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Fashion: A History from the 18th to the 20th Century (Collection from the Kyoto Costume Institute)

Akiko Fukai

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Clothes define people. A person's clothing, whether it's a sari, kimono, or business suit, is an essential key to his or her culture, class, personality, or even religion. The Kyoto Costume Institute recognizes the importance of understanding clothing sociologically, historically, and artistically. Founded in 1978, the KCI holds one of the world's most extensive clothing collections and has curated many exhibitions worldwide. With an emphasis on Western women's clothing, the KCI has amassed a wide range of historical garments, underwear, shoes, and fashion accessories dating from the 18th century to the present day. Showcasing a vast selection of skilled photographs from the Institute's archives, depicting the clothing expertly displayed and arranged on custom-made mannequins, Fashion is a fascinating excursion through the last three centuries of clothing trends.

From a rare treasure such as a 17th century iron corset with embroidered bodice to modern-day outfits by such designers as Yves Saint Laurent and Calvin Klein, the collection provides an extensive overview of the evolution of women's fashion. The KCI believes that "clothing is an essential manifestation of our very being" and their passion and dedication positively radiate from every page of this book. It offers an opportunity to see how our ancestors dressed, to consider the amazing accomplishments of contemporary fashion, and to imagine how our descendants may dress in the distant future as clothing design continues on its tireless evolutionary path.

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