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National
Gallery of
Victoria



EDWARD STEICHEN & ART DECO FASHION

18 OCT – 2 MAR

MEDIA KIT

Media release

17 October 2013

Edward Steichen & Art Deco Fashion



The National Gallery of Victoria will showcase the glamour and modernity of the Art Deco period through the work of fashion's most influential photographer, Edward Steichen, and stunning Art Deco fashion garments and accessories. The exhibition *Edward Steichen & Art Deco Fashion* is the first Australian survey of Steichen, widely considered to have created the first modern fashion photo.

The exhibition features almost 200 of Steichen's original vintage photographs, drawn from the vast archives of Condé Nast where he was chief photographer for their most prestigious magazines *Vanity Fair* and *Vogue* during the 1920s and 30s, alongside more than forty exquisite Art Deco fashion items from the NGV Collection and select private collections.

Tony Ellwood, Director, NGV, said that *Edward Steichen & Art Deco Fashion* is the first major Australian retrospective dedicated to Steichen's iconic Condé Nast work.

"Steichen's evocative images are regarded as among the most striking in early-to-mid-20th century photography and his fashion work in particular revolutionised the genre of fashion photography. This exhibition provides a rare opportunity to view such a large body of his work and to see up close the intricate details of outstanding Art Deco fashion items that highlight the interplay between fashion and photography," said Mr Ellwood.

The exhibition presents Steichen's pioneering modernist fashion photography and celebrity portraiture, produced during his fifteen year career as chief photographer for esteemed Condé Nast publications *Vanity Fair* and *Vogue*. During this period he put his exceptional talents and prodigious energy to work, creating a legacy of unequalled brilliance as he photographed the world of high fashion and stars of contemporary popular culture including Marlene Dietrich, Joan Crawford, Charlie Chaplin, Katherine Hepburn, Clara Bow, Louise Brooks, Greta Garbo, Gary Cooper, Winston Churchill and George Gershwin.

Steichen's images transformed fashion photography and influenced generations of photographers, capturing the sophistication of the newly liberated 'modern woman' and encapsulating the chic beauty and avant-garde style of the Art Deco movement. Renowned as an innovator and master of lighting, his practice bridged the transition from photography's early soft-focus, pictorialist style to clean, crisp modernism.

Echoing the aesthetics of Steichen's photographs, this exhibition will also celebrate the fashion borne of the period with over forty exquisite Art Deco garments and accessories by leading designers of the day including Chanel, Lanvin, Madeleine

Vionnet, Madame Paquin and Callot Soeurs. The elegance of old Hollywood glamour and high end fashion will be seen through a range of pieces - including swimsuits, coats, evening gowns, beach pyjamas, dresses, hats, bags and shoes, as well as an early example of Chanel's little black dress.

Art Deco style developed in response to changing lifestyles and ideals following the First World War. Typically characterised by sleek, geometric lines, rich colours and luxurious adornments, these new forms represented a shift away from traditional values; in fashion, hemlines rose and hairstyles became shorter, culminating in the infamous mid-twenties flapper style.

Edward Steichen & Art Deco Fashion also displays rare copies of *Vogue* and *Vanity Fair* that demonstrate the way Steichen's photographs appeared on the magazine page.

Two catalogues accompany the exhibition: *Art Deco Fashion*, a magazine-style volume that charts the development of the modern silhouette and highlights some of the leading designers of the period, and *Edward Steichen: In High Fashion - The Condé Nast Years, 1923-1937*, a lavishly illustrated 288 page publication that focuses on Steichen's legendary *Vogue* and *Vanity Fair* work.

The opening weekend of *Edward Steichen & Art Deco Fashion* will celebrate the Art Deco era with a special day of programs on Saturday 19 October inviting visitors to learn the Charleston and join experts at a free forum that will discuss the enduring legacy of Edward Steichen. For full details visit ngv.vic.gov.au.

The exhibition is organised by the Foundation for the Exhibition of Photography (FEP), in collaboration with the National Gallery of Victoria.

