

Embroideries and Flower Silk Laces - Swedish Fashion in the Time of the Art Nouveau and Jugend Period



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1. Red dress
in silk
and wool,
made by the
French
fashion house
"Jeanne
Ferran,
Paris"
1900
Inv.
No. RKM
78-2005.
Donated by
Tonie
Lewenhaupt.
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Museum.
Photo: Frida
Lönnerberg



In Sweden the Jugend style had its breakthrough in the beginning of the 20th century. The Swedish variations of Jugend and Art Nouveau were overall more restrained than in Europe as a whole, because of the National Romantic style which appeared around the same time. The Röhsska Museum's collection of Jugend objects consists mainly

of glass, silver, furniture, textiles and ceramics, but the museum also holds a very fine and impressive collection of costumes from the Jugend period. The Röhsska Museum is Sweden's only specialist museum for design, fashion, and decorative arts. The museum was founded in 1904 and opened to the general public in 1916. For almost a century, the museum has displayed exhibitions about design and the decorative arts and collected artefacts from a number of different countries and in different material categories. The museum's collection now includes around 50,000 objects. The Art Nouveau and Jugend period played a significant role in 20th century design and it is well represented in the museum's collection and honoured with a permanent gallery at the museum. Since 2010, the museum has been working with digitization, but it is not until the current European Commission funded project, Partage Plus, that Röhsska for the very first time will display the collection online. The museum's artefacts will be displayed on the Europeana portal along with Art Nouveau and Jugend artefacts from all over Europe.

Fashion with great significance

The Röhsska Museum's fashion collection contains garments from the 18th century to the present day, and many of the greatest fashion designers of the 20th century are represented by creations of the highest artistic quality. The collection also contains numerous accessories, such as shoes, bags and jewellery. Each year the museum displays temporary exhibitions in which fashion is presented in new contexts to stimulate interest in fashion from an artistic and historic perspective. The aim is to create a counterbalance to the articles of consumption that are characteristic of many areas of



The Jugend style ideals are mainly reflected in the female S-shape, which was based on a hard corset ring. Other distinctive traits were embroidery, patterns, and light colours with white as a highly popular colour.

2. White-pink colored silk chiffon dress, made by the Nanna Bagge atelier Stockholm, 1905. Inv. No. RKM 84-2005. Donated by Tonie Lewenhaupt. ©Röhsska Museum. Photo: Frida Lönnberg



the fashion world. The Röhsska Museum wants to promote and deepen nuanced interest in fashion. The museum continuously acquires contemporary design and older garments. The museum collects fashion clothing and accessories, as well as other items that are linked to fashion. The museum primarily collects contemporary material that we believe will be of great significance for the development of design. The core of the museum's fashion collection consists of a donation from fashion historian Tonie Lewenhaupt, who donated her private collection to the museum in 1997.

Visual representation of our culture

Fashion is an artistic expression that is right in our midst, constantly present as a visual representation of our culture. Fashion is both an art form and a significant design discipline. The Röhsska Museum primarily collects fashion creations that express a high level of artistic and artisanal quality and skill. Fashion and clothing are important forms of artistic expression, along with industrial design, arts and crafts and the applied arts, and fashion has an important role in modern culture, defining art's social participation and significance. Fashion is also a fascinating lens to use when observing, describing and analysing the world. A fashion garment is also an interesting reflection of the role of the artist. By linking a garment to a context, a creative process, social change or to its creator, we can discover and be fascinated by the garment's new dimensions. We also enjoy garments as visual time markers and we can often use fashion to better understand contemporary life.

Fashion has for a long time been regarded as something extravagant and superfluous, which



3. Wine-red dress in wool made by the French fashion house Jeanne Pène Paris
 Inv. No. RKM 121-1996.
 Donated by Tonie Lewenhaupt.
 ©Röhsska Museum.
 Photo: Frida Lönnberg

has meant that it was perceived as luxurious and shallow. Historically the fashion phenomenon was created in Paris and for long periods of time that city has also been a centre of fashion. In the 17th century, at the court of the Sun King in France, when fashion was reserved for a small elite, fashion, luxury and excess were intimately linked. In the 20th century, haute couture made luxury more discreet with a focus on style and expensive, understated elegance. For a long time, fashion garments were only for the social elite, and at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries the growing bourgeoisie also engaged in fashion. The Röhsska Museum holds a true masterpiece from the Jugend style, a red dress in silk and wool, made by the French fashion house Jeanne Ferran, Paris in 1900 (image 1). The dress is very well preserved and has a beautiful flower pattern in red and white. It was probably purchased in Paris by a Swedish lady. This was still the most common way to stay in fashion in a small country like Sweden in those days.

