

# WESTERN REGION NEWS

SPRING 2010

## REPORT FROM THE 2009 REGIONAL EDUCATION SYMPOSIUM SEPTEMBER 25 - 26, 2009, SACRAMENTO, CA

### *History and Modernity: Apparel of the Western U.S.* by Nancy Fadis

**Immediate Past-President and Historian/Archivist,  
CSA -Western Region**



Symposium Coordinator Shelly Foote (*left*) greets Norma Greene (*center*) and 2009 Symposium Keynote Speaker Inez Brooks -Myers (*right*) at the Opening Reception aboard the Delta King Riverboat on the Sacramento River.

*Photographer: Lydia Tanji*

Sacramento California was the site of the Western Region's 2009 education symposium "Costume in the American West: Historic to Modern Times." Held on September 25th and 26th in the Railroad Museum of the capitol city's historic Old Town, the symposium was a success by any measure, with 46 guests, 8 guests from other regions, 5 non-member guests, and 8 speakers.

Joining Program-chair and President-elect Shelly Foote in putting together an extraordinary agenda and venue:

- Inez Brooks-Myers – Keynote Speaker
- Mela Hoyt-Heydon – Abstracts Editor
- Jan Loverin -- Reception
- Gail Russell – Hospitality
- Clarissa Esguerra – Program Development
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- Heather Vaughan – Publicity
- Jo Ann Stabb – Registrar
- Lynne Giovannetti - Student Scale Mannequins
- Lydia Tanji - Timekeeper

In development for well over a year, the symposium fulfills CSA National's mandate that each of the eight regions present biennially a one or two-day program to expand the sphere of costume knowledge. The symposium (from the Latin and Greek: a convivial meeting for intellectual debate) provides a forum for students and professionals to present and discuss their research.

Symposium Speaker Richard Adkins of the Hollywood Heritage Museum talks with CSA-WR Board Member Mela Hoyt-Heydon, Resident Designer and Chairman of the Fullerton College Theatre Costume Certificate Program.

*Photographer: Lydia Tanji*



The evening welcome reception, held in an elegant salon aboard a restored 19th century paddle-wheeler, beautifully expressed the symposium theme of the American West. The Delta King, moored on the Sacramento River, is also a hotel where many symposium guests stayed in cozy staterooms.

*continued on page 4*



## WESTERN REGION

The Western Region of the Costume Society of America is made up of members from Alaska, Alberta, British Columbia, California, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Northwest Territories, Oregon, Saskatchewan, Washington, Wyoming, and the Yukon Territories.

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## MEMBER NEWS



CSA-Western Region Secretary, Heather Vaughan, is pictured with husband Jacob Lee Fink and her parents, Peter and Gayle Vaughan at her September 19, 2009 wedding. The bride's gown was made by Theresa LaQuey, of Oakland, CA and the design is a copy of a 1934/35 dress, which Elsa Schiaparelli created for Baroness Rodolphe de Schauensee. The original dress was of purple silk ottoman and is currently held in the Historic Costume Collection at Drexel University in Philadelphia. The groom's suit is also vintage 1930s.

*Photographer:  
 Norbert von der Groeben*

## IN MEMORIAM ...

**Elfriede "Lee" Spenza  
 1929 - 2010**

Our dear friend, colleague and teacher, Elfriede "Lee" Spenza, died on January 9, 2010 of pancreatic cancer in Richmond, CA. Born in Vienna Austria, she came to the United States as the bride of a US soldier in 1954. Lee taught millinery for many years in the Peralta College System, starting at Laney College and then moving to the College of Alameda. While at the College of Alameda she helped host several Western Region CSA meetings at the College in the Apparel Design and Merchandising (ADAM) department. Lee will always be affectionately known as "The Hat Lady," who looked stylish at our meetings and symposia in her fashionable hats. A memorial in her honor was held in Alameda on February 20, 2010. *Inez Brooks-Myers*

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

Dear CSA-Western Region Members!

Welcome to a New Year and a New Decade! 2010 is shaping up to be another exciting year for CSA-Western Region members with a wonderful range of programs and events planned for your continuing education and enjoyment. Thank you to those who responded to the CSA-WR survey created by Mela Hoyt-Heydon, WR Board Member and Chair of our Education Committee, inquiring about your preferences for program topics and gathering feedback that will help to shape our future planning and continue to inspire your participation. This is very helpful for our guidance in meeting your costume-related needs and desires!

