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What woman can resist imagining herself in a beautiful designer dress? Here, for the first time ever, are 100 fabulous gowns from the permanent collection of the renowned Costume Institute at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, each of which is a reminder of the ways fashion reflects the broader culture that created it.

Featuring designs by Paul Poiret, Coco Chanel, Madame Grès, Yves Saint Laurent, Gianni Versace, Vivienne Westwood, Alexander McQueen, and many others, this one-of-a-kind collection presents a stunning variety of garments. Ranging from the buttoned-up gowns of the late 17th century to the cutting-edge designs of the early 21st, the dresses reflect the sensibilities and excesses of each era while providing a vivid picture of how styles have changed_sometimes radically_over the years. A late 1600s wool dress with a surprising splash of silver thread; a large-bustled red satin dress from the 1800s; a short, shimmery 1920s dancing dress; a glamorous 1950s cocktail dress; and a 1960s minidress_each tells a story about its period and serves as a testament to the enduring ingenuity of the fashion designer's art.

Images of the dresses are accompanied by informative text and enhanced by close-up details as well as runway photos, fashion plates, works of art, and portraits of designers. A glossary of related terms is also included.