

Spring 2008

Wedded Bliss, the Marriage of Art and Ceremony

The Peabody Essex Museum Invites You to the Wedding Celebration of the Year Through Sept. 14, 2008

The Peabody Essex Museum unveils *Wedded Bliss, The Marriage of Art and Ceremony*, a wide-ranging exploration of the wedding as artistic inspiration across cultures, lifestyles and three centuries. No exhibition has ever before taken this connective and comparative approach, with 130 paintings, sculptures, photographs, decorative objects and multimedia from the United States, Europe, Asia, Africa and the Pacific, highlighting the complex beliefs and emotions surrounding the matrimonial experience. From the 18th century to the present, these works reveal the diversity of creative response to weddings, as well as changing attitudes and customs over time.

"The concept of marriage manifests in *Wedded Bliss* as a universal cultural phenomenon that serves as a powerful touchstone for creativity. Our curator, Paula Bradstreet Richter, has organized an exhibition that is as ambitious in its artistic scope as it is in its global reach and contemporary relevance," said Dan L. Monroe, executive director of the Peabody Essex Museum.

Works by artists such as Pablo Picasso, Marc Chagall, Winslow Homer, Benjamin West, William Hogarth, Cecily Brown, Claes Oldenburg and Jacob Lawrence are presented together with an array of objects created for wedding rituals around the world. These include historical and contemporary couture gowns, ceremonial items and rare jewelry including the diamond nuptial crown of Alexandra, the last Russian empress.

Conceived in five thematic sections, the exhibition addresses joy or disillusionment from the earliest sparks of attraction through remembrance of the wedding ceremony after many years of marriage.

The first section, *Wedding in White*, features wed-



Chinese wedding gown, late 19th century, silk, gold metallic thread, China, Dennis Helmar photographer, Peabody Essex Museum, gift of the estate of Julia C. Deane, 2001.

ding gowns as art transporting individuals from ordinary daily existence into timeless roles for the occasion of marriage. The historical roots of the white wedding tradition are addressed here, exploring symbolism, conformity and resistance to it. Dresses by contemporary and historical designers including Priscilla of Boston, exemplify the Euro-American wedding ideal, while others dismantle it. Lesley Dill's sculpture, *Dada Poem Wedding Dress*, a paper wedding gown inscribed with a poem by Emily Dickinson, was worn originally as performance art at an AIDS benefit, an iconic wedding symbol drawing attention to issues in contemporary life.

Artful Negotiations documents the early stages of a romantic relationship and the agreement to wed, and includes Winslow Homer's *Rustic Courtship*, a depiction of the uncertainty of courtship and unrequited love in the 1870s. Also in this section are John Clevley, Sr.'s monumental 1762 painting of Queen Charlotte's arrival for her marriage to King George III, and 19th-century spade-blade currency shown as a symbol of bride price in the Democratic Republic of Congo.



Wedding Cake Dress, Christian Lacroix, dress hat silk, from the collection of Sandy Schreier, photograph, courtesy of the Indianapolis Museum of Art Photography Department.

Color and Symbolism in Wedding Attire presents alternatives to the white wedding, with selected examples of handcrafted textiles from around the world, and America's past. International wedding films put the garments in cultural context.

Art and Ceremony features the use of art both in marriage ceremonies and as a means of creating ritual space. The art quilt, *Shekhinah* by Ricky Tims, is a full-size wedding chupa or canopy enabling visitors to enter an area uplifted from the everyday to the extraordinary, at the ready for a wedding ceremony.

The concluding section, *Remembrance*, features art commemorating the wedding, reliving the experi-

ence or marking the passage of time. An especially poignant example is a gold, enamel and diamond bracelet by Tiffany & Co., given as an anniversary gift from a Civil War general to his wife. The bracelet is composed of hourglasses inscribed with each battle he fought, symbolizing the long hours of separation from his wife during his military service.



President's Message

Hello again:

As my first year as regional president comes to a close, I've been reflecting on my experiences. And, I must confess that I am worried. Our regional membership is falling, we have fewer people volunteering to run for the board and our program attendance has been low. In my first message in this space I wrote about how proud I am of our region and of my belief that we are the strongest of CSA's regional groups. While I am still proud of us, I am growing concerned about our strength. How will you feel if we stop offering regular programs and newsletters? What will you miss if we don't have enough board members to run the activities we all enjoy?

