, how, why and where (Kim et al., 2017) are the questions that should be put as a basis when reviving a dormant luxury brand, as was the case of Balenciaga. The mythical past of many luxury houses is often glorified and romanticized, as is the date of their foundation and the name of their founder (Hudson and Balmer, 2013) and following Rindell and Santos (2021) perspective on what makes a corporate heritage brand authentic for consumers, it can be seen that a) continuing to maintain connections with its original roots, b) that its products and/or activities continue to be a reference in the market and c) that it continues to represent what it used to represent are the pillars of that corporate heritage brand authenticity.

The new format based on miniseries is bringing the figure of renowned designers such as Cristóbal Balenciaga, Christian Dior or Karl Lagerfeld closer and disseminating their legacy through digital platforms. This research aims to analyse the audiovisual narrative of this format and how the legacy of three designers with recent series is transmitted: *Cristóbal Balenciaga* (Disney +), *New Look* (Apple TV) and *Becoming Karl Lagerfeld* (Disney +). In this way, we will be able to observe what elements they have in common, where they differ, how they have passed on their legacy and how they are maintaining it.

In this way, we will know how to preserve this type of brand, defining brand preservation as the maintenance of the essence of the brand in order to protect its legacy, disseminate it correctly and

ensure its permanence over time, with the aim of protecting, nurturing and enhancing the figure of designers such as Cristóbal Balenciaga.

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Paula Nunes Rodrigues da Silva

Mackenzie Presbyterian University, São Paulo, Brazil

Paula Nunes Rodrigues da Silva holds a Bachelor's degree in Journalism from Mackenzie Presbyterian University in São Paulo, Brazil, and is currently pursuing a Master's in Education, Art, and Cultural History at the same university. Her thesis focuses on analyzing Cristóbal Balenciaga's creative process, exploring the complex cultural, artistic, and communicative aspects of his creations. She is a student researcher at the research group Language, Identity, Society: Studies on the Media, affiliated to the Brazilian National Council for research (CNPq) and the UPM.

Dr. Isabel Orestes Silveira

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PhD in Communication and Semiotics, from the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo (2010). Master in Visual Arts, from São Paulo State University (2006). Bachelor and Licentiate in Pedagogy from São Marcos University (1990). Bachelor in Art Education from Mackenzie Presbyterian University-UPM (1995). She also holds a specialization degree in Psychopedagogical Foundations of Art and Communication from UPM (2003). Professor at UPM since 1986, is currently affiliated to the Graduate Program in Education, Art and Cultural History. She also teaches at the Communications department at the Paulus College of Technology and Communication-FAPCOM, since 2008. She is a leader and researcher in the research group Language, Identity, Society: Studies on the Media, with CNPq (Brazil's National Council for Scientific and Technological Development) and UPM.

Dress as Cultural Language: Translational Aspects in Cristóbal Balenciaga's (1895-1972) Creative Process

This research investigates the work of the renowned Basque couturier Cristóbal Balenciaga through a critical study of his creative process, aiming to understand how this process leads to the genesis of a unique visual and formal language in fashion. The proposed framework includes the analysis of three specific pieces while considering the methods and procedures adopted throughout the designer's entire creative period.

In process studies, Salles (1998) argues that the act of creation has an intersemiotic character, meaning it is a hybrid process. From Silveira's (2010) perspective, this characteristic implies understanding the designer as a translator of visual signs, acting as an intervener within a complex cultural context and plural temporality. Thus, Balenciaga's creative process is analyzed as an act of cultural translation, where the specifics of design emerge in dialogue with historical and cultural forces.

The research problem aims to reflect on the fashion designer's acts of creation, specifically Cristóbal Balenciaga's, as a translational process that produces an aesthetic language relevant to its time. In this regard, the study examines how variables relating to culture, time, and the creative process in fashion help to understand Balenciaga's creative procedures and actions in his quest for a distinctive language. The hypothesis suggests that creative processes tend to endure over time. Balenciaga's creations persist and echo Braudel's (1978) concept of "long-term historical duration." Consequently, this research proposes a discussion on the relationships between design, fashion, and culture, using the theoretical contributions of Silveira (2010), Salles (1998, 2006), Pinheiro (2007), and Castilho (2004), also observing the procedural and translational resources of the couturier throughout his work.

