

PRESS RELEASE

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Press Contact

Rachel Eggers
Manager of Public Relations
rachele@seattleartmuseum.org
206.654.3151

***YVES SAINT LAURENT: THE PERFECTION OF STYLE* OPENS AT SEATTLE ART MUSEUM OCTOBER 11**

Tickets on sale August 3 for major retrospective tracing the legendary fashion designer's 44-year career



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1300 First Avenue
Seattle, WA 98101
206.625.8900
seattleartmuseum.org

SEATTLE, WA - The Seattle Art Museum's fall 2016 exhibition, *Yves Saint Laurent: The Perfection of Style*, opens October 11, 2016, and continues through January 8, 2017. Drawn from the archives of the Fondation Pierre Bergé - Yves Saint Laurent and other private collections, this retrospective offers an intimate and comprehensive look at the lifetime achievement of Yves Saint Laurent, one of history's most influential fashion designers. Featuring important examples of haute couture and ready-to-wear garments—some never shown publicly before—the exhibition reveals Saint Laurent's artistic genius, his influence on fashion, and the creative process in his atelier.

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

The exhibition guides viewers on a path tracing the trajectory of Yves Saint Laurent's life and career. Divided into eight thematic sections, it features 110 ensembles illustrative of his tremendous achievements and the sources of his design inspiration.

The exhibition begins with Saint Laurent's "Paper Doll Couture House," shown for the first time in the United States. The paper dolls and corresponding wardrobes and accessories were created by the designer as a teenager on the precipice of a lifetime of fame and success.

Ensembles early in the exhibition focus on Saint Laurent's formative years at the House of Dior, including an example of a short evening dress from his successful debut *Trapeze* collection (1958). Later ensembles from Saint Laurent's own couture house spotlight innovations that redefined women's fashion: the peacoat (1962), the tuxedo (1966), the "First" pantsuit (1967), the safari jacket (1968).

Visitors will also see how Saint Laurent was inspired by art. The exhibition includes one of his famous dresses that pays homage to Piet Mondrian (1965) and dresses inspired by Pop art (1966). Also on view is an evening ensemble



comprising a raffia coat and a silk dress embroidered with wooden beads (1967) loosely based on African art.

In addition to ensembles fully accessorized in the “total look” favored by Saint Laurent, numerous photographs, drawings, and production documents offer a rare behind-the-scenes glimpse into the creative workings of the fashion house and the private life of the couturier. Collection boards from 1962 to 2002—every Saint Laurent haute couture show—feature sketches and swatches that retrace 40 years of the *maison de couture*’s fascinating history. A room of muslins, the hand-sewn forms ateliers use to create a first draft of couture garments, offer a unique look into how the garments were constructed.

The exhibition concludes in an explosion of color with a procession of evening wear ranging from black silk (1977) to blue-green chiffon (1985) to red silk crepe (1985) gowns to a white damask wedding gown (1995)—the traditional ending to an Yves Saint Laurent couture show.

The multifaceted exhibition is curated by Florence Müller, guest curator and Denver Art Museum’s Avenir Foundation Curator of Textile Art and curator of fashion in collaboration with Chiyo Ishikawa, SAM’s Deputy Director of Art and Curator of European Painting and Sculpture. A press preview will be held at SAM on Friday, October 7 at 11 am; more information to follow.

After SAM, the exhibition will travel to the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts from May 6 – August 27, 2017.

EXHIBITION CATALOGUE

A 160-page exhibition catalogue (including 150 color photographs) published by Skira Rizzoli will be available for purchase in September in SAM Shop (\$45.00). Also titled *Yves Saint Laurent: The Perfection of Style* (ISBN: 978-0-8478-4942-0), it is edited by Florence Müller and Chiyo Ishikawa. It features a preface by Pierre Bergé, President of the Fondation Pierre Bergé – Yves Saint Laurent, and a foreword by Kimerly Rorschach, SAM’s Illsley Ball Nordstrom Director and CEO.

YVES SAINT LAURENT – BIOGRAPHY

Yves Saint Laurent was born in 1936 in Oran, Algeria. He later studied at the Chambre Syndicale de la Haute Couture in Paris but was soon hired by Christian Dior to work in his studio. Upon the death of Dior in 1957, the 21-year-old Saint Laurent was named artistic director of the House of Dior and his first collection—*Trapeze*—was an immense success.

After being dismissed by the House of Dior in 1960, Saint Laurent launched his own couture house in 1961 with Pierre Bergé, who would become his lifelong partner in business and life. Over the ensuing 40 years, he would transform women’s fashion with his innovative designs. He notably revolutionized fashion by opening SAINT LAURENT *rive gauche* in 1966, the first ready-to-wear boutique to bear a couturier’s name, thus paving the way to what has today become the fashion world.

