

# KUNSTHALLE MÜNCHEN

## Press Release

### **THIERRY MUGLER: COUTURISSIME** **Starting May 25, 2020** **(original dates: April 3 – August 30, 2020)**

For the first time in Germany, the Kunsthalle München is presenting an exhibition about the French creator Thierry Mugler. It is initiated, produced and circulated by the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (MMFA), in collaboration with the Maison Mugler which restored the designer's heritage couture. The exhibition is curated by Thierry-Maxime Lorient under the direction of Nathalie Bondil, Director General and Chief Curator of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.

This spectacularly staged retrospective presents the multifaceted work of this visionary couturier, director, photographer and perfumer. It showcases more than 150 haute couture and prêt-à-porter outfits, stage costumes and accessories, videos, photographs, design sketches, and archival material created between 1977 and 2014. Some 100 works by famous fashion photographers who have staged Mugler's creations, from Helmut Newton (1920–2004) to David LaChapelle (\*1963), round out the exhibition.

In the early 1970s, Mugler, who was trained as a classical ballet dancer, revolutionized fashion by countering the flowing bohemian looks of the hippie era with morphological and futuristic cuts as well as sculptural, elegant, and form-fitting silhouettes. With his designs, Mugler lent heroic strength to the people he once described as "fragile, beautiful creatures". In times of cocooning, of retreating from a world perceived as unmanageable and threatening into a domestic private life, Mugler created glamorous armor that transformed women into superheroines by borrowing from the world of animals and myths as well as from the universe of modern technology and architecture. He experimented with innovative materials such as metal, Plexiglas, fake fur, vinyl and latex. "My only measure is excess," said Mugler of his extravagant creations. His designs were worn by stars such as Diana Ross (\*1944), Liza Minelli (\*1946), David Bowie (1947–2016), Céline Dion (\*1968) and Lady Gaga (\*1986); he also created costumes for tours and videos of stars like Beyoncé (\*1981).

Mugler recruited collaborators from all over the world to realize his fantastic ideas, including car painters and leather craftsmen, printing technicians, photographers, scientists, and artists. His fashion is characterized by a sophisticated mixture of high and popular culture, in which refined haute couture meets drag show drama. It moves between elitism and mass appeal, between tradition and transgression.

Organized by



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A brilliant storyteller with a penchant for theatrical performance, Mugler has created some of the most spectacular fashion shows of his time. He designed costumes for the production of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* put on by the Comédie-Française and the Festival d'Avignon, as well as for Cirque du Soleil's Zumanity. He also staged his own revues, such as the *Mugler Follies* in Paris and *The Wyld* at Berlin's Friedrichstadt-Palast.

As a photographer and filmmaker, he directed the video clip »Too Funky« by British singer George Michael (1963–2016) as well as short films with Isabelle Huppert (\*1953) and Juliette Binoche (\*1964). Mugler's work is distinguished by numerous collaborations with big names of the art world – such as interior designer Andrée Putman (1935–2013) and well-known photographers like Helmut Newton (1920–2004), Guy Bourdin (1928–1991), Dominique Issermann (\*1947), Herb Ritts (1952–2002), Ellen von Unwerth (\*1954), David LaChapelle (\*1963) and Pierre & Gilles (\*1950 and \*1953).

The exhibition presents the various aspects of Mugler's art as a sequence of eight opera acts.



## ACT I – FUTURISTIC & FEMBOT COUTURE

By creating futuristic, aerodynamic and robotic looks that radiate superhuman strength, Mugler directs attention to the relationship between man and machine. His cyborgs and chassis-outfitted characters are harbingers of the transhuman revolution that shapes our everyday life. The designer was inspired by science fiction and comic heroines as well as by medieval armor and uniforms, industrial design, and futuristic vehicles. In 1989, the *Hiver Buick* collection was created as a tribute to the American automobile designer Harley J. Earl (1893–1969), who designed the tail fins of the 1959 Cadillac Eldorado, among other things. Mugler's *Maschinenmensch* [robot-woman] (1995), created in a six-month long process, is an all-time masterpiece that pays tribute to the character of Futura in the novel *Metropolis*, adapted by Fritz Lang (1890–1976) in 1927.