The study of Cristóbal Balenciaga's work as an object of research is essential due to his ability to maintain a paradoxical dialogue between the ephemeral and the permanent, timelessness and

avant-garde, re-signifying Western women's dress during his more than five decades of production (Arzalluz, 2011; Vives, 2018), precisely reflecting the hypothesis proposed by this study.

The adopted methodology combines a critical literature review with an archaeological approach, inspired by Salles' (1998) notion of "traces" left by the couturier, such as sketches, drafts, patterns, correspondence, among other records, with the goal of reconstructing his creative path, observing the nonlinear routes of his thinking in the development of his projects, or wearable artifacts. This method reveals the creative process from its "reverse", also exposing the marks of a singular creator's mind.

The theoretical foundation concerning Balenciaga's work is supported by the works of Arzalluz (2011), Jouve and Demornex (1989), Miller (1993), and Balda (2013, 2021, 2022, 2023).

Dr. Álvaro Pérez Álvarez

Álvaro Pérez is the Dean of the Faculty of Communication at the University of Montevideo (Uruguay). He holds a PhD in Communication and a degree in Journalism and Philosophy from the University of Navarra, and his research interests lie in the field of narrative journalism. In particular, he is an expert in the figure of the journalist Manuel Chaves Nogales (Seville 1897-London 1944), in the genre of the biographical profile, and in the new biography. He has published articles on these topics in specialist research journals and presented papers on them at international conferences.

The Legacy of Balenciaga Through his Obituaries in the Press

Cristóbal Balenciaga passed away on 23 March 1972 in Jávea (Alicante). At that time, he was already established as one of the most prominent couturiers in the field of haute couture on an international scale. The demise of Balenciaga was extensively documented in the press, with the *New York Times*, *The Guardian* and media outlets across the globe allocating coverage to the designer. Magazines with a focus on fashion also dedicated a considerable amount of space to the news. This article presents a qualitative analysis of a selection of international obituaries, which collectively portray the figure of Balenciaga at the time of his death. If the objective of an obituary is to capture the essence of a life, rather than focusing on the circumstances of death (Starck, 2006), the diverse approaches observed in the selected texts illustrate the significance attributed to the Basque couturier. While some emphasise Balenciaga's artistic influence, others highlight his impact on contemporary fashion, and some focus on his personal profile. Nevertheless, a unifying theme emerges across these accounts, portraying Balenciaga as a seminal figure in women's fashion.

Alba Sanz

Alba Sanz Álvarez is a PhD candidate at The University of Edinburgh. Her PhD working title is "Donors' Traces: From Garment to Museum". This project revolves around the presence and absence of stories from the donors of three fashion collections once the objects are in their new institutional homes under the interdisciplinary guidance of her supervisory team with Juliette Macdonald, Frances Fowle and Christopher Breward. Alba holds two master's degrees from Stockholm University in Fashion Studies and Fashion Communication and Marketing, as well as professional experience working in the Swedish high-end fashion brand Acne Studios. Since 2021, she has volunteered as the Conference and Events manager for the Association of Dress Historians supporting all their activities and is a member of their Executive Committee.

A Gift of Affect: Rachel L. Mellon's Donation to the Cristóbal Balenciaga Museoa

"I Feel Pretty" are the words inscribed not only in the leather album where Rachel L. Mellon carefully treasured the sketches combined with the fabric swatches of her Cristóbal Balenciaga garments but also handwritten in the cardboard case of the album. It might seem like a simple detail, but these words can be interpreted as a sign of the affect that those garments convey to her owner. The notion of affect I refer to aligns with the conception of affect in Sara Ahmed's work and the active role of emotions, affecting and being affected and moving. The creation and preservation of the album by Rachel L. Mellon illustrate the deep care to save and treasure each of her Balenciaga possessions.

