MAISON VALCOURT

PRINTEMPS · ÉTÉ 2027



Le jardin du premier atelier

MAISON VALCOURT

PARIS · DEPUIS 1921

Le jardin du premier atelier

PRINTEMPS · ÉTÉ 2027 · TWENTY LOOKS

SAMPLE WORK
Maison Valcourt is an invented house created for a portfolio sample; nothing here depicts a real house or its history.

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Twenty looks for spring and summer, cut in the ateliers on the Left Bank and photographed in the courtyard garden the house has looked onto since its first season.



THE FIRST ATELIER

1921

In the spring of 1921 a tailor's workroom opened on the ground floor of a hôtel particulier on the Left Bank. Its windows faced north, onto a parterre of clipped box that was already a century and a half old. The house has cut cloth in that light ever since.

FOUNDED

Spring 1921, Paris, seventh arrondissement

THE TRADES

Tailoring in wool; silk cut on the bias

THE GARDEN

A courtyard parterre of box, gravel and limestone

A TAILOR'S WORKROOM WITH NORTH WINDOWS ON A GARDEN

The founder came to Paris from Lyon, where she had learned silk before she learned wool: the weight of a crêpe in the hand, the way a twill pulls along the bias. In Paris she was apprenticed to a men's tailor, and there she learned the straight shoulder, the pressed crease and the patience of a coat built over three fittings. When she took the ground floor of the hôtel she brought both trades with her, and set four cutting tables beneath its tall windows.

The windows were the reason for the lease. North light does not travel across a table the way southern light does. It holds still, it shows a colour as it is, and it never flatters a seam. Beyond the glass lay the courtyard garden: a parterre laid out in the eighteenth century, four compartments of box around a round basin, the paths between them in pale gravel, the whole of it closed on four sides by limestone.

The first clients came for the tailoring. They stayed for what the house lined it with: silk cut on the true bias and felled by hand, so that a jacket closed on the body the way a door closes on a well-hung hinge. Within a decade the linings had become dresses, and the two codes of the house were fixed. Wool is cut as architecture. Silk is the one soft thing allowed inside it.

A century on, the tables stand where they stood. The box is clipped in June and again in September. The gravel is raked each morning before the first fitting, and the shutters are folded back before the cutters arrive, so that the light is on the cloth when the chalk comes out.

Every collection since has been cut, as the first one was, with the parterre in view. This one is the first to be about it.

THE HOUSE IN FIVE DATES

1921

The atelier opens on the ground floor, four cutting tables under the north windows.

1928

The first dress cut entirely in silk, on the bias, from a lining pattern.

1952

The cutting room takes the east wing; the windows still face the garden.

1987

The four compartments replanted box for box, to the eighteenth-century plan.

