



FORTUNY
UN ESPAGNOL
À VENISE

04.10.2017 —

07.01.2018

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04.10.2017 – 07.01.2018

SUMMARY

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PRESS RELEASE

This exhibition, "Fortuny, un Espagnol à Venise" (Fortuny, a Spaniard in Venice), closes the Palais Galliera's Spanish Season, which opened with "Balenciaga, l'œuvre au noir" ('Balenciaga, working in black') at the Musée Bourdelle, and was followed by "Costumes espagnols, entre ombre et lumière" ('Clothes in Spanish Tones') at the Maison de Victor Hugo.

A museum in the heart of La Serenissima bears his name. He was a Venetian by adoption, but Spanish by birth, famous for his fine pleats... The man in question is Mariano Fortuny, and the Palais Galliera, musée de la mode de la Ville de Paris, is devoting a retrospective to his work. With over a hundred pieces from the Galliera collection, Madrid's fashion museum, the Museo del Traje, and the Museo Fortuny in Venice, the exhibition will reveal the full diversity of his inspiration. The famous *Delphos* gown, designed in 1909, is the quintessential illustration of his originality and inventiveness. It is made entirely from plain silk, and is so finely pleated that it can be rolled up into a ball and still maintain all its flowing lines when unrolled... Mariano Fortuny y Madrazo (1871-1949) was the son of the Spanish painter Mariano Fortuny y Marsal (1838-1874) and, like his father, he started out as a painter. He moved to Venice in 1888 and his name has always been associated with that city. His highly eclectic tastes encompassed engraving, photography, furniture and lighting design, as well as stage design and stage lighting. In 1906, he turned his attentions to fabrics, with his *Knossos* scarf made of silk, printed with motifs inspired by Kamares pottery from the Minoan period. His dress designs liberated the female form. He reinterpreted the styles and motifs of Ancient Greece, the Middle-Ages and the Renaissance, and he created timeless, unwaisted pieces with soft, straight-hanging lines.

Mariano Fortuny features prominently in the works of Marcel Proust. At one point in *Remembrance of Things Past*, the painter Elstir tells Albertine: "But I hear that a Venetian artist, called Fortuny, has recovered the secret of the craft, and that before many years have passed women will be able to walk abroad, and better still to sit at home in brocades as sumptuous as those that Venice adorned, for her patrician daughters, with patterns brought from the Orient."

Fortuny would turn every fabric into a uniquely magnificent piece with subtle reflections of light. In the gowns worn by such legendary women as Countess Greffulhe and her daughter Éline, Eleonora Duse, Ellen Terry, and Oona Chaplin, visitors can admire his carefully researched prints, made from metallic powders on silk velvet, with their Byzantine, Japanese and Persian influences. The Mariano Fortuny exhibition is an invitation into the soft, shimmering world of a prolifically inventive designer who was a zealous advocate for liberating the female form, and a believer in the ultimate luxury: comfort. A total immersion in timeless elegance.

The exhibition has been organised in conjunction with the Museo del Traje, Madrid, and the Museo Fortuny in Venice.

Curators:

Sophie Grossiord, Head curator at the Palais Galliera assisted by **Christian Gros**

Scenography:

Béatrice Abonyi

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MUSEUM TRAIL

SALON D'HONNEUR

BEGUILING WITH LIGHT

Mariano Fortuny's discovery of Richard Wagner at Bayreuth in 1892 and the concept of the total work of art (*Gesamtkunstwerk*) opened up a vastly enlarged horizon for him and this is reflected in his work for the stage. *Tristan and Isolde* at La Scala, Milan in 1900, his renovation of the Comtesse de Béarn's theatre in 1906, the lighting for the main foyer of the Paris Opéra the following year, the installation of the Fortuny cyclorama dome for Parsifal, at La Scala in 1922, and his design for the Master-Singers of Nuremberg in Rome in 1931 were part of an impressive career in scenography.

Between 1903 and 1933, Mariano Fortuny filed no less than twenty patents in Paris. They were evidence of the major role played by light in his creations. He was an inventor of genius who explored new methods of applying indirect lighting with a reflector to the theatre. At the same time he devoted himself to engraving, painting and photography. His training as a painter was an essential part of this creative process.

The infinite chromatic variations of light on the canals, the dim light created by the bullseye window panes in the Palazzo Pesaro-Orfei were subtly echoed in the changing reflections of the printed textiles: "the shimmering fabric of an intense blue which, as my eyes drew nearer, turned into a malleable gold by those same transmutations which, before an advancing gondola, change the azure of the Grand Canal into gleaming metal." (Marcel Proust, *The Captive*, 1923).



© Stéphane Piera / Galliera / Roger-Viollet

Mariano Fortuny
Coat
Gold printed chocolate silk velvet
and caramel silk velvet
Gold silk satin lining
Circa 1920



© Stéphane Piera / Galliera / Roger-Viollet

Mariano Fortuny
Coat (detail)
Gold printed chocolate silk velvet
and caramel silk velvet
Gold silk satin lining
Circa 1920

The chromatic range, the juxtaposition of two motifs inspired by the Italian Renaissance, the print work which plays on the effects of the material are evidence of Mariano Fortuny's incomparable virtuosity. The pattern of the wide section is repeated in the trimming of the edges.

THE VOGUE FOR HELLENISM

Picking up on a tradition that started at the beginning of the 19th century, the first decade of the twentieth century saw a resurgence of interest in Greek antiquity. It was an influence on architecture, dance and music as well as haute couture.

In England, the paintings of Lord Frederic Leighton, Lawrence Alma-Tadema and John William Godward were steeped in a nostalgia for the period, which heralded the *Delphos* gown. The archaeologist Théodore Reinach had the villa Kérylos built in Beaulieu-sur-Mer in 1902 – a reconstruction of an ancient villa on the island of Delos. Antoine Bourdelle drew inspiration from the period. Isadora and Raymond Duncan were leading figures in the return to Hellenism, which was also shared by the choreographer Mariquita and the dancer Régina Badet.

