

Early 20th Century Fashion: Modernism Embodied by the Fashion Designs of Paul Poiret, Coco Chanel, and Elsa Schiaparelli



The Final Phase of the 19th Century: The "Health" Corset Edwardian: 1900-1910



Victorian versus
Edwardian silhouette



Edwardian Era(1901-1910)/ The Gilded Age (1870s-1900) / Belle Epoque
(1895-1914)

The swansong of the leisured class



Biltmore Estate



Called “his little summer escape” by George Vanderbilt
(son of Cornelius)

Built 1880s, height of the Gilded Age

Largest private home in the US, has 250 rooms

Edwardian, 1900-1909

'pouter pigeon' bust, hips thrust back=
S-bend or 'kangaroo stance'

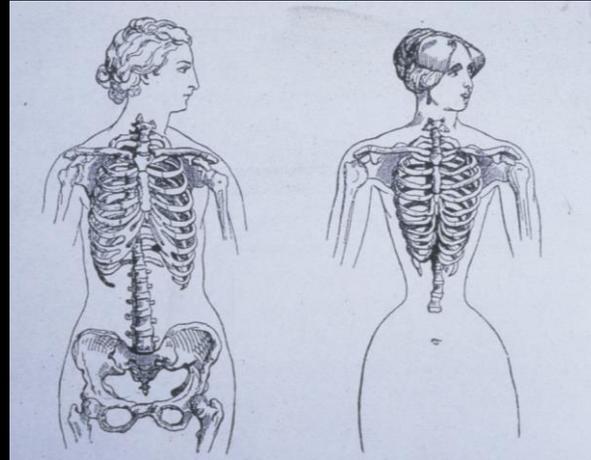
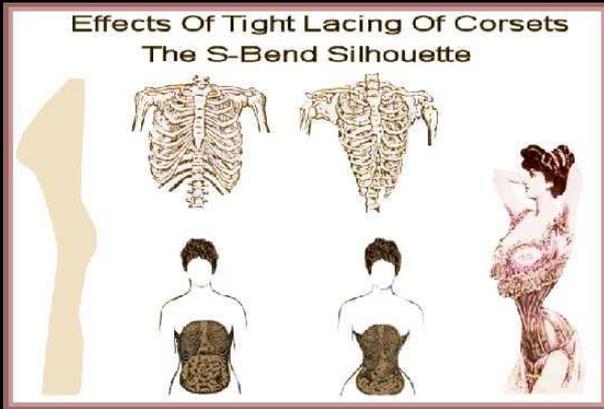
The female anatomy routinely stood at an angle of 33 degrees





Swan bill, S-bend, or “health corset” intended to reduce pressure on the diaphragm and stomach and follow the natural contours of the female form.

There are many reports of waists between 18 and 14 inches – even 12 inch waists are mentioned.



Photographic “re-touchers” sliced off and curved women’s waists to create their own ideas of shape, form, and size

Art Nouveau and The "S" Curve

Art Nouveau= lush, curvilinear abstractions



Constricting dress & number of flounces and frills were testimony to the leisured life of the wearer

