



PRESS RELEASE

BETTINA

opening **Tuesday, September 16th 2014**
from **7.00 pm to 10.00 pm**

on show from **Wednesday, September 17th to November 2nd, 2014**
everyday, 10.30 am – 7.30 pm
Wednesday and Thursday, 10.30 am – 9.00 pm

Galleria Carla Sozzani
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BETTINA

Recognized as a great Muse to the designers of the 40's and 50's, Bettina would become one of the most photographed women in the mid 20th century world of fashion.

Muse to Jacques Fath, Bettina was a privileged witness of the years of the dazzling world of post-war *couture* in France then being created by Jacques Costet, Lucien Lelong, Hubert de Givenchy, Christian Dior and Coco Chanel.

Bettina was born in Normandy in 1925, with a dream of becoming a fashion designer in 1944 she took her fashion sketches to Paris and met Jacques Costet, a young designer who had just opened his atelier. Costet, fascinated by her beauty, ended their interview by asking Bettina to model a dress he was working on. From that moment Bettina's extraordinary career of model and muse started: "*gloves, hats, veils - that was the time: I liked to pose, it was an instinct and a pleasure too*" (*Fashion memoir*, Thames and Hudson, 1998).

Leaving Costet to work for other designers, she is renamed and transformed by Jacques Fath. She grows up in these post war years sheltered by Fath, Coco Chanel, Christian Dior, Jacques Costet, Lucien Lelong, and Hubert de Givenchy until Fath's early death in 1954.

She would become the most celebrated and sought after model working from fashion magazines: "The most photographed French woman in France" according to Paris Match.

In 1952, as both model and press agent, Bettina works with Hubert de Givenchy to open his new fashion house and Givenchy names the first collection after her. One blouse particularly catches the eye of elegant women around the world and the "Bettina", immortalized in the famous drawing by René Gruau, becomes a "must have" seen on Ava Gardner and Elizabeth Taylor. She meets Peter Viertel, an American screenwriter who introduces her to intellectuals, actors, directors and writers: Georges Simenon, Jean Genet, Jacques Prevert, Greta Garbo, Elizabeth Taylor, Gregory Peck, the Bogarts, Ava Gardner, John Huston, Irving Shaw, Charlie Chaplin, Gary Cooper and Truman Capote. Bettina continues to pose for fashion magazines with clothes by Christian Dior, Madame Grès, Balenciaga, Balmain. In the midst of it all, she retires from the French fashion world in 1955 at her peak.

Still an elegant trendsetter, she does an 8 page layout as an "ambassador of style" for *Elle* magazine in 1963, with the "most beautiful clothes in Paris". Her last modeling assignment is in 1967 for Coco Chanel. Maintaining her connections in the world of fashion, but no longer in front of the camera, Bettina serves as Art Director for Emanuel Ungaro and press agent for Valentino. Recognized for her continuing contribution to the fashion industry, Bettina receives France's *Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres* from Frédéric Mitterrand in 2010.

Fashion is always her passion, and she continues to follow and promote it; her personality engages new designers and photographers like Azzedine Alaïa, Yohji Yamamoto, Pierre et Gilles, and Mario Testino.

The exhibition at the Galleria Carla Sozzani traces her career through more than a hundred images signed by the greatest photographers of the time: Erwin Blumenfeld, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Jean-Philippe Charbonnier, Henry Clarke, Louise Dahl-Wolfe, George Dambier, Robert Doisneau, Nat Farbman, Horst P. Horst, Arik Nepo, Gordon Parks, Irving Penn, Willy Rizzo, Emile Savitry, Seeberger brothers, Maurice Zalewski.

Bettina will attend the opening on Tuesday, 16th September 2014 at the Galleria Carla Sozzani. The catalogue "Bettina" published by Carla Sozzani Editore, accompanies the exhibition.

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