



ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

SCAD FASH Museum of Fashion + Film presents *Cinematic Couture*, an exhibition focusing on the art of costume design through the lens of movies and popular culture. More than 50 costumes created by the world-renowned London firm Cosprop deliver an intimate look at garments and millinery that set the scene, provide personality to characters and establish authenticity in period pictures.

The films represented in the exhibition depict five centuries of history, drama, comedy and adventure through period costumes worn by stars such as Meryl Streep, Colin Firth, Drew Barrymore, Keira Knightley, Nicole Kidman and Kate Winslet. *Cinematic Couture* showcases costumes from 24 acclaimed motion pictures, including Academy Award winners and nominees *Titanic*, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Out of Africa*, *The Duchess* and *The Danish Girl*, as well as British television series *Pride and Prejudice*, *Downton Abbey* and *Victoria*.

Costume is the essential ingredient in the authenticity of a period piece. It provides vital information about where and when the drama occurs, and conveys characters' status, age, class and wealth, as well as their roles within the story. Garments created for period pieces require couture craftsmanship and face intense visual scrutiny. When the camera zooms in for a close-up, each handmade detail must appear to be genuine and impeccably executed. This exhibition allows the viewer to intimately examine the costumes and appreciate fine details only briefly seen on screen.

The garments in this exhibition come from the more than 100,000 costumes and accessories created by the British costumer Cosprop. Founded in 1965 by award-winning costume designer John Bright, the company specializes in costumes for film, television and theater, and employs a staff of 40 experts in designing, tailoring, cutting, fitting, millinery, jewelry-making and repair, dyeing and printing. Cosprop maintains an extensive library of original garments used as source material, ensuring that all productions are historically accurate.

Since 1987, when the Academy Award for Best Costume Design was awarded to Bright and fellow costume designer Jenny Beavan for *A Room with a View*, the company has supplied costumes for 61 nominated films. In 2009, Michael O'Connor won the Academy Award for Best Costume Design for *The Duchess*, featuring Cosprop costumes. In 2011, along with Susannah Buxton and Caroline McCall's Emmy Awards for Outstanding Costumes for a Miniseries, Movie or a Special for *Downton Abbey*, Cosprop provided garments to four of the five Oscar nominees for the Best Costume Design award.

The exhibition is curated by Rafael Gomes, director of fashion exhibitions.



Costume design by Janet Patterson for Nicole Kidman in *The Portrait of a Lady*, 1996.

ABOUT SCAD AND SCAD FASH

Offering more degree programs and specializations than any other art and design university, SCAD is uniquely qualified to prepare talented students for professional, creative careers.

SCAD FASH Museum of Fashion + Film celebrates fashion as a universal language, garments as important conduits of identity, and film as an immersive and memorable medium. Situated within the SCAD Atlanta location at 1600 Peachtree St. NW, SCAD FASH focuses on the future of fashion design, connecting conceptual to historical principles of dress — whether ceremonial, celebratory or casual — and welcomes visitors of all ages to engage with dynamic exhibitions, captivating films and educationally enriching events.

Fortified by the university's strong global presence and worldwide connections to renowned contemporary fashion designers, filmmakers and creative professionals all over the world, SCAD FASH is an integral part of the SCAD educational experience.

ABOUT SCAD CURRICULUM GUIDES

SCAD curriculum guides enhance understanding of art and design through investigations that reveal relevant personal, historical and cultural connections while promoting cross-disciplinary links necessary for today's innovative careers. Designed for use within the museum's exhibition spaces and in classrooms, the guides provide learning opportunities aligned with the requirements of national education standards.

Recognizing the guides' overall design excellence and ingenuity, the American Alliance of Museums' Museum Publications Design Competition and the Southeastern Museums Conference have awarded SCAD curriculum guides first- and second-place prizes, a medal and honorable mentions for three consecutive years.

This *Cinematic Couture* guide for high school students investigates the enduring appeal of period pieces, which create convincing, engaging film experiences through costumes that combine historical authenticity, visual coherence and character-revealing details.

Educational standards are listed on page 10.

Additional learning resources are located in the Curriculum Connections can be found on page 11.

Highlighted glossary terms and citations can be found on page 13.

Image credits can be found on pages 14-15.

1.