In 1999, Saint Laurent sold the ready-to-wear activity to the Kering group and dedicated himself to the couture collection. He officially retired on January 7, 2002, and on January 22 of the same year, the Centre Pompidou in Paris presented more than 40 years of Yves Saint Laurent creations, including his last Spring-Summer 2002 collection. Since then, only ready-to-wear collections have been produced by the brand owned by Kering. Its name was changed to SAINT LAURENT Paris in 2012.

In 2004, the Fondation Pierre Bergé – Yves Saint Laurent opened its doors in the premises of the former couture house. Its main goals are to conserve and promote Yves Saint Laurent’s unique heritage.

Saint Laurent died in his Paris home in 2008.

Two museums entirely dedicated to Yves Saint Laurent's work and life are to open in Paris and Marrakech in fall 2017. They will house important selections from the Fondation Pierre Bergé - Yves Saint Laurent's impressive collection. The Parisian museum will be in the historical couture house, 5 Avenue Marceau; in Marrakech, it will be located in a brand new building near Jardin Majorelle.

TICKETING INFO

Tickets go on sale Tuesday August 3. Due to anticipated high demand and limited capacity, timed ticketing will be in effect on certain high volume days for *Yves Saint Laurent: The Perfection of Style*.

Special Hours

- Monday 10 am-5 pm
- Closed Tuesday
- Wednesday 10 am-5 pm
- Thursdays 10 am-9 pm
- Friday-Sunday 10 am-5 pm

Daily Prices

- \$24.95 Adult
- \$22.95 Senior (62+), Military (with ID)
- \$14.95 Student (with ID), Teen (13-17)
- FREE for children (12 and under)
- FREE for SAM Members

First Thursday Reduced Ticket Prices

Special Exhibition ticket prices are reduced by more than 50% on the first Thursday of the month. Tickets to SAM Collections and Installations are free.

Head to visitsam.org/ysl for the most up-to-date ticketing information.

EXHIBITION ORGANIZATION AND SUPPORT

The exhibition is organized by the Seattle Art Museum in partnership with the Fondation Pierre Bergé - Yves Saint Laurent, Paris



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Image credits: "First" pantsuit, Spring-Summer 1967 haute couture collection, Black wool double-breasted jacket and pants with white pinstripes, Collection Hamish Bowles, © Patrick Bertrand/Les Editions Jalou. Evening gown, Spring-Summer 1985 haute couture collection, Red silk crepe gown with plunging V-neck, Model ordered by Nan Kempner, © Fondation Pierre Bergé - Yves Saint Laurent, Paris/Alexandre Guirkingier.. Portrait of Yves Saint Laurent, 1969, Photograph by Jeanloup Sieff, © The Estate of Jeanloup Sieff.

ABOUT SEATTLE ART MUSEUM

As the leading visual art institution in the Pacific Northwest, SAM draws on its global collections, powerful exhibitions, and dynamic programs to provide unique educational resources benefiting the Seattle region, the Pacific Northwest, and beyond. SAM was founded in 1933 with a focus on Asian art. By the late 1980s the museum had outgrown its original home, and in 1991 a new 155,000-square-foot downtown building, designed by Robert Venturi, Scott Brown & Associates, opened to the public. The 1933 building was renovated and reopened as the Asian Art Museum. SAM's desire to further serve its community was realized in 2007 with the opening of two stunning new facilities: the nine-acre Olympic Sculpture Park (designed by Weiss/Manfredi Architects)—a "museum without walls," free and open to all—and the Allied Works Architecture designed 118,000-square-foot expansion of its main, downtown location, including 232,000 square feet of additional space built for future expansion.

From a strong foundation of Asian art to noteworthy collections of African and Oceanic art, Northwest Coast Native American art, European and American art, and modern and contemporary art, the strength of SAM's collection of more than 25,000 objects lies in its diversity of media, cultures and time periods.

ABOUT FONDATION PIERRE BERGÉ – YVES SAINT LAURENT

Yves Saint Laurent and Pierre Bergé opened their haute couture house at 30 *bis* rue Spontini in 1962. During the twelve years that they stayed there, Yves Saint Laurent invented the wardrobe for the modern woman. They settled at 5 Avenue Marceau in 1974, in a Second Empire-style private mansion. There, Yves Saint Laurent asserted his style, until 2002, when he ended his career.

Opened in 2004 in Yves Saint Laurent's former couture house, the Fondation Pierre Bergé – Yves Saint Laurent is founded on 40 years of creativity. Recognized as a public organization, it has three missions:

- **The rigorous conservation of a unique heritage** comprising five thousand haute couture garments and fifteen thousand accessories, as well as thousands of sketches, collection boards, photographs, and objects;
- **The organization of exhibitions**, in both the refurbished spaces at 5 Avenue Marceau and museums around the world, promoting Yves Saint Laurent's work.
- **The support of cultural institutions** encouraging the contemporary arts.