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CRISTÓBAL BALENCIAGA MUSEOA

Transmissions

Heritage and New Creation

2019-2021

Educational Project

Evening dress in black silk tafeta. Ca. 1952.
© Cristóbal Balenciaga Museoa



Presentation

Cristóbal Balenciaga is unanimously regarded as one of the leading and most influential couturiers of the 20th century. A tireless perfectionist, he acquired an expert command of sewing techniques and spent his life refining the construction of his creations and introducing extraordinary innovations that allowed him to gradually evolve towards simpler and purer forms.



Cristóbal Balenciaga at his Paris maison
© Juan Gyenes. Biblioteca Nacional de España

His exceptional creative talent inspired him to design models that were audacious in both their form and aesthetics, taking the world by storm and setting the indisputable trend season after season. His command of the craft earned him the respect of his colleagues and he reigned supreme in the international haute couture world until he retired.

The Cristóbal Balenciaga Museum, the first great museum in the world dedicated exclusively to a couturier, opened on 7 June 2011 in the town of his birth: Getaria, Spain. Seeking to explain Balenciaga's life and work, his relevance in the history of fashion and design, and the contemporaneity of his legacy, the Museum houses a unique collection. Its large size –almost 3,000 pieces which continue to rise in number thanks to loans and donations– and its wide-ranging formal and chronological extension –including, for example, the earliest existing models by the couturier– make this one of the most complete, consistent and interesting of its kind.

The figure of Cristóbal Balenciaga is central and structures the mission of the Museum, a centre that works to serve as an international benchmark for the understanding and contextualization of the artist and his work.

Project Background

The contemporary nature of Cristóbal Balenciaga's legacy continues to inspire today's creators, and the Museum has the important mission to convey knowledge of his work, his technique and his values to the new generations. Thus, since 2016, the Museum has been promoting the *Transmissions* educational and creative project, aiming to become a natural part of the curriculum of the participating schools, while aspiring to turn the Museum into a benchmark for the new designers who, thanks to the initiative, obtain a first-hand look at the couturier's place of origin, environment and work.



Fashion in Motion: Inspired by Balenciaga
© Victoria & Albert Museum

In a first stage and as a pilot test for the project, the Museum collaborated with BA Fashion Design Womenswear, BA Fashion Print and BA Fashion Communication students at the prestigious Central Saint Martins school in London. Both the students and their professors came to the Museum to take a first-hand look at the origins of Cristóbal Balenciaga and their enormously important part in the couturier's creations. Here they had the opportunity to explore the temporary exhibition *Coal and Velvet: Views on Popular Costumes by Ortiz Echagüe and Cristóbal Balenciaga*, the theme of the collaborative project, and to analyse a selection of pieces in the collection.

Following the study trip, and under the supervision of the instructors in each area, students documented their creative and research processes, designing a complete outfit which was then evaluated by both institutions.

The Fashion Communication students put together an online exhibition with a selection of the best works which were presented to coincide with the students' participation in the Fashion in Motion project at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London.¹

1. The online exhibition is available for consultation on <https://artsandculture.google.com/exhibit/iAIC5ymJ2vtnLw>.

PROJECT BACKGROUND



Conner Ives
Central Saint Martins (UAL, London, UK)

Fashion in Motion aims to shine a spotlight on up-and-coming designers. The V&A organises a series of catwalks, one of which was dedicated on 24 March 2017 to fifteen outfits created by Central Saint Martins' students in the context of the Cristóbal Balenciaga Museum's educational project.²

In a second phase of the project, during the academic year 2017/2018, the project united professors and students from 6 of the most prestigious international fashion design schools: Central Saint Martins (UAL, London, England), The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts (Copenhagen, Denmark), Iceland Academy of the Arts (Reykjavik, Iceland), Shenkar College of Engineering, Design and Art (Ramat Gan, Israel), Seika Kyoto University (Kyoto, Japan), and Parsons The New School of Design (New York, USA), around an experience of immersion in the philosophy, technique and biographical context of Cristóbal Balenciaga.

After their visit to the centre, direct access to certain pieces in its archive and the study of diverse digital resources, the 150 participating students set about developing their own research and creation project achieve their personal interpretation of Balenciaga's work.

The results of the process were presented in a collective exhibition running from 14 June to 2 September 2018, displaying a selection of 26 creative proposals from among those submitted by students who participated in the project.