These two galleries in the exhibition were designed by Berlin-based artist and set designer Philipp Fürhofer, who already in 2018 was in charge of the impressive setting of the exhibition "You are Faust. Goethe's Drama in the Arts" at the Kunsthalle München.

Luigi & lango, Gisele Bündchen, 2018, Digital print  
Outfit: Thierry Mugler, Superstar Diana Ross collection,  
prêt-à-porter spring/summer 1991  
Photo: © Luigi & lango



David LaChapelle, Danie Alexander, London Sunday Times, May 1998; Outfit: Thierry Mugler, *Jeu de Paume* collection, haute couture spring/summer 1998  
Photo: © David LaChapelle

## ACT II – STARS & SPARKLES. STAGING FASHION

“My only true vocation is the stage.” In the conviction that fashion must be shown in a musical and theatrical setting, Mugler justified the principle of the fashion show as a spectacle. In 1984, he opened a stunning show at the Paris Zenith, a veritable fashion opera, for 6000 people. His catwalk became a stage for musical comedies, scenes from comics, Hollywood movies, and glamorous cabaret shows. He also introduced the trend of having stars model at fashion shows. Mugler invited singers and Hollywood actresses like Tippi Hedren (\*1930), Diana Ross (\*1944) or Sharon Stone (\*1958) to walk for him; stars like James Brown (1933–2006), David Bowie (1947–2016), Céline Dion (\*1968), Madonna (\*1958), Lady Gaga (\*1986), and Beyoncé (\*1981) wore his designs.



Patrice Stable, Emma Sjöberg during the shooting of the video for George Michael's song “Too Funky”, Paris, 1992, directed by George Michael and Thierry Mugler; Outfit: Thierry Mugler, *Les Cowboys* collection, prêt-à-porter spring/summer 1992; Photo: © Patrice Stable

## ACT III – TOO FUNKY

The music video for the famous song “Too Funky” by British pop star George Michael (1963–2016) was released in 1992; it marked the beginning of Mugler's career as a video director. The song appeared on the charity album *Red Hot + Dance*, which was intended to raise funds for the fight against AIDS – a cause supported by both the singer and the designer. The quintessence of pop aesthetics, “Too Funky” assembled an extraordinary cast clothed in Mugler outfits. In addition to celebrated supermodels such as Linda Evangelista (\*1965), Eva Herzigová (\*1973), Nadja Auermann (\*1971) and others, personalities from the New York fashion scene as well as actors and performance artists appeared. There are two versions of the video, one by George Michael, shown in this exhibition, and the other by Mugler. With a point of view at once pugnacious and scornful, the designer reveals the contrast between the glamor out on the runway and the chaos behind the scenes.



Ellen von Unwerth (born 1954), Eva Herzigová behind the Scenes at the Thierry Mugler Fashion Show, Paris, 1992, Gelatin silver print, Outfit: Thierry Mugler, Les Cowboys collection, prêt-à-porter spring/summer 1992  
Photo: © Ellen von Unwerth

## ACT IV – BELLE DE JOUR | BELLE DE NUIT

Amidst the hippie movement, Mugler countered the flower power and ethnic looks of the early 1970s with the invention of his “glamazon” – a modern, stylish, urban, and unconventional woman. She distinguished herself through bold, figure-hugging cuts, architectural silhouettes and innovative materials, and developed the concept of power dressing. From then on, the power of female seduction went hand in hand with professional success. With the arrival of the “total look” (a style featuring only one color or pattern) and skin-tight designs made possible by elastane fabrics, the myth of the perfect body came into focus. Mugler adopted materials of the fetish and underground scenes such as latex and vinyl and made them not only presentable, but turned them into classics. Summarizing Mugler’s style, American art historian and feminist Linda Nochlin (1931–2017) said, “It is so extreme that these women are not sex objects, but sex subjects.”