The vogue came into full bloom with Sergei Diaghilev's Russian ballets which by 1909 had taken Paris by storm. *Narcisse* premiered on 6 June 1911, *Hélène de Sparte* on 4 May 1912, *L'Après-midi d'un faun* on 29 May 1912 and *Daphnis et Chloé* on 8 June 1912, all with sets and costumes by Léon Bakst and staged at the Théâtre du Châtelet. In the private domain, Paul Poiret gave free rein to his extravagant taste for magnificence in his 'Les Festes de Bacchus' party in June 1912.

In the same year, Madeleine Vionnet's winter collection was a series of variations on the ancient Greek tunic.



© Musée Bourdelle / Roger-Viollet

Maurice-Louis Branger
Raymond Duncan and his pupils
beside a pool
Gelatin aristotype
Circa 1910



© Françoise Cochenne / Galliera / Roger-Viollet

Mariano Fortuny
Delphos gown
White mercerized cotton, white silk
cord, white, yellow and blue, glass
beads
Late 1940s

Oona Chaplin owned several *Delphos* gowns in different colours. Three of them are presented in this exhibition. This one was most likely purchased in New York. It is made of three widths of fabric.

THE KNOSSOS SCARF

"In 1907, some ancient printed fragments, found in Greece, started me on a search for printing processes», wrote Mariano Fortuny. The name *Knossos* and the logo of the famous labyrinth, which he made his trade mark in January 1908, are evidence of the importance of Minoan Crete in his inspiration.

In 1900, Sir Arthur John Evans had begun his dig in search of the mythical palace of Minos at Knossos. His discoveries were echoed in Fortuny's notebooks by some sketches of motifs copied from Evans's 1906 article 'The Prehistoric Tombs of Knossos'.

The *Knossos* scarves were Fortuny's first attempts, in collaboration with Henriette Nigrin in 1907, at textile printing. The different models were presented in Berlin on 24 November of the same year by Ruth St Denis, a pioneer of modern dance. The chromatic richness of those long scarves was a reminder that Fortuny was a painter. The block-printed floral and marine motifs (octopus, seaweed, shells) were modelled on the decorative repertoire of the Minoan vases.

Success was immediate. «In Paris at the moment, everybody is talking about the famous scarf painted by Fortuny,» it said in *L'Art et la Mode* in February 1908, going on to explain that «it is essential to be assisted by a chambermaid who must hold tightly onto one end of the material, which one wraps around oneself at least four times, before letting the other end fall to the ground as a train."

The *Knossos* scarf, which frequently accompanied the *Delphos* gown was characteristic of Fortuny's desire to liberate the female body.



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Paul Poiret / Mariano Fortuny
Bacchante tunic worn by Denise Poiret
for 'Les Festes de Bacchus' on 20 June 1912
White chiffon printed black, green silk taffeta
leaves, gilded glass tassels, yellow silk thread
trimmings

On June 20, 1912, Paul Poiret organized 'Les Festes de Bacchus' at the Pavillon du Butard. Dressed as Bacchus, in a golden wig, he welcomed his guests, one of whom was Isadora Duncan. Disguised as a Bacchante, Denise Poiret wore a tunic printed with Cretan-inspired geometric patterns and plants, made from a *Knossos* scarf. The scarf used was 1 m wide by 4 m long.

THE DELPHOS GOWN

This emblematic dress, whose name was attested in September 1909 by a purchase by the extravagant Marquise Casati, made Mariano Fortuny famous and has enjoyed uninterrupted success up to the present day. It was inspired by the *Charioteer of Delphi*, but it is also a direct heir of the archaic Greek Korai in their pleated chitons.

With the impetus of the move towards reform which was even influencing a still rather Victorian England, Fortuny filed a patent in Paris in November 1909 for the invention of a «Kind of garment for women derived from a classical dress». A few months earlier he had filed a patent for a «Kind of pleated, corrugated fabric».

Made from four or five widths of fine pleated silk taffeta, the *Delphos* dress, the bottom of which flares out in a corolla, follows the movements of the body perfectly and liberates the female form. Decoration is limited to the belt, which is ornamented with gold print patterns. This highly refined model generates subtle effects by the way it concentrates and reflects the light, helped in part by the glass beads that adorn the edges. A layer of albumin adds sublime brilliance to the fabric.

One remains baffled by the delicacy and lightness of that permanent pleat; its invention is attributed to Henriette Nigrin, Mariano Fortuny's wife and close collaborator. In spite of the technical explanations in the patent, the way it was achieved still retains an element of mystery.



© L. Degrâces et P. Ladet / Galliera / Roger-Viollet

Mariano Fortuny
Delphos gown
Bronze green silk pleated taffeta,
black silk cord, amber-colour glass
and black and white glass beads
Circa 1913



© Fondazione Musei Civici di Venezia

Mariano Fortuny
Woman wearing a *Delphos* gown
Gelatin dry plate
Circa 1920

Mariano Fortuny filed the patent for this dress in London on 2 June 1913 and completed it on 24 October. He registered the model for it at the Conseil des Prud'hommes de la Seine on 30 January 1914. An ingenious system of drawstrings can be used to adjust the waist. The dress on display is made from four widths of pleated silk.

GRANDE GALERIE

TEXTILE PRINTING AT THE PALAZZO PESARO-ORFEI

The abayas, casaquin jackets, capes, coats, surcoats and tunics that added magnificence to the *Delphos* gown, have come in a small number of typologies over the decades. These timeless, sober creations that cling to the body in various shades, are difficult to date. They draw on a luxurious decorative repertoire, inspired by that multitude of influences from the Middle and Far East, Islamic art and the Renaissance that inhabited Mariano Fortuny's consciousness. "These Fortuny gowns, faithfully antique but markedly original, brought before the eye, like a stage décor, [...] that Venice saturated with the gorgeous Orient where they would have been worn," wrote Proust.

