

Shafana Begum

ARTH 1204-D429

Dr. Nazanin Munroe

Research Notes

### **Callot Soeurs**

Introduction:

- 1895: French Fashion house
- Callot Soeurs translates to Callot Sisters.
- Three sisters: Marie Callot Gerber, Marthe Callot Bertrand, and Regina Callot Chantrelle
- They all shared an artistic heritage
- Mother was a lace maker and Father was an artist
- Orientalism: a way of seeing that imagines, emphasizes, exaggerates and distorts differences of Arab peoples and cultures as compared to that of Europe and the U.S. It often involves seeing Arab culture as exotic

Dinner Dress:

- The materials used in this gown from 1906-1910 make a conventional silhouette.
- While the dress lacks a label, these details and the overall quality of the design suggest a Callot Soeurs attribution.
- Gerber was the head designer, “Callot Soeurs gowns from the early 1900s led trends in flowing and delicate fabrics such as [silk](#), chiffon, organdy, and antique French [lace](#). But the label was also willing to adopt and adapt the bright jewel-tone colors associated with the Fauvists and the vogue for Eastern themes at the end of that decade.”

### Evening Dress:

- Perhaps even more importantly, the silhouette reflects Europe's examination of Eastern dress, the softness, raised waist, and lower bust stance.
- “Adjusted to the Orientalism of the decade, Callot Soeurs made the silhouette into a cylindrical wrap, effortless in lingerie-weight fabric. “
- “Here, sequins vary some are punched into a filigree pinwheel, others are hammered flat; in some instances, metal is overlaid onto faceted crystal. But even this ornamentation is not entirely for the pleasure of diversity, but for the calculated and magical effects of such varied surfaces seen in evening and candle lights.”

### Evening Suit:

- First established in the 1890s by the four Callot sisters as a lingerie and lace business (after their mother), Callot Soeurs evolved into a premier dressmaking house in the early years of the 20th century.
- “The garments from Callot Soeurs signature elements of the house: antique lace trimming, Orientalist textiles, lavish embroidery that includes bead- or ribbon work, or a combination of these elements.”

### Dress:

- In a reference to Persia, Callot Soeurs created a kind of artistic dress of the 1920s, stark in its tubular silhouette but ornamented on the surface.
- “Despite the presence of decoration, for which they were perhaps best known at the time, Callot Soeurs practiced a disciplined modernism.”

- This day dress with collarless tunic employs a vestigially Ottoman angled sleeve with narrow cuffs.

Compare and Contrast:

Callot Soeurs: Evening Dress

- “In this gown from 1914, the decorative scheme is as deliberate as that of a scenic kimono, in which no part of the pattern repeats itself.”
- “Radiating bars resemble fans unfolding, while the different textures of textiles and beads are layered with all the care evident in a fine piece of lacquerware.”
- “Both the motifs and the color palette of black and ivory relate to prized Japanese fan boxes decorated with that traditional decorative technique.”

Madeline Vionnet: Evening Dress

- “This dress of pale pink lamé and black silk lace appliquéd with black silk velvet is from the personal collection of Mona Bismarck.”

## Bibliography

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- "Callot Soeurs." The Museum at FIT - Online Collections. Accessed November 20, 2019. [http://fashionmuseum.fitnyc.edu/view/people/asitem/items\\$0040:6170/0?t:state:flow=289c1dd3-a51e-455a-bfdc-8d892f89f71c](http://fashionmuseum.fitnyc.edu/view/people/asitem/items$0040:6170/0?t:state:flow=289c1dd3-a51e-455a-bfdc-8d892f89f71c).
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- "Roaring into the Twenties: The New New York Woman; on View at the Museum of the City of New York March 22 - September 14, 2003." *Italian Voice*, Mar 13, 2003. <https://search-proquest-com.citytech.ezproxy.cuny.edu/docview/362651286?accountid=28313>.

### **Image URLs:**

- <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/158321?&searchField=All&sortBy=Date&ft=Callot+Soeurs&offset=0&rpp=20&pos=12>
- <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/81139?&searchField=All&sortBy=Date&ft=Callot+Soeurs&offset=40&rpp=20&pos=43>
- <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/155869>
- <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/81113?&searchField=All&sortBy=Date&ft=Callot+Soeurs&offset=60&rpp=20&pos=76>
- <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/155882?&searchField=All&sortBy=Date&ft=Callot+Soeurs&offset=40&rpp=20&pos=47>
- <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/81494?&searchField=All&sortBy=DateDesc&ft=Madeleine+Vionnet&offset=20&rpp=20&pos=33>