

PRESS KIT

YVES SAINT LAURENT

The Hamish Bowles Collection



30.01.2025 – 04.01.2026

musée YVES SAINT LAURENT marrakech

Yves Saint Laurent

The Hamish Bowles
Collection

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Yves Saint Laurent

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Word from the guest curator
Private collector



"As a child obsessed with the hazy glamour of the far-away world of Paris fashion, Yves Saint Laurent was my spirit guide, the guru of taste, the great beautifier of all things and all people who were seduced by his alchemical magic."

Hamish Bowles, Vogue, September 2017

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Word from the President of the Fondation Jardin Majorelle



It is a great honor to bring to the Musée Yves Saint Laurent Marrakech such a rich and fascinating approach to examining Saint Laurent's genius, as exhibited here through garments that represent just a small part of Hamish Bowles' vast collection. It is a privilege to share with our Moroccan and international visitors this exhibition—the first devoted to Hamish Bowles' impressive fashion collection—and give them a chance to discover these extraordinary Yves Saint Laurent creations within private hands.

Madison Cox

PRESS
RELEASE

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From January 31, 2025, to January 4, 2026, the Musée Yves Saint Laurent Marrakech will present a new interpretation of the couturier's work thanks to an exceptional loan.

Following the seven temporary exhibitions seen at the Musée Yves Saint Laurent Marrakech (mYSLm) since it opened in October 2017, the museum has today given *carte blanche* to one of the most important private collectors of the second half of the twentieth century: the eminent fashion historian and critic, Hamish Bowles.

As we begin 2025, the exhibition *Yves Saint Laurent: The Hamish Bowles Collection* has been entrusted to someone with no direct link to the couturier's legacy and who is taking a completely novel approach: for the first time in its history, the mYSLm will explore the unique point of view of a collector of Yves Saint Laurent garments through a monographic exhibition.



A one-of-a-kind exhibition

In 1964, Yves Saint Laurent began keeping a selection of prototypes from each of his collections: in other words, models that had been designed by him and produced by his in-house ateliers, just as they had been worn on the runways.

However, the 55 vintage pieces designed by Yves Saint Laurent presented in this exhibition were never seen on a runway nor are they stored in the archives of the Fondation Pierre Bergé-Yves Saint Laurent in Paris; instead, they hail from Hamish Bowles' own collection, which in its entirety includes more than 150 pieces from the House of Yves Saint Laurent. Another remarkable fact: the models on display were made to the measurements of couture clients and worn by them before arriving in the hands of Bowles—they all are garments that had been part of someone's life.

It's no coincidence that the scenography of the exhibition has been entrusted to the Anglo-Irish opera director Patrick Kinmonth, who is more accustomed to the stage and live performances than to museum spaces. Bringing together the three key periods of Yves Saint Laurent's career in a single exhibition, Kinmonth's immersive, "baroque" exhibition design is based on an original dramatic approach. The whole is accompanied by a film, which retraces the mounting of the exhibition, by the American documentary filmmaker David Boatman, as well as by an exhibition catalogue available in French and English.

Once visitors have crossed a lilac-colored vestibule, they enter a maze of lounges and alcoves in gray tones, where they discover dresses designed by Yves Saint Laurent during his early years working for Christian Dior (1958–1960).

Visitors then find themselves in a poetic forest filled with shapes, reflections and superpositions, revealing couture creations of the House of Yves Saint Laurent, co-founded by the couturier and Pierre Bergé in 1961. The final chapter of the exhibition showcases the dynamism and fluidity of SAINT LAURENT *rive gauche* ready-to-wear creations in a vibrant atmosphere of colors and geometric lines.

Anything but retrospective or backward-looking, the exhibition should be seen as an invitation to viewers to immerse themselves in the exuberant passion of a collector captivated by style.



