

The Fashion Archives & Museum presents

(RE)SHAPING THE BODY







The Fashion Archives & Museum presents

(RE)SHAPING THE BODY

EDITOR

KARIN J. BOHLEKE, PH.D.

Director

Fashion Archives and Museum

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Fashion exerts both a positive and negative influence on every wearer's life. Adopting the latest styles can add confidence to one's stride; after all, the current look implies the knowledge needed to keep up, the budget to acquire new items, and even a certain level of good taste. But, at the same time, fashion promotes anxiety and undermines that very self-confidence on multiple levels. In some circles, being too fashionable implies a mind over-concerned with outward surface appearances. The "right" labels are often out of the financial reach of the vast majority of consumers. Is the selected outfit appropriate for the occasion? Being under- or over-dressed is a social misstep. Does the color look good? At any given moment, the "in" colors clash with the skin tone of a large swath of the population, with washed out or over-ruddy results. Then, there is the question that promotes even more angst: "Does this style look good on me?" A prevailing style may appear fabulous on only one body type, leaving the rest of the population to make do.

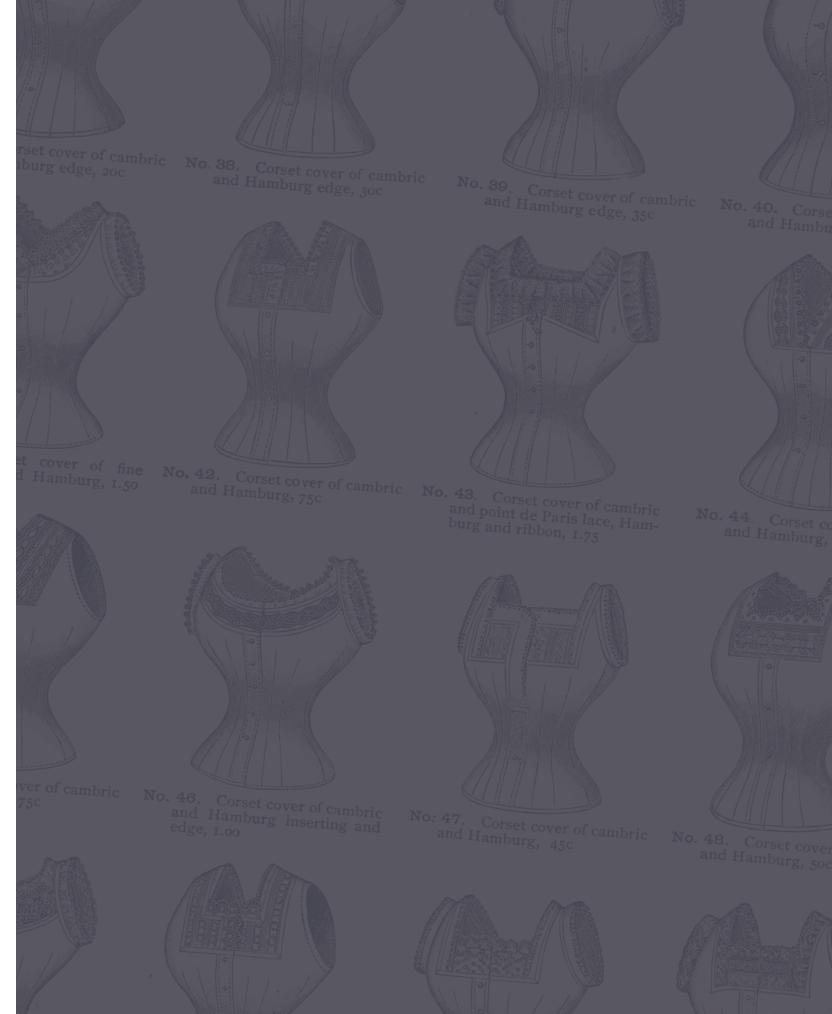
Indeed, fashions are designed to promote consumer unease: the manufacturer's solution is for the consumer to buy more items, and more importantly, to purchase the corrective undergarments necessary to mold the body into the ideal of the moment. Bras actively shape or even eliminate the bosom, for example.