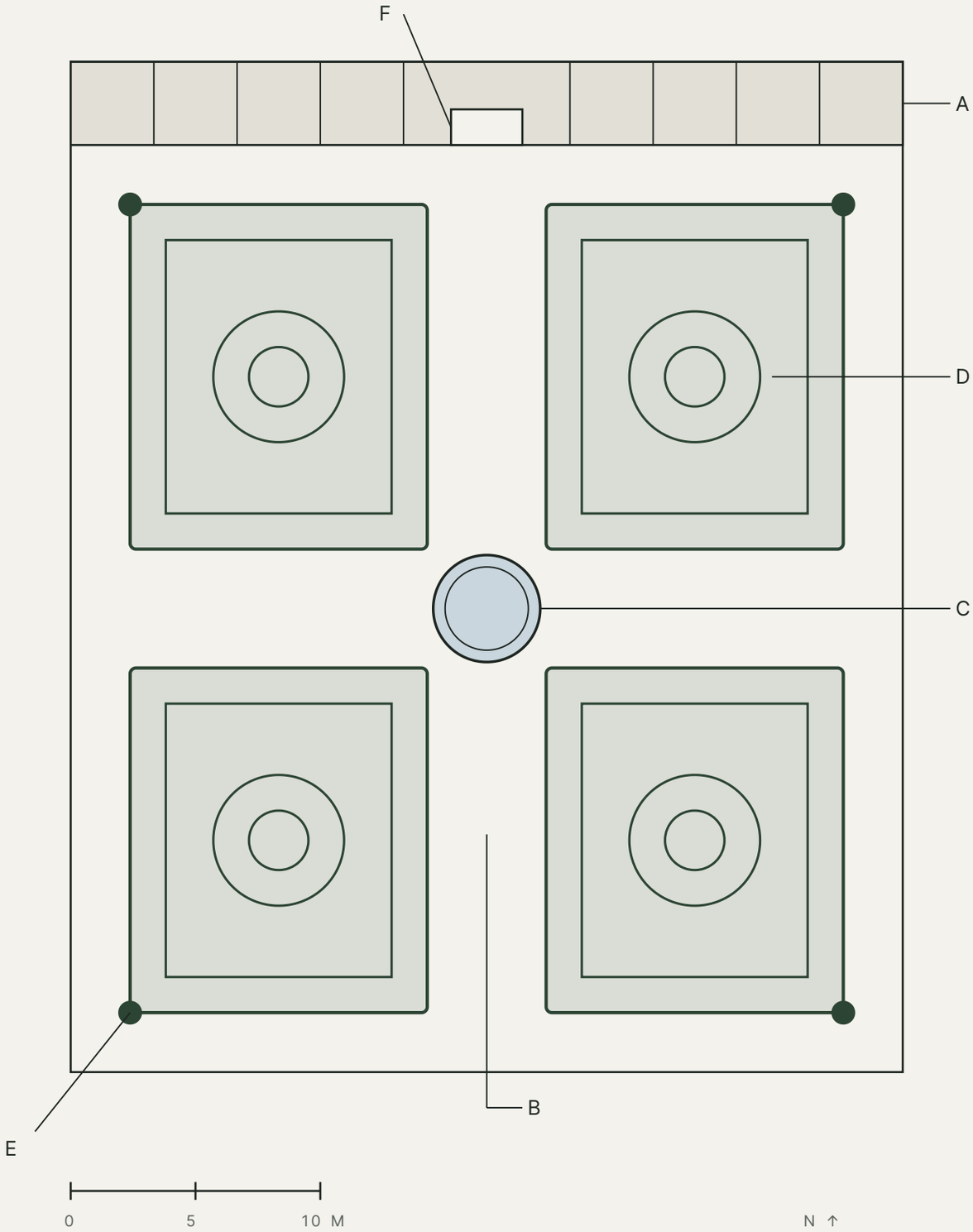
2027

The first collection made about the garden rather than beside it.

FOUR TABLES · NORTH LIGHT · ONE GARDEN

THE PARTERRE, DRAWN

The courtyard as the atelier sees it, north at the top



KEY TO THE DRAWING

A The atelier façade: eight tall windows facing north over the garden.
B The central allée, pale gravel raked each morning.
C The round basin, moulded limestone, still water.
D Four compartments of box, clipped in June and September.
E Box cones at the four corners.
F The double door to the cutting room.

THE COURTYARD IN FIGURES

28 × 36
metres, wall to wall

4
compartments of box

5 m
across the basin

8
windows on the atelier side

The figures are the house's own, taken from the drawing opposite.



The cutting table under window A, mid-morning: bone gabardine chalked for a jacket, oyster silk for its lining.

THE CODES OF THE HOUSE

L'épaule droite
The shoulder cut on one straight line from collar to sleevehead, built in canvas and never padded past its own width.

Le pli marqué
Every trouser pressed to a single crease, front and back, set by hand under a damp cloth.

Le biais
Silk cut on the true bias, so that it falls with the body and never across it.

La doublure
The lining as a second garment: felled by hand, and once a season in a colour the outside never shows.



The gardener and the tailor work with the same tool: a line pulled taut between two points, and the discipline not to leave it.

