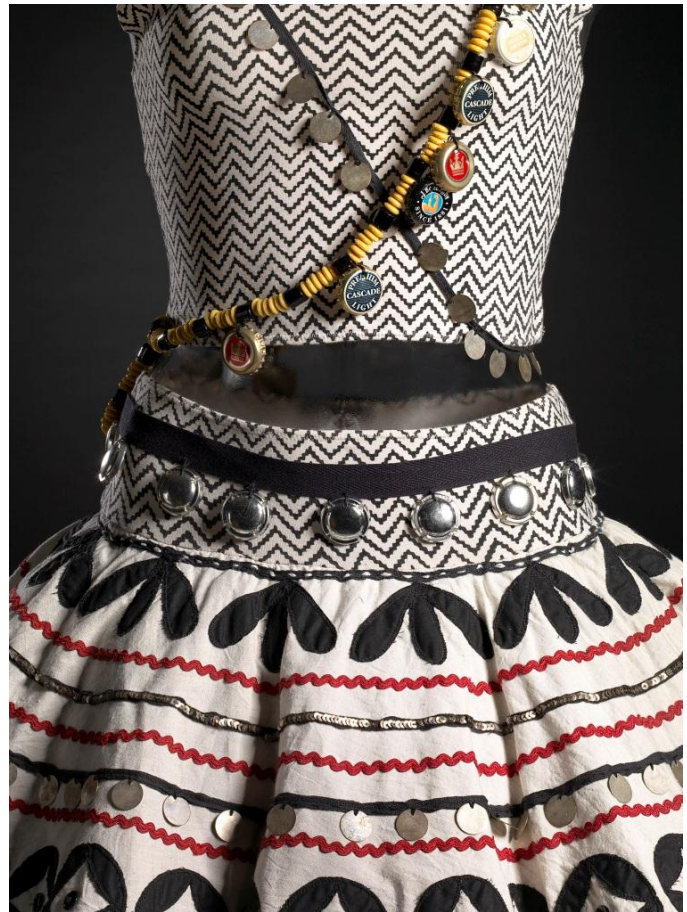


INTRODUCTION

Art and fashion have long been associated with each other. During the eighteenth century artists contributed designs for textiles, and in the 1860s the Pre-Raphaelite painters dressed their models in loose, free-flowing gowns that inspired new forms of 'artistic' dress. In the early decades of the twentieth century, Parisian couturiers collaborated with artists from the avant-garde. Paul Poiret commissioned the painter Raoul Dufy to design printed fabrics, Elsa Schiaparelli and Salvador Dalí devised Surrealist outfits while Jacques Heim helped Sonia Delaunay translate her abstract art into clothing. Over the past two decades, collaborations between art and fashion have burgeoned at every level. The American painter and street artist Barry McGee redesigned a classic Adidas sneaker in 2005, and Japanese artist Takashi Murakami began working with Marc Jacobs in 2002 to rejuvenate Louis Vuitton's iconic accessory range.

Today, as fashion regularly conjoins with art, designers engage more frequently with the world of dance. Ballet and fashion, however, have inspired each other for as long as performers have been dressing up and dancing. From Louis XIV, in whose court ballet was formalised and codified, and who himself performed in opulent robes meant to evoke the Sun God, to the Romantic-era ballerinas whose bouffant skirts found their way into Christian Dior's postwar 'New Look', dancers have influenced designers and designers have dressed dancers, exciting audiences of both the stage and the runway.



It is a great thrill for The Australian Ballet and the National Gallery of Victoria to collaborate on *Ballet & Fashion*, which reflects the way that artists can be inspired by working together. Even those separated by centuries are able to draw on each other's talents to spark innovation. Ballet itself is a multidisciplinary form, involving cooperation with musicians, designers and filmmakers. In many cases fashion designers have been involved, most famously when Coco Chanel created costumes for Serge Diaghilev's ballets; paving the way for the beautiful works that are represented in *Ballet & Fashion*.

