



Vionnet Names Kokosalaki Creative Director

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The house of Vionnet has appointed designer Sophia Kokosalaki as its Creative Director, and the Greek designer will debut her collaboration with a Spring 2007 collection, but with remarkably limited distribution.

Sophia Kokosalaki for Vionnet will be exclusively available worldwide at Barneys New York stores in New York, Beverly Hills, Dallas, Boston and Chicago and at the Vionnet Studio in Paris.

Founded in 1912, Vionnet once employed 1,200 seamstresses to create over twelve thousands haute couture garments per season, but its relaunch will be limited to just six stores.

'Vionnet has one of the most exceptional fashion heritages and a timeless appeal. Our return on the fashion scene will not be an ordinary revival but a unique and genuine approach to bring forward the Vionnet vision. Sophia, with her technical abilities and contemporary feminine vision, will be in a rare position to honor the past of the House and invent its future,' said Vionnet CEO Arnaud de Lummen, whose family acquired the trademark in 1988.

'I am truly humbled to work on Vionnet. She is an inspiration to all designers and I look forward to exploring her work and discovering how it relates to women today' added Kokosalaki. She will not stage her Vionnet on a catwalk in the next Paris season in October, but may do so next year.

"Vionnet has always represented the highest level of integrity in fashion. Barneys goal is to continue to honor the great design Houses that bring fashion forward. We are very pleased to have the opportunity to work with such a masterful name under the creative direction of Sophia Kokosalaki," said Barneys Chairman and CEO Howard Socol.

Expect retail prices in Barneys from \$600 for tops up to \$20,000 for uniquely embroidery creations.

One of the greatest dressmaker of the 20th century, Madeleine Vionnet once dressed stars Marlene Dietrich and Greta Garbo, before presenting her farewell collection in 1939.

Kokosalaki, an inventive designer known for her complicated draping and pleating techniques, is a graduate of Central Saint Martins in London. Since October 2004, she has presented her collection in Paris, one year after winning the 'New Generation Designer' award at the British Style Awards. She designed the costumes for the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games in Athens in 2004, including the dress that Björk wore in her historical performance. Kokosalaki will continue to design and show her own collection under her own name.