Metro Stations, Paris, 1906



Pitcher, 1899



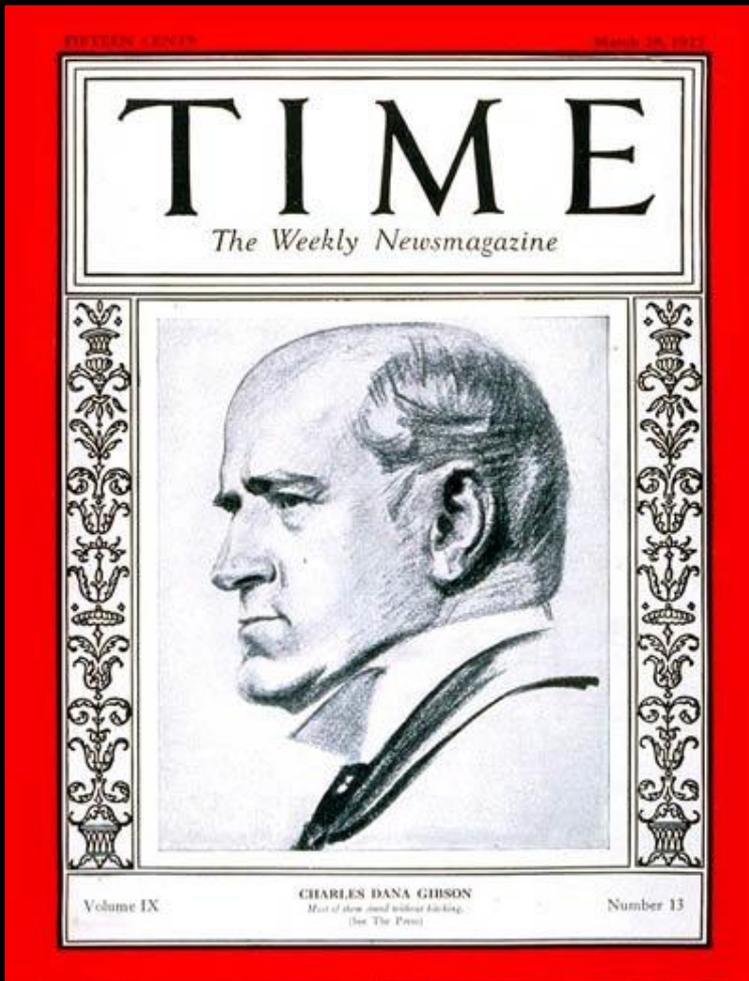
Vase, 1896

Charles Dana Gibson (1867–1944)

American graphic artist

Created the "Gibson Girl"

Iconic representation of the beautiful, independent American woman at the turn of the 20th century.



The Gibson Girl

Stage actress and model for the "Gibson Girl" illustrations

Camille Antoinette Clifford

In the early 1900s she won U S\$2000 in a magazine contest sponsored by illustrator Charles Dana Gibson to find a living version of his Gibson Girl drawings:
his ideal woman had an 18" wasp waist and wears the health corset



Women with Pompadour hairstyles



"The Weaker Sex: The young man imagines himself the latest victim of some fair entomologist," 1903

A young man on his knees imagines Gibson Girls examining him under a magnifying glass, like an insect

Charles Dana Gibson,

“The Gibson Girl,” Early 1900’s



The look of a group of women with
“Gibson Girl” hairstyles.
Chorus girls, 1915



Wall paper design for boys dorm rooms



The New American Woman: Independent, sporty, in charge



“Stepped On,” 1901



“Love in a Garden,” 1901

- Tailored suits of the period worn by the Independent woman:
- Tweed, serge, or linen skirt
 - Worn with starched blouse= shirtwaist, taken from men’s wear
 - Smart tailored jacket

The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire in New York City, 1911

Resulted in the fourth highest loss of life from an industrial accident in U.S. history



- One of the deadliest disasters that occurred in New York City –until the destruction of the World Trade Center 90 years later
- 146 garment workers died from the fire, smoke inhalation, or falling or jumping to their deaths
- Most of the victims were recent Jewish and Italian immigrant women aged sixteen to twenty-three
- Led to legislation requiring improved factory safety standards and helped spur the growth of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union which fought for better working conditions for sweatshop workers.
- The factory was located in the 23–29 Washington Place, now known as the Brown Building
- The factory normally employed about 500 workers, mostly young immigrant women, who worked nine hours a day on weekdays plus seven hours on Saturdays, earning between \$7 and \$12 a week

The early 1900s included both the health corset and Mariano Fortuny's Delphos Gown, originated c.1907



Mariano Fortuny, 1920's

The **Delphos gown**: finely pleated silk dress : 1907-1950
by Mariano Fortuny y Madrazo (1871–1949)

Inspired by, and named after the classical Greek statue, the Charioteer of Delphi. Patented, 1909



Evening gown, 1920s; robe textile demonstrating Fortuny's unique dying and printing processes
Mariano Fortuny ; Pale-pink pleated silk with pink silk cord and glass beads.
Mary McFadden, inspired by Fortuny

A mantua at the Victoria and Albert Museum, dated to 1755-1760
Radical changes in fashion occurred at the end of the 18th and the 19th century which
looked back to the ancients