In this communication proposal, I aim to delve into the consideration of Rachel L. Mellon as a donor of the Cristóbal Balenciaga Museoa and explore the donation process of her collection. My comprehension and use of the term donor seek to unwrap the implication of the emotional attachment between the donor and her collection by engaging with the concept of gift—"A gift makes a connection," in the words of Lewis Hyde. The Cristóbal Balenciaga Museoa, as the recipient of this gift, adds to its collection the relationships and stories that the donor and collection have developed.

This investigation stems from my PhD research following oral history methodology and storytelling approaches that enable a personal approach to the sometimes-unknown process of donation and acquisition of pieces by museums. These narrative approaches support the comprehension of the non-tangible, the emotions and relationships, and the invisible attachments that affect the collection and the donor. The entanglement goes beyond collection and donor, including the museum and its personnel, as well as the crucial figure of Hubert de Givenchy in the donation process.

Lastly, the stories and the anecdotes that surround the donor and the collection, I argue, add an alternative layer of value to the collection

and the pieces, inferring that by sharing these donor/collection narratives, the affect of this relationship embedded in the collection and pieces would foster the audience in an empathetic manner channelling the care and appreciation of the pieces.

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Dr. Sara Skillen

University of Portsmouth

Sara Skillen is currently an Associate Lecturer in Visual Culture at the University of the West of England, Bristol. She holds a PhD in fashion studies from the Centre for Fashion Studies, Stockholm University. In 2011 she gained an MA with distinction in History of Design and Material Culture at Brighton University. Before starting her PhD research at Stockholm University, Sara worked in the London fashion business for the couturier Deborah Milner, at *Elle* and *Wallpaper** magazines, and for milliners Philip Treacy, Stephen Jones and Rachel Trevor Morgan. Areas of research expertise include mid-late twentieth century design, particularly history of dress and the material culture of fashion, and the construction of dress history narratives through personal memory and identity. Lecturing and teaching experience encompasses fashion history, material culture, fashion branding, contemporary fashion, fashion media, fashion film, visual culture and consumer culture, at Foundation, BA and Masters levels.

Memories of the Master: Balenciaga through the Eyes of His Contemporaries

Writing in 1954, the British journalist Alison Settle acknowledged that it was rare to find authoritative books on the creation of fashion, of 'how and why fashion is currently made,' although histories of costume and theories on dress were common. This study focuses on the life writing and fashion books of key contemporaries of Cristóbal Balenciaga, examining the ways in which autobiographies, memoirs, and published reflections from the 1950s and 1960s provide unique insights into Balenciaga's role in the world of haute couture, as well as the behind-the-screen workings of the fashion industry.

Through the writings of influential figures such as Alison Settle (*British Vogue*), John Fairchild (*Women's Wear Daily*), Percy Savage (Lanvin press attaché), fashion editors Bettina Ballard and Carmel Snow, and couturiers Pierre Balmain and Christian Dior, this research analyses how personal narratives, intertwined with journalistic accounts, shaped Balenciaga's legacy and the broader historiography of fashion. It examines Balenciaga's influence not only as a couturier but also as a symbolic figure whose myth was constructed and perpetuated by those who worked alongside him. Contemporary books about the Parisian haute couture industry, including Anny Latour's *Kings of Fashion* (1958) and Roma Fairley's *A Bomb in the Collection: Fashion with the Lid Off* (1969), also offer rare accounts of the behind-the-scenes workings of high fashion during this period. These texts highlight the broader theoretical and commercial context in which fashion was produced, consumed, and critiqued.

In addition, close analysis of archival materials selected by these influential "Fashion Motivators" reveal that fashion history, particularly during the mid-20th century, was often written with an emphasis on the visual, reflecting a teleological progression of styles, as evidenced in fashion journalism of the period. This narrative structure, driven by the commercial imperatives of the fashion industry, illustrates how the visual dominated over a more textual analysis in

fashion writing, particularly in the work of contemporary journalists.

