

CHRISTIE'S

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THE PERSONAL COLLECTION OF ELSA SCHIAPARELLI AT CHRISTIE'S PARIS ON 23 JANUARY, 2014



© Courtesy Condé Nast / Horst Estate

Horst P. Horst (1906-1999), *Elsa Schiaparelli, Paris 1936*,
Gelatin Silver print, 8¼ x 5⅜ in, signed in pencil on the mount
Estimate: €10,000-12,000/£9,000-11,000/\$14,000-16,000

*“Madame Elsa Schiaparelli was incomparable. There is no equivalent to be found. Her imagination knew no bounds.”
“She would have transformed you in less time than it takes to tell – and saved you. She was a bouquet of spells. She was a constellation of the stars, a fireworks display. Watch out! Or be hypnotized.”*

YVES SAINT LAURENT

Paris – Christie's is pleased to announce that *The Personal Collection of Elsa Schiaparelli* will be offered at auction in Paris on 23 January, 2014. A landmark sale for the international world of fashion, style and design, the collection comes to the market having passed by descent to Elsa Schiaparelli's granddaughter, the actress Marisa Schiaparelli Berenson. With passion and extraordinary vision, the legendary Madame Elsa Schiaparelli – a deadly rival of Coco Chanel – was at the heart of avant-garde ideas in 1930s Paris. A powerful conduit between the

worlds of cutting-edge fashion and surrealist art, she was a collaborator, friend, and patron to many leading artists of the day, from Salvador Dalí and Man Ray to Christian Bérard, Jean Cocteau, Alberto and Diego Giacometti, and Marcel Vertès. Comprising approximately 180 lots, this remarkable private collection features **fashion** – a dynamic combination of Elsa Schiaparelli’s own designs alongside other much-loved ethnic costumes and personal pieces – **furniture, fine art** and **decorative arts** which, together, evoke the unique inspirational sensibility adored by so many. The star lots of the sale are a bronze Alberto Giacometti 1936 floor lamp modelled with the head of a young woman (estimate: €60,000-80,000/£54,000-71,000/\$81,000-110,000, *illustrated right*) and a violet silk blouse, 1939, from Schiaparelli’s Astrologie Collection (estimate: €25,000-30,000/£23,000-27,000 /\$34,000-41,000, *illustrated below*). With estimates for individual lots starting at €500/£450/\$670, the collection is expected to realise in the region of €800,000/£710,000/\$1,100,000.



Marisa Schiaparelli Berenson, the granddaughter of Elsa Schiaparelli explains: *“My grandmother was an inspiration and always has been, and now I think it’s very important for younger generations to know who she was, to have a taste of that wonderful world that she lived in, that she created, that she left behind her. I’m very much one of those people who lives in the present – obviously the past is precious because of everything it means emotionally and because of the legacy one has oneself in one’s genes and the culture and the richness that it’s brought to one’s life, but I think that’s all inside of me and there are certain things that I don’t need to carry around all my life. There comes a time when you want to let go of things, because life changes. I think my grandmother’s personal belongings will inspire future generations; this is an extraordinary and fascinating legacy.”*

Pat Frost, Director of Christie’s Fashion Department commented: *“To have the opportunity of cataloguing the personal wardrobe of Elsa Schiaparelli is, quite simply, a privilege. Not only is the experience like meeting old friends known intimately from books and photographs – such as the Astrologie blouse – but it is also a peek into the home life of a design icon, where Chinese robes, Ottoman gowns and Persian jackets hung in large numbers in her wardrobe next to couture. Elsa Schiaparelli wore them informally but with a connoisseur’s appreciation of their worth. Many elements indeed are interwoven into her own Couture collections. It has been an added pleasure to have been working with Marisa Schiaparelli Berenson, Schiaparelli’s granddaughter, whose memories of life with her grandmother have been both invaluable and illuminating. We look forward to sharing this fascinating view into the world of Elsa Schiaparelli in January 2014.”*

COLLECTIONS FAVOURED BY THE STARS



Worn by icons of the Golden Age of Hollywood such as Marlene Dietrich, the **‘Astrologie’ collection** really had nothing less than a cosmic impact on 1930s fashion. The violet silk



blouse from 1939 (estimate: €25,000-30,000/£23,000-27,000 /\$34,000-41,000, *illustrated far left*) is an

example of the marriage of Schiaparelli’s interest in the Zodiac with the very finest embroidery Lesage could produce. A further highlight is an intricately beaded waistcoat with ‘Bucking Bronco’ beadwork, inspired by Elsa Schiaparelli’s influential 1940’s trip to Texas and recalling her earlier Circus Collection (estimate: €10,000-12,000/ £9,000-11,000/ \$14,000-16,000, *illustrated left*).