The eye of the fashion designer often finds a new way to interpret a silhouette, inspiring a choreographer to devise movements that accentuate and flaunt it. In the rehearsal room, this can occur when a dancer receives a practice skirt with a train, which then becomes a pivotal part of the choreography – as in the case of Akira Isogawa's design for Juliet's wedding dress in Graeme Murphy's *Romeo & Juliet*, 2011. When a costume is based on a dancer in a particular pose, it can also inflect what happens in the studio. This synergy was at play between designer Vanessa Leyonhjelm and Stanton Welch during the creation of Welch's signature ballet *Divergence*, 1994.

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There are challenges in such combined efforts. A designer has to make a garment that not only looks amazing, but also will survive the rough and tumble of being pushed and pulled, partnered and laundered. The transition from page to stage is a complex process in which the designer, choreographer, costume maker and dancer come together to solve puzzles and perform magic. Often what they come up with changes the course of fashion. Léon Bakst's harem pants and turbans, created for the Ballets Russes production of *Schéhérazade*, 1910, became must-have pieces when translated into the couture collections of Paul Poiret. Even the humble demi-pointe acquired iconic status when it was worn as a street shoe by Brigitte Bardot and Audrey Hepburn in the 1950s and 1960s.

We would like to thank our Exhibition Sponsor, *Vogue Australia*. It has been wonderful to explore the wardrobes of ballet companies from around the world in gathering the material for this show. Ballet and fashion share a long and bountiful history. We look forward to the ongoing development and cross-pollination of these two alluring art forms.

Tony Ellwood
Director, NGV

David McAllister AM
Artistic Director, The Australian Ballet

****Excerpt from Ballet & Fashion by Roger Leong, NGV Publications, 32 pages, \$14.95***

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THE DESIGNERS

GILES DEACON FOR *BLACK SWAN PAS DE DEUX – BLACK AND WHITE (MIXED BILL)*

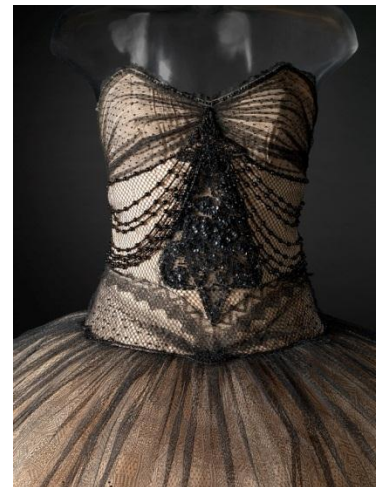
In 2010, *Harper's Bazaar* UK commissioned Giles Deacon to create a tutu on the occasion of English National Ballet's sixtieth anniversary for the Company's prima ballerina Elena Glurdjidze. The following year saw Deacon's design worn by the dancer to perform the *Black Swan pas de deux*, and in June 2011 English National Ballet dancer Shiori Kase modelled a version of the tutu for the Company's Summer Party fundraiser.

The costume is elegant with a darker undertone befitting the dancer's character. The bodice features a heart-shaped panel of black silk embellished with hand-cut lace and embroidery. The tutu is layered with a profusion of organza petals so delicately rendered as to create the impression of ruffled feathers. Its fragility is further enhanced by ostrich feathers and a smattering of Swarovski crystals.

COLLETTE DINNIGAN FOR *TUTU*

In 2002, The Australian Ballet initiated the *Tutu: Designing for Dance* project with the goal of uniting the worlds of fashion and ballet to create new ideas for dance costumes. Seventeen of Australia's leading designers and labels including Balarinji, Gwendolynne, Easton Pearson, Akira Isogawa, Toni Maticevski, Sass & Bide, Scanlan & Theodore, Richard Tyler as well as Collette Dinnigan were invited 'to design and construct their interpretation of a tutu'.

Dinnigan responded to the *Tutu* brief with a costume that combined many of the elements she is best known for, including soft feminine colours with dramatic black lace and bead work with a vintage feel. The fragile fabrics and tones – such as sheer silk lace and silk crepe de chine in a delicate hue of dusty pink – were exquisitely detailed with glass 'jet' beads and sequins across the torso; elsewhere festoons of larger beads surrounded a sequined heart shape and tiny beads appeared along the delicate hem.



