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A Study of Fashionable Silk Veiling, Maline, and Tulle from 1904

by
Joanne Dolan

A group of silk net, veiling, tulle, and maline, all sheer draping fabrics produced in unique patterns and colors is the subject of this paper. They form part of a larger collection of materials in a variety of fabrications consisting of raffia, feathers, paper, horsehair, sequins, and chenille. The amassed group is contained in a sample book dated Printemps 1904, and suggests that it may have served as a millinery swatch service book. I intend to focus only on the silk draping materials and examine their fabrication, design, and use in millinery during the first decade of the twentieth century. In addition I will draw comparisons to their geometric designs with the universality of geometry as a source of pattern.

The millinery fashion and trade press of 1904 and 1905 reveal the degree of novelty that was in demand at that time. The importation of silk veiling into the United States reached an all time high in the years 1904 and 1905. I aim to reveal that the importation of silk veiling was very specific to millinery and these importation records reflect the changing taste in millinery silks.