



# Dance & Fashion

The Museum at **FIT**

Seventh Avenue at 27th Street  
New York City

**Dance & Fashion**

September 13, 2014–January 3, 2015

**Hours:**

Tuesday–Friday, noon–8 pm

Saturday, 10 am–5 pm

Closed Sunday, Monday, and legal holidays

[fitnyc.edu/museum](http://fitnyc.edu/museum)

@MuseumatFIT

This exhibition has been made possible thanks to the generosity of the Couture Council, The Coby Foundation, and MAC Cosmetics.

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Cover photo: Costume by Iris van Herpen for *Neverwhere*, New York City Ballet, 2013. Photograph by Erin Baiano.



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*The first Dramatick Rule is, have good Cloaths,  
To charm the gay Spectator's gentle Breast,  
In Lace and Feather Tragedy's express'd,  
And Heroes die unpity'd, if ill-dress'd.*

Richard Steele's Prologue to John Vanbrugh's *The Mistake*, 1705

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Dance and fashion are the two great embodied art forms. Dress and adornment have long played an important role in the visual allure of dance, and fashion designers have often been inspired by the way dancers look. In recent years, fashion designers have also increasingly been invited to create dance costumes. This is an exciting opportunity, but also a challenge. "Fashion designers need to realize that the dancer is not walking down a runway—she is leaping into the air," says Marc Happel, costume director of the New York City Ballet. "When they design for a dancer, they are designing for an athlete."

This exhibition explores the synergy between dance and fashion by tracing the vectors of inspiration and collaboration. The focus is on performance dance, such as ballet and modern dance, not social dance, such as the waltz. Both dance costumes and fashionable dress are featured. The tutus and pointe shoes of the Romantic ballet, for example, closely resembled the fashions of the 1830s and 1840s. That they have continued to inspire designers from Christian Dior to Christian Louboutin is a testament to the iconic image of the ballerina. The Orientalism of the Ballets Russes and the image of the Spanish dancer have also influenced generations of fashion designers. Modern dance introduced a new vocabulary of movement and style, which continues to evolve and to influence how we dress.

Valerie Steele



1.



2.



3.

1. Noritaka Tatehana, *Lady Pointe* shoes, leather and satin, 2012. Photograph © MFIT.

2. Christian Dior, *Cygne Noir*, haute couture evening dress, fall-winter 1949-1950, gift of Doris Hakim, 1974 (1974.312.2a,b). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY, USA. Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Image source: Art Resource, NY.

3. Costumes by Tara Subkoff for *Underland* (2011), choreography by Stephen Petronio, Stephen Petronio Company. © Sarah Silver Photography.