



PRESS RELEASE

# UNVEILING OF THE STUDIO OF D'AZZEDINE ALAÏA

**Sunday, February 26th, 2023**

Open every day from 11 am to 7 pm

Full Price: 10€ - Reduced price: 3€

Métro : Hôtel de Ville

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On 26 February, the day Azzedine Alaïa was born, the Foundation will unveil to the public for the first time a place that has been kept secret since the designer's death on 18 November 2017: Azzedine Alaïa's Studio.

This is undoubtedly the place most imbued with the memory of Monsieur Alaïa: every corner of this room tells of the couturier but also of the man he was.

Visitors will now be able to discover Azzedine Alaïa's Studio through a window, and imagine the couturier at work, day or night, in his den, and also dream of fitting sessions with the most beautiful models in the world.

The unveiling of the Studio is also an opportunity to highlight the beautiful photographic work of Thomas Demand on Azzedine Alaïa's patterns, that colourful geometry, the chrysalis of the designer's sculptural dresses.

*« I only make sketches as reminders of what I am working on. I trace a pattern on calque paper, I cut it out and I attach it with a pin to a sheet of paper. Then I begin working on a dressmaking mannequin, but I need someone for the fitting. Because a woman walks, her body moves, and I need to see how the fabric behaves on her ».* Azzedine Alaïa

« A poetic Capernaum, where ideas are born and take shape, the atelier of Azzedine Alaïa, represents the heart within the body of the designer's couture house and private apartments.

In this island of creation, located on the first floor, nestled between his fitting room and his private living quarters, the atelier distills the memories of the most beautiful Alaïa collections.

Since 1987, it is here in the place familiarly known as his studio that the couturier invents, conceives, cuts and molds the dresses that constitute the timeless architectures of fashion.

It is here, in this forest of racks of clothes in the making, dresses awaiting completion, that Azzedine Alaïa would find sanctuary in the evenings and late into the night. When the last of his friends would leave the kitchen, another hub of vitality in which resides much of the spirit of the Alaïa house, he would go upstairs and come to sit down at his worktable.

In his uniform of midnight black, Alaïa would set out to work through to the dawn. One would see him pinning the form of a sleeve, then nervously removing those same pointed pieces of metal, and to those not trained in the techniques of cut and pattern drafting, Alaïa would seem much like a construction foreman. Graduated rulers, some curved like the backs of birds, serve the purpose of adjusting measurements that had become for him automatic writing. On this table, veritable mirror of the couturier's hands, a geography of the body evolves each night. Pieces of fabric soon to become replicas and reflections of the arms, busts



and hips that they would shortly caress. Into the small hours, Oum Kalthoum accompanies Azzedine in his mission. She sings as tirelessly as he cuts. On the red brick wall, Alaïa need only lift his gaze to see lifelong friends, fairy godmothers and muses who accompanied and supported him in the development of his art. Arletty, Tina Turner, Naomi, Veronica Webb, Stephanie Seymour, Carla Sozzani, Michèle Obama, Shakira, Bruce Weber, Charles Baudelaire ... photographs like fallen leaves of a secret tree. To his right, a giant television screen broadcasts the wildlife documentaries that Alaïa particularly loves to watch.

The following morning, the models can come back to him. In front of the large mirror surrounded by a gilt frame, fittings take place and corrections are applied. Alaïa pins together and takes apart on the sublime bodies jackets, coats, and evening dresses in various stages of completion yet no less sublime.

In this peculiar den where rolls of fabric muffle voices and footsteps, entire and notorious collections have been realized, eternal dresses have been born thanks to the great art of Alaïa, the last reigning couturier.

Already 5 years have passed since all here was brought to silence and covered with white dustsheets. Not a single garment, nor sketch, tool, pin, or needle has been touched.

It is now time to draw back these veils of discretion and reveal once more to the public, the atelier, fortress of ideas and imagination, of the couturier.

In a subtle scenography, the visitor will be able to perceive the spirit of this unique place where the laughter, joy and passion of an occupation and vocation seem to echo still. »

*Olivier Saillard,*

Director of the Azzedine Alaïa Foundation

Recognized for its public utility on the 28th of February 2020, the couturier's eponymous Foundation pays homage to him by way of exhibitions, publications, and conferences. Refurbishments have been carried out in the place where he lived and worked in order to welcome the public and improve conservation conditions for Azzedine Alaïa's archives.

The Foundation collaborates with several fashion schools in Paris and internationally to encourage the exchange and transfer of knowledge and technique.

The unveiling of the designer's Atelier is a new stage in the life of the Foundation and the plans for its future, with the aim that it shall in term become the Azzedine Alaïa Museum.



## AZZEDINE ALAÏA FOUNDATION

Azzedine Alaïa lived a life filled with fashion, art, design, architecture, music and theatre.

Mr. Alaïa had been an avid collector in the creative and cultural disciplines for the past fifty years. In 2007, he set about to preserve his own work and his large holdings by founding the Association Azzedine Alaïa, later becoming the Azzedine Alaïa Foundation, with his lifetime partner, and his close friend of forty years, the publisher Carla Sozzani.

The Azzedine Alaïa Foundation has been recognized as a public utility on February 28th, 2020. The Foundation's missions are the conservation and enhancement of the work of Azzedine Alaïa, the pieces he collected throughout his life in the fields of art, fashion and design, the organization of exhibitions, and the support for cultural and educational activities.

The foundation houses its collections in Paris and exhibits Alaïa's own work as well as his collections. It is located at 18 rue de la Verrerie where he lived and work and in Sidi Bou Saïd, the town he loved so dearly.

A bookshop and café, featuring books on fashion and cultural history, are also situated at the heart of the Foundation in Paris.

The Foundation also gives awards to promising visionaries in fashion.

The signature logo of the Azzedine Alaïa Foundation was designed by Julian Schnabel.