



PRESS RELEASE

Azzedine Alaïa Thierry Mugler 1980/1990 Two decades of artistic affinities

Curated by Olivier Saillard

Exhibition from March 3rd, until June 29th, 2025

Open every day from 11 am to 7 pm

Full Price: 10€ - Reduced price: 3€

Métro : Hôtel de Ville

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Established in Paris in 1956, Azzedine Alaïa owes his training more to his female friends and customers than to any training school. He accompanies them in their desire for a demanding yet discreet wardrobe. A great couturier who has lost none of the closeness that a fitting or cutting session imposes, Azzedine has acquired the reputation of a great cutter heir to an academic tradition that places him in the direct line of Cristobal Balenciaga or Madeleine Vionnet.

His expertise and technical virtuosity are coveted not only by the elegant women of the moment. Couturiers and fashion designers know they can count on him to refine certain complex designs or lend a hand on a collection that needs finishing. This was the case for Yves Saint Laurent. It was also the case with Thierry Mugler, whom Alaïa met in 1979 and with whom he forged a real friendship.

For his autumn-winter 1979-80 collection, Mugler invited Alaïa to design the series of tuxedos for his fashion show, and in the press kit that accompanied the presentation of his creations that season, he thanked him publicly. In the hands of the man who never wanted to transgress the laws of cut, powder-grain and satin trouser suits acquired a form of notability and fluidity that was much appreciated. This collaboration encouraged Alaïa to become a designer himself. Thierry Mugler strongly encouraged him, and his support proved both vital and unfailing. On Rue de Bellechasse, where Azzedine has set up his workshops, Mugler, always flanked by his bicycle, brings in the top fashion journalists. In 1982, at the request of the American department store Bergdorf Goodman, Alaïa presented a show in New York. It was Mugler who persuaded him to do so, Alaïa imagining that the invitation was a joke! The designer, friend and admirer, accompanied him, organized and built the show himself, answered and translated interviews, and supported his comrade in the smallest tasks, for which he was eternally grateful. In the summer, they spend their vacations together in Tunisia at the home of lifelong friend Latifa and Leila Menchari.

Companions for a decade that they preempted stylistically, Alaïa and Mugler freely let their influences influence each other's creations. In the 1980s, both divinized the woman, proclaiming the return of glamour in glory and Hollywood as their inspiration, a world away from the folkloric fashions of the 1970s. They shared a common silhouette where majestic shoulders contrasted with choked waists and blossoming hips, memories and fantasies of the fashions of the 1930s and 1950s and the couturiers Adrian, Jacques Fath, Christian Dior and Cristobal Balenciaga in the lead.

If Mugler had a flair for showmanship, orchestrating the biggest ever parade of his creations and fantasies at Zenith in 1984, Alaïa had a taste for intimacy and perfection. But it's with a shared spirit that their collections respond to each other. Since our meeting," says Thierry Mugler of his friend, 'my clothes are less abstract, more in touch with reality, the body feels more at ease in them, and his are something more striking (...) I think that with me, Azzedine Alaïa has been able to free himself, let's say, to move towards suits with more ergonomic, sinuous lines'.

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It's striking to see the extent to which Alaïa's creations have borrowed the charisma of the silhouettes Mugler used to claw his way through hundreds of shows, while the former concentrated on just a few.

United by "mutual love at first sight", Mugler always showed the young couturier a preview of his collections. He even agreed that Zuleika, his lifelong muse, and Mirabelle, his no less regular collaborator, would marry into the Alaïa family and company, which he firmly supported in its development.

Contemporaries, friends, both deceased within six years of each other, the two designers showed deep respect for each other's careers throughout their lives. Their daywear and eveningwear echoed each other, dictating a four-handed fashion style that was the hallmark of contemporary fashions.

Azzedine Alaïa, the couturier and collector behind a vast and renowned fashion heritage, has preserved over 200 Thierry Mugler-branded creations, some 40 of which are exhibited here in dialogue with his own archives

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AZZEDINE ALAÏA FOUNDATION

Azzedine Alaïa lived a life filled with fashion, art, design, architecture, music and theatre.

Mr. Alaïa had been an avid collector in the creative and cultural disciplines for the past fifty years. In 2007, he set about to preserve his own work and his large holdings by founding the Association Azzedine Alaïa, later becoming the Azzedine Alaïa Foundation, with his lifetime partner, and his close friend of forty years, the publisher Carla Sozzani.

The Azzedine Alaïa Foundation has been recognized as a public utility on February 28th, 2020. The Foundation's missions are the conservation and enhancement of the work of Azzedine Alaïa, the pieces he collected throughout his life in the fields of art, fashion and design, the organization of exhibitions, and the support for cultural and educational activities.

The foundation houses its collections in Paris and exhibits Alaïa's own work as well as his collections. It is located at 18 rue de la Verrerie where he lived and work and in Sidi Bou Saïd, the town he loved so dearly.

A bookshop and café, featuring books on fashion and cultural history, are also situated at the heart of the Foundation in Paris.

The Foundation also gives awards to promising visionaries in fashion.

The signature logo of the Azzedine Alaïa Foundation was designed by Julian Schnabel.

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