[Introduction]

MOOD OF THE MOMENT
Gaby Aghion & the house of Chloé

In 1952 Gaby Aghion founded the fashion label Chloé in Paris. Her intention was to liberate women from the many constraints of couture design by creating stylish everyday garments she and women like her would want to wear—and above all to cultivate the work of young designers. This exhibition celebrates her daring vision and prolific legacy.

Aghion's Chloé launched a new fashion mode: a unique cross between the luxury and artistry of haute couture and the ease of ready-to-wear. This innovative approach to fashion combined sumptuous fabrics and meticulous craftsmanship with simple silhouettes that spoke to the needs and tastes of modern women. The label foresaw a pivotal moment in the fashion industry: a transition away from the dominance of haute couture to the emergence of prêt-à-porter. Through Chloé, Aghion crystallized the Parisian spirit of effortlessness, imbuing fashion with a certain nonchalance, a casual elegance, fluidity, and lightness.

Aghion (1921–2014) was born into a sophisticated French-speaking Egyptian Jewish family and from an early age moved in cultured and politically progressive circles. Coming to Paris after World War II, she continued to inhabit the intellectual world of the Left Bank. To found her own label was a remarkable achievement for a woman in postwar France. At Chloé she established a lasting tradition of hiring emerging designers (most of them, like Aghion herself, not French-born). "I have no talent. I recognize the talent in others," she once remarked, preferring to remain outside the spotlight and instead to advance the work of the designers she championed as a creative entrepreneur. The nurturing environment she fostered launched numerous outstanding careers in the fashion industry.

Each designer's vision for Chloé was inflected with Aghion's ethos, addressing the cultural shifts of his or her own times and designing new expressions of femininity. Aghion's talent from the start was her innate understanding of the sartorial interests of women while always developing new styles to embrace the ephemeral nature of fashion and its ability to capture fleeting time. In each decade since the 1950s, the designers of Chloé have renewed her legacy, echoing the mood of their moment.

Choghakate Kazarian
Guest Curator

Kristina Parsons
Leon Levy Assistant Curator

Claudia Gould
Director Emerita and Exhibition Project Director

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I never asked anyone for their permission. I was responsible for my own life! I wanted to have an activity of my own—not to make money, but because creating something of your own brings you great happiness and pride.
—Gaby Aghion

[Anne and Bernard Spitzer Gallery]

Gaby Aghion in Egypt, early 1940s, photographed by Raymond Aghion.
Private collection of Philippe Aghion

Exhibition begins
←

I started Chloé because I loved the idea of couture, but found the concept a little out of date—a little artificial. A thing of beauty and quality should be seen on women in the streets.
 —Gaby Aghion

Chloé Garment Names
In 1958 Gaby Aghion developed her own system to identify the individual designs in each of Chloé's seasonal collections. Rather than assigning a number to a garment (as was standard practice in haute couture salons), designs were given names with literary, artistic, or pop-cultural references.
        Every collection was assigned a letter in alphabetical order. The system was first used in autumn–winter 1958, with design names beginning with A. This approach, which continued until the mid-1980s, gave a distinct personality to the garments and infused both playfulness and sophistication into each new presentation. A selection of these names appears here.

[Garment Names]

Acacia	Camelot	Debussy
Achille	Camomille	Degas
Adagio	Cannes	Devoir
Adieu	Caprice	Dictionnaire
Allegro	Capucine	Dimanche
Angleterre	Carre	Discipline
Apollo	Casablanca	Domino
Arc-en-ciel	Cascade	Dumas
Avril	Champaigne	Écoute
Baba	Chanson	Edelweiss
Badmington	Chou-chou	Édition
Bagdad	Clams	Eiffel
Baguette	Cognac	Élégance
Banjo	Corail	Émancipée
Bas-relief	Corse	Embrun
Bateau	Crime	En route
Bazar	Cygne	England
Beatnik	Dagobert	Éphèse
Beaux-Arts	Dahlia	Épinard
Bergamotte	Dandy	Epsom
Bonheur	Danse	Esquire
Bonjour	Darling	Essentiel
Brighton	Dash	Esther
Cabochon	Dauphin	Été
Californie	Dear	Étoile

Eustache	Jus	Piquant
Évidemment	Koala	Pissarro
Express	Lady	Poivre
Fabergé	Lampe	Pom-pom
Fabuleux	Lazuli	Pop
Facile	Légume	Porsche
Faucon	Les Amazones	Porto
Fanny	Libre	Pourquoi
Faux-pas	Limoges	Rabicoin
Fellini	Locomotive	Racine
Figaro	Longtemps	Radieuse
Flagrant	Loup	Rabelais
Flamboyant	Lucifer	Redaction
Fleur	Lundi	Rintintin
Football	Lynx	Riviera
Formidable	Macaron	Rivoli
Fric-frac	Maintenant	Robot
Fumée	Majong	Rome
Gala	Manet	Rossignol
Galaxie	Marais	Rummy
Gamine	Marron glacé	Saint-Germain-des-Prés
Garbo	Marseille	Sake
Garde-fou	Menthe	Salome
Géranium	Mer	Sancerre
Gertrude	Mercredi	Sang-Froid
Gitan	Metropolis	Saturne
Gladys	Midas	Sèvres
Golf	Mimi	Seychelles
Goncourt	Momo	Sirius
Grand Palais	Monsieur	SNCF
Graphisme	Moutarde	Soleil
Happy	Mouton	Souris
Harissa	Musicale	Spectre
Harmonica	Nanny	Sportive
Hécatombe	Nantes	Sucre
Holiday	Naxos	Sweepstake
Horoscope	Nectar	Tarentelle
Horticulture	Neptune	Tartine
I.B.M.	Norbert	Tendre
Ibis	Nostradamus	Tennis
Iceberg	Nymphe	Tertulia
Idylle	Oiseau	Tilt
Illogique	Opaline	Titulaire
Illumination	Opera	Tivoli
Imprimeur	Oseille	Toi
Indigo	Ouragan	Torpedo
Ingres	Pampa	Totem
Intéressant	Panda	Trafic
Iota	Parapluie	Trapèze
Irma	Pelican	Tribune
Italique	Penny	Trolley
Jade	Piano	Tulipe
Japon	Pingouin	Tunis
Judith	Pinocchio	Twist

Utopie	Versailles	Vis-à-vis
Vaillante	Veto	Voilà
Valeur	Vignette	Volvo
Vasari	Viking	Watteau
Velásquez	Vincennes	Zermatt

[Rita and Stanley H. Kaplan Gallery – first section]

From Alexandria to Paris
Gaby Aghion

Gaby Hanoka (1921–2014) was born in Alexandria, Egypt, to a Greek Jewish father and a mother of Italian Jewish descent. She was brought up in a cultured, French-speaking home. In 1940 she married her childhood friend Raymond Aghion, son of an eminent Egyptian Jewish banking family. During World War II he was a dedicated antifascist activist and political organizer. In 1945, as the war ended, the couple moved to Paris, where their life orbited around the Saint-Germain-des-Prés district. There they found a circle of friends among the Surrealist artists and intellectuals of the Left Bank.

