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Fashion Collections, Collectors, and Exhibitions in France, 1874–1900: Historical Imagination, the Spectacular Past, and the Practice of Restoration

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Abstract

This article explores fashion collecting and dress exhibitions in nineteenth-century France. The first three exhibitions of historic dress in France, which occurred in 1874, 1892, and 1900, raised a host of questions for French dress historians, collectors, and curators: they debated how historical dress should be displayed, what kind of garments should be collected, and what role fashion had in the narrative of French history. This article explores the “historical turn” in dress history, which formalized the practice of using historical garments and accessories as sources for the writing and display of history. It also examines how the shift from

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industrial to decorative arts spurred an interest in fashion collecting. Finally, it argues that the spectacularization of fashion display between 1874 and 1900 had an impact on the garments themselves, as collectors and curators began to alter garments in order to display them within imaginative settings. Rather than condemning these restorations, this article proposes that we view them as forms of historical imagination.

KEYWORDS: historiography, exhibitions, collecting, nineteenth century, France

France's two most important fashion collections, one housed in the fashion and textile department at Les Arts Décoratifs and the other at the Palais Galliera, both have histories that date to the early decades of the Third Republic (1870–1940). In 1874, the L'Union centrale des Beaux-Arts appliqués à l'industrie, the precursor to the Union centrale des Arts décoratifs (or UCAD, now more generally called by the name "Musée des Arts Décoratifs [MAD]"), organized France's first public exhibition of dress history. This exhibition, and a subsequent one in 1892, spurred the UCAD to begin adding historic fashion and accessories to its growing collection of industrial and decorative arts. In 1981, the UCAD's dress collection was greatly enriched by the donation of a 63,000-piece collection assembled by a private association called the Union Française des Arts du Costume (UFAC, founded in 1949 by François Boucher [1885–1966], then curator of the Musée Carnavalet). Following this donation, the UCAD created a distinct exhibition space for its greatly expanded fashion collection, which opened in 1986 as the Musée des Arts de la mode and was located in the west wing of the Louvre in a space called the Pavillon Marsan.

Likewise, the collection of the Palais Galliera can be traced back to 1907, with the creation of the Société de l'Histoire du Costume (SHC), a private association founded by the painter, collector, and costume historian Maurice Leloir (1853–1940), with the help of Maurice Maindron (1857–1911), an entomologist and writer, and Édouard Detaille (1848–1912), a history painter. In the Société de l'Histoire du Costume, Leloir gathered a passionate group of artists, industrialists, couturiers, and amateur costume historians who worked together with the goal of building a collection of historic fashion and opening a museum dedicated to its exhibition. In 1920, the SHC donated its collection to the City of Paris, which placed it at the Musée Carnavalet (the museum of the history of Paris) while waiting to find a permanent space for the 2,000 garments and accessories. In 1956 the Musée Carnavalet annexed several galleries in the Musée de l'Art modern and exhibited the SHC donation as the "Musée du costume." In 1971 the City of Paris moved the collection across the street to the city-owned Palais Galliera, where it resides today. Today, these two collections, one founded in the late nineteenth century, and the other in the early twentieth, form the historic archives of their respective institutions.

The twentieth-century history of France's two major fashion collections has been ably addressed by scholars within both institutions (Tétart-Vittu 2000, 2012; Bruna 2016). However, the nineteenth-century history of fashion collecting in France is still relatively unknown. Similarly, despite the wealth of important work on the cultural history of French fashion in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the history of the discipline of fashion history in France has attracted very little scholarly attention (Roche [1989] 2007, Introduction; Bass-Krueger 2016). By focusing on the first three exhibitions of historic dress in France, which occurred in 1874, 1892, and 1900, and examining the collectors and their collections, this article will map out a submerged history of early collectors, collections, collection practices, and exhibitions. As the contours of these networks come into focus, another story about the relationship between nineteenth-century French fashion history, visual spectacle, historical imagination, and restoration practices is made visible.

Historical imagination, a term made famous by the philosopher and historian R.G. Collingwood (1935) and theorized by Hayden White (1973), refers to the process that historians use to study the “inside” or unobservable parts of history (the “outside” parts of history are those that can be factually shown, such as political decisions or movements of people from one place to another). Collingwood argued that the historian must necessarily use his or her imagination to reconstruct and understand source-based historical narratives. In the nineteenth century, as history came to interest a wider public than just academics, a great number of people used their imagination to think about the past: historians, archaeologists, architects, artists, engravers, advertisers, theater designers, couturiers, and fancy-dress makers, to name but a few of those who produced textual and visual representations of past worlds.

The imagery and ideas they produced were disseminated widely through French culture: inexpensive lithographs, articles in the illustrated press, printed postcards, and photographs of historical or pseudo-historical scenes circulated widely. Yet, some of the most remarkable representations of the imagined past were those that were commercialized through dioramas, panoramas, posed *tableaux vivants*, wax museums, and reconstructed environments. Vanessa Schwartz has examined how these attractions helped the public experience real life as spectacle in late-nineteenth-century Paris (Schwartz 1998, 150). A specific genre of such entertainment focused on French history (plays about Napoleon, wax scenes of the Revolution, reconstructed medieval villages). These helped give shape to what Maurice Samuels has called the “spectacular historical imagination;” that is, new, popular representations of history that were both visual and commodified (2004, 7). Samuels argues that while these public displays gave audience members “the illusion of having participated in historical events,” critics towards the end of the century feared that such passive consumption of the past prevented individuals from engaging with the present (2004, 40, 59–62). Whether revered or feared, however, the “spectacular past” was

produced and consumed by men and women on all levels of the socio-economic scale, particularly towards the end of the century as admission prices fell and commercial entertainment became affordable for the working class (Schwartz 1998, 152).

Historians have argued that the written and the visual as well as the scientific and the imaginative were brought together in the nineteenth century, and particularly in the later part of the century, as never before. Was history more appealing to the public as it became more spectacular? Or did smart businessmen and women capitalize on public thirst for historical and historicizing visual culture? Both processes were undoubtedly at work, feeding into—and off—each other in order to create the specific vein of self-conscious, highly visual, commercial historicism studied by the scholars cited above. In this article, I would like to extend the scope of nineteenth-century historical imagination and visual spectacle to the discipline of dress history, collections, and exhibitions.

The discipline of dress history was not immune to what Martin Bressani has called the “transgressive power of the backward glance” in reference to Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, an architect as well as a dress historian (Bressani 2014, xxiii). The first dress histories, dress collections, and dress exhibitions all occurred at the same time in France: during the second half of the nineteenth century, which was also the most profitable years for the kinds of popular, commercial, and spectacular historical representations that Samuels studied for the first half of the century. As the Third Republic began to take shape, theorists, collectors, and curators began to grapple with questions relating to dress history: what role should past fashion play in the narrative of French history? How should historical garments be displayed? What old garments should be collected (and where could they be procured)? What kind of exhibition displays would best capture the attention of the public? The debates surrounding these questions form the basis for this article.

First, I will touch on the way in which historical garments came to be understood as “historical,” and not just old garments. Dress history was born in the nineteenth century, and first formally theorized by Jules Quicherat (1814–1882) within the practice of archaeology (which, in the nineteenth century, more closely resembles our current practice of cultural studies or even material culture studies) (Bass-Krueger 2016, Chapter 1). This “historical turn” in dress history, I argue, was crucial in formalizing the practice of using historical garments and accessories as sources for the writing of history. Quicherat also helped contribute to the popular interest in dress history through publications and lectures.