The motifs tumble out on velvet and gauze. His fabric of choice, silk, allows the realization of delicate masterpieces. Led by Henriette, the workshops in the Palazzo Pesaro-Orfei, which was also the couple's home in Venice, employed up to a hundred workers. The production process was artisanal, the silk imported from Japan was dyed with natural pigments applied in successive layers, the decoration was printed with the aid of copper oxides, bronze and aluminium. Polishing was done with an agate. Fortuny filed patents for textile printing techniques in 1909 and 1910. Wood-block printing, Japanese katagami type stencils, continuous mechanical printing on gelatin coated support, and a technique akin to silk-screen printing – the processes were many and complex. Preparatory cartoons, blocks for printing, and stamping tools, still existent in large numbers, are a direct link with the models on display here.



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Mariano Fortuny
Ensemble: *Delphos* gown and coat (detail)
Grey pleated silk Taffeta dress, yellow and red glass beads, silk taffeta printed with gold. Matching belt.
Coat in coral rosewood silk velvet printed silver, trimmed at edge with brown printed grey silk velvet. Pink Crepe Chiffon Lining
Circa 1919-1920

This *Delphos* gown, with raised collar in the same pattern as the belt, is an unusual model. It consists of five widths of pleated silk.

The velvet trim, printed in a different pattern, which adorns the edges of cloaks, capes and casaquin jackets is characteristic of Mariano Fortuny.



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Mariano Fortuny
Eleonora dress
Green silk velvet printed with gold, green pleated silk taffeta, green silk cord, black and white glass beads
Gold silk taffeta lining
Circa 1912

The motifs of this *Eleonora* dress and the size of them were inspired by the Italian Renaissance.



© Stéphane Piera / Galliera / Roger-Viollet

Mariano Fortuny
Eleonora dress (detail)
Green silk velvet printed with gold, green pleated silk taffeta, green silk cord, black and white glass beads
Gold silk taffeta lining
Circa 1912

GALERIE EST

"AT LAST I HAVE MY DRESS!"

The «magician of Venice» used to exhibit his creations in the cosy atmosphere of the Palazzo Pesaro-Orfei. They were designed for a cosmopolitan, privileged clientele. «At last I have my dress!» wrote Eloisa P. de Lartigue in August 1910, "But you can flatter yourself for having made me wait.» An abundance of drawings and photographs attests to this success. Parisians discovered Mariano Fortuny in April-May 1911 at an exhibition at the Central Union of Decorative Arts. The press was enthusiastic about models that were still reserved for a private few.

The artistic elite, frequented by Marcel Proust, acclaimed the *Delphos* gown. The Marquise Casati, Régine Flory, Eleonora Duse, Anna Pavlova, Lucienne Bréval, Julia Bartet, Rosemonde Gérard, Joaquín Sorolla all shared the enthusiasm. Deirdre, the young daughter of Isadora Duncan, wore a very rare children's model of the *Delphos*.

An Eleonora dress owned by Éleine Greffulhe, and another worn by the actress Ellen Terry are testimony to the fame of this model, which Isadora Duncan was also fond of. The Countess Greffulhe had several Fortuny outfits, including a casaquin.

«Mariano Fortuny is in fashion! [...] The Orfei Palace has become an atelier and a museum. We arrange to see each other there, and we meet up. We even get into the habit of going back to it», trumpeted *Le Gaulois* in 1929. From 1923 to 1927, the sales books testify to this vogue for clothes that women now dared to wear outside: wealthy foreigners and celebrities gave them the stamp of approval; orders were shipped quickly. Mrs. G. Churchill, Mrs. Galsworthy, Alma Mahler, Mrs. Arthur Schnitzler are just a few names among many others. Interior designer Elsie Mc Neill made substantial purchases and Jeanne Lanvin was a loyal customer.



© Albert Harlingue / Roger-Viollet

Albert Harlingue
The actress Régine Flory at home
in a *Delphos* gown
Gelatin dry plate
Circa 1910



© Albert Harlingue / Roger-Viollet

Albert Harlingue
Lisa, Anna and Margot Duncan,
adopted daughters of Isadora Duncan,
in *Delphos* gowns
Gelatin silver print
Circa 1920

GALERIE OUEST

BABANI AND "THE PALACE OF SILKS"

At the beginning of the twentieth century, which was marked by a vogue for all things Japanese, Babani's embroidered kimonos were all the rage among Parisian women.

Vitali Babani, who was originally from Constantinople, moved to Paris in 1892, to 98 Boulevard Haussmann and 65 Rue d'Anjou. The house specialised in goods from the Orient, importing carpets, bronzes, ivories, porcelain, furniture and silks from China, Japan, India and Turkey. They also had embroidery work done in workshops in Kyoto and Constantinople. The *Palais des Soieries* ['Palace of Silks'], as *La Renaissance de l'art français et des industries de luxe* dubbed it in September 1920, was an Ali Baba's cave full of embroidery, clothes and drapes. Mary Babani, the daughter of the founder, drew from this collection to create garments that exploded with colour; they were often embroidered with gold and inspired by all kinds of exotic costumes. Artists and emancipated women, often foreigners passing through Paris, recognized the originality and simplicity of their cut, as well as the freedom of movement that they allowed. The Duchesse de Gramont, née Éline Greffulhe, was a client.

Around 1911, finding that they were similarly inspired, Mariano Fortuny entrusted the sale of some of his pieces to Babani. In fact, Fortuny's influence is clearly perceptible in Babani's creations.

Under the leadership of Maurice Babani, son of Vitali, fragrances and cosmetics were introduced from 1919 to the early 1940s and greatly contributed to the fame of the house.