66 ... to transfer from our inward nature human interest and a semblance of truth ... to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief ... 99¹

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

In 1817, poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge coined the phrase "suspension of disbelief" while describing how the combination of drama and reality engages readers. Today the term frequently applies to the art of filmmaking, referencing the moments when audiences are immersed in an illusion, wholeheartedly accepting the visual and narrative foundations of the onscreen world.

Historical dramas go to great lengths to foster suspension of disbelief. Total engagement in a movie is sustained through an internal coherence that relies on attention to detail. Small inconsistencies can break a movie's spell, abruptly spoiling the filmgoing experience. Convincing locations, sets and props are all part of a successful historical drama, with a particular emphasis on authentic costumes. Together with actors, they share the production's spotlight.

Achieving costume authenticity begins with the designers' background research — an investigation into the garments, fabrics, trims and accessories related to the film's time period. The designer seeks relevant paintings, illustrations and actual garments from the era through sources such as libraries, photographic archives, museums, dealers in antiquities and private collections. John Bright, whose award-winning designs and extensive personal collection includes the costumes featured in this exhibition, is highly regarded for his research. Containing garments and textiles from the early 18th to late 20th centuries, The John Bright Historic Costume Collection functions as a resource tool, allowing costume designers to inform newly created works through firsthand observations of the texture, weight, cut and construction of historic garments.



Detail of the coronation stole from *Victoria*, 2016, featured on the facing page.

Costume designers make substantial contributions to visual and narrative coherence through a firm understanding of the picture's characters and storylines. Conceptual research begins with close readings of the script, followed by the development of costume designs that visually express each character while remaining faithful to the fashions of that time. The costume's contribution to **mise en scène** — the visual elements that combine to create a single frame of the film — presents additional design considerations involving directorial choices and **cinematography**. In all these aspects — research, creation and collaboration — costume designers strive to support a convincing, cohesive narrative.

Costume designers often create **concept boards** to develop, record and share ideas. Explore the use of concept boards with the same approach that one might use to analyze the construction of a finished garment — by taking it apart. Using online sources, choose a movie represented in the exhibition and digitally select a screen still that contains one or two costumed actors. Create the concept board that could have informed the scene. The concept board should be a physical or digital collage that aligns with the screen still by featuring illustrations of similar historic garments. It should also include notes and/or illustrations regarding **silhouette**, color palettes, textures, fabrics and accessories. Refer to this guide's Curriculum Connections on page 11 for resources.

With a partner, reflect on the process of creating the concept board and what it revealed to you. For instance, what nuances did you discover about the film while analyzing silhouette or color palettes? What intriguing discoveries did you make while searching for matching historical garments? How will the experience of completing this activity, together with your understanding of suspension of disbelief, inform your next viewing of a period piece?



Three costume designs by Rosalind Ebbutt for Jenna Coleman in Victoria, 2016.

2.

66 Costume design has far more to do with storytelling than to do with clothes. 99²

Jenny Beavan, Academy Award-winning costume designer

Costume design significantly contributes to the collaborative nature of cinematic storytelling. People "read" costumes to recognize indicators of time and place — to gather insights regarding social mores and group alliances. At an individual level, costumes may express both a character's personality and current state of mind. Symbols and emotional associations related to the use of materials, color, line and texture also contribute to impressions of character.



Elinor Dashwood is the "sense" in *Sense and Sensibility*. Her calm composure is coupled with levelheaded intelligence, evident in the muted colors and the balanced, regular lines of this modest and elegant ensemble.



Marianne Dashwood represents "sensibility." The delicacy of her feelings and her effervescence in expressing them are revealed in this wedding gown. Layers of gauze and silk are strewn with tiny silver stars and edged with embroidery that is at once dainty and exuberant.

Jenny Beavan and John Bright collaborated on costume design for *Sense and Sensibility*, 1995. From left to right, designs for Emma Thompson and Kate Winslet.

As characters develop over the course of the narrative, so does their costuming. Georgiana, the **protagonist** of *The Duchess*, is a carefree 17-year-old who marries into the highest social circles. Creative and outspoken, she becomes a fashion icon and political activist. As her personal life deteriorates, she maintains appearances. Her wardrobe speaks tellingly of her situation, evolving from sumptuous harmonies to strong contrasts of color and texture.



From left to right, costume designs by Michael O'Connor for Dominic Cooper, Keira Knightley, Ralph Fiennes and Keira Knightley in *The Duchess*, 2008.