The title of this entirely black and white gallery refers to Luis Buñuel’s 1967 movie classic *Belle de jour* (*Beauty of the Day*) which deals with a frustrated house wife (Catherine Deneuve, \*1943) who prostitutes herself as a form of liberation.



Michel Lemieux, “The Disappearance of Lady Macbeth”,  
Photo: © Marc Cramer

## ACT V – MACBETH

July 6, 1985 was the opening night of the Avignon Festival, in which the Comédie-Française put on a new production of William Shakespeare’s famous *Macbeth*. Influenced by his own theater experience as a dancer and his fascination for opulently staged productions, Mugler designed over 70 costumes and accessories for this play. He had been given the largest budget for this purpose since the company’s founding in 1680. “The actors all wore magnificent armor and breastplates, doublets forming musculature, as well as leather and metal, while underneath they were very vulnerable,” commented Mugler.

The costume of Lady Macbeth served the multimedia artist Michel Lemieux (\*1959) as a source of inspiration for his digital installation, which was especially created for this exhibition. It depicts how the sleepwalking queen, increasingly stricken with feelings of remorse, is haunted by the blood she imagines on her hands before she finally falls into madness.



Thierry Mugler, *Claude Heidemayer*, New York; Outfit: Thierry Mugler, *Les Infernales* collection, prêt-à-porter fall/winter 1988–1989  
Photo: © Thierry Mugler

## ACT VI – BEYOND FASHION: MUGLER BEHIND THE LENS

The trigger for Mugler's interest in photography came about in 1976, when he asked Helmut Newton (1920–2004) to do an advertising campaign for him. Mugler interfered so much during the shoots, however, that Newton finally told him he should do it himself – which the designer did. While Mugler continued his collaboration with Newton for over 20 years, he also developed his own unique visual language for campaigns. Playing with proportions and perspectives, his photographic dramatizations often set his models in monumental settings, where they appeared to be miniature figures. Marked by the memory of the Gothic cathedral of his Strasbourg childhood as well as by Art Deco, Soviet, and futuristic aesthetics, Mugler photographed his muses in inaccessible places like the icebergs of Greenland, the dunes of the Sahara or the dizzying heights of the Chrysler building.



Helmut Newton, *Jerry Hall and Thierry Mugler*, Paris, 1996  
Photo: © The Helmut Newton Estate

## ACT VII – HELMUT NEWTON & MUGLER

An inextricable part of the magazine boom, fashion photography, supplanting fashion illustrations, came into its own in the 1960s. The increasingly important editors-in-chief had a free hand in supporting young talents, be they models, photographers, or designers. Francine Crescent, editor-in-chief of the French edition of *Vogue* from 1968 to 1987, for example, significantly advanced Mugler's career and also supported two masters who turned the rules of contemporary fashion photography upside down: Helmut Newton (1920–2004) and Guy Bourdin (1928–1991), whose photos of Mugler glamazons dominated the photo series of magazines in the early 1970s. Newton photographed powerful seductresses. His images of women in Mugler creations leave traditional narratives far behind them and display a mixture of bold sex appeal and luxurious elegance. They take up compositional strategies of surrealist artists, play with the picture-in-picture concept or the juxtaposition of the nude and clothed figure. With their ambiguity and pictorial wit, many of his works have attained an iconic status.



Photo of the exhibition, Photo © Marc Cramer

## ACT VIII – METAMORPHOSES

“I have always been fascinated by the most beautiful animal on earth: the human being,” said Mugler. In his view, human seduction is informed by the animal world animating his fantastical creations. Mugler’s bestiary is inspired by marine life and reptiles, insects, birds and butterflies. However, he refused to work with luxurious exotic leather or rare feathers focusing more on synthetic materials. Water nymphs haunted the ocean depths of his *Les Atlantes* collection, with its spiky “shell” glass bustiers, “sea urchin” accessories, a manta ray-look dress, fishbone-look stitchings and spectacular organza medusa gowns. In 1997 and 1998, the designer succeeded in reviving French haute couture with two exceptional collections. *Les Insectes* included a stunning sheath dress with a black velvet train decorated with butterfly wings made of cock feathers. Mugler’s “Chimera” is a mythical creature with articulated armor and scales decorated with crystals, rhinestones, feathers, and horsehair – a masterpiece created in collaboration with corset maker Mr Pearl (\*1962) and artist Jean-Jacques Urcun that required thousands of hours of atelier work. This exhibition gallery features an animated 360° projection by RodeoFX. For many years, this award-winning visual effects studio has been working on major motion pictures such as *Game of Thrones* or *Star Wars*.



