

HIROKO KOSHINO

Personal Timeline

- 1937 Born in Kishiwada City, Osaka Prefecture, Japan.
- 1957 Won Nippon Designers Club's best designer award, while studying at the Bunka Fashion College, Tokyo.
- 1961 Graduated from Bunka Fashion College.
Became an exclusive designer for a youthful womenswear line at the Ginza Komatsu Store, now Ginza Komatsu.
- 1964 Opened an haute couture atelier in Shinsaibashi, Osaka.
- 1977 Joined the Top Designers 6 (TD6).
Debuted collection in Tokyo and has been showcasing biannually ever since.
- 1978 Became the first Japanese designer to join Alta Moda, Rome - the sensational international debut and the consequent impact of her collection instantly lead to a 30-page special feature in Italian Harper's Bazaar.
- 1982 Established Hiroko Koshino International Inc. and was inaugurated as the President.
Started women's ready-to-wear and licensing businesses.
Debuted collection in Paris and showcased biannually.
- 1983 Became a specialty member of Osaka 21st Century Association.
As a result, the three sisters - Hiroko, Junko and Michiko Koshino - showcased a collection together as part of an Osaka 21st Century Association event.
- 1984 Became the first Japanese designer to showcase a collection at the Jing Jiang Club in Shanghai, China.
- 1985 Opened Hiroko Koshino branch office in Tokyo.
Became a member of the Council of Fashion Designers, Tokyo (CFD), and the Kansai Association of Corporate Executives; as well as an honorary member of the Japan Designers Club Inc.
- 1987 Presented the first Osaka Collection at My Dome Osaka, under the auspices of Osaka Prefecture, Osaka City and renowned business personalities of Osaka.
Showcased collection in Seoul, South Korea.
- 1988 Established Hiroko Koshino Co., Ltd. and was inaugurated as the President.
Became the chairperson of Hiroko Koshino International Inc.
- 1989 Became an executive committee member of the World Fashion Fair (WFF).
- 1990 Organized and chaired C.O.D. (Collective of Osaka Designers).
- 1991 Opened branch for Hiroko Koshino Co., Ltd. in Paris, France.
- 1993 Discontinued showcasing in Paris after 10 consecutive years of joining the event.
- 1994 Presented a collaborative event, Twilight Modes, in Prague, Czech Republic, with architect Borek Sipek and stage director Bambi Uden.
Held 'Hiroko Koshino Works' exhibition showcasing her Japanese calligraphic works, at the Kintetsu Art Building in Osaka.
- 1995 Lectured at the International Apparel Federation Convention in Washington, D.C., U.S.A., as a representative of Asian designers.
- 1996 Designed the uniforms for the employees of the Osaka Imperial Hotel.
- 1997 Debuted Hiroko Koshino Homme as part of the Osaka Collection, with the Governor and Mayor of Osaka having modelled for the same.
Celebrated the 15th-year anniversary of the brand and the 40th-year of fashion design.
Won the first honour of the 15th Mainichi Fashion Grand Prix.
Published HK2001 - a book of her works within all capacities.
- 1998 Organized a fashion event, Fashion Vision 21, with composer Shigeaki Saegusa at Chikatsu Asuka Museum.
- 2000 Organized a collaborative event, Tactile Sensation, with interior designer Christian Biecher in Hamburg, Germany.
Designed ballet costumes for the Grand Theatre de Geneve, for their first ever performance in Japan.
Presented a collaborative fashion show with sisters Junko and Michiko, at their home town - Kishiwada City, Osaka.
- 2001 Won the first honour of the Osaka Art Award 2001.
'Semper' was built - an atelier, gallery and guest house in Ashiya City, Hyogo.
- 2002 Held an exhibition, Honoka, Hirameki, meaning Faint, Afflatus, in Tokyo, Sapporo and Kokura, displaying her calligraphic works and paintings.
- 2003 Exhibited paintings drawn using Chinese ink and select collection items, at the Hiroko Koshino Works exhibition, Kintetsu Art Building, Osaka.