Contemporary texts about the fashion industry also contributed to a public understanding of Balenciaga's place in the post-war haute couture landscape. These works, often written by industry insiders, not only provide detailed accounts of the technical processes involved in haute couture but also reveal the economic, social, and artistic contexts in which designers like Balenciaga operated. They offer a rare glimpse into the intricacies of the fashion industry at a time when such knowledge was largely confined to those within the couture world itself.

Heather Sproat

Central Saint Martins UAL

As Pathway leader for the Womenswear Fashion Design course I am responsible for the management of the course and tutoring both second and final year students. I have creatively directed graduate design research projects for Penhaligons, Bvlgari, Sephora, Paul Frank, and Diadora. I have worked on Student projects with Louis Vuitton, Dior, Celine, Mulberry, Canada Goose, Nike, Victoria & Albert Museum, Cristóbal Balenciaga Museoa. I was an Associate lecturer at CSM for 7 years before being awarded the role of pathway leader and have taught there for 24 years. I have worked as a designer at Louis Vuitton in Paris and before that studied Haute couture tailoring at Christian Dior in Paris. I have been external examiner for the fashion courses at both Falmouth and Limerick universities. I researched and curated a chapter of the book "Pattern" published by Phaidon in March 2013, and a chapter in Teaching Sustainability at higher education Level published by Stringer 2016.

Cristóbal Balenciaga × CSM

How has exposure to the legacy of design, aesthetics, pattern cutting, and construction techniques created by the designer Cristóbal Balenciaga impacted the learning of students currently studying BA fashion design womenswear at Central Saint Martins?

Over the last eight years CSM has participated on a number of collaborative projects with the Cristóbal Balenciaga Museum in Getaria, Gipuzkoa, Spain. Museum field trips, curatorial talks, unique archive presentations and an extensive online digital platform of resources have been shared to expose students to the inspiration, methodology, development and process of Cristóbal Balenciaga's garment design and creation. The students have been supported by the museum's educational and curatorial team to deepen their learning. These projects have invited students to respond to what they have learned in the context of their own experimental design practice as students at Central Saint Martins. The intention of this research is to reflect upon the effect that this project may have had on their wider development as young contemporary designers. How has Balenciaga's legacy been communicated and what effect does this understanding have on emerging design talent?

The research collates a wider body of work related to the Balenciaga Transmissions projects I have taught at Central Saint Martins. From this research I have selected a smaller group of students to study in depth.

Drawing on case studies of a selection of these students' work, the aim of this research is to investigate, collate and curate a body of work to explore the impact that their knowledge and understanding of Balenciaga's work has had on their own practice.

Will it be possible to evidence any correlation between their learning in the projects and subsequent abilities within their garment design development?

The methodology I have used for this research is to analyse ten individual case studies, I have interviewed the students and invited them to recount the experiences they recall.

I have asked them to reflect on their own thoughts about the impact of this project.

I have collected and collated sketchbook development work, photographs of their garments and, where possible, examined and documented their outfits to develop my own thoughts and reflections on their evolution as designers in response to the project, as well as their subsequent design work

I have interviewed students and graduates, and observed the further development of their design practice to seek out visual evidence of influence on silhouettes, volumes, construction techniques, patterns, and details which may have been influenced by the intimate understanding of Cristóbal Balenciaga's work afforded by the projects.

The conclusion of this research is a short film edited in a format suitable for TikTok of the research, interviews, images and garments.

Stefan Žarić

University of Novi Sad, Serbia

Stefan Žarić is a PhD candidate at the University of Novi Sad, Serbia, and the former Fulbright Scholar in Fashion History at the University of Massachusetts, currently serving as the Board Member to ICOM Costume Committee and Fashion History Contributor at *ELLE Serbia*. He has curated the first haute couture exhibition in Serbia (Jean Paul Gaultier) and actively researches both fashion studies in Serbia and the fashion historical exchange between Serbia and the West, with early modern and modern focus. Prior to developing his PhD on the subject of fashion history in Shakespeare's Great Tragedies, Stefan studied, specialized, and lectured in fashion history and fashion curation at the universities and museums in the former Yugoslav and Balkan region, the USA, Estonia, the UK, and Japan.

