



## MEDIA RELEASE

### NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA

MEDIA CONTACTS: MEDIA AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS, NGV  
MARION JOSEPH | 8620 2346 | 0427 147 999 | MARION.JOSEPH@NGV.VIC.GOV.AU  
AMY SILVER | 8620 2299 | 0448 683 945 | AMY.SILVER@NGV.VIC.GOV.AU  
BONNIE HORNE | 8620 2166 | 0448 369 260 | BONNIE.HORNE@NGV.VIC.GOV.AU  
BRIANA TOMASINO | 8620 2237 | 0408 333 399 | BRIANA.TOMASINO@NGV.VIC.GOV.AU

## Gabrielle Chanel. Fashion Manifesto

NGV International | 4 December 2021 – 25 April 2022 | Admission fees apply

**7 October 2021:** *Gabrielle Chanel. Fashion Manifesto* is the first exhibition in Australia to exclusively focus on the significant contribution to twentieth-century fashion culture by the renowned French couturière Gabrielle Chanel (1883–1971). This major exhibition is presented by the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) in partnership with the Palais Galliera, the preeminent fashion museum of the City of Paris, and will be launched on Saturday 4 December 2021.

*Gabrielle Chanel. Fashion Manifesto* premiered in Paris in autumn 2020 and makes its international debut at the National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne, Australia. *Gabrielle Chanel. Fashion Manifesto* was developed by the Palais Galliera, with outstanding loans from the Direction du Patrimoine de CHANEL, the fashion house's heritage department, and is curated by Miren Arzalluz and Véronique Belloir, respectively the Director and Head of Collections of the museum.

With more than 230 garments, accessories and jewellery pieces drawn from the rich holdings of the Palais Galliera and the Patrimoine de CHANEL in Paris, complemented by important loans from major public museums and private collections, *Gabrielle Chanel. Fashion Manifesto* showcases the impressive breadth of Gabrielle Chanel's output and her design codes. The Melbourne presentation also features several designs from the NGV Collection, including recent, never-before-seen acquisitions generously gifted by Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family, including an embroidered organdie *Evening dress*, spring-summer 1933 and spectacular Shirred red silk velvet and marabou-lined *Evening cape*, c. 1924–26.

Considered to be one of the most influential designers of the twentieth century, Gabrielle Chanel introduced a language of modernity into fashion that still resonates today. With the opening of her first fashion boutique in Deauville in 1912, then her couture house on 31 Rue Cambon in Paris in 1918, Chanel began to reform women's wardrobes by creating a new code of dress that privileged comfort, function and elegance, and responded to the growing desire for greater social freedoms among women.

Chanel's designs offered a restrained luxury that rejected ornamentation and, above all else, allowed women to move with ease. She pioneered the use of jersey and tweed, drawing inspiration from menswear and sportswear conventions, and championed the 'little black dress' and the suit as liberating modes of dress for women.

Unfolding across several chronological and thematic sections, *Gabrielle Chanel. Fashion Manifesto* explores Chanel's design codes through a visually arresting and sumptuous display of more than 100 garments that trace her remarkable career. These are placed alongside her innovations in perfume, jewellery and accessory design. Highlights include early examples of her use of black to connote modernity and chic; delicate lace gowns; wool jersey and tailored tweed suits; dazzling beaded garments; and bold costume jewellery. The survey offers audiences an unprecedented opportunity to appreciate Chanel's significant impact on the development of womenswear throughout the twentieth century, and to consider the legacy of her designs in contemporary culture.

Minister for Creative Industries, Danny Pearson said: 'Melbournians love their fashion so it is fitting that *Gabrielle Chanel. Fashion Manifesto* makes its first international debut right here in Melbourne after its premiere in Paris.

'Exhibitions of this calibre attract visitors from right across the nation, boosting local tourism and adding to Victoria's standing as the creative state,' said Pearson.

Brendan McClements, Visit Victoria CEO, said: 'Fashion lovers from around the country will flock to Melbourne for this exclusive exhibition of Chanel works, straight from its debut in Paris to Australia's very own fashion capital.'

Tony Ellwood AM, Director, NGV, said: 'There is no bigger name in twentieth century fashion design than Gabrielle Chanel. Her originality, timelessness and elegance forged a radically modern vision of fashion and a singular style. *Gabrielle Chanel. Fashion Manifesto* will be expansive, visually sumptuous and will reveal the achievements and enduring legacy of the extraordinary French fashion designer.'

Miren Arzalluz, Director, Palais Galliera and co-curator of the exhibition, said: 'Gabrielle Chanel devoted her long life to creating, perfecting and promoting a new kind of elegance based on freedom of movement, a natural and casual pose, a subtle elegance that shuns all extravagances, a timeless style for a new kind of woman. That was her fashion manifesto, a legacy that has never gone out of style.'

'Gabrielle Chanel's success was based not only on the functionality, comfort and chic elegance of her designs, but also on her ability to grasp and interpret the needs and desires of the women of her time,' said Arzalluz.