## A LUXURIOUS COMPANION VOLUME

(english)

*Thierry Mugler: Couturissime* is the first monograph dedicated to fashion designer Thierry Mugler. The result of extensive research, this book edited by Thierry-Maxime Loriot, contains essays by Jeanne Beker, Nathalie Bondil, Marie Colmant, Matthias Harder, Jack Lang, Amelie Nothomb, Lou Stoppard, Stefano Tonchi and Shelly Verthime; with 350 archival images and previously unpublished photographs by the biggest names in photography, in addition th photographs by Mugler himself. The book was published by the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts Publishing Department in association with Phaidon. It was designed by the Montreal-based firm Paprika. Price only at the Kunsthalle: € 79

With around 350,000 visitors every year, the **Kunsthalle München** is one of Germany’s most prestigious exhibition houses. Located at the heart of Munich, the Kunsthalle stages three large exhibitions a year on a variety of themes. Equipped with state-of-the-art museum technology, the approximately 1,200 m<sup>2</sup> exhibition space is a respected platform for artworks representing a variety of genres from painting, sculpture, graphic art, photography and crafts, through to design and fashion. The Kunsthalle München’s diverse programme alternates monographic exhibitions with thematic projects, yet also includes interdisciplinary concepts.

# BIOGRAPHY

Manfred Thierry Mugler is born in Strasbourg, France.

**1962** The young Mugler joins the Ballet of the Opéra national du Rhin, and tours with the company for six years as a professional dancer in classical and character roles. He immerses himself in the magical world of the stage—the music, the backstage scene, the lighting and the performers glorified by costumes and makeup—which will influence his work. He goes to the École supérieure des arts décoratifs in Strasbourg and starts making his own clothes and defining his style.

**1967** After years in productions of *Swan Lake* and other ballets, he begins looking for a more creative outlet and decides to move to Paris to audition for contemporary ballet companies. His first week there, he discovers that fashion design can be an actual job, and very quickly sells his sketches to Dorothee Bis and Cacharel. Hired by the first “hip” store in Paris, Gudule, located on Rue de Buci, he creates a new style with his first maxicoats and extremely broadshouldered silhouettes, which meet with immediate success. He takes his first trip to the United States and Mexico, which is followed by a sojourn in India to learn Kathakali, a type of dance-drama from the southern state of Kerala that incorporates mime and martial arts. He becomes a freelance stylist for various ready-to-wear houses and for seven years will work in Paris, London, Milan and Barcelona, designing up to eight collections for women, men and children per season.

**1969** He divides his time between London and Amsterdam. In the British capital he sells his designs to the King’s Road, Chelsea boutiques Mr Freedom and Granny Takes a Trip, the latter a mecca of hippie eccentricity whose clothes are worn by Jim Morrison, Jimi Hendrix, Lou Reed, David Bowie, John Lennon and the members of Pink Floyd.

**1973** He creates the initial collection for his first label, Café de Paris. His clothes are sold in the Créateurs et Industriels concept store on Rue de Rennes in Paris conceived by the French interior designer Andrée Putman and businessman Didier Grumbach. He shows two collections that are huge hits with the press as well as buyers from major department stores such as Browns in London and Bergdorf Goodman in New York. Along with Alain Caradeuc, who finances part of its operations, he founds the Thierry Mugler company in a small studio. The following year, he presents the first collections bearing his name in a completely white photo studio—a total production even at this early date—and creates his own label and the house of Thierry Mugler in his combined studio space and apartment. During a time when outlandish, unstructured looks reign in the fashion firmament he establishes a return to bodyconscious, defined shapes by designing a highly stylized and flattering silhouette. He declares: “Dance taught me a lot about body language, the importance of shoulders, how to hold the head, walk, and place your legs; these sensations helped me create an essential fashion style that is both functional and refined. Fashion is like a daily personal ‘performance.’”