A(In)Visible Basque-Balkan Thread: Balenciaga's Legacy and the 20th Century Women Fashion Artists in Serbia

Noting the absence of Balkan perspectives in Balenciaga scholarship and parting from Christian Dior as the commonplace of Western fashion in Eastern Europe, the proposed research aims to expand the general premises about the presence of haute couture in Serbia's fashion system of the 20th century by emphasizing the influence of Cristóbal Balenciaga on several women fashion designers and artists in the period between the 1940s and the 1960s.

While Balenciaga's house was formally introduced to the Serbian public at the 1959 Fashion in the World fair in Belgrade and through the Yugoslav First Lady Jovanka Broz's appearance, the Fair was subsequently dominated by Pierre Cardin's promotion of domestic textile traditions, and the First Lady's wardrobe by Dior and his Serbian counterpart, Aleksandar Joksimović. As such, Balenciaga's influence will be observed through (in)visible women fashion artists seminal in establishing the Spanish couturier's aesthetic legacy within the framework of Serbian fashion: Milena Pavlović Barilli and Anđelka Slijepčević and, to a lesser extent, Ljubica Cuca Sokić.

Following Hamish Bowles's classification of Balenciaga's Spanish themes of art, dance, bullfight, and regional dress (Balenciaga and Spain, 2011), the research will outline how these particular segments were translated — and transgressed — in and through the works of Barilli (fashion illustration, fashion photography, costume design), Slijepčević (fashion design), and Sokić (fashion illustration), resulting in a localized reconfiguration of Balenciaga's aesthetics.

Whereas all three artists lived and worked in Paris after he opened his couture house in 1937, Barilli's life and travels in Spain and her rendition of the 1939 Infanta dress for the cover of US Vogue in 1940 will be observed as the catalyst for the introduction of the designer's iconographic vocabulary in Serbian fashion and visual culture prior to the presentation of his designs in Belgrade in 1959.

Conclusively, the juxtaposition and comparison between Balenciaga's couture and the three Serbian artists aspires to demonstrate the fashion exchange between Spain / West and Serbia / East and to diversify increasingly growing scholarship on the Spanish designer by respectively putting the Balkans on the map of his artistic legacy.

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Scientific Committee

Dr. Miren Arzalluz
Palais Galliera

Miren Arzalluz is a graduate in History from the University of Deusto, she holds an MSc in Comparative Politics from the London School of Economics, and an MA in Art History, with a focus on the History of Dress, from the Courtauld Institute of Art. In 2021 she completed her PhD at the University of Deusto, which explores the emergence of fashion in the so-called Côte Basque as a fundamental factor of its development as an international summer resort, and the key role that fashion leaders such as Gabrielle Chanel and Cristóbal Balenciaga played in this context. She was responsible for the Cristóbal Balenciaga Foundation collections and exhibitions from 2006 to 2013, during which time she published her book *Cristóbal Balenciaga. The Making of the Master (1895-1936)* (Nerea, 2010; V&A 2011). Between 2013 and 2017 she worked as a freelance curator and researcher collaborating with museums such as the Palais Galliera in Paris and the Mode Museum in Antwerp. She has been the director of the Palais Galliera since January 2018, leading the ambitious renovation of the museum and the expansion of its rich and diverse exhibition and research programmes since its reopening in 2020.

Dr. Ana Balda
University of Navarra

Ana Balda is Senior Lecturer (officially accredited by ANECA, 2024). Since 2013, she has been an Associate Lecturer at the Faculty of Communication at the University of Navarra, where she teaches Fashion History and Fashion Illustration and Photography. Since she completed her PhD on the communication of the Balenciaga house (1937-1968) in 2013, Balda has continued her research on the life, work, and context of the Basque designer. This work has led to the curation of various exhibitions and publications in different academic journals and

books. With María Kublin she has co-authored *Kublin-Balenciaga. A Fashion Record* (Thames & Hudson, 2024).