© Françoise Cochenec / Galliera / Roger-Viollet

Babani
Tunic
Turquoise silk fabric, gold wire embroidery,
gold wire cord, bronze coloured metalized
glass beads
1920s



© Françoise Cochenec / Galliera / Roger-Viollet

Babani
Kimono
black fleeced silk satin, embroidery in pink
and black silk thread. Pink silk linen
Circa 1930

SALLE CARRÉE

INFLUENCED AND INSPIRED BY MARIANO FORTUNY

The recent acquisition of a coat by the Palais Galliera has cast new light on Suzanne Bertillon, a little-known artist who worked on the fringes of couture. «Mademoiselle Bertillon [...] has found a new method for fixing gold applications onto light fabrics», noted *La Renaissance de l'art français et des industries de luxe* in 1918. Her growing reputation led her, from 1919 on, to exhibit at the Salon d'Automne, the Museum of Decorative Arts and the Musée Galliera. In 1925, *L'Art vivant* waxed enthusiastic about her velvets, printed with hand-crafted colours: «These fabrics are of an opulence which irresistibly reminds one of the sumptuous materials of the Renaissance. [...] The compositions, which she engraves herself on wood or on linoleum, are in an easy and very deliberately contemporary style.»

In 1913, the Italian artist Maria Monaci Gallenga, a painter by training, also designed pieces in silk printed with complex motifs. Although she was surrounded by artists striving to recreate the relationship between art, crafts and industry, Gallenga's place in modernity is justified by her use of a process that was specifically her own.

There is no solid evidence for a connection between Suzanne Bertillon and Maria Gallenga and Mariano Fortuny, and they cannot be placed among the disciples of the «magician of Venice.» Even so, the way the designs of all three blended influences from both the Renaissance and the East, imbues them with a similar sense of timelessness.

As a tribute to Mariano Fortuny, Issey Miyake's *Pleats Please* and the Valentino Haute Couture Spring-Summer 2016 show bring this journey to a close.



© Stéphane Piera / Galliera / Roger-Viollet

Maria Monaci Gallenga
Indoor dress
Raspberry silk velvet printed with gold, raspberry silk thread, rust-green beads; lining in pink silk fabric and pink chiffon.
Unlabelled.
Circa 1912

The cut of this princess line dress is of mediaeval inspiration.



© Françoise Cochenne / Galliera / Roger-Viollet

Valentino by Maria Grazia Chiuri and Pierpaolo Piccioli
Isadorable dress
Pleated taupe chiffon wood-block printed with gold pattern
Haute couture Spring-Summer 2016

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PUBLICATIONS

CATALOGUE (in French)

Mariano Fortuny, un Espagnol à Venise

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Gratuite

The digital app can be downloaded onto a smartphone or a tablet. It contains extra information in the form of written explanations, visuals and digital links to the subject. It includes a concise biography of Mariano Fortuny, a presentation of the different sections of the exhibition trail, with a focus on 18 of the pieces and models on display. Each 'focus' gives additional information about the works through texts and extra content. The free app is available on Apple Store and Play Store and can be downloaded directly in the museum lobby. It is part of a Paris Musée general policy of welcoming visitors in an environment that reflects contemporary advances in information technology and cultural mediation.



FORTUNY UN ESPAGNOL À VENISE

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EXTRACTS FROM THE CATALOGUE

MARIANO FORTUNY'S LEGACY

Guillermo de Osma

[...] Mariano Fortuny y Madrazo (1871-1949) remained outside orthodox art history as it was understood from the perspective of avant-garde modernity. It was only with the advent of postmodernism that the world rediscovered this eclectic, solitary designer, whose personality combined tradition and modernity, austerity and exuberance, minimalism and theatricality. Fortuny was curious about everything, an indefatigable, relentless worker. All he thought about was getting his projects finished without betraying his vision and his way of thinking. This personal dialectic led him to a universalist, non-hierarchized view of mankind and its works. And artistic creation, experimentation and scientific research were complementary fields to his humanist attitude. Fortuny made no distinction between major and minor arts, or fine art and the decorative arts, and rejected any separation of art from science. A mechanical problem might take up as much of his attention as a large Wagnerian-style painting. He could be equally absorbed in the tiniest detail of an engraving, by pigments for dyeing a piece of velvet, or in working out a new lighting technique. Fortuny explored fields as varied as painting, engraving, photography, scenography, stage lighting, making textiles and clothing, designing lamps, furniture and other objects, as well as scientific research. Between 1901 and 1934, he filed some twenty patents in France, Italy, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States. His inventions range from a technical device for varying the intensity of a lamp, to a boat propulsion system. Among other things, he patented the *Delphos* gown, his best-known garment – actually designed by his muse Henriette –, several new textile printing processes, and a revolutionary, indirect, stage-lighting system. Fortuny drew inspiration from his deep knowledge of the past and his keen sense of tradition. His ability to integrate the old with the latest technology, often of his own invention, always achieved an innovative and resolutely modern result.

Following in his father's footsteps

[...] «Marianito» or «Mano», as his mother called him, learned to walk in a stimulating environment of painters, both family and friends, and he grew up surrounded by extraordinary objects and wonderful paintings. He appears with his sister in a painting by his father, one of his freest and most modern works, entitled *The Painter's Children in the Japanese Salon* (now in the Museo nacional del Prado).

In this delightful scene, little Mariano plays with a large piece of cloth from his parents' collection – a collection that he added to his own, years later. His uncle Ricardo de Madrazo recalled that «Mano», still very young, spent his time dyeing fabrics different colours. Mariano Fortuny's father died in 1874, at the age of thirty-six, leaving a powerful mark on his son's memory, even though young Mariano, who was three years old at the time, hardly knew him. It was Cecilia who created and maintained the legend of her late husband. But, over and above this mythical dimension, a strong bond with his father persisted in Fortuny's mind, clearly the result of shared passions. The two artists shared a fascination for the East and the Arab world, even going so far as to adopt the dress codes and to collect similar fabrics and objects. Both had large studios: the father's in Rome, in the Via Flaminia, and the son's in Venice, at the Palazzo Pesaro-Orfei.

