New Look Encyclopedia Article

New Look

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Contents

New Look Encyclopedia Article.....1

Contents.....2

New Look.....3

New Look

"The New Look is simply the feminine body which French designers beginning with Poiret have misrepresented," commented acclaimed designer Christian Dior. The international public sensation which greeted the New Look took place in the context of post-World War II European austerity. Dior launched his fashion house in 1947 with a spring collection that re-introduced exaggerated and extravagant femininity into a culture of utility. *Life* magazine is generally credited with christening the New Look and reported "shapely skirts, flowing to mid-calf with a myriad of hand pressed pleats [which] brought sculpture back into fashion, moulding drapery around the figure and highlighting the body's natural curves." Although it had established itself by the 1950s, the style was originally controversial. The fashion world applauded the bold new design, but there was also dissent from women who felt this femininity was impractical for the work place. Furthermore, such full skirts required lengths of fabric publicly denied during the war and were viewed as wasteful in the immediate postwar period of rationing and reconstruction.

Further Reading:

Pochna, M. F. *Dior: Fashion Memoir.* London, Thames and Hudson, 1996.

Sladen, C. *The Conscription of Fashion.* Brookfield, Vermont, Ashgate Publishing, Company, 1995.