Corsets have seen a resurgence in popularity, and the shapewear industry—think "Spanx"—is thriving, demonstrating that a body's natural form requires compression to conceal undesirable curves and enhance the waist. In this context, Chinese foot-binding practices represent a brutal historic example. Conversely, pads have enhanced the apparent size of shoulders and even the derrière. Menswear has not escaped the pressure: tailored suits have always contained padding and interlining to "correct" the silhouette and enhance the fabric drape.

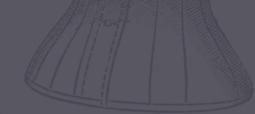
This exhibit, spanning two centuries and arranged by body part, explores how undergarments and optical illusion tailoring have altered the natural appearance of the body. Fashion has subjected every section of the human form to its whims: the shoulders, torso, hips, derrière, and chest have all had their moment of enhancement or minimalization. Even shoes and tall hats can change one's apparent height. These changes are tied to the social concerns and movements of their day, and they also illustrate the eternal connection between ideal dress and ideal behavior. Lastly, as the garments reveal, fashion cycles are variations on a theme, and the different body "zones" receive their moment of emphasis more than once.

KARIN J. BOHLEKE, PH.D.

Director, Fashion Archives and Museum



and Hamburg edge, 20c



No. 38. Corset cover of cambric and Hamburg edge, 30c



cambric and Hamburg, 1.50



No. 42. Corset cover of cambric and Hamburg, 75c





POWER SHOULDERS





When worn with sleeve supporting "plumpers," women's shoulders achieved proportions impossible without artifice during the 1830s. Layers of petticoats widened skirt hems to balance the look, and women's footwear was visible. Increases in cotton production through enslaved labor, as well as technological advances in industrial printing technology, brought down costs and made extravagant use of fabric affordable to a wider range of consumers. Magazines featuring the latest fashion news and illustrations also benefitted from technological innovation, and Godey's Lady's Book (published 1837-1898) and other titles of similar focus informed American women of the latest European styles.

Dress on loan from the DAR Museum, Washington, DC Front-lacing Boots, ca. 1820s-1830s, donated by the Berks History Center



A woman from Pike County, PA, enjoyed this elegant, patterned silk dress, ca. 1893-1894. The "jacket bodice," as the style was named, fastens with an intricate system of separate layers of hooks and eyes concealed beneath the center front. The dramatic puffed sleeves characterized the 1890s, giving women a confident and powerful silhouette. Shown with black satin button boots manufactured in Detroit, MI, associated with the wedding of Belle White (1871-1968) to Orville A. Custer on December 28, 1892. Hat of straw, velvet ribbon and feathers, ca. 1890, that belonged to Mary Helen Rinehart (1862-1894) of Fairfield, PA.

> Dress donated by the Pike County Historical Society Hat donated by H. Grove Boots donated W. Steesy Exhibit Label by Christopher Ott and Kathleen Foley





Women's dresses of the 1890s paralleled those of the 1830s with enormous leg-of-mutton sleeves and wide hemlines. However, the bodices were longer in the torso and terminated in points, and the skirts hid the wearer's feet. In many cases, the sleeve linings fitted the arms closely, and netting placed between the lining and the outer sleeve maintained the silhouette. Deep lapels added width to the shoulders, and two or more fabrics added harmonious contrasts to 1890s dresses, as seen here in this ca. 1894-1895 gown.

Donated by the Pike County Historical Society



Tailoring at the end of the 1930s moved toward a strong shoulder line that widened to become the signature look of the 1940s for men's and women's fashions, both military and civilian. Internal shoulder pads and interfacings were necessary to create this crisp look. Broad shoulders symbolize strength and capability in Classical mythology, Atlas supported the world on his shoulders—and clearly projected a visual signal that Americans were ready to face the challenges of World War II. Richard Breneman Bare wore the lieutenant's uniform, and Jeanette Russell Rothensies Johns (1916-2015) wore the WAVES uniform.

