

## New Exhibition Highlights Alaïa's Pompadour Connection

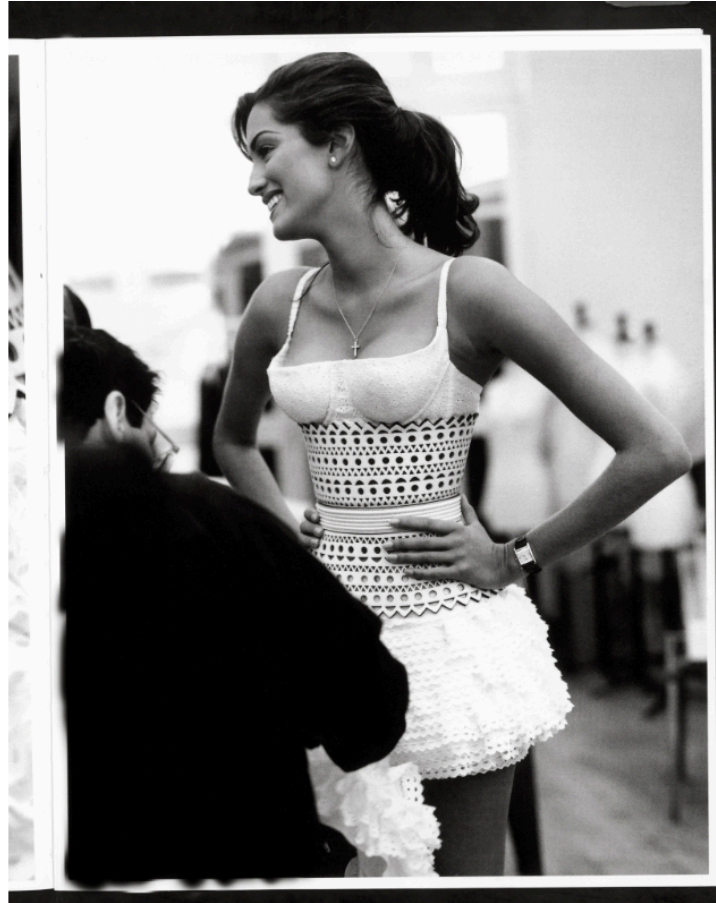
The designer dedicated a collection to royal courtesan Madame de Pompadour after moving into the building where she lived as a young woman.



**MISTRESS STYLE:** A new exhibition on Azzedine Alaïa has opened just in time for Paris Couture Week.

“The Secret Alchemy of a Collection,” showing at the designer’s headquarters in the city’s Marais district until Jan. 6, focuses on the first collection he designed after moving there in 1991. Alaïa discovered that the historic building had once been home to Jeanne Antoinette Poisson, the future Madame de Pompadour, chief mistress of King Louis XV.

Accordingly, his spring 1992 collection incorporated elements of 18th-century dress, with pannier skirts rendered in white eyelet cotton and jackets inspired by men's redingotes. Saucier nods to palace intrigue included a leather corset belt in laser-cut white leather, and stretch dresses with "lady garden" intarsia motifs.



Azzedine Alaïa working on his spring 1992 collection. Courtesy

It's the latest in **a series of exhibitions** organized by Carla Sozzani, a close friend of the designer, following **his death last year**. **Olivier Saillard**, who curated the show, said it was timed to coincide with the recently reissued **Assouline book dedicated to the collection**.

"It's very Alaïa, very Eighties — even if it's 1992 — and it's also very Pompadour, because there's a lot of broderie anglaise, perforated leather, plunging necklines," he said. "There is also an 18th-century inspiration in the long white dresses, which are like the undergarments that women wore under their dresses. Azzedine had a passion for white shirts from different eras."

His favorite look was a white eyelet corset top and ruffled skirt originally worn by Christy Turlington. "It looks like whipped cream," he said with a smile. "It reminds me of a dancer by Degas. I think it's cute as pie."