



Yves Saint Laurent

1936-2008

Costumes for the Ladies, opening scene of Notre-Dame de Paris, 1965

Gouache and ink on paper signed, titled and dated lower right

Dimensions : 45 x 63 cm

Dimensions : 17.72 x 24.80 inch

Origin : Former collection Gilbert Cournaud



Dimensions with frame : 79 x 92 cm
Dimensions with frame : 31.10 x 36.22 inch

Biography

Yves Saint Laurent was born in Oran where he grew up until 1955. Then he settled in Paris where he joined the school of the syndical Chamber of Haute Couture. His talent was quickly noted and he began to work for Christian Dior. In 1957, after Dior's death, at only 21, the young Yves Saint Laurent became director of Dior. He gained success with "Trapèze" his first collection for Dior.

After a few years in this prestigious haute couture house, Yves Saint Laurent left and created his own label, helped by his partner Pierre Bergé met in 1958 and with who he shared his entire life until his death 50 years later. His first haute couture collection was presented in 1962; then he created the dress Mondrian in 1965 or "Pop Art collection" that revealed his taste for art. Today, the iconic pieces of Yves Saint Laurent are the dinner jacket, the pant suit and the safari jacket inherited from male wardrobe.

Simultaneously to haute couture, the French designer created in 1966 a luxury prêt-à-porter collection under the name Saint Laurent rive gauche. These collections designed by Yves Saint Laurent were executed under industrial process. Instantaneously, these collections gained a lot of success and many shops opened in France and also in New-York in 1968 and London in 1969. In 1974, Yves Saint Laurent settled the haute couture inside a private mansion at the 5 avenue Marceau Paris 8th. This place is nowadays the address of the Museum Yves Saint Laurent.

In October 1985, the great fashion designer was awarded with the Oscar of the best dress designer for his entire work. At the end of 1986, he bought the Group Charles of the Ritz that managed Saint Laurent perfumes and cosmetics around the world. The designer focused on haute couture at the end of the 1990's before retired the 7th January 2002.

On the 31st December 2002, Yves Saint Laurent and Pierre Bergé bought the hôtel particulier located on the 5 avenue Marceau. Then, Yves Saint Laurent consecrated himself to the eponymous foundation dedicated to the preservation of 5 000 clothing items and more than 15 000 objects that form the collection of the future Museum Yves Saint Laurent. Opened on the 3rd October 2017, the Museum summarizes the sense of creativity of the genius Saint Laurent around haute couture creation and a certain "art de vivre" probably extinct today.

Attracted to art and scene, Yves Saint Laurent created simultaneously to his activity in fashion a lot of costumes for theater, ballet and cinema. He started to work with Roland Petit in 1959 when he designed the costumes ballet for Cyrano de Bergerac. After he worked with Claude Régy, Jean-Louis Barrault, Luis Buñuel, François Truffaut, Alain Resnais. He especially made clothes for Jean Marais, Zizi Jeanmaire, Arletty, Jeanne Moreau, Claudia Cardinale, Isabelle Adjani, or Catherine Deneuve.

In 1965, the choreographer Roland Petit took possession of Victor Hugo's masterpiece Notre-Dame de Paris and created his first representation for the ballet of the Opera de Paris. Key figure of neoclassical dance with his eyes lined with kohl, Roland Petit knocked at the young Yves Saint Laurent's studio. At this time, the designer worked on his Mondrian collection. Inspired by the coloured rectangles of the Dutch painter Piet Mondrian, the dresses of Saint Laurent were like a revolution in haute couture at that time.

Roland Petit liked fashion and wanted to work with the young creator to make his Notre Dame an avant-gardist adaptation of Victor Hugo's work. While Saint Laurent imagined the costumes, Maurice Jarre composed the music. Nine representations will occur at the Opera Garnier between 11 and 27 December 1965. The dancers were dressed with vivid color medieval costumes while Roland Petit used to work with transparent or feathered costumes. After Notre Dame, Saint Laurent and Petit left their mark on the 1970's and thanks to their friendship

and collaboration, the ballets of Roland Petit entered the repertoire of the Opera de Paris.

In an interview given in 1996, Yves Saint Laurent explained: "When we worked, Roland Petit and myself, on Notre-Dame de Paris, we didn't imagine that 30 years later this ballet could always be on the bill at the Opera de Paris. From its creation, it was a success and nowadays it is a classic. Classic of modernity, creativity and imagination. I wanted these costumes to be colorful like the stained glasses of a cathedral and I followed Mondrian to imagine Phoebus' costume. I tried to escort the eternal youth of the choreography. The variation of Esmeralda, the pas de deux and pas de trois. The judges of the court, the shady movements of the Court of Miracles, the turmoil of Frolo and the moving tenderness of Quasimodo inspired me, like a fresco of the Middle Ages."

In the collection of the Musée Saint Laurent, we can see 26 drawings of the costumes of Notre Dame and among them one is very close to ours. We can see the three ladies for the opening of the ballet, with their large headdress inspired from Middle Ages and their long dresses. Our gouache was a part of Gilberte Cournand's collection, a dance critic, bookseller and sponsor. Absolutely passionate by dance, she had a very important collection of objects and gave a large part of it to the national center of dance.

Museums

Museum Yves Saint Laurent, Paris

Decorative Arts Museum, Paris

Bibliography

Laurence Bénéïm, Yves Saint Laurent : Biographie, Le Livre de poche, mars 1995

Marie-Dominique Lelièvre, Saint Laurent mauvais garçon, Paris, Flammarion, janvier 2010

Pierre Bergé, Yves Saint Laurent, l'oeuvre intégral. Haute couture 1962-2002