



Houses of Style

A pair of new Yves Saint Laurent museums shows the designer's diverse influences

Yves Saint Laurent spent almost 30 years designing his collections at 5 Avenue Marceau, in Paris's Eighth Arrondissement. This hôtel particulier was where the couturier fitted some of the City of Light's most elegant women, so it should come as little surprise that it became home to the Musée Yves Saint Laurent Paris, which opened last October. The location of its sister

museum, however, might catch some fashionistas off guard.

The Musée Yves Saint Laurent Marrakech also opened in October, following 10 years of planning. The Moroccan city is famed for its marketplaces, but it's not typically thought of as a fashion capital. Still, after Saint Laurent first visited the city in 1966, it became his second home. As Pierre Bergé, the designer's longtime partner and the

The courtyard at the Musée Yves Saint Laurent Marrakech

founder of the Fondation Pierre Bergé-Yves Saint Laurent, said during the museum's planning, "He was so moved by the place that he decided to buy a house and regularly go back there. It feels perfectly natural, 50 years later, to build a museum dedicated to his oeuvre, which was so inspired by this country."

Taken together, the museums provide a holistic view of the designer. "Both locations are

Nicolas Mathe (Museum courtyard); Antonio Martinelli (hallway); Alexandre Guirkingier (Mondrian dress); Luc Castel (gown)

complementary,” says Musée Yves Saint Laurent Marrakech curator Björn Dahlström. “In Paris, it’s about the process of creation from the sketch to the garment that is sold. In Marrakech, it’s more about inspiration and emotion.”

A visit to the Paris location—which has several bespoke pieces from the designer’s extensive archive on display—offers the chance to enter Saint Laurent’s creative atelier and to understand the process of designing an haute couture collection. “In Paris, we wish to explain the process of creating a work but also to restore the atmosphere, the climate, and the art of living of an haute couture house,” says museum curator Aurélie Samuel.

The Marrakech museum, meanwhile, illustrates how Morocco influenced Saint Laurent’s designs. As Saint Laurent once said, “Marrakech taught me color.” The museum is filled with photographs, accessories, and garments that illustrate how the city insinuated itself into the designer’s identity. The building was designed by Studio



Clockwise from top: a gallery at the Musée Saint Laurent Paris; a gown and a Mondrian-inspired dress at the Paris museum; Saint Laurent in his studio in 1986

KO to evoke the look of fabric on the outside and the lining of a couture jacket on the inside.

The end result: bookend monuments to an iconic designer who combined the elegance and sophistication of Paris with the colors and fervor of Marrakech, creating fashion pieces to be admired far beyond the cities Saint Laurent called home.