They both had a horror of the void, which led them to fill the space with all kinds of objects: paintings, fabrics, draperies, and more. Where Granada and later Naples were symbols of freedom for the father, it was Venice for the son. They both felt uncomfortable with the inevitable social pressures of large cities. All his life, Fortuny *films* maintained an attitude of independence, if not defiance, which led him to seek autonomy, so that he could keep control of the entire creative process from his ivory tower, from raw material to finished product. His Venetian palace was laboratory, house, atelier and shop, all at the same time. This characteristic speaks volumes about the way he developed his work, both artistic and technological.

Fortuny liked to do what he wanted, the way he wanted, without having to rely on others. So, he studied treatises on the painting techniques of the old masters and travelled through remote villages in the Veneto in search of the rare craftsmen who still made their own colours. He eventually created a formula that allowed him to produce his own colours, the 'Fortuny tempera', which he started selling in the 1930s. He printed his father's engravings himself, as well as his own. He also developed his own photographs and invented a type of photographic paper. He embarked on experiments with light, developed systems for indirect lighting, and manufactured the lamps for it. As for textile design, Mariano Fortuny and his wife Henriette took delivery of the raw fabrics in Venice and supervised the entire process of transformation. Fortuny developed a method for printing on velvet, silk or cotton fabrics, and designed the machines required to do it. They made canvases in the Palazzo workshops. Even the sale of their products was carried out exclusively through his own network.

Like his father, who had been fascinated by the skill of the craftsmen and had tried, among other things, to manufacture firearms, Fortuny *films* was, from a very young age, keen to understand how things worked. He showed an early interest in mechanics and everything to do with technology. In 1882, Federico de Madrazo nicknamed his eleven-year old grandson 'the mouse trap maker'. If Fortuny's father was endowed with many talents which his son also inherited, the son certainly demonstrated all of his father's aptitude for design and invention.

[...]

It's all about painting

Little by little, Fortuny renovated the Palazzo Pesaro-Orfei, gradually restoring the 'magician's house' to its former glory. The huge living room on the first floor, the *piano nobile*, was divided by huge velvet curtains and the space was lit by two large silk lamps, painted with Arabic and oriental motifs, using an indirect lighting system. Fortuny hung his paintings on the walls; they were copies and paintings by his father, and family portraits. In the middle of all this, among all the memories and the miscellaneous objects from his collections, he would paint on a mobile easel of his own invention. In the adjoining rooms he set up workshops for his research into lighting and scenography, and a library containing the latest scientific and artistic publications and, above all, his picture archives. This imposing repository of forms and ideas was the guarantee of his autonomy.

At the end of his life, Fortuny wrote, «I have always been interested in many things, but my real job was painting». With those words he closed a circle and recognized that he was only a link in the family tradition. Yet, although he painted remarkable paintings, especially the Wagner-inspired ones, it seems clear that Fortuny's main contribution was in other artistic fields, such as photography, lighting systems, and designing textiles and clothes.

There is no doubt that the practice of painting taught him how to use colour in subtle and harmonious ways, and revealed the myriad resources of light – lessons that were crucial to the development of his other activities. He also wrote, for example, that his new lighting system «allows the artist to mix colours on stage with his own palette: it has become possible to paint in the theatre.»

Using his progressive dyeing technique, Fortuny designed his fabrics like paintings, layering the colour to create a play of light. Having been printed and retouched by hand with a brush or some other implement, every one of his fabrics was a unique piece, both in its texture and its design. His highly innovative garment designs can only be understood by remembering that Fortuny was a classic painter, for whom a naked body deserves respect and should be covered in the simplest possible way.

The idealised clothes painted by artists of the generation before him, painters like Lawrence Alma-Tadema, Albert Moore, Frederic Leighton and John William Godward, seemed to become reality in the *Knossos* scarves (1906), the *Delphos* gown (1909) and all the models by Mariano Fortuny that stemmed from those two creations. He did not see painting as just a medium or a technique for producing an image, he saw it as an intrinsic aesthetic attitude towards light and colour, and he was able to handle it in an infinite variety of modes of expression.

MARIANO FORTUNY IN LITERATURE

Guillermo de Osma

“The box had Fortuny’s name on it. Eustace untied the string and lifted the lid. What he saw beneath the uncrumpled tissue-paper startled him. Twisted into a tight coil, as if wrung out to dry, lay the blue and silver of Hilda’s dress. The heavy pleats, close-ribbed like a ploughed field, looked darker than he remembered. He knew he could never fold the dress again, so he contented himself with letting his fingers run along those grooves and ridges, so tightly drawn that he could feel their pressure. Yet what power for expansion did those pleats imply, what undreamed-of potentialities of movement for Hilda, the new Hilda! What an escape from the prison of her clinical clothes, the blue-black uniform that constricted all her movements ! She could dance, she could fly, in this.”¹

Mariano Fortuny’s singular and charismatic personality, his gifts in so many different artistic fields, his ability to combine tradition and modernity, art and science, and his fantastic «palazzo-laboratory» have fascinated and intrigued a host of writers and poets. He has been described variously as a «brilliant son of Venice,» a «magician,» an «alchemist,» a «dreamer,» a «Venetian hidalgo,» and even a «Renaissance man.» In the history of art, few creative artists have ever attracted the interest of the writers of their own generation, as Fortuny did. But he continues to fascinate writers of today, like Spanish poet Pere Gimferrer or the French author Gérard Macé. He was friends with some, like Gabriele D’Annunzio, Angelo Conti, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Ugo Ojetti and Miguel Zamacoïs. Others – such as Henri de Régnier, Henri Lavedan, Alberto Spainì, Corrado Tumiati or Paul Morand – have given us keys to his universe. And, of course, Marcel Proust, as well as L. P. Hartley and Mary McCarthy, explored the transcendental quality of his work, especially his clothes. This dimension has conferred an aura on him and a character that no other artist, couturier or creator has ever possessed.

