

Common Threads

A History of
Fashion through a
Woman's Eyes

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OLD COLLEGE GALLERY

UNIVERSITY OF
DELAWARE



Common Threads

A History of Fashion through a Woman's Eyes

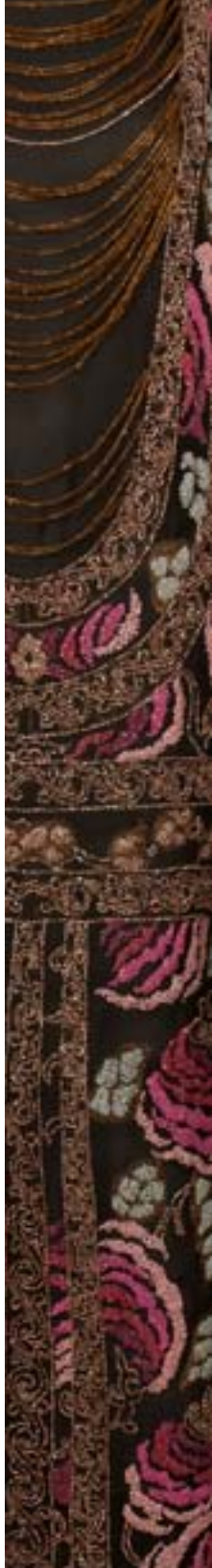
This exhibition chronicles 20th century women's fashion and explores the meaning of fashion in both social and historical contexts. It is a visual journey spanning decades of social change, told through the medium of clothing. As clues to the lives of individuals and to their roles in society, the garments in this exhibition become artifacts of women's stories, illustrating the evolution of women's roles, from the one-dimensional personification of "the weaker sex," to equal members of the workforce.

*Exhibition co-curated by Dilia López-Gydosb,
Belinda T. Orzada, and Vicki Cassman.*

About the University of Delaware's Historic Costume & Textiles Collection

The University of Delaware Historic Costume and Textiles Collection was organized in 1971. Managed by and located in the Department of Fashion and Apparel Studies, the Collection consists of over 3,600 women's, men's, and children's clothing items, as well as textiles from the 18th through the 21st centuries. As a repository of textile and apparel material culture the collection serves as a resource for undergraduate and graduate research, and provides study artifacts for fashion history, fashion illustration and design courses, as well as a costume collection management course. Beyond the Fashion and Apparel Studies programs, other disciplines across campus, including Art Conservation and Journalism make use of the Collection as a resource.

Initially, Instructor Frances Smith organized the first donations by cataloging and documenting those items received prior to 1971. The collection grew slowly until 1978 when the (former) Textiles, Design and Consumer Economics Department began exhibiting some of the objects under the direction of faculty member Frances Mayhew. In 1990 the Collection moved into a permanent storage location on the second floor of Alison West. Dr. Mayhew managed the Collection until a sabbatical in 1998 when Dr. Belinda Orzada became involved in accessioning and display.



In 2002, Dr. Orzada, along with Dr. Janet Hethorn, received an Advanced and Emerging Technologies in Instructional Contexts Grant to develop a searchable database and photo documentation system for the Collection. Dr. Orzada was Director of the Collection until 2008. Since that time, Dr. Dilia López-Gydosh has directed the Collection. Dr. López-Gydosh has curated numerous exhibitions in the Alison West exhibition spaces and obtained a National Endowment for the Humanities Preservation Assistance Grant for Smaller Institutions to improve storage and exhibition conditions for the collection in 2009.

Home to over 1750 garments, the Collection includes fashion designer apparel and accessories, ethnic apparel, and regional dress and textiles representative of Delaware, the Delaware Valley, and the University of Delaware. Among the earliest gems are a pre-Columbian hat, an 1810 Quaker woman's dress, a 15th century embroidered chasuble, a late 18th century calash, an 1837 men's court suit, and a wedding dress from 1845. Menswear dates from the 1830s to the 1990s and varies from a World War II Army Air Force uniform to the classic jeans suit of the 1970s. The Collection also boasts nineteen gowns by American designer Arnold Scassi and sixteen full ensembles by Adrian. Additional designer pieces include garments by Christian Dior, Valentino, Balenciaga, James Galanos, and Givenchy, to name a few. Garments come from six continents including

many traditional pieces from countries such as Mexico, China, Japan, Tibet, the Balkans, Russia, and India. Of particular interest are ethnic garments collected by Henry Francis du Pont in his travels, donated by the Winterthur Museum.

