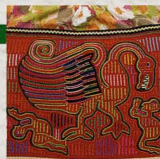




Avenir Museum


of Design & Merchandising



WINDOW TO THE WORLD

Colorado
State
University

COLLEGE OF APPLIED HUMAN SCIENCES



The Avenir Museum of Design and Merchandising offers a stimulating point of entry for exploring textiles and costume as a *window to the world*. Textiles, as material objects, provide insight into past and current socioeconomic conditions, aesthetic traditions, global trade, and world views. Avenir Museum exhibitions, workshops, and classroom presentations offer the University community and the public a unique opportunity to learn from more than 12,000 artifacts collected within the United States and around the world. Costumes from the 19th and 20th centuries tell of changing gender roles, household responsibilities, professional expectations, and life on the Colorado Front Range. The designer collections exhibit aesthetic brilliance and technical virtuosity of U.S. leaders in the fashion industry. Ethnographic artifacts from East, South, and Central Asia demonstrate the critical role that world trade plays for design inspiration and diffusion. The living traditions of weavers, quilters, embroiderers, and dyers come alive through their creative artifacts housed in the Avenir Museum.

The Department of Design and Merchandising is grateful to the Avenir Foundation for their generous support of our vision that the department's vast collection be housed in museum-standard storage, protected using the latest in conservation practices, and exhibited to the University community and the public. We are pleased to name the museum in the Foundation's honor and are grateful for its foresight in bringing our collaborative vision to life. With our Museum housed in an educational institution, the Department of Design and Merchandising assumes the special responsibility of ensuring that the primary goals of *teaching and learning* guide our decisions and activities in the coming years.

We welcome you to the Avenir Museum of Design and Merchandising. We hope that the Museum's collections engage visitors in exploring garments, textiles, and chairs for insight into their personal lives, and for greater understanding of global interconnections. In a rich sense, the Avenir Museum is a *window to the world's* history and cultures.

Mary Littrell

Mary Littrell
Department Head
Design and Merchandising

WINDOW TO THE WORLD

Linda Carlson

The Avenir Museum of Design and Merchandising (formerly the Historic Costume and Textiles Collection) at Colorado State University was the early dream of the late Dagmar Gustafson, former department head, who in the 1950s envisioned the museum as a way to inspire an appreciation of textiles and apparel in our students. Gustafson believed knowledge of international and historic clothing styles would generate student interest and broaden their cultural background. We are proud that students at all undergraduate and graduate levels have access to the museum's collections. This controlled and supervised access is unique among university museums, with approximately 200 students actively participating in research and class projects every semester.

In 2008, the Museum was named in honor of a major gift from the Avenir Foundation, of Lakewood, Colo. ("Avenir" is French for future.) The Avenir Foundation has long maintained an interest in educational and arts activities and we are proud to bear its name.

Today, the Avenir Museum contains more than 12,000 objects, largely 19th and 20th century garments, textiles, accessories, and interior furnishings. It includes women's dresses, children's wear, and flat textiles, such as paisley shawls, quilts, Navajo rugs, and hand-woven linen bed sheets. Contemporary collections include garments designed by Mr. Blackwell, Arnold Scaasi, Calvin Klein, James Galanos, and Carolina Herrera. Non-Western dress and textiles are a growing interest of the Avenir Museum, recognizing the global importance of Asia, Africa, and Central and South America.

As a hands-on teaching and research facility, the Avenir Museum is a repository of historically significant costumes, textiles, and decorative art objects useful to students and scholars primarily in the fields of apparel, textiles, interior design, fibers, anthropology, and history and

historic preservation. Students examine artifacts for design and construction details and embellishment stitches and motifs. They are interested in the printed designs as well as the weave structure of textiles. As material culture, the objects provide insight into the social, economic, technological, and political norms of a time period. Artifacts in the Museum have been cited in survey books about 20th-century fashion and in numerous popular magazines. The Museum combines a series of collections representing ethnographic, geographic, and socioeconomic diversity. As a museum, the purpose is to obtain, document, preserve, and exhibit artifacts of regional, national, and international significance emphasizing material culture and cultural transfer of the near environment. Exhibitions and accompanying educational programming (lectures, workshops, seminars) offer a *window to the world* for members of the Colorado State University, Fort Collins, and regional communities.