Then, I will examine how the shift from industrial to decorative arts was made visible to the public in the Union centrale’s 1874 and 1892 exhibitions and how this shift helped spur the first forays into collecting fashion within French museums at the turn of the century. Here, I take Debora Silverman’s definition of the *amateur* collector of the late nineteenth century and expand it further, positing that the most important early French fashion collectors were not only *amateurs* in the sense that they displayed

both “taste and erudition,” but that they were more specifically *working-amateurs*, that is authors, engravers, publishers, archaeologists, artists, and costume designers who collected fashion in order to have material sources for their work (Silverman 1989, 111).

This leads to my third argument: as visual culture became increasingly exuberant—spectacular—over the course of the nineteenth century, the *working-amateurs* who collected fashion and participated in the fashion exhibitions helped push fashion history into the world of imaginative history. This “visual turn” had an impact on the garments themselves, as the collectors’ focus shifted from the material authenticity of the garment to its overall aesthetic value; heavy-handed “restorations” or complete reworking of garments was common practice for some of the most important fashion collectors in turn-of-the-century France. These restorations were evident in the first exhibitions, but increased as immersive *tableaux vivants*-type exhibition displays became popular (the garments were often altered in order to be fully displayed “in the round” or else “in full” on wax mannequins).

The tension between material authenticity and restoration practices was apparent in two competing exhibitions of dress history at the 1900 *Exposition Universelle*, and particularly in the contribution of Maurice Leloir (1853–1940), who was perhaps French fashion history’s most active working *amateur* collector and a believer in the benefits of altering, restoring, embellishing, and even reconstructing garments, as the Palais Galliera curator Pascale Gorguet-Ballesteros and researcher Marie Bonin have written in a recent article (Gorguet-Ballesteros and Bonin 2016). Silverman’s definition of the *amateur* as an “active re-creator of the past” was particularly apt for Leloir and his peers at the Société de l’Histoire du Costume (Silverman 1989, 111). In the years between the first exhibition of historic dress, in 1874, and the third, in 1900, historical garments began to be seen not as archaeological artifacts to be displayed “as is,” but as objects to be restored in order to fit into popular historical attractions. I argue that these restorations were themselves forms of historical imagination, operating as part of the same process as the historicist wax displays and posed *tableaux vivants* within which they were placed.

A photograph of Leloir, published in the catalog for the 1900 “Costumes anciens” exhibition at the *Exposition Universelle*, shows him wearing a (yellow) brocaded silk *robe de chambre* from the July Monarchy (1830–1848) (*Musée rétrospectif des classes* 85 & 86 1900, 58) (Figure 1). The photograph reveals two stages of retouching: Leloir first modified the garment (the front appears to have been cut up and reworked, and the dressing gown may have been cut in two), donned it to have his picture taken, and then drew over the printed photograph with white pencil to rework his hair, goatee, shoes, and the jabot. As a source for the history

Figure 1

Photograph of Maurice Leloir, "Robe de chambre soie jaune 1840." Archives Leloir / Département des arts graphiques / Palais Galliera. Courtesy of the Palais Galliera. Photograph reproduced in *Musée rétrospectif des classes 85 & 86: le costume et ses accessoires à l'Exposition universelle internationale de 1900, à Paris* (Saint-Cloud: Belin Frères, 1900), p. 58.



of collecting, this photograph is highly revealing. First, on a basic level it shows that historic garments were being collected, photographed, and displayed. As simple as this statement may seem, it is remarkable when put into context: historical garments began to be included as sources within the disciplines of history and archaeology in the 1850s and were first exhibited in 1874. Until then, old garments, however precious their materials, were most often reused, handed down, re-worked as fancy dress, or sold into the second-hand trade or rag market (Charpy 2009, 2010). Leloir's photograph shows a growing awareness of the value of historic clothing.

Second, printed in an exhibition catalog alongside other such images, Leloir's photograph reveals that the "visual turn" of dress history encompassed exhibition display and print. The catalog for the first exhibition of dress history in 1874 contained only textual descriptions of each room and the names of the lenders (*Quatrième exposition Musée historique du costume* 1874). The catalog that accompanied the second exhibition in 1892 featured longer de-

scriptions of the rooms, lenders, and several black-and-white drawings of the *tableaux* displays (*Exposition Des Arts de La Femme* 1892). In 1900, the catalog for the “Costumes anciens” exhibition not only included this photograph of Leloir, but also presented nearly a hundred photographs of objects on display as well as lengthy thematic essays about dress history (*Musée rétrospectif des classes* 85 & 86 1900). The catalog’s layout was visually evocative and innovative: text was printed diagonally next to photographs, photographs were doctored to remove the model or mannequin from the garment, leaving the garment disembodied, and thin onionskin paper printed with text was placed over a photograph to create a playful overlay.

The Leloir photograph also revealed a third layer in the historiography of early French fashion collecting that was further from our current practices, namely that of re-touching, re-working, and re-constructing historic garments for display. This practice of “re-constructing” garments was not evident in the first exhibition of historic dress in 1874, but had gained traction in 1892 and 1900, and was in full use by the time Leloir and the SHC organized its first exhibition of dress history in 1909. In 1900, cutting up, re-piecing, and replacing components of historic garments was a way for exhibition designers to make garments fit within the imaginative visual displays that were becoming increasingly popular for the display of historic dress.

Garments as History: the Discipline of Dress History in Mid-Nineteenth-Century France

In France, the discipline of dress history arose out of a desire on the part of the Academy to provide accurate images and information to historical painters in the early nineteenth century (Amic and Patry 2000). By the middle of the century, the discipline had shifted from the confines of art history to the nascent field of archaeology, whose practitioners were interested in studying the past through monuments, objects, and text (Bass-Krueger 2016). Jules Quicherat, the first Chair of Medieval Archaeology at the École des Chartes, pioneered this new archaeological attention to dress history in France.¹ During his inaugural lecture at the École des Chartes in 1847, Quicherat stated that the evolution of fashion, linked to the history of the garment and textile industries, was an important component to understanding French history (Quicherat 1847). Historians could study garments and accessories, Quicherat argued, just as they could study important dates, political leaders, and social events.

Following the lecture, Quicherat incorporated lectures on historical dress within his classes on medieval archaeology, teaching his students how to compare images of fashion with extant artifacts and primary texts. Between 1845 and 1869 he also published a series of articles on fashion history covering the Middle Ages to the eighteenth century for the general public in *Le magasin pittoresque*. In 1875, he gathered together these articles, added chapters on the Gauls and the Middle Ages, commissioned new wood block engravings, and published this work as *Histoire du cos-*

tume en France depuis les temps les plus reculés jusqu'à la fin du XVIIIe siècle (1875). Quicherat's *Histoire du Costume* (1875) was the first popular book in France to address both French history and fashion history, and it did so in the new medium of an affordable, illustrated press.

Quicherat's book had a lineage in erudite scholarship about dress stretching back to the French antiquities scholar Bernard de Montfaucon's (1655–1741) 15-volume *L'antiquité expliquée et représentée en figures* (1719–1724), yet it definitively broke away from antiquarian studies by proposing an accessible theoretical framework for fashion by linking it to industry, an area of great interest in the nineteenth century (Bass-Krueger 2016, Chapter 1). In its judicious use of images and emphasis on providing a written historical narrative, Quicherat's *Histoire du Costume* (1875) was different from other books on costume history published around the same time such as Auguste Racinet's *Le Costume historique* (6 volumes, 1876–1888), which focused heavily on images rather than crafting a historical narrative, or Eugène Viollet-le-Duc's volume on "Clothing, Jewelry, and Accessories" (*Vêtements, Bijoux de Corps, Objets de Toilette*) in his *Dictionnaire raisonné du mobilier français de l'époque carolingienne à la Renaissance* (1858–1875, volume 3 of 8), which provided detailed images and descriptions of garment-related terms for the Middle Ages, but no wider historical narrative. Although the three authors worked separately and in their own fields, the fact that they published their influential works around the same time helped constitute what would later be seen as a "historical turn" in French dress studies (Maindron 1907; Roche 2007, Introduction).