Close relations with the poets Gabriele D’Annunzio and Régnier

Shortly after he moved to Venice in 1888, Fortuny met the fiery Gabriele D’Annunzio at the Casetta Rossa, the miniature palazzo of Prince Fritz von Hohenlohe and his wife Zina – whose portrait he painted. The two men hit it off immediately, thanks to a common interest in art and theatre. The friendship lasted more than twenty years. During the following years, Fortuny contributed to two reviews, *Convito*, founded by D’Annunzio in 1895 and *Il Marzocco* (founded in 1896). At the Hohenlohes’, Fortuny met Angelo Conti, the historian and art critic, administrator of the Venice museums and an old friend of D’Annunzio. Like Fortuny, he was a great admirer of Richard Wagner. Conti was a strange person; he was a Buddhist and attracted by symbolism. He dedicated his essay on art and aesthetics, *La Beata Riva* (1900) to Fortuny. His aesthetic idealism had a considerable influence on the «magician of Venice» who remained in contact with him until he died in 1930. In 1901 Gabriele D’Annunzio and Eleonora Duse asked Fortuny to design the sets for *Francesca da Rimini*, a commission that he accepted with enthusiasm.

D’Annunzio wanted a production with complex effects, and his strict requirements gave rise to a lengthy correspondence. In addition, the two friends often met to discuss the project in “the alchemist’s garret”, where the poet admired Fortuny’s models – «piccoli teatri miracolosi» – and his «admirable» lighting. In June, D’Annunzio asked him to

1. L. P. Hartley, *Eustace and Hilda*, 1947 London, Putnam. p. 201.

start thinking about the costumes straight away: «Research on these costumes is very important.» Fortuny did not yet have a workshop with sufficient logistical capacity or an adequate team to cope with a complex scenography; in the end, he handed his models and his sketches over to Antonio Rovesalli, Eleonora Duse's regular scenographer.

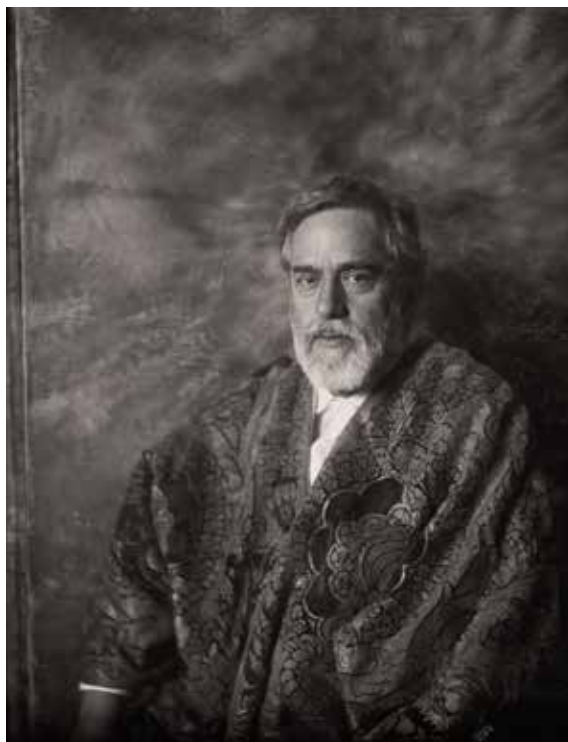
It may well have been D'Annunzio who inspired Fortuny with the name *Delphos*, which he gave to his famous pleated dresses in 1907. *The Charioteer of Delphi* had been discovered in 1896, and it fascinated the poet, who had a copy of it: he compared «the symmetrical, firm pleats» of the sculpture to the robustness of the columns in the temples.

Although the Francesca da Rimini project came to nothing, the detailed study for the costumes for the play had raised Fortuny's interest in garments and fabrics, a world with which he was already familiar thanks to his parents' remarkable collection of textiles. The symbolist poet Henri de Régnier described his discovery of Cecilia de Madrazo's collection in *L'Altana ou La Vie Vénitienne* (1899-1924), one of the most beautiful and eloquent accounts of the Fortuny's atypical life at the Palazzo Martinengo. «In spite of the austere fence," it was not a hostile or closed world. Cecilia and her daughter Maria Luisa, who both «still looked very Spanish », were delighted to receive visitors. Before admiring the fabrics, «we were offered delicious cooking from Valencia and intricate pastries». Over lunch, Madame Fortuny related anecdotes about the collection, revealing that her passion for fabrics went back to her childhood, and it was a passion she had shared with her late husband, Mariano Fortuny y Marsal. Part of the collection was auctioned in 1875, but she had been able to keep her personal collection, which had grown over time. After the meal, Doña Cecilia escorted her guests to the great hall of the palazzo, where they observed «a scene of magic». «Mme Fortuny and her daughter went over to a large chest in the corner of the room and lifted its heavy lid. In it lay, gently and carefully folded, the fabrics which they took out with great care. Suddenly the first one appeared. It was an admirable velvet from the fifteenth century, dark blue and embossed with stylish arabesques, it was a strange, dull blue, deep and pure, like the mantle of the night. [...] bending over the deep, inexhaustible chest, Mme Fortuny, with her magic gestures, seemed to be conducting an astonishing concert of fabrics which, in the depths of this old palace, was being played in the mysterious silence of the Venetian twilight.» Most of the collection was eventually handed down to her son, for whom it provided a rich repertoire of inspiration.

FORTUNY
UN ESPAGNOL À VENISE
04.10.2017 – 07.01.2018
A FAMILY OF ARTISTS

The son of Mariano Fortuny y Marsal, a famous Catalan painter who died prematurely at the age of 36, and Cecilia de Madrazo y Garreta, herself from a dynasty of Spanish artists, Mariano Fortuny y Madrazo was born in Granada in 1871. His maternal grandfather, who was director of the Prado, his uncles Raimundo and Ricardo de Madrazo, his cousin Federico, known as Coco, son of Raimundo, were all renowned painters. With this family background it was only natural that, in 1881, the young Mariano joined the studio of Benjamin-Constant in Paris and became part of a vigorous art scene. He considered himself first as a painter, following in the footsteps of his father, to whom he devoted a book *Fortuny 1838-1874*, published in 1933.

