

## The Ephemeral Museum of Fashion

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It feels just like entering a private space, into a big house full of rooms. Walking through these rooms, it feels like clothes are watching you, inviting you to come in; in even other rooms they seem to ignore you, reject you, blind you with their aesthetic and revolutionary power, only to plea for support and offer their hand again for one last time.

“The Ephemeral Museum of Fashion” exhibition is the celebration of the live matter; the exhibition path follows that of vitality, intended as the vital cycle of a dress inhabited by a body: the story *par excellence* within the value of fashion.

The Gallery of Costume in Palazzo Pitti has been for several years one of the few Italian museums permanently dedicated to fashion; the project of a true and exclusive fashion museum in Florence has only started in the past few years thanks to the determination of Centro di Firenze per la Moda Italiana, Pitti Immagine and Galleria degli Uffizi towards bringing into Palazzo Pitti a systematic program of fashion exhibits, pioneered by ‘Visions of Fashion’ by Karl Lagerfeld in 2016.

“The Ephemeral Museum of Fashion” exhibit (Florence, 14 June – 22 October 2017) has legitimated the Museum of Fashion and Costume in Palazzo Pitti (formerly known as Gallery of Costume and Fashion of Palazzo Pitti). The exhibit, curated by Olivier Saillard (Palais Galliera, Paris) has provided a wider scope to the fashion exhibits trend, by making them look more like a free and interactive conversation rather than a direct and closes confrontation/dialogue between Galliera and the Costume Gallery. The exhibition themes (feathers, colours, shapes, decorations, ...) have developed, collection after collection, over 18 rooms and 200 items from the 19th century to today.

Olivier Saillard has designed the setting by borrowing items — quite exceptionally — from the attics/store rooms of Pitti Palace which have been goldmines for this projects; moreover, the design of the original prints for the blood-red carpets of the exposition paths has been assigned to Christian Lacroix himself.

The concept of “ephemeral,” short-lasting, no longer than one day, assumes several meanings in this exhibit: transitory, like fashion is, exclusive, like a ceremony dress, of “pieces of clothing made to last one day,” of affection, measurable from how worn out the item is. The approach, according to the curator, is one of “respect” for the conditions of the piece of clothing, like you would have for a fragile person: Madeline Vionnet’s gown from 1936, made of satin, crêpe and silk, was so delicate that it could not be placed on a

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mannequin but rather inside a shrine, like its life had come to an end. Once again, Saillard reveals himself as the supporter of a certain dynamism in fashion exhibits; he does not use still mannequins but actual human actions: to sit, to hold hands, to hug, to fix oneself, to turn backs, to faint — he does not show human features but rather actual life.

This exposition frames itself in the ever-growing trend of making fashion exhibit the occasion to contemplate and meditate on an easy and fast-consumable subject, from the show of the new dress to the exhibition of the worn piece of clothing.