Yet, of the three, Quicherat was the only one to write a narrative of French fashion history that included archaeological drawings of extant garments as well as more commonplace images of men and women in fashionable dress. Whereas historians had previously studied fashion through representations of dress such as those seen in illuminations, engravings, and on sculptures, Quicherat's work also engaged with object-based fashion history (Bass-Krueger 2016). The archaeological images printed in the *Histoire du Costume* function as signposts for the history of collecting and show growing awareness that authentic historical garments and accessories (rather than representations of garments) could be incorporated into a historical narrative. Quicherat was not a collector, yet the way in which he incorporated objects into his textual history was revelatory of growing cultural awareness of the historical value of old garments and accessories.

1874—"Musée Historique du Costume": the First Exhibition of Dress History in France and the Beginning of a Fashion Collection at the Union Centrale des Beaux-Arts Appliqués à l'Industrie

The first exhibition of "sumptuary arts" in France occurred almost concomitantly with the publication of Quicherat's *Histoire du Costume*. The

“Musée historique du costume,” organized by the Union centrale des Beaux-Arts appliqués à l’industrie, opened on August 10, 1874 in the Palais de l’Industrie, an exhibition hall originally built for the 1855 Universal Exhibition (Figure 2).² (Despite the title of “museum,” the show was in fact a temporary exhibition.) Over 100 private collectors and a handful of public institutions collectively lent 6000 garments, textiles, accessories, and “works of art representing costumes,” which included paintings, engravings, illuminated manuscripts, tombstone etchings, seals, and tapestries (Report, Archives, Musée des Arts Décoratifs [MAD], Box A1/52). Although the exhibition mainly focused on European fashion, several hundred Asian, African, and Indian objects were displayed as well, a testament to the wide-ranging interest of these early collectors.

Inside each room, wall-mounted and freestanding glass display cases were filled with artful *assemblages* of objects. The walls were hung with tapestries and paintings corresponding to the time period or continent presented. The first room was arranged thematically to showcase three large private collections of historic fans, gloves, and shoes; the next 11 rooms were organized by geography and chronology including “The Far East, China, Japan,” “Africa and the Orient,” “Seals and tombstone etchings from the collection of the National Archives and the Ministry of Public Instruction,” “Byzantine art and the Middle Ages,” “The Renaissance,” “The Limoges Penitents,” “seventeenth



Figure 2

Photograph, “Histoire du Costume. 3e Exposition de l’Union centrale des Arts décoratifs (Collections Jubinal et diverses),” in Henri Bouilhet, *L’orfèvrerie française aux XVIIIe et XIXe siècles (1700–1900)*, Volume 1. Courtesy of the University of Ottawa.

and eighteenth century” (three whole rooms), and “theater costumes.” The exterior corridor featured tapestries from the Gobelins manufactory, and an extra room was set aside for a library of “all the volumes that could interest the public and inform them on the history of sumptuary arts and the teachings on the art of design” (*Quatrième exposition Musée historique du costume* 1874).

The circumstances that led the Union centrale to plan an exhibition on historic dress were multiple. First, the fashion industry had grown rapidly over the course of the nineteenth century as fashionable couturiers began setting up shop in Paris and stylish ready-made clothing became increasingly accessible through department stores. With this interest in contemporary fashion came awareness of fashion’s past. As Martin Bressani has written, “the rise of modernity is the development and exacerbation of an historical consciousness; some form of historicism thus essentially inheres to it” (Bressani 2014, xxiii). Second, as the fashion industry benefitted from the rise of print culture, fashion plates of contemporary and historical garments circulated with growing frequency through the illustrated press, commercial catalogs, and popular genre-scene lithographs peddled in urban and rural areas (Mainardi 2017, Introduction). Popular interest in fashion and fashion history grew dramatically during the second half of the nineteenth century and was directly tied to commercial and financial benefits for the French economy.

Third, a series of Universal Exhibitions and industrial arts exhibitions organized in France and abroad over the course of the nineteenth century forced the French couture and confection industries to organize, define, and classify themselves, hone their marketing techniques, and compete for excellence by showcasing their skills to the hundreds of thousands of visitors who passed through each fair (Delille 2016; Laprade 2017). It was during these fairs that the primary narrative about the excellence of French contemporary fashion was bolstered by a secondary historical narrative about the industry’s long and illustrious past. The intertwining of these dual narratives was a conscious way for fashion industrialists to reconcile art and industry, which they considered necessary in order to maintain the “aura” of French fashion (Green 1994).

Fourth, as discussed earlier, increased knowledge about the history of French fashion was tied to a larger, popular interest in history and its objects. This tied into a fifth, final context: the rise of the museum experience as a mass cultural phenomenon, wherein all kinds of objects were displayed in a way to appeal to, amaze, and educate people from all walks of life (Griener 2017). So although men and women were certainly aware of and interested in fashion in the eighteenth century, the industrialization of fashion design, the proliferation and democratization of the visual culture of fashion images, the commercial and artistic stimulus provided by the Universal Exhibitions, and wider popular interest in history and objects—brought together in the museum—combined together to provide fertile grounds for the organization of the first exhibition of French fashion history.

Fashion as an Industrial Art

The “Musée historique du costume” was organized by a group of industrial designers who banded together as the Union centrale des Beaux-Arts appliqués à l’industrie, a society founded in 1864 for the purpose of raising the profile of the industrial arts to that of the fine arts (Silverman 1989, Chapter 6). Some of the founders worked in the fashion and textile industries as artists, designers, engravers, and artisans; others worked in other branches of the industrial arts or the press. Although textile design had been considered an industrial art from the Union’s very beginnings, fashion had not. Press reviews following the opening of the Union centrale’s museum space and library in 1864 commented favorably on the quality and quantity of French textiles and fashion trimmings on display in the museum—from Lyonnais silks to fine muslins, printed cottons, lace, ribbons, cashmere shawls—as well as the number of useful books of drawings and designs for designers on view in the library. There was little mention, however, of complete garments being shown as examples of fine French industrial design (*Union centrale des Beaux-Arts* 1867, 42–52).

The 1874 “Musée historique du costume” marked the moment the Union centrale officially identified manufactured clothing and accessories as an industrial art. This recognition endowed fashion with the cultural values commensurate with artistic appreciation and allowed historic garments and accessories to be exhibited, financially valued, and appraised. If fashion was “art,” industrial or decorative, then the clothes and accessories that made up its system had aesthetic values that could be debated in public or in print, as well as monetary values that could be negotiated in antique shops and auction sales. Those who had collections of historic garments were suddenly holding on to objects with market value; those who had old garments in the attic became owners of “antiques.”