I ask all of you—every CSA member in the Northeastern region—to think about what you want out of the organization. Do you want varied, interesting programs? Do you want to meet people who share your interest in costume and dress? Do you want an opportunity to present new research or share a skill? If so, please help the regional board continue to thrive. Volunteer to run for the board. Send me a note about an idea for a program. Convince a friend to join. Now is the time to act—do one of these things right now or in the months to come. We also have a desperate need for a new Treasurer. This position does not require advanced math skills, nor does it require an immense amount of time. It's an appointed position, requiring the person to attend board meetings and use the computer program Quicken to manage our regional funds. If you would like to get involved by coming on as our Treasurer, please contact me as soon as possible.

A couple of thank yous—and a word about upcoming events: First, thank you to Karen Kaplan who organized our Student Research Forum this past February while also pulling together our spring symposium at the Boston Public Library and Boston Ballet on May 3. Both events offered wonderful food for thought, as well as the opportunity to make new friends. My sincere appreciation goes to Karen for her hard work. Second, in my first message last spring, I recognized outgoing President Carrie Aleya in this space. This year, Carrie steps off of the regional board to become a regular member of the region once again. Carrie has worked incredibly hard during her six years on the board and contributed in innumerable ways. I thank Carrie personally and on behalf of the membership for all of her efforts—I know that she'll continue to support CSA and its programs. While Carrie rotates off, Jessica Urick comes onto the board. Read more about Jess in this issue and be sure to welcome her at one of our fall meetings.

We are working on two events for the fall. Our traditional autumn event will be a symposium in Montreal, as our region collaborates with the McCord Museum for Bodies on Display, a two-day colloquium on November 7 and 8, 2008. Mark the date now! We'll also offer a one-day event this fall in New England. Join CSA and our region's own Jackie Field for a special look at that most luxurious fabric—silk! Details to come soon...

Please do consider my questions at the top. To ask a question or volunteer, see the list of regional board members on the website at www.costumesocietyamerica.com. My contact information is also printed at the end of this message—don't hesitate to use it for a comment, an idea or a complaint. I look forward to hearing from you.

Aimee Newell, President
CSA Northeastern Region
781-457-4144 • aimee1@charter.net

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The Northeastern Region Newsletter is published three times a year. The deadline for the next issue is Aug. 15, 2008. Please send exhibit listings, new book notices, professional news, job listings, classes, etc., to:

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Introducing Jessica Urick Recently Elected Member to the CSA Northeastern Region Board

I received my undergraduate degree in Art Conservation from the University of Delaware and a Master's Degree in Textiles, Merchandising, and Design with a concentration in Textile Conservation from the University of Rhode Island.

Prior to graduate school, along with an internship in the Textile Conservation laboratory at the Winterthur Museum, I worked as a collections assistant at the New Castle Historical Society in New Castle, Delaware, cataloguing and rehousing their costume collection. I joined the Preservation Society of Newport County in 2005, first as a graduate intern under the direction of Rebecca Kelly and eventually as Textile Conservator. I first discovered the Costume Society as an undergraduate, when Professor Fran Mayhew encouraged me to join and present a poster at a national symposium. It has been a great resource ever since, through Student Soirees, lectures, and annual meetings. I enjoy the CSA because it provides an ideal forum for my varied dress interests—everything from Gilded Age textiles to 1960s fashion to contemporary fashion theory.



Backstage at the Ballet: A look at Theatrical Costume

Saturday May 3, 2008 Boston Massachusetts
by Deborah A. Brothers



Courtyard of the Boston Public Library McKim Building

If you haven't attended one of the Northeastern Region's spring or fall symposia, you are missing wonderful opportunities for lively lectures, brilliant tours and unsurpassed company of smart CSA members. These spring and fall symposia are always a joy to attend. On Saturday May 3, about twenty symposium attendees, met at the Boston Public Library at Copley Square in Boston Massachusetts. The day started out with a welcome and introduction by board member Karen Kaplan who organized this wonderful event.

