

04.03.2023

Musée
Yves Saint Laurent
Marrakech

28.01.2024

Yves Saint Laurent Traits portrait خطوط فورتريه Line and Expression



MEDIA KIT

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It is a great privilege for the **Musée Yves Saint Laurent Marrakech** to present the exhibition ***Yves Saint Laurent: Line and Expression [Traits portrait]***, curated by Olivier Saillard and Gaël Mamine, which explores the rich body of exploratory graphic work by the late couturier.

Both men have strong links with Yves Saint Laurent's work. Saillard was the curator of the important exhibition *Yves Saint Laurent 1971: La collection du scandale*, mounted at the Musée Yves Saint Laurent Paris in 2015. It examined a legendary collection that was heavily critiqued by the press when it was unveiled, yet was universally adopted by the public and sparked the retro trend, which continues to resonate within fashion today. Mamine was Head of Collections and Textiles at the **Fondation Pierre Bergé – Yves Saint Laurent** and played a key role in the Saint Laurent retrospective at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts in 2008.

***Yves Saint Laurent :
Line and Expression [Traits portrait]***
Musée Yves Saint Laurent Marrakech
Rue Yves Saint Laurent, 40090 Marrakech

Dates: 04.03.2023 – 28.01.2024

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**FONDATION
JARDIN MAJORELLE**

Full Circle

As we delve deeper into the vast repertoire of works left by the great French couturier Yves Saint Laurent, it seems essential that we explore the genesis of his designs by scrutinizing his many preparatory drawings and sketches, today housed at the Fondation Pierre Bergé –Yves Saint Laurent in Paris.

It is there—within the more than 60,000 sketches and drawings preserved by the Foundation—that the grand couturier's vision is so readily grasped through simple and often highly evocative line illustrations. In many, even a type of fabric is implied: the etherealness of chiffon, the shimmer of silk, the textural weave of tweed and sumptuousness of velvet are richly and visibly evoked by simple lines drawn with an HB pencil. This distillation of his vision to several rapidly sketched lines allowed for a unique and extraordinary understanding between Saint Laurent and those working in his ateliers, whose vocation was to realize the couturier's vision.

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I also deeply thank the conservation team at the Fondation Pierre Bergé –Yves Saint Laurent in Paris for providing access to their vast archives to both exhibition curators and to their Moroccan counterparts at the Musée Yves Saint Laurent Marrakech. Spearheaded by Alexis Sornin, Director of the Marrakech museum, and his dynamic team, this is a further example of the strong dialogue to be encouraged between the two sister institutions. I look forward to their future collaborative projects.

While looking at these powerful illustrations, which would magically be transformed by the Paris ateliers into mythical creations, it is extremely moving to imagine that so many were drawn during Saint Laurent's twice-a-year stays in his beloved Marrakech. It is so fitting, in delving into this rich heritage of drawings and sketches, that these line illustrations are presented for the first time here in Morocco: a line becomes a full circle.

Madison Cox
Marrakech

Yves Saint Laurent Traits pour Traits

Olivier Saillard

Yves Saint Laurent, like some of his predecessors and contemporaries, liked to be alone. Far from the Rue de Babylone or the salons of Avenue Marceau, he found refuge in Marrakech. Here, surrounded by colors dear to his heart, he could dream up his next collection in complete solitude. On his desk, paper and pencils were aligned, waiting only for his well-trained hands to put them to use. For hours, whole days, even nights, the couturier let the pencils and pens glide across the paper, tracing the black contours of silhouettes of imaginary women, enhancing a collection of imaginary clothes with color. Here, within the bounds of the size of the paper used, the collections that would be so lauded were born out of a strict economy of line. Even before fabric, cut and seam cast their influence over new shapes, it was ink that conveyed a line that would become a jacket, dress or coat. With sensitive draftsmanship capable of renewing fashion obsessions, and always with an expression of profound style, Yves Saint Laurent's drawing came first, ahead of the other stages of creation and production of a collection. It was the starting point of a complex process, from drawing to toile, from patternmaking to fitting on a live model, which could not be dispensed with until the final garment was finished in the chosen fabric and colors.