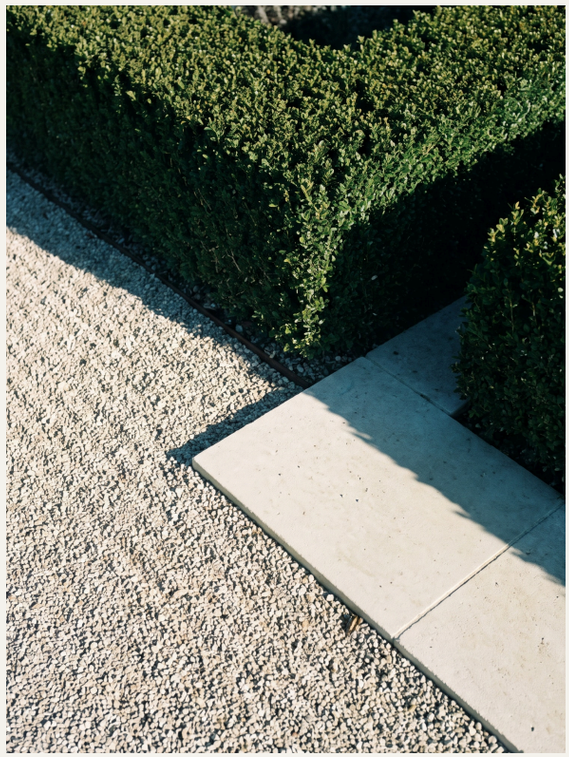
THE GARDEN IDEA · I

Le Tracé

Every parterre begins with string. Before a single plant of box goes into the ground the gardener stakes out the plan with a cordeau, a cord pulled tight between two pegs, and walks it until the line is true. In the atelier the same work is done in chalk. A pattern is laid on the cloth, the straight grain is found, and the cutter draws the line the shears will follow. Neither trade forgives a line that wanders.

This season begins there. The first jacket is built along one straight line from collar to hem, and the trouser beneath it is pressed to a crease you could sight along. The garden asked for order and the collection answers in kind: bone, oyster and gravel grey, the colours of the courtyard at nine in the morning, each piece set in the parterre the way a compartment is set within its paths.

Symmetry is the law of the garden, and it is the law of the first seven looks. What moves inside it is the cloth.



Box, gravel, limestone: the three materials of the season, at the corner of compartment D.

THE PALETTE

Box green, gravel, limestone, bone, oyster, sky.

THE ACCENT

Garance, the madder red of the old dyers' gardens. Used twice in twenty looks.

THE LIGHT

North, clear and directional. Shadows long, never warm.

I *Le Tracé*





LOOKS 01 TO 07



LOOK 01

Le Tracé

Double-breasted jacket in bone wool gabardine, peaked lapel, six buttons, the shoulder cut on one straight line. Straight trouser, pressed crease. Bone leather flat.



LOOK 02

L'Allée

Shirt-dress in oyster silk crêpe to the ankle, narrow self belt at the natural waist, long sleeve with a deep cuff. Oyster leather sandal.





LOOK 03

Buis

Long single-breasted coat in box-green wool barathea, the exact green of the hedges, narrow notch lapel and one concealed fastening, cut straight to mid-calf. Wide trouser in bone silk satin. Bone flat.



The lapel edge, rolled by hand; the barathea's fine diagonal rib.

The coat was dyed to a cutting taken from compartment D in May, and matched again in the courtyard before it was cut.



LOOK 04

Gravier

Cropped single-button jacket in gravel-grey wool-mohair with a square shoulder, ending at the waist. High-waisted trouser, very wide, pleated, to the floor. Bone silk shell. Grey pointed flat.



LOOK 05

Ciel

Bias-cut slip dress in sky silk satin, to the ankle. Over it, a long sleeveless gilet in oyster wool crêpe, three buttons. Flat leather sandal.



LOOK 06

Pierre

Cape-coat in limestone double-faced wool, a stand collar and arm slits, falling as one plane from the shoulder to below the knee. Narrow bone trouser. Bone flat.

Three ways to stand in a garden: squarely before the house, at the water's edge, and walking away up the allée with the shadow beside you.

Ten words the garden and the atelier share

Aplomb
The true vertical. A gardener checks a hedge face against it; a tailor checks the hang of a coat's front edge.

Bordure
The low edge of box that frames a bed. In the atelier, the narrow facing that finishes a hem.

Broderie
The scrolling pattern of a formal parterre, named for embroidery and drawn, like it, on paper first.

Buis
Box. Slow, dense, and patient with the shears. The green of the third look.

Cordeau
The gardener's line, stretched between two pegs. Every allée in the courtyard was laid out on one.

Craie
Tailor's chalk. It marks the line once and brushes away when the line is sewn.