The exhibition depicted the dialogue between the legacy conserved at the Museum, the readings of the teachers involved in these transmissions, and the personal work and talent of a new generation of creators.³

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2. For more information about this initiative, please visit www.vam.ac.uk/articles/fashion-in-motion-inspired-by-balenciaga
3. For more information about this edition of the project, please visit www.cristobalbalenciagamuseoa.com/transmissions/en/

New Edition

2019-2021

Following these first two experiences, and with an eye on the 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 academic years, the Museum would like to strengthen and expand the *Transmissions* project.

This is an important challenge for the Museum since it involves solving the tension between the requirements of conserving the heritage archive and the opportunity of making the works accessible from a technical and conceptual point of view, as well as making the Museum exhibition programme coincide with the school times and curricula.

The Museum has therefore devised a special programme for a limited number of exclusive international Fashion Schools to take part in a research and creation project based on the Cristóbal Balenciaga Museum's collection, its exhibition and archives, as set out below.

Objectives

Amongst others, the objectives of the project are to:

- Transmit the knowledge, values, techniques and creative heritage of Cristóbal Balenciaga to a new generation of young designers through the direct study of his work.
- Showcase the revolutionary proposals of Cristóbal Balenciaga and his constructive and formal experimentation as a source of new creativity, acquiring tools for the research, documentation and analysis of sources, trends and evolution of the female silhouette, and resources for developing concepts and design based on formal innovation.
- Delve deeper into creative exploration and systems for adapting and interpreting silhouettes, making imaginative use of forms and volumes, images and aesthetics, construction and techniques, materials and colours, using the work of Cristóbal Balenciaga as an example.
- Use the creation of a look as an experimental ground in which each student implements and develops the ability to communicate design ideas through the reinterpretation of silhouettes. Students will prepare and present a sketchbook of inspirational material and one garment.¹

1. These aspects will form the basis of the Museum's evaluation of the students' work, an evaluation detailed below.



Thematic Framework of the Project

As far as subject is concerned, the project will turn the focus on an aspect unquestionably constituting one of Cristóbal Balenciaga's main contributions to the history of fashion: the introduction of new silhouettes composed of fabric, air and body, with which women could identify.

The same year that Christian Dior captivated the world with his New Look, a nostalgic revival of the romantic 19th-century silhouettes (a line Balenciaga had previously experimented with), Balenciaga set out on a different road, opting for fluid lines, curved backs and volumes which defied the conventions of the moment. The tonneau line of 1947, the semi-fit of 1951, the balloon skirt of 1953, the tunic of 1955, the sack dress and the baby-doll of 1957 soon became landmarks in the history of western fashion.

Mainly from the 1950s, each of Balenciaga's collections set a trend and introduced extraordinary innovations built on a foundation of meticulous, intelligent dressmaking. The fact that we can still see his designs on 21st-century catwalks is a nod to the timelessness of his contributions.

Balenciaga's experiments with construction would reach the height of their expression in the 1960s. The couturier used his mastery of tailoring techniques and extensive knowledge of fabrics to conceive increasingly purer and more abstract silhouettes. This progressive constructive simplification culminated in his extraordinary late-1960s gowns and impeccably tailored suits and day dresses that stood out for their architectural forms. These perfect models of austere beauty fled from superfluous decoration and brought distinction to the women who wore them.

Through this project students will discover the couturier's creative path and how the different silhouettes evolved, breaking away from established forms.

– Coat in ivory and black Batavia twill and mohair. 1952.
– Dress in black wool crepe. 1957
– Day dress in orange wool crepe. Ca. 1958
© Cristóbal Balenciaga Museoa

Project Phases, Actions and Calendar

The project will take place every two years, and will run during the 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 academic years, starting in autumn 2019. Both of the academic years in the project will involve the same schools, meaning that they must commit to two consecutive years of participation, giving students in both years the option to participate during the period proposed.

Participation is set at a maximum of 10 schools, and the Museum believes that the participants should be studying at a similar level, not necessarily in regard to their specialisation, but to their course level. We therefore suggest that the students should be in the 2nd or 3rd year of their course, and that the same year is chosen on both occasions to give all students in these two years the opportunity to participate. The project will have five phases as described below:

PHASE I

Study visit for professors (transmitters) to Cristóbal Balenciaga Museoa

DATE

Autumn 2019
Date to be confirmed

ESTIMATED DEDICATION

One and a half days
+ Further optional cultural activities
in Balenciaga's geographical context

ATTENDEES

1 or 2 professors from each
participating school

In a first phase, the Museum proposes a visit solely and exclusively for the professors (transmitters) involved in the project. Each participating school must have 1 or 2 representatives at the meeting, no matter where the school is located (i.e. whether or not it is based in Europe).