In postwar Paris women of means dressed in haute couture, while others purchased cheap ready-made garments or had couture styles copied by local dressmakers. "So you ended up with this kind of half-baked couture," Aghion remembered. Seeking alternatives, in 1952 she began making light, free-moving dresses to sell to Parisian boutiques, transforming herself from client to designer. She did not want to use her own name for her fledgling brand, so she borrowed that of a friend named Chloé, liking the feminine roundness of its letters. Keenly aware of the importance of brand identity, Aghion insisted that retailers keep Chloé's labels on the clothes, instead of replacing them with their own (as was common at that time).

Although Aghion designed Chloé's first garments herself, she soon became artistic director, managing a creative team and overseeing the production of designs made by a cohort of freelance stylists. Very few of these early garments survive.

[On the wall at left]

Gaby Hanoka (later Aghion) as a teenager in a dress of her own design, c. 1936.

Gaby Aghion (left) and a friend at the beach in Egypt, in an undated photograph.
Aghion's lifelong love of the beach and an active lifestyle influenced her vision for Chloé. "I was inspired," she later recalled, "by what we wore in the sporting clubs in Egypt: lightweight dresses which were neither evening wear nor run-of-the-mill, but had that special something."

Gaby Aghion c. 1939.

Gaby Aghion in the desert near Alexandria, Egypt, c. 1940–45, photographed by Raymond Aghion.

Gaby Aghion in an undated photograph by Raymond Aghion.

Gaby and Raymond Aghion in Egypt with a friend (left), c. 1940–45.
Raymond Aghion (1921–2009) came from Egypt's Jewish haute

bourgeoisie. He was a lifelong communist and antifascist activist, and was involved in Egyptian Surrealist circles. When Raymond and Gaby moved to Paris after World War II, he continued his political activities while also working as an art dealer. Through Raymond's political work and their shared artistic interests, the Aghions were immersed in a large circle of intellectuals, some of whom were also Egyptian Jewish immigrants.

Gaby Aghion and the Egyptian Jewish poet Edmond Jabès in the late 1940s.

Gaby Aghion with friends, including, on her left, the Dada poet Tristan Tzara and the writer Daniel Anselme (born Rabinovitch) in Paris in the late 1940s.

Gaby Aghion and her son, Philippe, c. 1960.

Invitation (front and back) to the Chloé spring–summer 1958 fashion show at the Café de Flore, Paris.
Collection of the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris

Gaby Aghion in the Chloé workshop, 1964.
From *Vogue Paris*, October 1964

Gaby Aghion with her business partner, Jacques Lenoir, and Karl Lagerfeld on a business trip to Japan, c. 1977.
Soon after she founded Chloé, Aghion invited Lenoir (born Bensusan), a friend and former member of the anti-Nazi Resistance, to be co-owner. He ran the business aspects of the company while she managed the creative team.
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris

Gaby Aghion's apartment at 12, rue Linné, Paris, with paintings by Roberto Matta, Erró, Igael Tumarkin, Óscar Domínguez, Serge Charchoune, Ivan Puni, a relief by Céline Chalem, and African and East Asian sculptures, photographed in 2016 by Nicolas Norblin.

Unless otherwise noted, these photographs are in the private collection of Philippe Aghion.

LARGE PHOTOGRAPHS ABOVE, LEFT TO RIGHT

Gaby Aghion in the desert near Alexandria, Egypt, c. 1940–45, photographed by Raymond Aghion.
Private collection of Philippe Aghion

Aghion (seated, in a dark suit) working with members of her staff in the Chloé workshop, reviewing the spring–summer 1973 collection, 1972.

Aghion in the studio of the sculptor Céline Chalem around 1980.
Private collection of Philippe Aghion
Among Aghion's closest friends was the Cairo-born sculptor Céline Chalem. Chalem influenced Aghion's cultural life while Aghion supported

Chalem's art career, acquiring some of her sculptures and jewelry designs.

ON THE WALL AT RIGHT

Chloé fashion show at the Closerie des Lilas, Paris
May 19, 1960, autumn–winter 1960 collection
Agence Gamma, Paris

Between her husband's art gallery and the nearby cafés where the couple spent their time, Aghion's life was firmly rooted in the Saint-Germain-des-Prés neighborhood, the heart of postwar intellectual Paris. In November 1957 Aghion presented Chloé's first fashion show at the storied Café de Flore with a radical approach in which she brought her clothes directly to a favorite spot of her clients. Guests enjoyed breakfast while models strolled casually between the tables. Subsequent collections were shown in other nearby restaurants, Brasserie Lipp and the Closerie des Lilas, both famed haunts of artists and the intelligentsia. By showing Chloé's new designs in the informal environment of a Paris café, Aghion broke with the haute couture precedent of showroom presentations in formal interiors, infusing the brand with a bourgeois-bohème spirit.

[On the platform]

Suit (jacket and skirt)
Designed by Michèle Rosier, spring–summer 1964
Lace with stitched silk ribbons, lined with silk pongee
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 0685 A-B

These three garments are among the few early Chloé designs known to survive.

Embrun (Sea Spray) dress
Designed by Gaby Aghion and Maxime de la Falaise, autumn–winter 1960, reissued 2013
Wool jersey and silk twill
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1377

Chloé's freelance designers submitted sketches to Aghion, who chose which ones to purchase and produce. Thus, a collection was often made up from work by several different designers. On occasion Aghion took a direct hand in the development of a piece. For the autumn–winter 1960 collection she picked a design by Maxime de la Falaise and chose a jersey fabric for it; equally unusual was the choice for the collar and cuffs of silk twill—a fabric traditionally used for men's ties. At once practical and elegant, with a masculine touch, the Embrun dress was Chloé's first big success and quickly sold out. It embodied the spirit Aghion was looking for: comfortable yet stylish.

Flou-flou dress
Designed by Gérard Pipart, spring–summer 1961
Wool crepe
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1346

[On the platform at left]

Bergamotte dress
Designed by Karl Lagerfeld, autumn–winter 1967
Crepe with sequin embroidery and metal studs
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1631

Balalaïka dress
Designed by Karl Lagerfeld, autumn–winter 1967
Textile embroidered by Maison Hurel with sequins
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1978.318

ABC dress
Designed by Karl Lagerfeld, spring–summer 1967
Silk crepe hand-painted by Le Besnerais
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 2425

[On the platform at right]

Ensemble (T-shirt and skirt)
Designed by Karl Lagerfeld, c. 1976–77
Silk crepe (shirt); wool (skirt)
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 0807 A-B

En Compétition ensemble (T-shirt and skirt)
Designed by Karl Lagerfeld, spring–summer 1977
Silk crepe (shirt); cotton, polyamide, and viscose blend lace (skirt)
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 0520 A-B

Colombe (Dove) dress
Designed by Karl Lagerfeld, spring–summer 1976
Cotton jersey with silk crepe collar and bow
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1335

[Rita and Stanley H. Kaplan Gallery – second section]

Madame Aghion is a charming person. She sparks off the kind of atmosphere which has a very stimulating effect on me.
—Karl Lagerfeld

With each collection, I try to crystallize the mood of the moment.
—Karl Lagerfeld

Luxurious Effortlessness

In 1963 Aghion hired the young, then-unknown Karl Lagerfeld to join her team of stylists. Together they established Chloé's unique position between haute couture and the everyday accessibility of ready-to-wear, a niche that she called "prêt-à-porter de luxe." Encouraged by Aghion (the modernist), Lagerfeld (the historicist) embraced light, easygoing structures without heavy linings and with simple hems.

