

LABELS IN THE FRC

By Dr. Ingrid Mida

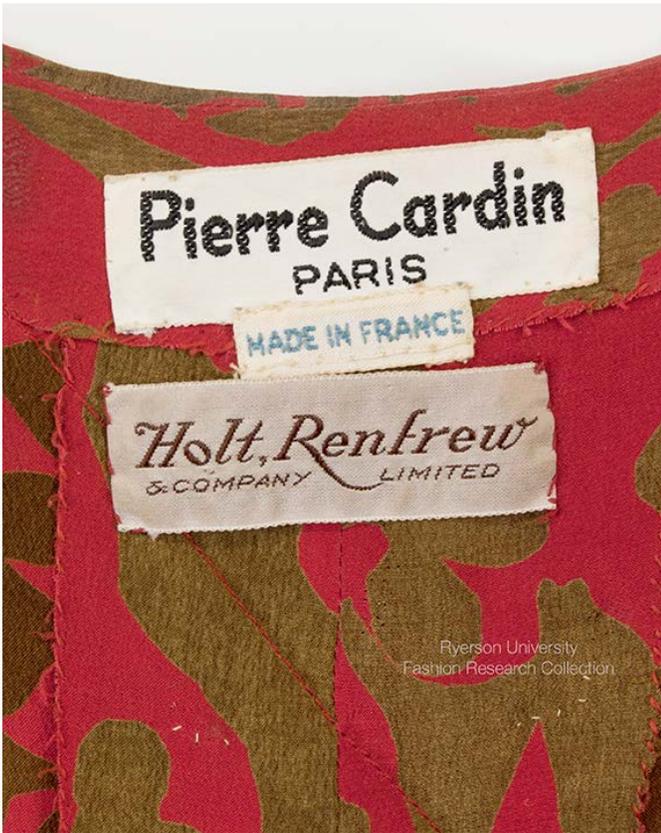
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In the 1850s, the 'father of haute couture' **Charles Frederick Worth** was the **first fashion designer to insert a label into his garments and sign them like a work of art**. Since then, it has become a common practice. **Labels tell stories**, especially if it is a numbered couture piece. Other than the designer name, they often include the place of manufacture, and sometimes the season or date.

Putting a monetary value on a garment depends so much on whether the fashion house still exists and its current ranking or status. If the label has been retired and the designer is no longer known, the garment might be beautifully constructed, but its value is diminished.

The **Designer Archive** of the Ryerson Fashion Research Collection contains a range of designer labels, including international designers like **Balenciaga, Balmain, Dior, Issey Miyake, Kenzo, Nina Ricci, Valentino**. There are also uniquely Canadian labels, some of which are rare and hard-to-find labels, like **Meme Dysthe** or **Ruth Dukas**, who made beautiful couture-like garments in the 1960s, but their names are almost totally unknown today. There are also garments with labels from Canadian retailers like the **T. Eaton Company** or **Jean Pierce** that no longer exist. **For this reason, the Ryerson Fashion Research Collection offers a unique opportunity to study Canadian fashion history and to celebrate our past.**

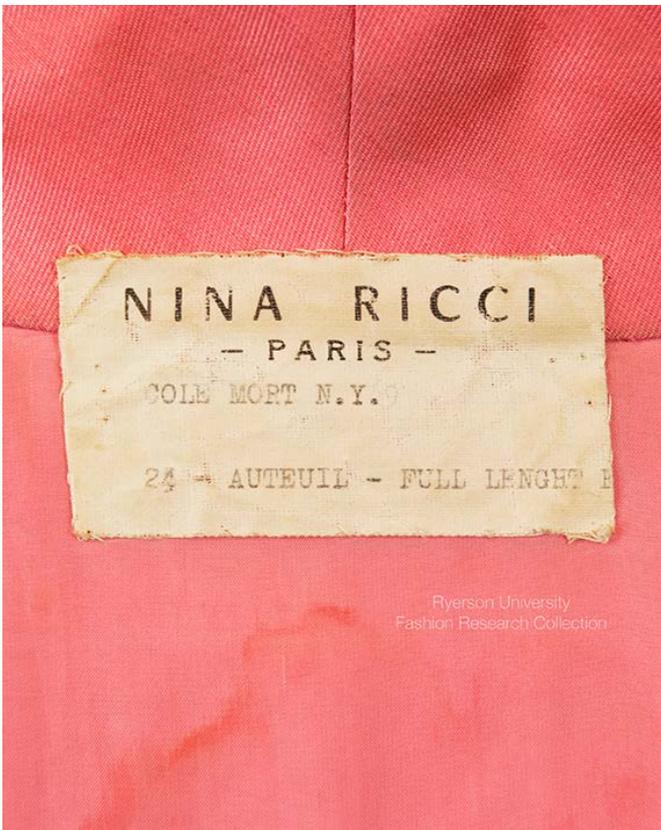
This project was sponsored by a grant from the Learning and Teaching Office at Ryerson University in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.