The Collection houses approximately 1600 accessories. These include 250 pairs of shoes ranging from 1850s women's side-lacing silk ankle boots to Tibetan men's yak hair boots; 100 handbags; and 400 hats—from Stetsons to a portrait hat by designer Elsa Schiaparelli.

Ongoing exhibitions showcasing our holdings are offered in Alison Hall West. The themes addressed often correspond to Fashion and Apparel Studies courses, highlighting specific facets of fashion design and/or history. The Collection has also supported interdisciplinary collaboration: the historic clothing exhibition "The Aesthetic Movement: Influences on Fashion, Late 19th and Early 20th century" was part of the 2010 University of Delaware conference "Useful & Beautiful: The Transatlantic Arts of William Morris and the Pre-Raphaelites." The collection is available for in-house study to students, faculty, and the general public.

Oxford Heels

ca. 1930s
Suede and satin
Gift of Mrs. Mary
Louise Drews
Bloodworth Scott
2010.248a,b

These smart shoes were worn at the time when practicality reigned. The Great Depression necessitated women's shoes be both practical and reliable. The Good Housekeeping Seal found on the shoes inner sole, reassured the wearer of quality craftsmanship.





Dress Ensemble

1902

Silk damask, lace,
and velvet trim

Made in United
States

Gift of Mary V.

Biddle

1977.004a,b

At the turn of the century, women's dress had a distinctive "S" silhouette, with prominent full bust, cinched waist, and small back bustle. This lovely example, in blue and white silk damask, exemplifies the fine workmanship of the era and was perhaps worn for an afternoon outing.



Graduation Dress

ca. 1910s

Silk chiffon, lace,
and beaded trim

Made in the
United States

Worn by Iva Mae
Bartlett

Gift of Charles C.
Miller III

2009.022

In the early decades of the 20th century, as more colleges and universities were founded in the United States, women had increased opportunities for higher education: Iva Mae Bartlett wore this dress to her college graduation in 1911. With its raised waistline and narrow silhouette, this dress illustrates fashions of the century's second decade (pictured).

Beaded Dress

ca. 1920s

Made in the United States
Silk georgette with beaded
embellishment

Gift of Constance Davis
2010.005

A wonderful example of the
1920s Flapper style, this
dress was made by designer
Frances Shepard. Born in the
late 19th century, Shepard
was a highly sought after
wedding dress designer. This
beaded dress illustrates her
exceptional talents and
attention to detail.



May Day Dress

1931

Cotton organdy
Made in United States
Worn by donor, Catherine
Amend Slocum, née Catherine
Broad
2010.006a,b

Women's dress in the 1930s
was characterized by overtly
feminine styles as seen in the
delicate ruffles on this dress.
While a student at the University
of Delaware, Miss Broad wore
this dress to the annual May Day
event held on the women's
campus, as a member of the
May Queen's court (pictured).



Wedding Ensemble

ca. 1930s

Made in the United States
Silk satin and lace, with veil and shoes

Worn by Mrs. George Frederick Broske, née Ethel Frances Moore
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. George Broske
2010.056a-d



Ethel Frances Moore (pictured) wore this gown to her 1939 wedding to George Frederick Broske. This glamorous satin gown, with its fluid shape, is characteristic of the draped silhouette of the 1930s. Mrs. Broske later attended Millersville College (present day Millersville University) and, in the 1940s, began a career in teaching.



Prom Dress

1958

Cotton velvet and nylon tulle

Made in the United States
Worn by donor Frances W.