Edward Steichen & Art Deco Fashion is on display at NGV International from 18 October 2013 to 2 March 2014. Open 10am–5pm, closed Tuesdays. Admission fees apply: Adult \$12 | Concession \$10 | Family \$30.

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(previous page)

Edward Steichen

American 1879–1973, emigrated to United States 1881, worked in France 1906–23, *Actress Pola Negri 1925*, gelatin silver photograph, Courtesy Condé Nast Archive, © 1925 Condé Nast Publications

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Exhibition organised by



The exhibition

In the 1920s and 30s the chic modern style of the Art Deco period dominated fashion and fashion photography. Dance dresses in clashing colour combinations, reflective silvers, metallic threads and sequins, and glowing lamé evening cloaks appeared as sumptuous graphic elements in photographs illustrated in magazines such as *Vogue* and *Vanity Fair*.

Edward Steichen & Art Deco Fashion pairs Steichen's pioneering photography with fashion items from this glittering and thoroughly modern era, such as in the examples below.



In Paris in 1925, the *Exposition internationale des arts décoratifs et industriels modernes* heralded the arrival of Art Deco. Edward Steichen readily adopted this new emerging style and, in this example, made use of a 'modern' backdrop painted by artist Sonia Delaunay to photograph American dancer, Tamaris. When published in *Vogue*, this image carried a caption that read, 'Although these garments started as an amazing eccentricity of the mode, they have come to be regarded as a striking, but accepted version of summer chic.' In fashion, the flat forms of garments provided broad panes for extravagant patterns. Textile design became increasingly bold, with technology evolving the potential for textile patterns. The loose cut of this *Evening coat* flaunts a fabric of woven golden-stylised flowers over printed naive floral motifs.



(above left)

EDWARD STEICHEN

American 1879–1973, emigrated to United States 1881, worked in France 1906–23
Tamaris with a large Art Deco scarf 1925
gelatin silver photograph
Courtesy Condé Nast Archive

(above right)

FRANCE

Evening coat (c. 1925)
The Schofield Collection.
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased with the assistance of a special grant from the Government of Victoria, 1974

The exhibition continued



Popular dances in the 1920s included the Black Bottom and the Charleston, which were considered immoral and provocative due to their exaggerated gestures. Their energy and exuberance could be expressed easily in the looser, shorter fashions of the day such as in these two examples. This black *Dress* has tear-shaped paillettes applied in vertical ribbons, each by a single thread, to quiver and gently tinkle as the wearer moves. In Steichen's photograph of cabaret and nightclub dancer Lenore Hughes, she strikes a pose that not only highlights the cut and delicacy of the fabric of her skirt to great effect, but showcases these new dance steps. *Vogue* and *Vanity Fair* paid particular attention to the arts and Steichen regularly photographed the stars of the New York stage, often in costume and in character.



(above left)

EDWARD STEICHEN

American 1879–1973, emigrated to United States 1881, worked in France 1906–23

Dancers Leonore Hughes and Maurice Mouvet 1924
gelatin silver photograph

Courtesy Condé Nast Archive

© 1924 Condé Nast Publications

(above right)

FRANCE

Dress (c. 1927)

silk, gelatin sequins, glass beads

102.0 cm (centre back), 45.0 (waist, flat)

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

The Schofield Collection

Purchased with the assistance of a special grant from the Government of Victoria, 1974

The exhibition continued



The 1920s saw the development of the 'modern woman'; a chic, sophisticated woman who engaged in the new dance styles and all kinds of outdoor activities, a woman who worked, voted and lived a life outside of the home. In this example, Steichen pictures a group of these 'modern women' for the pages of *Vogue*, and demonstrates an innovative change in fashion photography - the use of outdoor locations. The women in Steichen's photograph wear cloches, which became the most iconic hats of the era. Cloches were typically made of straw, fabrics and especially felt, and the high bulbous crowns lent themselves to experimentation with pleating, beading, embroidery, appliqué and trimming. Here, brown velvet ribbon is woven through yellow felt to create a decorative motif. Soft, hugging cloches reflected the casualness and ease of 1920s dressing.