The result was a series of weightless dresses that embody Aghion's concept of luxury ready-to-wear, combining exquisite handwork, lush materials, and uncomplicated silhouettes. These unstuffy shapes were the perfect canvas for the colorful patterns that Lagerfeld developed from a range of artistic sources, including Cubism, Russian Constructivism, Art Deco, Art Nouveau, and 1960s psychedelic posters. Always attuned to the mood of the moment, Lagerfeld's designs evolved in the 1970s, swapping colorful hippie dresses for minimalist garments inspired by popular sports culture. By 1975 he was the sole designer at Chloé, where he and Aghion worked closely together for more than two decades.

Karl Lagerfeld was born in Germany in 1933 to parents who were members of the Nazi Party, an association he long tried to conceal. Over the years he himself invited controversies with his provocative public comments.

[On the wall]

Six Karl Lagerfeld sketches
TOP ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT

Bing dress, autumn–winter 1967
Pencil, felt-tip pen, and pastel on paper
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1967 H B III-235

Cinétique (Kinetic) dress, spring–summer 1968
Pencil, felt-tip pen, and collage on paper
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1968 E C III-134

LSD dress, spring–summer 1968
Pencil, felt-tip pen, pastel, and collage on paper
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1968 E C III-166

This sketch features a poster for a 1967 concert at the Fillmore Auditorium

in San Francisco, designed by Robert Wesley Wilson.

BOTTOM ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT

Sursis (Reprieve) dress, autumn–winter 1973
Pencil, felt-tip pen, and collage on paper
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1973 H S I-080

Rachmaninoff dress, spring–summer 1973
Pencil, ballpoint pen, felt-tip pen, and pastel on paper
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 0303 A

Lagerfeld frequently pasted images directly onto his sketches as a
reference for the Chloé workshop to interpret on silk, Aghion's favorite
fabric and thus Chloé's most frequently used textile.

Dress, autumn–winter 1971
Ink, pencil, and collage of printed papers on paper mounted on card stock
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1971 H M IV-324

[On the platform]

Dress
Designed by Karl Lagerfeld, autumn–winter 1971
Silk crepe hand-painted by Nicole Lefort
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 2417

The hand-painted motifs on this dress were adapted from a Cubist painting
by Albert Gleizes. Between 1960 and the late 1970s, Nicole Lefort
managed a small Parisian studio tasked with hand-painting these lyrically
asymmetrical patterns onto Chloé's silk dresses, known as "picture
dresses." Working from Lagerfeld's notes and sketches, she translated
designs and colors found in art books.

Ensemble (blouse, skirt, and vest)
Designed by Karl Lagerfeld, autumn–winter 1973
Printed silk crepe and jacquard wool knit
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 0833 A-B-C

Rachmaninoff dress
Designed by Karl Lagerfeld, spring–summer 1973
Silk crepe hand-painted by Nicole Lefort
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 0303 A

Dress
Designed by Karl Lagerfeld, spring–summer 1971
Silk chiffon hand-painted by Nicole Lefort
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 2814

Prokofiev dress
Designed by Karl Lagerfeld, autumn–winter 1972
Silk crepe hand-painted by Nicole Lefort

Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1326

Fiorentina ensemble (blouse, skirt, and pinafore)
Designed by Karl Lagerfeld, autumn–winter 1975
Silk crepe hand-painted by Nicole Lefort
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 3021 A-B-C

Astoria dress
Designed by Karl Lagerfeld, spring–summer 1967
Silk crepe hand-painted by Nicole Lefort
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 2415

Like the Aubrey dress, seen nearby, this garment features a design
influenced by the Art Nouveau drawings of Aubrey Beardsley and hand-
painted by Nicole Lefort.

Aubrey dress
Designed by Karl Lagerfeld, spring–summer 1968
Hand-painted satin silk, satin, lace, and velvet
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 0813

[Robert J. Hurst Family Gallery]

[On the platform]

Dress
Designed by Karl Lagerfeld, spring–summer 1977
Cotton canvas with embroidered tulle
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 2785, from the Marceline
Loridan-Ivens collection

Polonaise dress
Designed by Karl Lagerfeld, autumn–winter 1980
Printed silk and embroidered tulle lace
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1995

Arsenic dress
Designed by Karl Lagerfeld, spring–summer 1975
Silk crepe and lace
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 2420

The dress displayed here mixes lace and silk crepe, a blending of materials
that was common in haute couture garments, reinterpreted to emphasize
the lightness so essential to Chloé's aesthetic. Lace and silk were
traditionally reserved for evening wear and lingerie, but Lagerfeld used
them for daytime dresses that moved with the body and underscored the
interplay between decadence and the modern bourgeois. This dress, named
for the 1944 Frank Capra movie *Arsenic and Old Lace*, cheekily
incorporates both lace and black ribbon in a subtle nod to the film's darkly
comedic undertones.

Dress
Designed by Karl Lagerfeld, spring–summer 1976
Cotton jersey with silk crepe
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 2780, from the Marceline
Loridan-Ivens collection

Rhodes blouse and skirt
Designed by Karl Lagerfeld, spring–summer 1973
Printed crepe de chine
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1169

[On the wall]

Luis Buñuel
The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie, 1972
Excerpt, 3 min.

In Buñuel's landmark film, the buoyant, insouciant Alice Sénéchal, played
by Stéphane Audran, finds herself in a series of nightmarish and absurd
situations that expose the hypocrisy of her bourgeois ideals. In the pivotal
scene pictured here she wears a Chloé dress by Karl Lagerfeld.
Lagerfeld's design for Alice drew on the trappings of a modern upper-
middle-class woman to reveal the nuances of this character, typified by a

refined, understated elegance, compelling in its subtle, immaculate details.

Designs by Karl Lagerfeld, photographed by Guy Bourdin for Paris Vogue, February 1977
Exhibition print

Guy Bourdin staged this photograph in Karl Lagerfeld's Paris apartment. Like the Buñuel film seen in a clip at left, it is imbued with an air of the surreal and the ominous—typical of Bourdin's style. Lagerfeld's furniture is draped in dropcloths, as if the room had been eerily vacant until the spooky appearance of four ghostly models dressed in shades of white.

