

Mint Dress, circa 1960s

Silk

Embellishment:

- * Lace appliqué
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- * This mother of the bride wore this dress to her daughter's wedding.
- * This dress was made by the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU), which was founded in 1900 and functioned in the United States and Canada.
- * The lace used mimics alençon lace, which is named after the town of its origin in France.
- * True alençon lace is made exclusively in Alençon, France.
- * Appliqué is accomplished by sewing or gluing small pieces of fabric to a larger piece to create a design.
- * This technique can be done by hand or by machine.
- * This dress actually has two pockets! This dress is one of only two dresses in this exhibit with pockets.

Parachute Dress, circa 1945

Silk, cotton embroidery floss

Embellishments:

- * Hand embroidered
 - * with padded satin stitch
 - * with stem stitch
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- * This dress was made from a German parachute. The parachute was recovered and brought to the United States by R. T. Burden, Jr., in 1945.
- * Mr. Burden served in the United State Army from 1943 to 1945.
- * Parachutes were made in white and cream in order to conserve fabric dye.
- * Once silk became “military issue” the price went up and women could no longer afford to buy silk.
- * It was common during and after World War II to see women make wedding dresses and other garments out of parachutes brought back by their husbands or other soldiers.
- * Resource rationing lasted until well after the war.

Black Beaded Dress, circa 1930s

Rayon (or silk)

Embellishments:

- * Tambour beading
 - * with glass seed beads
 - * with glass bugle beads
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- * This is a typical evening dress of the 1930s. The public was fascinated with celebrities and their on-screen fashions. The sleek glamorous lines of this dress and the shine provided by the beautiful beads were a popular way to mimic the sophistication seen on the Silver Screen.
- * The shoulder pads seen in this dress allude to the popular “square” look favored for women’s torsos in the late 1930s to early 1940s.
- * Deep V-necks at the front and back were popular for eveningwear.

Blue Beaded Dress, circa 1930s

Rayon (or silk)

Embellishments:

- * Ruched sweetheart neckline
 - * Tambour beading
 - * with glass seed beads
 - * with glass bugle beads
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- * Use of beading is reminiscent of the shine elements influenced by screen stars.
- * “Tambour” is French for drum.
- * Tambour beading was originally done by hand by using a drum-shaped frame and a sharp hook instead of a needle. The sewer would hand-stitch each bead to the fabric after the beads were strung on the thread.
- * The tambour technique can be used with beads, sequins, or with thread or floss alone to create interesting embroidery.
- * Ruching is created when fabric is gathered into a ruffle or pleat.

Brown Dress, circa 1930s

Rayon crepe, self-fabric belt

Embellishments:

- * Hand beading
 - * with glass seed beads
 - * with faux pearls
 - * Prong-set rhinestones
 - * Bound buttonholes
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- * The style of dress seen in the 1930s was much more feminine, modest, and figure-hugging than those of the 1920s.
- * A new fascination with celebrities and fashion brought glamour to the forefront of style. More sparkle and shine elements became popular in women's fashion.
- * This dress is made from rayon, which became a very popular fabric due to its washability.
- * The label inside the dress has written on it "Fred A. Block Original."

Pink Shawl, circa 1920s

Silk (or rayon)

Embellishments:

- * Hand-knotted fringe
 - * Hand-embroidered
 - * with satin stitch
 - * with seed stitch
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- * The flowers on this shawl are peonies.
- * Its style is similar to nature scenes depicted on Japanese woodblock prints.
- * During the 1920s, artists of all types, were inspired by Middle Eastern, Asian, and North African societies. Fashion designers of the period such as Paul Poiret and Madame Vionnet embraced “exotic” elements taken from these cultures.
- * Satin stitch is a series of flat stitches that are used to completely cover a section of the background fabric.
- * Seed stitch a series of straight stitches that are generally even in size and evenly spaced apart but random placed. It is used as a filler stitch.

Peach Slip, circa 1920s

China silk, lace

Embellishments:

- * Filet lace
 - * Hand-embroidered
 - * with satin-stitch flowers
 - * with drawn threadwork
 - * with shadow embroidery
 - * with vertical lines of hemstitching
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- * In the late 1920s, it became trendy to have dainty decorations on lingerie, which became just as pretty as the outerwear. But undergarments made of silk were used only for special occasions.
- * Undergarments kept corsets (still worn by some) away from skin, provided support to outer garments, and reduced washing of the outer garments.
- * The detailing of the slip is done so it does not create bulk which would be seen on the outer dress.
- * Filet lace, featured at the top of the slip, is knotted netting that has been stretched on a frame and embroidered.
- * Drawn thread work is a form of counted-thread embroidery based on removing threads from the warp and/or the weft of a piece of fabric. The remaining threads are grouped or bundled together into a variety of patterns. Hemstitching is the most basic kind of drawn thread work.
- * Shadow embroidery is worked on semi-sheer or sheer fabric, with the bulk of the embroidery on the back of the design so that the color of the thread shows through on the front of the fabric.

