

JEAN PAUL GAULTIER

b. April 24, 1952

DESIGNER

“What is masculine and what is feminine, anyway? Why should men not show that they can be fragile or seductive?”

“There are different kinds of beauty and I always try to show that.”

Jean Paul Gaultier is a world-renowned French fashion designer best known for his avant-garde and haute couture designs. He redefined traditional Parisian elegance.

Gaultier grew up in Arcueil, France. “I was a lonely child,” he says. “One day I decided my teddy looked forlorn and ugly so I made him a corset.” At 13, he designed a collection for his mother and grandmother. As a teen, Gaultier sent sketches to Paris designer Pierre Cardin and was hired as his design assistant. Gaultier worked for many French design houses, including the House of Patou.

After his designs were published in Mode Internationale, Gaultier started his own company and became the second designer in three decades to create couture under his own label. In his late 20’s, he became famous for his fusion of classic fashion and unconventional elements. He earned the name “enfant terrible” for his provocative designs.

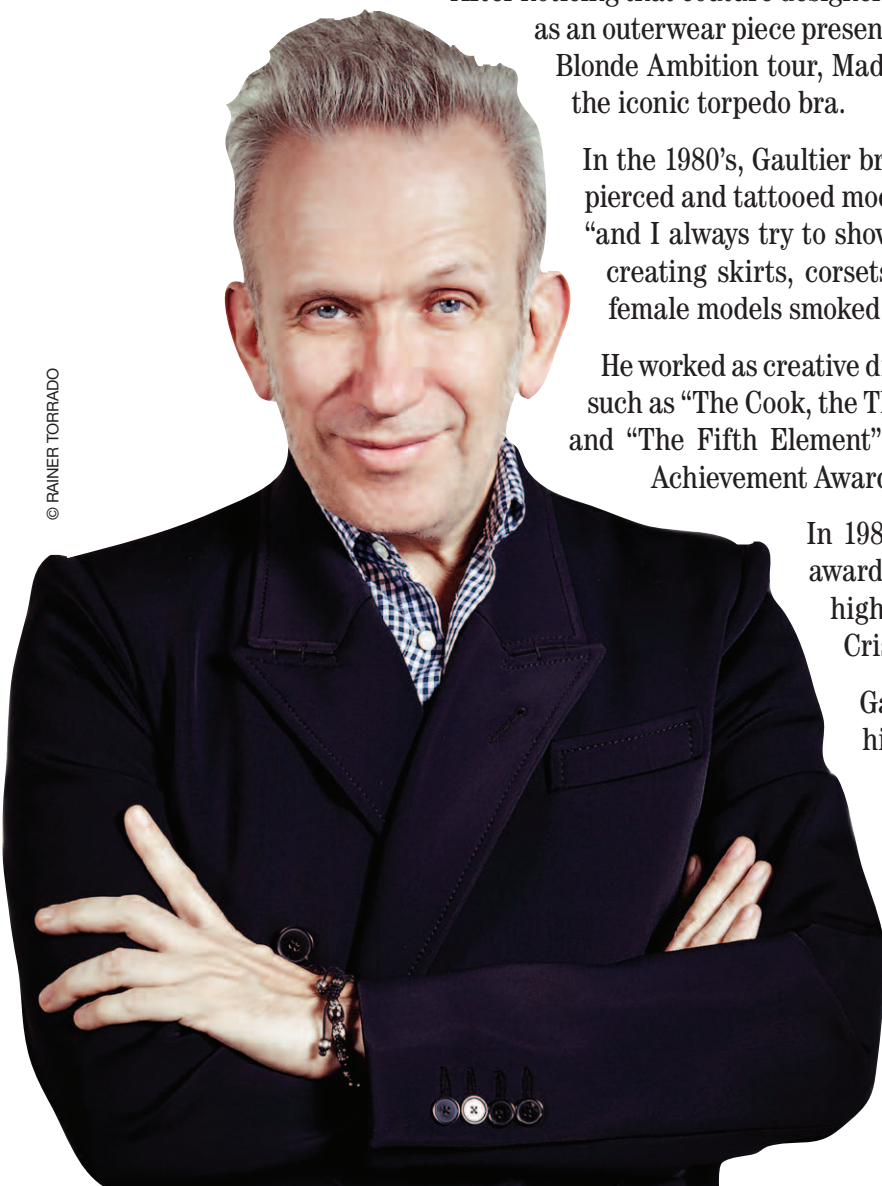
After noticing that couture designers hid female curves, Gaultier reinvented the corset as an outerwear piece presenting breasts as an object of feminine power. On her Blonde Ambition tour, Madonna exclusively wore Gaultier designs, including the iconic torpedo bra.

In the 1980’s, Gaultier broke fashion stereotypes by featuring transgender, pierced and tattooed models. “There are different kinds of beauty,” he said, “and I always try to show that.” He challenged traditional gender roles by creating skirts, corsets and tutus for men. For one controversial show, female models smoked pipes while men wore transparent lace skirts.

He worked as creative director for Hermès and designed costumes for films such as “The Cook, the Thief, His Wife and Her Lover” (1989), “Kika” (1993) and “The Fifth Element” (1997). In 1995, Gaultier received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Stockholm Film Festival.

In 1987, Gaultier won the French Designer of the Year award and earned the title of Chevalier, one of France’s highest honors. In 2011, he received the Globe de Cristal for Best Fashion Designer.

Gaultier lives in Paris, where he continues to design his collections.



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