



QUEEN SOFÍA  
SPANISH INSTITUTE  
NEW YORK

– FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE –

**BALENCIAGA: *Spanish Master***  
November 19, 2010–February 19, 2011

This November, Queen Sofía Spanish Institute will present **BALENCIAGA: *Spanish Master***, the first exhibition to consider the impact of Spain’s culture, history and art on one of its greatest twentieth-century sons, the legendary designer **Cristóbal Balenciaga** (1895–1972). Hailed as “Fashion’s Picasso” by Cecil Beaton, Balenciaga’s innovations transformed the way women dressed, from the opening of his Paris fashion house in 1937 until his retirement in 1968. His visionary designs and impeccable standards seduced generations of the best-dressed women in the world.

Following its inauguration by Her Majesty Queen Sofia of Spain, **BALENCIAGA: *Spanish Master*** will officially open to the public on November 19, 2010 and remain on view through February 19, 2011. The exhibition was conceived by **Oscar de la Renta**, Chairman of the Institute’s Board of Directors, who has worked closely with the exhibition team to develop and realize the show. Mr. de la Renta himself began his career in fashion working in Madrid at Eisa, one of the Spanish branches of Balenciaga’s fashion empire.

The exhibition curator is **Hamish Bowles**, *Vogue*’s European Editor at Large and the curator of the 2001 exhibition *Jacqueline Kennedy: The White House Years*, which opened at The Metropolitan Museum of Art to widespread critical attention and acclaim, and later traveled to the John F. Kennedy Library and Museum in Boston, The Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, the Field Museum in Chicago, and Les Arts décoratifs, musée de la Mode et du Textile in Paris.

The exhibition will showcase some sixty items of Cristóbal Balenciaga clothing and accessories, including masterpieces such as his 1939 “Infanta” gown, matador boleros from 1946, flamenco-inspired dresses from 1951 and 1961, and the extraordinary embroidered 1957 wedding dress of Sonsoles Díez de Rivera (daughter of Balenciaga’s Spanish muse, the Marquesa de Llanzol), which is as splendid as the vestments of a Sevillana Madonna figure. Related support material will incorporate historical and regional Spanish dress.

Mr. Bowles has drawn this material, some of which has never before been exhibited, from museum and private collections in America and Europe, including the Balenciaga archive in Paris, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Museum at the Fashion Institute of Technology, and the Philadelphia Museum of Art. The pieces will consist of garments commissioned and worn by some of the twentieth century’s most iconic taste-making women – Pauline de Rothschild, Mona Bismarck and Thelma Chrysler Foy among them.

The accompanying catalogue – written by Hamish Bowles, published by Rizzoli and art directed by **Raúl Martínez**, Chief Creative Officer of AR New York and Design Director of *Vogue* – will have as its focus the influence of Balenciaga’s native country on the designer’s creative process and work. The exhibition will be designed by set designer **Stefan Beckman**, whose prestigious client list includes Marc Jacobs, Alexander McQueen, Cartier, and the Brooklyn Museum of Art.

For Diana Vreeland, Balenciaga's "inspiration came from the bullrings, the flamenco dancers, the loose blouses the fishermen wear, the cool of the cloisters." **BALENCIAGA: *Spanish Master*** will consider the influences on his designs of the country's great artists, from Zurbarán and Goya to Picasso, Sorolla and Miró, and of Spain's religious dress and ceremony, its royal history, its rich regional costume, its dance traditions, and the power and splendor of the bullfight.

Significant Spanish works of art and decorative arts will support the curatorial thesis of the exhibition to create a compelling, lively, and dramatic vision of Spain in all its glory, and the work of its most masterful designer.

**Queen Sofía Spanish Institute** was founded as The Spanish Institute in 1954 to promote greater awareness and understanding of the culture of the Spanish-speaking world in the United States, and was renamed in November 2003 to recognize the support given to the Institute through the years by Her Majesty Queen Sofía of Spain. Since its foundation, the Institute has sought to further its mission through a variety of programs. The activities focus on particular aspects of Spanish culture, past and present, and the remarkable influence this culture has in the Americas. Throughout its 55 years, the Institute has maintained an especially strong commitment to the fine arts by exhibiting major masters and newly emerging artists from Spain, Latin America and Europe.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a series of related public programs including exhibition tours and lectures.

Please check the website [www.queensofiaspanishinstitute.org](http://www.queensofiaspanishinstitute.org) for a schedule of events.

Press inquiries and image requests: [press@queensofiaspanishinstitute.org](mailto:press@queensofiaspanishinstitute.org) or 212-628-0420.

**Queen Sofía Spanish Institute**  
684 Park Avenue  
New York, New York 10065

**Gallery hours:**  
Monday–Thursday 10am–6pm  
Friday 10am–8pm  
Saturday 10am–5pm

**ATTACHED IMAGES CANNOT BE CROPPED AND MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY  
APPROPRIATE CREDIT LINE. FOR PRESS USE ONLY.**