Pink Dress, circa 1912 - 1914

Cotton gauze

Embellishments:

- * Lace
- * Bias-cut china silk chevrons
- * Pink soutache braid
- * Silk velvet knot
- * Silk velvet overlaid with metallic lace
- * Narrow pink velvet ribbon
- * Cream velvet ribbon edged in soutache applied with a black chevron embroidery stitch
- * Teardrop-shaped medallions
- * Embroidered trim

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- * This dress shows the “S” shaped silhouette that was popular in the early 1900s. The “S” shape was achieved by corsets that were designed to push the torso forward and thrust the hips backward simultaneously.
 - * King Edward VII inspired the Edwardian style seen in this dress. He was known for his opulent and extravagant nature, which was reflected in clothing that was highly decorative with detailed embellishments.
 - * Soutache is a narrow, flat braid in a herringbone pattern usually used as the trimming of drapery or clothing.

Purple Dress, circa 1910s

Silk satin, silk chiffon sleeves, bias-cut silk
faillie hem

Embellishments:

- * Hand-embroidered
 - * with satin-stitch flowers & leaves
 - * with chain-stitch scallops and stems
 - * with French knot accents
 - * Machine-stitched applied cording
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- * There are two types of flowers and leaves in the overall embellishing as well as abstract squiggles.
- * The embellished sections on this dress are defined by scalloped stitching at their edges.
- * This dress had additional embellishments along the waist, but they were removed at an unknown time.
- * This dress showcases the Edwardian fashion style of lavish detail and ornamentation spread throughout the garment.
- * Chain stitch is an embroidery technique in which a series of looped stitches form a chain-like pattern.
- * The French knot is one of several knotted stitches used in surface embroidery.

Black Evening Coat, 1900 - 1910

Net, silk satin lapel and facing

Embellishments:

- * Chain-stitched trim
- * Satin-stitched trim
- * Braided button loop

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- * Coats, shawls, and capes made of heavily embellished net fabric were very popular during the Edwardian era. As they offered no protection from the elements, they should be considered an accessory and not practical outerwear. They are the epitome of Edwardian extravagance.
 - * The ornate details, naturalistic influences, and slim silhouette help us to date this coat to the Edwardian period.
 - * The trims on this coat were machine-made. The satin-stitch trim is used to finish the scalloped edged hem and sleeves. It also creates a decorative scrolling spiral pattern on the coat.
 - * The chain-stitched trim was used to create a leaf and vine pattern and abstract squiggle.

Yellow Tea Dress, circa 1890s

Silk surah, cotton lining

Embellishments:

- * Ruching at the neckline
 - * Silk ruffles
 - * Braided ribbon trim
 - * Silk satin bow
 - * Silk accents
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- * The hem has a pleated cotton crinoline for added stiffness.
- * The classic 1890s leg-of-mutton sleeves are seen in this dress.
- * Fastenings are situated to the front of the dress so the wearer could easily dress herself.
- * This dress has built-in metal boning to accentuate the slim waist of the wearer.
- * The tea dress was designed to be worn during afternoon tea, 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., and was not meant to be as formal as an evening gown. However, it still needed to be formal enough to wear to greet one's peers.

Black Mourning Coat, circa 1890s

Silk taffeta, horsehair

Embellishments:

- * Soutache
 - * Horsehair braids
 - * Pleated-taffeta border on collar
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- * This is a very lightweight coat and would not have provided much warmth.
- * Its notched shawl collar features the most embellishments.
- * There are six types of trim on this otherwise simple coat.
- * The coat was roomy enough to be worn over a dress with a bustle.
- * The entire body of the coat is pleated and attached to a yoke of straight fabric underneath the collar.
- * Since the 1800s the hair from the mane and tail of horses has been woven, usually with cotton or silk, into a textile. It was created with varying degrees of stiffness and could be used to reinforce dress hems, build a stiff bustle, or as a lining in garments where rigidity was needed, such as in a lapel. It was very durable and was also used in upholstery, crinolines; and as seen here, trims for fabrics.