Dr. Emily Brayshaw
University of Technology, Sydney

Emily Brayshaw is internationally recognised for her work on the visual culture of fashion and performance costume. She is an Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Technology Sydney. Emily's inter-disciplinary research examines the past, present, and future of critical fashion and performance costume with a focus on identities, luxury, material costume, embodiment and design methodology from the nineteenth-century to the present day. At the same time, Emily contributes to the arts in Sydney, working as a costume designer on critically acclaimed theatrical productions.

Dr. Sophie Kurkdjian
American University Paris

Professor Kurkdjian has been teaching cultural and social history of clothing and fashion at the American University of Paris since September 2020. As a Research Fellow at the Institut d'histoire du temps (CNRS) since 2012, she organizes a research seminar on the cultural history of fashion. In 2018, she created the research network *Culture(s) de Mode* in collaboration with the Ministry of Cultural Affairs of France. As an exhibition curator, in 2017 she organized the exhibition *Mode & Femmes, 14-18* at the Forney Library in Paris. Following her studies in cultural history, Kurkdjian completed in 2013 her PhD on the history of fashion press and publishers in the early 20th century. After a research project on the historical construction of the status of "fashion capital" of Paris, between 1858 and 1947, she is currently working on the history of work and female workers in the clothing and fashion industry between 1880 and 1940.

Dr. Lesley E. Miller
University of Glasgow

Lesley Miller is Professor Emerita in Dress and Textile History and Affiliate of the University of Glasgow. From 2013 till 2025 she was Professor of Dress and Textile History at the University of Glasgow and from 2005 until

2021 Senior Curator of Textiles and Dress in the Furniture, Textiles and Fashion Department at the Victoria & Albert Museum, London, before which she lectured in various UK universities and art schools. Her first book on Balenciaga was published in 1993 and the second edition in 2007. This latter was subsequently extensively revised to accompany *Balenciaga: Shaping Fashion* (V&A, 2016-7), an exhibition for which she was consultant curator. Lesley is currently pursuing research on 18th-century French and Spanish silk design and commerce for her next monograph, having already published widely on different aspects of the subject. She was recently appointed an honorary member (Research) of the Advisory Committee of the Fundación Cristóbal Balenciaga.

Dr. Carlos Naya
University of Navarra

Carlos Naya has been the Dean of the School of Architecture at the University of Navarra since 2021. He received the Extraordinary Doctorate Award for his theoretical research on the major writings and manifestos of the 20th-century artistic avant-garde. He was a Visiting Scholar at the GSAPP at Columbia University (New York, 2007-2008), where he collaborated with renowned architecture scholars such as Kenneth Frampton, Mark Wigley, and Joan Ockman. He has taught at ISEM Fashion Business School (University of Navarra, Madrid), as well as at various European and American architecture schools, including the Architectural Association School of Architecture (London). Currently, he collaborates with the London College of Fashion (UAL, London) in organizing an international master's program.

Dr. Alexandra Palmer
Royal Ontario Museum

Alexandra Palmer is the Nora E. Vaughan Senior Curator, Global Fashion & Textiles at the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) responsible for the collection of 44,000 western textiles and fashions from Europe and North America. She is Affiliated Faculty, Art History at the University of Toronto and teaches about the impact of textiles and fashion on climate change. She has curated over 20 exhibitions at ROM, contributed to international museum catalogues, books, scholarly journals, and

authored three award-winning publications. In 2023 she was named *Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Palmes académiques* for her contribution to French culture.

Dr. Elisa Palomino
Smithsonian Arctic Studies Center

Elisa Palomino, with 25 years' experience designing for luxury brands such as John Galliano, Christian Dior, Moschino and Roberto Cavalli she bridges fashion, education and anthropology. With a PhD in Anthropology and Sustainable Fashion from the London College of Fashion, she is an international lecturer and has held the position of Director of Fashion Print at Central Saint Martins for a decade. Elisa has successfully led EU-funded projects, including Horizon 2020's FishSkin, and earned fellowships such as Fulbright, Kluge Fellowship at the Library of Congress, Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Fondazione Cini, Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz, Max-Planck Institute, ANAMED. Currently a Research Associate at the Smithsonian Arctic Studies Center, she specialises in Arctic Indigenous Fashion. She is the Education Advisor at the Cristóbal Balenciaga Foundation and co-creator of the Cristóbal Balenciaga Museum Transmissions fashion education program.

