Paul Poiret: King of Fashion (1879 - 1944)

“It is neither by restoring life to the color scheme, nor by launching new styles that I rendered the greatest to my epoch.”
Paul Poiret

“It was in my inspiration of artists, in my dressing of theatrical pieces, in my assimilating and response to new ideas, that I served the public of my day.”
“He must love life, love the arts, and love women. He must have an unquenchable thirst for beauty and self-realization.”

Born April 8th 1879, in Paris
Parents: owned shop making woolen cloth
Dad forced him to work as an errand boy for umbrella maker: Jacques Doucet, from whom he learned dressmaker crafts, and a sophisticated lifestyle
Paul Poiret

- Used wooden dolls from his sisters to design dresses
- 1901 employed by Worth
- Madame Poiret gives him 50,000 francs
- 1st Fashion salon in 1903
Paul thought there was nothing more important than external appearance.

“I might have forgotten to wash my neck now and then, but I changed my white collar every day.”
Paul Poiret

- Became well-known, everybody in Paris attended his parties
- Married Denise Toulet
- Later had five children
Paul Poiret
Contributions to fashion

- Hobble skirt-1920 (woman didn’t follow)
- 4 ways of pantaloon gown-1911
- Oriental mode/ orientalism
- Turbans with feathers
- Prints (designed by real artist)
- Mantle wraps
- Traveling, theater, and daytime coats
- Evening gowns, afternoon & daytime dresses
- Theater costumes (Josephine Baker)
- Concocted vibrant hues
Contributions to fashion

- Minaret skirts
- Kimono-sleeved tunics
- Exotic embroidery
- Barbaric jewelry
- Eye make-up
- Fitted tube
- Dress LA Vogue
- Replaced the corset with elastic bras
- Illusion of bare legs
ROSINE

1\textsuperscript{st} couturier with perfume line
Rosine 1922 (daughter who died)
Fans (advertising)
MARTINE

School for crafts decorative arts
Martine 1911
Interior designs- wallpaper, tables, vases, dressers, etc
Left his aesthetic mark on everything around him and on everything he could sell, from accessories to interior design
History continued…..

- Syndicated Defense de la Grande Couture Francaise
- 1st real designer of the 20th century
- Called up to battle front for 4 years
- Returned to Paris for fall collection, but Rosine died so he abandoned the idea
Paul Poiret

After WWI, Belle Époque ends

He falls out of fashion, failing to keep up with the times

Chanel and the roaring 20s usher in a new look

Poiret becomes a theater set designer, marginally employed and dies virtually penniless in 1944

10/17/2002
Influences/ Accomplishments

- Corsetless “liberated” women
- Oriental and Middle Eastern ethnic motifs and silhouettes
- Lampshade skirts
- A new genre of printmaking
- Journal des Dames et des Modes
- Printed designs straight onto the finest silk (note Versace on Thursday)
- 1st of the “fashion celebrities”
- Everything he touched turned to headlines
- “freed the breast” and shackled the legs
- Advocated the adoption of the brassiere
Paul Poiret
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