Lieutenant's Uniform, World War II, donated by the estate of V. Gelwix-Bare Uniform Tie, World War II, donated by L. Showers WAVES Uniform, World War II, donated by M. Cook



Fashions after World War II maintained the strong shoulder lines and crisp tailoring. Carolyn Hope Long enlisted in the Army upon completing nursing school in Allentown, PA, at which time she was deployed to Korea and Japan and in the United States. Fortunately, she kept all her uniforms and their components, including this rare trouser and Ike jacket combination. Her skirt and jacket dress uniform displays the complex tailoring that evolved in women's uniform designs. Note the curved pockets.

Donated by T. Shade



Men's and women's tailored fashions balanced one another during the 1940s. Here, the strong shoulder line appears even wider thanks to the narrow waist and broad collars on the suit jackets.

The Glen Brooks company tailored the wool pinstripe suit, and the Beau Brummel brand tie was a gift in November 1943 for the recipient, who appeared on the Don McNeil Breakfast Club radio show.

Mrs. F. Garland purchased the plaid suit at Leiter Brothers in Chambersburg for \$50 (about \$625 today). She wore it while teaching at the model school at the Indiana University of Pennsylvania during the 1940s.

Brown Wool Pinstripe Suit donated by S. Cory
Silk Necktie, 1943, donated by D. Addams
Woman's Plaid Suit donated by F. Garland
Blouse, 1940s, donated by J. Brewer



During the 1980s, executive fashions for women looked to the 1940s for inspiration to underscore women's abilities through a proven example of effective power dressing. Fashion magazines openly acknowledged the historic sources for women's suits. They provided excellent design and reminded viewers of a time when women rose to every challenge the struggles of World War II presented.

Even though the 1980s took shoulder pads to new heights and widths, earning mockery today, they did not help women break through the glass ceiling. At the same time, feminine ruffles, inspired by the preferred styles of Princess Diana, softened the strong lines of the suits.

Dr. Elizabeth Thompson, who founded the Fashion Archives & Museum, purchased the Sassoon suit in a Hess department store in 1988.

> Suit donated by Dr. E. Thompson Blouse donated by P. Coffman



Designer Arnold Scaasi created this bold gala dress in 1993. The stiffened fabric encircling the wearer's upper chest creates the effect of a wide shoulder line while the shoulders remain bare. But the result effectively reduces the range of movement by imprisoning the wearer's arms at her sides.

Donated by A. Scaasi







Alice Angino of Hagerstown, PA, wore this early 1990s version of legof-mutton sleeves to holiday galas. Fashions of the 1980s and early 1990s reflected 1940s designs in their tailoring, while these oversized sleeves reference the 1830s and 1890s, as well as the large sleeves associated with 1930s evening wear. Fashions consist of a repeated theme with variations.