(above left)

EDWARD STEICHEN

American 1879–1973, emigrated to United States 1881, worked in France 1906–23

On George Baher's yacht. June Cox wearing unidentified fashion; E. Vogt wearing fashion by Chanel and a hat by Reboux; Lee Miller wearing a dress by Mae and Hattie Green and a scarf by Chanel; Hanna-Lee Sherman wearing unidentified fashion 1928

gelatin silver photograph

Courtesy Condé Nast Archive

© 1928 Condé Nast Publications

(above right)

JAUNTÉE PLAYTIME HATS, California (milliner)

active 1920s

Cloche (c. 1928)

rabbit fur felt

72.0 cm (outer circumference),

21.0 cm (height), 22.8 cm (width)

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Gift of Miss Anne Ross, 1983

The exhibition continued



The combination of increased leisure time in the 1920s and 30s alongside developing theories on health saw people spending more time outdoors. One of the most significant developments occurred in swimwear. Annette Kellerman, an Australian champion swimmer, was one of the first female swimmers to wear a men's multi-piece stretch jumpsuit as it offered increased speed and comfort in the water. By 1920, Asbury Mills had begun producing the wool-knit maillot, a tight-fitting one-piece swimsuit for women with a tank-style top and high-cut legs, as opposed to the traditional dress and pantaloons style. It was marketed as the 'Annette Kellerman' and dominated swimwear. Steichen's striking modernist picture of Olympic diver Katherine Rawls uses the compositional elements of 'new photography' to perfectly illustrate this novel style of female swimwear, in a photograph that was taken for the September 1932 issue of *Vanity Fair*.

(above left)

EDWARD STEICHEN

American 1879–1973, emigrated to United States 1881,
worked in France 1906–23

Olympic diver Katherine Rawls 1931

gelatin silver photograph

Courtesy Condé Nast Archive

© 1931 Condé Nast Publications

(above right)

ASBURY MILLS, New York (manufacturer)

1920–60

Annette KELLERMAN (designer)

Australia 1887–1975, worked in England and United States 1904–70

Swimsuit (c. 1920)

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Purchased, 2002

Program highlights

Opening Weekend: Putting on the Ritz

Join us as we celebrate the lavish photography of Edward Steichen and fashion from the 1920s and 30s in this opening weekend. Learn the Charleston, join a tour, and hear from experts.

Sat 19 Oct, 10.15am–4pm

• 10.15am

Film: *Bugsy Malone*

(1976, 93 mins, G)

Introduction by Paola Di Trocchio, co-curator and Assistant Curator, Fashion and Textiles, NGV
A musical gangster film set in 1920s New York with an all child cast creates a slap-stick world of would-be hoodlums, showgirls and dreamers.

Venue Clemenger BBDO Auditorium, NGV International

• 12pm

Kids On Tour: Hip Cats and Glamour Girls

Join us on a tour with exhibition co-curators Paola Di Trocchio and Susan van Wyk as we explore the *Edward Steichen & Art Deco Fashion* exhibition and what it was like to live in the 1920s and 30s.

Meet Exhibition entrance, Temporary Exhibitions, Ground Level, NGV International (admission fees apply)

• 1pm

Roaring 20s: Charleston Dance Demonstration & Workshop

Learn to dance like a genuine 1920s flapper with Swing Patrol. A short Charleston demonstration will be followed by a drop-in workshop. All welcome.

Venue Great Hall, NGV International

• 2–4pm

Forum: Edward Steichen – the image maker

Join us as we explore the innovative and glamorous fashion photography of Edward Steichen, as well as art deco fashion from the 1920s and 1930s.

Introduction: Dr Isobel Crombie, Assistant Director, Curatorial and Collection Management, NGV

Keynote: *Make Vogue a Louvre: Edward Steichen and the Origins of Modern Fashion Photography*

Speaker William A Ewing, independent curator, formerly director of the Musée de l'Élysée, Lausanne, Switzerland, and specialist in the history of fashion photography

Steichen: what does the name mean today?

