



ABOVE LEFT – ‘Espéranto’, tea gown, crêpe de Chine with gold brocade front panel and trimmed with pearls, 1911–12. AAD/1982/1/57

ABOVE RIGHT – Evening gown (with ‘Paisley’ border design), embroidered cream ‘Liberty’ silk with cream and gold lace overlay, 1908. AAD/1982/1/53



OPPOSITE RIGHT – *Robe de bal*, white satin and spangled tulle embroidered with sequins and beads in a cloud and shower of rain design, with lace, chiffon, fringes and silk flowers, 1902–3. AAD/1982/1/46

OPPOSITE LEFT – Evening gown, white silk crêpe de Chine and taffeta with nasturtiums embroidered on green taffeta (matching the corselette), hem and falling sleeves trimmed with ribbons with trailing corsage of artificial nasturtiums, 1901–2. AAD/1982/1/43



DESIGN INSPIRATION

Between 1909 and 1914 – in line with prevailing trends – Worth’s collections were influenced by clothes from a wide range of cultures. Charles Frederick and Jean Worth were inspired by the fine arts and illustrations in their excellent fashion library. Confirming this, a reporter (who might have muddled the facts) recounted a conversation with Charles Frederick, who, he said, ‘always consulted Jules Breton for his Artois reproductions; he learned a great deal from Felon, a master of Arlesian costume; from Landelle, the painter of costume in the Pyrenees; from Guillemin, Leleux and Fortin, who spent many a long day portraying the strange and poetic costumes of Brittany. Bonnat and Henner he considered as the two best authorities on Italian costume, Hardy and Wells on English matters of dress, Theodore Delamarre on Chinese, Bida on Turkish, and Stevens on Parisian costume.’¹⁴ Jean stated that after attending the 1867 Paris Exposition, his father introduced kimono sleeves into his coat designs.¹⁵ And, in 1869, the couturier was credited with launching the vogue for draping Indian shawls to form a mantle, which was said to be an art that he alone possessed.¹⁶ Later, the decorative motifs and patterning of Indian shawls (p.84, right) and the knotted silk fringing that decorates shawls worn in China and Spain (p.86, centre) were to inspire Jean’s designs. A number of unstructured daywear dresses, from 1910 to 1914, employ the flat-cutting techniques characteristic of various African and Asian cultural clothing traditions. One afternoon dress is made using a textile with a broad decorative border that is shawl-

like, while the style bears some resemblance to the North African djellabah (p.102, left). Another, of figured silk with contrasting lining, encircles the upper body and has oriental overtones (p.103, right).

THE TEA GOWN

In *The Cult of Chiffon* (1902) Mrs Eric Pritchard noted, ‘At this very moment the perfection of a tea-gown may be realised by a combination of Japanese colouring, Grecian lines and French frivolity. Was there ever a time when fashions of all countries and periods were mingled with such excellent results?’¹⁷ A tea gown was generally a long, flowing, one-piece garment, often cut in a high-waisted style and made in soft materials such as lace, charmeuse or chiffon. Worn at tea-time, it was acceptable for a married woman to receive her female guests thus attired – ‘fast’ ladies arrayed in tea gowns were known (shockingly) to entertain gentlemen callers. While they were designed to provide comfort, tea gowns were not understated affairs. The same year Mrs Pritchard’s book was published, Jean designed a white silk and lace tea gown with a majestic draped back (p.83, below right) and another in white silk crêpe de Chine with voluminous sleeves, which was modelled by a house mannequin (p.83, below left). A filmy garment from 1907 features horizontal embroidered paisley or botch motifs with coiled tips (p.83, top left), while ‘Espéranto’ (one who hopes), of 1911–12, with its tabard-like front and beaded pearl trim has medieval overtones (p.84, left).



OPPOSITE TOP ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT – *Robe de bal*, black 'peau de soie' full-skirted gown overlaid with spotted tulle, trimmed with a vine of silk grapes and leaves, 1889. AAD/1982/1/62

Robe de bal, pale green satin with silver embroidery and applied silk garlands of flowering bindweed, overlaid with sheer tulle and with a 'bustle' of silk and tulle, 1889. AAD/1982/1/62

Evening ensemble (taking elements from eighteenth-century dress), 'habit' and skirt in white 'peau de soie' with polychrome embroidered floral borders and flounced lace, 1902-3. AAD/1982/1/43

MIDDLE ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT – 'Paquerette', evening gown, bias cut flounced lemon-coloured chiffon adorned with horizontal looped rows of pearls secured by tassels, 1913-14. AAD/1982/1/61

'Fuchsia', evening gown, violet chiffon and pink tulle over pink 'Liberty' silk, with embroidered scalloped design, velvet sash, applied tassels and velvet pansies, 1909-10. AAD/1982/1/56

'Toscarina', evening gown (with a large floral corsage), layered pale pink crêpe de Chine beaded in black and white with diagonal borders of bold scrollwork, 1911-12. AAD/1982/1/57

BOTTOM ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT – 'Medicis', evening gown, black satin over white chiffon with a cutwork diamanté studded 'spider's web' and silk flowers, c.1912. AAD/1982/1/58

Evening gown, green and gold brocaded silk with asymmetrical neckline over a short-sleeved bodice trimmed with a large tassel and fabric rose, 1911-12. AAD/1982/1/57

'Cupidon', *robe de diner*, apricot-coloured brocaded silk lamé, with tassel and fur trim, 1913-14. AAD/1982/1/61

ABOVE RIGHT – Evening gown (rear view), embroidered pintucked eau de Nil satin, with lace and silk flowers, 1902. AAD/1982/1/45

BELOW RIGHT – Evening gown, court train suspended from each shoulder, 'Liberty' satin, chiffon and tulle with a deep lace border entwined with white silk roses, c.1902. AAD/1982/1/45