Pam Sebor-Cable gave a talk "Transforming Sketches into Finished Costume". Pam is currently an adjunct faculty member at Framingham State and Lasell Colleges, but she also was a seamstress at the Boston Ballet. She said she came to sew one season and stayed seven years. Through her association with the Boston Ballet she gave an informative talk on the process of designers' sketches and ideas moving into finished costumes from the skilled artisans of the ballet's costume shop. She told us that the Boston Ballet has used fashion designers such as Norma Kamali and Pam showed examples of Ms. Kamali's 1986 costumes from *In the Upper Room* which was choreographed by Twyla Tharp. She also reports that the ballet uses theatrical costume designers like David Walker, his designs for *The Nutcracker* continue to be used in the Boston Ballet's performances each year. An example of adapting designs she gave was in the case of Mother Ginger's costume from this ballet. Pam says she had the opportunity to redesign this costume from Mr. Walker's original piece when the ballet moved the production from the Wang Center to the smaller Colonial Theatre. Mother's panniers were too grand for the Colonial and needed a leaner design that still allowed children to appear from underneath her ample skirts. Pam says, "Now that the ballet performs *The Nutcracker* in the Opera House, she (Mother Ginger) has been reinstated in her original splendor".



Margaret Ordonez and speaker Pam Sebor-Cable

Pam took us through the steps and processes of more modern costumes and their effects on stage in the adaptation of visual artist, Mary Jean Keaton and her designs for a Merce Cunningham piece called *Breakers*. Pam also gave us examples of traditional, classical and romantic tutus along with some of

the construction techniques that the ballet costume shop uses. She showed samples of varying designers' work and illustrated the process from two-dimension form into the evolution of finished brocades, silk, tulle, and jersey of many costumes from the Boston Ballet's costume repertory. Pam's talk was extremely interesting, informative, clear and illustrative about the costume processes and Pam's memorable experiences at the Boston Ballet.

We then held our annual CSA Northeastern Region meeting. One of the agenda items was introducing our newest elected board member Jessica Urick, and re-introducing our re-elected second term board members, Nightwing Whitehead and Deborah Brothers. Part of the business of the day was also a reminder that the National Convention will be held shortly in New Orleans and about the "Angel Project." Co-coordinator of the Angel Project, Margaret Ordonez, mentioned that several of the assembled group were heading down to the conference early to help on the project at the Jackson Barracks which had their Museum of Military artifacts under the flood waters in 2005.

For the second session of the morning and we all had the opportunity of taking the Boston Library Buildings and Mural Tour. The Boston Library consists of two building and in the older McKim building they house amazing murals of Sargent, along with murals by the artists Abbey, Chavannes, and Elliot. John Singer Sargent's late murals, *Triumph of Religion* are a true highlight of these collections as are the murals of the American artist, Edwin Austin Abbey, which depict *The Quest for the Holy Grail*. Then there are paintings entitled *The Muses of Inspiration Hail the Harbinger of Light* by the French artist Puvis de Chavannes. All of these murals and the architecture of the McKim building were part of the wonderful surprises for many of us at the symposium.

After lunch we then traveled to the Boston Ballet where we broke into three small tours with ballet docents. With our hosts we wandered up and down the floors to view the seven working studios with dancers of all ages from kindergarteners to young company professionals. We then visited the lower depths of the Boston Ballet's costume shop. This is a well organized space with the various sections for each area of costume production; a dye and paint room, a wig room, a larger work room full of industrial sewing machines and cutting tables, fitting rooms, a Manager's office, a shoe room with boxes of shoes for each ballet company member, and immediate costume storage for current productions. Various bibles of productions were left out for our perusal, each of these a record showing the details of fabrics and trims, their fabric store origins, dye recipes, measurements of dancers and much more—all the recordable details so that the shop can replicate a single costume to a full production from the original designs and changes.

Many of the group continued the day by attending the Boston Ballet's production of *Swan Lake* choreographed by Artistic Director Mikko Nissinen after Petipa and Ivanov. This production premiered in 2004 and in that year Christine Temin of the Boston Globe claimed it "a must-see". Those of you who could not attend—please go to the website of The Boston Ballet: <http://bostonballet.org/>.