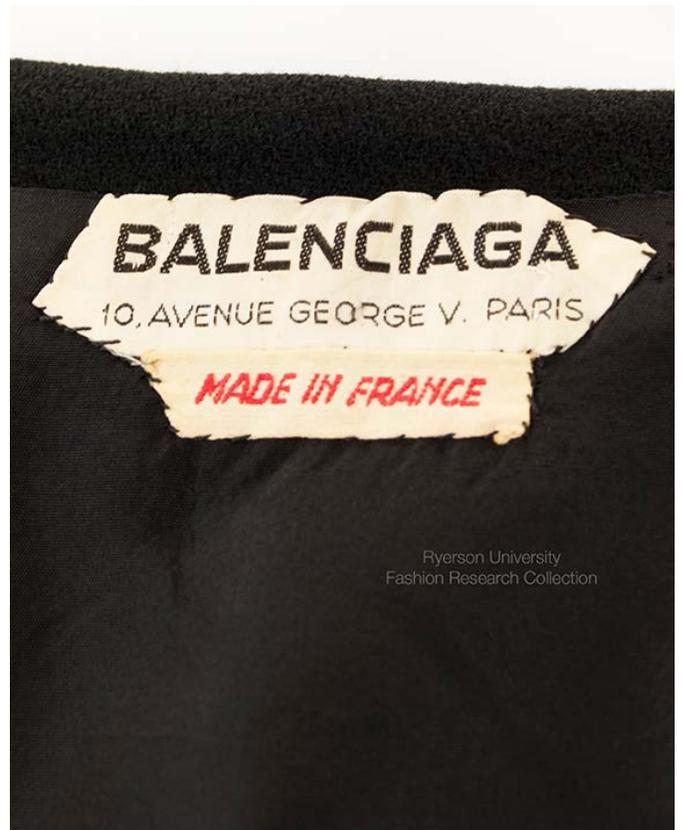
Pierre Cardin red and brown printed silk evening dress, ca. 1970s. Ryerson FRC1997.04.003.



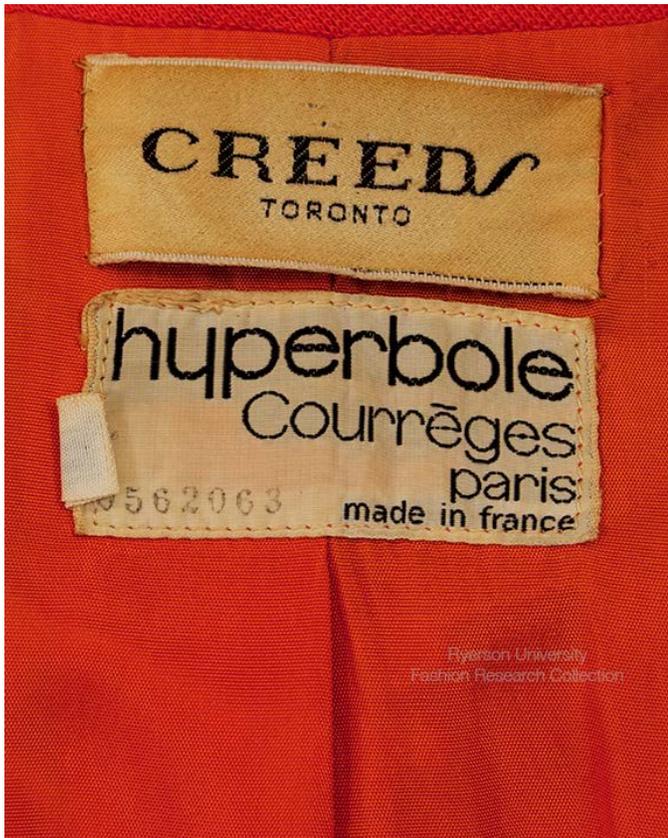
Valentino red crepe strapless evening gown, ca. 1965. Ryerson FRC1997.04.009.



