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La Mode en Majesté

Haute couture et tradition à la Cour de Thaïlande / Royal Thai Dress : From Tradition to Modernity

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- Through eight chapters, the catalogue highlights a unique blend of tradition and modernity in fashion, while exploring the ways in which dress connects to cultural diplomacy, international visibility and power
- Over 150 illustrations of outfits and fabric - featuring many archival pictures of Queen Sirikit
- Explains the process behind ancient artisanal weaving techniques

In spring 2026, the Musée des Arts Décoratifs will present a unique exhibition on clothing at the Thai court, tracing the relationship between local textile traditions and haute couture, as well as the advent of fashion as a marker of Thai culture internationally and its essential role in the kingdom's diplomacy. This exhibition will be presented in celebration of the 170th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Thailand and France, and the 340th anniversary of the first official contact between Siam and France. The catalog published at this occasion highlights the figure of Queen Sirikit, a national icon who recently passed away. Passionate about fashion, she played a central role in modernizing court attire, presenting her creations during official trips with King Rama IX. From the 1960s onwards, Queen Sirikit maintained close relations with leading French and European fashion houses.
By collaborating for more than thirty years with Pierre Balmain and then with Erik Mortensen, his successor at the head of the fashion house, she reinvented Thai royal elegance, preserving its heritage while ensuring its international appeal. Committed to preserving traditions, she also worked tirelessly to safeguard her country's textile arts and crafts. The book brings together nearly two hundred outfits, accessories, royal objects, photographs, fabric samples, and embroidery (from Lesage and Princess Sirivannavari), and offers a unique glimpse into Thailand's rich tradition of craftsmanship in textiles, jewelry, and accessories. It highlights the use of fashion as a form of cultural diplomacy that works through image, craftsmanship, and materials.

Text in English and French.

The Queen Sirikit Museum of Textiles' mission is to collect, display, preserve, and serve as a centre for all who wish to learn about textiles, past and present, from Southeast Asia, South Asia, and East Asia, with a special emphasis on the textiles of, and related to, the royal court and Her Majesty Queen Sirikit.
Béatrice Quette is a curator at le musée des Arts décoratifs, Head of the Asian and Islamic collections. **Sébastien Quéquet** is a curator at le musée des Arts décoratifs, in charge of the Photography Collections.

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