This issue of the *CSA-Western Region Newsletter* includes a listing of current programs proposed for 2010 for your advance planning purposes, with some specific dates still being finalized. Be sure to check your e-mails (or regular mail if you are not e-mailing) for the specific invitations and registration forms for each individual program as this information becomes available. Shelly Foote, President-elect and Program Coordinator, is diligently working to finalize the many details involved in making these programs valuable learning experiences, as well as enjoyable social and professional networking opportunities.

Our September 2009 Regional Symposium in Sacramento was a great success! We also look forward to seeing a good turn-out of Western Region members at the National Symposium entitled "Crossroads: From Cowhide to Couture" scheduled for May 25-30, 2010, in Kansas City, Missouri. It is always wonderful to immerse ourselves in all-things costume with experts from all aspects of costume, including collecting, curating, conservation, education, research and just plain obsession! If you have not attended a previous National Symposium, try and get to this one with its rich range of topics and speakers. (Check our national website for details: [www.costumesocietyamerica.com](http://www.costumesocietyamerica.com) and click on "Symposium 2010")

Also, please be sure to vote in our next WR Board of Directors' election. Ballots will be sent out in early April. This is an opportunity for you to participate in the governance of CSA-WR; true democracy in action! And please let us know if you are interested in volunteering for any "jobs" or positions - as we welcome *all* members to participate. You don't need to be an elected Board member to make a contribution to CSA-WR.

Just let me know what you're interested in helping with! Remember, the more you put into an organization, the more you get out of it!

With warmest regards,

Jo Ann Stabb  
[jcstabb@ucdavis.edu](mailto:jcstabb@ucdavis.edu)



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Jo Ann Stabb, President of CSA-Western Region, converses with Lydia Tanji, CSA member and former UC Davis student of Jo Ann's who is now a professional costume designer for numerous theatrical productions and films, including "The Joy Luck Club".

*Photo courtesy of Lydia Tanji*

## CSA-WR 2009 EDUCATIONAL SYMPOSIUM (CONT.)



These 1/2 scale dress forms are wearing period garments and were created by students of Sacramento City College's Fashion 335 class taught by Lynne Giovannetti, Assistant Professor of Fashion and Interiors.

In this class, students study different time periods and design a garment based on period research. The garments are first created in muslin and then interpreted in period correct fabric on 1/2 scale dress forms. The students pay close attention to assembly and closure details from their chosen time period. Then each student pattern drafts them to full size and creates another muslin and garment

*Photo courtesy of Lynne Giovannetti*

On display at the reception were five half-scale mannequins in period dress created by current and former students of the Fashion and Interiors Program of Sacramento City College. The students constructed these completely detailed garments to scale:

- Kimono - late 1800s
- Woman's suit - 1942
- Chemise, corset, hoop skirt, pantaloons - late 1880s
- Spencer jacket - 1895
- Embroidered underskirt with panniers and overskirt - 1776

We thank new member Lynne Giovannetti (MFA, University of California at Davis), an Assistant Professor in the Program, for exhibiting these finely made garments at the symposium.



Lynne Giovannetti (left) with Shelly Foote (center), and Mary Gibson, faculty member of Santa Barbara City College Theatre Department.

*Photographer: Lydia Tanji*

Much conviviality ensued during the reception as guests ran into former colleagues and met new ones. Many continued their discussion of shared interests over dinner afterward in the glittering dining room.

Presenting papers at the Railroad Museum's auditorium the following day were members from the Western, Mid-Western, Southwestern and Southeastern Regions:

- Inez Brooks-Myers – *What is Western Costume?*
- Sheryl Birkner – *Advertising in the West*
- Richard Adkins – *The Unknown Adrian*
- Shelly Foote – *Louella Ballerino: Many "Points of Consideration"*
- Melinda Seaton – *George Strait: Fashion Icon of the Texas Cowboy*
- Nancy Parezo and Angelina Jones: *The 1940s-1950s Squaw Dress: From Ethnic to Regional to National Attire*
- Alyce Graham – *Then Becomes Now: How Costumed Interpretation Engages the Public with History*

*continued on page 5*

## CSA-WR 2009 EDUCATIONAL SYMPOSIUM (CONT.)



Alyce Graham in her traveling dress by the North Fork of the Arkansas River. This dress was reproduced from a picture in an 1881 issue of Harper's Bazaar.