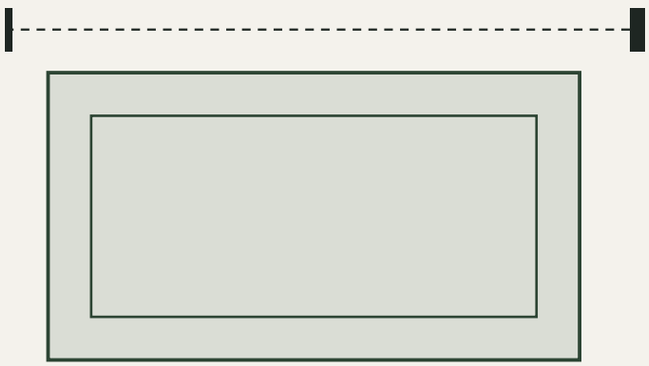
Droit-fil
The straight grain of a cloth, parallel to the selvedge. Tailoring is cut on it; silk, in this house, across it.

Gravier
The pale gravel of the paths, raked each morning into parallels. The grey of the fourth look.

Pli
A fold set on purpose: the crease of a trouser, the inverted pleat of a skirt, the sunray pleats of a silk that moves.

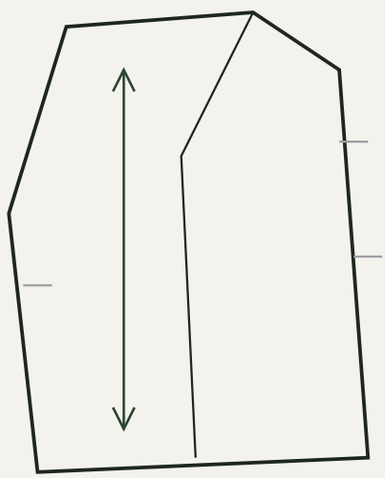
Toile
The canvas that builds a shoulder from inside, and the first muslin of a garment, fitted before any cloth is cut.

CORDEAU · THE BED STAKED OUT



A cord between two pegs fixes the edge of the box

DROIT-FIL · THE FRONT PIECE CHALKED



The grain line, drawn first, fixes the hang of the coat



LOOK 07

Cordeau

Shirt in silk poplin, a narrow stripe of sky and bone, the collar buttoned. High-waisted trouser in bone wool with one pressed crease. Bone flat.

II

Le Bassin

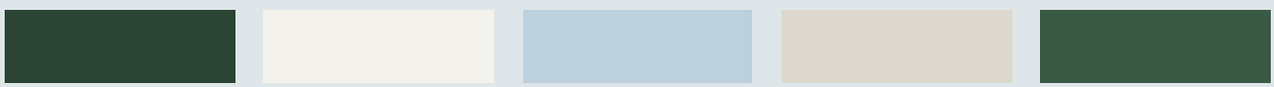
LOOKS 08 TO 15 · THE GARDEN IDEA · II

At the centre of every parterre is the one surface that does not hold its shape. The basin takes the façade and turns it upside down; it takes the sky and lays it on the ground. Everything around it is clipped, raked and measured. The water is simply still.

Silk plays that part in the house. Against the discipline of the tailoring it is the material that answers to gravity and to air: a skirt of faille with one deep pleat, a top that stands away from the body like clipped box, an organza trench you can see the garden through, a skirt pleated so finely that it moves like the basin when the wind crosses it.

The looks of this chapter are cut in sky, oyster and box green. They stand at the water's edge and they let the light in.

THE SILKS OF THIS CHAPTER



Faille, box green · Duchesse satin, bone · Organza, sky · Charmeuse, oyster · Twill, box green



THE BASIN, MID-MORNING · SKY SILK SATIN



LOOK 08

Bordure

Column skirt in box-green silk faille, to the floor, one deep inverted pleat at centre front. Bone silk-knit sweater, high round neck. Bone flat.



LOOK 09

Topiaire

Sleeveless top in bone silk duchesse satin, boat neck, its peplum standing from the body like clipped box. Narrow ankle trouser in grey wool. Grey flat.



LOOK 10

Le Perron

Evening jacket in charcoal wool grain de poudre, the shawl lapel faced in oyster silk satin, one button, nipped at the waist. Long straight skirt in oyster silk satin. Charcoal pointed flat.

THE MAKING

Jacket
Three fittings. Canvas built by hand; the lapel roll set by steam on the form.

Facing
Oyster satin, cut in one piece from collar to hem, felled by hand.

Skirt
Satin on the bias, the hem rolled by hand, the length taken standing on the steps.

The steps to the atelier door, where fittings end and clients leave in what they came for.