An insatiable collector, Mariano Fortuny y Marsal built up an exceptional collection of weapons, ceramics, tapestries, draperies and fabrics, which he exhibited in his studio in the Via Flaminia in Rome. The auction of part of the collection, in Paris in April 1875, made a great stir. Cecilia was inspired by the same passion as her husband and added old fabrics and historical clothes to this collection which never failed to arouse the admiration of visitors to the Palazzo Martinengo in Venice, where the family settled in 1888. We learn this from the writer Henri de Regnier, who wrote about it in *L'Altana ou La Vie Vénitienne 1899-1924*, published in 1928. A collector in his turn, Mariano Fortuny was particularly caught up by the family passion because it revived an Italian Renaissance tradition that had shone with special brilliance in Venice.



Mariano Fortuny
Self-portrait circa 1935
Museo Fortuny archives
© Fondazione Musei Civici di Venezia –
Museo Fortuny

TIMELINE

1871

11 May: birth of Mariano Fortuny y Madrazo in Granada, second child of the painter Mariano Fortuny y Marsal and Cecilia de Madrazo y Garreta.

1874

21 November: death of his father.

1877

4 October: birth of Henriette Nigrin in Fontainebleau.

1888

May: after moving to Rome, Paris, and then Madrid, Cecilia moves permanently into the palazzo Martinengo, Venice, with her children.

1896

Gold medal at the 7th International Art Exhibition, Munich, for his painting *Le Fanciulle-Fiore*.

1898

February: purchases the attic of the Palazzo Pesaro-Orfei, Venice.

1899

22 April: takes part for the first time in the Venice Biennale.

1902

Meets Henriette in Paris.

1906

Buys the first floor of the Palazzo Pesaro-Orfei.

1907

Begins printing on fabrics with Henriette.
24 November: presentation of the *Knossos* scarf in Berlin.

1909

Files patents in Paris for invention of a 'kind of corrugated, pleated fabric' (10 June), used in the design of the *Delphos* gown and for a 'Kind of garment for women' (4 November).

1911

April-May: participates in the exhibition *Les Travaux de la femme* at the Union Centrale des Arts Décoratifs, Paris.

1912

Opens a boutique in London at 29 Maddox Street and Old Bond Street, and one in Paris at 2bis, Rue de Marignan (in 1921, this boutique moved to 67, rue Pierre-Charron).

1919

Has a textile printing factory built on the island of Giudecca (Venice).

1923

7 July: the Società Anonima Fortuny is set up.

1924

29 February: marries Henriette in Paris.

1925

Grand Prix at the International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts in Paris.

1927

Meets interior designer Elsie McNeill, who opens a boutique in New York at 509 Madison Avenue.

1932

12 August: death of his mother.

1940

October: production stops at the Giudecca factory.

1942

10 January: the Paris boutique is closed.

1947

Production resumes at Giudecca, with the help of Humphrey Lee and Elsie McNeill.

1949

2 May: death of Mariano Fortuny in Venice.
30 November: Henriette stops all activities at the Palazzo Pesaro-Orfei.

1951

24 March: Henriette hands over the property to the Società Anonima Fortuny and the Giudecca factory to Elsie McNeill.

1956

Henriette gives the Palazzo Pesaro-Orfei to the City of Venice.

1965

16 March: death of Henriette Fortuny in Venice.



MUSEO DEL TRAJE – CENTRE D'INVESTIGATION DU PATRIMOINE ETHNOLOGIQUE



As its name suggests, the Costume Museum (Museo del Traje) and Ethnological Heritage Research Centre (Centro de Investigación del Patrimonio Etnológico), is the result of the merger of two major collections, one devoted to the history of fashion and costume, and the other to the ethnological heritage of Spain. This explains the variety and amplitude of the museum's collections – more than 183,000 pieces divided logically between two major sections: clothing and ethnography. The clothing section accounts for much of the museum work (both temporary and permanent exhibitions) while the ethnographic collection is above all a resource for research.

The textile and clothing collections contain more than 61,000 pieces, the oldest of which dates back to around 1500. The museum

attaches great importance in certain sections of the collection not just to the items' relevance to Spain and Spanish history, but also their international character. In this respect, the 18th century clothing collection, which is largely the result of donations made in the 1920s by the aristocratic Güell and Guiu families, is of great interest. Even more remarkable is the unique collection of drawings by Mariano Fortuny y Madrazo, which was acquired at the same time as his collection of fabrics; it contains some real jewels and shows influences from many and varied sources. Another special section is dedicated to Spanish haute couture; it features work by Balenciaga, Pertegaz, Elio Berhanyer and Pedro Rodríguez, amongst others, in a prestigious, national and international collection of ready-to-wear fashion. Last of all, but by no means least, are the Spanish folk costumes. They form a large collection that testifies to a rich and varied tradition of fabrics and workmanship from every corner of Spain.

All these pieces are preserved and displayed in what was the first purpose-built museum building in Spain, a building that was awarded the Spanish National Prize for Architecture in 1969. It is a functional and very distinctive building, whose various departments and spaces blend naturally with the surrounding gardens and greenery. The circuit of the permanent exhibition takes the visitor on a fascinating trip through the history of clothing in Spain, from Antiquity (illustrated by sculptures and pottery) to the present day, with a particular focus on the period between the 18th and 20th century, when French fashion was a powerful influence. The outfits and accessories that marked each era are displayed in large vitrines with a minimalist, elegant atmosphere. An important museographic decision was made to use invisible mannequins, custom built by the museum staff in order to ensure optimum conservation of the pieces.