[Michael R. Bloomberg Family Gallery]

Chloé is a soft name. There's a soft way you pronounce it. So I think this is why Chloé has the right mood for the nineties. The name can be part of the moment.
—Karl Lagerfeld

For me, Gaby Aghion represented the spirit of Saint-Germain-des-Prés. It was a period when women were active and visionary.
—Martine Sitbon

Gaby loved fabric, and we often would spend hours together looking at various weights of silk crepe and miraculous materials.
—Peter O'Brien

Extravagance and Illusion
The Mood of the Eighties

The 1980s ushered in a new era for Chloé, moving away from the bohemian spirit of previous years toward bold and audacious dressing, in keeping with a powerful new vision of femininity. Lagerfeld created a series of structured and body-contouring black dresses and played with sparkle to create trompe-l'oeil motifs—for example, embroidery imitating a seventeenth-century violin; water gushing from a faucet; a dress hung over a dress. These witty fashions echoed the self-referential postmodernist spirit of the decade and its penchant for historicist parody.

In 1984, after Lagerfeld's departure, Aghion returned to the stable system of the brand's early years. Multiple designers worked concurrently, including Peter O'Brien, Philippe Guibourgé, and Carlos Rodriguez. Embracing a renewed interest in haute couture and extravagance, they emphasized opulent and dramatic designs, which they translated into glamorous evening wear. Two years later Aghion sold the label and retired, although she maintained an informal relationship with the company and supported its designers to the end of her life.

In 1987 Martine Sitbon was hired as Chloé's sole artistic director. Her garments were inspired by the glitz of cabaret and nightclub cultures in New York and Paris. In 1992 Lagerfeld returned to Chloé as artistic director, a position he occupied until 1997. He revived romantically fluid silhouettes and references to art that he had developed in the seventies.

[On the wall]

Chloé fashion show photographed by Jean-Luce Huré, featuring the Reis top and Bridge hat, designed by Karl Lagerfeld, spring–summer 1979

Antonio Lopez
Illustration for Vanity magazine, October 1983, featuring the Buée (Vapor) and Bath dresses, designed by Karl Lagerfeld, autumn–winter 1983

Gouache and pencil on paper
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. OA 0076

The renowned fashion illustrator Antonio Lopez was frequently commissioned by Vogue and other magazines to provide exclusive drawings of new collections as an alternative to runway photographs. Lopez championed diversity in the fashion world, sketching models of color, including close friend and future Chloé muse Pat Cleveland, and advocating with magazines for their inclusion in print. When Lopez moved to Paris in 1969, he lived for a time in Karl Lagerfeld's apartment and frequently sketched Lagerfeld's designs. Lopez's fantastical aesthetic captures the surreal whimsy and excess of Lagerfeld's trompe l'oeil dresses for the autumn–winter 1983 collection, transforming a man's face into a faucet from which water pours onto the models.

[On the corner platform at left]

Dress
Designed by Karl Lagerfeld, autumn–winter 1983
Silk embroidered with silver sequins, bugle beads, and crystals by Lanel
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 0792

[On the corner platform at right]

Albatros dress
Designed by Karl Lagerfeld, spring–summer 1983
Nylon tulle embroidered by Maison Hurel with sequins
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 0137

[On the central platform]

Bugatti dress
Designed by Karl Lagerfeld, autumn–winter 1983
Silk jersey with embroidery, bugle beads, and faceted mirrors
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 0836

Cintre (Clothes Hanger) dress
Designed by Karl Lagerfeld, spring–summer 1984
Acetate and viscose crepe embroidered by Lane with sequins and glass beads
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 0602

Angkor dress
Designed by Karl Lagerfeld, spring–summer 1983
Viscose and acetate crepe embroidered by Maison Vermont with threads, rhinestones, and beads
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 2933

Éphèse (Ephesus) dress
Designed by Philippe Guibourgé, spring–summer 1985
Silk chiffon embroidered with beading, rhinestones, and gold threads

Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 0021

In 2014 Chloé's artistic director of the time, Claire Waight Keller, invited the artist Cao Fei to create an intervention in garments from the Chloé Archive. She chose to write short poetic stories about works in the Archive, which were then printed on labels and sewn into the clothes. The story for this dress, entitled Black Eye, reads, "I thought I had smudged my lower eyelashes with kohl. I dabbed a little water on them, then rubbed. It turned into a black eye."

Ensemble (jacket and dress)
Designed by Martine Sitbon, spring–summer 1991
Raw silk, taffeta, beads, and acetate pellets
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 0045 A-B

Coat
Designed by Martine Sitbon, autumn–winter 1990
Fishnet with sequin embroidery
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 0048

Dress
Designed by Martine Sitbon, spring–summer 1990
Silk chiffon embroidered with plastic pellets and beads
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 0066 A-B

Individu dress
Designed by Carlos Rodriguez, spring–summer 1987
Silk crepe with sequin embroidery
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 0231

Geyser dress
Designed by Peter O'Brien, spring–summer 1986
Silk crepe with beaded embroidery
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 0014

[On the corner platform at left]

Dress
Designed by Karl Lagerfeld, autumn–winter 1994
Mohair and cashmere
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 0077

[On the corner platform at right]

Dress
Designed by Karl Lagerfeld, autumn–winter 1993
Velvet (dress); thin layered tulle (underdress); velvet cord (belt)
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 0245

Dress
Designed by Karl Lagerfeld, spring–summer 1994
Silk gauze hand-painted by Atelier Montex with guipure and needle lace

Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1084

[On the wall]

Karl Lagerfeld
Sketch for a hand-painted dress, spring–summer 1994
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1994 E I-083

The spring–summer 1994 collection presented diaphanous tulle dresses hand-painted with motifs inspired by ancient Greek frescoes. This sketch shows Lagerfeld's working process, in which drawing is combined with photographed details of the source imagery and notes for execution.

[Joseph and Fanya Heller Gallery]

Young British Women Designers

In 1997 Chloé returned to Aghion's original vision: women dressing women. During a surge in interest in British culture, Chloé hired the twenty-five-year-old Stella McCartney as artistic director, a role she held until 2001. McCartney brought a youthful sense of confidence and provocation to her celebration of female empowerment at the brand. She thought of herself as the typical Chloé client: "They're just lovely clothes that I and my friends want to wear," she said.

She paved the way for a rising generation of British women designers (all born in the early 1970s) with a shared sensibility and creative approach: Phoebe Philo (2001–6), who started as McCartney's assistant; Hannah MacGibbon (2008–11), who started as Philo's assistant; and Clare Waight Keller (2011–17). McCartney, Philo, and MacGibbon all studied at the influential Central Saint Martins design school in London. Each found her own way to revive and reinterpret Chloé's bohemian styles, probing the aesthetics of femininity while fostering a spirit of sisterhood. They played with the dichotomy of feminine and masculine, contrasting airy fabrics with sharp tailoring in which the garment was sculpted on the body.