This session or preparatory visit will be held only once, at the start of the two yearly project, given that the contents to be worked on at the Museum will be the same for both academic years. It is also assumed that the departments and/or professors involved will be the same for both years, meaning that there will be no need to repeat the meeting.

The professors would make their visit in autumn 2019, which would include:

- Guided tour of the exhibition *Balenciaga. Fashion and Heritage*.
- Analysis of a selection of relevant pieces from the archive in line with the thematic framework described together with the Museum Collections Director and great connoisseur of Balenciaga's work, Igor Uria.
- Description of and familiarisation with the educational resources made available to the professors in order that they may subsequently convey the content studied to their students.

This is a meeting of vital importance for familiarising the professors involved in the project with the contents and resources generated, to enable an exchange of opinions and points of view and for answering queries or questions. Its attendance is therefore compulsory.



*Cristóbal Balenciaga:
Fashion and Heritage exhibition*
© Cristóbal Balenciaga Museoa

PHASE II

Study visit for students (recipients) to Cristóbal Balenciaga Museoa

DATES

January 2020

January 2021

ESTIMATED DEDICATION

One day

+ Further optional cultural activities in Balenciaga's geographical context

ATTENDEES

Students from the participating schools accompanied by their professors

Next, the participating students, the recipients, will come to Getaria with their professors to discover Cristóbal Balenciaga's legacy by directly studying the creator's work at the Museum; here they will have access to the archive and will analyse a selection of representative pieces that reflect his technique and creative skill.

European schools will be required to organise a study trip to the Museum with their students, scheduled by the Museum itself. This will be optional for overseas schools, given the geographical distance and the complexity of involving students in a trip of this magnitude. In this case, professors will be sent the educational resources required to convey the content received, which they will be expected to use in their respective transmissions sessions at school.

The Museum will offer slots of single-day sessions for every school, in groups of no more than 20 students. We therefore encourage you to apply early and to confirm your interest in taking part.

The students' study trips will take place every academic year (January 2020/January 2021) for two different student intakes, according to a previously established programme running for a week or several days.

The duration of the visit would be one day with the basic activity programme (compulsory) or for two or three days if choosing the extended activities programme (optional), according to the following structure:

- Documentary on Cristóbal Balenciaga's life and career or a historical, contextual talk.
- Guided tour of the exhibition *Balenciaga. Fashion and Heritage*, and free time to take pictures, draw in the galleries, etc.
- Analysis of a selection of Study Collection pieces (exact replicas in toile), and observation of a limited number of real archive pieces, conducted by a professional heir of the Balenciaga Maison knowhow. This person is a regular Museum collaborator and author of the Study Collection replicas.

Analysis session at the Museum
© Cristóbal Balenciaga Museoa



As said, the single-day visit could be extended for another one or two days to carry out more practical exercises. The first of these would be connected to one of the essential tasks of the project, specifically to develop a replica of a piece chosen from the collection. The second would involve studying non-compulsory complementary technical content. The two exercises proposed are designed to improve the familiarisation with and understanding of Cristóbal Balenciaga's creations, as well as the techniques used to make them. The schedule of the two extra days would therefore be:



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PHASE III

Students' personal project development

DATES

January - March 2020

January - March 2021

ESTIMATED DEDICATION

8 weeks

DAY 2 (OPTIONAL)

For the second day, the Museum proposes an exercise of approximation involving application of the moulage technique to one of the pieces in the collection in order to study the volumes, development and fitting of the pattern, as well as how the garment is cut, assembled and sewn. Each student would therefore choose a piece from the collection which, based on available pictures or on its direct analysis were it on display, they would set about emulating. This exercise, which can be carried out at the Museum or elsewhere, will be compulsory for all participants and must be presented in the shape of deliverables, as explained below.

DAY 3 (OPTIONAL)

On the other hand, the Museum proposes an immersion in Haute Couture techniques, applying the specific techniques employed in the couturier's maisons to make either the so-called Balenciaga neck or a Japanese sleeve. To go about these exercises, the Museum will provide students and their professors with educational videos explaining the processes to be applied in both cases. Given the time required by these exercises, the participants must choose and produce only one of them.