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From the birth of a passion to its public display: the Hamish Bowles Collection

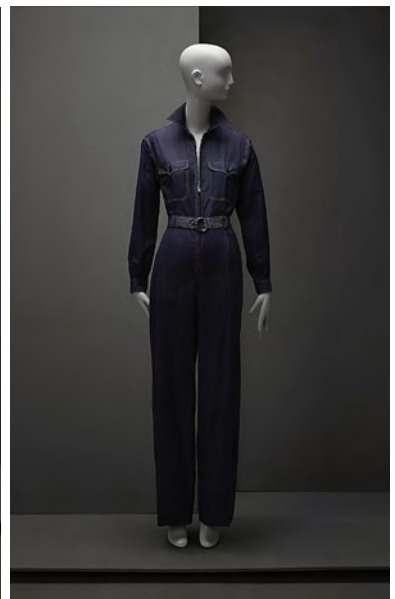
This visionary exhibition would not have been possible without an extraordinary loan granted by Hamish Bowles, a unique character whose keen eye and encyclopaedic knowledge of the history and making of clothing throughout the ages have made him an authority for over for forty years in the most prestigious fashion magazines.

His obsessive approach to clothing, a constant in his life since childhood and, later, during his years studying at the renowned Central Saint Martins college in London, has never failed him throughout his career as a journalist, fashion historian and exhibition curator.

Acquired over the course of more than half a century, his colossal collection, which today includes more than 3,000 pieces, has attracted international attention.

Always on the lookout for auction sales of clothing and other vintage treasures sourced from the private wardrobes of prestigious clients, Bowles has studied the work of Yves Saint Laurent for four decades and remains as fascinated by those who wore the illustrious couturier's creations as by the garments themselves.

Hamish Bowles was nineteen when he acquired his first couture Yves Saint Laurent, a 1969 evening dress in a poppy-like patchwork, inspired by the bohemian lifestyle, at a London thrift store. In 1984, upon becoming a fashion editor at *Harper's & Queen* at the age of twenty, he covered his first Yves Saint Laurent haute couture show, the couturier's Fall-Winter 1984 collection.



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From the runway to real life: “living” archives

From a cocktail dress from the Spring-Summer 1958 collection (Dior period) to a blue SAINT LAURENT *rive gauche* jumpsuit worn by Betty Catroux, the exhibition reveals Hamish Bowles’ favorite Yves Saint Laurent creations, while the exhibition’s accompanying catalogue reproduces the 55 exhibited models alongside original sketches, workshop sheets, collection plates or illustrations from the museum’s collection, today held by the Fondation Pierre Bergé–Yves Saint Laurent in Paris.

One intriguing aspect of this exhibition is how it merges the work of the renowned couturier and the lives of clients, showcasing clothing worn in their everyday lives by strangers as well as by some of the most fashionable women of their time, such as Nan Kempner, Lynn Wyatt and Lily Safra. One discovers a brightly colored patchwork ensemble from a 1969 collection, reflecting the influence of Marrakech on Yves Saint Laurent’s creations, and a zigzag-striped jumpsuit remodeled and adapted to the silhouette of a particular client.

What this living heritage reveals, above all, is the timeless elegance of the creations of an undisputed master of modernity—Yves Saint Laurent—a brilliant interpreter of his era, who never ceased to inspire women, all women without exception, whether yesterday or today, the world over.

Forever searching for new ways to explore the couturier’s world and oeuvre, the mYSLm seeks to transmit to today’s and tomorrow’s visitors, whether from Morocco or overseas, an ever richer and more inspiring understanding of Yves Saint Laurent’s unique legacy.

BIOGRAPHIES

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Biographies

Hamish Bowles

Hamish Bowles is one of the most prominent international figures in the world of fashion and design. As creative director at *World of Interiors* and editor at large at *Vogue*, he oversees all articles and covers contemporary culture, fashion and its history. Mr. Bowles has assembled an impressive collection of haute couture and has contributed, as curator and consultant, to numerous critically acclaimed exhibitions: *Jacqueline Kennedy: The White House Years* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art; *House Style: Five Centuries of Fashion at Chatsworth*; *Balenciaga: Spanish Master*; and more recently, *India in Fashion: The Impact of Indian Dress and Textiles on the Fashionable Imagination*.