I'd like to express many thanks to Karen Kaplan for this informative, lovely and enjoyable day. And please join us at our next Northeastern symposium this fall on Silk. Details will be forthcoming. We have so many hidden treasures in our midst in this region—as well as our members who attend these symposia in the many fields of costume. We hope to see you all next time. ✉

CALL FOR PAPERS

Bodies on Display

McCord Museum, Montreal, QC

November 7 and 8, 2008

A two-day colloquium organized by the McCord Museum of Canadian History in collaboration with the Costume Society of America, Northeastern Region in conjunction with the McCord Museum exhibition *Reveal or Conceal?*

Fashion is inextricably linked to the bodies that wear it. Bodies give shape and meaning to clothing, while dress makes bodies social and fashionable (or unfashionable). How do we address the body in researching and interpreting the history of dress and fashion? How do we address its absence in studying the material culture of clothing?

In the light of the growing scholarly interest in addressing the body in many academic disciplines, this colloquium aims to foster a dialogue among those in the academic setting who study the body as it relates to dress and fashion, and dress as an embodied practice, with those who approach it from the museum, material culture, living history, and design perspectives.

Abstracts for papers are sought on the following themes, in historic or contemporary, Western or non-Western perspectives. Research incorporating or intersecting with material culture is encouraged.

Uncovering modesty: Issues in the historical and contemporary perceptions of acceptable body covering, regulating dress and modesty, the interplay between modesty and eroticism in dress.

Shifting standards: Key changes in constructions of physical comfort in dress, notions of public and private in fashion and the body, and gendering and the dressed body.

Fashionable immodesty: The power of the partially dressed body, marketing the body, readdressing theories such as the "shifting erogenous zone".

Wearing the body: Methods of shaping the body from corsetry to fitness, embellishment and modifications of the exposed body, issues surrounding appropriate public presentation of the body.

Putting bodies on display: Aspects of museum or living history presentation of dressed bodies, such as the creation of mannequins and supports for bodies, clothing for bodies to be displayed in unusual ways.

Practical demonstrations are welcome.
Languages: English and French

Submission of Abstracts

Abstracts for papers should not exceed 600 words in length and should be sent via e-mail to symposium@mccord.mcgill.ca with a short biography for use in the program or publicity (about 200 words). A separate page must indicate the authors' names, addresses, telephone numbers, fax numbers, and

email addresses, and to whom all communications should be directed. Students (Masters and PhD) are encouraged to submit, and should also indicate their degree status and school and program in which they are enrolled. All contributions must be received no later than June 13, 2008. Notices of acceptance will be sent out by July 11, 2008. Speakers will not pay registration fees at the colloquium.

For more information: Cynthia Cooper, Curator, Costume and Textiles, McCord Museum of Canadian History cynthia.cooper@mccord.mcgill.ca
514-398-7100, ext. 288 • www.musee-mccord.qc.ca

Reveal or Conceal?

at the McCord Museum through Jan. 2009



Group at Kamouraska, 1916, gift of Mrs. Charles W. Wagner, ©McCord Museum

A well-turned ankle peeking out from under a long hoop skirt, an expanse of thigh in a miniskirt, an exposed midriff in low jeans—this McCord Museum exhibition shows how revealing a woman's body has always been as much a part of Western fashion as concealing it. In spite of or because of their

impact, shocking and tantalizing styles, like knee-length skirts in the 1920s, hot pants in 1971, and exposed thongs today, often become mainstream.

The exhibition examines how, because we conceal our bodies with clothing, revealing them can be powerful. Some 200 objects from the McCord collection will illustrate how with each decade of the past century, clothing revealed more of the female body, and women seemed to gain ever greater physical comfort and social and sexual freedom. Ultimately this exhibition aims to show that revealed or concealed the female body is contested terrain for changing social attitudes and practices.