Grain de poudre is a wool woven so tightly that its surface reads as a fine dust of points; it takes a press and keeps it, which is why the house uses it for evening. Against it, satin faced on the lapel and falling below as a skirt. The jacket is tailoring, the skirt is water, and the line between them is the waist.

Look 11 makes the same argument in daylight: a waistcoat and trouser in grey wool flannel, and one length of sky silk twill knotted once at the throat.



LOOK 11

Le Banc

Long tailored waistcoat in gravel-grey wool, worn alone, and a straight trouser to match. Scarf in sky silk twill, knotted once. Seated on the limestone bench at the edge of the parterre.

Silk is the one material in the house that is allowed to disobey.

Charmeuse is the opposite: a satin weave so soft it can only be cut on the bias and only hemmed by hand. Between the two lie the faille of the eighth look, ribbed and dense enough to hold a pleat, and the twill of the fifteenth, heavy enough to be tailored like wool.

Organza is silk at its most architectural: a plain weave so fine and so stiff that it holds the cut of a trench coat while hiding nothing behind it. In the courtyard it turns the colour of whatever it stands before, sky over the basin, green over the box.

LOOK 12

Reflet

Trench coat in sky silk organza, storm flap, belt and epaulettes, worn open. Slip dress in bone silk. Sky flat.



Photographed across the basin so the garment is seen twice, once on the gravel and once in the water.



LOOK 13

Symétrie

Tailored jumpsuit in bone wool crêpe, notched collar, set-in sleeve, a self belt tied flat. Wide leg, pressed to the floor. Bone flat.



LOOK 14

Rosée

Mid-calf skirt in oyster silk charmeuse, sunray-pleated so that it swings in an arc. Fitted sweater in fine bone silk knit. Oyster flat.



LOOK 15

Tailleur de Soie

Double-breasted jacket and straight trouser cut in heavy box-green silk twill, the shoulder soft and unpadded. Bone silk shell. Green slipper.

III *L'Ombre portée*

LOOKS 16 TO 20 · THE GARDEN IDEA · III



In the late afternoon the parterre changes its argument. The sun drops below the roofline of the west wing and the box cones throw shadows three and four times their height across the gravel, each one as straight as the line that planted it. For an hour the garden is drawn twice: once in green, once in shadow.

The last looks of the season are cut for that hour. Charcoal and limestone, a coat that falls straight to the ankle, a bone coat lined in the one colour this collection allows itself. Garance, the madder red of the old dyers' gardens, appears twice and only twice: inside a coat, where it is felt before it is seen, and at the end.



LOOK 16

Ombre

Coat-dress in charcoal wool gabardine, double-breasted, fitted through the body and falling straight to the ankle, peaked lapel. Charcoal flat.



LOOK 17

Doublure

Long collarless coat in bone wool, lined in garance silk, the first of the season's two reds. Bone silk shirt, narrow bone trouser. Bone flat.

LOOK 18

Équerre

Cropped jacket in limestone wool, square neck, square body, concealed placket. Trouser in sky silk crêpe, wide enough to move with the air. Bone flat.



Équerre: the set square. The jacket is cut on it; the trouser is not.

At six the courtyard empties. The gardener rakes the allées back into their parallels, the shutters on the atelier windows are closed one by one, and the basin takes the last of the sky. In the morning the light will come from the north again, as it has on every working day since 1921, and the tables will be ready for it.



LOOK 19

Le Soir

Gown in oyster silk charmeuse cut on the bias, high at the front with a long narrow sleeve, the back falling in a deep cowl to the waist. A short train on the gravel. Oyster satin slipper.



LOOK 20 · FINAL

Garance

Strapless column gown in madder-red silk faille, straight from a straight-cut bodice to the floor, one long fold at the back. The season's single red, worn once in full. Red satin slipper.

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COLOPHON

MAISON VALCOURT

Le jardin du premier atelier · Printemps Été 2027

Twenty looks in tailoring and silk, set in a formal courtyard parterre of clipped box, raked gravel and limestone, in north light.

The wordmark is set in Bodoni Moda. The text is set in EB Garamond, the look names in Cormorant Garamond, the captions and notes in Inter Tight. The house mark, a square of four compartments around a basin, is drawn from the plan of the courtyard on page 8.

Format 240 by 300 millimetres, forty pages.

The photographs, the garments, the courtyard and the house's history in this book were all created for this sample.

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