Donated by A. Angino

and Hamburg edge, 20c



No. 38. Corset cover of cambric and Hamburg edge, 30c



ambric and Hamburg, 1.50



No. 42. Corset cover of cambric and Hamburg, 75c





THE BOSOM

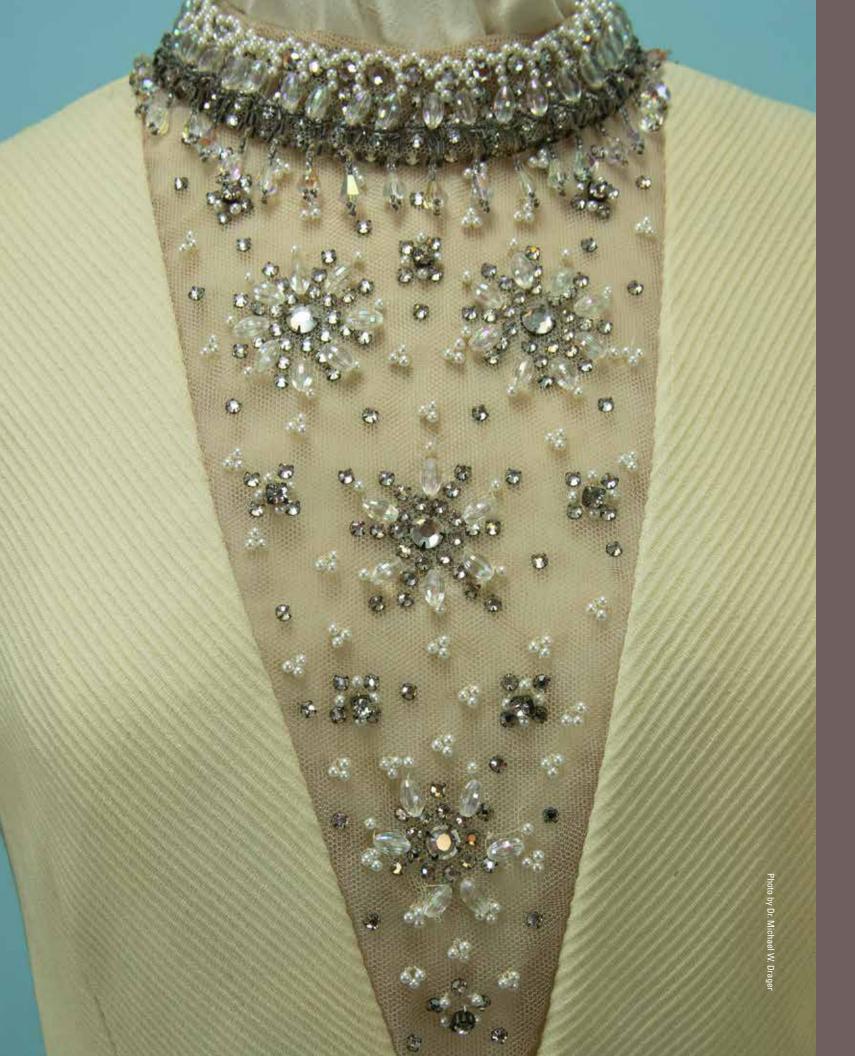


Right: Radical changes in men's and women's styles of the 1790s ultimately created the high-waisted look that characterized Empire fashions. For women, positioning the waistband immediately below the bust emphasized the bosom. On some gowns, internal front panels were pinned together to create an effect later achieved by the 1990s Wonderbra. The dressmaker cut this bodice front on the bias; the absence of darts fitting it to the bust dates the gown to the early 1800s. The original wearer of this light silk gown is unknown, but the donor indicated that the family resided in New Jersey at the time.

Donated by L. Cowles

Left: The 1940s ushered in a style of bra in which a pointed coneshape replaced natural teardrop roundness. Dresses of the 1950s and 1960s adjusted the bodice shapes to accommodate the pointed underwear. Additional foundation garments—girdles or waist cinchers—molded the figure to achieve a narrow waist. Florence Cooley Ft. Lauderdale, FL, designed this beaded cotton dress worn by Alice Virginia Danzer Fletcher (1915-2007) of Hagerstown, MD.

Donated by B. Luetscher



A beige lining creates the illusion of bare flesh in this close-up of Mrs. W. J. Geiselman's wool evening gown. Artful combinations of crystals, pearls, and paste resemble snowflakes. Additional teardrop crystals, hanging freely at the neckline, add movement to the gown. The clear bugle beads trimming the neckline have a sterling silver core that has tarnished with age but once added its own gleam to the gown. Hand-sewing is the only way to apply such decorations.