**1974** On the advice of Pierre Bergé, Didier Grumbach takes an interest in Mugler and with Michel Douard forms a partnership: while also producing Valentino, Saint Laurent, Lanvin and Chanel prêt-à-porter, beginning in 1978—and for twenty subsequent years—he becomes president of the Thierry Mugler label. Grumbach will propose Douard to become chief executive the same year. Added to these new investors will be a prestigious Italian knitwear manufacturer, Ginocchietti, which will enable the Mugler house to grow, as well as to fit out offices and studios, and therefore to develop the concept of the fully produced fashion show spectacular.

**1976** The German photographer Helmut Newton is hired to photograph the first Thierry Mugler advertising campaign. Irritated by the designer’s constant suggestions, Newton suddenly hands over his camera and tells him to shoot the campaign himself, which Mugler does.

**1978** Mugler sets out on his first advertising campaign as a photographer. His search for the ideal setting in which to place his dramatis personae leads him to extraordinary spots around the world, including the Sahara, China, Japan, Greenland, Russia, Africa, the Middle East, and North and South America. Fascinated by the boundlessness of natural and human architecture, and by the graphic character of nature, his photographer’s eye manifests a highly personal point of view, a resolutely poetic and vivid take on life and

the urban world. "For me," he says, "a photograph is not reality. It's an art that captures the feeling of reality and that can be reworked as many times as need be to achieve perfection. I am rarely satisfied." Mugler opens his first boutique at 10 Place des Victoires in Paris. In his first collections "from space," followed by those with his Amazons and "insect women," Mugler shows a strong, sensuous woman with swagger. He creates an anatomically structured cut of an impeccably sophisticated and sexy style, and launches the unisex look. The splendor of the "new woman" is soon echoed by the clean look and the resolutely modern style of the "Mugler man," with its simple, precise and structured cut and broad-shouldered shape, slim and pure—a new classic. From 1983 to 1986, over fifty stores and in-store boutiques will be opened worldwide, from Geneva to New York to Tokyo. He designs the uniforms for the waiters of the legendarily hip Le Palace discotheque, the mecca of Parisian nightlife from 1978 to 1981. His first fashion show to be presented abroad takes place in Tokyo.

**1979** David Bowie appears on the television program *Saturday Night Live* along with performer Joey Arias and singer Klaus Nomi, who are both wearing dresses by Mugler. The same year, Bowie dons a Mugler-designed, mermaid-style sequined gown for his "Boys Keep Swinging" video. Throughout his career, the singer will wear Mugler's creations on stage, in his videos and for his public appearances, on the red carpet or at his wedding with Somali model Iman in 1992.

**1982** In parallel with his career as a designer, he enrolls in the Cours Florent drama school, which he will attend for four years and where he will also mount his first productions. There he meets Quebec-born French singer Mylène Farmer, with whom he will collaborate over the years on her videos and concerts.

**1984** He celebrates the tenth anniversary of his fashion house by organizing a show for his fall/winter collection, which he opens to the public at the inauguration of the Zénith in Paris. More than six thousand people—four thousand of them buying their tickets—attend this first "fashion show of operatic proportions," which presents 350 different outfits.

**1985** He designs the costumes for the musical *Émilie Jolie*, which has a five year run, and also creates an opera, *Nuits d'été [Summer Nights]*, presented at the Festival d'Uzès in France. In addition, for twelve years he designs the costumes for French actress and comedian Sylvie Joly's shows. He designs the costumes for a staging of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* by the celebrated Comédie-Française. The production is given the biggest budget ever provided by the Comédie-Française since its founding by Louis XIV. It opens France's famous Festival d'Avignon in the summer at the Cour d'Honneur of the Palais des Papes, and is then presented at the Parisian institution's theater the following fall and winter. In April, the French Minister of Culture, Jack Lang, sparks a scandal by appearing at a sitting of the National Assembly, where wearing a tie is mandatory, in a Muglerdesigned black suit with a Mao collar. This causes great astonishment and hilarity among the deputies, and his suit is variously described by some journalists as "eccentric," or being a look for "a vaguely Islamic clergyman." The incident even makes the national headlines.