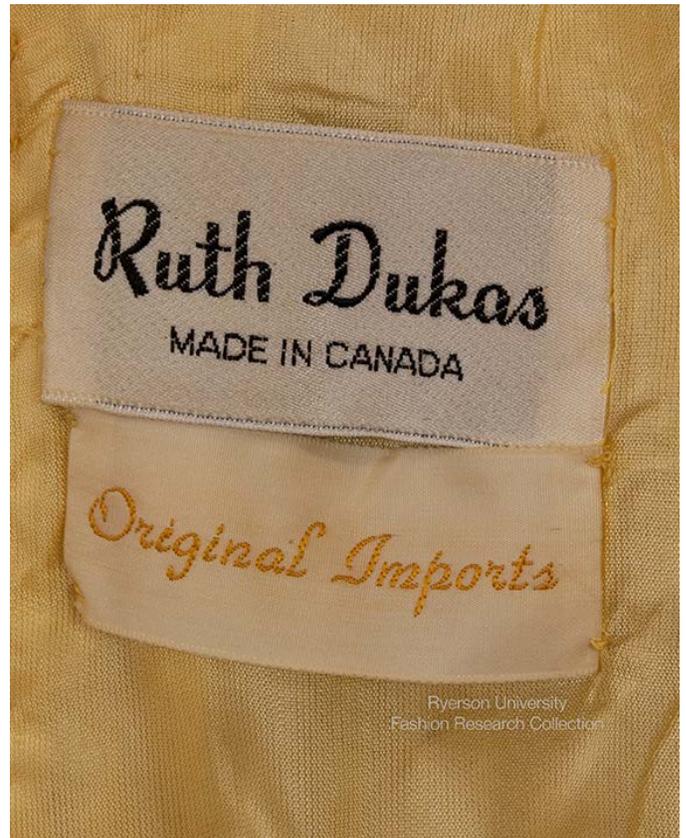
Nina Ricci pink raw silk evening gown and jacket, ca. 1970s. Ryerson FRC1997.04.048AB.



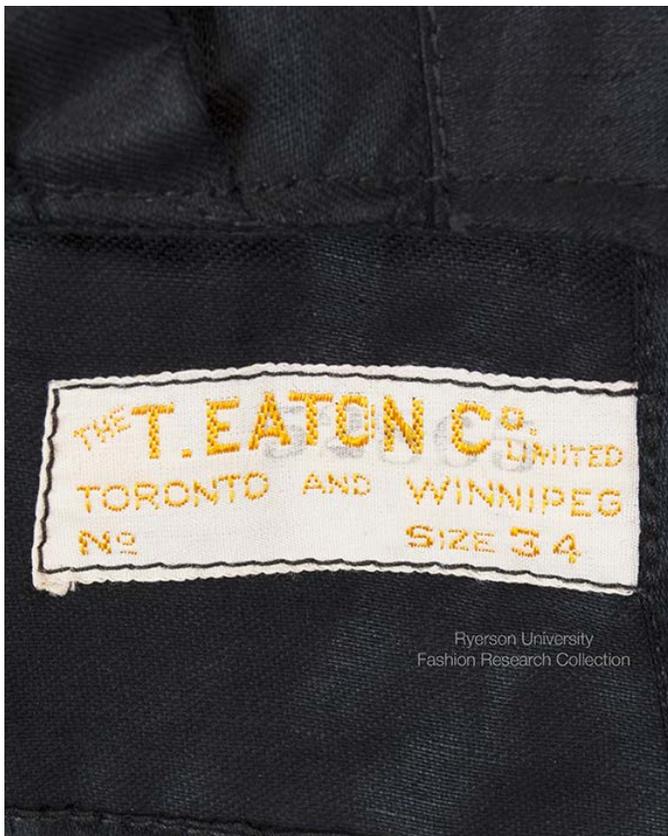
Balenciaga black wool bejewelled evening dress and jacket, ca. 1960s. Ryerson FRC1992.01.019AB.



Courrèges orange womenswear pant suit, ca. 1970s. Ryerson FRC2013.02.009.



Ruth Dukas pastel brocade evening gown, ca. 1960s. Ryerson FRC2013.02.001.



Eaton's black silk shirtwaist, ca. 1900s. Ryerson FRC2008.03.007.



Pat McDonagh white satin strapless evening gown with black velvet applique, ca. 1990s. Ryerson FRC2013.99.020.