

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Yves Saint Laurent at OCMA

Elisa Leonelli · Monday, September 9th, 2024



I finally drove to Costa Mesa to visit [OCMA](#), the new Orange County Museum of Art that opened in October 2022. The building designed by Morphosis is “filled with light and a seamless connection between the indoors and the outdoors.” Admission to OCMA is free, but you have to make a reservation. Director Heidi Zuckerman stated: “Access to art is a basic human right, not a privilege.”

You may read article and watch video [The New OCMA](#) by Rick Meghiddo in this publication.



I explored the exhibit *Yves Saint Laurent: Line and Expression* on view from July 3 to October 27, with an extensive display of gowns and drawings by the renown French fashion designer. I don't know much about fashion so I quote OCMA's press release.



“Yves Saint Laurent’s creations are recognizable by their lively, dynamic lines, which he emphasized masterfully through his use of black. From collection to collection, the couturier showed how much he was also a colorist. Passionate about the arts, and in particular painting, his palette of natural and exotic hues would encompass Goya pink, Picasso red and Chagall blue. Certain color combinations, which others would consider incongruent, became a signature in the hands of Saint Laurent: green against blue, orange alongside pink.”



However I am interested in learning about [Yves Saint Laurent](#)'s life, so I did some research. I was helped by two television series that I watched this year.



The New Look, largely set in World War II Paris during the Nazi occupation, investigates the personal lives and careers of **Christian Dior** (Ben Mendelsohn) and **Coco Chanel** (Juliette Binoche). Many other prominent figures of the fashion world are featured, including a brief appearance by Yves Saint Laurent, when he is hired by Dior as his assistant in 1955 at the age of 18. He would become artistic director of the House of Dior in 1957 after the sudden death of Dior of a heart attack at age 52.



In *Becoming Karl Lagerfeld*, a French series starring Daniel Brühl as German fashion designer Lagerfeld, covering the years 1972 to 1983, Saint Laurent plays a prominent role, as the two rival designers share the love of one young gigolò, Jacques de Bascher. You may read about their love triangle in this [TIME magazine article](#).



Born in Oran, Algeria in 1936, Yves Saint Laurent would return to North Africa, to Marrakesh, Morocco, to create the designs for four collections a year, Spring-Summer and Fall-Winter for both [haute couture](#) and [ready-to-wear](#), after founding his own label in 1962 and opening his Prêt-à-Porter house YSL in 1967.



As an [article](#) in AramcoWorld magazine states, Saint Laurent “found design ideas on the streets. Rich embroidery, colored threads and other North African influences abounded in his collections.”



He was inspired by local capes and robes, cloaks and scarfs, tunics and caftans. “But it was Marrakesh’s saturated colors—sunset pinks and ochre reds, sunflower yellows, indigo blues—on mosaics, paintworks and walls, in gardens and on traditional garments that made the biggest impact.”



Also displayed in the OCMA exhibit is a series of poster size greeting cards that Saint Laurent drew starting in 1970 until 2007 and sent to his family, friends, collaborators and clients to celebrate the New Year. They all feature the word LOVE and are “tributes to Georges Braque, Jean Cocteau, Andy Warhol and Henri Matisse.”



Satisfied with my exploration, I capped my OCMA visit with a lunch at [Verdant](#), their spacious café on the top floor, where I enjoyed an Avocado Toast.

This entry was posted on Monday, September 9th, 2024 at 9:34 am and is filed under [Fashion](#). You can follow any responses to this entry through the [Comments \(RSS\)](#) feed. You can leave a response, or [trackback](#) from your own site.