1910-1920 Innovations

- Orientalism and Opulence; Rational dress (liberated from the corset)
- Paul Poiret (1879-1944)
- 1910: Women's Wear Daily begins publication
- 1911: Cubists exhibit in Salon des Independents in Paris
- 1912: Paul Poiret designs costumes for Le Minaret in which he uses hobble skirts
- 1914: outbreak of World War I
- 1917: the United States enters World War I
- 1918: World War I ends
- 1919: Women's suffrage is achieved: This major victory of the feminist movement also included reforms in higher education, in the workplace and professions, and in healthcare

The 1910s & 1920s

Fashion & lifestyle changes for women

- Drove cars, went to work outside the home in increasing numbers, active sports such as swimming and bobsledding
- Businesses employing more women: especially as “typewriters”
- Women’s club memberships were increasing
- Clothes needed for these activities helped to push and modify existing styles
- WWI: Filled jobs that soldiers had left behind. Became auto mechanics, worked in factories, directed traffic

Teens, 1910-1919 female

Evening dress, Callot Soeurs (French, active 1895–1937) Date: 1910–14.

Cotton, silk, metal



Increasingly, simple lines were considered beautiful and seductive
Women in Suits

Deborah Scott's designs for the costumes for *Titanic*



Deborah L. Scott: "She comes from an incredibly strict, structured lifestyle, and the first thing she wears is a tight suit tailored to the nth degree. It's got a hobble skirt, so she can barely walk; she's got a stiff collar, and she's got a giant hat."



- Rose comes from an incredibly strict, structured lifestyle reflected in her first tight, restrictive, tailored outfit
- Hobble skirt—she can barely walk
- A tie, a high neck, stiff collar, giant hat, and a corset underneath

Haute Couture= High Dressmaking

Evening Dress, House of Worth, 1898-1900





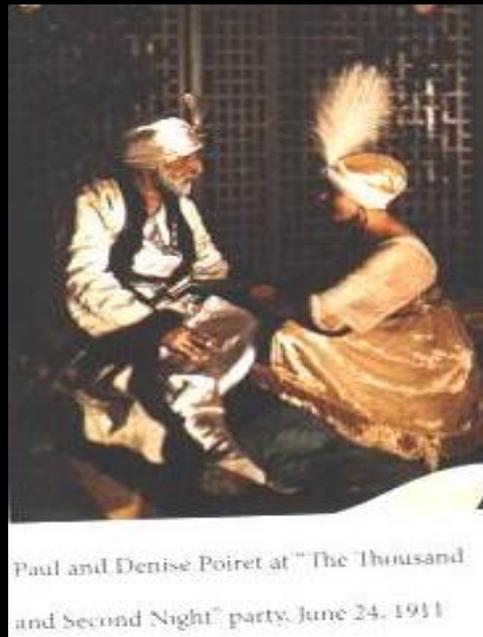
Les Robes de Paul Poiret :
book of illustrations by
Paul Iribe, 1908



Paul Poiret(1879-1944)
In America, called
“The King of Fashion”
The fashion industries
first great modernist
Worked for House of Worth:1901-1903



“Am I a fool when I dream of putting art into my dresses, a fool when I say dressmaking is an art? For I have always loved painters, and felt on equal footing with them. It seems to be that we practice the same craft, and that they are my fellow workers.”



Paul and Denise Poiret at "The Thousand and Second Night" party, June 24, 1911

- Paul Poiret & Madeleine Vionnet share the credit for liberating women from their corsets
- One of the first "Celebrity Fashion Designers."
- Threw costume balls with fashion shows. Most famous was "One Thousand and Second Nights," June 1911



- Famous for:
- Originated the narrow silhouette
- Fashion for the un-corseted figure
- Eliminated the petticoat
- Culottes and minaret tunic