The Museo del Traje (Costume Museum) is one of the more recent institutions in Spain (it was opened in 2004), but its origins go back to 1925, the year of the regional and historical costumes exhibition in Madrid. That event was such a resounding success with the public that it was immediately clear that a national museum was required for this precious heritage. A museum devoted to traditional dress was created and, from 1934 on, found its home in the newly established Spanish People's Museum (Museo del Pueblo Español). That museum was closed to the public for many years but it continued to grow its collection and, in 2004, the decision was made to re-open it on the current site, with absolute priority given to clothes, fashion and the declared objective of promoting fashion culture in Spain.

THE PALAZZO FORTUNY



The Palazzo Fortuny was built for Benedetto Pesaro, formerly Pesaro degli Orfei, in the middle of the 15th century. Today it is an imposing building, on one side overlooking the Rio di Ca' Michiel and on the other side, the Campo di San Beneto, one of the most highly wrought Venetian Gothic facades.

The architectural structure of the palace is a fine illustration of the Venetian tradition, as can be seen in the rows of trefoil windows on the first and second floors and the unusual depth of the porteghi. The interior features some particularly remarkable and refined architectural elements, such as the carved wood architraves and marble pilasters on the first floor.

The warehouse, which was developed from a commercial building, has been expanded and transformed over the centuries. In the second half of the 19th century it was divided into a number of residential and commercial spaces. It was in such a state of disrepair that in 1898 Mariano Fortuny decided to occupy the immense space under the roof, which he transformed into a workshop for his artistic and scenographic experiments. Over the years, he acquired the other parts of the palace, then began restoring the structure, to give it balance and proportion, before making the Palazzo Pesaro-Orfei his home. In 1907, with his companion and muse Henriette Nigrin, he installed a small textile workshop. Within a few years, two whole floors of the building were occupied by their extraordinary atelier for designing dresses and printing on silk and velvet fabrics. In 1956, after the death of Fortuny (which occurred in 1949), the building was bequeathed to the City of Venice and became «a permanent cultural centre for things artistic.» The city took full possession of the building in 1965, after Henriette's death, and in 1975 the doors of this unique museum-house opened to the public.

The museum has become an active exhibition centre over the years, preserving the characteristics of what used to be

Mariano Fortuny's atelier. On the first floor, the *piano nobile*, the walls are covered with precious silk and cotton velvet fabrics. The space is organised like the backstage area of a theatre and it houses a rich collection which gives a good idea of the different fields of research in which Fortuny developed his genius: painting, photography, drawing, engraving, sculpture, technical and domestic lighting, theatre, printed fabrics and garments – from the famous *Delphos* gowns to stage costumes. The sources of the artist's eclectic inspiration are still at hand in his extraordinary library on the second floor, with its wealth of furniture, art objects and rare editions of books about art and techniques. The Palazzo Fortuny still bears witness to the genius of this artist who divided his time between reworking old techniques, experimentation and innovation, it contains ample evidence of his presence on the international intellectual and artistic scene in the late 19th and for half of the 20th century.

Fortuny



More than a century old, Fortuny remains the highly esteemed Venetian textile company founded by noted artist, inventor, textile and fashion designer, Mariano Fortuny. Under management of the Riad family for nearly 30 years, Fortuny continues to be infused with the spirit of its founder. Every Fortuny fabric is still produced in the original factory in Venice, on the same machines, using the same secret process and techniques handed down from generation to generation for nearly a century. Just as Mariano Fortuny used his love for the past and respect for tradition to inspire his creativity, today Fortuny continues to be a pioneer in the world of design and technology.

After many years and countless hours of research and development, Fortuny will proudly showcase its first work introducing the re-mastered art of the pleats invented by Mariano Fortuny at the Palais Galliera. Together with his wife and muse, Henriette Nigrin, Mariano Fortuny invented a technique to pleat silk and created the legendary *Delphos* gown, defying all fashion trends of the time. This deceptively simple, yet highly sophisticated, design broke the mold of the constraints of women's fashion at the time and liberated the female form, forever changing the face of fashion. Fortuny's dresses were quickly embraced by the artists and cognoscenti of the

time such as Marcel Proust, Isadora Duncan and Eleanora Duse, yet with their timeless design, they have been worn by and influenced countless tastemakers and designers since, from Tina Chow, Gloria Vanderbilt and Peggy Guggenheim to Issey Miyake and Valentino. This secret and patented technique, which has not been utilized since Mariano Fortuny passed away in 1949, will be presented as a reimagined *Delphos* alongside pieces from Valentino's Mariano Fortuny-inspired Spring/Summer 2016 haute couture collection.

Mariano Fortuny's work has revolutionized the fields of fashion, lighting, theater and textiles and inspired numerous books and exhibitions at world renowned institutions such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the State Hermitage museum in St. Petersburg, the Queen Sofia Spanish Institute under the direction of Oscar de la Renta, and now, the Palais Galliera in Paris.

FORTUNY UN ESPAGNOL À VENISE 04.10.2017 – 07.01.2018

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

PALAIS GALLIERA

Musée de la Mode de la Ville de Paris

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75116 Paris
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www.palaisgalliera.paris.fr

GETTING THERE

Métro 9 Léna or Alma-Marceau
RER C Pont de l'Alma
Bus 32, 42, 63, 72, 80, 82, 92
Vélib' 4, rue de Longchamp – 1, rue Bassano
– 2, avenue Marceau
Autolib' 1, avenue Marceau,
33, avenue Pierre-I^{er}-de-Serbie,
24, avenue d'Éléna

OPENING HOURS

Tuesday to Sunday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Late opening Thursdays until 9 p.m.
Closed on Mondays and certain public holidays
Last entry to the exhibition 45 minutes before museum
closing time

ADMISSION CHARGES

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Reduced rate 8 €
Admission free for under 18 years
The Palais Galliera only presents temporary exhibitions.
The collections are not on permanent display.

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* Except for the Crypte archéologique du Parvis de Notre-Dame and the Catacombs.

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