A nature-inspired counterweight

The Jugend style coincided with the period when the industry was expanding as never





before the visual expression of the time became a nature-inspired counterweight and protest against the accelerating urbanization and industrialization. The characteristic idiom is present in all artistic disciplines such as ceramics, architecture, interior design, sculpture and painting. Objects and buildings were created in synchronization to be experienced together. Much of the original inspiration comes unmistakably from nature, but also from art for example, the typical visual expression in Japanese woodprints. The idea of synchronization and harmonic appearance also affected fashion. The leading artists and interior decorators of the Jugend period promoted a new fashion to populate their buildings and interiors. The Jugend fashion ideals appreciated elegant decoration with natural motifs such as flowers and insects. The Jugend style ideals are mainly reflected in the female S-shape, which was based on a hard corset ring. Other distinctive traits were embroidery, patterns, and light colours with white as a highly popular colour. An elegant example in Röhsska's fashion collection is a white-pink coloured silk chiffon dress made in 1905 in Stockholm by the Nanna Bagge atelier (image 2). In the thin lace on the Nanna Bagge dress, delicate floral embroidery creates an ornamented base.

Fashion in art

In Sweden the Jugend style had its breakthrough in the beginning of the 20th century and one of the most well-known Swedish Jugend artists is Carl Larsson. In his paintings the current fashion ideals were skilfully depicted. He often painted his wife Karin Larsson dressed in a long skirt, high collar, a corset waistline and a clear S-shape with a bustle back already in the 1890s. He found his inspiration in the Arts and Crafts

4. Gold-coloured silk dress
Probably made by the Augusta Lundin studio 1894.
Inv. No. RKM 4-2008.
Donated by Kerstin Lidbeck.
©Röhsska Museum.
Photo: Frida Lönnberg



5. Black Chantilly lace dress made by the NK Franska (a French tailoring studio) Paris, 1905
Inv. No. RKM 1841997.
©Röhsska Museum.
Photo: Frida Lönnberg

movement, and his wife was fond of the aesthetic dress. Both Carl Larsson and his wife Karin Larsson were influential in interior decoration and fashion, and they came to play a significant role in modern Swedish design history. At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, an important inspiration for the fashion creators was art. Other artists who functioned as inspiration but also promoted the new fashion ideals were men like Gustav Klimt, Henry van de Velde, Peder Severin Krøyer, and William Morris, who created the loose, softly draped dress ideals in their paintings that inspired many of the fashion makers. Inspiration was taken initially from natural forms such as plant tendrils and flowers, sea waves and bubbles, which were translated into sensual undulating alignments. In the costumes this meant long elegant lines and tall collars.

The Röhsska Museum holds a very fine example of the typical loose aesthetic dress promoted by the Arts and Crafts movement (image 3). It is a wine-red dress in wool from the French fashion house Jeanne Pène, and is a good example of the loose style with soft lines and the asymmetric bodice. The dress once belonged to a Miss Gunilla Bennet, daughter



6. An evening silk and cotton gown made by Paul Poirot.

Inv. No.

RKM 72-2005.

Donated by

Tonie Lewenhaupt.

©Röhsska Museum.

Photo:

Frida Lönnberg



of a Swedish minister in Paris. Miss Bennet purchased the dress in Paris and brought it back to Stockholm where she was invited to the Royal Castle to present the latest fashion.