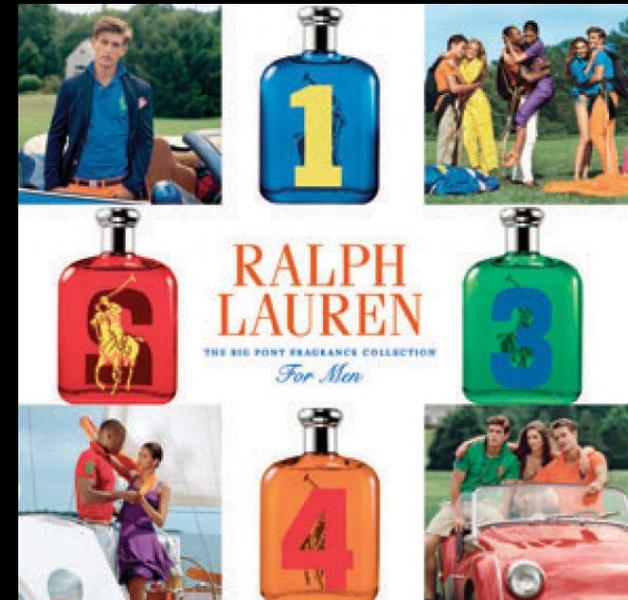
Poiret dress, 1914



Poiret suit, 1914

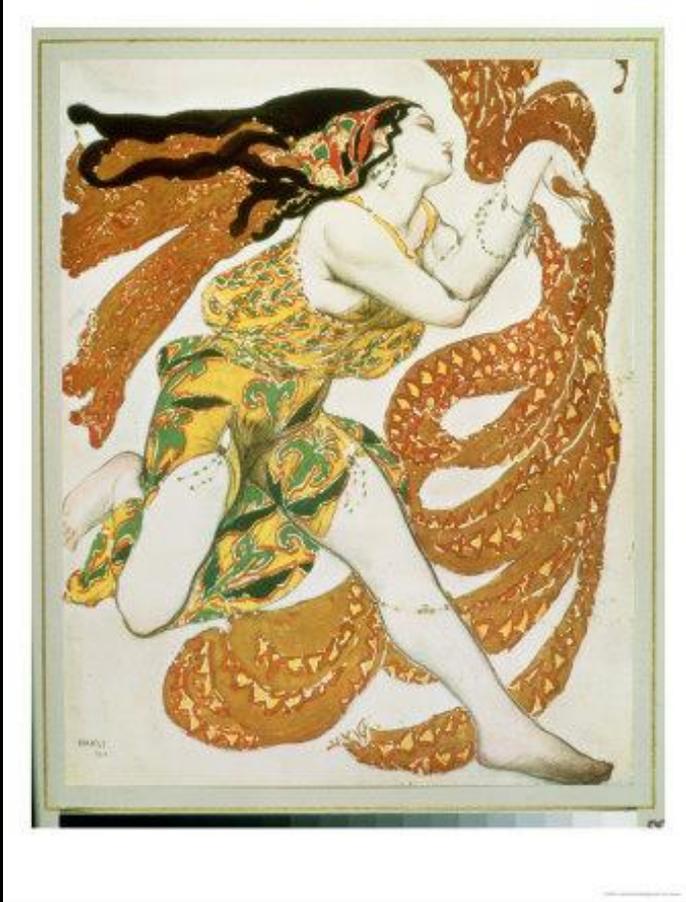
Poiret as Celebrity= Lifestyle Branding

- Poiret created himself as a celebrity
- Held fashion shows and great parties in the public eye
- Commissioned illustrations of his work to disseminate among his clients
- Sold perfume, lotions, cosmetics, soaps
- Branding: designer and the fashion shows help to create an image that a group of consumers want to belong to. Even if they cannot afford the clothes, they can buy the: bags; glasses; shoes; hats; scarves; T-shirts; fragrances; cosmetics; jewelry; hosiery; additional items that carry the designer's name. Sale of these lesser priced items fund the high-profile runway shows
- Ralph Lauren is the casual chic, luxury lifestyle brand. "When I create, I compose a universe, I imagine all the details: the place, the man, the woman, what they're doing, what they're wearing, down to their fragrance." Ralph Lauren