The traveling dress is made from all period materials: wool, silk, and cotton. Though Alyce used her machine for some seams, all the visible finishing work was done by hand. The most time-consuming part of the sewing was the twenty-four hand-bound buttonholes on the bodice.

Alyce made the dress for Leadville's Boom Days festival in August, 2008. She chose the year 1881 because the railroad arrived in 1880, and Leadville's population of women rose dramatically in 1881. With the dress, she wanted to illustrate the experience that women had traveling to Leadville during that time.

Alyce Graham is pursuing a Masters degree in History at Virginia Commonwealth University. After she graduates in May, 2010, she plans on going on to get a PhD. Alyce has been sewing since she was four years old, and worked for two years at the Costume Design Center at Colonial Williamsburg.

*Photo courtesy of Alyce Graham*

Alyce Graham, graduate student at Virginia Commonwealth University, is the winner of our region's 2009 Student Award. Congratulations, Alyce.

Conviviality resumed mid-day over lunch at Sacramento Old Town's historic Fat City Bar and Café. Built around 1849 as dry goods store, the brick structure's superb restoration recalled an Old West dining hall and saloon.

Symposium guests then explored Old Town's Western Americana shops and museums before returning to the Railroad Museum for the region's Annual Meeting and remaining papers.

We thank the Education Committee (Inez Brooks-Myers, Shelly Foote, Jan Loverin and Heather Vaughan) for an excellent symposium. Its venue and content superbly captured and conveyed the spirit of the old and new American West.



Sheryl Birkner (*left*), a featured speaker in this program and current Vice President of Technology for CSA, with Kay Enyart, Bella Eibensteiner, and Susan Claassen, who was the incarnation of designer Edith Head in her performance at the CSA National Symposium held May 2009 in Tempe, Arizona.

*Photo courtesy of Lydia Tanji*

## CSA WESTERN REGION INVITES YOU TO ...

### *Amish Abstractions: Quilts from the Collection of Faith & Stephen Brown*

de Young Museum, San Francisco

April 17, 2010



Enjoy a guided tour of this exhibition of 48 quilts, dating from the 1880s to 1940. This exhibition examines how the Amish approach to quilt making is informed by social structure and religious belief and how each community has adopted distinctive methods and techniques to create richly colored quilts with bold patterns. [www.famsf.org/deyoung](http://www.famsf.org/deyoung)

### **National Symposium *Crossroads: From Cowhide to Couture***

Kansas City, MO

May 25-30, 2010



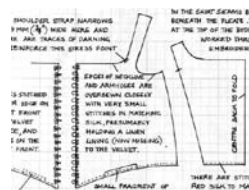
Costume Society of America members will share research, exhibitions, performances, and original designs at this year's national symposium in Kansas City, Missouri. Besides sampling local cuisine and music, attendees will have the opportunity to visit nearby museums and points of interest.

[www.costumesocietyamerica.com](http://www.costumesocietyamerica.com)

### **Workshop: Taking Patterns from Historic Garments**

Seattle, WA

July/August 2010



Learn the Janet Arnold method for taking accurate patterns from existing garments. This will be a hands-on workshop where participants will use entomologist pins, measuring tapes and drafting paper. A discussion about taking construction notes and how to use the scale patterns to create full size garments will be included. Date and venue will be announced soon!

### *Weavers' Stories*

Fowler Museum at UCLA, Los Angeles, CA

August 21, 2010

This experimental exhibition starts with the understanding that textile arts are widely regarded as the archetypal form of women's labor in Southeast Asia. Through video, weavers and batik artist tell their stories directly to the museum audience. We will also view accompanying exhibition Fowler in Focus: Courtly and Urban Batik from Java, which features the museum's extensive holdings of Indonesian textiles.