Mayhew, née Frances

Whitaker

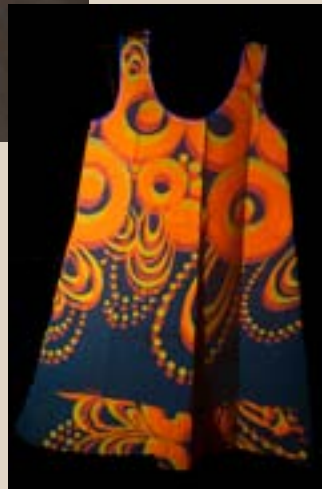
1981.175

The architecture and hourglass shape of this gown are hallmarks of the 1950s era. Women often wore gowns such as this to formal evening events. Donor and University of Delaware alumna, Frances W. Mayhew first wore this gown to her high school prom, a major rite of passage for any young girl. Pictured is the donor wearing this gown to a military ball in 1959.



Paper Dress

ca. E.1960s
Made in the
United States
Paperdelic,
Paper and
fluorescent ink
Gift of Camilla
Berry
2009.075



The Youthquake of the 1960s inspired many daring fashions, including the mini and this short-lived fad: the paper dress. Originally sold by the Scott Paper Company as a marketing gimmick, paper clothes were inexpensive and included fun details, such as fluorescent patterns, as demonstrated by this UV-light image of the paper dress from the exhibition.

Ensemble,

ca. 1970s
Vinyl maxi coat
Gift of Patricia P.
McDonald
2011.046

Qiana nylon
sweater
Givenchy
Gift of Dilia
López-Gydosh
2011.077

Wool plaid
hot pants
Gift of Roberta
Gibson
2008.017a

During the 1970s, women's fashions went to extremes, from the mini to the maxi. Complete with white vinyl go-go boots, this ensemble captures the wide range of womenswear trends from this decade.





Evening Gown

ca. 1980s
Arnold Scaasi
Silk damask, silk
satin, and tulle
Gift of Arnold
Scaasi, Inc.
1998.220

This ballgown features the exaggerated proportions popular in women's fashion during the 1980s. The royal blue gown with metallic embroidered floral motif, features oversized puffed sleeves and sweeping floor-length skirt complete with blue tulle petticoat.



Ensemble

ca. 1990s
Shirtdress
Esprit
Rayon georgette,
Gift of Dilia López-
Gydosh
2012.004a

Fashion in the last decade of the 20th century was all about personal self-expression. Subcultural style, as well as the growing adoption of casual and unisex clothing, influenced mainstream fashions. For example, this ensemble is inspired by the mid-1990s "grunge" look, based on the Seattle music scene. Delicate dresses, combined with men's style flannel shirts and work boots, typified this look for women.



Hat

ca. L1910s/E 1920s
Silk, wool and feathers
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Robert W. Mayer
1998.112

This “bucket hat,” a popular millinery style from the early 20th century, was sold by the Krauss family of Lancaster, PA. Owned by the eldest daughter, this family business illustrates the entrepreneurial spirit of WWI-era women.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following contributors and participants:

Co-Curators:

Dilia López-Gydosh, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Fashion & Apparel Studies

Vicki Cassman, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Art Conservation

Belinda T. Orzada, Ph.D.
Professor, Fashion & Apparel Studies

University Museums staff:

Janis Tomlinson
Director, University Museums

Janet Gardner Broske
Collections Manager, University Museums

Brian Kamen
*Preparator/Facilities Coordinator,
University Museums*

Student assistants:

Martha L. Hall
Fashion and Apparel Studies

Anna Juliar
Art History

Beth MacKenzie
Visual Communications

Abigail Stenner
Fashion and Apparel Studies

Editors:

Belinda T. Orzada and Martha L. Hall

Photography:

Kathy Atkinson and Evan Krape

Design:

Lane McLaughlin

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Exhibition Checklist

Ensembles

Dress Ensemble, 1902, J.D. Chew, blue and white silk damask, Gift of Mary V. Biddle, 1977.004a,b

Tailor-made Suit, 1910s, teal silk shantung, Gift of Anonymous, 0000.033a-c

Graduation Dress, 1910s, off-white silk chiffon, Gift of Charles C. Miller III, 2009.022