- 2004 Exhibited paintings, calligraphic works drawn using Chinese ink and select collection items, at the Hiroko Koshino Exhibition 2004, Ashiya City Museum of Art and History, Ashiya City, Hyogo.
- 2005 Acted as a co-producer of the government-led 'Cool Biz' movement to inspire men's energy-saving fashions for the summer, using a multitude of resources.
- 2006 Held collaborative exhibition, Kasane, meaning Layers, with renowned kimono-maker Genbe Kondaya and architect Kengo Kuma, at the Daimaru Museum, Tokyo. Kimonos and obi belts made of very fine silk were adorned by Hiroko using a brush and Chinese ink.
- 2007 Commemorated her 50th-year anniversary as a fashion designer.
Showcased collection at Anomalous Duality - a collaborative event held with British musician Michael Nyman in Shanghai - part of the official program for the 9th China Shanghai International Arts Festival.
- 2008 Renamed company from Hiroko Koshino Design Office to what it is today - Hiroko Koshino Co., Ltd.
- 2009 Presented collection in Paris, after 17 years since discontinuing the same.
Presented collection at the Taipei arena with top Taiwanese designer Shiazy Chen, for the Taipei In Style event. She also became the first foreigner to receive the title of professor emeritus at Shih Chien University, Taiwan.
- 2010 Presented a static show in Paris, which consequently received a lot of appraisal as the pieces were vividly clear.
Invited to the International Costume Culture and Education Conference in Beijing, China, to speak, showcase and be appointed as professor emeritus for the Beijing Institute of Fashion Technology.
- 2011 Exhibited Hiroko Koshino Creations 2011 - an art and fashion exhibition at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, in Paris.
- 2012 Exhibited the first personal exhibition as an artist, at the Galerie Hors-Champs in Paris.
Designed the uniforms of the Japanese gymnasts contending at the London Olympics 2012.
Opened KH Gallery Ginza, the first gallery to present Hiroko Koshino's artwork.
- 2013 Held a solo art exhibition at the Sanyo Department Store, Himeji, Hyogo.
Opened HK Gallery Ashiya, remodelling former residence to gallery dedicated solely to Hiroko Koshino's artwork.
Designed the official international uniforms of the national gymnastics team.
Held solo exhibitions at the Hanshin and Daimaru Shinsaibashi department store's galleries.
- 2014 Exhibited art works at the well-established Galerie Nicolas Deman, in Paris.
- 2015 Exhibited a collaborative piece with flower arrangement artist Atsunobu Katagiri at the Awaji Hanahaku 2015. Held an exhibition of fashion and art titled "Hiroko Koshino Exhibition."
Held an exhibition titled "Hiroko Koshino Exhibition: Traces of the Brush" at the Daimaru Department Store Shinsaibashi in Osaka.
- 2016 Held an exhibition titled "Hiroko Koshino: Black & White—Sumi Ink and Blank Space" at the AIR Gallery in Osaka.
Awarded the Hyogo Prefecture Award for Distinguished Service.
Became the chair of Hiroko Koshino Co., Ltd.
Appointed as a member of a committee formed by the Bureau of Industrial and Labor Affairs of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government to explore ways of branding the city of Tokyo.
- 2017 Served as a panelist on the Business of Fashion and Design panel at the 2017 Global Summit of Women.
Published HIROKO KOSHINO —it is as it is— to commemorate the 60th year of her career as a designer.
- 2018 Appointed as the honorary director of KOBE FASHION MUSEUM.
Held an exhibition titled "A Touch of Bauhaus" at White Box in New York.
- 2019 Held a special fashion show titled "Hiroko Koshino Fashion Show GET YOUR STYLE!" In Kobe, with a hundred amateur models in a wide range of generations.
- 2021 Held a special exhibition titled "HIROKO KOSHINO -Ex · Vision To the Future-" at Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Art.
- 2022 The above "Ex · Vision" exhibition was awarded silver prize of Kukan Design Award 2022 and bronze prize of Japan Sign Design Award 2022.