**1987** He directs *L'Antimentale*, a short film featuring his muse Dauphine de Jerphanion and the boxer Stéphane Ferrara; music is by Gabriel Yared.

**1988** Publication of the book *Thierry Mugler: Photographer*.

**1989** He designs the costumes for Mylène Farmer's first major tour, *Tour 89*. In Moscow, he presides over the first national supermodel contest—Iman acts as the mistress of ceremonies—and puts on a fashion show with Russian models only.

**1990** Mugler directs four short films for Canal+ with four actresses: Juliette Binoche (*Jeanne d'Arc*), Isabelle Huppert (*The Human Voice*), Viktor Lazlo (*Put the Blame on Me*) and Dauphine de Jerphanion (*Marie-Antoinette at the Temple*). He also directs his first television advertisement for Gauloises cigarettes, *Gauloises Aventures*. Thierry Mugler and the cosmetics company Clarins Group join forces to create Thierry Mugler Parfums.

**1991** He presents two spectacular fashion shows in Tokyo.

**1992** He shows his first haute couture collection at the Ritz in Paris. He scripts and directs pop star



George Michael's video "Too Funky." In this satire of the fashion world, Mugler presents his vision of "heaven" (the catwalk) and "hell" (backstage). Featuring in it are celebrities, actors and actresses, performers and supermodels, among them Nadja Auermann, Tyra Banks, Linda Evangelista, Eva Herzigová, Estelle Lefébure, Rossy de Palma, Djimon Hounsou, Bob Paris, Julie Newmar, Joey Arias and Rod Jackson. As a result of a conflict during its shooting, two versions of the video will be produced, one by the French couturier and the other by the British singer. He presents a fashion show in Los Angeles for APLA (AIDS Project Los Angeles). Many musical, fashion and entertainment icons take part in it: Lady Miss Kier from the group Deee-Lite and Celia Cruz sing, Lypsinka puts on a show, and Jeff Stryker, Daryl Hannah, Ivana Trump, Michelle Phillips, Debi Mazar, Brigitte Nielsen, Talisa Soto, Diane Brill, Traci Lords, Linda Hamilton and Sharon Stone, among others, walk the runway. The designer, as is his wont, is behind everything, from the music and staging to the choreography and lighting. The fragrance *Angel* is launched in fall. In just a few years, *Angel* ranks among the world's ten bestselling perfumes and achieves the top spot in France, a feat unmatched to date. This first fragrance is created by Grasse perfumer Olivier Cresp according to Mugler's guidelines. The designer wants "a scent that makes you want to eat up the person wearing it," with notes evoking the emotions surrounding things such as childhood, food, chocolate and cotton candy that are familiar to everyone. Following over six hundred trials, he adds ethyl maltol (also known as veltol) to an initial formula composed mainly of vanilla and patchouli. Developed in 1969 by the laboratories of the Swiss company Firmenich, that compound produces scents reminiscent of candied fruit, sugared almonds and caramel. Used until then in the food industry as a flavoring, ethyl maltol makes its debut in perfumery with *Angel*, creating a whole new category of what are called "gourmand" fragrances.

**1993** He becomes the first and only French designer to be the proprietor of his own, state-of-the-art manufacturing facilities—one of them a 2,300-squaremeter (24,750-square-foot) plant in Angers, France—where his high-end prêt-à-porter, which he himself dubs "industrialized couture," is made with a remarkable precision that extends to every aspect of garment construction, including inside finishing. He organizes a charity fashion show for amfAR at Saks Fifth Avenue in New York starring Diana Ross as a model. He presents a fashion show in Vienna for the first Life Ball.

