The first comprehensive overview of the legendary house of Dior, from its founding in 1947 to today. Featuring over 180 collections presented through original catwalk photography, this ambitious book is published in collaboration with Dior to mark the house’s 70th anniversary in 2017.

Dior

*Catwalk : The Complete Collections*

Introduction & designer profiles by Alexander Fury

Over 1,100 illustrations
27.7 × 19 cm
632pp
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Key Sales Points

• Discover or rediscover over 180 Dior collections presented through original catwalk photography including haute couture and ready-to-wear.

• Featuring Christian Dior, Yves Saint Laurent, Marc Bohan, Gianfranco Ferré, John Galliano, Raf Simons, and, most recently, Maria Grazia Chiuri designing for Dior

• Over 1,000 looks as they originally appeared in Dior’s iconic fashion shows, styled as the designer intended

• Book being published to celebrate 70th anniversary of Dior

• Published to coincide with a special anniversary haute couture show & special celebration in July, as well as a major exhibition in Paris

• Book features several previously unpublished images
Related Titles

CHANEL CATWALK

Thames & Hudson

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The ‘H’ Line

Described as a ‘Silhouette Hanches’ (hip-based silhouette) in the original collection notes, the H-line was designed by the couturier as ‘an entirely different line, based on the lengthening and the shrinking of the bust’. It is one of those parallels forming the tall letter H that dresses, suits and coats are built.

With garments set high and loose on the chest, and draping, pockets or belts placed under the waist, right at the top of the hips, Dior achieved this effect of a long bust resting on the hips, which is the defining feature of the season.

‘If one were to find an analogy in the past for the slimmer body of today’s woman,’ he wrote, ‘it would be the body of the nymphs of the School of Fontainebleau – the H of Henri II’, the king who ruled France 400 years earlier (1547–59) and whose court at Fontainebleau castle welcomed artists such as François Clédat who captured the beauty ideals of the time on his canvas, painting slim, high-cheeked, aristocratic beauties – perhaps most famously the king’s mistress, Diane de Poitiers.

‘The same love of style and purity. The same love of elegance and elongation. The same love of reserve and youth,’ wrote Dior, linking 1553 to 1953.

Artistic parallels continued in the dainty shoes’ new ‘Watteau heel’ and in the couturier’s choice of colours: bright ‘Vermillion blue’ for day, a grey ‘Fontainebleau blue’ and ‘pure Vermeer yellow’ for evening, plus reds and pinks that ‘match the shades of the house’s new lipsticks’.

The H line marked the final evolution begun in 1947 (see p. 49) by the liberation of the waist, Christian Dior would later declare in his autobiography. Almost immediately the new line was bequeathed the ‘Flirt Look’, but it had never been my intention to create a flat fashion which would evolve the idea of a swinger beam.

Vogueconcurred, arguing in its Paris report that Dior, far from flattening the bosom, has flattened it, raised it, rounded it, given it an alluring look of youth; and praised ‘the new statuesque evening line at Dior’, exemplified by ensembles such as ‘Zadig’ (opposite) and ‘Amalida’ (p. 80, left).

Finally, in swarms of brazen bust forth whom the last dress, an enchanting bridal creation [see p. 44], came into the Dior showroom... There were cries of “divine!” for this was unquestionably the best collection Christian Dior has made since his first of new look fame,” The New York Times reported.
New ‘Flower Women’

For his first Dior collection (whose creation was captured in Frédéric Tcheng’s Dior and I documentary film), Belgian designer Raf Simons looked to the clothes created by Christian Dior himself for inspiration.

‘Mr Dior was a supreme architect of pattern,’ Simons said. ‘He could construct something so perfect and yet he would often throw in a gesture on purpose to break that perfection. He would make what he did human for the wearer. You could tell he loved women in that way, in that incredible gestural way.’

Simons set out to ‘take the codes of Mr Dior and transgress them to make the haute couture dynamic’, with an emphasis on ‘the architectural symbolism of the Bar suit … (shifting) the jacket’s construction into other garments’, the collection notes stated.

