

American Beauty



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This beautifully illustrated book is the first to examine the relationship between innovation and aesthetics as expressed by American couturiers and fashion designers from the late 1910s to the present day. The book, which accompanies a major exhibition at The Museum at the Fashion Institute of Technology, New York, reveals that great design and great style were consistent elements in the work of American's best fashion designers. Patricia Mears introduces many great forgotten figures, as well as many familiar names: work by lesser-known figures such as Jessie Franklin Turner, Ronaldus Shamask, and Charles Kleibecker is discussed alongside pieces by more celebrated creators, such as Halston and Charles James; work by designers of the past is juxtaposed with that of present-day designers such as Rick Owens, Yeohlee Teng, and Maria Comejo. James' grand and structurally imposing gowns from the 1950s appear alongside contemporary Infantas by Ralph Rucci; the section on draping juxtaposes 1930s gowns by Elizabeth Hawes and Valentina with more contemporary garments by Jean Yu and Isabel Toledo; clothing cut into pure geometric shapes like circles, triangles, and rectangles is illustrated by World War I-era teagowns by Jessie Franklin Turner, Claire McCardell's mid-century rompers garments, and modern sportswear by Yeohlee and Shamask. While the United States may be best known worldwide for its casual mass-marketed garments, Mears demonstrates that artistry, innovation, and

flawless construction are the true marks of American fashion.

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