Located in the University Center for the Arts, adjacent to the main Colorado State University campus, the Avenir Museum of Design and Merchandising includes a gallery; a 3,700 square foot, temperature- and humidity-controlled, state-of-the-art storage facility; reading room; teaching spaces; and administrative offices. In 2009, a conservation laboratory will be added allowing the Museum to better preserve its artifacts and to provide students with additional learning opportunities. It is our hope that we may contribute to the community as a research resource and as a source of information on the care and preservation of costume, textiles, and interior furnishings. The Gustafson Gallery, named for former department head Dagmar Gustafson, also falls under the auspices of the Avenir Museum. This gallery is located on the 3rd floor of the Gifford Building on campus, and features smaller, short-term exhibitions by students and faculty.

Historic Western Dress

There are more than 8,000 19th and 20th century garments reflecting changes in appearance and apparel in the Museum. They offer a glimpse into the important events and cherished memories of men, women, and children in the last 200 years, including weddings, graduations, births, funerals, and the variety of life's activities that define an era. Artifacts change with the introduction of new technology, such as the invention of synthetic fibers and use of the zipper in apparel. They speak to the political and economic environment, with garments that reflect boom and bust periods and times of world conflict.

Well represented are beaded dresses known as chemises (straight, dropped-waist, scooped-neck dresses) of the 1920s. These dresses reflect the growing independence of women's lives and the gaiety of life before the Great Depression. Patterns and designs illustrate a shift from the soft, curvilinear designs that characterized Art Nouveau to the more geometric, angular lines of Art Deco. Each beaded dress is stored flat in a drawer as the weight of the glass beads is a heavy pull on such delicate fabrics as silk chiffon.

There are beautiful bias cut garments from the 1930s that hug the body. Women's suits and utility dresses of the 1940s reflect the shortages and restrictions of the war years. Full-skirted dresses typify the 1950s silhouette established by French couturier Christian Dior.

1880 two-piece wedding dress, fitted bodice and bustle skirt with train of silk taffeta and satin. (88.1.1) Donor: Harry Kingman



18th century parchment fan with painted ivory sticks and abalone insets. (2002.124) Donor: Jane Foster



1920s beaded bag with tassels. (73.3.343) Donor: Caroline Ostertag

More contemporary apparel includes blue jeans and the now ubiquitous T-shirt that reflect the politics of the 1960s and rock 'n' roll. We are currently collecting apparel that we hope will represent the end of the 20th century and the beginning of this new century.

Men's apparel is less well represented, as men seem to have used their clothes until they were worn out, and then discarded them. There are frock coats from the 1830s, knickerbockers (golfing trousers ending below the knee) from the 1920s, Palm Beach suits of the 1930s, 1980s handsomely tailored suits designed by Giorgio Armani, and military uniforms from a variety of major historic conflicts.

Included in the Western dress collection are accessories such as shoes, handbags, hats, umbrellas and parasols, lingerie, and exquisite fans. Aside from apparel accessories, the Museum also maintains an extensive collection of dressmakers' patterns, embroidery and needlework patterns, and sewing notions, including early commercial zippers and stitch sample books.



1923 chemise of "artificial silk" (later renamed rayon), silk velvet, fox squirrel trim, and gold-covered silk slip. (73.3.3) Donor: Caroline Ostertag

Designer Apparel

Beginning in the 1950s with beautiful dresses by Ceil Chapman, a favorite designer of the Hollywood stars, and including ball gowns created by Denver designer Julia Tobias, the Museum possesses significant collections of designers Arnold Scaasi, James Galanos, Calvin Klein, Carolina Herrera, and Mr. Blackwell. We are very proud of our 20-year relationship with Mr. Blackwell. While known primarily for his Annual Worst-Dressed List, Mr. Blackwell was an innovative and creative designer, who produced successful apparel lines from the 1950s through 1980s. We feel privileged that he came to campus as a visiting scholar in 1997, and taught studio classes, gave several public lectures, and presided over a wonderful retrospective of the collections. The Avenir Museum owns seven large scrapbooks given to us by Mr. Blackwell that chronicle his career. We also have his



1980s Arnold Scaasi (b. 1931) original of black Jacquard organza featuring an umbrella skirt and off-shoulder bodice. (971.542) Donor: Arnold Scaasi

master patterns and a series of fashion sketches. A major retrospective of Mr. Blackwell's creative life is planned for Fall 2010.

Designers Arnold Scaasi and Calvin Klein also recognized the importance of the Museum as a teaching and research resource with gifts of their collections. The designers' beautiful creations provide students with the opportunity to view the fine detailing, complexity, and handwork that characterize a well-constructed couture garment.



