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## Museum Object Analysis Paper

### **First part: Physical Description**

Object name: Evening dress, spring/summer 1938

Graceful dress of lightweight organza from spring/summer 1938

- The color of the object includes Ivory silk organza with floral appliqué of ivory and green silk mousseline embroidered with white and green bugle beads. This is a summer suspender long dress, with a silk silhouette. The materials needed to make this dress are silk, glass, silk mousseline, bugle beads, and floral appliqué. The pattern of this dress is made up of many roses. Each delicate stem of roses consists of an appliqué of ivory and green silk mousseline.
- I guess this dress is partly made by hand and partly by machine. The roses on the dress may have been made by hand, with the workers sewing the roses together, and the rest may have been made by machines.
- Evening dresses are special dresses for formal occasions that stand out from regular dresses. They are carefully made to express a woman's desire. Evening dresses are a way of expressing a women's feministic side. Each dress shows low neck cuts with dresses tightly wrapping around one's body. Necklines are low and deep, straps were tiny or little to none. The fabric on evening dresses especially stood out to many: extravagantly pliant chiffons and satins and luxuriant velvets and taffetas. Evening dresses also boast a variety of different designs, including lacing, embroidering, along with ruffles on the surfaces. This particular evening dress is a promised gift to Sandy Schreier. Sandy Schreier is a pioneering collector, who believes dresses are a way for people to express their creativity.

### **Second part: Historical/Cultural analysis**

- This dress was designed in 1938 (in the 1930s). In the 1930s, people could see the return of feminine fashion, and the dresses that showed women's curves once again became the most favorite style of the fashionable people. There was more emphasis on the waist, but there was no return to the extreme girdle exaggeration of the early 20th century.

Influenced by movie stars, evening dresses became more colorful and delicate. The backless dinner dress was the most important and innovative invention of the 1930s. Evening dress styles with a front height and backless to near waist became popular, revealing the back began to be seen as "aesthetic" and "sexy". A simple short shirt with a wrap skirt, or a v-shaped sweater and jacket are examples of fashion. 1938 was a period of transition from the disastrous depression to world war 2. Women's fashion is rich at that time: vibrant colors, surrealistic accessories, minimal embellishment of ornate hats are the main trends, bigger floral prints, smaller hats, and more glamorous shoes. However, the overall outline is simple, clean and complex. The hemline began to drop below the knee. Skirts are no longer just cut diagonally; they are now a-line, pleated, or flared. The restrained, organized shoulders evolved into the trademark puffy sleeves. Shoulder pads were also introduced to add more dramatic toppings and a slimmer natural waistline to the fantasy. Public figures such as the duchess of Windsor have inspired women's everyday dress. The women's coat of 1938 was as colorful as the dress, and not just in the spring. There are more choices in color. Winter coats come in bright blue, green, burgundy, yellow, and so on. White summer shoes and sandals dominated the fashion scene in 1938. Colorful sandals are popular beach shoes. In 1938 women always went out with hats, and in that period hats had low rounded edges, wide edges, and were often folded into irregular shapes. The decoration of the hat is relatively simple, with little trimming: a small ribbon or a flower. In summer it is straw, and in winter it is felt.

- Lucien Lelong never formally studied fashion, instead earning a business degree at Ecole des Hautes Etudes commerciales in Paris. However, he grew up in a haute couture environment. His father, Arthur Lelong, owned a textile factory. He trained at the Hautes Etudes DE Commerciales in Paris and opened his own fashion house in the early 1910s. He was unanimously elected to the important post of President of the couture chamber of commerce in 1937 and remained in office until 1945, when he successfully steered the French fashion industry through extremely difficult times, including the German occupation of Paris during world war 2. He has clients who are famous actors, directors or authors of that period, like Greta Garbo, Gloria Swanson, Colette, Rose Kennedy, and

so on. Vogue magazine first published Lelong's design in 1913. Poor health led to the end of his career; Lelong retired in 1952.

### **Third part: Exhibition analysis**

- This garment is displayed in the section of spring and fall evening dresses (which are designed by French designers), but it is placed in the middle. It shows the importance of the garment in this area. And there was a white light shining on the dress. Although it is not allowed to touch the dress on these models, the white light is more convenient for the visitors to observe some details of the dress, and also to observe the details of the roses on the dress (such as the bugle beads, on the dress, and the floral appliqué on the dress are sewn on which part of the dress).
- Paris, France, a country known as the “palace of art”, is famous for its fashion, architecture, art, painting and so on. And Paris is a synonym for fashion, full of a variety of imagination and French style elegant feelings, many famous designers are located and born there, is the creation of Hermes, Dior, Yves Saint Laurent, and other world top luxury brands. It is also a fashion art mecca for artists and designers all over the world. The inclusion of this garment to the exhibition means that the designers of each period have their own different styles, some dresses may be influenced by the paintings of that period, and some dresses may be influenced by the architecture of that period. It also means that different designers in different periods have different approaches to the details of the dresses or clothes. The interpretation of Paris fashion is that this dress can show the fashion styles of that year or that year (such as puffy sleeves). Or what colors were popular that year.
- This exhibition was effective because it showed the many different promised dresses given to Sandy Schreier. Through all the promise dresses given to her, it is inevitable to notice the changes in evening dresses throughout the century. Although many dresses were made in different time eras, each dress displays a unique approach to crafting a dress. Each dress shown in the exhibition exhibits the rich materials used by each designer. Overall, this exhibition clearly displays various dresses in various time periods and effectively displays them.