*Dress with evening bodice, and separate day bodice, 1874
Gift of the Estate of Clara C. Benson, ©McCord Museum*

Yves Saint Laurent Montreal Museum of Fine Arts May 29 to September 28, 2008

In partnership with the Fondation Pierre Bergé-Yves Saint Laurent, the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco are presenting the first retrospective spanning the forty years of creativity of the Maison Haute Couture Yves Saint Laurent. Presented from May 29 to September 28, 2008, the exhibition *Yves Saint Laurent* focusses on this virtuoso of haute couture, whose unique style blends references to the world of art with allusions to pop culture and social revolution.

Structured around four themes, the exhibition develops the revolutionary nature of a body of work that has marked both the past and the present with a new definition of femininity and left a signature that transcends fashion. The display will include 160 accessorized creations belonging to the Fondation Pierre Bergé-Yves Saint Laurent, as well as drawings and videos.

Yves Saint Laurent is famed for revolutionizing the haute couture tradition and laying the foundations of modern women's wear. The wardrobe basics that he designed—pantsuit, culotte skirt, pea coat, blazer, safari jacket and tuxedo—shone with his innovative style and became true timeless classics. His designs were equally remarkable, reflecting wide-ranging sources of inspiration. In Saint Laurent's stylistic vocabulary, music, art, performance, literature and impressions of far-off places were just as important as the new shapes he introduced.

The exhibition will be divided into four themes: "Masterful Pencil Strokes," where the designer's idea is followed from the original sketch; "The YSL Revolution," where feminized versions of men's attire rub shoulders with seductive apparel; "The Palette," which shows

how traditional rules of colour harmony were reversed in new contrasts inspired by cross-fertilization; and "Lyrical Sources," which explores the historical, literary (Proust, Oscar Wilde, Louis Aragon, Jean Cocteau...) and artistic influences that were interpreted and translated by this genius of couture.

Throughout his career, Yves Saint Laurent has taken the time to examine the work of the great artists of our day, expressing his personal tastes and the paintings he admires by transforming painting into fabric. Some of his models take up the visual sensations of Impressionism, while others liberate the expressive power of some of the great names and movements of modern art: Mondrian and Poliakoff in 1965, the Pop Art dresses in 1966, Picasso in 1979 and Braque in 1988.



Yves Saint Laurent, Cocktail Dress Homage to Mondrian. 1965 Fall Winter Collection, No. 81. Wool jersey yoke. Faceted jet stud earrings with fancy pearls, patent leather pumps with metal buckles. Fondation Pierre Bergé-Yves Saint Laurent.



Yves Saint Laurent, Original sketch for the Wedding Dress from the collection sketchbook. Fall-Winter 1988. Graphite on paper, gazar sample. 24 x 32cm. Photo Fondation Pierre Bergé-Yves Saint Laurent.



Yves Saint Laurent, Cocktail Dress, Spring-Summer 1992. Gazar. Wide-brimmed sun hat with sequin embroidery. Ceramic pendant earrings. Crepe pumps. Fondation Pierre Bergé-Yves Saint Laurent. Inv. 1992 PE 45. Photo Alexandre Guirkingier

The Coby Foundation Awards Grants Across Northeastern Region

The Coby Foundation, Ltd., which directs all of its support to projects in the textile and needle arts field, made grants totaling \$479,000 to seventeen organizations in 2007, its fourth full year of funding. The only foundation in the country to focus solely on the textile field, the Coby Foundation, located in New York City, limits its support to non-profit organizations in the mid-Atlantic and Northeast.

In 2007, the Coby Foundation's largest award was also its first to an organization in Maine. The Maine State Museum received \$100,000 for an exhibition entitled *Uncommon Threads: Wabanaki Textiles, Clothing and Costume*, which will be the first major exhibition and publication documenting the textile traditions of these indigenous people from prehistoric times through the late 19th century. The exhibition opens in Augusta in June 2008 and will travel to five additional museums.

The New Bedford Whaling Museum was funded for an exhibition, currently on view, that examines the roles that working with a needle has played in the social, economic and cultural lives of New Bedford's men and women.

The remaining grants varied across the textile field, including a large-scale, long-term installation by Amsterdam-based textile artist Fransje Killaars at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MASS MoCA) in North Adams.

Other organizations receiving Coby Foundation support include the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, for planning an exhibition of Indian export textiles from England's Ashburnham Place.