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About

Hiroko Koshino was born in Kishiwada City, Osaka, Japan - the first daughter of the Koshino family. Her grandfather was a dealer in kimono fabrics, her father a tailor and her mother ran a store carrying westernised fashions. As a result, since her childhood, Hiroko was highly influenced by both the sensual Japanese beauty of kimonos, as well as the westernised fashions and styles - the people around her and the environment she was within greatly helped nurture her creativity, shape her identity and epitomise a fusion of the East and the West.

It was during the 1950s and 60s that Hiroko's talent flourished. After enrolling on to the Design Course at the Bunka Fashion College in Tokyo, Hiroko exhibited her skilful paintings and made a remarkable success, winning a number of design contests, including the first prize for a competition sponsored by the Nippon Designers Club (NDC). Following Hiroko Koshino at the time at Bunka Fashion College were a number of highly-talented young designers, including Kenzo Takada, Yohji Yamamoto, Tokio Kumagai, and Junko Koshino, Hiroko's younger sister. Together in the late 1970s, they established the TD6 - the predecessor of the Tokyo Collection - and participated at the Paris collections in the 1980s.

While taking over her mother's store in Kishiwada City, after graduating from the Bunka Fashion College, Hiroko was appointed as the in-house designer for the Ginza Komatsu Store, now known as Ginza Komatsu, and consequently opened an eponymous haute couture store in Shinsaibashi - a prime location in Osaka. Decorated with dried flowers, antique items and innovative designs at the time, her store quickly became very popular, leading to the expansion of several new licensing businesses. However, financial difficulties that most emerging designers face started to become more prominent with the increasing number of seasons and collections - Hiroko says in retrospect, "it was a period of hardship," although she was just 26 years old and thoroughly enjoying designing despite the inevitable obstacles. Around the same period, Suelo Irie, who opened his atelier in Paris after working as assistant to Kenzo Takada, was hired as her atelier staff and worked for Hiroko Koshino until he moved to France.

It was in the 1970s that Hiroko's career began to soar. She presented a collection in Tokyo as part of TD6 and also made her first international debut at Alta Moda, Rome; becoming the first Japanese designer to ever participate in the same. The works she created in collaboration with Italian traditional craftsmen truly amazed people in Rome, leaving a long-lasting impression and also leading to a 30-page special feature in Italian Harper's Bazaar. It was this period when the identity of Hiroko Koshino and "the beauty of the fusion of the East and the West" began to be truly and extensively appreciated.

The 1980s brought with it further success, also making it the busiest period for Hiroko, internationally. Her activities overseas expanded monumentally, starting with showcasing at the Prêt-à-Porter collections in Paris in 1982, followed by being invited to present in other metropolises such as Shanghai and Seoul. While she gradually started to become a household name worldwide - France, Italy, other parts of Europe and Asia - she devoted her time to create the Osaka Collection in order to promote fashion in her hometown. As a member of the Council of Fashion Designers, Tokyo (CFD), which organizes the Tokyo Collection, she was also a central figure to hold the Osaka Collection as an expert committee member of the Osaka 21st Century Association, which was created under the slogan 'From Osaka to Asia.' As a result, Hiroko presented collections in Paris, Tokyo and Osaka at every season around this period.

The 1990s saw a further expansion of Hiroko Koshino's creative activities across the globe. While presenting collections every season, she collaborated with architect Borek Sipek and producer Bambi Uden in Prague, Czech Republic, and made a speech as a designer representing Asia in the General Assembly of the International Apparel Federation, held in Washington D.C. In Japan, she held an exhibition of her calligraphic works, which she has honed since her childhood; at the Kintetsu Art Building in Osaka. Although this exhibition was out of the realms of fashion, it strongly attracted the attention of art critics upon the opening, validating her knowledge, wisdom and versatility as a designer and person. In 1997, Hiroko published HK2001 - a book with a selection of her works commemorating her 40th anniversary as a designer. In addition, she won the Mainichi Fashion Grand Prix sponsored by the Mainichi newspaper, in recognition of her long-term activities within Japan and internationally.

Her creative work never paused but was only more driven and evolved since having crossed such a monumental milestone. She held Fashion Vision 21 in collaboration with composer Shigeaki Saegusa at the Osaka Prefecture Chikatsu Asuka Museum. She also took charge of costume design for the Grand Theatre de Geneve - a ballet theater which made its first performance in Japan. Overseas, she worked on a fashion collaboration, Tactile Sensation, with architect and interior designer Christian Biecher, in Hamburg, Germany.