Philo developed her iconic minimal, refined style during her tenure at Chloé. MacGibbon explored the tapered silhouette of the late seventies and early eighties, adding feminine touches like scalloped edges and loose capes. Waight Keller brought a new sophistication to the brand with her contemporary take on the antique drape, experimenting with textures, materials, and a fresh palette of colors.

[On the platform]

Jacket
Designed by Stella McCartney, autumn–winter 2001
Faux fur embroidered with lamé and beads
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1510 A

When Stella McCartney, a lifelong vegetarian, joined Chloé, she demanded that no fur, no leather, no pearls, and no feathers be used in the company's garments. It was a bold move in the late 1990s, anticipating McCartney's ongoing commitment to cruelty-free fashion. This faux-fur jacket is a testament to her ethics. Using a synthetic material imitating animal hair, it is part of a series of jackets that play with the dichotomies of animal/vegetal and natural/artificial.

Blouse
Designed by Stella McCartney, autumn–winter 2001
Fishnet embroidered with faux mother-of-pearl, metal chains
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1075 A-B
Jacket
Designed by Stella McCartney, pre-fall 2001
Lamé
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1332

Jacket
Designed by Stella McCartney, autumn–winter 2001
Cotton with sequin beading
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 0022

[On the wall]

I think being a young British female designer was an asset, but mostly I wanted to bring back to Chloé this wearability and this coolness.
—Stella McCartney

Shirt
Designed by Stella McCartney, summer 2001
Cotton jersey

T-shirt
Designed by Stella McCartney, spring–summer 2001
Cotton jersey and transfer
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 0593, 0677

This shirt's cheeky, faintly risqué image of two bunches of bananas wrapping around the wearer's breasts has a provocative yet playful riposte inscribed on the back: "Keep your bananas off my melons." Both McCartney and Phoebe Philo incorporated fruit imagery in the graphic T-shirts they designed for Chloé, bringing a kittenish element of pop culture to the line that addressed their own younger generation of women.

T-shirt
Designed by Stella McCartney, autumn–winter 1999
Elastane, cotton jersey, and transfer
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 0835

[On the platform]

T-shirt
Designed by Phoebe Philo, spring 2002
Cotton jersey and transfer
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 0552

Jeans
Designed by Phoebe Philo, spring–summer 2002
Denim with appliqué embroidery of silk threads and plastic beads
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 0507

During Stella McCartney's tenure, low-rise jeans became a staple of the Chloé look and indeed of the late 1990s and early 2000s fashion aesthetic for young women. In her debut collection as creative director, Philo continued to play with denim, emphasizing the hip-hugging style by embroidering lobsters wrapped around the waist—a nod to her free-spirited sensibility and the luxury resort lifestyle of Saint-Tropez.

Banana shirt
Designed by Phoebe Philo, spring–summer 2004
Printed cotton jersey
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1765

Stella McCartney
Excerpt from the collection show, spring–summer 1999, presented on October 14, 1998
1 min., 37 sec., WAB Productions, soundtrack by John Carter
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris

Responding to the immediate events of her time, McCartney opened the show for her third collection at Chloé with a soundbite from then-president Bill Clinton's 1998 PBS television interview with Jim Lehrer, in which he denied having a sexual relationship with a White House intern, Monica Lewinsky. McCartney, daughter of the Beatles' Paul McCartney, added a dynamic mix of music from across genres, including songs by the Jungle Brothers, Prince, and the Beatles.

In speaking about her decision to excerpt the Clinton interview, McCartney explained to reporters, "The collection is about female sexuality." The inclusion of this highly publicized interview shows McCartney's deftness at absorbing and echoing the pulse of the moment, keenly addressing the ways in which this scandal had global reverberations in the popular discourse.

The carefully orchestrated juxtaposition of lingerie-inspired silk and satin ensembles, presented with a soundtrack that mixed contemporary politics and music, subverted the idea that femininity is innocent or fragile. Rather, McCartney's femininity was one of unapologetic sexuality and powerful sensuality. Infusing her clothing with this indestructible energy transformed the soft, flowing garments into symbols of female power.

Tank top
Designed by Stella McCartney, spring–summer 1999
Printed cotton jersey
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 0988

Camisole
Designed by Stella McCartney, spring–summer 1999
Silk satin, lace, and organza
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 0818

T-shirt
Designed by Phoebe Philo, spring 2002
Cotton jersey and transfer
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 0516

[On the platform]

Dress
Designed by Stella McCartney, spring–summer 2001
Raw silk voile and printed satin appliqué

Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 0400

An enthusiastic equestrian, McCartney brought her beloved hobby to her fashions with a 2001 collection inspired by the nineteenth-century equine paintings of Théodore Géricault and George Stubbs. Notably, these designs were presented as part of the same collection that featured the "bananas" T-shirt, underscoring McCartney's deft negotiation of high and low cultural references and translation of them into both sophisticated dresses and confident feminist statements.

Dress
Designed by Stella McCartney, autumn–winter 2001
Screenprinted silk crepe, boning, and cotton
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1510 B

The dress features a portrait of Chrissie Hynde, founding member, lead vocalist, and guitarist of the British rock band The Pretenders.

Dress
Designed by Stella McCartney, spring–summer 2001
Raw silk voile and sequin embroidery
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1475

[On the wall]

My work at Chloé was discovering how to bring a sense of empowerment through clothes that are intrinsically feminine but make you feel incredible, sophisticated, strong, chic, and confident.
—Clare Waight Keller

LEFT, TOP TO BOTTOM

Stella McCartney
Sketches of Ensemble 42 and Ensemble 56 (blouses with trousers), spring–summer 2001
Drawing on paper with fabric swatches
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 2001 H I-006, 2001 H I-041

CENTER, TOP TO BOTTOM

Phoebe Philo
Polaroid for a collection fitting, spring–summer 2003
The model is Hannah MacGibbon, Philo's assistant at the time.

Two Polaroids for a collection fitting, spring–summer 2003
The model is Anca Partouche.

Sketch of an ensemble, spring–summer 2003
Pencil on paper with two Polaroids
The model is Anca Partouche.
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 2003 E II-133, 2003 E II-142.2, 2003 E I-028

Instead of making sketches to be translated later into garments, both Phoebe Philo and Stella McCartney used a hands-on design process that included fitting sessions, aiming to make clothes they would wear themselves. Here we see Hannah MacGibbon, then Philo's assistant, trying on a pleated leather skirt over her jeans, breaking down the boundaries between designer and wearer.

RIGHT, TOP TO BOTTOM

Phoebe Philo
Collection fittings, spring–summer 2003 and autumn–winter 2003
Digital photographs
The models are Anca Partouche and Zita Mészáros; Philo is at right.
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 2003 E I-029, 2003 E I-109

Invitation for Clare Waight Keller's spring–summer 2016 collection show, featuring Falling (Light Leak), a 2013 photograph by Ryan McGinley
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris

The spring–summer 2016 collection was a Technicolor reinterpretation of the romantic pleated dress, as seen in the tasseled chiffon dress in this room. Its ethereal fluidity is echoed in this invitation card, which features a photograph by the American artist Ryan McGinley, known for his jumping and floating nudes of young men and women. The carefree sensuality and weightlessness of McGinley's hedonistic photographs translate the optimistic, youthful spirit of Chloé, embodied in the freedom of movement this dress affords the wearer.