It may be that the same, unique design, as is said in the ateliers, favors two models of different temperament because it is not merely the sum total of buttons, sleeves and collars. It is, more than that, an abstract work, a spirit of the collection by the couturier through which he intends to introduce his new vision, and not only the technical geography that the construction of the garment consequently imposes. Thus, we can better understand the nervousness of the heads of the atelier when Monsieur Saint Laurent would return to his design studio. This collection of newly drawn, initialed silhouettes would serve as a record for the fabric creations to come.

The Musée Yves Saint Laurent conserves the couturier's sketches in their hundreds, in their thousands, whether they have been removed from the current collection or are still on display. Indexed, inventoried and classified according to the seasons, years and use for haute couture or prêt-à-porter, all the sketches together prove the designer's command of line and volume, and for whoever might still doubt it, the strong artistic talent of the couturier. So many jackets newly designed each time, so many evening dresses, cannot be subject to the luxury and fashion industries alone.

This frenzy of clothing designs that began as ephemeral dreams, from which spring necks and legs, and faces in profile like those on portrait medallions, together form a declaration of creation that dominates the greatest couturiers. In long supply, they are the mysterious confessions that lead them always to clarify the illusion of a dream woman's appearance. She of Yves Saint Laurent is slender, aloof and regal and has been embodying and inspiring fashion for more than eight decades.

In the mid-1950s, as a young teenager who was not yet a student at the prestigious Ecole de la Chambre Syndicale de la Couture in Paris, Yves Saint Laurent was already dreaming of the haute couture house he would set up in Place Vendôme. For Autumn/Winter 1953 and 1954, he cut out the silhouettes of the models he would have in his imaginary house from the fashion magazines of the time. These paper dolls, with an impressive wardrobe made up of more than 400 outfits that the budding couturier designed, then skillfully attached with paperclips allowing him to dress them as he wished, are still kept in the museum's archives. Day dresses, cocktail dresses, eveningwear and clothes for special events followed and showed the fascination that this young man, who was still living in Oran, Algeria, had for Paris, the capital of fashion. Their style was much influenced by the *New Look* that was in favor at the time. Waistlines are narrow, skirts voluminous, and the design follows the then dominant lines of Christian Dior. In 1954, Yves Saint Laurent won the International Wool Secretariat prize. His design of a black crêpe cocktail dress set him apart from the other winners, including Karl Lagerfeld, who won the coat category prize. In 1955, following correspondence with the editor-in-chief of *Vogue* magazine, Michel de Brunhoff, he was hired by Christian Dior, as his assistant. The two men, far apart in age, had a similar drawing style which naturally contributed to the expression of a common aesthetic.

Dior broke into fashion following a convoluted path. He wanted to be a gallery owner, dedicated to supporting the artists he loved. In the mid-1930s, he managed to sell sketches of dresses and hats, and then began a career as a fashion illustrator for *Le Figaro*, which brought him into contact with René Gruau. Successively employed by couturiers Robert Piguet and Lucien Lelong, Dior learned fashion through design. His *New Look* collection was decisive in the history of fashion, as proved by other houses. The media-friendly use of graphic lines that he used for each collection continued with the lively, brief and incisive strokes with which he renewed the wardrobe of the 1950s. Plenty of fashion fans of Yves Saint Laurent's generation learned fashion styling from Dior's own designs. The grand masters such as Cristóbal Balenciaga and Madame Grès relied simply on drawing to incorporate technical information. Their drawings, while factual, lacked refinement. All of their efforts were concentrated on cutting decisions,

technical details that they mastered as no others did. In the past, the virtuoso Madeleine Vionnet did the same. We do not know of any drawings by Schiaparelli other than those executed by the qualified staff at her house for the equally important purpose of referencing styles (today kept at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris). The doyenne of them all, Jeanne Lanvin, admitted without embarrassment that she could neither draw nor sew. She compiled, in bulging files, samples of fabrics and prints that gave birth to dresses that are rare examples of execution.

The arrival on the scene and the success of Christian Dior signaled the acceptance of illustrator-couturiers. Their creations and styles condensed the strong graphics for which preparatory drawing is the definitive handbook.