It could be said that in the 2000s, Hiroko entered her period of maturity. In 2001, she opened a gallery and guest house, Semper, in Okuike, Ashiya City, Hyogo; overlooking the panoramic view of the Osaka Bay and establishing an environment conducive to her creative activities. In the following years, she held a number of exhibitions nationwide, featuring pieces of her collections and ink paintings. She also held the Hiroko Koshino Exhibition 2004 - a culmination of fashion, calligraphy and painting - at Ashiya City Museum of Art and History, at the request of Ashiya City.

The exhibition presented the opportunity for Hiroko to challenge creation within other capacities. Genbe Kondaya, the master of the obi (kimono belt) - a 270-year old Japanese tradition - visited the exhibition and offered to collaborate with Hiroko towards the creation of a completely new type of kimono and obi. As a result, Hiroko's design of the fusion of traditional Japanese culture with Western culture is incorporated in the kimono, a traditional Japanese cloth and thus, vigorous kimono designs which bear both the traditionally Japanese as well as contemporary exoticism. Following the same, an exhibition of kimono and obi, titled Kasane, meaning Layers, was held at the Daimaru Museum in Tokyo. Designed by architect Kengo Kuma, the venue with hills full of moss and dramatic lighting greatly put vision to perspective.

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During the same period, Hiroko also restarted to learn the 'shamisen' - a traditional Japanese musical instrument with three strings, similar to a guitar - which she acquainted herself with since the age of three, under Rokunobu Kineya, currently renamed to Katsuroku Kineya. On the second appearance at the National Bunraku Theatre, at a concert of his school, she took part in the closing act and raised a storm of excitement with 'Kanjincho' - considered to be one of the most difficult titles to play. In aggregation, it clearly demonstrated Hiroko's vast spectrum of talents - fashion, calligraphy, painting and the shamisen - and versatility, all a driving force that enable her and the people around her to thrive.

Around the same time, she presented designs to "cool down" mens' business wear as part of a global warming prevention initiative at the request of the then Minister of Environment, Yuriko Koike. This important social pursuit, named 'Cool Biz,' became a social phenomenon of the summer, following up to become a highly popular annual event.

Hiroko Koshino commemorated her 50th-year as a fashion designer in 2007, with her passion as a creator, artist, designer and person only becoming stronger with time. Having met British composer and musician Michael Nyman the same year, she held a joint event in Shanghai, China, for the Shanghai International Arts Festival. The show, in which about 30 Chinese models strutted the runway with 134 items of that year's collection, 30 dancers from the Dancing Troupe of Shanghai Opera House wearing custom Hiroko Koshino costumes danced while Nyman and his troupe played original scores. Needless to say, the show highly fascinated the 2000 members of the audience.

Despite the status and fame as a leading Japanese fashion designer, Hiroko Koshino never settles. She decided to set up a branch in London and employ young designers from the top design schools in the world to, again, stimulate staff and herself. She also decided to participate in the Paris Prêt-à-Porter collections, which had been suspended since 1992. The news that an established Japanese fashion designer with the "spirit of being a rookie" was returning to Paris attracted both the Japanese and French press. The Paris Collection also triggered an invitation to Taipei In Style - a special event and show, together with top Taiwanese designer Shiatzy Chen.

By 2010, Hiroko Koshino was quickly becoming known as an artist as much as a fashion designer. She had transformed her collection in Paris to a static, exhibition-like event, collaborating fashion and art, and expressing the world of creation comprehensively. Visitors enjoyed seeing each item up-close and being able to get a touch and feel of the same. Hiroko Koshino has always linked art and fashion, and used painted art work for her textiles. However, by 2012, her activity as an artist flourished and a private art exhibition was held at the Galerie Hors-Champs in Paris. The exhibition was the first her virtual debut as an artist, displaying only artwork. During the same year, with the opening of the Ginza flagship boutique, KH Gallery Ginza, her first gallery, was opened to exhibit seasonal art works of Hiroko Koshino. In 2013, she renovated her residence in Ashiya City into her second gallery - KH Gallery Ashiya. This world-famous building designed by renowned architect Tadao Ando has attracted many a visitor from all over the world.

"People in the fashion world always look ahead, rather than looking back. I want to remain an unpretentious fashion designer, regardless of nationality, by honestly expressing whatever I feel" - Hiroko Koshino.

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