Choose a movie that is familiar to you, one that demonstrates the development of character. Select at least three of a character's costumes and explain how each one contributes to the film's narrative through visual references to the character's transformations. Share your garment interpretations with friends, seek their opinions and respond to them.

Reflect on this quote by John Bright: "If you superimpose something on someone it often looks that way; it looks like a designed costume and that's really not the point." What does Bright mean by "like a designed costume," and what really is the point?

66 The costumes have been so accessible to a modern audience. That's one of the things I tried to achieve without using modern fashion in any way. 994

Jenny Beavan, Academy Award-winning costume designer

Filmmakers strive for historic validity and authentic portrayals, knowing their effort must always remain an approximation. History-based motion pictures, including documentaries, are incomplete depictions of the past often influenced by modern perspectives. Costume designer and historian Deborah Nadoolman Landis maintains, "Period costume design must always resemble the year in which the film was made." 5

Landis is not referring to a fault; instead, she views the resemblance as a requirement. For audiences to recognize and relate to characters, costuming must contain elements of the familiar, of aesthetic values that inspire contemporary admiration and connectedness. Since any interpretation of history must be selective rather than encompassing, designers can and do create authentic period costumes based upon selected historically accurate styles that reflect contemporary aesthetics.

Identify costumes within the exhibition that contain elements you admire and would enjoy incorporating into your wardrobe. Use the adjacent workspace to sketch and take notes that describe these specific features. Compare your notes to those of your friends to determine if a particular garment or element attracted more attention among your group. Discuss these designs and analyze them to determine the source of their contemporary appeal. For instance, do they belong to an era with interests similar to our own? Do they have a romantic or nostalgic charm relevant to today? Share your theories in the space on the facing page, expressing them as thesis titles.



Costume designs by Lisy Christl for Rhys Ifans in *Anonymous*, 2011.

Follow this format:

Objects of Interest: Observation/Conclusion
From Jerkins to Jackets: The Material and Symbolic Resilience of Leather
:
:

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS

NATIONAL CORE ARTS STANDARDS - HIGH SCHOOL

Activity 1

Connecting 10.1 Anchor: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

HSI: Document the process of developing ideas from early stages to fully elaborated ideas. HSII: Utilize inquiry methods of observation, research and experimentation to explore unfamiliar subjects through art-making.

HSIII: Synthesize knowledge of social, cultural, historical and personal life with art-making approaches to create meaningful works of art or design.

Activity 2

Responding 8.1

Anchor: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

HSI: Interpret an artwork or collection of works, supported by relevant and sufficient evidence found in the work and its various contexts.

HSII: Identify types of contextual information useful in the process of constructing interpretations of an artwork or collection of works.

HSIII: Analyze differing interpretations of an artwork or collection of works in order to select and defend a plausible critical analysis.

Activity 3

Responding 7.1

Anchor: Perceive and analyze artistic work.

HSII: Recognize and describe personal aesthetic and empathetic responses to the natural world and constructed environments.

Responding 7.2 Anchor: Perceive and analyze artistic work.

HSIII: Determine the commonalities within a group of artists or visual images attributed to a particular type of art, time frame or culture.

COLLEGE, CAREER AND CIVIC LIFE C3 FRAMEWORK FOR SOCIAL STUDIES STATE STANDARDS - HIGH SCHOOL

Activity 3

D2.His.7.9-12 Perspectives: Explain how the perspectives of people in the present shape interpretations of the past.

D2.His.8.9-12

Perspectives: Analyze how current interpretations of the past are limited by the extent to which available historical sources represent perspectives of people at the time.

COMMON CORE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS - HIGH SCHOOL

Activity 1-3

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1

Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-12 topics, texts and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own ideas clearly and persuasively.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Follow The John Bright Collection on Instagram and continue to learn about fashion history. instagram.com/costumeheritage

This scene-by-scene description of *Downton Abbey* costumes explains their significance to characters and events. costumequibbling.blogspot.com/2014/01/downton-abbey-season-1-episode-1.html

Behind-the-scenes views of hair and makeup for *The Duchess* reveal creative decision-making that parallels that of costume design. youtube.com/watch?v=lpmCdk6Kk-w

A participant in historical re-enactments reflects on historical accuracy. historyboots.wordpress.com/2013/04/10/what-is-historical-accuracy

This approach to composing research paper titles simplifies the process into three straightforward sections. dissertation.laerd.com/the-main-components-of-a-dissertation-title.php

Students in SCAD Atlanta's sculpture course, Body as Concept: Prosthetics to Cosplay, research and create costuming pieces including props, garments, headdresses, prosthetics and facial elements.

scad.edu/blog/body-concept-prosthetics-cosplay



GLOSSARY

aesthetic adj. Concerned with beauty or the appreciation of beauty.