In both options, on day 2 and day 3, the direct involvement of the professors accompanying each school will be determinant since they themselves will help and advise the students in regard to the tasks to be carried out. The Museum will not provide instructors for developing the practical exercises.

Over a period of two months (8 weeks) at their respective schools, the participants will proceed with their own process of research and creation in order to create their own individual project, the results of which will be an outfit taking its inspiration from the knowledge acquired.

Supervised by instructors in each area, the students will work on their ideas and develop them into deliverable materials. They will reproduce one of the pieces from the collection in toile to give them a better idea of Cristóbal Balenciaga's work, designing and producing a full look, tailored garment included, and including all of the support materials used (toiles, sketches, memories, pictures, etc.) to document their research and creation process. The finished project will be assessed jointly by both institutions, the school and the Museum.

The project must be completely made by the student and nobody else.

PHASE IV

Assessment, selection and submission of the pre-selected works

DATES

March 2020

March 2021

ESTIMATED DEDICATION

1 weeks

With a view to homogenizing the deliverables to be presented for assessment, and in order to provide a standardised basis for the evaluation, the Museum proposes the following:

AT LEAST (COMPULSORY)

- 3-4 images of a toile replica of one of the garments in the Museum collection.
- 6-10 sketches and 4 pages of research images, as well as a text explaining the creative process followed by the student.
- 3-4 images of the full look produced (front, back, sides), and 1-2 detailed reverse side images of the tailored finish.
- Description and reasoning behind the project (creative line) and a description of the final result (max. 200 words).

ADDITIONAL DELIVERABLE MATERIAL IF DESIRED (NOT COMPULSORY)

- 3-4 images of details that the student believes demonstrate the influence of Cristóbal Balenciaga's work on their creative process.
- Description and technical information for the fabrics, materials and techniques used.
- 3-4 pictures of toiles and patterns.

All of the above materials must be presented in a single document per student in PDF format.

The assessment will mainly focus on the student's ability to apply techniques and aesthetics in order to present a design with new silhouettes, the methods of adaptation and interpretation used, and their study of and reference to the processes employed by Cristóbal Balenciaga as follows:

- *Research and documentation* of sources for developing concepts and designs based on formal innovation.
- *Analysis* of sources and evolution of the feminine silhouette with a view to applying new techniques and aesthetics for the presentation of new silhouettes as well as analysis of and reference to the processes introduced by Cristóbal Balenciaga in this regard. Specify how the contents of the study trip, or its transmission, are embedded in the creative process.
- *Innovation and experimentation* related to forms and volumes, images and aesthetics, construction and techniques, materials and colours, etc.
- *Technical competence*. Suitability of the patterns, the fabric, and the finish.
- *Environmental criteria*, from the fabric selection to the pattern creation.
- *Communication and presentation*. Suitability of the global view of the final selection.

Emil BH
The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts
(Copenhagen, DK)





Norea Persdotter Wallstorm
Iceland Academy of the Arts (Reykjavik, IS)

Every academic year the professors (first) and Museum staff (second) will select the garments that will participate in an exhibition to take place in the Museum at the end of the two year period.

Each School will assess and pre-select the best 10 works in the event that the number of students taking part in the project is more than 20, and 5 works if there are fewer than 20 participants. The deliverable materials must then be sent to the Museum, before 31 March, for their selection.

Only at the end of the whole two year process, in 2021, the Museum will make a final selection to be shown in a collective exhibition from the pre-selected works. This final selection will pay special attention to the way the students' projects would fit into the global narrative of the exhibition; the Museum will therefore appoint a jury including the Museum Collections Director, the Head of Education and the project advisors.

The works selected on completion of the process of the first academic year will be kept in deposit at the Museum for their display in the exhibition a year after having been selected, together with those chosen from among the second year projects.

Each school must commit to and assume the formalities and the cost of sending (and collecting) the pre-selected works before 30 April every year.

PHASE V

The exhibition

DATES

Summer 2021
Dates to be confirmed

The students' projects will be presented at the Museum in a joint exhibition featuring approximately 40 garments, which will lend visibility to both the process and the deliverables resulting from the project.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a web platform describing the process used and acting as its catalogue, including the selected projects.

The exhibition will be announced to the press prior to its opening, and the Museum will study the possibility of holding a meeting around the project with the participation of its protagonists.

To make the project more visible, the schools must help to circulate news of the initiative in their respective countries, and through their channels.