The gradual acceptance of fashion within the confines of the industrial arts was largely helped by the industry’s growing economic importance, which translated into the industry’s increasingly visible presence in the major Parisian Universal Exhibitions of 1855 and 1867. As Nancy Green has shown, the tension between ready-to-wear and couture created an imperative for the fashion industry to “reappropriate a language of art, even within the context of mass production” as a way to maintain the aura of French fashion and thus maintain France’s competitive edge against the growing American, German, and British fashion industries (Green 1994, 724). The 1874 Union centrale Committee considered it their job to educate the artists, manufacturers, industrialists, and general public (particularly female consumers) about the illustrious heritage of French fashion. “The lettered public will draw [from the show] assured knowledge about history that will allow them to rectify certain false ideas,” Georges Lafenestre, then under-manager of the Union centrale, wrote in his report to the commission, “while the title alone of ‘Gallery of the History of Costume’ [an early name for the ‘Musée du Costume’] will insure crowds of the female public for whom curiosity and *coquetterie* will incite them to come looking for original instruction and new inspirations” (Report, Archive, MAD, Box D1/4).³

From Collector-Amateur to Working-Collector: Defining the First Fashion Collectors at the 1874 “Musée Historique du Costume”

Although the Union centrale possessed several hundred pieces of historic textiles by 1874, it had not yet begun actively collecting garments and accessories. The catalog (*Quatrième exposition Musée historique du costume 1874*) that accompanied the “Musée historique du costume” notes only 11 garments belonging to the Union centrale: four Chinese robes, two stomachers, one early-eighteenth-century man’s indoor robe, and four Louis XVI-era men’s waistcoats. None of the five other institutions cited as lenders to the 1874 exhibition—the Les Archives Nationales, La Direction des Beaux-Arts, l’École Nationale de Dessin et de Mathématiques, Le Musée de Moulins, Le Mobilier National—were credited as having loaned garments. They provided secondary sources, in a sense, such as engravings, tapestries, paintings, sculptures, objects d’art, etc. Almost all of the historic garments and accessories on display came from private collectors—the catalog cites 260 in all. This imbalance between public and private lending, as well as the extraordinary number of private lenders solicited, indicates most private collectors only collected a few pieces of historic garments and that their collections were concentrated on other areas, with historic garments serving as the complement rather than the focus.

This is not to say that there were no collectors focused on historic fashion, although in 1874 the largest collections were still those related to textiles and accessories rather than historic garments. The “Musée historique du costume” opened with a prominent display of three large French collections: Auguste Dupont-Auberville’s (1830–1890) impressive collection of textiles, about half of Jules Ferdinand Jacquemart’s (1837–1880) shoe collection, and Achille Jubinal’s (1810–1875) glove collection were the first objects visitors saw as they entered the exhibition at the top of the monumental staircase and walked through the Salon d’Honneur. Dupont-Auberville, a banker and collector of porcelains as well as textiles, lent 100 textiles from the fourteenth century to the First Empire.⁴ Jacquemart, a printmaker whose meticulous engravings were published in *La Gazette des Beaux-Arts* and *L’Art*, had spent 30 years amassing his collection of European and Asian shoes dated from the fifteenth century onward, which were displayed throughout the museum; he was also a leading collector of Japanese art (Ganz 1991).⁵ In turn a medievalist, archaeologist, and political deputy, Jubinal was a prolific writer who published widely, from the history of tapestries to the letters of Montaigne.⁶ In addition to the gloves, Jubinal also lent a variety of Renaissance-era objects that were scattered throughout the other rooms (scepters, belts, combs, and busks), as well as tapestries, corsets, and a man’s eighteenth-century waistcoat. The size and prominence of these collections reveals that accessories, like textiles, appear to have acquired collecting value before garments.

If fashion collecting was a relatively marginal activity at the start of the Third Republic, why were these men—particularly Jacquemart and Jubinal, who were notable for having collected accessories rather than

textiles—interested in it? Prior to the nineteenth century, the practice of collecting was linked to the *curieux*, the *amateur*, the *antiquaire*, and the *connoisseur*—in other words, to a culture of curiosity guided by epistemo-philosophy (Pomian 1987). A shift from the culture of curiosity to the culture of collecting occurred in the early half of the nineteenth century, giving rise to the *collectionneur*, a person for whom collecting was an autonomous realm of activity, a passion in and of itself, and a way to display socio-cultural status (Bielecki 2012). The Third Republic engendered a third collecting type that Deborah Silverman characterizes as the collector-*amateur* (1989, 111):

The collector-*amateur* had a special significance in the Central Union after 1870. He was the antithesis of the nouveau-riche collector of the Second Empire, who amassed precious stuffs as the signs of financial success. The *amateur* in the Central Union was the counterpart of the Goncourts—specialists in a particular period or medium, connoisseurs and scholars of the objects in their collections, recognized for their superior sensitivity and taste as much as for their often illustrious social positions. Money, the marquis Philippe de Chennevières explained, was only the pre-requisite for a collector, but “taste and erudition” rendered him a true *amateur*, worthy of his renowned colleagues in the Old Regime from Mazarin to the comte de Caylus. The *amateur* was not a passive consumer but an active re-creator of the past, and his efforts at reassemblage were like the creative work of an architect or poet. (Silverman 1989, 111)

However, in the case of early fashion collecting and collectors, I believe that Silverman’s definition of the new collector-*amateur* needs to be expanded: the early French fashion collectors were not only amateurs in the sense that they displayed both “taste and erudition,” but were more specifically *working* collector-*amateurs*. Collectors like Jacquemart and Jubinal were men who collected garments and accessories in order to have material sources for their work. What I identify in shorthand as the “working-collector” was often an artist or engraver, but sometimes a historian, theatre designer, writer, or publisher whose work dealt with the dissemination of fashion history in some manner and who used their collections to nourish their work.

The working-collector was an active participant in the making of the discipline of fashion history as well as one of the main actors in its popularization. Although the working-collector type had a long legacy in the fine arts (historical painters and sculptors usually had garments in their ateliers to use as models), the early working-collectors of historic garments and accessories were conscious that their collections, and the work that developed out of them, could be used to teach people how to look at garments and accessories in order to learn about France’s industrial and artistic past. Working-collectors such as Jacquemart and Jubinal played key roles in the development of the new illustrated press, Jacquemart as an engraver and Jubinal as a historian and writer; their work helped contribute to popular

knowledge about the past. The objects in their collections, while certainly useful for their own work, were not merely props—they were sources for the writing, illustration, and theorization of French history.

Indeed, many of the other objects on display at the “Musée historique du costume” came from the collections of like-minded working-collectors such as Léon Gauchez (1825–1907), a Belgian art critic, dealer, and founder of the review *L’Art, revue hebdomadaire illustrée*, who lent over 80 items to the exhibition: ecclesiastical robes, bed coverings, tapestries, textile swatches, silk dresses from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.⁷ Likewise, the firm Firmin-Didot lent over a dozen miniatures and manuscripts; Louis Goupil (1834–1890), painter and partner in the art publishing house Goupil & Cie lent traditional Mexican garments and theatre costumes⁸; the textile manufacturing firm Tassinari & Chatel lent over a dozen dalmatics, chasubles, copes, rugs, and fragments of historic textiles; Edouard Lechevallier-Chevignard (1825–1902), the primary illustrator of images for Quicherat’s *Histoire du Costume*, lent a half-dozen Renaissance paintings and engravings, a glass necklace from Murano, Italian fabrics, several chasubles, lace men’s shirts from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, a sword belonging to the Duke of Burgundy, and several male waistcoats from the eighteenth century. A typical example of the new working-collector, Lechevallier-Chevignard not only illustrated a series of important works on fashion history, but towards the end of his career wrote his own history of the French decorative arts, published as *Les styles français* (in 1892).