ELEGANCE & GLAMOUR FROM DUSK TO DAWN

An unusual yellow linen blouse, with beadwork and black and white floral trim, from 1940, points to Elsa Schiaparelli's interest in porcelain, which translated to her designs through the use of subtle colours, textures and embroidery (estimate: €10,000-15,000/ £9,000-13,000 /\$14,000-20,000, *illustrated left*). Injecting feminine evening elegance with the drama of the Spanish matador, a pink wool bolero, with jet bead trim, also from 1940, shows yet more influences which Schiaparelli drew upon (estimate: €12,000-15,000/ £11,000-14,000 /\$16,000-21,000, *illustrated below*).



The sale also features a similar version of the bolero jacket in ice blue crêpe, a key Schiaparelli silhouette that was featured in a Harper's Bazaar fashion illustration at the time (estimate: €15,000-20,000/ £14,000-18,000/\$21,000-27,000, *illustrated below*). The two colour ways of these jackets matched her perfumes *Shocking Pink* and *Sleeping Blue*. Glamorous to the hilt, signature pieces from Elsa Schiaparelli's



personal wardrobe include a 1930s white mink stole, with her monogram 'E.S' embroidered into the lining, alongside many other such luxuries from the time.

ORIENTAL INSPIRATION

In the 1930s, Elsa Schiaparelli built a house in Hammamet, Tunisia. She spent a lot of time there entertaining, collecting and absorbing local colour. The sale includes two elegant 20th century Hammamet robes which directly influenced her designs

(estimate: €1,000-2,000/ £900 - 1,800/ \$1,400-2,800, *illustrated in the centre*). A true 'Renaissance Woman', Schiaparelli literally drew inspiration from around the globe. She wore and was inspired by Islamic and Asian costume and the sale features a large collection of oriental robes, together with an assortment of North African, Chinese, Ottoman and Persian costume.



AT HOME WITH MADAME ELSA SCHIAPARELLI



The Personal Collection of Elsa Schiaparelli presents a veritable feast of artworks and objects that reflect their owner's significant role as a taste-maker. A key trendsetter in the 1930s, Schiaparelli not only contributed her own lively creativity and sponsorship to the contemporary scene in Paris but also enjoyed plundering the past to create baroque counterpoints to the modern (*Elsa Schiaparelli illustrated at home, above*). This is evidenced in her love of such eclectic delights as baroque furniture, the French Second Empire style – witness the chic lilac-upholstered 'love-seat' (estimate: €600-800/ £540-710/\$810-1,100, *illustrated above*) – and blackamoor figures, which all reflect her wonderful sensibility for all that was extravagant and evocative. Schiaparelli used the pieces, collectively, to create an engaging world of fantasy – environments that reflected the influence of Surrealists who prized the imaginative and irrational. She became an inspiration to many, at a pivotal point in the interwoven stories of art and design. Modernist ideas were confronted with alternative sensibilities – neo-romantic, exotic, fanciful, and indulgent. The 30s witnessed a succession of magnificent costume balls that brought together Parisian high society and high bohemia, and Schiaparelli *lived* the part – adding the spice of her own eclectic eye and inspiration. This very personal collection captures the essence of Schiaparelli – imbuing all of the lots offered with a unique aura.

The 1936 bronze Alberto Giacometti floor lamp which leads the sale as a whole is emblematic of Schiaparelli's world, reminding us of her close working rapport with designer-decorator Jean-Michel Frank, who helped create her boutique and her apartment and who encouraged Giacometti, Dalí and other artists, with whom Schiaparelli was also close, to create artifacts that were at once functional and expressive (estimate: €60,000-80,000/£54,000-71,000/\$81,000-110,000 *illustrated page two*).

The collection ranges from an atmospheric portrait of Schiaparelli's daughter – Countess Maria Luisa Yvonne Radha de Wendt de Kerlor, better known as 'Gogo' Schiaparelli – by Leonor Fini (1908-1996), who

collaborated with Schiaparelli, notably designing the bottle for her famous perfume *Shocking* in 1937 (estimate: €30,000-50,000/ £27,000-45,000/\$41,000-67,000, *illustrated below*); to a group of three Louis XVI chinoiserie wool Aubusson tapestries, after François Boucher (estimate: €20,000-30,000/ £18,000-27,000/\$28,000-41,000, including *A Chinese Dance*, *illustrated below centre and above the fireplace in the photograph of Elsa Schiaparelli at home*). A series of ten photographic portraits by Man Ray (1890-1976) includes the solarised study *Elsa Schiaparelli, circa 1928-30*, a favoured image chosen by Schiaparelli to illustrate her memoir, *Shocking Life* (estimate: €10,000-15,000/ £9,000-13,000/\$14,000-20,000, *illustrated below right*). Man Ray is a telling artist to associate with Schiaparelli: a Dadaist and a Surrealist, he was also, like her, completely at ease straddling the worlds of commerce and pure creativity. Further highlights include a delightful Marcel Vertès screen, most likely created for the presentation of Schiaparelli's 1939 Spring-Summer 'Commedia dell'arte' collection (estimate: €10,000-15,000/ £9,000-13,000/\$14,000-20,000, *illustrated page 4 top right*). This screen reminds us of the fluidity with which artists in Schiaparelli's circle were happy to work across media and invest their skill and imagination in all they created – be it an illustration, an object, a piece of furniture, or an environment.



