

**Tailored for Freedom
The Artistic Dress around 1900 in Fashion, Art and Society**

Kunstmuseen Krefeld, Kaiser Wilhelm Museum

October 12, 2018 til February 24, 2019

Opening: October 11, 2018, 7.30 pm

Press conference: October 10, 2018, 11 am

Taking the artistic reform dress as a starting point, the exhibition at the Kunstmuseen Krefeld will investigate for the first time the complex interrelations between art, fashion, photography, and dance in the context of the 'Reform' movement between 1900 and 1914. The interdisciplinary question and the latest research findings allow for new perspectives on this exciting time at the beginning of the 20th century. Restriction, ornament, and liberation are here the keywords that define not only the image of women at that time but also the newly emerging artistic disciplines and a different understanding of art.

In August 1900, the first exhibition of artistic reform dresses in Germany was shown in Krefeld. Inspired by Friedrich Deneken, the founding director of the Kaiser Wilhelm Museum, dress designs by renowned artists were displayed, amongst them Henry van de Velde, Alfred Mohrbutter, Richard Riemerschmid and Margarete von Brauchitsch. A reform of women's fashion and women's culture, one of the main concerns of which was the pro and contra of the corset, had already been fought for decades earlier, initially in the USA and in England and later in Middle Europe, now yet another, fundamentally new aspect was added. 'From now on exhibitions of women's dresses join the ranks of art exhibitions,' believed Henry van de Velde. Women's fashion should no longer be just comfortable and healthy, in accordance with the basic idea of the 'life reform', but should furthermore be subject to an aesthetically sophisticated design created by artists.

With the disappearance of the boundaries between the fine and applied arts, artists began to play key roles in inventing new contemporary forms. Architecture, furniture, and décor were defined as a Gesamtkunstwerk and conceptualized according to a consistent language of forms. Also the artistic dress, whose appearance followed the design of the room as well as the individuality of the wearer, can be placed in this context. The dress designs of the Art Nouveau display a reformed understanding of beauty, which as Henry van de Velde phrased it should have the effect of a 'weapon'. For the young avant-garde, the dress of their own design became an autonomous artwork, which transferred the sentiment as a movement into space. The curators Ina Ewers-Schultz and Magdalena Holzhey explain: 'The artistic dress in all its varying manifestations becomes thus a focal point of the extensive European 'Reform' movements prior to the First World War. Artists as designers and the dress as a work of art: these ideas reduce age-old systems of values and role definitions to absurdity and signify a radical act of criticism of art and society.'

Taking the historic exhibition in Krefeld in 1900 as a starting point, the current show at the Kaiser Wilhelm Museum investigates the prerequisites, the impact and the historical connections between the protagonists. Here the focus will be for the first time on the complex interrelations between fine art, arts and crafts, fashion, photography, and dance, as well as on the network that spanned from the centres of artistic transformation in Germany to Belgium, Holland, Vienna, and Paris and to England and Glasgow. The image of women that is reflected by the 'Reform' movement in various facets, ranging from women as decorative objects to women as creative artists and independent entrepreneurs, will be closely analysed and re-evaluated. 'The project displays in a unique way the new objectives of the Kunstmuseen Krefeld, which link the reappraisal of the rich history of the museum with a topical perspective and new research approaches,' states Katia Baudin, the director of the Kunstmuseen Krefeld.

The opulent exhibition combines works from the collection with numerous high-quality international as well as German loans into a vivid presentation. Well known protagonists such as Sonia Delaunay, Isadora Duncan, Emilie Flöge, Mariano Fortuny, Josef Hoffmann, Ludwig von Hofmann, Wassily Kandinsky, August Macke, Paul Poiret, Johan Thorn Prikker, Henry van de Velde, Heinrich Vogeler, Eduard Vuillard stand side by side with names yet to be rediscovered, including Vanessa Bell, Mela Köhler, Frances MacNair and Margaret MacDonald, Ditha Moser, Anna Muthesius, Else Oppler, Mileva Roller or Emmy Schoch.

The title 'Tailored for Freedom' is used courtesy of Margret Greiner and taken from her book about the fashion Designer Emilie Flöge (Kremayr & Scheriau 2014).

The exhibition is accompanied by a richly illustrated catalogue with numerous essays, published in a German as well as in an English edition by Hirmer Verlag.

Curators:

Dr. Magdalena Holzhey (Kunstmuseen Krefeld) and Dr. Ina Ewers-Schultz

Printing material of the exhibition can be found on our WEBSITE www.kunstmuseenkrefeld.de

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VISITORS ADDRESS

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Museums Haus Lange and Haus Esters are closed til 2019 due to renovation

OPENING TIMES

Tue-Sun 11 a.m. – 5 p.m.

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