Speaker Todd Brandow, Executive Director, Foundation for the Exhibition of Photography and exhibition co-curator

Art Deco Fashion

Speaker Nicole Jenkins, fashion historian, retailer & author of *Love Vintage: A Passion for Collecting Fashion* (2009)

Q&A, hosted by Susan van Wyk, exhibition co-curator and Senior Curator, Photography, NGV

Venue Clemenger BBDO Auditorium, NGV International

Talk: Under The Seams

Thu 14 Nov, 11am & Sat 16 Nov, 2pm

Join us to hear about the conservation techniques used in the *Edward Steichen & Art Deco Fashion* exhibition, and how these works came into our collection.

Speakers Bronwyn Cosgrove, Senior Conservator, Textiles, and Paola Di Trocchio, exhibition co-curator and Assistant Curator, Fashion and Textiles

Cost Free (admission fees apply)

Meet Exhibition space, NGV International

Art Deco Delights: Walking Tour

Sun 8 Dec, 10am–11.30pm

Stroll through the CBD for a tour of Melbourne's Art Deco architecture.

Tour Leader Kenneth Park, cultural historian

Cost \$27 A / \$22 M / \$25 C

Meet Details provided on booking

Code P13102

Manchester Unity Building – Open Doors Tour

Tue 12 Nov, 3 Dec, 4 Feb, 25 Feb, 6pm for 6.15pm

Hosted by Dr Kia Pajouhesh, founder and managing director of Smile Solutions, this tour offers you the exclusive privilege of seeing inside the architecturally significant interiors of the Manchester Unity Building - all of them privately owned and restored by Australia's largest dental practice. A Melbourne landmark in the grand Art Deco tradition, Manchester Unity is one of our city's best loved icons.

Cost Free, by ballot

Meet details provided on confirmation of booking

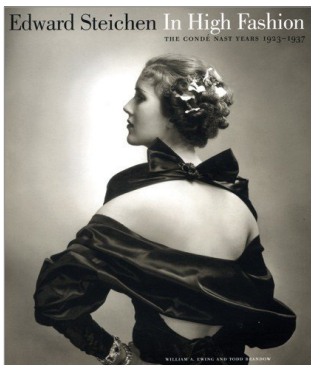
Bookings Register your interest at www.manchesterunitybuilding.com.au



Art Deco Fashion

Publisher: National Gallery of Victoria
270mm (h) x 210mm (w), paperback, 56 pages
Fully illustrated in colour
ISBN: 978-0-7241-0375-1
Category: fashion, photography
Published: October 2013
\$19.95

Art Deco Fashion is a nod to the illustrious and glittering modernity of one of the most exciting periods of fashion history – the 1920s and 30s. This magazine-style volume charts the development of the modern silhouette, reflects on a period of progress and liberation, and highlights some of the leading designers of the period, such as Madeleine Vionnet, Madame Paquin, Jeanne Lanvin and Callot Soeurs.



Edward Steichen: In High Fashion - The Conde Nast Years, 1923-1937

Publisher: FEP Editions LLC
305mm (h) x 253mm (w), softcover, 288 pages
Fully illustrated in colour
ISBN: 978-0-3930-6677-7
Category: photographers, Steichen, Edward
Published: 2008
\$55.00

This beautiful book reproduces the best of Edward Steichen's images, drawn from Condé Nast's archive of more than 2,000 original vintage prints. Until now, no more than a handful of these prints has been exhibited or published. The 1920s and 1930s represent the high point in Steichen's photographic career, and the work he produced for Condé Nast's influential magazines stands among the most striking creations of 20th century photography.

MEDIA CONTENT

The attached USB contains a selection of high-resolution imagery from the exhibition. The caption document is also available on the USB, and we request that you adhere to the copyright guidelines outlined in this document.

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(cover)

EDWARD STEICHEN

American 1879–1973, emigrated to United States 1881,
worked in France 1906–23
Marion Morehouse and unidentified model
wearing dresses by Vionnet 1930
gelatin silver photograph
Courtesy Condé Nast Archive
© 1930 Condé Nast Publications