Landmark V&A show will celebrate Coco Chanel's fashion, beauty contribution

By Sandra Halliday - May 27, 2022

The latest landmark fashion exhibition to be seen at the V&A in London will focus on Gabrielle ‘Coco’ Chanel. Opening next year, it will be the first time a major UK museum has dedicated an exhibit to the trailblazing French designer.

Called Gabrielle Chanel: Fashion Manifesto, the event will run from the opening of her first Paris millinery bought in 1910 up to her final collection in 1971. It will be curated by Paris’s Palais Galliera.

And it’s likely to make a major impact judging by the success of previous V&A spotlight exhibitions built around major design names, including Christian Dior and Alexander McQueen.

The exhibition will centre on 180 designs, including looks created for celebs such as Marlene Dietrich and Lauren Bacall, as well as the all-important jewellery, accessories and perfume.

The show, which was originally staged in Paris in 2020 and is divided into eight themes, will be supplemented by rarely-seen pieces from the V&A’s own collection.
The event will focus on her contribution to fashion rather than her — at times — hugely controversial life. And that contribution is undeniable given the huge part she played in the simplification of women’s fashion and the move to more conformable clothing, as well as her influence on the global perfumes industry and her inspired use of accessories.

It will run from 16 September 2023 to 25 February 2024.

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