Despite himself, Yves Saint Laurent was of this school, nurtured by the fashion magazines whose pages were still a mixture of illustrations and fashion photography. Illustrators like Éric, Gruau, Roufflange and Blossac were using their brushes as the photographs of Avedon, Penn and Clark were gaining ground. The quest for clear and precise lines and accentuated curves reigned. Sharing this stylistic community alongside Monsieur Dior, Yves Saint Laurent was pushed into direction of the house's collections when the Avenue Montaigne couturier died suddenly in 1957. On magazine covers, in publications and on the new medium of television, the young couturier Yves Saint Laurent took advantage of the times with pencil in hand. He willingly took on live drawing to explain his new collections. Elsewhere, we see him at his worktable strewn with drawings and sketches in ink on paper. Eventually, decades later (in 1971), he posed naked in an advertisement to better embody this new generation of designers who are not found in the iconography of the neighborhood couturier with scissors in hand. The launch of his own haute couture house on Rue Spontini in 1962 motivated him to rid his line of the artifices of the 1950s salons. The social and generational demands brought about in the 1960s finally emancipated him. The silhouettes of the Pop Art collections and those that followed are a snapshot of the time. The heaviness of the previous decade gave way to a more liberated body of work. Sleeves took flight and styles were set free in the image of this youthfulness that found its tempo in Yves Saint Laurent. Clothes, and the way the fabric draped, took off, while the faces in profile borrowed a sinuousness from Cocteau and Bérard, through which timelessness was rediscovered. The arms and hands placed high above the head and the joined legs became the silhouette that formed the Y of his initials.

Long dresses and evening capes by Yves Saint Laurent, trouser tuxedos and suits are steeped in his beloved black or enhanced with colors that he alone knew how to put together or use in contrast, like entries in birth certificates. From the very first sketches by Yves Saint Laurent himself, to the mannequins in the finished fabrics, a common feeling of freedom of line dominates. Comparing them does not always make it possible to identify the source where one might be the consequence of another. We can therefore say that one draped dress from Autumn/Winter 1983 and another embellished with feathers on its collar from Autumn/Winter 1970 are both convincing designs in satin. A tuxedo from 1984, like those of the 1970s, is drawn with detached, emphatic lines, just as it is understood that all the sketches from the 1976 Russian collection make up a fashion show and a collection in themselves. The heritage collections of museums and private institutions have preserved as much as possible the clothes of the past. But despite these efforts, some couturiers who are forgotten today are only remembered through the traces they left on the pages of magazines. None, or very few, of their now vanished creations were archived. In the hierarchy of inventoried documents and works, fashion designs still sometimes suffer from a lack of recognition for their artistic autonomy. They always depend on the evening dress or day dress of which they are the observers even though they preceded them. Model drawings for workshop use for some, fashion illustrations for others: these innumerable sketches have not yet had their personal history written. By examining the two facets of Yves Saint Laurent's drawings, as worthy and formidable artistic testimonies of his work and as stylized handbooks for the collections, we are undoubtedly convinced of the disciplinary authority that they represent. May they inaugurate and confirm the recognition of a practice through which young, budding couturiers can still dream and venture out onto their path.

Exceptional cinematographic screening:

Yves Saint Laurent / 5 avenue Marceau 75116 Paris,
movie from David Teboul, 2002
Sunday 5 March 2023 at 6 pm
Auditorium Pierre Bergé
Musée Yves Saint Laurent Marrakech

Yves Saint Laurent dessins et dessein

Emmanuelle Brugerolles and David Guillet

Ever since the opening in 1961 of the House of Yves Saint Laurent, the renowned couturier placed his designs—and more broadly the act of drawing—at the heart of the creative process behind his collections. He attributed a crucial role to them at every stage of his work, from the conception embodied by the first exploratory sketches to their transfer to the workshops and on to the runway show. Their memory has been scrupulously preserved through the five hundred to one thousand drawings produced for each collection.