 $\textbf{cinematography} \ \textit{n}. \ \textbf{The art of creating film visuals through camera choices such as point of view, speed, focus and film type.}$

concept board *n*. A visual preview of an idea, representing guiding themes and inspirations.

mise en scène (mee zahn SEN) *n*. The visual design components of a film or play, including setting and sets, lighting, props, actors, costumes and makeup.

mores *n*. Customs and behaviors characteristic of a society or social group.

nuance *n*. A subtle, meaningful difference.

protagonist n. The leading character or most prominent main characters of a narrative.

silhouette n. The overall shape of a garment, determined by fit, fullness and length.

CITATIONS

- ¹ Coleridge, S. T. (1817). BIOGRAPHIA LITERARIA. Retrieved October 26, 2018, from gutenberg.org/files/6081/6081-h/6081-h.htm
- ² Landis, D. N. (2012). Costume design. Amsterdam; Boston: Focal Press. p.21
- ³ John Bright: The Frock Flicks Guide. (2017, December 13). Retrieved October 29, 2018, from frockflicks.com/john-bright-frock-flicks-guide
- ⁴ Michals, S. (2011, December 31). The 'Downton' Designer. Retrieved November 14, 2018, from wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052970203479104577124671699676082
- ⁵ Landis, D. N., & Victoria and Albert Museum. (2013). Hollywood Costume. New York: Abrams Andrews, B. (1970)

Facing page: Costume design by Patricia Norris for Julie Andrews' character in Victor/Victoria, 1982.

IMAGE CREDITS

Page Cover		Materials and notes Dress: Green and gold brocade with pleated gray organza in panels and	Year 2000	Film/Series The Golden Bowl
Cover	Bright	attached jewelry	2000	The Golden Bowl
Inside cover	Jenny Beavan	Dress : One-piece, cream satin slip, overlaid with silver and gold beaded crêpe, trimmed with pearl drops Wings : Metal frame and cream silk net	1998	Ever After
Inside cover	Jenny Beavan	Dress : Greenish-silver and black brocade dress with sleeves with blousing bronze, metallic organza and piped, olive taffeta strips Cord : Green, twisted, metallic thread necklace; black-velvet ribbon with cross with green stones and seed pearls	1998	Ever After
2	Janet Patterson	Evening dress : Two-piece evening dress of gold lamé overlaid with black and gold net, and a neckline edged with a gold band of heavily beaded black net Headdress : Black and gold brocade with black glass beads Fan : Black lace and black wood	1996	The Portrait of a Lady
5	Rosalind Ebbutt	Dress: Cream silk brocade with neckline trimmed in cream lace Belt and detachable train: Matching cream silk brocade Crown: Designed, 3-D printed and embellished by Tina Gancev (M.A. luxury and fashion management; B.F.A., fashion, 2017)	2016	Victoria
5	Rosalind Ebbutt	Colobium sindonis: A sleeveless inner gown of ivory silk and cotton with ivory lace down the sides and around the hem and neckline Supertunica: A tunic of old damask with gold-lace trim, red-satin lining and a gold waist cord and tie Dalmatica: Gold silk damask outer robe, digitally printed and embroidered with gold thistles, roses and shamrocks, and edged with heavy gold fringe Crown: Designed, 3-D printed and embellished by Tina Gancev (SCAD M.A. luxury and fashion management; SCAD B.F.A., fashion, 2017)	2016	Victoria
5	Rosalind Ebbutt	Short jacket: Navy blue wool with red wool collar and cuffs, and gold buttons Skirt: Navy blue wool Fill-in: Cream cotton Cap: Navy blue wool with a black peak, and a red band trim	2016	Victoria
6	Jenny Beavan, John Bright	Evening dress: Lilac silk-crêpe evening dress with gold embroidery and cream lace trim Stole: Lilac silk, open-work net with striped edging and fringing Reticule: Rose silk with silver metallic brocade overlay and silver metallic tassel	1995	Sense and Sensibility
6	Jenny Beavan, John Bright	Wedding dress : Cream silk-mesh fabric with a straw embroidered standing collar and a silk skirt train, edged with straw embroidery, over a cream-gauze underskirt beaded in gold and silver, and studded with tiny silver stars	1995	Sense and Sensibility