Auctions and the Growth of the Union Centrale’s Historic Garment Collection

The success of the 1874 dress exhibition set off a wave of interest in fashion history that led to an increase in the sale and purchasing of historic dress. Parisian auction houses began advertising historic dress as part of their sale lots. Although theatrical costumes made an appearance from time to time in auction houses before 1874, the sale (or at least the advertisement of the sale) of historical garments was unprecedented before 1878. It appears that a series of auctions of historical European and oriental garments, tapestries, lace, and textiles held in Paris between March and June 1878 under the expertise of Charles Mannheim set off a chain reaction. An analysis of French auction house catalog titles shows while there were no auctions devoted primarily to historical garments before 1878, between 1878 and 1900 more than 34 auctions of historic garments were held in Paris alone (many of them assessed by Mannheim).⁹

After the success of the 1874 exhibition, the Union centrale started to expand their small collection of historic garments and textiles. By 1881, their dress collection had grown to over 100 garments. Although most of these were donations, the Union centrale’s inventory shows that they also began buying important pieces, including a “coat in green & red brocaded *dauphine*, edges hand-embroidered with natural flowers” for 25F and an

“uncut velvet coat, green and pink edges hand-embroidered, satin sleeves with pigeon breast tones” (Inventory, Archive MAD, Box C4/53). The Société du Musée des Arts Décoratifs, a separate group founded in 1877 to help the Union centrale open a permanent museum, began with a very small selection of 18 donated and loaned garments, as seen in their inventory from 1878 (Inventory, Archive MAD C4/3). Over the next year, the Société du Musée acquired more than 60 garments and textiles, almost all of them donations from private collectors and companies such as Tassinari & Chatel and La Manufacture de Beauvais (Catalog, Archive MAD C4/5).

The exhibition committee recognized the financial success and popularity of the “Musée historique du costume” (Bulletin, Archive MAD A1/52). None of the subsequent retrospective exhibitions—metal (1880), wood and textiles (1882), porcelain (1884), and industrial arts (1887)—were as well attended as the dress history exhibition. Indeed, the last two exhibitions were so sparsely attended that the Committee decided to organize a second dress history exhibition in 1892. Capitalizing on the ever-growing public interest in dress history as well as the craze for staged scenes, wax mannequins, and spectacular display, the 1892 “costumes anciens” exhibition was the Union centrale’s most popular exhibition yet.

1892—“Costumes Anciens” Exhibition at the Exposition des Arts de la Femme, Organized by the Union Centrale des Arts Décoratifs (UCAD): from Industrial to Decorative Arts or the “Visual” Turning Point in the History of Fashion Display

The second dress exhibition of dress history, called “Costumes anciens,” was presented at the 1892 Exposition des Arts de la Femme in the Palais de l’Industrie. It was organized by the newest iteration of the Union centrale, the Union centrale des Arts décoratifs (UCAD, 1882–present), an offspring of the merger between the Union centrale des Beaux-Arts appliqués à l’industrie (1864–1882) and the Société du Musée des Arts Décoratifs (1877–1882), an association of aristocrats and wealthy collectors who took over the Union’s mission of establishing a museum. When the Société du Musée had no more luck acquiring space for a permanent decorative arts museum than the Union centrale, the two groups combined forces in order to avoid organizing competing exhibitions and more effectively lobby the state. Although the groups had similar ambitions, the merger underlined two significant evolutions within the French industrial arts model. Whereas the leaders of the Union centrale des Beaux-Arts appliqués à l’industrie were mostly prominent French industrialists, the initiators of the Société du Musée des Arts Décoratifs came from the sphere of politics and high society. The name change engendered by the merger also underscored a larger ideological shift in focus “from the producer and the commercial potential of the *industrial arts* to the collector and the cultivated refinement

of the *decorative* arts,” as Silverman has written (1989, 109). While the Union centrale had defined industrial arts as the product of “beauty and utility” (*le beau dans l’utile*) and aimed to “industrialize art and to make industry more artistic,” the UCAD reversed the adage and sought to “purify the sentiment of beauty and aristocratize the crafts” (Silverman 1989, 110–111).

This change was made manifest in the exhibition design and object grouping of the 1892 “Costumes anciens.” The organizing committee, which was composed of a rising generation of artists including genre painters, engravers, set designers, and costumers, helped set a “visual” turn in motion. Seeking to demonstrate that there was “nothing more pleasant, more spiritual, and more seductive” than “the works that constituted [a woman’s] finery and luxury,” the organizers decided that in addition to the traditional exhibition of historic garments, they would include a series of imaginative *tableaux* scenes, painted dioramas, and wax busts (Exposition des Arts de la Femme 1892, 113) (Figure 3). These modes of entertainment were fashionable in late-nineteenth-century France and helped fulfill the UCAD’s new mission of “aristocratizing the crafts” by making fashion history into commodified entertainment and enshrining it within the growing leisure industry.

The “Visual” Turn in Exhibition Display

The 1892 exhibition was planned so that visitors first viewed the modern objects presented on the ground floor and then made their way up the grand staircase to the “retrospective” section, where they could reflect on the artistry of French fashion, textiles, and accessories while noting the progress manufacturers, designers, and craftsmen had made in the same fields in the intervening centuries. “The past,” the Committee argued, “can serve as a useful lesson to the present only on such condition that it present the same precious element of study on the same terrain and with the same technological classification” (Exposition des Arts de la Femme 1892, 114). Display cases were organized by type, and labels above the cases indicated that garments within were “old” (*ancien*), without specifying their era (e.g. “Old dress and textiles” [*Costumes & Tissus Anciens*]).

In addition to these display cases of historical garments, textiles, and accessories, the organizing Committee proudly advertised two new types of spectacularized historical displays: dioramas featuring a century of French fashion through history and wax displays of historic and contemporary fashions and hairstyles. Seven large-scale painted dioramas by the celebrated diorama artist Théophile Poilpot (1848–1915) depicted scenes of amassed crowds (presumably featuring men and women wearing a wide variety of dress) spanning the fall of the Bastille in 1789 to the racetracks in 1867. Poilpot’s dioramas combined the craze for large-scale optical illusions with that for history—here, fashion history. Even more visually impressive were two *tableaux* scenes featuring wax mannequins, one historical and one contemporary to make the link between the artistry of

**Figure 3**

Photograph, "Exposition de la chambre des coiffeurs—Exposition des Arts de la Femme." Album Maciet 309 bis 1. Courtesy of Centre de Documentation des Arts Décoratifs.

the past and the present. The first recreated an eighteenth-century engraving by Moreau le jeune (1741–1814) called *Les Délices de la maternité*; in the second scene, mannequins wearing modern fashions posed in a scene of an afternoon tea (the larger point about femininity, maternity, and house-keeping is not lost on the modern reader). The final novelty was a room devoted to the "History of hair" which featured more than 30 wax busts with historical hairstyles from Antiquity to the Second Empire (Figure 3). Spectators were invited to marvel at the diorama and wax mannequins' realistic representations of the past; the "illusion" of such displays was to make the past as lifelike as possible—the "authentic" reproduction of historic garments and hairstyles greatly helped the effect.

This "visual" turn in fashion history display was led by the exhibition's Committee members rather than the collectors themselves. The main lenders of 1874 had passed away by the 1892 exhibition: Jubinal in 1875, Jacquemart in 1880, and Dupont-Auberville, Goupil, and Spitzer in 1890. The collectors who lent historic garments to "Costumes anciens" were listed in the catalog (*Exposition des Arts de la Femme 1892*) as "Mme la comtesse de Greffulhe, MM. Lefébure, le marquis de Groliers, A. de Champeaux, G. Verger, Marmuse, Mmes V[euv]e Flandin, de la Boissière, P. Viger, Doisteau,

Schreckenburger.” Of these, only Lefébure and Flandin had lent items to the 1874 exhibition (Lefébure had lent two pieces of lace, and Flandin had lent 10 eighteenth-century chasubles, silks dresses, coats, and aprons).