**1994** He appears in the film *Ready to Wear* by Robert Altman, who allowed Mugler to write the scene in which he plays himself.

**1995** He pulls out all the stops with the presentation of a spectacular fashion show at Paris's Cirque d'Hiver celebrating the label's twentieth anniversary. James Brown performs during the finale, while the greatest supermodels of every era, from Carmen Dell'Orefice and Jerry Hall to Kate Moss and Claudia Schiffer, as well as legendary American actress and Hitchcock muse Tippi Hedren and heiress Patty Hearst, walk the runway. He comes up with the concept for the opening number of the first VH1 Fashion Awards.

**1996** Launch of *A\*Men*, the first Mugler fragrance for men.

**1997** He becomes an invited member of Paris's Chambre syndicale de la haute couture. For the haute couture spring/summer season, he broadcasts the show for his *Les Insectes* collection live to New York for his American clients. Along with regulars Saint Laurent, Valentino, Versace and Chanel, the new guard consisting of Thierry Mugler, Jean Paul Gaultier, John Galiano at Christian Dior and Alexander McQueen at Givenchy marks an historic week. In total, 850 journalists and 320 photographers from 40 countries travel to France, putting the City of Light back at the forefront of the fashion industry. The Clarins Group acquires the majority share in the house of Thierry Mugler.

**1998** He settles in New York.

**1999** For the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Playboy he produces a series of photographs that make him a leading artist of the concept of "sex couture."

**2000** He presents a fashion show on Rome's famous Spanish Steps; Sophia Loren is the patron of the event.

**2002** He leaves his own couture house and withdraws from the fashion world to devote himself to directing and producing projects. From now on his name is Manfred Thierry Mugler.

**2003** He forms a part of the creative team for *Zumanity*, the first and only Cirque du Soleil show for adults only. He also designs the show's costumes, in collaboration with Stefano Canulli, among others, and directs the final "Extravaganza" scene. The show is still playing at the New York-New York hotel and casino in Las Vegas.

**2005** Launch of the fragrance *Alien*.

**2008** He designs the stage costumes for the American pop singer Beyoncé's *I Am...* world tour. He also directs several of the numbers in the show and plays a part in its choreography and artistic direction, as well as in the shooting of the concert videos. Launch of the Thierry Mugler Beauté line.

**2009** He contributes to the development of the show *Arias With a Twist*, presented in New York, and creates the costumes for it.



Max Abadian, Manfred Thierry Mugler, 2018;  
Photo: © Max Abadian

**2013** He creates and stages the *Mugler Follies*—a new kind of revue that will be presented for close to two years at Le Comédia theater in Paris—for which he also designs the costumes and writes most of the songs.

**2014** He develops and stages a new show, called *The Wyld*, at Berlin's Friedrichstadt-Palast, which will run until 2016. It has the biggest budget of any production at the theater since it opened in 1919 and, with

500 performances and 800,000 spectators, at that time will be its biggest hit to date. He settles in Berlin.

**2019** The exhibition *Thierry Mugler: Couturissime* is developed, produced and circulated by the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. Publication of *Manfred Thierry Mugler Photographer*, a monography of 40 years of his own photographs. Exhibition of his photographic work at Polka Galerie (Paris).

### A stunning visual journey of the enduring legacy of fashion and couture icon Manfred Thierry Mugler



Since launching his first fashion collection in 1973, Manfred Thierry Mugler has been celebrated for his fierce creative vision. Drawing inspiration from everything from architecture and theatre to Old Hollywood and futurism, Mugler not only designs his collections, but also stages his own shows, directs the advertising campaigns, and photographs his fantastical creations. Including both iconic and never-before-published images, this book is illustrated with more than 150 photographs from his captivating personal collection and includes a travel journal-inspired text that follows Mugler around the world on his shoots, offering a behind-the-scenes look at how the images came to be. Proving that Mugler's vision is best captured by his own extraordinary images, *Manfred Thierry Mugler Photographer* is a vibrant visual journey through the work of a singular talent. Published by Abrams. Price: € 75

# KUNSTHALLE MÜNCHEN

**Nathalie Bondil**, Director General and Chief Curator of the MMFA: “The MMFA is pursuing its major exhibitions in the world of high fashion. It is a privilege to pay tribute to these contemporary artists, with them and for them, as they are rare beings in this exclusive world of haute couture. Metamorphosis, super-heroines and cyborgs are already present in Mugler’s work: he perceived very early the trans-human revolutions on the way. His streamlined and elegant creatures, and dangerous and alluring women, people a universe of glamour and seduction at the frontiers of reality.”