Happenings Around the Region

Massachusetts

**In conjunction with the exhibition
Needle/Work—Art, Craft, and Industry in
a Port City, The New Bedford Whaling
Museum presents a symposium:
Needlework and the Sea**

June 12–15, 2008

Scheduled topics and speakers include:

- “Quakers, Whaling, and Girlhood Education: New Bedford’s Sampler Girls.” Kathleen Staples, independent scholar, Greenville, S.C.
- “Frocks, Drawers, and Monkey Jackets: New Bedford’s Needle Trades and the Sailor’s Slop Chest.” Madelyn Shaw, New Bedford Whaling Museum
- “Sailor’s Yarns: Nineteenth Century Shipboard Needlework.” Michelle Tolini Finamore, independent scholar, Salem, MA
- “Scrimshaw Needlework Tools: Connoisseurship.” Stuart Frank, New Bedford Whaling Museum

Additional topics include:

- “By Land and By Sea: Creative Journeys in the Needle Arts”
- “Sailmakers and Sailmaking in Nineteenth Century New Bedford”
- “Knitting in New England: Maritime Connections”

Add-On Activities

- Stitching Workshop with Kathleen Staples
- Site visits (restricted to 20-25 participants) to local historical societies with important and little known needlework collections
- Whale Watching trip departing from Plymouth, MA on Sunday June 15th

Registration Includes

- Thursday evening wine and cheese reception/ registration in conjunction with New Bedford’s “AHA!” (Art, History, Architecture) gallery night, June 12th
- All lecture sessions
- Coffee breaks
- Gala Portuguese dinner with wine, at the Museum, Friday evening (cash bar)
- New Bedford Whaling National Park Historic Walking Tour

New Bedford Whaling Museum
18 Johnny Cake Hill
New Bedford, MA 02740
508-997-0046 • whalingmuseum.org

Imperishable Beauty: Art Nouveau Jewelry

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

July 23, 2008–November 9, 2008



BOSTON

This exhibition includes about 120 works by the leading designers and fabricators of late nineteenth- to early twentieth-century Art Nouveau jewelry.

René Lalique (1860–1945) was the most renowned Art Nouveau artist, whose one-of-a-kind pieces were often large and made of unusual and inexpensive materials such as horn, enamel, and glass. In addition to works by Lalique, jewelry by Georges Fouquet (1862–1957), Eugène Feuillâtre (1870–1916), and Lucien Gaillard (1861–1933) is shown, as are paintings, sculpture, prints, posters, textiles, and decorative arts from the period.

“Clothes Make the Man: The Colonial Gentleman in New England” Flynt Center of Early New England Life, Historic Deerfield.

Through August 17, 2008

413-774-5581 • www.historic-deerfield.org

Rhode Island

“Evolution Revolution: The Arts and Crafts in Contemporary Fashion and Textiles” on Exhibit at the RISD Museum

Through June 15, 2008

401-454-6500 • www.risd.edu/museum.cfm

Vermont

Quilts in Bloom:

A Bouquet of Textile Art, Shelburne Museum

May 18–October 26, 2008

Senior curator Jean Burks has selected a brilliantly colorful array of more than a dozen finely-crafted works. Most are focused on a single flower. The show includes well-known contemporary quilters Judith Leslie and Emilie M. Belak of British Columbia and Velda E. Newman of California.

Museum visitors will also find the flowers that inspired the artists’ quilts planted throughout the museum’s 45-acre campus.

802-985-3346 • www.shelburnemuseum.org

Purse-onality: Handbags with Attitude

Shelburne Museum
May 18–October 26, 2008

The Round Barn's ground floor is transformed into an artful boutique of one of the most popular accessories of all time—the handbag. Displayed on three-dimensional photo collage models, the exhibit examines the offbeat and the beautiful.

