

Elliott Barnes unveils his design for the exhibition
“Mood of the moment: Gaby Aghion and the house of Chloé”
at The Jewish Museum

This exhibition will take place in New York City from the 13th of October 2023 to the 18th of February 2024.

Exhibition Highlights Gaby Aghion’s Legacy and the Work of Iconic Designers Who Began Their Careers at Chloé Including Karl Lagerfeld, Stella McCartney, Phoebe Philo, Natacha Ramsay-Levi and Gabriela Hearst.

The installation design at the Jewish Museum in New York City for “Mood of the moment: Gaby Aghion and the house of Chloé” is inspired by the world of fashion as well as by the life and times of Gaby Aghion, Chloé’s founder.

Gaby Aghion was born Gabriella Hanoka in Alexandria, Egypt, in 1921 to a Jewish family. Like many educated upper-class families, especially among Egyptian Jews, the Hanoka’s spoke French and admired French culture. Aghion and her mother were fond of French fashion and the ideal of Parisian elegance, inviting seamstresses to their home to recreate designs they saw in French fashion magazines. In 1945, she moved to Paris with her husband Raymond Aghion and the couple quickly embedded themselves in the cultural scene of the city’s Left Bank cafés.

Aghion established Chloé in 1952, during a time when the French fashion market was dominated by the stiff formality of haute couture—women who couldn’t afford haute couture would make their own copies. Aghion wanted to offer original, modern, and elegant well-made garments in high-quality fabrics and free women from the rigid designs of the time. For the name of her new brand, Aghion chose the name of a friend, Chloé, inspired by the roundness of the letters and the youthful feminine image the name conveyed. Choosing this name, Aghion created a Chloé persona: a woman who defined herself not only by her looks but by her free and modern attitude. This approach made Chloé known for a new kind of luxury that spoke to modern women, emphasizing elegance, simplicity, and comfort, embodying the Parisian bourgeois bohemian spirit of refined effortlessness. By capturing the mood of the moment, Aghion founded a fashion brand characterized by an easy elegance.

Just as fashion designers drape their models to make a garment, Elliott Barnes was inspired to “drape” the interior of the second-floor rooms of the Jewish Museum with a sustainable material to create a backdrop for the story of Gaby Aghion and the work of the house of Chloé designers.

“The intent behind the concept of draping the rooms with a white sustainable fibrous paper used in garment conservation - which I first saw in the house of Chloé archives” declares Elliott Barnes, extends beyond the gesture that connects the installation to the world of fashion design. “It is also a strategy for softly framing the articulate ceiling detailing and the historic wooden casework of the museum’s interior architecture”. The use of this sustainable material, presented in a non-rigid manner, also allows the installation to take a contrasting position to the architecture of the place.

The opposition between the orthogonal lines of the museum and the flowing spaces developed by the installation is a direct reference to the fluidity of the Chloé look and more specifically to the life of Gaby Aghion, who proposed a unique way of thinking about elegance for women as a counterpoint to the stricter canons of post-war Parisian fashion.

An organized, yet serendipitous, promenade to discover the house of Chloé and its designs, begins in the lift lobby.

Moving fluidly around softly lit curved backdrops and rounded platforms, iconic designs by Karl Lagerfeld, Martine Sitbon, Stella McCartney, Phoebe Philo et. al. are presented. The promenade through the history of Chloé culminates in a fashion dreamscape of floating signature Chloé blouses in the colors of Gaby Aghion's beloved Egypt.

Through the simple orchestration of innovative sustainable materials and soft lit moments the exhibition embraces the spirit of Gaby Aghion and the House of Chloé.

Mood of the moment: Gaby Aghion and the house of Chloé

October 13, 2023—February 18, 2024

Mood of the moment: Gaby Aghion and the house of Chloé is organized by the Jewish Museum: Claudia Gould, Director Emerita and Exhibition Project Director; Choghakate Kazarian, Guest Curator; and Kristina Parsons, Leon Levy Assistant Curator.

About the Jewish Museum

The Jewish Museum is an art museum committed to illuminating the complexity and vibrancy of Jewish culture for a global audience. Located on New York City's Museum Mile, in the landmarked Warburg mansion, the Jewish Museum was the first institution of its kind in the United States and is one of the oldest Jewish museums in the world. The Museum offers diverse exhibitions and programs and maintains a unique collection of nearly 30,000 works of art, ceremonial objects, and media reflecting the global Jewish experience over more than 4,000 years. The public may call 212.423.3200 or visit TheJewishMuseum.org for more information.

About Chloé

As one of the leading Parisian luxury fashion houses, Chloé embodies a forward-looking yet timeless style, with a purpose-driven model that advances positive social and environmental change. Chloé was founded in 1952 by Gaby Aghion, who wanted to liberate women's bodies from the stiff and formal fashion of the era through her luxury ready-to-wear offering. Since its inception, the Maison has

NewTone – Julie Beuter for Elliott Barnes

entrusted a succession of emerging talents to further Aghion's vision: Karl Lagerfeld, Stella McCartney, Phoebe Philo, Hannah MacGibbon, Natacha Ramsay-Levi and Gabriela Hearst.

In October 2021, Chloé received B Corp certification – a demanding, independent evaluation process – that marks a new stage in the Maison's transformation.

About Elliott Barnes

See his biography attached.

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