**Thierry-Maxime Loriot**, exhibition curator: “The work of Thierry Mugler is as distinctive as it is avant-garde. It has an architectural, hyper-feminized style that sublimates the curves of the femme fatale. This creator knows how to distinguish himself through constant innovation and audacious silhouettes that have marked an era, and found a place in the history of fashion. His singular style, a kind of futurist version of New Look with a touch of fantasy and fetishism, is still a powerful influence on today’s generation of couturiers,”

**Roger Diederer**, director of the Kunsthalle München: “As the only venue in Germany, we are very proud to present ‘Thierry Mugler. Couturissime’ and thus one of the foremost creators of our time. With the past exhibitions on Jean Paul Gaultier and Peter Lindbergh, the Kunsthalle has already shown two stellar figures in the fashion world. The quality and extravagance of Mugler’s creations presented in a stunning exhibition design guarantees yet another unforgettable experience for our visitors.”

Conceived as an opera in eight acts, the exhibition revisits Mugler’s iconic creations and collaborations in spectacular settings to which several people contributed:

**Philipp Fürhofer**, German artist and designer of costumes and sets for major operas, is responsible for the layout of the “Futuristic & Fembot Couture” gallery. Recipient of the 2013 Laurence Olivier Award from the Society of London Theatre, he has collaborated with the Dutch National Opera in Amsterdam, the Royal Opera in Copenhagen, the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, London, and the Kunsthalle in Munich.

**Michel Lemieux**, designer, director for film and stage, and set designer for numerous digital productions and installations, notably for Cirque du Soleil, the Cité Mémoire urban circuit, and the MMFA, contributed a digital work of virtual projections entitled “The Incandescence of Lady Macbeth”, with music by Johann Johannsson.

**Rodeo FX** created the visual imagery and special effects for the “Metamorphosis” gallery. Winner of prestigious awards, this Montreal studio has produced numerous special effects for international television and film productions, such as Game Of Thrones and the movies Arrival, Birdman and Blade Runner 2049, winner of the 2018 Oscar for Best Visual Effects.

**Tord Boontje** created five monumental chandeliers, entitled Cherry Blossom, for the exhibition. Composed of Swarovski crystals, they dominate the ceiling of the “Belle de jour & Belle de nuit” gallery like glittering ivy. Objects and furniture created by this Dutch designer, whose studio is based in London, are in the collections of major museums such as the MMFA, the Victoria and Albert Museum and MoMA.

The mannequins in the exhibition were custom-made by **Hans Boodt Mannequins**, Rotterdam.

“Thierry Mugler. Couturissime” marks the first participation of the **Helmut Newton Foundation**, since its inauguration in Berlin in 2003, as lender to an exhibition designed by a foreign museum.

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## DIRECTOR

Roger Diederer

## CURATORIAL CREDITS

The exhibition was curated by **Thierry-Maxime Loriot** under the direction of **Nathalie Bondil**, Director General and Chief Curator of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.

## EXHIBITION LAYOUT

The exhibition layout was overseen by **Sandra Gagné**, head of Exhibition Production at the MMFA.

## PRESS ENQUIRIES

Agnes Trick, T +49 (0)89 / 37 82 81 64, presse@kunsthalle-muc.de

## PRESS IMAGES FOR DOWNLOAD

[www.kunsthalle-muc.de/press\\_area/en/press\\_area/thierry-mugler](http://www.kunsthalle-muc.de/press_area/en/press_area/thierry-mugler)

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