EASTON PEARSON FOR *TUTU*

Pamela Easton and Lydia Pearson were invited to participate in The Australian Ballet's 2003 *Tutu* project. The Brisbane duo designed a costume that combines the laconic humour of Australia with the colours, patterns and traditional textile crafts of India and Africa. The midriff bodice is essentially a version of the iconic Aussie singlet, printed in a striking herringbone pattern and festooned with coloured beads, round metal paillettes and beer bottle tops. The tutu is a set of hand-sewn, patchworked motifs, rickrack braid and glass beads – ostensibly Indian in origin but also African in colour and form, and European in decoration – that radiate in proportion and number with the hems of the cotton skirt, and also with the tulle petticoats jangling with ever more metal paillettes. The final touch is a belt sporting a collection of silver foil bottle tops; the type one finds on French Champagne.

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AKIRA ISOGAWA FOR *GRAND* AND *ROMEO & JULIET*

Akira Isogawa and Graeme Murphy, the choreographer and former Artistic Director of the Sydney Dance Company, have been collaborating since 1998. This coupling of two creative minds is one of the most acclaimed and sustained unions of dance and fashion on the stage, including *Grand* for the Sydney Dance Company, 2005, and *Romeo & Juliet* for The Australian Ballet, 2011.

Made from ivory-toned sheer silk and cotton muslin, Isogawa's costumes for *Grand* epitomise the delicate effects that he has perfected. Configured asymmetrically, the strapless and one-shouldered dresses gently hug the torso or skim the body revealing a richness of artisanal embellishment: micro-pleating, ruching, embroidery and delicately distressed details.

Isogawa's costumes for *Romeo & Juliet* ranged in colour from the jewel-like hues of the Indian subcontinent to icy silvers and purples to sombre greys; the male lead in creamy silk and leather, and the heroine in layers of blue, silver and ivory. For the Verona gate scene, Isogawa created costumes that both acknowledged the Italian Renaissance and were rendered timeless by a more nuanced approach. The ivory silk of Romeo's tunic bristles with tiny nodules made using a traditional Japanese *shibori* technique, and his deconstructed leather vest sports a pistol moulded of the

same leather – a likely nod to Baz Luhrmann's Hollywood film version of 1996. For the ball scene set in the Capulet's Ice Palace, Isogawa again utilised the *shibori* technique to create exaggerated, spiky forms across the shoulder of Lady Capulet's shrug, highlighting the intensity of her character.

REI KAWAKUBO FOR *SCENARIO*

Rei Kawakubo, regarded as one of the most challenging and influential thinkers in fashion today, joined with choreographer and dancer Merce Cunningham for *Scenario*, 1997. Her costumes for the performance comprised tight-fitting garments made from a fine stretch fabric in plaid, stripes and solid colours, which were internally padded and distended with seemingly arbitrary lumps and bumps. Based on similar garments in Kawakubo's spring-summer 1997 collection *Dress Meets Body, Body Meets Dress*, the costumes' act of distortion not only 'deformed' the body, but also subordinated function to form. Cunningham and Kawakubo crafted their respective elements independently of each other, embracing a degree of uncertainty in the final look of the performance.

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CHRISTIAN LACROIX FOR *GÂITÉ PARISIENNE*

Gâité Parisienne, or *Parisian Gaiety*, first presented by the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo in 1938, depicts a group of people dancing, flirting and cavorting in a fashionable Parisian cafe. When Mikhail Baryshnikov, then Artistic Director of the American Ballet Theatre, planned a revival he invited Christian Lacroix to design the costumes. Lacroix's response was emphatic: 'The costumes fifty years ago were very romantic and very soft and very pastel things. So I proposed...doing something stronger, acider, something more modern'.