The designer’s Dior debut was set in a grandfôune, with particular attention being paid to the swirls of fabric, the movement of the clothes and the precision of the tailoring. The collection’s title paid tribute to the flower motifs in the clothes, evoking the idea of the ‘New Look’ ‘Flower Women’ (the way Mr Dior himself referred to his ‘New Look’ silhouettes and attitude, paying tribute to his father’s obsession).

‘Perhaps the contemporary flower woman is seen in her cleavage in the dissected ball gown silhouette,’ the house explained. ‘Starting with the pattern of a ball gown from the archives, the original silhouette is altered and shortened to form a short dress or a top to be worn with simple black cigarette trousers. The upper half of the silhouette remains the same, unadulterated, the bottom half success, the way we live now.’

After the black wool tuxedo ‘Bar’ jacket that opened the show (right) came embroidered cut-off ball gown trousers worn with tailored trousers (including a multi-creation embroidered with fuchsia velvet poplin dots, see overhead, inspired by the ‘Esther’ dress from Dior’s autumn/winter 1955 collection), day and evening gowns with structured bodice inserts, a striking ‘Dior Red’ cashmere ‘Bar’ coat (opposite) and an unexpected electric blue astrakhan fur bateau cocktail dress (overleaf).

Simons was keen to push for the development of new techniques and fabrics in couture, as demonstrated here through multicoloured mesh layered ensembles (see for example p. 542, right and, most memorably, the noble Strassbury prints that were developed exclusively for the collection and turned into chiffon-silk scarfs and evening gowns (see pp. 531 and 534, bottom left). A splendid white organza dress embroidered with ‘Pointaias’ degrade chiffon (see p. 535) closed the collection.
‘Dio(r)evolution’

For her first Dior collection (the first to be imagined by a woman in the house’s history), Italian designer Maria Grazia Chiuri declared that she set out "to create fashion that resembles the woman of today.....Fashion that corresponds to their changing needs, freed from the stereotypical categories of "masculine/feminine", "young/not so young", "reason/emotion"."

The central theme she chose was fencing, a discipline in which the balance between thought and action, the harmony between mind and heart are essential, Chiuri explained. "The uniform of the female fencer is, with the exception of some special protections, the same as for a male fencer."

The designer explored the forms and shapes of a silhouette that’s contemporary, agile and Olympian, exhibiting an elite sporting elegance, she announced the press notes. The padding and contouring of the New Looks were transformed here into strong, protective fencing jackets and ‘un-aggressive’ blush-coloured bustiers worn under fluid, transparent dresses.

The iconic 'Bar' silhouette was revisited in a freer way—the white jacket, which accentuates the narrowness of the waist and volume of the hips, is worn over a white t-shirt (embellished with a programmatic 'Dior(re)volution' slogan), while the black skirt is layered in tulle to give a peak at the knitted lingerie beneath, the house stated (see p. 620, left).

Key to Chiuri’s approach was the desire to look at the entire history of the brand, and the work of the designers who preceded her. ‘Sometimes people believe that Dior is only Monsieur Dior, but Dior is a brand that is seventy years old’, she told Tim Blanks. ‘There were incredible artists who worked in the house – Christian Dior was only ten years. After there was Saint Laurent, Marc Bohan, John Galliano – for my generation, John Galliano at Dior is a reference – but also Raf Simons, Simman for Dior Homme, and Giacomo Ferré. So I decided to look at the brand in a different way – on the one hand I decided to look at it like a curator.’

The bee motif that decorated white trainers and t-shirts was borrowed from Heidi Siman’s collections for Dior Homme, for example, while a new slogan, ‘T J Adair’ was everywhere from black and white elastic straps to choker necklaces and pendant earrings (see p. 621, bottom right), and echoed John Galliano’s ever ‘T J Adair Dior’ t-shirts (see p. 248) and ‘Admirable’ tattoo prints (see p. 33).

Christian Dior himself inspired the theme of rich and intricate eveningwear creations: ‘his logo, charms such as the t-shirt, the heart and the four-leaf clover are spritied here and there, cosmic and landscape elements are embroidered in silver on midnight blue tulle, while hour symbols were reinterpreted in the colorful embroideries of the evening dresses that closed the show,’ the house concluded.
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