Bruno Pavlovsky, President of CHANEL Fashion and of CHANEL SAS said: 'By bringing together all the facets of an exceptional creativity, this exhibition throws new light on Gabrielle Chanel's stylistic legacy. A rebel at heart, she transposed her personal needs, audacity and freedom into creations that reflected her personality and that she initially made for herself. Her demands – comfort, functionality, simplicity – subsequently became those of all women. For the first time, fashion reflected the aspirations of women, the changes to come in their lives and the evolution of their place in society. Ephemeral in essence, with Gabrielle Chanel fashion became perennial. By breaking away from the standards of her time, her codes and stylistic vocabulary have endured.'

Highlights of the exhibition include rare examples of Chanel's early daywear and her wool jersey suits, which marked a radical departure from the elaborate fashions of the Belle Epoque and Edwardian periods in France and England.

Equally captivating are the gowns associated with Chanel's so-called 'romantic' period of the 1930s. Dedicated sections of the exhibition showcase Chanel's love and use of floral motifs - realised as printed textiles or as appliqued florets – and her skilfully manipulated lace eveningwear.

Chanel's innovations also included the first composite and abstract perfume, Chanel N°5, created in 1921; cosmetics and highly decorative costume jewellery that combined precious and semi-precious materials. The exhibition also explores the design codes Chanel introduced in the 1950s, including the quilted 2.55 bag and two-tone slingback that remain closely associated with the visual language of the house.

A further highlight of the exhibition is a display of iconic Chanel suits. Debuted by Chanel in the 1910s and reintroduced after the re-opening of her haute couture house in 1954, the two or three-piece suit, in lightweight woven tweed or wool bouclé, remains a feature of the house's collections to this day. Popularised by the likes of First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy, Princesse Grace de Monaco and actresses such as Marlene Dietrich, Romy Schneider and Lauren Bacall, the Chanel suit quickly became the embodiment of sophistication and functionalism, defined by its tailored lines, allowance for ease of movement and comfort, and clever use of gilt buttons and braiding as means of both decoration and structure.

***Gabrielle Chanel. Fashion Manifesto*** will be on display at NGV International, Melbourne, from 4 December 2021 – 25 April 2022. The exhibition will be celebrated at the **NGV Gala**, an annual black-tie event, on Saturday 19 February 2022. For further information and tickets, please visit the [NGV website](#).

An exhibition organised by the Palais Galliera, Fashion museum of the City of Paris, Paris Musées.

## **ABOUT PALAIS GALLIERA**

The Palais Galliera is a permanent fashion museum in Paris, established in 1977 in the nineteenth-century building commissioned by Duchesse de Galliera. The museum displays exhibitions of French fashion design and costume from the eighteenth-century to the present day and has a collection of over 200,000 items. Collection highlights include garments owned by Marie-Antoinette, Louis XVII and the Empress Joséphine, and important pieces by such renowned designers as Madame Grès, Cristóbal Balenciaga, Christian Dior, Hubert de Givenchy and Yves Saint Laurent.

The Palais Galliera has secured a reputation for inspired, off-site exhibitions, including *Paris Haute Couture* at the Mitsubishi Ichikogan Museum in Tokyo; *Outside Fashion*, at the Huis Marseille, Amsterdam ; *Backside – Dos à la mode* at the Musée Bourdelle; and *Balenciaga in Black*, at the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth, a tribute to the “couturier of couturiers” Cristóbal Balenciaga through the prism of his favoured colour.

The museum’s Director, Miren Arzalluz, joined the Palais Galliera in December 2017, bringing fifteen years of experience in fashion curatorial and collection practice, including eight years at the Cristóbal Balenciaga Foundation. She has led the redevelopment of the site over the past several years, which has doubled the size of the museum by transforming the vaulted cellars to exhibition galleries.

The Palais Galliera is part of Paris Musées, the public institution incorporating the 14 museums belonging to the City of Paris.

## ABOUT THE NGV GALA

The NGV Gala is an annual black-tie event that celebrates art, fashion, fine food and music. First held in 2017 to coincide with the major fashion exhibition, *The House of Dior: Seventy Years of Haute Couture*, the NGV Gala has become an anticipated event on Melbourne’s social calendar and has been attended by the likes of Nicole Kidman, Natalie Portman, Elizabeth Olsen, and Winnie Harlow.

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PRESENTING PARTNER

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ORGANISING INSTITUTION



**CHANEL**



An exhibition organised by the Palais Galliera, Fashion Museum of the City of Paris, Paris Musées

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### Media Contacts:

**Marion Joseph, Associate Director, Media and Public Affairs, NGV**

0427 147 999 | [marion.joseph@ngv.vic.gov.au](mailto:marion.joseph@ngv.vic.gov.au)

**Amy Silver, Senior Publicist, Media and Public Affairs, NGV**

0448 289 795 | [amy.silver@ngv.vic.gov.au](mailto:amy.silver@ngv.vic.gov.au)

**Briana Tomasino, Media and Public Affairs Officer, NGV**

0408 333 399 | [briana.tomasino@ngv.vic.gov.au](mailto:briana.tomasino@ngv.vic.gov.au)

**Bonnie Horne, Media and Public Affairs Officer, NGV**

0448 369 260 | [bonnie.horne@ngv.vic.gov.au](mailto:bonnie.horne@ngv.vic.gov.au)