



Madame Grès

Richard Martin, Harold Koda

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To elect to devote an exhibition at The Costume Institute to the work of an individual living designer is a significant decision. Yet we have chosen to do so unequivocally for Madame Grès. We tender our highest esteem for this designer of exceptional vision, whose work is untrammelled by commerce or compromise. She has fulfilled the highest objectives of art for the majority of this century.

Grès invented one model that she practiced, polished, perfected, and purified. Her Grecian gown, the *drapé* or draped dress, has been her emblem for nearly two-thirds of this century. Grès's sensual purity is akin to sculptor Antonio Canova's ideal of supple and voluptuous classicism and also to painter Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres's evocation of the tremulous, yet still, beauty of liquid line. Undeniably Grès's *drapé* is a supreme cipher; it owes its imputed mystery to the elements of voluptuous excitability, pensive sensuality, and repressed eroticism. It is a perfect neoclassicism. [This book was originally published in 1994 and has gone out of print. This edition is a print-on-demand version of the original book.]

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