Donated by W. J. Geiselman



Right: The 1920s adopted a different extreme toward the bust: rather than emphasize their breasts, women did everything they could minimize, and even flatten, them. Dress designs assumed that a woman had few or no curves. Today, popular mythology argues that the 1920s liberated women from the corset, but few women naturally possessed the required straight, flat, and boyish physique. Those "cursed" with unfashionable curves still had to rely upon the artifice of corsets or girdles and bust-flattening bras to compress and control their figure.

Donated by the Chambersburg Chamber of Commerce

Left: Beyond bra shapes, there were other design techniques for emphasizing the bustline. On this gown, a bold semi-sheer insert, laden with beads and rhinestones, invites the viewer's eye to travel suggestively down the wearer's body. Mrs. W. J. Geiselman purchased the dress at Lord & Taylor's in Chicago in the mid-1960s.

Donated by W. J. Geiselman

and Hamburg edge, 20c



No. 38. Corset cover of cambric and Hamburg edge, 30c



cambric and Hamburg, 1.50



No. 42. Corset cover of cambric and Hamburg, 75c





THE TORSO



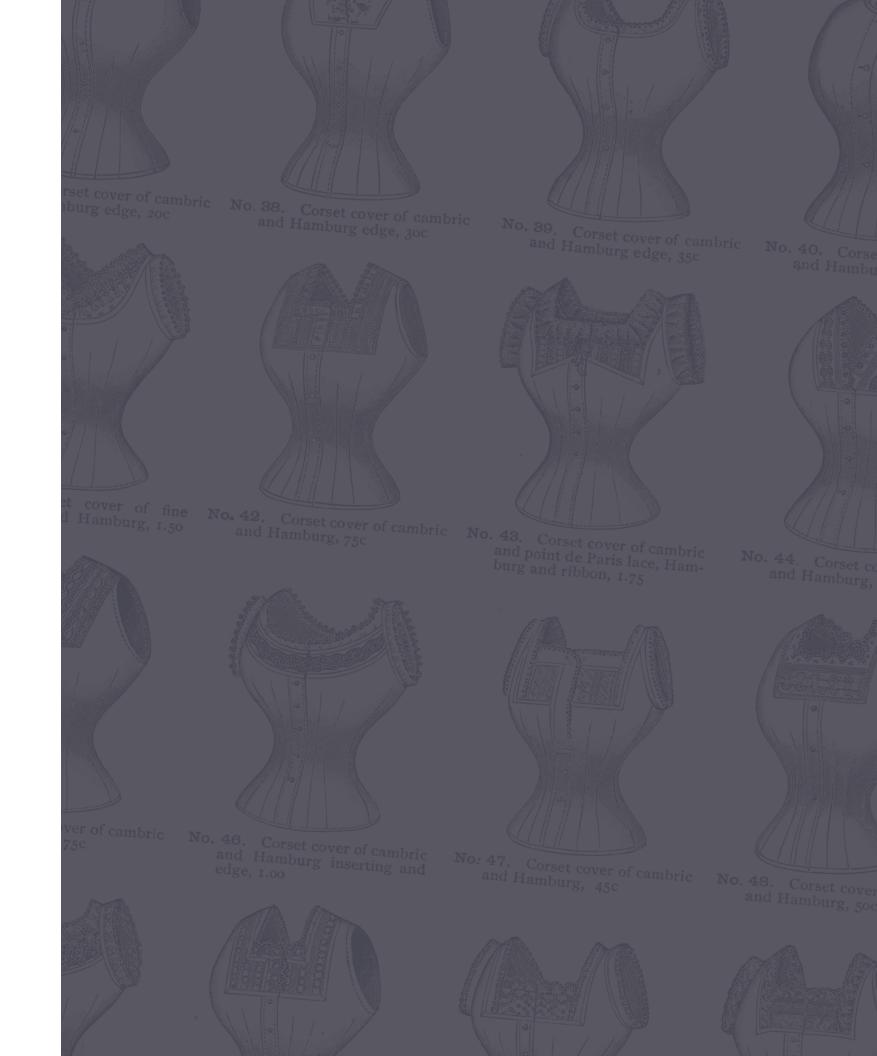
Strategically positioned pads have permitted tailors and dressmakers to conceal bodily flaws, such as a crooked spine, and to build up any perceived muscular deficiencies. In the nineteenth century, the proverbial "proud military bearing" was as much a product of padding as good posture. To create the prominent yet smooth chest of this artillery officer's coat, the tailor inserted large pads of wadded sheep's wool between the coat and its lining. The coat dates to ca. 1849-1851, and the officer's militia unit is unknown, particularly since multiple units throughout the country adopted this style and color combination.