[www.fowler.ucla.edu](http://www.fowler.ucla.edu)

### **Let's Celebrate!!**

Oakland Museum of California, Oakland, CA

September 2010

Celebrate the re-opening of the Art and History galleries at the Oakland Museum of California with a full day exploring collections in the East Bay, including the workshop of "Dianne Ayres Arts & Crafts Period Textiles." [www.museumca.org](http://www.museumca.org)

### *Fashioning Fashion: European Dress in Detail, 1700-1915*

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA

December 4, 2010

After a curatorial overview of the museum's recent acquisition of a major collection of European men's, women's and children garments and accessories, view the exhibition. This exhibition tells the story of fashion's aesthetic and technical development from the Age of Enlightenment to World War I. It also explores the sweeping changes that occurred in fashionable dress spanning a period of over two hundred years. We will also hold our annual meeting here. [www.lacma.org](http://www.lacma.org)

**For more information on these programs  
or to submit program ideas,  
contact Shelly Foote**

at [Satalexandria@aol.com](mailto:Satalexandria@aol.com) or  
[www.costumesocietyamerica.com/RegionV](http://www.costumesocietyamerica.com/RegionV)

## EVENTS AROUND THE REGION

**Hand Fan Museum, Healdsburg, CA*****Babies and Toddlers - Those Funny / Frustrating Bundles of Joy***

April - June, 2010

A tiny, jewel box of a museum with a great collection of Edwardian and Victorian fans, the Hand Fan Museum also features rotating themed exhibits every 3 - 4 months. Admission is free. Hours are Tuesday-Sunday, 11am -4pm and closed holidays and rainy days. Tours can be arranged for other days and times by calling (707) 431-2500 . Please visit [www.handfanmuseum.org](http://www.handfanmuseum.org) for more information.

**Lace Museum, Sunnyvale, CA*****Night and Day: Lingerie and Sleepwear from 1850 to 1950***

Through June 5, 2010

This exhibition features a variety of unmentionables, many trimmed with lace. The museum is open Tuesday – Saturday, 11:00am-4:00pm. The exhibition closes June 5, 2010. For more information call (408) 730-4695 or visit [www.thelacemuseum.org](http://www.thelacemuseum.org).

**Palos Verdes Art Center: The Artists' Studio****Palos Verdes, CA*****"Signatures" Artwear Fashion Show***

May 1, 2010

CSA member Justine Limpus Parish will present her Spring Collection as a part of this group fashion show, which features one-of-a-kind fiber and jewelry ensembles by 22 artists. The show will open with a trio of Lindy-hop dancers from Rusty's Rhythm Club, El Segundo, CA. This twice yearly artwear fashion show, champagne luncheon and gala boutique will be presented on the patio at Palos Verdes Art Center, (5504 West Crestridge Road).

*Tickets are \$35 and must be purchased in advance.* by calling (310) 541-2479, extension 302 or in person at the gallery. Seating is limited, please reserve early. For further information, contact Gabrielle, (310) 991-7144 or visit [www.artists-studio-pvac.com](http://www.artists-studio-pvac.com).

**Woodbury University, Burbank, CA*****Under the Sun: Swimwear in California***

March 10 – June 13, 2010

Judith Tamkin Fashion Center, Cabrini Hall

*Under the Sun* will look at the development of the California swimwear industry within the context of American sportswear and the California lifestyle. Examples range from the early 1900s to the present and will include swimsuits from Catalina, Cole of California, Caltex and Rudi Gernreich. The exhibition is mounted by Fashion Design students currently enrolled in the Fashion Exhibition course, under the guidance of Melinda Webber Kerstein, Curator of the Fashion Study Collection. A color brochure will be available. Open daily 8am-8pm. Closed public holidays and March 13 – 21, 2010. For further information, please contact Melinda Webber Kerstein at [melinda.kerstein@woodbury.edu](mailto:melinda.kerstein@woodbury.edu).

**Bellevue Arts Museum, Bellevue, WA*****Beth Levine: First Lady of Shoes***

February 18-June 6, 2010

This exhibit features over 100 pairs of shoes by Beth Levine (1914 - 2006), the first successful female shoe designer in an era and field dominated by men, who was known for the comfort, wearability and beauty of her designs. While Beth's name remains virtually unknown, her designs are not. They include the iconic white go-go boots made famous by Nancy Sinatra's 1966 song, "These boots are made for walkin'," the Spring-o-lator and the topless 'No' shoe. For more information and a schedule of related events, please visit [www.bellevuearts.org](http://www.bellevuearts.org)

**San Jose Museum of Quilts & Textiles,****San Jose, CA*****Hawaii's Alfred Shaheen: Fabric to Fashion******Grand Applique: Hawaiian Quilts***

May 18-August 8, 2010

Located at 520 South First Street, hours are Tues-Sun, 10-5 pm. For more information, please go to [www.sjqiltmuseum.org](http://www.sjqiltmuseum.org) or call (408) 971-0323.