Page	Designer	Materials and notes	Year	Film/Series
7	Michael O'Connor	Cutaway coat: Blue wool cutaway with self-fabric buttons, stand-and-fall collar, top collar in long-pile blue velvet Breeches: Blue wool with fall front and self-fabric buttons Waistcoat: Cream silk with horizontal olive stripe, bordered in cream, olive and brown braid with silver buttons Shirt and cravat: White cotton	2008	The Duchess
7	Michael O'Connor	Overgown: Polonaise gown in deep cream, gray and faded-red dupioni silk with intertwined robings along center fronts, cuffs and neckline in self-fabric, with various other braids and passementerie in pink, green and cream; cream lace around cuffs and neckline Overskirt: Deep cream, gray and faded-red dupioni silk, a tier of self-fabric with intertwined braids Underskirt/petticoat: Pale peach taffeta silk with frill at hem Choker: Gold shot silk with mauve ribbon and faux pearls Parasol: Pale green silk with tassel detail on the edge and cream wooden handle	2008	The Duchess
7	Michael O'Connor	Cutaway coat: Burgundy cotton velvet with pewter silver buttons Long waistcoat: Gold silk brocade with gold braid and gold buttons Breeches: Matching burgundy cotton velvet Shirt: Cream linen with lace jabot and cuffs Triangular cravat: Cream cotton, tied at back Gloves: Black leather	2008	The Duchess
7	Michael O'Connor	Overgown: Robe à l'anglaise in shot silk gold-coral taffeta with green-silk taffeta lining to front-skirt panels, robings of green and gold lace, and cream floral corsage Underskirt: Shot silk gold coral taffeta Headdress: Wire frame covered with peach and cream striped organza and three white feathers Necklace: Pearls and blue glass stones with gold mountings	2008	The Duchess
9	Lisy Christl	Cape: Brown silk velvet with metallic gold braid Jerkin: Black leather with metallic braid and round leather buttons Doublet: Cream silk with a black embroidered floral pattern Breeches: Dark brown silk cord and brown cotton self-patterned fabric with brown silk under layer Shirt: Beige cotton Ruff: Cream cotton pleated with a black cotton trim	2011	Anonymous
9	Lisy Christl	Cape: Black cord, broken-down cotton with metallic gold braid Jerkin: Black leather with metallic braid and round leather buttons Doublet: Maroon quilted-cotton, cream cotton pleated cuffs and collar with black lace trim Shirt: Beige cotton Breeches: Dark brown cotton cord and self-patterned fabric with brown silk under layer	2011	Anonymous
12	Patricia Norris	Leotard : Black Lycra leotard with long, black silk fringing and diamanté trim Coat : Black man-made velvet with silver lamé lining and black boa trim	1982	Victor/Victoria

RELATED PROGRAMS

SCAD enrolls more than 14,000 undergraduate and graduate students from more than 100 countries. The innovative SCAD curriculum is enhanced by advanced professional-level technology, equipment and learning resources, as well as opportunities for internships, professional certifications and collaborative projects with corporate partners. In 2018, the prestigious Red Dot Design Rankings placed SCAD as the No. 1 university in the U.S. and in the top two universities in the Americas and Europe. Career preparation is woven into every fiber of the university, resulting in a superior alumni employment rate. According to a recent study, 99 percent of Spring 2017 SCAD graduates were employed, pursuing further education or both within 10 months of graduation.

SCAD prepares talented students for creative professions through engaged teaching and learning in a positively oriented university environment. SCAD offers more than 40 degree programs, including:

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SCAD: The University for Creative Careers

The Savannah College of Art and Design is a private, nonprofit, accredited university, offering more than 100 academic degree programs in more than 40 majors across its locations in Atlanta and Savannah, Georgia; Hong Kong; Lacoste, France; and online via SCAD eLearning.

For more information, visit scad.edu.

Cover image: Costume design by John Bright for Uma Thurman In *The Golden Bowl*, 2000.