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PRESS CONTACT: Hannah Schweiger | +44 (0)20 7389 2964 | hschweiger@christies.com
 Beverly Bueninck | +33 (0)1 40 76 84 08 | bbueninck@christies.com

PUBLIC EXHIBITION:

2013 Select highlights will be on view in New York: 6 – 20 December 2013 at Christie's, Rockefeller Plaza, NY
2014 The full pre-sale exhibition will be on view at Christie's Paris, 9 avenue Matignon: 18-20-21-22 January 2014

PAST IMPORTANT SINGLE-OWNER FASHION COLLECTIONS AT CHRISTIE'S:

IN MY FASHION: The Suzy Menkes Collection – 11-22 July 2013, online-only sale
 The Daphne Guinness Collection; Sold to Benefit the Isabella Blow Foundation – 27 June 2012
 The Collection of Elizabeth Taylor – 14 & 15 December 2011
 The Anna Piaggi Collection – 3 December 2009
 The Nan Kempner Collection – 1-2 October 2007
 Vivienne Westwood Archive from 1985-1995 – 4 September 2001
 The Dame Margot Fonteyn Collection – 12 December 2000
 The Personal Property of Marilyn Monroe – 27 & 28 October 1999
 Dresses from the Collection of Diana, Princess of Wales – 25 June 1997
 The Chanel Wardrobe and Casket of Costume Jewellery – 2 December 1978

CHRISTIE'S FASHION

Introduced in 1975, Christie's Fashion, Costume and Textiles Department and the South Kensington saleroom were established simultaneously. Since then, the department has secured Christie's place in the auction market as one of the top destinations for collectors of couture, costume, textiles and accessories. Today, the department contributes to numerous sales each year, offering items from all over the world, and featuring in no less than twenty-five auctions in 2011 including The Collection of Elizabeth Taylor, as well as Christie's annual Fashion sale, the bi-annual Elegance sale of Hermès handbags, and Interiors, Chinese and Indian and Islamic sales; estimates start from £500. Focusing on the best of the best, items featured in Christie's sales date from the 17th century right up to the present day, and range from haute couture and fashion pieces, through to historical clothing, handbags and luggage, and costume jewellery, as well as tapestries, samplers and more. The allure of Christie's fashion sales draws International couture collectors and fashion lovers, as well as institutions, offering both ready-to-wear and museum-quality pieces.

Christie's South Kensington

Open seven days a week, Christie's South Kensington is one of the busiest salerooms in the UK attracting over 200,000 visitors each year. With over 100 sales and offering more than 20,000 lots annually, estimates start from under £1,000. Interiors sales dedicated to home furnishings are held three times a month alongside regular Sunday sales of single-owner collections. Specialised sales for the avid collector are scheduled throughout the year according to category, and include Popular Culture Memorabilia, Vintage Couture, Islamic Art, Jewellery, 20th Century British Art and Chinese Works of Art, amongst others. In 2012 Christie's South Kensington realised the highest ever total for the third consecutive year with sales of £139.4 million / \$223.1 million having welcomed a 10% growth in registered bidders and a 20% increase (£ / \$) in total sales.

About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction and private sales in 2012 that totalled £3.92 billion/\$6.27 billion. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and expertise, as well as international glamour. Founded in 1766 by James Christie, Christie's has since conducted the greatest and most celebrated auctions through the centuries providing a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers over 450 auctions annually in over 80 categories, including all areas of fine and decorative arts, jewellery, photographs, collectibles, wine, and more. Prices range from \$200 to over \$100 million. Christie's also has a long and successful history conducting private sales for its clients in all categories, with emphasis on Post-War and Contemporary, Impressionist and Modern, Old Masters and Jewellery. Private sales totalled £631.3 million/\$1 billion in 2012, an increase of 26% on the same period last year.

Christie's has a global presence with 53 offices in 32 countries and 10 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai, Zürich, and Hong Kong. More recently, Christie's has led in growth markets such as Russia, China, India and the Middle East, with successful sales, exhibitions and initiatives in Moscow, Baku, Beijing, Mumbai, Delhi, Jeddah, Abu Dhabi, Doha and Dubai.

*Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer's premium and do not reflect costs, financing fees or application of buyer's or seller's credits.

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