

[New Acquisition]



Gabrielle Chanel

Dress, c.1919.

Label: Gabrielle Chanel PARIS

Inv. AC12037 2009-14-3AB

A silk velvet one-piece dress in dark green, embroidered with flowers and curving patterns with transparent bugle beads and golden threads on the bodice. Ornaments with fringes are added on both shoulders. The skirt's shape was designed to be similar to that of a wrap-over skirt, attached to an underskirt of black silk taffeta at the left side. On the right side, a separate piece of the same fabric as the bodice is added at the waist, lined with a golden lamé fabric, while an ornament made using the same fabric is attached at the left waist. The belt is embroidered with beads and fringed. This dress is one of the early works by Gabrielle Chanel [1883 - 1971]. *Vogue* (U.S.A.) introduced in one of its 1919 issues a very similar black velvet evening dress together with jet accessories. For this dress the inner belt is removed, but a belt is placed along with the gentle curve of the hips to create a loose-fitting silhouette. The exquisite embroideries on the bodice and the belt add floridness to the dress, beautifully expressing the tradition

of haute couture in this functional costume. In addition, the low-cut neckline at front and back projects feminine glamour. The drapes on the skirt, the asymmetrical hemline, the fringes on the shoulders, and the train create various expressions of the dress, changing according to the wearer's postures and movements. We can say that this work was based on human movements. After the Russian Revolution in 1917, Chanel hired at her Paris studio some self-exiled Russians. In those days she presented many works with embroideries based on the motifs of ethnic costumes. The embroideries on this dress seem to be similarly influenced.



Paul Poiret

Dress, c.1920.

Inv. AC12039 2009-15

A sleeveless one-piece dress with a bodice made of black silk satin embroidered with colorful flower patterns, and with a skirt made of breadthwise red silk broche (52 cm in width) with woven flower patterns. Paul Poiret [1879 - 1944] fearlessly introduced Orientalism to Paris at the beginning of the 20th century and continued to develop his exoticism. This

work was made for his wife and muse, Denise. The bodice is made of glamorous black satin embroidered densely with various sizes of flowers and leaves, mainly made using light and dark brown silk threads and surrounded by beads and spangles. The anomalous configuration of the fabric draws people's attention. The skirt is made of plain-woven loose twist silk in a soft red color with wool yarn creating continuous flower patterns. In view of the embroidery and weaving techniques, these fabrics were probably brought from the East. If you carefully follow the cutting lines, which are minimal, you will not see any breast darts or side seams in the bodice. The parts wrapping the shoulder blades alone are made by separate pieces. The skirt was shaped by stitching up a square piece of fabric, which is simply cut off a roll, to be attached to the waist of the bodice. The only seam line is utilized as the opening of the dress on the rear left side. This dress may be the result of strategic utilization of limited width and length of fabric. Poiret is renowned for his eclecticism, and it is known that he showed great interest in fabrics brought from various countries in the world including Japan, and created many sophisticated dresses from those fabrics. This must be one of those dresses.