



MEDIA RELEASE

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Extravagant glamour between the wars

Museum of Vancouver to exhibit Art Deco women's fashions from the 1920s and 1930s

(VANCOUVER, BC) – The design style known as art deco began in Paris in the 1920s and quickly gained worldwide popularity. Here in Vancouver, we see the art deco's geometry-inspired style captured in the architecture of the Marine Building and the Burrard Street Bridge. Starting March 8, the public can also see it captured in women's fashions of the 1920s and 1930s on display in *Art Deco Chic: Extravagant glamour between the wars* at the Museum of Vancouver.

"The garments chosen for exhibition have been selected because of their beauty and fine quality," explains guest co-curator Ivan Sayers. "Some of the most important fashion designers in the world in the 1920s and 1930s will be represented."

The fashion design of the era was a distinct departure from previous design styles. Drawing inspiration from geometric shapes to evoke elegance and modernity, it was also influenced by an increased ability to travel world wide – bringing inspiration not only from modernism, but from faraway places such as Russia, Egypt, and Mexico.

Visitors will enjoy more than 66 garments on display in this exhibition.

Notable Vancouver items include a black beaded gown worn to the opening of the Commodore Cabaret in 1929 and a red and gold lamé evening dress made from fabric depicting the battles of the Trojan War. Many items on show are exquisite designer dresses with labels such as Chanel, Lanvin, Vionnet, Patou, and Schiaparelli. To contrast these high fashion items is a piece from the MOV's collection – a modest, yet stylish, navy polka dot dress made by the Aurora Dress Company of Vancouver around 1927.

The garments and accessories on display come from the private collections of Ivan Sayers and Claus Jahnke, as well as from the MOV and other's collections. Handbags, hats, shoes, and jewelry will further illustrate the use of geometric shapes to create sleek, sophisticated designs.

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The Museum of Vancouver is an independent non-profit organization which holds a mirror to the city and leads provocative conversations about its past, present, and future.

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Biographies

Ivan Sayers / Guest Co-Curator

Ivan Sayers is a fashion historian who specializes in the study of women's, men's, and children's fashions, from 1650 to the present. He graduated from UBC in 1969, with a BA in Classical Studies. A long-time resident of Vancouver, he worked at the Vancouver Museum from 1970 to 1990, and was the Curator of History for the institution from 1976–1990. Sayers has one of the largest and most comprehensive collections of historic clothing in private hands across Canada, and has produced fashion shows, lectures, and exhibitions all over western and central North America. He commonly jokes that his collection so vast that he sleeps in the dining room of his 3-bedroom home.

Claus Jahnke / Guest Co-Curator

Claus Jahnke was born in Edmonton and has lived and worked in Vancouver since 1981. He studied fashion merchandising at John Casablanca College of Design, graduating in the early 1980s. Jahnke specializes in the study of fashion design history in Germany and Austria and now has one of the most important collections of historical clothing from those countries existing outside of Europe. His collection includes men's, women's, and children's garments from 1720s to 1960s and he now is consulted by historians and other researchers from all over North American and Europe. One of the most noteworthy displays of his collection was the groundbreaking exhibition "Broken Threads", hosted by the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre which dealt with the destruction of the Jewish garment industry in Germany and Austria in the 1930s.

Joan Seidl / Director of Collections and Exhibitions

Joan began working at the Rock County Historical Society in her hometown of Janesville, Wisconsin during high school. She worked in the Education Department at Old Sturbridge Village in Massachusetts and as a curator at the Minnesota Historical Society before moving to Vancouver in 1983 as the trailing spouse of an academic. After having a couple of kids, Joan began working as Curator of History at the Museum of Vancouver (then Vancouver Museum) in 1992. In 2008, she became Director of Collections and Exhibitions. Joan holds a degree in history from Grinnell College and a Master of Arts degree in geography from the University of Minnesota.

10 Four Design / Art Deco Chic Exhibition Designers

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