'I decided on a slightly naive interpretation of the world of Toulouse-Lautrec, based on the idea of the Moulin Rouge and the colourful Paris of the *fin de siècle*, the Lautrec of posters, as seen through the eyes of Minelli, and in the full technicolour spectrum, with a liberal use of primary colours, simple shapes and appliqué work.'



VANESSA LEYONHJELM FOR *DIVERGENCE*

In 1994, Vanessa Leyonhjelm began working in the theatre, designing costumes for The Australian Ballet's production of *Divergence*. *Divergence* was a pivotal moment in the meeting of ballet and fashion in Australia that saw traditional and innovative design and choreography merge seamlessly. Seeking a high fashion emphasis, choreographer Stanton Welch gave Leyonhjelm a brief to create a 'modern and elegant collection ... based around the look of the Russian tutu'. One of Welch's aims for the production was to expose the mechanics of classical ballet movement in a 'diverging' way'. Leyonhjelm responded with tutus that discarded the conventional supporting layers of tulle and introduced high-tech thermoplastics such as vacuum-formed bras and industrial mesh.

TONI MATICEVSKI & RICHARD NYLON FOR *AVIARY: A SUITE FOR THE BIRD*

The initial inspiration for Phillip Adams BalletLab's *Aviary*, 2011, was French composer Olivier Messiaen's explorations of birdsong, *Catalogue d'oiseaux* (1958). Director-choreographer Phillip Adams created a three-act production employing metaphors of the caged and uncaged bird. Both male and female dancers were dressed in Toni Maticevski's version of the traditional tutu – a starkly elegant and slightly Gothic amalgam of black silk, tulle and feathers – with precisely sculpted headdresses of black, white and silver feathers designed by Richard Nylon. For the second act, in which a flamboyant English dandy reigns supreme in a 1980s nightclub, Nylon created masks with exaggerated eyebrows, moustaches and beards – referencing the contemporary vogue for facial hair – and garishly bright dyed feathers inspired by the tribesman of Papua New Guinea. In the final act, alluding to his childhood spent in New Guinea, Adam's vision recreated the leafy nest and gestures of the Papuan bowerbird. Against an extravagant mass of branches, dancers moved energetically around the stage in tribally-inspired costumes: enormously tall and wide headdresses featuring pheasant feathers in their natural state; bodices, breastplates or collars and skirts abundantly plied with copious strips of silk georgette, leather, raffia and tufts of feathers.

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RALPH RUCCI FOR *C. TO C. (CLOSE TO CHUCK)*

Ralph Rucci was invited by American Ballet Theatre to produce costumes for *C. to C. (Close to Chuck)*, 2007, based on composer Philip Glass's musical portrait of his lifelong friend, the American painter and photographer, Chuck Close. A self-portrait by Close dominated the set: a large orange and black backdrop featured the artist's characteristic 'pixels'. Rucci's style was well suited to the minimalist, abstract nature of Jorma Elo's choreography. Elo determined the dancers' movements in advance of costuming, and Rucci's approach was to enhance them. The key feature of the costumes was a weighty, half-circle skirt and train with seams reinforced using strips of nylon crin and articulated with leather cord knotted to resemble 'barbed wire'. Made from heavy black duchess satin, the skirts formed dramatic shapes when in repose, and, in movement, opened to reveal a lining printed with Chuck Close's self-portrait; an image that also featured as one of the artist's backdrop designs.

VALENTINO FOR NEW YEAR'S CONCERT

In 2009, Valentino was commissioned to design the costumes for the acclaimed Vienna Philharmonic's New Year's Concert of 2010. The annual concert, which is broadcast live to over seventy countries, takes place in Vienna's historic *Musikverein*. The music always includes pieces by the Strauss family, and the second half of the program features dance sequences by the Vienna State Opera Ballet that have been pre-recorded in one of the city's many landmark buildings. For the 2010 concert, nine pairs of dancers performed the polka-mazurka and waltz to the music of Johann Strauss II in the grand foyers and picture galleries of the Vienna *Kunsthistorisches* Museum [Museum of Art History]. Valentino dressed the ballerinas in a palette of predominantly soft pinks, with highlight costumes in blue pearl and one in his signature crimson red. In keeping with the spirit of the waltz, the designer evoked the romantic era of classical ballet's origins. The costumes featured long, full skirts of silk and feather-weight tulle that captured the air, aided by the designer's favourite devices such as flounces, tiers and rosettes to enhance the graceful extensions and sylph-like movements of the dancers.