Madison Cox

Madison Cox is a renowned garden designer as well as President of the Fondation Jardin Majorelle and of the Fondation Pierre Bergé-Yves Saint Laurent. His garden design projects have taken him from New York to Florida, from California to Boston, as well as to Morocco and Europe. Cox is the author of *Private Gardens of Paris* (Harmony Books, 1989) and co-author of *Gardens of the World* (Macmillan, 1991); *Artists' Gardens: from Claude Monet to Jennifer Bartlett* with photographs by Erica Lennard (Abrams, 1993); and *Majorelle: A Moroccan Oasis* (Vendome Press, 1999) with Pierre Bergé.

Oriole Cullen

Oriole Cullen is a Senior Curator of Textiles and Fashion at the Victoria and Albert (V&A) Museum, which holds one of the leading international collections of historic and contemporary fashion. Prior to joining the V&A she was curator for dress and decorative arts at the Museum of London. She currently oversees the V&A's acclaimed Fashion in Motion series, showcasing the work of emerging and established contemporary fashion designers within the Museum. Her most recent exhibitions include *Dior: Designer of Dreams* (2019) and *Chanel: Fashion Manifesto* (2023–24).

Patrick Kinmonth

Patrick Kinmonth is a world-renowned designer and artist, often described as "a renaissance genius." After working as artistic editor of *Vogue*, he broadened his artistic scope in several disciplines including painting, interior architecture and design, opera production, set and costume design, fashion criticism, as well exhibition design and curatorship. Kinmonth writes frequently on art and design for publications around the world, while pursuing a multidisciplinary career that has taken him from Milan's Teatro alla Scala to New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Alexis Sornin

Alexis Sornin has been Director of the Pierre Bergé Museum of Berber Arts and of the Musée Yves Saint Laurent Marrakech since September 2020. He was previously head of publications and education at the Palazzo Grassi-Punta della Dogana / Collection Pinault in Venice; head of exhibitions and publications at the Villa Medici / Académie de France in Rome; and head of the study center at the Canadian Centre for Architecture in Montreal.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

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EXHIBITION CATALOGUE

The catalogue accompanying the exhibition *Yves Saint Laurent: The Hamish Bowles Collection*, published in both English and French editions, is on sale at the book shops of the Yves Saint Laurent museums in Marrakech and Paris.

MUSÉE YVES SAINT LAURENT MARRAKECH

The Musée Yves Saint Laurent Marrakech (mYSLm), which opened its doors in the fall of 2017 a stone's throw from the Jardin Majorelle, is a vibrant cultural center. Its main exhibition room features more than just iconic creations by the renowned couturier: it offers a journey to the heart of his inspirations. Fifty models, structured around themes dear to Yves Saint Laurent, offer an original reading of the designer's work through pieces rarely seen by the public. Garments are displayed in ten-month rotations, to ensure their best possible conservation, and to allow repeat visitors to always discover something new.

The mYSLm also houses a temporary exhibition room, a photography gallery, an auditorium, a reference library, a book shop and a café-restaurant. A basement-level conservation and archival center ensures that works are kept under state-of-the-art preventive conservation conditions. At the museum's temporary exhibition hall, designed as a cultural and artistic showcase, the mYSLm pursues a program that places a special emphasis on modern and contemporary Moroccan creations.

FONDATION JARDIN MAJORELLE

The Fondation Jardin Majorelle is a unique cultural institution in Morocco, overseeing three hectares in the heart of downtown Marrakech. It is dedicated to botany, Berber (Amazigh) culture, fashion, the decorative arts and contemporary artistic creations. It includes the Jardin Majorelle, the Pierre Bergé Museum of Berber Arts, and the Musée Yves Saint Laurent Marrakech. The Fondation Jardin Majorelle is a Moroccan non-profit institution, which self-finances its projects and supports cultural, educational and social programs and initiatives throughout the Kingdom.

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