Donated by the Berks History Center



THE FRONTS OF BODICES
AND THE HIPS OF SKIRTS
ARE INCREASED IN SIZE,
IN ORDER, IT IS SAID, TO
MAKE THE WAIST APPEAR
SMALLER. NOT ONLY ARE
THE DRESSES THEMSELVES
FULL OVER THE HIPS,
BUT FALSE HIPS BEING
MANUFACTURED, AS WELL
AS FALSE BUSTS.

Peterson's Magazine (August 1885)





and Hamburg edge, 20c



No. 38. Corset cover of cambric and Hamburg edge, 30c



cambric and Hamburg, 1.50



No. 42. Corset cover of cambric and Hamburg, 75c





THE DERRIÈRE











Dresses of the early 1870s consisted of three pieces: a bodice, underskirt, and overskirt. Draping and puffing of the two skirts over a bustle created an area ready for emphasis through pleats and trims. Popular hairstyles required copious amounts of hair, forcing some women to employ padding or purchase supplements of horse or human hair. Due to this phenomenon, hats changed shape, fitting only on the front half of the wearer's head. Ella Jane Stewart of Shippensburg wore this hat, ca. 1867-1870.

Silk Three-Piece Dress, ca. 1870 donated by the Wm. Penn Museum Bonnet donated by J. Stewart



Nelly McIlvane Hoopes, who married in 1887, is the probable wearer of this blue silk gown with dyed-to-match silk trim. Fashionable dresses of that year featured a bustle and asymmetrical drapery. Rows of pleats cascade down the left side of the dress, while the draped swag covers the right. A matching capelet provides light warmth when desired.

An unknown woman with a bold sense of style wore this silk gown for afternoons or daytime receptions, ca. 1887-1889, during the last years that the bustle was in fashion. Styles of the 1890s replaced focus on the bustle with emphasis on the shoulders through the sleeves.

Wedding Dress donated by S. Diehl

Bonnet, ca. 1885-1890, donated by the University of Maryland

Brown Silk Dress given by an anonymous donor





As genteel society expected, a now unidentified widow donned this silk mourning dress as an outward expression of grief. The comparatively short overskirt dates this dress to ca. 1885. The bustle and train add to the severe effect, and jet beading further weighs the gown. A soft precursor to coal, jet found many creative uses in jewelry and ornaments since Roman times. The presence of a white collar and cuffs, as well as the once-shiny jet beads on the bodice, indicates that the widow was in her second year or "ordinary mourning" stage, with a third year still ahead.

Donated by M. Doering

Label by Brooke Peterson, Sarah Hoffeditz, and Erin Emerick

Wilda Virginia Reel Gift (1936-2013) purchased this ca. 1963-1965 black satin evening gown at Katy O'Connell's, a shop in Hagerstown, MD. At the time of the donation, her husband stated that she loved the dress but hated to travel in it because the giant bustle bow was so uncomfortable when she sat on it in the car. Wilda's views on travel in a gown with heavy back drapery underscores the physical discomforts that many fashions cause. Audrey Hepburn's satin evening dress from the film *Breakfast at Tiffany's* inspired many imitations, such as this example.