The Committee was more interesting: here we find the names of the painters Frédéric Regamey (1849–1925), François Flameng (1856–1923), and Maurice Leloir, as well as the costume designers Charles Bianchini (1860–1905), Eugène Lacoste (1818–1907), and Théophile Thomas (1846–1916). Flameng and Leloir were both important working-collectors who amassed large collections of historic dress first for their own work—Flameng as a renowned history painter and Leloir as a popular illustrator and printmaker of historical scenes— and later with the specific aim of opening a permanent museum of fashion history in Paris. Bianchini, Lacoste, and Thomas were all three historically minded costume designers for the theatre and opera whose costumes melded archaeological accuracy with imaginative interpretation (Bass-Krueger 2016, Chapter 3).

The 1892 exhibition was a fecund moment of innovative types of visualization for fashion display and a generational turnover within the UCAD’s organizing committee. The influence of these new collectors was decisive within the historiography of dress history, as they pushed the discipline to experiment with modern forms of spectacular displays such as historical dioramas, wax mannequins, *tableaux* scenes, and reconstructed garments. The evolution from the traditional displays at the 1874 “Musée historique du costume” to the reality-bending ones at 1892 “Costumes anciens” reflected not only a spectacularization of fashion history in accordance with popular mass appreciation of such forms of entertainment, but also occurred at the same time as both institutions and private collectors began expanding their collections to include more historic garments. The UCAD’s inventory shows that its dress collection had grown steadily from 1882 onward; although the majority of the collection was constituted through donations, the ledger shows that a buying spree between 1886 and 1888 helped add 16 historical dresses and coats (from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, priced from 50 francs to 934 francs) to the growing archive.¹⁰ When the UCAD opened its first permanent museum in 1905, historic garments were given prominent placement within the galleries, particularly in those devoted to the decorative arts of the First Empire. Engravings and fashion plates supplemented the displays in galleries without garments. This was a significant indication that the Union centrale’s collecting mission, which had originally focused on textiles, now fully included garments and fashion-related objects.

Maurice Leloir, the 1900 *Exposition Universelle*, and the “Reconstruction” of Fashion History

This article has so far examined the constitution of the fashion collections and early fashion exhibitions of what is now called Les Arts Décoratifs. The example of Maurice Leloir takes us into the direction of what would later become the collection of the Palais Galliera. Although for several

years, at least between 1892 and 1909, Leloir was closely associated with the UCAD through a series of exhibitions, the decision in 1920 to donate the collection of the Société de l'Histoire du Costume (SHC)—an association he helped found—to the City of Paris ultimately led to the split between the fashion collections at the Palais Galliera and the Arts Décoratifs as they still exist today. Leloir and his battle to create a fashion museum has been admirably covered by Françoise Tetard-Vittu, the former Director of the Print Collection at the Palais Galliera (Tetart-Vittu 2000, 2012). What I would like to draw attention to here is the tricky question of the practice of restoration within Leloir's and the SHC's collection—a practice that was inherently tied to the “visual turn” in dress history led by Leloir and the new generation of working-collectors.

Of the Palais Galliera's holdings of eighteenth-century fashion, at least 40 percent stems from the historic collection of the SHC (Gorguet-Ballesteros and Bonin 2016, 2). These garments are often seen as models or references for the museum's entire collection of eighteenth-century garments and are used as “benchmarks” to date and identify other garments in the Galliera collection as well as in museums abroad (Gorguet-Ballesteros and Bonin 2016, 3). When the Palais Galliera exhibits these garments, their influence extends beyond the museum, shaping public perception of eighteenth-century fashion. Yet, as Gorguet-Ballesteros and Bonin have shown (2016, 4), and as I have observed with Gorguet-Ballesteros (Bass-Krueger 2016, Chapter 5), many of the garments from the SHC collection bear the traces of visible alteration and turn-of-the-century additions. Several pieces from the SHC collection are complete restorations and have either been noted as such by the SHC when they were donated, or are in the process of being “revealed” as such by Gorguet-Ballesteros and her students.

In their article, Gorguet-Ballesteros and Bonin advance several reasons why Leloir and his colleagues might have altered, modified, and reconstituted the garments: they might have used them as fancy dress, as was common at the time, or the garments may have been altered to serve as props for historical paintings (2016, 3–4). The pink corset in Leloir's painting of Manon Lescaut was donated as part of the SHC collection and is archived at the Palais Galliera (Galliera 1920–11238); its contemporary metal hooks, recognizable passementerie, and unusual boning suggest to Gorguet-Ballesteros and Bonin that the corset was re-worked at the time that Leloir created the painting. They also note that some of the garments bear multiple stamps, indicating that they may have circulated through several artists' *ateliers* before entering the SHC's collection (Gorguet-Ballesteros and Bonin 2016, 3). Indeed, in the *Bulletin du Société de l'Histoire du Costume*, a bi-annual publication edited by the SHC to keep members up-to-date with the Society's work, Leloir relates the provenance of two fifteenth-century houppelandes in the SHC collection: Louis Leloir (Maurice's brother, a history painter) first purchased the houppelandes from an antique dealer in Nuremberg in 1870 before passing them on to

Louis Robert de Cuvillon, a history painter and Louis Leloir's protégé (Leloir 1909, 162–163).

Working-collectors like the Leloirs and their peers were instrumental in helping form early collections of historic fashion; however, it appears that their practice as artists contributed to their tendency to rework the garments in their collections to suit their needs. As Gorguet-Ballesteros and Bonin have noted (2016, 3), until the official donation by the SHC to the City of Paris in 1920, the SHC collection was a working collection (*collection vivante*) and “the works were not fixed within a heritage status.” While I join the authors in their conclusion, I would like to suggest that reconstructions and reconstitutions were not so separate from “heritage” practices at the turn of the century. Indeed, they may in fact have been intimately linked, particularly in the case of Leloir and the SHC. Two competing exhibitions at the 1900 *Exposition Universelle* reveal that fashion history displays featuring reconstructed garments in *tableaux* scenes had become immensely lucrative to the detriment of traditional glass-case displays of “authentic” garments. Leloir, it can be argued, attempted to bridge both worlds by cutting and reworking actual historical garments so that they could also be displayed on wax mannequins in imaginative scenes.

Reconstructing Garments at the 1900 World Fair

The exhibitions of historic fashion at the 1900 *Exposition Universelle* show that as the visual component of fashion display become more popular, the reconstitution, alteration, and modification of historic fashion in order to adapt to the new imperatives of visual history became more pronounced. Two million visitors thronged through the doors of the “Palais du Costume,” a private initiative conceived of and produced by the couture house Maison Félix. There, the public marveled at a series of 34 lavish dioramas featuring wax models wearing reconstructed fashion (i.e. brand-new garments made to look like historic clothes) in an exhibition of “Le Costume de la femme à travers les ages,” which spanned from Ancient Egypt to 1900 (Palais du Costume 1900). On the second floor of the Palais du Costume visitors could stroll through a life-size recreation of the eighteenth-century shopping arcades of the Palais-Royal. Amid the recreations, a collection of (authentic) objects and textiles from archaeologist Alfred Gayet's (1856–1916) excavations at Antonopoulos, Egypt was displayed in the basement (Palais du Costume 1900). Schwartz (1998, Chapter 3) argues that it was common practice among wax museums to mix “authentic” objects among recreated scenes in order to blur the lines between spectacle and reality.