[On the platform]

Dress in two versions
Designed by Phoebe Philo, autumn–winter 2004
Silk chiffon with grosgrain ribbon appliqué
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 0628, 1781

Philo's romantic yet minimal style is exemplified in this iconic dress from the turn of the millennium, with its fairy-tale sweetness and soft lines. Her work was less openly provocative than that of her predecessor, instead emphasizing a suave, sexy elegance that spoke to the poise and vitality of young women.

Dress
Designed by Clare Waight Keller, spring–summer 2016
Chiffon and hand-dyed silk crepon with drawstrings and pompon tassels
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1167

[On the wall above]

Dresses designed by Phoebe Philo, photographed by Inez van Lamsweerde and Vinoodh Matadin for a Chloé advertising campaign,

autumn–winter 2004
Exhibition print
The models are Caroline Winberg and Dewi Driegen.
Inez and Vinoodh / Trunk Archive

Under Phoebe Philo's creative direction Chloé's advertising campaigns were often shot exquisitely by the photographer duo Inez van Lamsweerde and Vinoodh Matadin, set in classically French, romantic settings, as here in the Tuileries Garden in Paris. The images emphasized the strength of bonds and close intimacy among women. Alongside a broadly publicized network of "Chloé Girls" in the press (the celebrities, models, and friends of Philo—and before her, McCartney—who adored and loyally wore Chloé), the centrality of sisterhood that was so essential to the brand's spirit was broadcast far and wide in print.

[On the platform]

Dress
Designed by Phoebe Philo, resort 2006
Silk chiffon and organza embroidered with thin ribbons and small guipure lace motifs
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1795

Dress
Designed by Phoebe Philo, spring–summer 2005
Lace with grosgrain and velvet ribbon appliqué
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 0488

Three Paddington Bags
Designed by Phoebe Philo, spring–summer 2005 and spring–summer 2006
Washed calf leather with brass fittings
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 0080 A-C, 2188, 1535

After creating Chloé's leather-goods line in 2002 with the help of the bag designer Giovanni Morelli, Phoebe Philo launched the Paddington Bag in 2005. Recognizable for its heavy padlock and slouchy body made of washed leather, it was inspired by Philo's finds at the Portobello Road vintage market in London. The Paddington Bag sold out almost as quickly as it was made, cementing its status as an iconic "it bag" and a symbol of the growth of the luxury handbag market in the early 2000s.

Jacket
Designed by Stella McCartney, autumn–winter 2001
Woven cotton, glass pearls
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 0271 A

Both McCartney and Philo made power suits with tight, cropped jackets and polished tailoring. For her spring–summer 1998 collection, McCartney wrote a manifesto, articulating the idea of "masculine fashion 'au féminin' [in the feminine manner]." This jacket covered with faux pearls is a feminine take on a military uniform. "I am very inspired by men's clothing. I'm interested in making gender boundaries less extreme," she said. McCartney had learned tailoring working on London's Savile

Row, home of some of Britain's most celebrated bespoke men's tailors.

Jacket
Designed by Phoebe Philo, spring–summer 2005
Cotton canvas, rhinestones, sequin embroidery, and cotton twill tape appliqué
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1321

Jacket
Designed by Stella McCartney, autumn–winter 2001
Brushed cotton with boning
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1550

Origami jacket
Designed by Phoebe Philo, autumn–winter 2005
Cotton canvas, satin silk, grosgrain ribbon, and acetate appliqué
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1920

Jacket
Designed by Phoebe Philo, spring 2003
Cotton twill embroidered with metallic threads
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1887

Jumpsuit
Designed by Phoebe Philo, autumn–winter 2003
Cotton with silver buttons
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 0751

Coat
Designed by Phoebe Philo, autumn–winter 2002
Cotton gabardine with silk frogging
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1734

[On the platform]

Dress
Designed by Paulo Melim Andersson, autumn–winter 2007
Printed wool twill patchwork, lined with silk pongee
Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 2259

The Swedish-born designer Paulo Melim Andersson (formerly of Maison Martin Margiela and Marni) was creative director from 2006 to 2008. He brought a distinct edginess to the romantic femininity that had been cultivated by previous designers, favoring bold graphic prints, squared-off silhouettes, and asymmetrical cuts. In this collection Melim Andersson channeled the psychologically fraught terrain of familial relationships, describing his irreverent Chloé muse as "a girl who steals from her mother. I want this to be young-young, with no tricks. Clean, but not minimal."

[On the platform]

Coat
Designed by Hannah MacGibbon, spring–summer 2009
Double-face wool
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1578

The now-iconic scalloped edge of MacGibbon's debut collection for Chloé, in variations of warm pastels and soft shapes, brought a mood of charming romantic serenity to the brand. While the scallop had first appeared on Chloé designs in the 1960s and has continued to crop up in garments ever since, MacGibbon's predilection for contoured shapes brought a refined and elegant approach to the signature edge.

Ensemble (brassiere and trousers)
Designed by Hannah MacGibbon, spring–summer 2009
Polyester and cotton taffeta
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1619

Cape
Designed by Hannah MacGibbon, spring–summer 2010
Linen canvas, silk twill ribbon appliqué, suede, and metal buckles
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 2135

As MacGibbon's work for the brand developed over subsequent collections, she endeavored to design for what she described as Chloé's "understated, sensitive, real" core. As seen in this relaxed and easy cape, MacGibbon's designs brought forward an effortless sexiness through clothes that women could confidently live in.

Ensemble (skirt and blouse)
Designed by Clare Waight Keller, spring–summer 2013
Cotton poplin and cotton macramé
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1006 A-B

Ensemble (pinafore and blouse)
Designed by Clare Waight Keller, autumn–winter 2013
Wool and cotton poplin
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1017 A-B

[On the wall above the doorway]

Gaby Aghion's legacy informed the femininity, laid-back ease, effortless style, and elegance of my designs.
 —Hannah MacGibbon

[On the platform]

Dress
Designed by Clare Waight Keller, autumn–winter 2016
Silk chiffon embroidered with hand-dyed silk crepon
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1203

Waight Keller revived ethereal, floating, diaphanous elements from

Chloé's heritage, injecting the designs with bolder colorings, bright hand finishings (such as the chiffon embroidery seen here), a novel mixing of textures, and new silhouettes.