## "HOWARD GREER: DESIGNING HOLLYWOOD" - EXHIBITION REPORT

by Melinda Kerstein

Last fall, Woodbury University in Burbank, CA presented the exhibition Howard Greer: Designing Hollywood, in which two of CSA's Western Region Board played roles. Melinda Webber Kerstein, Student Award Chair, acted as curator and led a team of Woodbury University fashion design students and staff through the process of researching and mounting the exhibition. Shelly Foote, who has conducted extensive research on Greer, gave a lecture called "Howard Greer: Paris, Hollywood and the American Fashion Industry" in conjunction with the opening of the exhibit, and was a great asset while researching Greer.

Howard Greer (1896 – 1974) was a pioneer in the Los Angeles Fashion industry for more than thirty years. Beginning his career at the House of Lucile (Lady Duff Gordon) and later at Paramount Pictures, his bold decision to step out of the Hollywood studio system and into the world of custom made clothing in 1927 created a local market for Hollywood's elite. His custom made business endured the test of time, while he continued as a freelance costume designer. Greer produced his first mass market collection in late 1946, closed his custom made shop, Greer, Inc. in 1948, and went solely ready-to-wear. Greer maintained a loyal clientele throughout his career. Katharine Hepburn used Greer for her personal wardrobe and costumes for the films *Christopher Strong* in 1933 and *Bringing Up Baby* in 1938. He retired in 1962.



Woman's Cocktail Dress  
Howard Greer, circa 1954  
Purchase. WU.2006.21.147

*Photo courtesy of Woodbury University*



Woman's Day Dress  
Howard Greer, circa 1941  
Gift of Mrs. Edward Tuttle  
WU.1986.14

*Photo courtesy of Woodbury University*

In 1931, Greer was named to the Advisory Council of the new Costume Design program at Woodbury College. Greer's name alone was enough to bring a level of prominence to the new program, which the Los Angeles Times called "one of the most exclusive instruction features in which Woodbury takes pride." [Los Angeles Times, B15, January 31, 1932]

The exhibition included selections from Woodbury University Fashion Study Collection's Howard Greer Archives. The archive includes clippings, photographs and ephemera encompassing the career of Howard Greer from 1927 until 1962. The Fashion Study collection also includes several examples of Greer's custom made and ready-to-wear pieces. A color brochure accompanied the exhibition.

## COSTUME ON FILM: "THE YOUNG VICTORIA"

**An Interview with Academy Award Winner Sandy Powell**  
**by Allyson Hollingsworth**  
**CSA-WR Newsletter Editor**

2009 was a good year for costume, particularly for its role in telling the stories of strong, gutsy, independent women on screen. *The Young Victoria*, *Bright Star*, *Coco Before Chanel*, and *Precious* all feature heroines whose unique sense of style set them apart from others of their time and place, and the costume designers make full use of this to give the viewer deeper insight into these characters.

In an e-mail interview with Sandy Powell, who created the breathtakingly lovely costumes for *The Young Victoria*, I inquired about the following aspects of her work on this film:

*AH: What most surprised you in the research on the character/period?*

SP: What surprised me most about the period when researching it was that I actually quite liked it! I've always thought this part of the 19th century a bit unattractive for women, especially during the time of transition between 2 different looks (late 1820's and early 30's going into late 30's)

The best part about every job is the research period where you will always learn something new, and the more you discover the more you get to like it. Whereas I started thinking the look was a bit boring, I found I could make it interesting and more varied. It helped obviously that I was dressing a queen, which meant there were numerous looks to try!

*AH: How did the costuming reflect the character's identity as an original thinker, a strong woman who expresses herself through clothing choices that separate her from the traditional look of the era?*

SP: The costumes worn by [actress] Emily [Blunt] in the first part of the film, before she was Queen, were designed to make her look young, even younger than her age. This was deliberate and to show the control her mother, The Duchess of Kent, had over her. She was determined to keep her childlike and dominated her.