On the main esplanade of the Champs de Mars, in the official building of the Palais des Fils, Tissus, et Vêtements, a second dress history exhibition was on view. The “Musée rétrospectif des classes 85 & 86: le costume et ses accessoires” featured historical garments, accessories, and iconography from Louis XVI to Napoléon III on loan from private and public collections. This exhibition was organized by Alexandre Arsène (art critic),

Henri Bouchot (curator of prints at the Bibliothèque nationale), Georges Cain (curator of the Musée Carnavalet), Jean Robiquet (Secretary at the Musée Carnavalet), Georges Duvelloy (President of the Union of Fan-makers), Albert Haas (Secretary general of the Committee of French hat-makers), Frédéric Masson (member of the Académie française), and the illustrators and painters Emile Henry, Louis Morin, Ary Renan, Albert Robida, and Albert Trotin (*Musée rétrospectif des classes 85 et 86* 1900). The UCAD's fashion collection was on display, as well as pieces from Maurice Leloir's collection of eighteenth-century men's and women's fashion. A photograph of the "Musée rétrospectif" from the official catalog (*Musée rétrospectif des classes 85 et 86* 1900, Preface) shows that the accessories were presented in glass-topped cases in the open, central space, while the garments and engravings were exhibited in wall cases in the surrounding arcades.

Although the exhibition display was rather conventional—there were no *tableaux* stagings or wax mannequins, but rather glass vitrines, garments mounted on mannequins, and wall-hung iconography (in this sense the exhibition was more reminiscent of the 1874 exhibition than that of 1892)—the catalog was innovative and imaginative. Indeed, if the 1874 exhibition was France's first fashion exhibition, the catalog for the 1900 "Costumes anciens" was perhaps France's first fashion exhibition catalog—or at least (*Musée rétrospectif des classes 85 & 86* 1900) the first to include photographs alongside thematic texts, rather than placid descriptions of exhibition layout and lenders, as previously discussed in this article's introduction. The 1900 "Musée rétrospectif" catalog included several long essays about fashion history written by leading historians and curators, photographs of many of the objects, and photographs of the displays—all combined in an inventive layout that juxtaposed text and image (*Musée rétrospectif des classes 85 & 86* 1900). It appears that it was in this catalog, rather than in the exhibition itself, that Leloir first publicly experimented with historical reconstructions.

Leloir illustrated his catalog essay on the evolution of fashion from the eighteenth century to 1900 with 10 black-and-white photographs featuring male and female models (including the photograph of Leloir examined above) wearing some of the historic garments featured in the exhibition. These photographs, much like Leloir's genre paintings and illustrations, were historical fantasies. In addition to the photograph of Leloir in a Louis-Philippe dressing gown described in the introduction to this article, a photograph of his female model wearing a Louis XVI caraco and petticoat has also undergone the same two-stage retouching. Leloir has painstakingly drawn in the appropriate hairstyle, both on the model herself and in her reflection.¹¹ He also re-touched her shoes in order to whittle down her heel to a more period-appropriate height. The garments themselves were also re-worked, perhaps by Leloir himself: seams were drawn in or released, hooks were attached, and entire sections of fabric may have been taken out of one part of the garment in order to be placed elsewhere for the photographs, as garments archived in the Palais Galliera show.

In 1900, reconstructed garments were differentiated from historic garments through their display: the “Palais du Costume” was a different kind of visual experience than the “Musée rétrospectif.” The “Palais du Costume” did not bill itself as a museum but rather as “one of the most interesting curiosities of the 1900 Exhibition,” a promotional note that aligned the “Palais” with popular Parisian entertainments such as the recently opened (1882) Musée Grévin wax museum (Palais du Costume 1900). Indeed, the Palais du Costume’s wax displays, the reconstructed garments and interiors, and mix between “authenticity” (in the Egyptian objects displayed on the ground floor) and imitation can be seen as “spectacularized” history. The “Musée rétrospectif,” on the other hand, recalled traditional museums and industrial exhibitions: glass display cases and headless mannequins emphasized the object rather than the overall visual display. Although it is hard to be certain from the surviving photographs of the “Musée rétrospectif,” it appears as if Leloir’s own reconstructions were on view in the catalog only, and not in the exhibition. However, as Leloir became more involved with museum display—ultimately creating the SHC for the purpose of founding the first museum of dress history—the division between “spectacular display” and “museum display” narrowed.

Leloir, as Gorguet-Ballesteros and Bonin have noted (2016), and as seen in articles he and his colleagues wrote for the *Bulletin de la Société de l’Histoire du Costume*, was in favor of reconstructing fashion within a museum setting if it helped provide a more complete idea of the past. By 1909, when Leloir and the SHC organized their own exhibition of historic dress, reconstructing garments was a part of methodological practice. In a review of their own 1909 exhibition, Leloir described how the SHC modified and altered a rare seventeenth-century Spanish formal court corset lent by Worth in order to mount it for display:

The corset was such that it produced no effect when put on a mannequin. We had to rip out the used lining and patch the cloth. The parts that were embroidered had been saved by the embroidery itself. But the plain parts, used, in tatters, no longer gave the garment shape. They had been most cut away from the embroidery and replaced quite skillfully from fabric taken from the skirt. That explains why the skirt was missing. In two places, at the underside of the arms, the original fabric remained with its wear and tear. We replaced the skirt, on the mannequin, with fabric that looked analogous in color and in period, loaned to us by M. De Cuvillon. After this work (putting the fabric back between the embroidery), everything had been relined with a new blue silk, and then sewn back together quite well, except for the sleeves. How was it that several embroidered bands around the sleeves had disappeared? The count wasn’t there to redo the two sleeves. We replaced the missing three bands by a painted textile. Thanks to Velasquez’s portraits we were able to reconstitute the garment as it should have been. (Leloir 1909, 159)

What we learn from Leloir's photographic retouching in 1900, his attitude towards restoration in 1909, and the state of the SHC collection as it was donated in 1920 was that the alteration and restoration of historic fashion was prevalent and prolific among early fashion collectors; Leloir and his colleagues altered clothing not only for use in their artistic practice, but also for museum display.

In terms of other nineteenth-century practices of restoration, modified historic garments were no different than, say, architecture. Indeed, the *École des Beaux-Arts* trained architects, as well as sculptors, painters, and engravers in how to look carefully at the vestiges of ancient monuments and art objects in order to create "reconstructions," that is, drawings of what the site or object may have looked like in the past. Beaux-Arts students were instructed to use their knowledge—gleaned from books and the remains in front of their eyes—along with their imagination to "reconstruct" the past. These historically fanciful but visually arresting architectural reconstructions and artists' renderings were exhibited at the annual Salon, where they met with tremendous public admiration. As David Lowenthal has written in his seminal book, *The Past is a Foreign Country*, the idea of history in the nineteenth century was that of an imaginative past, an embellished and augmented view of a certain kind of history. "The unadulterated past is seldom sufficiently ancient or glorious," Lowenthal writes, "most heritages need aging and augmenting" ([1985] 1988, 325). This was particularly true for the late nineteenth century, where spectacle combined with history for the pleasure of the modern viewing public first on the boulevard and in privately funded displays at the *Exposition Universelle*, and then, eventually, in the museum.

