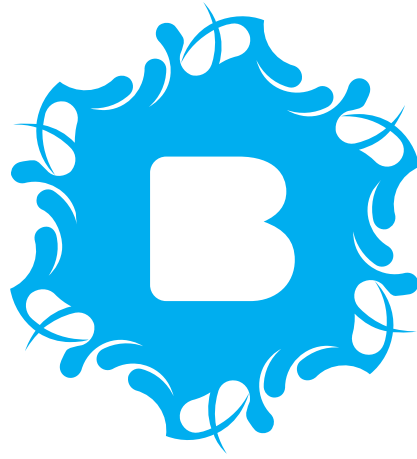


# Press Release



## **BROOKLYN MUSEUM ANNOUNCES LANDMARK COSTUME COLLECTION PARTNERSHIP WITH METROPOLITAN MUSEUM**

Brooklyn, New York, December 16, 2008. The Brooklyn Museum announced today a landmark collection-sharing partnership with The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Effective January 2009, the Brooklyn Museum's renowned costume collection of 23,500 objects, amassed during more than a century of collecting, will be transferred to The Costume Institute of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, where it will be known as The Brooklyn Museum Costume Collection at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Works from the collection will be fully integrated into The Costume Institute's program of exhibitions, publications, and education initiatives.

Brooklyn's collection constitutes perhaps the world's foremost holdings of American fashion from the late 19th to the mid-20th century. Director Arnold Lehman stated: "This landmark collaboration will create a model for similar museum partnerships both nationally and internationally. We are deeply grateful to the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for providing funding that made it possible for us to develop careful long-term plans for optimal stewardship of these extraordinary holdings."

Supported by an Andrew W. Mellon Foundation grant of \$3,925,000, the Brooklyn Museum has just completed an intensive 3-year assessment and photographic documentation of the entire costume collection. Not only will the collection be physically joined with that of the Metropolitan Museum, but portions of the collection will also be made internationally available digitally through ARTstor, an online initiative (created by the Mellon Foundation) that provides access to art images and related data for scholarly and not-for-profit educational use.

Brooklyn's costume collection includes a definitive collection of Charles James material, as well as signature objects by America's most famous designers. Extraordinary sub-collections of Belle Époque material and designs by international fashion icons such as Elsa Schiaparelli, exceptional wardrobes formed by major collectors such as Millicent Rogers, and extensive collections of hats and shoes add to the significance of Brooklyn's rich collection. When the Brooklyn collection is housed and displayed, and interpreted together with the Metropolitan Museum's Costume Institute collection of more than 31,000 costumes and accessories, particularly strong in European holdings and avant-garde contemporary fashion, the combined

### **Brooklyn Museum**

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resources will form the single largest and most comprehensive costume collection in the world. (The Brooklyn Museum will retain all of its renowned non-Western costumes, as well as all non-fashion textiles.)

“For over a decade— and as a guiding principle—the Brooklyn Museum’s Trustees and senior management have set the highest priority on insuring the appropriate environment, exemplary stewardship, and broad access to this invaluable and fragile resource. After carefully considering various alternatives, we concluded that we could best accomplish our goals by sharing the collection with an institution whose experience with a similarly rich collection is already exceptional, and where the combination of these two outstanding collections would contribute to a deeper understanding of Western culture,” commented Dr. Lehman.

Stated Director Philippe de Montebello and Director-Elect Thomas P. Campbell of The Metropolitan Museum of Art: “That two great New York institutions, after decades of collecting costume in parallel, are now joining together to combine their resources into the single largest and most comprehensive costume collection in the world, is a landmark event indeed. We thank Arnold Lehman for his vision in forging this collaboration between the Brooklyn Museum and the Metropolitan, and the Trustees of the Brooklyn Museum for their exceptional support. It is a partnership that will enlighten and engage scholars, students, and the public of both institutions for generations to come.”

“Following their deliberate and highly professional evaluation and documentation of the collection as well as assessment of its future stewardship needs, the decision of Brooklyn’s Trustees and Director to transfer these extraordinary holdings to the Metropolitan Museum holds enormous promise for the future of international scholarship and understanding in this field. The conditions for mutual use of the combined collections have been carefully established, and the Web-based archive will facilitate access to these materials in unprecedented ways,” said Angelica Rudenstine of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Four thousand stellar costumes have been selected out of the total Brooklyn Museum collection for special presentation. These costumes have been photographed in high resolution and will be made available as soon as possible through ARTstor. The Brooklyn Museum and the Metropolitan Museum also plan to publish a fully illustrated book documenting highlights of the collection, and all 4,000 objects will be featured on a discrete section of the Metropolitan Museum’s Web site with links to the Brooklyn Museum site.

An exhibition of the Brooklyn material is planned for 2010 at the Metropolitan Museum and will be the focus of The Costume Institute’s annual gala that year. A simultaneous exhibition will be presented at the Brooklyn Museum as a collaborative project between the two museums. Other plans include the organization of a traveling exhibition, an international symposium about the landmark collaboration between the two collections, and the publication of symposium papers in the inaugural issue of The Costume Institute’s online journal.

Harold Koda, Curator-in-Charge of The Costume Institute, stated: “The pairing of these two collections marks a significant moment in the rich history of each. The costume collections of the Brooklyn Museum

and The Metropolitan Museum of Art have strengths that are mutually enhancing. By integrating them, an unrivaled timeline of Western fashion history has been created, an incredible resource not only for the design community in New York City, but for the public and students of fashion everywhere.”

### **Brooklyn Museum Costume Collection**

The Brooklyn Museum costume collection was founded in 1902 with the goal of providing inspiration to American industry. For the next 80 years, through its Department of Industrial Design, its Design Lab, and its Department of Costumes and Textiles, the Museum served as one of the most important centers in the United States for the study and collecting of fashion. The stature and quality of the collection also inspired a number of great American designers to deposit their archives at the Museum. In addition to being an outstanding assemblage of individual works of great rarity and aesthetic quality, with masterpieces by Worth, Paul Poiret, Lanvin, Christian Dior, Balenciaga, Charles James, Norman Norell, and Claire McCardell, the collection documents the consolidation and growing international importance of the fashion industry in New York City.

### **The Costume Institute**

Founded in 1937, The Museum of Costume Art, after its incorporation and renaming as The Costume Institute, became a part of the Metropolitan Museum in 1946. Currently it contains a collection of more than 31,000 pieces dating from the 17th century to the present, including fashionable dress and regional costumes from Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas. The Costume Institute organizes two or three exhibitions each year, which receive international recognition. Involved in art-historical research since its founding, The Costume Institute contributes to scholarship through a range of publications.

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### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

#### **Admission:**

Contribution \$8; students with valid I.D. and older adults \$4. Free to Members and children under 12 accompanied by an adult. Group tours or visits must be arranged in advance by calling extension 234.

#### **Directions:**

Subway: Seventh Avenue express (2 or 3) to Eastern Parkway/Brooklyn Museum stop; Lexington Avenue express (4 or 5) to Nevins Street, cross platform and transfer to the 2 or 3. Bus: B71, B41, B69, B48. On-site parking available.

#### **Museum Hours:**

Wednesday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; First Saturday of each month, 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.; all other Saturdays, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day.