



**Kent State University Museum
Features the New House of Vionnet**

What: The exhibition – *Vionnet*²⁰⁰⁷

When: August 30, 2007 through January 27, 2008

Where: Stager Gallery in Rockwell Hall on the corner of East Main and South Lincoln streets on the Kent State University Campus.

Background: *Vionnet*²⁰⁰⁷ presents a selection of garments from the newly launched House of Vionnet's first collection designed by Sophia Kokosalaki. Through her eyes, the exhibition's curator, Dr. Anne Bissonnette, explores the legacy of Madeleine Vionnet (1876-1975), the legendary designer who opened her couture house in 1912 and revolutionized the world of fashion. Although her house closed in 1939 at the onset of World War II, the body of work created by Vionnet remains, sixty-eight years after her retirement, thoroughly modern and unsurpassed.

The House of Vionnet was reborn in 2007. The challenge this presented is the reason for the exhibition. How do you resurrect a firm created by a genius of garment engineering and one of the most gifted and original designer of the twentieth century? Very carefully. Times have changed and Madeleine Vionnet's structural and aesthetic revolution has been internalized. The female body that was revealed and released through Vionnet's designs is integral to today's fashion. Since 1991, the maze of Madame Vionnet's mind was brought to life through the research of Betty Kirke. The Vionnet paradox—simplicity and complexity combined—won the admiration of a new generation and generated the enthusiasm that contributed to the rebirth of the brand.

Madeleine Vionnet's signature minimalism, grace and elegance returns in *Vionnet*²⁰⁰⁷. Beyond the use of the bias, the skillful combination of geometry and anatomy that Madame Vionnet made her own continues to inspire. Then and now, the cutting, tucking, twisting, wrapping, looping and tying of the fabric help to create inventive garments. The concern for structure, balance and movement suggest a timeless ideal of beauty.

On opening day, Thursday August 30th, the CEO of the House of Vionnet in Paris, Arnaud de Lummen, and the award-winning author and Vionnet scholar, Betty Kirke, will present lectures to the public. This will be followed by a fashion show of 20 reproduction *toiles* (muslin prototypes) from the 1910s to 1930s work of Madeleine

Vionnet. The lectures will begin at 5:30 p.m. and the fashion show is set to end at 7:30 p.m. The event is free with museum admission.

The Kent State University Museum is open Wednesday, Friday and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4:45 p.m.; Thursday from 10 a.m. to 8:45 p.m.; and Sunday from noon to 4:45 p.m. It is closed on Monday and Tuesday.

The museum is located in Rockwell Hall on the corner of East Main and South Lincoln streets on the Kent Campus. Special guided tours are available for groups by reservation. Free on-site motor coach parking is available.

For additional information about the Kent State University Museum, go to <http://www.kent.edu/muusem/>, or call (330) 672-3450.

###

August 27, 2007

Contact:

Rachel Wenger, phone: (330) 672-2727

Dr. Anne Bissonnette (French or English), phone (330) 672-0302