Beaded Dress, 1920s, black silk with multicolor beading, Gift of University of Delaware Theatre Department, 1988.169

Beaded Dress, 1920s, Frances Shephard, black silk georgette with multicolor beading, Gift of Constance Davis, 2010.005

May Day Dress, 1931, yellow cotton organdy, Gift of Catherine Amend Slocum, 2010.006a,b

Wedding Dress, 1930s, off-white silk satin, veil and shoes, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. George Broske, 2010.056a-d

Day Dress, 1940s, Gilbert Adrian, white linen with black bunny design, Gift of Jones Apparel Group, 1998.015

Shirtwaist Dress, Sorority, 1940s/50s, multicolor striped cotton poplin, Gift of Joseph A. Halloran, 1980.213

Suit, Early 1950s, Christian Dior, dark gray wool suiting, Gift of Mrs. Charles E. Webbe, 1988.145a,b

Prom Dress, 1958, red cotton velvet and white nylon tulle, Gift of Frances W. Mayhew, 1981.175

Paper Dress, 1960s, Paperdelic, multicolor paper and fluorescent ink, Gift of Camilla Berry, 2009.075

Pant Suit, 1960s, André Courrèges, off-white wool gabardine, Gift of Joseph S. Simms, 1979.017a,b

Patio Gown, 1970s, Sears, white and blue cotton and polyester, Gift of Michael and Allison Richards, 2007.006

Maxi Coat, 1970s, red vinyl, Gift of Patricia P. McDonald, 2011.046

Ribbed Sweater, 1970s, Givenchy, off-white qiana nylon, Gift of Dilia López-Gydosh, 2011.077

Hot Pants, 1971, yellow plaid wool, Gift of Roberta Gibson, 2008.017a

Dress Ensemble, 1980s, Raul Blanco, multicolor floral silk duppioni, Gift of Ruth Mizrahi, 2011.018a,b

Evening Gown, 1980s, Arnold Scaasi, royal blue silk damask, Gift of Arnold Scaasi, Inc., 1998.220

Shirtdress, 1990s, Esprit, black and red floral rayon georgette, Gift of Dilia López-Gydosh, 2012.004a

Boots, 1990s, Doc Marten, black leather, Gift of Dilia López-Gydosh, 2012.042a,b

Minimalist Slipdress, 1990s, Bisou-Bisou, black polyester crushed velvet, Gift of Dilia López-Gydosh, 2012.002

Accessories

Feather Fan, 1900s, black ostrich feathers, wood and brass, Gift of the Historical Society of Delaware, 1979.102

Hat, 1910/20s, taupe silk, wool, and feathers, Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Robert W. Mayer, 1998.112

Coin Purse, 1920s, Whiting and Davis, multicolor metal chain mail, Gift of Mrs. Harold O. Ladd, 1988.102

Coin Purse, 1920s, multicolor metal chain mail, Gift of J. Robin Buccos, 2010.116

Oxford Heels, 1930s, dark green suede and satin, Gift of Mrs. Mary Louise Drews Bloodworth Scott, 2010.248

Doll Hat, 1940s, black wool felt and off-white ostrich feathers, Gift of Mrs. Mary Louise Drews Bloodworth Scott, 2010.205

Evening Gloves, 1950s, white kid leather, Gift of Dianne Crom, 2006.022a,b

Mod Hat, 1960s, Mr. John "Debutante," black and white synthetic twill, Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Robert W. Mayer, 1998.123

Patchwork Purse, 1970s, multicolor leather suede, Gift of Belinda T. Orzada, 2012.011

Bracelets, 1980s, red, black and white plastic, Gift of María T. López-Schoenherr, 2012.029a-c

Zebra Earrings, 1980s, black and white plastic, Gift of Dilia López-Gydosh, 2012.043a,b

Loafers, 1990s, blue, purple and black leather, Gift of Dilia López-Gydosh, 2012.009a,b





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These garments were selected
from the University of
Delaware's Historic Costume
& Textiles Collection



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