Donated by F. Gift

and Hamburg edge, 20c



No. 38. Corset cover of cambric and Hamburg edge, 30c



cambric and Hamburg, 1.50



No. 42. Corset cover of cambric and Hamburg, 75c





THE HIPS



Skirt hemlines began expanding during the 1850s, requiring multiple starched petticoats to achieve the fullness. The invention of flexible sprung steel created cage crinolines in 1856 and liberated women from the many petticoats necessary to "build" the silhouette. The metal crinolines supported ever-expanding skirts, matched by oversized pagoda sleeves. In addition, the armhole is dropped onto the wearer's upper arm to create the effect of rounded, sloping shoulders. An unknown woman from nearby Newville, PA, wore this green and white silk plaid dress, ca. 1857 to 1860. Cage crinolines in children's sizes were also worn, or children donned multiple petticoats to fill out their dresses like their mother's.

Dress donated by the Newville Historical Society

Undersleeves donated by C. Boher-Hosfeld

Bonnet donated by B. Glover. Reproduction curtain and ties.

Child's Cage Crinoline donated by the University of Maryland

Exhibit Label by Kai Sayer and Patrick Beaston







The 1939 blockbuster film *Gone with the Wind* sparked a revival of Civil War-era fashions. Early in the movie, Scarlett O'Hara attends a garden party, and her white and green gown with contrasting dark green trim found many imitations. This cotton floral dress is one of them, and it requires a boned slip to wear it correctly. In fact, the owner Temperance "Tempe" Butler Young (1912-1995) indeed wore it to a garden party: while accessioning the gown into the collection, Fashion Archives workers found burrs still trapped in the skirt.

Donated by W. & F. Young





In reaction to the narrow, fabric-saving silhouette of World War II textile rationing, crinolines returned in the 1950s. Slips laden with scratchy netting gave fullness to skirts that were often cut in a full circle, as seen on this wool felt skirt with butterfly design. Long-time Fashion Archives Advisory Council member and donor Dawn Taylor (1926-2014) wore the butterfly circle skirt.

Full Circle Skirt donated by D. Taylor

Blouse donated by D. & C. Hubley.

Cardigan donated by B. & B. Friedman

Stiletto Heels donated by R. Loughlin

Woven Beaded Purse donated by the estate of V. Pepperman





Alice Virginia Danzer Fletcher (1915-2007) of Hagerstown, MD, wore this cotton African print dress, which also features a skirt cut in a full circle.

African Print Cotton Dress with Full Circle Skirt donated by B. Luetscher



Wires and engineering are not always necessary to emphasize hips. In creating this 1992 gala dress, designer Arnold Scaasi instead relied upon elaborate draping of pink and gold silk to follow a wearer's figure. On the right hip, an oversized knot with floor-length ends draws the eyes to that spot. Walking then reveals the thigh-high side slit concealed beneath the floating ends.

Donated by A. Scaasi

Exhibit Label by Kai Sayer and Patrick Beaston





This home-sewn electric blue satin cocktail dress of the 1960s creates a distinctive silhouette. The empire waistline emphasizes the pointed shape of the bust. The stiff fabric of the overskirt protrudes over the hips, in effect widening them. The design gives the effect of an open skirt over a petticoat. It also echoes the side hoops of the eighteenth century, which expanded the hips like a shelf at the waistline.

Donated by R. Bruce

and Hamburg edge, 20c



No. 38. Corset cover of cambric and Hamburg edge, 30c



cambric and Hamburg, 1.50



No. 42. Corset cover of cambric and Hamburg, 75c





THE FEET



Extreme platform heels are not new to fashion. During the Renaissance, Italian women sported a predecessor—known as *chopines* that required the assistance of servants when walking in order to maintain one's balance. Today, high fashion expects wearers to manage such footwear on their own.

Donated by K. Megyeri



In recent years, there was a brief fad for athletic shoes with a hidden wedge heel built into the shoes' interior, creating the external illusion of a flat-soled high-top sneaker. Fashion repeatedly borrows from functional athletic footwear design to create a non-sportswear high heel, as seen in these examples from the 1970s.