Sweden's first fashion designer

French fashion was the ideal in Sweden ever since the 17th century. The nobility and later the bourgeoisie spoke, ate, and wore French. As a result, the Swedish tailor studios in the late 19th century were mainly inspired by the French fashion houses. In France, the first haute couture and fashion house was founded by the Englishman Charles Fredrick Worth in 1857. Before this, it was not possible to purchase a dress by a fashion designer. Instead, the fabric was purchased separately and the dress was made at home or by a tailor. Worth was the first to start designing and making the dresses in his studio, where he provided designs, fabrics, and costume fittings. The first Swedish fashion studio was founded by Augusta Lundin in 1867 in Stockholm. In the beginning, the customers brought their own fabrics to Miss Augusta. The studio had good contacts with fashion houses in both England and France. Inspired by the French fashion houses, among them the Worth house, she started to design her own models but also produced licensed copies. She became very successful and is considered to be Sweden's first fashion designer. In 1892 Augusta Lundin was granted a Royal Warrant and then began regularly to design and sew for the royal family. Röhsska holds an elegant example of the late 19th century, a gold-coloured silk dress from the 1890s with floral ornamentation (image 4). It is a great dress of very high quality, consisting of two pieces, a small jacket and a long skirt. It was made in 1894 and is hand-sewn in thick silk. It was donated to the museum in

2008. The dress had belonged to the wife of a railway construction director. As the Swedish king came to inaugurate a new section on the railway, the lady wore this dress, which may be from the Augusta Lundin studio although it lacks the label which would confirm its provenience.

License-produced copies

In Sweden it was very common to produce licensed copies once the French fashion houses were established. An important fashion provider at the beginning of the 20th century in Sweden was the department store NK Franska, which made high quality copies of the French haute couture originals. The NK Franska (a French tailoring studio) opened in 1902. The department store made their own creations mixed with inspiring innovations and models from Paris. The studio made license-produced copies of many French fashion houses. Röhsska holds a masterpiece from 1905 in black Chantilly lace, which is a perfect example of the exclusive clothing, carefully sewn by hand and decorated with pearl embroidery, that has come to represent the Jugend fashion (image 5). Another important fashion maker in Paris at the beginning of the 20th century was Paul Poiret. He was very much inspired by the Russian Ballet that performed in Paris in 1909, whose costumes had oriental influences. The Röhsska Museum holds an evening gown made from a Poiret model. It is made in silk and cotton, and has embroideries with glass pearls (image 6). The motifs are floral ornaments with flower and plants, in both embroideries and weaved pattern in the fabric.

Conservative male fashion

Men's fashion was as magnificent as women's fashion well into the 18th century. Courtiers in

the 18th century wore splendid clothing and wigs, as well as using lots of make-up and accessories. However, it was during the 19th century that a more conservative style was introduced in male dress. The basic wardrobe of a dark suit that has dominated throughout the 20th century became increasingly common. In the beginning of the 20th century, the suit's influence spread even outside of Europe. In Japan, for example, it became more popular than the traditional Japanese kimono. Apart from the suit, variations emerged such as the bonjour jacket, the morning coat or, for very formal occasions, the black tailcoat.

At the turn of the century, three-piece suits, consisting of a sack coat with matching waistcoat and trousers, continued as an informal alternative to the contrasting frock coat, waistcoat and trousers. The cutaway morning coat was still worn for formal day occasions in Europe and major cities elsewhere, with a dress shirt and an ascot tie. The most formal evening dress remained a dark tailcoat and trousers with a dark waistcoat. Eveningwear was worn with a white bow tie and a shirt with a winged collar. The Jugend style was not as obvious in men's fashion as in ladies' fashion, but this is also true for a large part of the 19th century and up to mid-20th century. But an important fashion trend during the Jugend period was the major inspiration of male tailored suits in female fashion. Inspired by men's tailored suits, the three-piece costume for women became more common. Röhsska holds a very fine example sewn by the French fashion house Christopher Drécoll, the three piece wine-red dress from late 1890s, donated to the Röhsska Museum in 2012 (image 7).





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The aesthetic dress was a loose and baggier dress, designed to be comfortable and easier to move in than the typical dress with a hard corset ring that was more common during the period. It also affected underwear, which became more comfortable. (Lewenhaupt, Tonie, *Tidens tecken: kvinnans kläder i förhållande till sin omgivning : 1890-1986*, Helsingborg : Wiken, 1988)



7. Three piece wine red dress sewn by the French fashion house Christopher Drécoll late 1890s, Inv. No. RKM 14-2012. Donated by Agneta Bratt. ©Röhsska Museum. Photo: Frida Lönnberg