Several are made from recycled materials such as tire inner tubes, aluminum pull tabs from soda cans and candy wrappers. Others are fair trade produced benefiting women in developing countries and some are just plain fun, like the yellow rubber rain boot bag!
802-985-3346 • www.shelburnemuseum.org

Québec

Yves Saint Laurent Montreal Museum of Fine Arts

May 29 to September 28, 2008
1-800-899-MUSE • www.mmfa.qc.ca

“Cinquante-Cartes” Manières de Vêtir La Royauté Museum of Costume and Textiles of Quebec

May 31–June 15 2008
450-923-6601 • www.mctq.org

Reveal or Conceal? McCord Museum of Canadian History

Through January 2009
514-398-7100 • www.mccord-museum.qc.ca

CALL FOR PAPERS Bodies on Display McCord Museum

November 7 and 8, 2008
Abstracts due June 13, 2008

A two-day colloquium organized by the McCord Museum of Canadian History in collaboration with the Costume Society of America, Northeastern Region in conjunction with the McCord Museum exhibition *Reveal or Conceal?*

The McCord colloquium will address the relationship between dress, fashion, and the body, historically as well as in museum exhibitions and design. It will bring together academics, museum professionals, dress historians, designers, and interested public for academic conference papers and practical demonstrations, as well as evening keynote lectures open to the general public.

More information:

www.mccord-museum.qc.ca/en/activities/colloquia/cynthia.cooper@mccord.mcgill.ca



Connecticut

Making a Splash: American Beach Fashions, 1850-1920 Wadsworth Atheneum

Through July 13, 2008

During the Victorian and Edwardian eras, the beach was a summertime playground for day-trippers and vacationers seeking relief from the heat and dirt of the city. Resort hotels, luxurious villas, and amusement palaces sprouted along the coastlines of France, Germany, England, and the United States to cater to tourists.

And at that time, sea bathing turned from a therapy treatment to a health-giving recreation.

A “water cure” outfit and a gymnasium suit, both of which feature pantaloons or “bloomers” to protect a woman’s modesty, open the exhibition. Such styling was the precursor to the American woman’s bathing costume.

Because promenading along the beach was a popular activity, *Making a Splash* is arranged as a stroll on the boardwalk. The dresses and parasols on view, dating from the 1850s through

the 1910s, resemble those of fashionable ladies in paintings by Boudin and Monet. For instance, a dress made of tissue-weight white cotton has a full skirt that would flutter in a light ocean breeze. In contrast, there is a dress made of dense silk twill that could deflect the sting of wind or sand. And as Manet depicted, people sat directly on the sand in their formal clothes to read or gaze at the waves.



Woman's bathing suits, c. 1920
American. Black cotton with beige piping and Black cotton sateen with machine-embroidery
Wadsworth Atheneum
Museum of Art, Hartford, CT

Among the delightful and rare apparel on display are a girl’s bathing costume, two boy’s sailor suits, and two men’s swimsuits from the turn-of-the-last century (trunks alone were not permitted in public until the 1930s). The exhibition closes as women’s silhouettes undergo a radical change in the early twentieth century, exemplified by tunic-like, leg-revealing bathing outfits.

Making a Splash has been organized by guest curator Lynne Z. Bassett.



Woman's dress, c. 1873
American Black and white striped cotton
Wadsworth Atheneum
Museum of Art, Hartford, CT



Education • Research • Preservation • Design
NEWSLETTER
 Society of
 New England and the Eastern Provinces
NORTHEASTERN REGION Costume



Joanna Cadorette, Northeastern Region Editor
 435 High Street, Apt. #2
 Mystic, CT 06355



Yves Saint Laurent, Wedding Dress in Tribute to William Shakespeare, Fall–Winter 1980. Damask, satin, lamé, braid. Lamé caul and veil. Netting, sequins, bead, and rhinestone pendant earrings, metal and paste bracelets and rings, rhinestone and bead rings, choker and cross, rhinestone, jet and bead chain necklaces. Metal and bead pin. Lamé brocade pumps. Foundation Pierre Bergé-Yves Saint Laurent. Inv. 1980 AH 126 Photo Alexandre Guirkinger



Yves Saint Laurent, Evening Ensemble, Fall Winter 1990. Coat with ostrich, rooster and pheasant feather embroidery. Muslin dress. Metal and crystal pendant earrings and cuff bracelets. Satin pumps. Foundation Pierre Bergé-Yves Saint Laurent. Inv. 1990 AH 82 Photo Alexandre Guirkinger