Coat
Designed by Clare Waight Keller, autumn–winter 2016
Hand-knotted yarns over a knit-wool base
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1202

[On the platform]

Coat
Designed by Clare Waight Keller, autumn–winter 2014
Fringed jacquard and viscose
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 0987

Dress
Designed by Clare Waight Keller, autumn–winter 2014
Silk georgette
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 0960

Dress
Designed by Clare Waight Keller, spring–summer 2015
Silk georgette with brass rings
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1048

Dress
Designed by Clare Waight Keller, spring–summer 2017
Viscose and cotton knit
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1429

Dress and belt
Designed by Clare Waight Keller, spring–summer 2012
Silk crepe and leather
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 0639 A-B

[Hallway between Joseph and Fanya Heller and Nancy and Morris W. Offitt Galleries]

Natacha Ramsay-Levi
Excerpt from the collection show, autumn–winter 2020, presented on February 27, 2020
2 min., 2 sec., video recorded by Free Caster, music by Jackson Fourgeaud, featuring Marianne Faithfull
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris

For her autumn–winter 2020 presentation Ramsay-Levi organized the runway around an installation of five golden totemic columns by the French artist Marion Verboom, entitled *Tectonies*. A tribute to female creativity, the show included collaboration with the artist Rita Ackermann and a soundtrack composed by Jackson Fourgeaud, with the British pop singer Marianne Faithfull reading excerpts of romantic poetry by Louisa May Alcott, Lord Byron, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, Christina Rossetti, and William Butler Yeats.

Invitation for Natacha Ramsay-Levi's autumn–winter 2020 collection show, featuring a 1995 collage by Rita Ackermann
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris

[Nancy and Morris W. Offitt Gallery – first section]

Something smart but not too uptight, professional without being too polished, seductive without being too sexy. I always believed that at Chloé whispering was more effective than shouting.
—Natacha Ramsay-Levi

I wanted to honor the brand's codes and belief system, as I found them very relevant to how we live today.
—Gabriela Hearst

Vintage in the Future

Chloé's most recent creative directors have been Natacha Ramsay-Levi (2017–20) and Gabriela Hearst (2020–23). Both reflect on the cycles of fashion, returning to past styles in ways that explore the richness of the brand's heritage as well as the ethics of reuse.

Trained as a historian before turning to fashion, Ramsay-Levi defined her approach as "vintage in the future." She brought a historicist spirit of mix-and-match to her work, blending styles and periods—just as a closet full of vintage pieces allows for unexpected juxtapositions of different pasts, all brought into the present. She studied the garments in the Chloé Archive and revived some iconic patterns, including Lagerfeld's 1973 black-and-blue geometric motif and McCartney's horses from the spring–summer 2001 collection (seen in earlier rooms). She collaborated with artists, highlighting the creative powers of women across disciplines.

Hearst, in turn, renewed Chloé's bohemian seventies spirit, bringing back maxi dresses, ponchos, and earthy colors, and revived the environmentalist ethos of that decade. She forged partnerships with artisans, returning to the handcrafted savoir-faire of Chloé's early years, and committed Chloé to sustainable production practices. An advocate of upcycling, she literally brought back textiles from the past, incorporating deadstock fabric offcuts into new designs.

[On the platform]

Dress
Designed by Natacha Ramsay-Levi in collaboration with Rithika Merchant, spring–summer 2018
Printed silk pongee
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1853

Dress
Designed by Natacha Ramsay-Levi in collaboration with Rita Ackermann, autumn–winter 2020
Viscose crepe, printed satin appliqué, guipure lace, glass- and wood-bead embroidery, and silk chiffon
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 2394

Blouse

Designed by Natacha Ramsay-Levi in collaboration with the estate of
Corita Kent, summer 2021
Printed silk
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 2746 A

"A Season in Hope," Ramsay-Levi's spring–summer 2021 collection,
showcased clothes and accessories produced in collaboration with the
estate of the American artist and social-justice activist Corita Kent. Kent is
best known for her 1960s antiwar and antiracism prints, featuring buoyant
messages of hope. This work was presented in October 2020, during the
first Paris fashion week after the start of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Suit and python-print shirt
Designed by Natacha Ramsay-Levi, spring–summer 2018
Cotton-elastane blend velvet with embroidery, lined with acetate-cupro
blend, zamak fittings (suit); printed viscose jersey (shirt)
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1980 A-B-C

The horses that appear across this suit speak to the frequent appearance of
this animal in Stella McCartney's designs.

Ensemble (T-shirt and skirt)
Designed by Natacha Ramsay-Levi, spring–summer 2019
Cotton and transfer (T-shirt), textured cotton jacquard (skirt)
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 2142 A-B

Dress
Designed by Natacha Ramsay-Levi, pre-fall 2018
Printed viscose with riveted mirrors and lace ribbon hem
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1931 B

The motifs on this dress reproduce Chloé prints from the 1970s.

Puffcho
Designed by Gabriela Hearst, autumn–winter 2021
Recycled nylon, cashmere, and silk
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 2873 A

Dress
Designed by Gabriela Hearst, autumn–winter 2022
Wool crochet and suede patchwork
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 3001 A-B

Dress
Designed by Gabriela Hearst, spring–summer 2022
Silk crepe de chine from Chloé deadstock
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 2965 A-B

This fringed dress was handcrafted by artisans using deadstock crepe de
chine ribbons found in storage in the Chloé workshop, knotted together in
a macramé technique. It was made in collaboration with Akanjo, a
Malagasy World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO). It is one of the
numerous collaborations initiated by Hearst to offer traditionally

handcrafted products within the project Chloé Craft.

[On the platform]

Coat
Designed by Gabriela Hearst in collaboration with Sheltersuit, autumn–winter 2021
Upcycled and repurposed Chloé fabrics in polyester, polyvinyl, silk, and wool
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 2912

This hooded coat was made of a patchwork of Chloé's leftover fabrics (from Ramsay-Levi's designs) in collaboration with Sheltersuit, an organization founded by the Dutch fashion designer Bas Timmer. Sheltersuit offers protection to people experiencing homelessness by providing full-length outerwear that converts into a sleeping bag. This long coat was a prototype for the shorter jackets that were produced commercially by Chloé with profits going to Sheltersuit.

[Nancy and Morris W. Offitt Gallery – second section]

The Colors of Egypt

BLOUSE: Blouse (smock-, sweater-, tunic-), blousette, brassiere, caftan, canezou, caraco, casaque, chasuble, shirt, chemise, top, jumper, sailor, polo, tunic, middy.
—Roland Barthes, The Fashion System, 1967, translated by Matthew Ward and Richard Howard

As the French philosopher Roland Barthes observes, the blouse is an iconic item of everyday wear, noted for its multiplicity of forms. It was a staple of Aghion's own daily uniform: she typically wore a long black skirt with a silk blouse in one of her favorite shades of white, ivory, beige, or dusty pink—tones that reminded her of the Egyptian sand of her youth. Since the 1960s, each Chloé designer has interpreted this wardrobe essential afresh, exploring an endless range of sandy hues, lush materials, ornamental details, and transparencies. The blouse plays with feminine and masculine codes, turning the professional, business shirt into a softened, floating silhouette in tune with the bohemian spirit of Chloé. The display shown here celebrates this humble yet crucial garment with examples from across Chloé's history as an emblem of Aghion's bold spirit in bringing luxury to the everyday.