VIKTOR&ROLF FOR *2 LIPS AND DANCERS AND SPACE*

The avant-garde theatre artist and director Robert Wilson chose to work with Viktor&Rolf on the enigmatic production *2 Lips and Dancers and Space*, created for Nederlands Dans Theater III – a company whose performers are all over forty years of age. *2 Lips and Dancers and Space* is a meditation on the opposing states of innocence, hope and despair. The four dancers – two male and two female – teeter on high heels and are visually united by their matching black stretch satin bodysuits. Viktor&Rolf flagged the changing scenes with emphatic headpieces, accessories and overgarments that transformed the dancers' appearance dramatically. The scenarios include a seventeenth-century courtly dance in which the dancers are decorated with flounces, swathes and ribbons of gold lamé and dunce caps, while the performers' most emphatic transformation is into sheer white hooped burqas complete with flashing blue lights.

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PROGRAMS

NGV FILMS

Red Shoes (1948, 133 mins, G)

2.00pm, 11 November 2012

Based on a Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale about a pair of enchanted crimson ballet slippers, a young ballet dancer is torn between the man she loves and her pursuit to become a prima ballerina.

Valentino – The Last Emperor (2008, 96 mins, PG)

2.00pm, 16 December 2012

This documentary looks at the life of legendary fashion designer Valentino, who designed for the stage as well as the runway.

NGV TALKS

Floor Talk: *Ballet & Fashion*

2.00pm, 4 November 2012

Speaker: Roger Leong, Curator, Fashion & Textiles. Join the curator of *Ballet & Fashion* for an insight into the development of this unique exhibition.

VOLUNTARY GUIDE TOURS

Ballet & Fashion

1.30pm, every Wednesday, Friday and Sunday (excluding 26 December 2012 and 2 January 2013)

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DISC CONTENT

- Media kit materials
- High resolution artwork images and captions

CAPTIONS

1. **EASTON PEARSON** (designer) *Tutu* 2003 (detail) *Tutu*, parade choreographed by Adrian Burnett, The Australian Ballet, 2003 The Australian Ballet Collection, Melbourne Photo: National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
2. **Collette DINNIGAN** (designer) *Tutu* 2003 (detail) *Tutu*, parade choreographed by Adrian Burnett, The Australian Ballet, 2003 The Australian Ballet Collection, Melbourne Photo: National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
3. **Akira ISOGAWA** (designer) Kevin Jackson in *Costume for Romeo* 2011 *Romeo & Juliet*, choreographed by Graeme Murphy, The Australian Ballet, 2011 The Australian Ballet Collection, Melbourne Photo: Georges Antoni
4. **Christian LACROIX** (designer) Robyn Hendricks in *Costume for the Lead Can Can Dancer* 1988 *Gâité Parisienne*, choreographed by Léonide Massine, staged by Lorca Massine, American Ballet Theatre, 2011 American Ballet Theatre Collection, New York Photo: Jo Duck, makeup courtesy Napoleon Perdis © Christian Lacroix
5. **Vanessa LEYONHJELM** (designer) Justine Summers in *Tutu and headdress* 1994 *Divergence*, choreographed by Stanton Welch, The Australian Ballet, 1994 The Australian Ballet Collection, Melbourne Photo: Jim McFarlane
6. **Ralph RUCCI** (designer) Vivienne Wong in *Costume* 2007 *C. to C. (Close to Chuck)*, choreographed by Jorma Elo, American Ballet Theatre, 2007 American Ballet Theatre Collection, New York Photo: Jo Duck, makeup courtesy Napoleon Perdis © Ralph Rucci

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