The different categories of drawings—whether sketches, studies or notes, as well as workshop sheets and collection boards—responded to distinct, carefully defined uses within the fashion house. As soon as they were produced, they were subject to a systematic classification according to precise criteria. Quite early, and in an innovative way for their time, Yves Saint Laurent and Pierre Bergé became aware of the importance of imposing an order on this graphic work, and of scrupulously conserving the graphic collection in question, which retraces every stage in the development of the haute couture and ready-to-wear collections.

This approach can be seen, beginning in the 1980s, by a desire to assign a clear value to this precious legacy, which soon led to an actual museological approach to the drawings, commensurate with the exceptional work and career of the designer. The collection thus constituted, which covers 81 haute couture collections, includes more than 60,800 drawings, 28,000 workshop sheets, 2,434 collection boards and 120 sketchbooks. This considerable body of work reflects the graphic activity, style and talent of Yves Saint Laurent; it also makes it possible to follow the evolution of his artistic production as a whole and to identify the originality of his creative vision over four decades, from 1962 to 2002.

Through this exhibition, the Musée Yves Saint Laurent Marrakech reveals the depth and richness of its collection—little known to the general public until now—through a choice of around a hundred unpublished drawings which cover a vast part of the grand couturier's career, while highlighting two specific years: 1976 and 2002. The choice of sketches to be exhibited was guided by a desire to emphasize the role that the pencil stroke and line play in the graphic work of the artist, while paying homage to his last runway show, when he presented his iconic chiffon *trait de crayon* (pencil stroke) dresses.

Drawings he did for the covers of the American magazine *Women's Wear Daily*, kept by the magazine after their publication, occupy a special place in Yves Saint Laurent's oeuvre. An exploratory sketch for these magazine covers, more specifically for the one featuring the SAINT LAURENT *rive gauche* collection of spring 1988, is kept in the collection of the Musée Yves Saint Laurent Paris. It is a sketch of three dancing fashion models, dressed in harlequin jackets, dancers' dresses and solid blue knit sweaters (and constitutes an exceptional legacy of that year's collection).





The dressmaking workshop fashioned blouses, evening, cocktail and day dresses, all cut from supple fabrics. The fluid and sinuous lines of the sketches evoke delicate, airy materials to be used, whether crepe, organza, or chiffon.



A dress is conceived as a second skin that slides over the body. The choice of fabric is determined by its arrangement on the body, the way it drapes, which varies according to its weight, its suppleness, its elasticity." Diaphanous, often transparent fabrics go particularly well with the sensual and eccentric nature of evening wear, which is distinguished, at the House of Yves Saint Laurent, by deep necklines.

Musée Yves Saint Laurent Marrakech

The Musée Yves Saint Laurent Marrakech, which opened its doors in the fall of 2017, is a vibrant cultural center built around a central exhibition hall that showcases the work of the renowned couturier on a permanent basis. Much more than a simple retrospective of the iconic dresses YSL designed, one is led on a journey, with its focal point in Marrakech, through the many themes that inspired him. The fifty or so magnificent garments displayed – many rarely seen by the public – offer us an original reading of Yves Saint Laurent's œuvre and of his importance to the history of fashion. The dresses and other haute couture pieces are rotated every ten months in order to ensure their conservation as well as to offer the visitor a panorama that evolves on a regular basis.

The mYSLm also includes a hall for temporary exhibitions, a photography gallery, an auditorium, a reference library, a bookshop and a café-restaurant. The basement of the building houses the museum's collection and a state-of-the-art preventive conservation center.

The hall used for temporary exhibitions at the Musée Yves Saint Laurent Marrakech was conceived as a cultural and artistic showcase. It is where the museum displays talent from all over the world, with a special emphasis given to modern and contemporary Morocco.

Fondation Jardin Majorelle

The Fondation Jardin Majorelle is a non-profit Moroccan institution that uses its own resources to ensure the conservation and functioning of the Jardin Majorelle, the Pierre Bergé Museum of Berber Arts and the Musée Yves Saint Laurent Marrakech.

The foundation's resources were used to establish the Berber Museum, inaugurated in December 2011, and the Musée Yves Saint Laurent Marrakech, which opened in October 2017. The foundation's earnings are entirely reinvested in Morocco to finance cultural, educational and social initiatives.