[On the wall]

Gaby Aghion in the desert near Alexandria, Egypt, c. 1940–45, photographed by Raymond Aghion
Private collection of Philippe Aghion

When you touch the sand it's like silk in your hands and it has a color which is a beige, slightly rose.
—Gaby Aghion

[Clockwise from left]

Blouse
Designed by Natacha Ramsay-Levi, spring 2021
Silk crepon with smocking
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 2719 A

Blouse
Designed by Phoebe Philo, spring–summer 2002
Cotton voile embroidered with plastic and brass beads
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 0839 A

Blouse
Designed by Natacha Ramsay-Levi, spring–summer 2020
Silk damask
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 2293 A

Blouse
Designed by Natacha Ramsay-Levi, winter 2019

Silk georgette with mother-of-pearl buttons
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 2240 A

Blouse
Designed by Karl Lagerfeld, spring–summer 1994
Silk crepe
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 0288

Blouse
Designed by Natacha Ramsay-Levi, autumn–winter 2018
Double-face silk crepe
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1998

Blouse
Designed by Phoebe Philo, spring–summer 2002
Printed cotton satin, guipure lace, and broderie anglaise
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1712 A

Blouse
Designed by Phoebe Philo, autumn 2004
Silk crepe with smocking
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1770

Blouse
Designed by Phoebe Philo, spring–summer 2002
Cotton and silk canvas with broderie anglaise
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 0871

Top
Designed by Martine Sitbon, autumn–winter 1990
Silk organza with sequin embroidery
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 0096

Blouse
Designed by Karl Lagerfeld, autumn–winter 1994
Tulle embroidered with glass beads
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 0461

Top
Designed by Hannah MacGibbon, spring–summer 2009
Lambskin leather
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1621

Blouse
Designed by Gabriela Hearst, autumn–winter 2021
Wool gauze
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 3026

Blouse
Designed by Phoebe Philo, autumn 2006
Organza with broderie anglaise
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1825

Bouzy blouse

Designed by Karl Lagerfeld, spring–summer 1978
Silk crepe with stripe in the weave, grosgrain ribbon
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 2508

Blouse
Designed by Phoebe Philo, spring–summer 2006
Cotton poplin
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1812

Blouse
Designed by Hannah MacGibbon, spring 2009
Emerized cotton poplin
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1666

Blouse
Designed by Karl Lagerfeld, 1972–78
Silk chiffon, lace, plastic beads
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 0784

Blouse
Designed by Hannah MacGibbon, spring 2009
Ramie voile and organza
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1676

Blouse
Designed by Hannah MacGibbon, spring–summer 2009
Silk shantung
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1639

Blouse
Designed by Karl Lagerfeld, 1972–78
Silk crepe and lace
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 0874

Blouse
Designed by Gabriela Hearst, spring 2022
Cotton poplin with broderie anglaise
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 2881

Blouse
Designed by Natacha Ramsay-Levi, spring–summer 2020
Silk damask
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 2299 B

Blouse
Designed by Karl Lagerfeld, spring–summer 1973
Silk crepe de chine
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 2639

Blouse
Designed by Karl Lagerfeld, spring–summer 1975
Silk
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 2241

Blouse
Designed by Hannah MacGibbon, pre-fall 2010
Silk crepe with a fringe of metallic passementerie, cufflinks in metallic passementerie
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1242

Blouse
Designed by Natacha Ramsay-Levi, pre-fall 2018
Silk chiffon with mother-of-pearl buttons
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1932 B

Blouse
Designed by Karl Lagerfeld, 1970–80
Silk crepe de chine with topstitching
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 2638

Blouse
Designed by Clare Waight Keller, spring–summer 2012
Silk chiffon
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1641

Blouse
Designed by Karl Lagerfeld, 1970–80
Silk crepe
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 2644

Blouse
Designed by Phoebe Philo, spring–summer 2002
Silk poplin and cotton with broderie anglaise
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1695

Blouse
Designed by Natacha Ramsay-Levi, autumn–winter 2018
Silk pongee
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1997

Délices (Delights) blouse
Designed by Karl Lagerfeld, spring–summer 1981
Embroidered silk crepe and needle lace
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 2778

Liszt blouse
Designed by Karl Lagerfeld, autumn–winter 1980
Silk crepe and lace
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 2442

Blouse
Designed by Phoebe Philo, summer 2002
Silk poplin
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1698

Blouse
Designed by Hannah MacGibbon, spring–summer 2009
Silk gazar
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1583

Blouse
Designed by Hannah MacGibbon, spring–summer 2009
Organza
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1620

Blouse
Designed by Phoebe Philo, spring–summer 2002
Cotton satin with broderie anglaise and guipure lace
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1709 A-B-C

Blouse
Designed by Phoebe Philo, spring–summer 2002
Silk crepe
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1694

Blouse
Designed by Karl Lagerfeld, 1970–80
Silk crepe
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 2443

Blouse
Designed by Karl Lagerfeld, spring–summer 1968
Silk crepe
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 2643

Blouse
Designed by Stella McCartney, autumn–winter 2001
Printed silk crepe embroidered with glass beads
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1515

Blouse
Designed by Karl Lagerfeld, 1975
Silk crepe
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 0834

Top
Designed by Martine Sitbon, spring–summer 1990
Silk tussah with glass, metal, and mother--of-pearl bead embroidery, lined
with silk pongee
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 0039

Blouse
Designed by Phoebe Philo, spring–summer 2002
Cotton voile embroidered with plastic and brass beads
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1718

Blouse
Designed by Karl Lagerfeld, 1978
Silk damask
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 2660

Blouse

Designed by Phoebe Philo, autumn 2006
Cotton poplin with broderie anglaise
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1826

Blouse
Designed by Natacha Ramsay-Levi, summer 2020
Cotton poplin
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 2303 A

Blouse
Designed by Clare Waight Keller, spring–summer 2013
Polyester twill with jour échelle embroidery and cotton poplin bows
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1004

Blouse
Designed by Phoebe Philo, spring–summer 2004
Cotton poplin with guipure lace insets
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 1746

Blouse
Designed by Natacha Ramsay-Levi, winter 2019
Silk-wool blend
Collection of the Chloé Archive, Paris, inv. 2210 A

[Anne and Bernard Spitzer Gallery]

Exhibition design: Elliott Barnes
Graphic design: Joseph Logan
Lighting: Clint Ross Coller
Dressers: Anne-Gaëlle Dufour, Tae Smith, Whitney Hanscom, Ben Klemes
Exhibition fabrication: South Side Design & Building

Blanksteen Curatorial Intern: Audrey Kim
Curatorial Intern: Elizabeth Skalka

The companion volume to the exhibition is on sale in the Cooper Shop.

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