

FIRST MUSEUM EXHIBITION HONORING GABY AGHION, THE FOUNDER OF THE FRENCH FASHION HOUSE CHLOÉ

**Exhibition Highlights Gaby Aghion's Legacy and the Work of Iconic Designers
Who Began Their Careers at Chloé Including Karl Lagerfeld, Stella
McCartney, and Phoebe Philo**

Mood of the moment: Gaby Aghion and the house of Chloé
October 13, 2023—February 18, 2024

New York, NY, October 10, 2023—The Jewish Museum presents ***Mood of the moment: Gaby Aghion and the house of Chloé***, the first museum exhibition honoring the visionary Jewish entrepreneur Gaby Aghion (1921–2014) and her legacy as the founder of the French fashion house Chloé. Casting a new light on the label's 70-year history with nearly 150 garments as well as never-before-exhibited sketches and documents from the Chloé Archive, this exhibition highlights Aghion's vision of effortless, luxurious fashion, and the work of iconic designers who began their careers with the brand, including Karl Lagerfeld, Stella McCartney, and Phoebe Philo. The exhibition showcases Aghion as a leader whose work altered the course of the global fashion industry in liberating women's bodies from the restrictive attitudes and styles of time, as well as pioneering the emergence of luxury ready-to-wear. *Mood of the moment: Gaby Aghion and the house of Chloé* is on view at the Jewish Museum from October 13, 2023, through February 18, 2024.

Gaby Aghion was born Gabriella Hanoka in Alexandria, Egypt, in 1921 to a Jewish family. Like many educated upper-class families, especially among Egyptian Jews, the Hanokas spoke French and admired French culture. Aghion and her mother were fond of French fashion and the ideal of Parisian elegance, inviting seamstresses to their home to recreate designs they saw in French fashion magazines. In 1945, she moved to Paris with her husband Raymond Aghion and the couple quickly embedded themselves in the cultural scene of the city's Left Bank cafés.

Aghion established Chloé in 1952, during a time when the French fashion market was dominated by the stiff formality of haute couture—women who couldn't afford haute couture would make their own copies. Aghion wanted to offer original, modern, and elegant well-made garments in high-quality fabrics and free women from the rigid designs of the time. For the name of her new brand, Aghion chose the name of a friend, Chloé, inspired by the roundness of the letters and the youthful feminine image the name conveyed.

Choosing this name, Aghion created a Chloé persona: a woman who defined herself not only by her looks but by her free and modern attitude. She sold her first dresses to the shops she frequented herself and insisted the boutiques keep the Chloé labels in the dresses, despite the common practice of them replacing the maker's label with their own.

Aghion presented her earliest designs at fashion shows staged in the cafés of the Saint Germain area of Paris instead of the exclusive salons of fashion houses, as was common practice at the time. Such approaches made Chloé known for a new kind of luxury that spoke to modern women, emphasizing elegance, simplicity, and comfort, embodying the Parisian *bourgeois bohème* spirit of refined effortlessness. By capturing the mood of the moment, Aghion founded a fashion brand characterized by an easy elegance.

Mood of the moment: Gaby Aghion and the house of Chloé explores the ways in which each subsequent creative director uniquely interpreted the Chloé ethos and echoed the needs of their time, from the development of ready-to-wear to embracing sustainable practices in fashion. This historical overview includes designs by Karl Lagerfeld (first hired by Aghion in 1964), Martine Sitbon, Stella McCartney, Phoebe Philo, Hannah MacGibbon, Clare Waight Keller, Natacha Ramsay-Levi, and Gabriela Hearst.

Though a pioneer of women's fashion and dress, Aghion herself wore the same uniform for decades: a black skirt with a waistcoat and a silk blouse in soft colors that reminded her of the Egyptian sands. The exhibition concludes with a section dedicated to some 50 iterations of the iconic Chloé blouse from across the brand's history, celebrating the beauty of everyday wear and rooting visitors firmly in Aghion's vision.

Mood of the moment: Gaby Aghion and the house of Chloé is organized by the Jewish Museum: Claudia Gould, Director Emerita and Exhibition Project Director; Choghakate Kazarian, Guest Curator; and Kristina Parsons, Leon Levy Assistant Curator. Exhibition design is by Elliott Barnes.

Catalogue

The exhibition is accompanied by a richly illustrated catalogue designed by Joseph Logan and co-published by the Jewish Museum and Yale University Press. It includes newly commissioned photographs by Julien T. Hamon, and essays examining the life and work of Aghion and the history of Chloé through its different designers by Choghakate Kazarian, Alexis Romano, Camille Kovalevsky, and Kristina Parsons.



Programs

The exhibition will be accompanied by a series of lectures, conversations, performances, and virtual courses inspired by the exhibition. Programs include a [panel discussion](#) on the making of the exhibition with Claudia Gould, Elliott Barnes, and Choghakate Kazarian, on October 12; a [virtual talk](#) on October 24 with Kristina Parsons, co-presented with 92NY; a [concert](#) on November 9 celebrating the works of Layla Mourad, the Egyptian Jewish musical legend, co-presented with Bang on a Can; a [conversation](#) on the impact of three women-led fashion companies—Chloé, Marimekko, and Claire McCardell—in the development of modern dress featuring Alexandra Lange and Alexis Romano, moderated by Avery Trufelman on November 30; and a [discussion](#) with cultural icon, model, and author Pat Cleveland, who will share stories from her career on December 7.

Other highlights include a [two-part virtual class](#) that explores the pioneering entrepreneurship of two Jewish women, Helena Rubinstein and Gaby Aghion on October 24 and 31; a free [drop-in artmaking workshop](#) on October 22 for kids and families to create their own piece of wearable art inspired by the fashion on display; an in person or virtual [tour](#) of the exhibition for participants with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias and their care partners on November 1; and a [descriptive tour](#) on November 22 of the exhibition for visitors who are blind or have low vision.

Support

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Both the publication and the exhibition feature garments from the CHLOÉ Archive collection.



About the Jewish Museum

The Jewish Museum is an art museum committed to illuminating the complexity and vibrancy of Jewish culture for a global audience. Located on New York City's Museum Mile, in the landmarked Warburg mansion, the Jewish Museum was the first institution of its kind in the United States and is one of the oldest Jewish museums in the world. The Museum offers diverse exhibitions and programs and maintains a unique collection of nearly 30,000 works of art, ceremonial objects, and media reflecting the global Jewish experience over more than 4,000 years. The public may call 212.423.3200 or visit TheJewishMuseum.org for more information.

About Chloé

As one of the leading Parisian luxury fashion houses, Chloé embodies a forward-looking yet timeless style, with a purpose-driven model that advances positive social and environmental change. Chloé was founded in 1952 by Gaby Aghion, who wanted to liberate women's bodies from the stiff and formal fashion of the era through her luxury ready-to-wear offering. Since its inception, the Maison has entrusted a succession of emerging talents to further Aghion's vision: Karl Lagerfeld, Stella McCartney, Phoebe Philo, Hannah MacGibbon, Natacha Ramsay-Levi, and Gabriela Hearst. In October 2021, Chloé received B Corp certification – a demanding, independent evaluation process – that marks a new stage in the Maison's transformation.

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