Once she had become Queen however, her look changes as by then Victoria has total control of how she looks. She even designed her own wedding dress and bridesmaid dresses. Here her look becomes simpler but sophisticated, without all the frills and ruffles inflicted on her by her mother.

*AH: I'm very interested in the millinery aspects as well, because the hats seem to be the main form of expression of character in the film. Can you tell me more about them?*

SP: The hats, or bonnets are obviously important, as this was a period where one wouldn't be seen out without one. I wanted to keep them light and youthful looking so made a lot of them from straw and transparent materials. This also helped with the lighting as strong shadows were never cast over the face.

*AH: Thank you so much for taking the time to respond to my questions! I so loved your work on The Young Victoria and it was wonderful to hear about some of the ideas behind the costumes. It's funny because as a viewer I registered the change in Emily's character on a more intuitive level, but hearing your thoughts really made me aware of how deftly the psychological aspects of character can be handled through costume, where the clothes speak volumes but in a very soft voice.*

Go to [www.theyoungvictoria.co.uk/](http://www.theyoungvictoria.co.uk/) to see the trailer for *The Young Victoria* and for behind-the-scenes extras.

## COSTUME ON FILM: "SHERLOCK HOLMES"

### *Elegant Tailoring for Sherlock Holmes*

Reviewed by Laurie Kurutz

Assistant Professor of Costume Construction & Costume Shop Supervisor  
Department of Theatre Arts, Southern Oregon University

Academy-Award winning Costume Designer Jenny Beavan has helped to create a new look for Sherlock Holmes. Unlike his predecessors, this new Holmes wears a lively mix of clothing pieces, pairing contemporaneous Victorian London clothes with clothing pieces from earlier in the nineteenth century. With the character of Dr. Watson, she adheres more closely to Victorian clothing conventions.

From top to bottom, this Holmes character adapts Victorian clothing to suit his unconventional style. His clothing choices are all slightly "off," either in the construction of the garments or how he wears them. For example, his looser cut frock coat is a style of an earlier era and is made of wide-wale corduroy, not the tweed or herringbone wool typical of Victorian menswear. His waistcoat, with its revers flipped up to frame the face, also harkens back to the Romantic period. Holmes ties the traditional grey-striped four-in-hand in all manner of ways, while his shirt collars and cuffs are worn open. This casual, careless manner of dress gives Holmes the air of a Bohemian poet or artist.

Dr. Watson, a former military man, wears crisply tailored impeccable suits. His hats have square shapes with flat tops -- none of Holmes's rounded, soft, slouch hats for this Watson. His stiff, detachable collar gives a nod to those collars of the period, but appears too loose and too low to be historically accurate. Actor Jude Law reportedly hated wearing the high, Victorian collar. It is possible the costume designer softened the high, tight fit of the true period collar to appease the

modern actor, who is not use to wearing stiff Victorian clothes. Dr. Watson's suits show off precision-tailored shoulders with minimal padding. His blue-gray tweed suits and brown herringbone suits are elegantly fit, with armholes cut high and with defined waist suppression.

Jenny Beavan's choices in tailored costumes clearly define, and beautifully render, the characters of Holmes and Watson. Watson's crisp, tidy appearance is a good foil to Holmes' casual Bohemian style.

## SEEN IN LAS VEGAS ...



Clockwise from left: *Jubilee* headpieces, *Jubilee* showgirl, Liberace Museum.



CSR-WR Members took a trip to Vegas on February 13, 2010 to experience the spangled, feathered, and bejeweled behind-the-scenes tour of *Jubilee*, one of the last lavish stage spectaculars, and the Liberace Museum. All photos courtesy of Edie Sanford-Tuazon.

***Betsy Bloomingdale and the Western Region*****By Inez Brooks-Myers**

What do you do when a prominent woman gives you over 100 high fashion garments? You have an exhibition and share it with the public!

“High Style: Betsy Bloomingdale and the Haute Couture” was the featured exhibition at the FIDM (Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising) Museum and Galleries in Los Angeles, October 21 through December 13, 2009. The focus of the exhibition was the outstanding collection from her own wardrobe, that Mrs. Bloomingdale gave to FIDM LA.