Today, historical honesty in fashion conservation requires that modern replacements be clearly distinguished and alterations be easily dismantled. Yet, like the nineteenth-century restorers who added additions to medieval churches under the belief that they were reconstituting the true past, Leloir and his colleagues had similar ideas about the added value of alterations and restorations to historic garments. Indeed, for Leloir and his colleagues at the SHC, historical authenticity was linked to a garment's imagined past rather than the material integrity of the garment itself. In the *SHC Bulletin*, Leloir wrote that his ideal museum would display a "complete [restored or reconstructed] garment" on a mannequin, and then display next to it "the same [authentic] garment, hung, open, together with its pattern" (Leloir 1909, 170–171). However, for the SHC's first exhibition in 1909, Leloir and his colleagues decided to reconstruct their most precious historic garments as a way to privilege the visual over the material—a decision that was as in line with their time as it is removed from ours.

Conclusion

This article has presented the rise of dress history, dress collections, and dress exhibitions in France at the start of the Third Republic as they

connect to the discipline of history, the beginning of industrial design exhibitions, and the rise of spectacular historical representations. A first “historical turn” included historic garments and accessories alongside texts and images in the new narrative of French history. This narrative was popularized via texts such as Quicherat’s, but also through exhibitions such as those organized by French industrialists seeking to cement the reputation of French industry in the new global economy. As the Union centrale shifted its emphasis from industrial arts to decorative arts, new working-collectors, many of whom were involved in the visual arts, began to participate in the organization of its exhibitions, pushing fashion display into a more visual and spectacular realm. Historic garment and accessories collections grew during this period, as fashion gained official recognition within the industrial arts. Popular interest in exhibitions of historic dress attested to fashion history’s commercial success.

The example of the 1900 *Exposition Universelle*, particularly Felix’s lavish “Palais du Costume” and Leloir’s imaginative contributions to the “Musée rétrospectif” catalog, show that spectacle and historical imagination extended beyond the display of fashion history to the garments themselves, either in the case of restorations or reconstructions. Felix’s 1900 “Palais du Costume” featured recreated garments (that is, supposed “authentic copies” of actual historic garments that were actually made-up designs inspired by historic fashion). Leloir’s own practice of restoring, altering, and embellishing historic garments also reveals a deeper layer of the culture of collecting in turn-of-the-century France, which was filled with inventive, imaginative, passionate artists, who were also collectors—or collectors who were also artists. As Lowenthal ([1985] 1988, 21) has written, “Memories are partial and fleeting, history’s evocations are often unimaginative, many physical remains are decayed or hard to reach or interpret; historical enclaves, whether actual backwaters or contributed reconstructions, seem tame or inauthentic. Thus addicts turn to imaginative voyages that will unlock gates to the past, let them see or roam there at will, and enjoy full-blooded experience of bygone times.” Addicts or not, Leloir, his peers, and his colleagues began using fashion as a way to “unlock the gates to the past” in the middle of the nineteenth century; as the century progressed, and history became a popular spectacle, the voyage became more imaginative—as did the garments held within the collections.

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Notes

1. Quicherat defined archaeology as “*la science des formes diverses qu’ont reçus aux diverses époques les produits de l’art et de l’industrie des hommes.*” For Quicherat (1886), fashion was one such product of industry. “Fragments d’un cours d’archéologie,” in *Mélanges d’Archéologie et d’Histoire*, 345.
2. The Palais de l’Industrie was destroyed in 1897 to make way for the construction of the Grand Palais, which opened for the 1900 Universal Exhibition.
3. “*Le public lettré y puisera, pour l’histoire, des renseignements certains qui lui permettront de rectifier quelques idées fausses, et le titre seule de “ Galerie de l’histoire du Costume ” vous assure l’affluence du public féminin dont la curiosité et la coquetterie ne manqueront pas d’y venir chercher des instructions piquantes et des inspirations nouvelles.*” M.G. Lafenestre, “Rapport: La Commission Consultative à M. le Président et à MM. Les Membres du Conseil d’administration” in *4e Exposition organisée au palais de l’industrie en août 1874*, Archive MAD, D1/4.
4. Dupont-Auberville was France’s leading textile collector and published the first book on the subject in 1877: Auguste Dupont-Auberville, *L’Ornement des Tissus, Recueil Historique et Pratique* (Paris: Ducher et Cie, 1877). Dupont-Auberville also worked with the architect and medievalist Victor Gay (1820–1877) to mount an exhibit of their textile and embroidery collection at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in 1880. See *Catalog Descriptif des Tissus et Broderies Exposés au Musée des Arts Décoratifs en 1880 par MM. Victor Gay et Dupont-Auberville* (Paris: Imprimerie des Publications Périodiques, 1880).
5. The other half of Jacquemart’s shoe collection was displayed in sections throughout the “Musée historique du costume”. News of the “attractive” shoe collection at the Union centrale’s show made it to the

- United States: Mrs. Bury Palliser. 1875. "M. Jules Jacquemart's Collection of Shoes in the Museum of Costume, Paris," *The Art Journal* (1875–1887), *New Series* 1: 269–272. Edmond Du Sommerard bought the collection after the exhibition and subsequently displayed it in the Hotel de Cluny, where it still resides.
6. The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston has 40 pieces from the Jubinal collection, mainly gloves, but also a pair of eighteenth-century Italian leather mitts, a hat (English or French, 1750), a belt (Italian, eighteenth century), and a muff (French, silk, 1680–1690).
 7. Gauchez used different pseudonyms (such as Paul Leroi) to donate his collections and write his art criticism. He provided the first paintings for the Metropolitan Museum's founding purchase in 1871. Gauchez was a fervent admirer of Jacquemart and commissioned his engravings to accompany articles that Gauchez wrote for various magazines as well as for his own magazine, *L'Art*. See Ingrid Goddeeris, "Léon Gauchez, critique et marchand d'art belge et sa passion pour la gravure française," *Cahiers de l'IRHis* 9, *Gravures/Gravure* (February, 2013), 5–20.
 8. Founded in 1850 by Henry Rittner (1802–1840) and Adolphe Goupil (1806–1893), Goupil & Cie bought original artworks and commissioned and sold reproductions at a substantial profit. They had branches in New York, London, Berlin, The Hague, and Brussels. In 1853 they began to experiment with photographing views, monuments, landscapes, seascapes, and architecture, before expanding to *cartes de visite* and cabinet cards. The Maison Goupil began publishing *Les Modes*, a fashion magazine, in 1901. Pierre-Lin Renié, "Goupil & Cie (active 1850–1884), in *Encyclopedia of Nineteenth-Century Photography*, ed. John Hannavy (New York: Routledge, 2008), 601–603.
 9. Findings compiled from the full collection of auction catalogs digitized on Gallica Labs.
 10. Several of these pieces were bought at auction. The inventory indicates that three garments were bought from the Richard sale in 1887 (sixteenth-century doublet, Louis XIV coat, and seventeenth-century chasuble), an eighteenth-century chasuble was bought at the Goupil sale for 294 Francs in 1888, and one sixteenth-century dalmatic and seven pieces of embroidered silk dated to Louis XVI were bought on separate occasions from the "salle de vente" in 1888. The other pieces were bought from private collectors. "Inventaire UCAD, 1864–1902." MAD, C4/13.
 11. The entire outfit may have been a reproduction. Michele Majer has noticed that the tabs all the way around the jacket bodice hem are unusual and that the very wide V front opening is not consistent with the late-eighteenth-century silhouette when jacket bodices invariably closed along the center front. There is also a discrepancy between the style of the hair and the silk fabric, which recall the 1770s, and the supposed date of the 1780s for the ensemble. The retouching is no-

ticeable in the catalog, but much more obvious in the original prints, which are housed in the Leloir archive at the Palais Galliera. I thank Laurent Cotta for making them available for me to consult.

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