

BALENCIAGA



BOUCHERON
PARIS DEPUIS 1858

KERING IS PROUD TO BRING TOGETHER, FOR THE FIRST TIME, THE EXPERTISE OF ITS HOUSES BOUCHERON AND BALENCIAGA FOR THE INDUCTION OF ANTOINE COMPAGNON IN THE ACADEMIE FRANÇAISE

On May 11, 2023, writer, literary critic, and professor emeritus at the Collège de France Antoine Compagnon will be inducted into the Académie française. His "habit vert" was created by the Couture atelier of Balenciaga and his sword by the High Jewelry atelier of Boucheron.





"I am proud and honored by the trust Antoine Compagnon has placed in our Houses. Thanks to this exceptional project, Kering has been able to bring together the Couture expertise of Balenciaga and the High Jewelry expertise of Boucheron to create what I believe is a model of the purest luxury. These unique, custom-made pieces fully reflect Antoine Compagnon's personality, a manifestation of creativity combined with the greatest skills and traditions that allow individuals to express what is unique to them."

François-Henri Pinault,
Chairman and CEO of Kering

Founded in 1635 by Cardinal de Richelieu, the Académie française is an institution whose mission is to defend the French language. The Academy is composed of 40 members elected by their peers for life. Known as the "immortals", they meet every Thursday under the dome of the Institut de France in Paris. The academicians are renowned for their "habit vert" and their sword, distinctive signs of their function.

Antoine Compagnon commissioned Balenciaga to make his academician's costume and Boucheron to craft his sword. These exceptional orders, carried out in perfect synergy, represent a unique adventure for the Kering Houses. The joint project illustrates the excellence of the two Maisons and showcases the strong link between Balenciaga's unique heritage and creativity and the know-how of its Couture workshops, combined with the extraordinary capacity for innovation and creative virtuosity of the oldest jeweler in Place Vendôme.

For the first time since its foundation in 1917 by Cristóbal Balenciaga, the House has drawn on its expertise to create and produce an academician's costume. Created by Demna, the suit required more than 300 hours of tailoring in the workshops of the Couture House, and the specific materials for each garment were selected from the most renowned weavers in their field. The black-tails jacket and matching trousers are embellished with an embroidery of the traditional olive branch, woven in gold and green, which took 900 hours of work to produce at the Maison Lesage.

[More information here.](#)

"The induction of Antoine Compagnon into the Académie française marks an historic event for Balenciaga. It is an honor for the House to have been commissioned by the Academician to create his suit for this special occasion. It is the first time since the House was founded in 1917, that an 'immortal' of the Académie française has bestowed this privilege upon Balenciaga.

As the CEO of Balenciaga, I am particularly proud of the collaborative aspects of this project. The innovative spirit of the House, the institution that is the Académie française, and Boucheron's excellence, all reveal the dynamic creative synergy within Kering and all inputs coming from the different teams of the brands, especially the ateliers."

Cédric Charbit,
President and CEO of Balenciaga

"It is an honor for Balenciaga to become for the first time a part of the Académie française's illustrious history by creating the 'habit vert' for Antoine Compagnon's induction. We are proud to have been involved in this special occasion and to contribute to the legacy of the House of Balenciaga and its Couture workshops."

Demna,
Artistic Director of Balenciaga

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K E R I N G



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For its part, Boucheron assisted Antoine Compagnon in the design of his academician's sword. This project, the result of nearly a year of co-creation, allowed the House to create a sword made entirely of glass, incorporating the references and symbols dear to the future Academician.

[More information here.](#)



"We are very proud to have created this sword for Antoine Compagnon, as it marks an important chapter in the prestigious Boucheron tradition of making swords for other academicians since the middle of the 20th century. Its great modernity and refined style make this sword a heritage piece that bears the singular stylistic signature of the House."

Hélène Poulit-Duquesne,
President and CEO of Boucheron

"Being entrusted with the creation of this highly symbolic piece touched me deeply. From our first meeting, Antoine Compagnon mentioned 'transparency' a theme that is particularly dear to me, as it was for Frédéric Boucheron, who loved rock crystal. This sword brings together various symbols close to Antoine Compagnon: a feather in reference to his literary work, a quotation from Marcel Proust on whom he is a specialist, a hedgehog after a watercolor by Hans Hoffmann that he loves, and a spiral echoing the chain that adorns the handle of the uniform sword of the Polytechnique, from which he graduated. I am very pleased that this sword, which represented an unprecedented challenge for the House, reflects Antoine Compagnon's personality and his unique career path."

Claire Choïsne,
Director of Boucheron Creations

ABOUT ANTOINE COMPAGNON

Antoine Compagnon is a literary critic, writer, and professor emeritus at the Collège de France, specializing in Marcel Proust. Born in 1950 in Brussels, son of General Jean Compagnon and Jacqueline Terlinden, Antoine Compagnon spent his childhood in London, Tunisia, and then Washington, D.C., following in the path of his father's assignments. He completed his secondary education at the Prytanée National Militaire de La Flèche, then entered the École Polytechnique (class of 1970) and became a civil engineer. At the age of 25, his passion for literature caught up with him. This "quasi-autodidact in literature", as he defines himself, became a doctor in French literature in 1977 and a Doctor of State in letters in 1985. After his first thesis, he returned to the École Polytechnique, this time as a teacher (1978-1985), during which period he also taught at the French Institute of the United Kingdom in London (1980-1981). In 1985, following his doctoral thesis, he became a professor at Columbia University in New York before returning to France to teach at the University of Maine (1989-1990), at the Sorbonne (1994-2006), and at the Collège de France (2006-2020). He is the author of numerous books on literary criticism and history; on Montaigne, Baudelaire, Proust, and Colette, as well as several stories.

ABOUT KERING

A global Luxury group, Kering manages the development of a series of renowned Houses in Fashion, Leather Goods, Jewelry: Gucci, Saint Laurent, Bottega Veneta, Balenciaga, Alexander McQueen, Brioni, Boucheron, Pomellato, DoDo, Qeelin, as well as Kering Eyewear. By placing creativity at the heart of its strategy, Kering enables its Houses to set new limits in terms of their creative expression while crafting tomorrow's Luxury in a sustainable and responsible way. We capture these beliefs in our signature: "Empowering Imagination."

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