Members of the Western Region of the Costume Society of America had a meeting that dealt with the exhibition in depth, on Saturday, November 7, 2009. The group heard a presentation about Mrs. Bloomingdale, the significance of her collection of couture, and the development of the exhibition. The co-curators were Kevin Jones and Christine Johnson.

A film featuring interviews with Mrs. Bloomingdale, several of her family members, and designers was premiered for the group. It was so up to date that it included footage of Mrs. Bloomingdale arriving at the October 2009, opening of the exhibition dressed in orange. The film also included Hubert de Givenchy, James Galanos and Oscar de la Renta, and others.

Carolyn Jamerson, who made all of the forms for the exhibition gave a detailed talk on the construction of the invisible mounts. She shared her step-by-step process, and passed out information sheets on “how to” and suggested sources for the recommended materials she used. She created idiosyncratic mounts, specifically made for each garment in the exhibition.

In the afternoon, Kevin Jones took us on a walking tour of the exhibition. The display was laid out in four different sections: INTRODUCTION - presenting Betsy Bloomingdale and some of her favorite designers; HAUTE COUTURE explaining some of the hand techniques that set apart Parisian Couture from ready-to-wear; THE DESIGNERS – showing some of the important designers who played a role in creating and developing Mrs. Bloomingdale’s wardrobe; LIFE and LIFESTYLE highlighting Betsy Bloomingdale as a hostess of international renown and an individual with a sense of etiquette and fashion.

Mrs. Bloomingdale’s taste is flawless, and the garments were presented faultlessly. In addition to the stunning garments, the range of color in each gallery, and the invisible mounts added to the beauty of the exhibition. The garments on display included pieces dating between 1961 and 1996 by Pierre Balmain, Andre Courreges, the House of Dior (Marc Bohan and Gianfranco), James Galanos, Oscar de la Renta, Yves Saint Laurent, Valentino and others.

A valuable tool, used to educate the visiting public on some of the nuances of haute couture, was a set of hand colored croquis of many of Mrs. Bloomingdale’s fashion choices. A croquis is a colored sketch of a garment, with an attached fabric swatch, sent to important clients, showing the garment that they have selected. The FIDM gallery treated the viewers to a whole wall of croquis.

Jones let the Costume Society members in on little secrets, such as the package of White House cigarettes that were found in the bottom of a hat box. The friendship between Betsy Bloomingdale and Nancy Reagan is well documented. The cigarettes were obviously a long forgotten souvenir of visits to Washington, DC during the Reagan era. Both Jones and Johnson warmly shared stories associated with the life and style of Betsy Bloomingdale. It was evident that they shared a respect and fondness for Mrs. Bloomingdale.

Go to <http://vimeo.com/7643836> to view the film accompanying the exhibition on Vimeo.

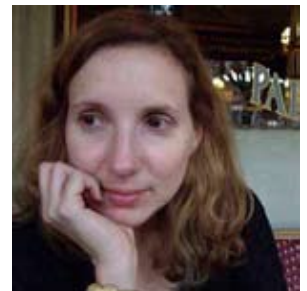


*Newsletter of the Western Region of the  
Costume Society of America*

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## NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

Happy Spring! I would like to extend thanks to all the members who contributed to this edition of the CSA-WR Newsletter. Because of your submissions, we have great coverage of programs, upcoming events, news and contacts into the wide world of costume that help make each installment unique and hopefully interesting. Keep 'em coming! The deadline for the Fall 2010 issue is Sept. 15. Please note the new email address for submissions, questions or comments is: [csawr.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:csawr.newsletter@gmail.com)



On a sad note, I was grieved to hear of the death of Alexander McQueen. He was my favorite contemporary designer, who always pushed the boundaries of form with each and every collection. I loved that his clothes started with a conceptual reference and ended up wearable sculpture. From his thesis collection at Central St. Martin's, to the Widows of Culloden, The Girl Who Lived in the Tree, Witches, and his Darwinist-inspired frocks last fall, McQueen was a great showman, turning clothing into poetry, albeit often dark and melancholic. His work was real, fantastical, provocative and unquestionably beautiful.

Best regards,

Allyson Hollingsworth  
Newsletter Editor  
CSA- Western Region