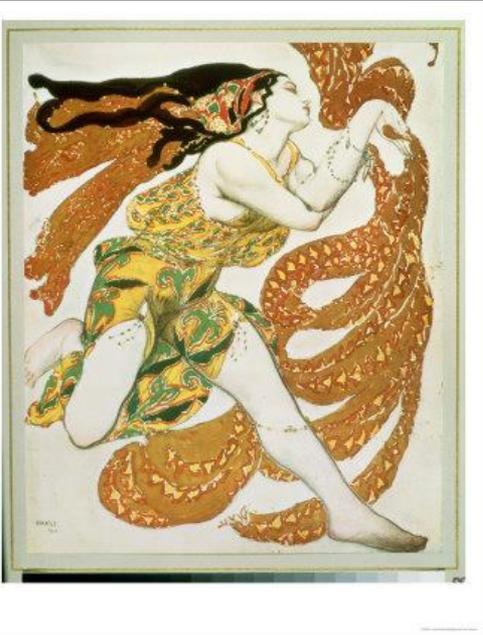


Leon Bakst and the Ballet Russes

- 1909: Russian Ballet company, performed their first season in Paris
- Barbaric with beauty, anger, lust, terror, pure and free
- The antithesis of "Victorian." The public LOVED it!
- 1910: watershed for orientalism in fashion and the arts
- Bakst: his watercolor sketches dazzled
- Use of color: considered groundbreaking



Leon Bakst (1866 - 1924)



- Rebellion to the Victorian World
- Russian painter, scenery, and costume designer
- Revolutionized the arts he worked in
- 1908: he made a name as a scene-painter for Diaghilev with the Ballets Russes

- Ballet Russes:
 - one of the most influential ballet companies of the 20th century
 - ground-breaking artistic collaboration among choreographers, composers, and artists
 - Their influence, in one form or another, has lasted to this day
 - Paris premiere, 1909
 - London premiere, 1911