1980s Mr. Blackwell (1922-2008) original of silk velvet gown with pencil skirt, rhinestone embellished bodice and peplum. (2001.31) Donor: Mr. Blackwell



Circa 1980 Carolina Herrera (b. 1939) original open-weave fabric with hand-applied gimp polka-dots, back view. (2004.150) Donor: Elizabeth Hyatt

Non-Western Textiles and Dress



Geta, 20th century, lacquer-finished Japanese platform sandals, with hollowed out platform soles. Tiny bells are attached inside the partially hollowed soles announcing the arrival of the young woman. (83.7.65) Donor: Editha Leonard

A major focus of the Avenir Museum's non-Western collections is textiles and clothing of Asia. The Maxson Collection of kimono, given to the University by Bill Maxson in honor of his wife Mary Lou, became a part of the Museum's holdings in 2004. A lifelong student of Japanese textile art, Mary Lou collected, researched, and documented her collection of more than 300 kimono, which now form the basis for an impressive Asian textiles collection. This collection represents a broad spectrum of traditional Japanese textile design. Other donors have added significantly to this collection with gifts of additional kimono, obi, dolls in traditional dress, other accessories, and flat textiles.

Our emphasis on Asian textiles also includes Chinese robes, couched with gold thread dragons and embroidered with Buddhist and Taoist symbols, as well as a beautiful 19th-century woman's hood and a boy's "tiger" hat. The woven patterns in Chinese textiles, and the silks of Japan,

help students understand the complex and ancient weaving traditions of both countries, and the influence they have had on each other and the world.

Recognizing the growing global importance of countries in South and Southeast Asia (India, Laos, Vietnam, Myanmar, Bhutan, Thailand, and Cambodia) and Central Asia (Uzbekistan), the Avenir Museum views these areas as an important focus for current and future collecting. The textiles originating in that part of the world have long been seen by scholars as critical to our understanding of east-west trade and the history of textiles. These countries are now increasingly acknowledged for their contributions to the production of contemporary apparel and textiles. Ikat



Woman's ceremonial hood, mid-19th century, silk and metal thread on silk, metal disks, and tassels. (971.327) Donor: Sophia Aldrich

fabrics, whose patterns are dyed onto the warp and/or weft prior to weaving, are among the most beautiful textiles. Saris in bright colors and with richly embellished borders take our breath away. Indian embroidery includes shisha, or mirror work, each small disc of mirror exactly stitched securely to the textile.



20th-century boy's robe detail, ethnic origin believed to be Afghanistan; purchased in Turkey. (Arndt 343) Donor: Judi Arndt

Contemporary silk sari, 46 inches wide by 18 feet long (includes yardage for choli blouse) with supplementary weft peacocks. (951.114) Donor: Karen Herhold

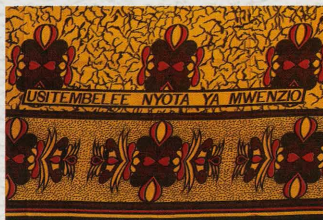


Africa



20th-century Moroccan Fez belt, one-half of original width. (2009.025) Donor: Jack Curfman

Khangas – selection of women's cotton wrap garments from Kenya. Donors: Robert Udall, Bill and Pat Ciesla



African textiles including khangas (eastern Africa wrap apparel), kente cloth, richly dyed adire, hand-stamped adinkra, and a selection of northern Africa textiles highlight the diversity of textiles from the continent of Africa. The Robert and Dorothy Udall Collection forms the core of these textiles and includes textile samples and garments produced in Kenya for the Western market in the 1960s and '70s. Photographs and newspaper reports chronicle the work of Maridadi East, a company established by the Udalls to interpret, design, and produce a wide range of textiles for apparel and interior furnishings.



Contemporary North African Berber wedding caftan. (2006.17) Donor: Helen Davis



Mid-20th-century shirt, bogolafini, commonly known as mud cloth, from Bamana group, Mali. (961.160) Donor: Robert Udall

Central and South America



Guatemalan huipil, woman's blouse from village of Chichicastenango. (2001.77) Donor: Marta Christensen Laven

The artifacts of Central America include Maya huipiles, backstrap woven and beautifully embellished blouses from Guatemala, and molas from Panama. Of particular importance is an

intact 1950s mola blouse featuring a giant bird about to devour a frightened figure. The designs and woven details of both huipiles and molas can identify the status of the wearer and reveal the specific village where the garment originated. Huipiles are embellished with motifs of local and mythical animals and with floral and geometric designs using a supplementary weft technique. Mola patterns may have originated as body art before the arrival of Europeans. Reverse appliqué techniques are used, stacking multiple layers of fabric on top of each other and cutting through the layers to reveal the color underneath in specific areas.

