

# MaxMara

MAX MARA FALL-WINTER 2024

## THE INNER LIFE

*“Are you asleep? No, if I put my cheek against yours, I feel your eyelashes flutter like the wings of a captive fly. [...] All my body yields itself up to sleep, relaxed, and my neck weighs heavily on your gentle shoulder; but our thoughts unite in love discreetly across this blue dawn, so soon increasing.”*

Colette, *Sleepless Nights*, *The Collected Stories Of Colette*

The fullness of lips, napes of necks, eyelashes; they feature a lot in Colette's *oeuvre*. Her voluptuous prose connotes deep passions and tugs on heartstrings, each delicate shade of feeling painted precisely and candidly. With characteristic frankness she declared *“love is not an honourable sentiment.”*

She was sophisticated, intelligent, and sexually liberated; inspired by the multi-talented writer, journalist, screenwriter, sometime beautician and audacious music hall performer, Max Mara's consummate woman-in-control acquires a dash of Belle Époque elegance, with a hint of *demi-mondaine* glamour and a glimpse of the sensual woman within.

Modern, spare, yet deeply evocative; Max Mara is to design what Colette is to literature. And so, grainy black and white photographs of Belle Époque beauties in the *Bois* yield a look which is sleek, snappy, and has soul. The Japanese-influenced ovoid silhouette of the 1910s inspires coats with intriguing new constructions, sometimes with kimono sleeves, sometimes blousing at the back like a bomber jacket. In compact cashmere meltons, fluffy double faced camel and alpaca they are the last word in streetsmart luxury. Knitted and felted with pinked edges they highlight a lighter approach to outerwear that is between a coat and a cardigan. Long or short, the silhouette is punctuated by a broad knitted band at the waist, with a narrow strap of a belt, like an *obi*. Soft calfskin bags close with a stylised hinge and clasp. Colette said, *“There are connoisseurs of blue just as there are connoisseurs of wine.”* Max Mara presents deep inky navy to mix with jet black and smoky greys.

Colette often dressed like a man. Her handsome anti-hero Chéri provides impeccable classics including authoritative officer coats, cabans and a clutch of the power jackets for which Max Mara is renowned.

*Peignoirs*, pyjamas and powder; scenes set in heavily shaded *boudoirs* and backstage *loges* inspire camisoles, teddies and slipdresses. Translated into flannel, drap and tweed with open stitchwork they are a seductive counterpoint to Max Mara's urban armour. Gently undulating volants bring the new femininity to sassy broadcloth skirts and tunic dresses. Billowing pyjamas and blousy *robes-de-chambres* in flannel or plush midnight blue velvet strike a new note for day and evening; after dark the glint of black and blue crystals highlights their rigorous geometry.

Colette describes her characters' assiduous toilettes in detail; the outfit chosen to flatter, the cool compress, touch of powder, dab of lipstick, polish and pomade, those myriad tiny touches that produce magic. Who is the intended beneficiary of this careful attention to one's appearance? Colette provides the answer, *“Beautiful? For whom? Why, for myself, of course.”* and Max Mara agrees.

HAIR: ODILE GILBERT &   
MAKE-UP: DIANE KENDAL &   
MUSIC: JOHNNY DYNELL



#MAXMARA #MAXMARAFW24 #MFW