



Fortuny

Anne-Marie Deschodt

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Mariano Fortuny was a designer of textiles and couture at the beginning of the 20th century. Born in Spain, he lived in Venice and showed his work there and in Paris. He specialized in spectacular luxury fabrics based on Renaissance and Byzantine revival patterns: double-cut velvets, gilded screenprinted silks and chiffons. His most famous creation was a unique plisse (hand-pleated) silk that clung sensuously to the body. His "Delphos" dress, made of this extraordinary cloth and based on ancient Greek dress, was world-famous. Isadora Duncan and Eleanora Duse wore his dresses. Orson Welles made costumes from his textiles for his production of "Othello". Fortuny was also a celebrated designer of interior furnishings, theatre sets and costumes. Fortuny belongs in the pantheon of Art Nouveau and the Gilded Age, with Tiffany, Galle, the Pre-Raphaelites, Gustave Moreau, Whistler and William Morris. He was also an accomplished painter in the style of Moreau and the Macchiaioli (Italian Impressionists). His design house is still in operation and modern editions of his textiles, lamps and dresses are available. He has influenced such current designers as Mary McFadden and Issey Miyake. This book offers a survey of his life and work.

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