Fine Andean weaving and knitting typify the textiles of Peru in South America. Sources of wool, including the llama, alpaca, and vicuna, help students identify the variety of animal sources other than sheep.



1950s mola blouse from Panama. (2001.15) Donors: Art and Edith Wartburg

Lace, Quilts, and Coverlets

In 2000, the donation of a significant lace collection was added to the holdings of the Museum. Ruth Payne Hellmann, docent to the Metropolitan Museum in New York, and avid lace maker and collector, left this extensive collection of lace along with invaluable lace sample books from the 18th century, lace-making tools, and other supporting materials to the University upon her death. Hellmann's interest, in line with the mission of the Museum, was in assembling a broad range of lace and lace-like constructions through which students could gain an appreciation and knowledge of lace.

Embellished textiles include both pieced and appliqué quilts and hand- and Jacquard-woven coverlets. Jacquard looms were developed in the very early 19th century, providing a mechanical method of weaving curvilinear design motifs. The crazy quilts of the late 19th century are particularly interesting as a source of a variety of



Linen bag with embroidered initials HNT, second half 19th century. (75.1.14) Donor: Alice Dodge Wallace

1887 presentation quilt detail. (90.26.3) Donor: Julia Hanan



1843 summer-winter coverlet, indigo and white double weave, of cotton and wool. (2006.70). Donor: William Lumb

embroidery stitches. Quilts in the Museum include an 1887 presentation crazy quilt and a doll quilt hand-pieced at the end of the 1800s. Nineteenth-century coverlets illustrate the advances in technology that took coverlet making from a domestic activity done in the home to one that required a complex loom that only professional weavers used.



1850-1860 Point de gaze needle lace lappet under construction (Ab22 2.1.1) Donor: Ruth Payne Hellmann

Chairs

The creation of a chair collection in 2007 is the beginning of a larger endeavor to include interior artifacts in the Avenir Museum. The interior design program was included in the Department of Design and Merchandising in the late 1980s, and today is a significant part of the department. The addition of interior artifacts is a logical step in the progressive growth of the Avenir Museum.

Chairs reflect the periods and styles of interiors throughout history. And, like all material culture, chairs are thoughts in tangible form – they embody a record of people's lives, attitudes, and ideas – and therefore are tools to enhance our understanding of people in the past and present and the design movements they have created.

Few interior design programs throughout the United States have chair collections. As a teaching collection, students have supervised access and an opportunity to see, measure, sketch, and draw actual examples of various

periods and styles of interior design. Chairs and garments combined in exhibitions provide a more complete view of the near environment.



1870-1900 Victorian lady's boudoir chair. (2009.032)
Donor: Craig Birdsong



1950 Danish modern "wishbone" chair designed by Hans Wegner. Donor: Jack Curfman



Late 19th-century Victorian side chair detail in style of Charles Locke Eastlake. (2009.033)
Donors: David and Rosalie Bentzin

WINDOW TO THE WORLD

The Avenir Museum offers an in-house database for searching artifacts, based on type of garment, time period, and historical provenance. A preliminary project, based on graduate student research, is a retrieval system specifically designed for artists who are researching embellished textiles. Upon completion, the index will include the characteristics of embroidered surface embellishments most relevant to research in design and visual art. Examples include the fine cross-stitch marking of a 19th-century nightshirt, the Bullion knots richly embellishing a woman's nightgown, the silk embroidery on a castanet pouch, and the hand-stitched roses on a linen tablecloth. Future plans

include an online database accessible to researchers and scholars.

There is something for everyone in the Avenir Museum of Design and Merchandising, something to inspire, to take your breath away, to broaden your cultural perspective, and to bring forth memories of times past. The Avenir Museum of Design and Merchandising is truly a *window to the world*.

Linda Carlson has been the curator of collections for the past 20 years. She has been responsible for the growth and development of this major University museum.

For additional information about the Avenir Museum of Design and Merchandising, contact Linda.Carlson@ColoState.edu.

The Avenir Museum of Design and Merchandising is on the threshold of great things – exhibitions, workshops, lectures, symposia – that will broaden our knowledge of and appreciation for the garments, textiles, and interior furnishings that define culture past and present. Please join us in these efforts.

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