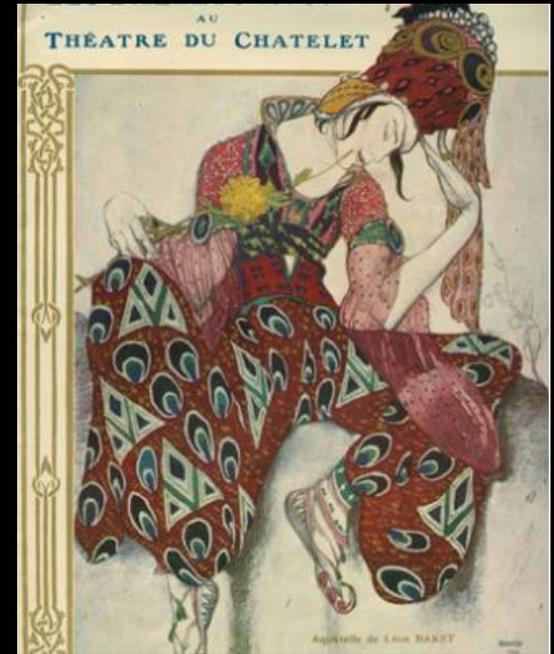


Orientalism

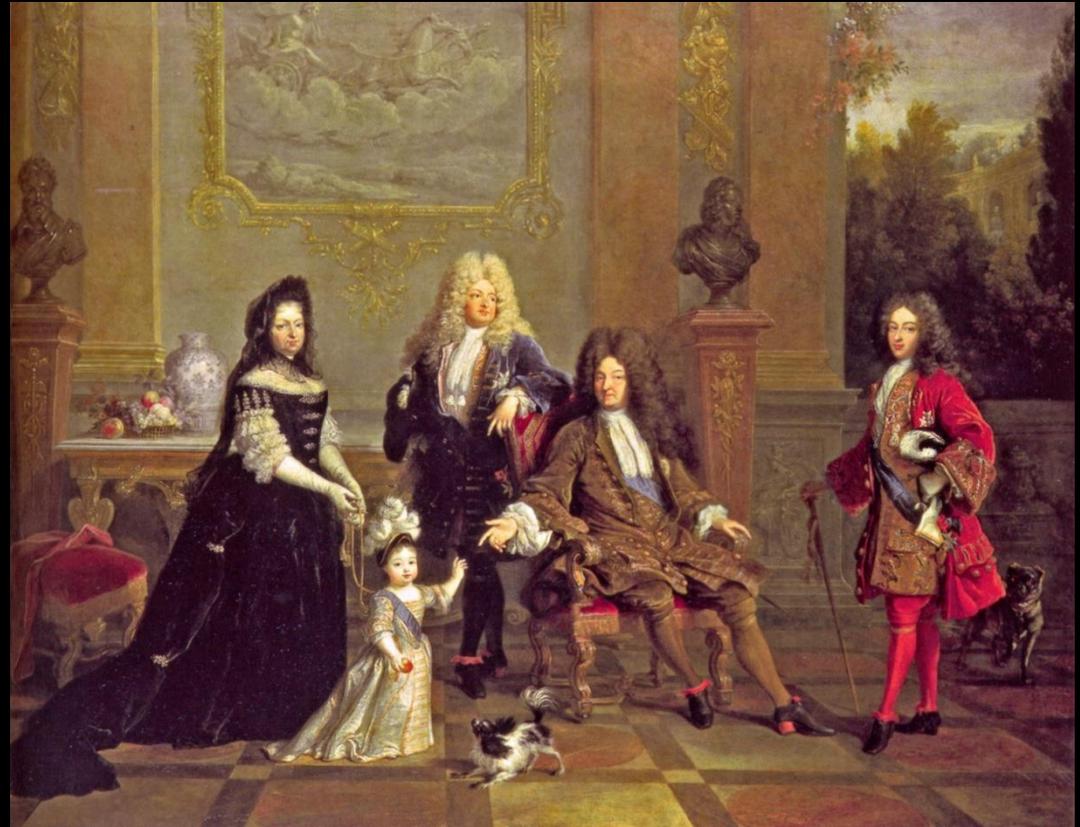


- Imitation or depiction of aspects of Eastern cultures in the West by writers, designers and artists.
- Refers to artists in the 19th and 20th centuries who used artistic elements derived from their travels to non-European countries in North Africa and Western Asia

Leon Bakst designed and made flamboyant exotic colorful costumes



- Used color inspired by oriental influence
- Much of his work showed oriental influence
- Bold hues and sharp contrasts with highlights of embroidery and heavy appliqué
- The idea behind the clothes was that women would look like harem slaves. To emphasize this he put women in turbans and harem pants
- To complete the outfits there were exotic Eastern inspired jeweled slippers



Ballet costume inspired by fashion history, late Baroque period
For *The Ballets Russes* designed by Leon Bakst
Louis XIV and His Family, 1720

Leon Bakst inspires Paul Poiret
(although Poiret denies it)



Design by Bakst for the
Ballets Russes



Design by Poiret. Fancy dress costume, 1911



Paul Poiret, 1912, opera gown



1912, opera coat

“Color is liberation” “My sunburst of pastels brought a new dawn.”

Evening dress, 1910

Paul Poiret (French, 1879–1944)



- Green and ivory striped silk, black silk chiffon, white linen
- Poiret's early revolutionary designs were loosely based on the upright, columnar, high-waisted styles worn in ancient Greece
- The tubular shape and graphic horizontal stripes are harbingers of the modern era, while the below-the-knee gathering of the overskirt suggests the "hobble skirt" that Poiret introduced in 1910 and was briefly the height of fashion.
- One of Poiret's signature decorative techniques was to use folkloric textiles and trims that he collected on his travels. Here the collar and cuffs are fashioned from a traditional French pleated linen bonnet, and brightly colored brocade ribbons that would have adorned a festive folk bonnet or costume encircle the raised waistline.
- Requiring less restrictive undergarments and conforming more to the natural shape of the body, Poiret's designs of 1908–11 are regarded as pivotal in the transition from the rigidly corseted silhouettes of the Victorian and Edwardian eras to styles providing greater freedom and comfort in dress that would characterize twentieth-century fashion.

Théâtre des Champs-Élysées
Paul Poiret (French, Paris 1879–1944)
1913 Culture, French: rhinestones; silk ; leather



"Irudree"

Paul Poiret (French, Paris 1879–1944)

1923 French: metallic, silk



- Low slung hip roll is a nod to the hip roll, or farthingale of the Renaissance
- An icon of modernist design in its structural simplicity
- Skirt: made from two pieces of fabric sewn selvage to selvage to form side seams, gathered at the bodice drop waist
- Bodice: made from one piece of fabric, shirred at right hand side seam for fit



Poiret, coat, 1912; 1922: Near, Middle East, and Far East influences=dramatic power