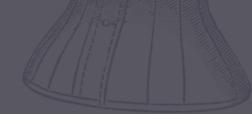
Donated by L. Adley



Shoes with a sole of carved wood, such as clogs, represent an ancient form of protection for the feet. Known as *sabots* in French, workers protesting new industrial technology threw theirs into machinery, causing it to break down and creating the term "sabotage." Such hard shoes prevent flexible movement of the feet while walking, a situation rendered more difficult in these heavy platform "Oluida" brand heels made in Brazil during the 1970s.

Donated by L. Barron

and Hamburg edge, 20c



No. 38. Corset cover of cambric and Hamburg edge, 30c



ambric and Hamburg, 1.50



No. 42. Corset cover of cambric and Hamburg, 75c





UNDERLYING STRUCTURES



No. 39. Corset cover of cambric and Hamburg edge, 35c

No. 40. Corset cover of and Hamburg edge, 25

As early as 1600 BCE, some type of corsetry appears in depictions of women. Corsets supported the bosom and prevented skirt and petticoat waistbands from digging into the wearer's body. Initially, corsets were decorative outerwear and became hidden underwear in the 18th century. It is a myth that corsets caused women to faint constantly, rearranged their internal organs, and that wearers had their lower ribs surgically removed. Corsetry use stopped during World War I due to metal shortages, but returned as the girdle until the 1970s feminism diminished their use. Today, shapewear and Spanx constrict the figure, and corsets are currently undergoing a popular revival that continues to promote compression of the body to achieve an ideal that is both eroticized and restrictive.

Exhibit label by Peyton Bramble and Shawn Pokrop



The enormous sleeves fashionable during the 1830s required a new type of underwear called "plumpers," worn over the short-sleeved chemise.

Corsets included shoulder straps, and a hard busk of metal or bone in the corset's center front prevented slouching. Although different inventions came and went, most corsets laced in the back until 1853, so a woman needed help to get dressed. Starched petticoats filled out a skirt, and garters tied stockings to a woman's legs. No other underwear was required.

Susannah Parker Bolton (1817-1885) wore the linen chemise, followed by Ruth Joanna (Hettie) Parker Kyner (b. 1862-d. 1930).

Corset and Metal Busk on loan from the DAR Museum, Washington, DC

Sleeve Plumpers from an anonymous donor
Linen Chemise donated by J. McDonald





In the 1880s, women's underwear followed the established pattern of chemise, split-crotch drawers, corset, under-petticoat, and overpetticoat; the construction of this last item having to conform to the bustle. While a new one-piece drawers-and-chemise, called a "combination suit", had entered women's wardrobes, traditional wearers, such as Sarah Blair Glover (1861-1929) of Richmond, Virginia, still relied on the knee-length chemise. This one formed part of her October 1885 wedding trousseau.

Chemise donated by B. Glover

R & F Brand Corset, ca. 1886, donated by Dr. E. Thompson

Split-Crotch Drawers with Matching Petticoat
donated by J. McDonald

Corset Cover donated by J. Mulroy

Cage Bustle donated by R. Gearson

Boots donated by the University of Maryland

Exhibit Label by Kasmira Zechman,
Max Edwards, and Sara Bengar







Short Corset for evening wear or riding, ca. 1890-1905 Donated by A. Robertson

IT TAKES MANY HANDS TO CREATE AN EXHIBIT

Fashion Archives &

Museum Director:

Dr. Karin J. Bohleke

Fashion Archives & Museum Student Staff

and Interns:

Graduate Assistant:

S. Pokrop

Graduate Students:

P. Bramble

E. Emerick

K. Foley

K. Zechman

Undergraduate

Students:

L. J. Anderson

J. Bowen

M. Griffith

A. Jones

JJ Miller

Community Volunteers:

C. Berry

E. Biddle

J. Donne

J. Dunigan

Advanced

Photography Students:

Professor:

Dr. Michael Drager

Students:

Kimberly Braet

Quehanna Coble

Olivia Wilson

