

Art and Fashion

Emily Garcia

ARTH 1204- E420

New York City College of Technology

Emily Garcia

Professor Munroe

ARTH 1204- E420

October 15 2018

Art and Fashion: Compare and Contrast

Charles Frederick Worth is regarded as the founder of Haute Couture, who so cleverly began the adding of labels to the garments he designed. Worth was born in 1825 and died in 1895, during his upbringing he was required to get a job alongside his mom to help provide because his father was an alcoholic. Due to this, he took on jobs at Swan and Edgar as well as Lewis Allenby where he supplied yards of fabric and learned about textiles. These experiences peaked his interest in going to art galleries, which he used as inspiration for his fashion designs later on. Thus, leading to the House of Worth and Worth's gown in figure 1.

Throughout his time, Worth has managed to design gowns such as the one in figure 1. This particular gown is a mustard color evening dress with details of flowers; which appear to be red roses attached to their stem, along with some leaves. The gown is held at the shoulders similar to a cap sleeve, but stops just below the elbows like a $\frac{3}{4}$ sleeve. There seems to be multiple layers of a dusty mustard sheer detailed fabric. Worth used shapes like a triangle to elongate the torso and the rounded shape that begins at the waist to accentuate the figure. Worth also used a dark dull blue for 3 bows that he placed on the gown, two on the sleeve which add a scrunched texture to it and one just below the bosoms. The fabrics used for this dress were silk and cotton and it was made in 1890 between 1900. Worth incorporated and popularized the bustle, which could tie into his previous life experience of gazing at art work or into supporting his family, like the bustle is a support for the dress to keep it from dragging.

Like anyone who is successful in the fashion industry, Paul Poiret has experienced the highs and lows of the fashion cycle. His life begins in Paris in 1879 and ends in 1944. Growing up, he was surrounded by art work like paintings as well as architectural work. On [encyclopedia.com](https://www.encyclopedia.com) it says his “family also owned a country house outside of Paris, at Billancourt, where Poiret spent his spare time constructing fountains, pressing petals from the garden, and gathering odd bits of iron and junk into what he called his antique collection” (“Paul Poiret.” *Encyclopedia.com*). His keen for fashion progressed through magazines, catalogs, theater and art exhibits. His continued passion led him to work for the House of Worth, where he started to develop a fondness of textile. Poiret was well familiar with fabrics, but wasn’t good at sewing so he began to drape. This ideal of loose clothing, emerged from orientalist influence which he is known for and figure 2 is an example of that.

Theatrical costumes were Poiret’s forte, in 1925 the Robe de Style in figure 2 was made. This dress has a dash of elegance starting with the rounded boat neckline, exposing the collarbone. Poiret adds the same rounded but textured detail around the waist. This detail is helping the bottom of the dress to have a soft accordion pleat affect, due to the choice of fabric being silk. The dress is a grayish blue color, with long sleeves and ending just below the knees. He decided to add triangles below the neckline with small colored circles, giving the dress a sort of jester look. As for the back of the dress, instead of keeping the rounded design of the waist, he ends it in a triangle. The triangle gives off a loose and hanging look, which complements his use of a cloud shaped bottom. To describe the cloud shaped bottom, it’s the half shaped circles where he ends the dress. Robe de Style is a classic Paul Poiret and he has shown that his upbringing, interests, and surroundings have developed and are displayed in each of his designs, with the inclusion of what colors may have been on the rise of the fashion cycle in his time.

Similarly, Worth and Poiret were ahead of their time with their designs. Both dresses, the “Evening Dress” and the “Robe de Style” are both one color with details that are of a different color. The dresses include the same fabric of silk as well as similar boat necklines. There’s an inclusion of triangles and a use of red for details which stand out on their dull choice of color for the dresses. Although Poiret includes the grayish blue color as his overall choice for the dress, Worth included that same color for the bows.

However, the fitting of the garments are apparent, Poiret’s dress is loosely fitted while Worth’s is shape defining or enhancing. The use of shapes are also different in context, for Worth the use of the triangle on the front of the dress is to elongate the torso and the boat neckline is a little less modest than Poiret’s. As for Poiret, his use of the triangle is on the back, which he pairs with the design under the neckline, this gives off a parallel or balanced look. His use of the boat neckline displays a modest look. For both dresses, the lengths of the sleeves as well as the length of the dresses overall are different. Worth layers fabric and Poiret only uses one fabric, but adds details such as circles to make the dress look a little less dull. Worth has so much going on in his gown, he uses bows to add texture; while Poiret’s use of texture is the bottom half of the dress which is like a soft pleated accordion and the hem is a cloud or in other words half circles.



Fig. 1. Is an “Evening Dress” designed by Charles Frederick Worth of the House of Worth design house. Made of silk, cotton in 1890 between 1900, which now resides in the Met Museum with the accession number of 1993.156.1a, b. (The Met)



Fig. 2. Is the “Robe de Style” designed by Paul Poiret in 1925. This dress is made of silk and is located in the Met Museum with the accession number of 1982.249. (The Met)

Works Cited

“Charles Frederick Worth.” *Encyclopedia.com*. Encyclopedia of World Biography, Copyright 2004 The Gale Group Inc. Web. 16 Oct. 2018.

<https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/literature-and-arts/fashion-biographies/charles-frederick-worth>

“Evening Dress.” *The Met*. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000–2018. Web. 16 Oct. 2018.

<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/80740>

“Paul Poiret.” *Encyclopedia.com*. Encyclopedia of World Biography, Copyright 2004 The Gale Group Inc. Web. 16 Oct. 2018

<https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/literature-and-arts/fashion-biographies/paul-poiret>

“Robe de Style.” *The Met*. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000–2018. Web. 16 Oct. 2018.

<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/97118>