Calendar

OCTOBER 2019	NOVEMBER 2019 Study visit professors	DECEMBER 2019
JANUARY 2020 Study trip for students and professors Students' personal project development	FEBRUARY 2020 Students' personal project development	MARCH 2020 Assessment and pre-selection of projects
APRIL 2020 Submission of the pre-selected projects	MAY 2020	JUNE 2020
JULY 2020	AUGUST 2020	SEPTEMBER 2020
OCTOBER 2020	NOVEMBER 2020	DECEMBER 2020
JANUARY 2021 Study trip for students and professors Students' personal project development	FEBRUARY 2021 Students' personal project development	MARCH 2021 Assessment and pre-selection of projects
APRIL 2021 Submission of the pre-selected project	MAY 2021 Final selection of the projects for exhibition	JUNE 2021 Curation and preparation of the exhibition
JULY 2021 Exhibition	AUGUST 2021 Exhibition	SEPTEMBER 2021 Exhibition
OCTOBER 2021 Collection of the projects	NOVEMBER 2021	DECEMBER 2021

Collaboration Formula and Commitments of Each Party

The formula of collaboration in the project will involve the schools assuming a fee which, depending on the chosen visit formula, will mean:

- 1 Day study visit (compulsory): 400 euros/ per course
- 1 & 2 Day study visit (optional): 550 euros/ per course
- 1 & 2 & 3 Day study visit (optional): 700 euros/per course

Said rates will be applied for each academic year and, therefore, for each of the visits scheduled in both years, 2019/2020 and 2020/2021.

As far as the obligations of the parties is concerned, the MUSEUM undertakes to:

- PHASES 1, 2, 3
 - Design a complete programme of actions as indicated with the structure and characteristics described for the duration of the project.
 - Fully develop the actions corresponding to the Museum, including the selection of content, the production of resources, and the organisation, coordination and hosting of the scheduled visits.

- PHASE 4
 - Safeguard the pre-selected works for a maximum period of one year, prior to the final selection of the projects to be included in the exhibition.
 - Appoint a jury for final selection of the works.

- PHASE 5
 - Design and produce both the web platform and the physical exhibition for displaying the works resulting from the project.

And the SCHOOLS, for their part, undertake to:

PHASES 1, 2

- Assume, by themselves, or by their students, the costs generated in phases 1 and 2 of the project corresponding to travel, accommodation and subsistence, and the costs of the materials required to develop the practical exercises encompassed in the visit programme, should they choose this option.
- Respect the key dates on the proposed calendar.

PHASE 3

- Assume, by themselves, or by their students, the costs generated in this stage 3 corresponding to materials, photographs or any other resources necessary to develop and document the students' individual projects.

PHASE 4

- Evaluate and pre-select the students' best works and take responsibility for the logistics and costs of sending the works and materials corresponding to the pre-selected projects, on the dates established.

PHASE 5

- Assume, by themselves, or by their students, the costs of travel, accommodation and subsistence arising from attending the opening of the exhibition and/or the meeting organised in that context.
- Take responsibility for the logistics and costs of collecting the works and materials of projects safeguarded at the Museum once the final selection of works has been announced and/or at the end of the exhibition.

The museum will endeavour to obtain a contribution of an economic or other nature from other agents with similar objectives in order to complete the necessary funding for the different phases of the project.

The overall approach of the project could therefore be modified for its potential presentation to the *Creative Europe* grant call for proposals. However, in the event of failing to obtain said grant, which will not be decided until spring 2020, the project would be integrally developed.

Thus, when formalising their participation, each party will assume the commitment to pay the costs arising from their participation.

With a view to enabling and simplifying organisation of the school study trips, the Museum is willing to assume responsibility for their logistics management. The Museum could therefore organise the internal transport, the accommodation, the materials and the students' subsistence for the duration of their visits.

The estimated costs for the schools, or for the students where appropriately, would be approximately:

BILBAO-GETARIA-BILBAO BUS SERVICE¹

- Minibus (with seating for a maximum of 25 people): 465 euros/per bus
- Standard bus (with seating for a maximum of 55 people): 515 euros/per bus

YOUTH HOSTEL ACCOMMODATION

- www.hostelgetaria.com/
- www.zarautzhostel.com/

LUNCH BAG

- Lunch bag with a sandwich, piece of fruit and a soft drink: 8 euros/per student

FABRICS FOR PRACTICAL EXERCISES

- Day 2: Moulage exercise: 15 euros/per student
- Day 3: Haute couture techniques exercise: 35€euros/per student

1. Bilbao is the closest international airport to Getaria.

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