

Well-suited for success



New CSU exhibit follows evolution of women's suits

By **DIANA MURPHY COLES**
The Coloradoan

Technological advances in textiles and apparel production have changed the way women dress.

The 20th century has seen the advent of new fibers and fabrics — think polyester and rayon — and the rise of mass manufacturing

techniques that have made “ready to wear” the mainstay of many designer collections.

These changes and more are explored in a new show at Colorado State University's Gustafson Gallery.



BRANDT

“Women's Suits: Transformations in Form and Fabric, 1890-1990” illustrates how technological advances in textiles and apparel production have influenced the evolution of women's suits during the past 100 years. The exhibit is based on research gathered during a group study by students, faculty and friends of the gallery.

“Although suits have been a part of women's wardrobes for the last 300 years, they have become a standard fashion statement for women of the 20th century,” Gustafson Gallery curator Linda Carlson says.

The suit's evolution has been influenced by dressmaking versus tailoring techniques, the increasing popularity of ready-to-wear fashions, simplification and standardization, prevailing silhouette trends, fabric availability and new fiber technology.

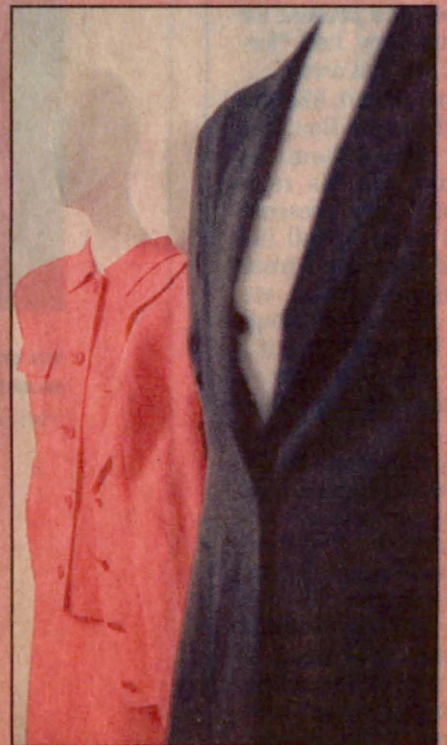
“We found that making connections to technology helps explain changes in form, fabric and definition,” says co-curator Brenda Brandt, an associate professor in the design, merchandising and consumer sciences department. “Each suit in the exhibit will be identified as representative of a particular decade. Technological changes that occurred during each period will be noted and related to changes in the suits.”

The retrospective features 35 garments from the department of design, merchandising and consumer sciences' collection of historic costumes and textiles. Among the collection's highlights:



SUCCESS DRESS: Above, mannequins await positioning in the Gustafson Gallery exhibit ‘Women's Suits.’ At left, a Calvin Klein suit is seen through the crook of a mannequin's arm. Below, two of the four Klein suits included in the exhibit.

Photos by **Jill P. Mott**
The Coloradoan



If you go

“Women's Suits: Transformations in Form and Fabric, 1890-1990” opened Friday at the Gustafson Gallery at Colorado State University. It will run through May 1.

The exhibit illustrates how technological advances in textile and apparel production have influenced the evolution of women's suits throughout the past 100 years. Highlights include several modern suits donated to the gallery by Calvin Klein Inc.

Admission is free. Regular hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, but special viewings can be arranged. For more information, call curator Linda Carlson at 491-1983 or co-curator Brenda Brandt at 491-6759.

The Gustafson Gallery is located in Room 145 of the Gifford Building.



FINE FABRICS: Above, a mannequin wears a bright orange suit dating from the 1970s. At left, gallery curator Linda Carlson unpacks an Arnold Scaasi suit worth about \$18,000.

Suits

Continued from Page C1

20 modern suits donated by designer Calvin Klein and two suits donated by designer Arnold Scasasi.

The four Calvin Klein pieces featured in the exhibition are representative of 1990s fashion and include a highly tailored suit in luxurious silk and tweed. The suit's color — cognac — and finely detailed features represent the rich tones and elegant shapes that have become popular with improved production machinery and better availability of high-quality fabrics.

Also on display by Calvin Klein: a sleek deep green pant suit made from hammered rib wool, a novelty fabric that represents the diversity of materials being used in the 1990s.

Colorado State is among a select group of universities and institutions worldwide to receive donations from Calvin Klein Inc.

Other recipients include the Metropolitan Museum in New York, the Kyoto Museum in Japan, the Victoria and Albert Museum in London and the Los Angeles County Museum.

"We are delighted with the ongoing gifts from Calvin Klein," Carlson says. "The pieces are beautiful examples of modern fashion. The donated suits are an integral part of this exhibition, and we're also looking forward to adding Calvin Klein pieces from the 1970s and 1980s to our collection."

The university was chosen because of its sizable costume collection and the climate control it employs to store and study garments, Brandt says.

The Gustafson Gallery's collection, which includes approximately 10,000 artifacts, is used by faculty, students and independent scholars studying design, construction and material culture of middle America.