Dr. Karena De Perthuis
Western Sydney University

Karena De Perthuis is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Humanities and Communication Arts at Western Sydney University and co-editor-in-chief of the *International Journal of Fashion Studies*. Her research explores the intersection of fashion, media and the body. Recent publications include work on fashion photography, fashion performativity, fashion utopias, Instagram influencers and Tilda Swinton. She is currently working on a monograph, *The Fashionable Ideal: Undoing Bodies and images in Fashion*, to be published by Bloomsbury in 2024.

Dr. Veronique Pouillard
University of Oslo

Dr. Pouillard is a Full Professor at the University of Oslo in the department of Archaeology, Conservation and History. Véronique Pouillard

does research and has published books and articles in business and economic history, with focus on topics including the media, luxury, manufacturing, and the history of intellectual property rights. She is the author of *Paris to New York: The Transatlantic Fashion Industry in the Twentieth Century*, Harvard University Press, 2021. She is also the co-editor of the *Oxford Handbook of Luxury Business*, Oxford University Press, 2021. She was a Principal Investigator in the HERA II project on the Enterprise of Culture funded by the European Science Foundation, then one of the four coordinators of the Nordic Branding project funded by the UiO:Norden transdisciplinary initiative (2017-2019). Véronique Pouillard leads the ERC Consolidator project, Grant 818523, CREATIVE IPR – The History of Intellectual Property Rights in the Creative Industries (2019-2025). She is currently writing a book on the history of the internationalization and the colonization of intellectual property.

Dr. Giorgio Riello
University Institute, Fiesole

Giorgio Riello is Professor of Early Modern Global History at the European University Institute, Fiesole, Italy. He is also Professor of Global History and Culture at the University of Warwick, UK (currently on leave). He is the author of *A Foot in the Past* (2006), *Cotton: The Fabric that Made the Modern World* (2013), *Luxury: A Rich History* (2016 - co-authored with P. McNeil), *Back in Fashion: Western Fashion from the Middle Ages to the Present* (2020) and *Tutte le perle del mondo* (2023 - co-authored with M.G. Muzzarelli and L. Mola). He is the co-editor of *The Right to Dress: Sumptuary in a Global Perspective* (2019); *Dressing Global Bodies* (2020); and *The Cambridge Global History of Fashion* (2 vols. 2023).

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Simona Segre Reinach is Associate Professor of Fashion Studies at Bologna University. She has written extensively on fashion from a global perspective. Latest publications: *Fashion in Multiple Chinas. Chinese Styles in the Transglobal Landscape* (2019), *Biki. French Visions for Italian Fashion* (2019), *Per un vestire gentile. Moda e liberazione animale* (2022). She

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Dr. Valerie Steele
Fashion Institute of Technology

Valerie Steele is director and chief curator of The Museum at the Fashion Institute of Technology, where she has organized more than 25 exhibitions since 1997. She is also the author or editor of more than 30 books which have been translated into Chinese, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish. In addition, she is founder and editor in chief of *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body & Culture*, the first scholarly journal in Fashion Studies. She was listed as one of "The People Shaping the Global Fashion Industry" in the *Business of Fashion 500*: (2014 to the present).

Igor Uria
Cristóbal Balenciaga Museoa

Igor Uria has a degree in Fine Arts from the University of the Basque Country, with a specialist in Conservation and Restoration. He has completed different specialist studies at the universities of Deusto and Alcalá de Henares, as well as CIETA courses in Lyon and *Curating Fashion and Dress*, the V&A International Training Course in London. From 2004, he served as the Head of the Conservation and Registration Department at the Cristóbal Balenciaga Foundation. He is currently Director of Collections at the Cristóbal Balenciaga Museoa, a position he has held since 2014, and he has curated most of the exhibitions at the same institution.

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