



Passion for Fashion (113)

10th December 2018

Lot 70

Estimate: £50000 - £70000 +Fees

A fine and rare Elsa Schiaparelli couture 'Hall of Mirrors' jacket and matching dress, 'Zodiac' collection, Autumn-Winter, 1938-39, Schiaparelli London label to both the dress and jacket, no 6918, of soft black silk velvet, the jacket with front panels emblazoned with gilt strip and cellophane embroidered rococo cartouches inset with segmented mirror panels, edged and studded with glass florets, the embroidered scrolls infilled with sequins of graduated sizes, the five moulded composition buttons in the form of neo-classical female heads with necklaces and tiaras, shirred gathers to the shoulders, lined in black silk crpe de chine; the matching bias-cut dress with square neckline low rectangular back cut in one with the straps and large plastic zip offset to left side, bust approx 86cm, 34in (2)

Although single jackets of identical design have previously come onto the market - see Christies, 29th November 2012, lot 91 sold for £73,250; Christies, 13th November 2013, lot 108, sold for £47,500 - this is the only example ever to be offered for sale complete with matching dress.

Schiaparelli's 'Zodiac' collection is renowned for its lavish embroidery and dazzling ornaments. Presented in August 1938, it drew on two main themes - astrology and the magnificent Palace of Versailles. The seventeen massive archways of the Galerie des Glaces, each filled with twenty-one mirrors, must have inspired the baroque cartouches on this jacket front. Schiap was a frequent visitor to Versailles and the Villa Trianon in its grounds to visit her friend, the renowned interior designer Lady Mendl (Elsie de Wolfe) who lived there.

Provenance: Vera Bowler who married John Wesley Worth on 4th May 1935. Her husband was regional Manager for Carreras Ltd., Britain's largest manufacturer of cigarettes. Before she married, Vera worked as a shop assistant in the ladieswear department of Messrs. Jones & Co. Department Store, Wine St, Bristol. The family retain local newspaper clippings showing her working in the shop. She was always a very stylish girl with a perfect willowy figure for the period. She avidly followed the latest Paris styles and was a huge fan of Wallis Simpson. She was probably influenced by Mrs Simpon's choice of a Schiaparelli trousseau in 1937, when making this important couture purchase. The family album shows photographs of her in the 1920s and 30s where she is always à la mode, even on the beach! After her marriage, although still not a woman of vast means, she budgeted and saved hard to purchase this dress and jacket from Schiaparelli's London house to attend a company dinner-dance with her husband. Wearing this spectacular ensemble,

she must have been the most admired woman in the room. It was her most treasured possession and during the 1980s was gifted to her granddaughter who is the current vendor.