Green and Orange Dress, circa 1890s

Silk peau de soie, silk damask, silk velvet

Embellishments:

- * Bias-cut velvet applique & bows
- * Bias-cut ruffles at the bottom
- * Feather stitching on back of bodice
- * Lace

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- * This is a two-piece dress.
 - * The maker of this dress took fabric reclaimed from earlier dresses to make the lining.
 - * The style of the sleeve is leg-of-mutton.
 - * The bustle trend was coming to an end toward the late 1890s, but a modest bustle pad would have been worn with this particular dress.
 - * Asymmetry can be seen along the bodice.
 - * Peau de soie cloth is a soft, satin weave cloth made of silk or rayon. It has a dull luster and was often used for wedding gowns.
 - * Feather stitch is an embroidery technique made of open, looped stitches worked alternately to the right and left of a central rib.

Blue Afternoon Dress, circa 1880s

Silk faille, glazed cotton lining

Embellishments:

- * Hand embroidered
 - * with satin stitch leaves & grapes
 - * With stem stitch
 - * Handworked button holes
 - * Hand-stitched ruching
 - * Interfaced box pleats along lower edge
 - * Decorative brass or bronze buttons
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- * This is a two-piece dress.
- * Small fabric-covered lead weights are embedded into the bodice to prevent it from flaring up.
- * Embroidery was completed after the dress was made.
- * This dress is accompanied by a shelf bustle.
- * The skirt has a piece of metal sewn into the back which helps give an extended shape to the bustle.
- * The fabric is bunched at the back of the dress in addition to the wearing of a bustle to further emphasize the backside.
- * Pleating became a popular technique in the 1880s due to the introduction of new technology such as the power loom.

Ivory Wedding Gown, circa 1880s

Silk peau de soie, lace, net

Embellishments:

- * Ruffles with bias-trimmed edge
 - * Bias-trimmed stems and leaf edges
 - * Leaves backed with stiff cotton net
 - * Lace
-

- * This dress was constructed in the late 1860s and was modified for another wearer in the 1880s. It is currently displayed in the 1880s fashion.
- * The wearer would have worn a shelf bustle with this dress.
- * All the embellishments except for the hem cord are self-fabric, meaning they are made from the same fabric as the rest of the dress.
- * Nearly everything is stitched to the dress by hand.
- * The dress had two pieces—an underskirt and an overskirt with the bodice attached.
- * Wedding dresses were not typically white during this period. Common colors were ivory, light yellow, and even red.
- * Front buttons were very popular in the 1880s.
- * Bias tape is a narrow strip of fabric, cut on the bias (at 45 degrees to the length of the tape) which makes it stretch and drape more readily than a strip that is cut on the grain, which is why it's often used for hemming and trimming.

Brown Dress, circa 1872 - 1880

Silk faille, glazed cotton lining

Embellishments:

- * Appliqued velvet and jacquard stripes
 - * Handworked button holes
 - * Cotton-linen blend lace
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- * The bodice and skirt feature asymmetric designs.
- * The dress's design was influenced by menswear and military styles as seen in the trimmings of the bodice and sleeves.
- * Applique is an embellishing technique which involves stitching or gluing small pieces of fabric onto a larger piece to create a design.
- * Silk faille is one of the more substantial silk fabrics where the defined ribs are less prominent than a grosgrain. This fabric is smooth, lustrous, and easy to drape, but it has an affinity for taking a crease making it a popular choice for tailored clothing.

Blue Plaid Dress, circa 1870s

Silk taffeta, cotton lining

Embellishments:

- * Pleated trim with pinked & scalloped edges
 - * Satin-weave border
 - * Self-fabric bows
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- * The bright blue color is characteristic of the Victorian era.
- * The plaid silk is actually woven right into the fabric of the dress.
- * During this time, trains began to disappear in daywear and were reserved for evening wear.
- * Sleeves are bias cut, meaning these were cut at about a 45 degree angle instead of straight on the grain of the fabric. This technique allows the fabric to have more elasticity and to show more fluid curves or drapes.
- * The maker of this dress was thrifty with the fabric at hand and utilized every inch of it.
- * There is horsehair installed in the hem of the dress for added rigidity and shape.
- * There is a hidden pocket on the right side of the skirt. A rarity for this time period; this dress is one of only two dresses in this exhibit with a pocket.

Hair Earrings, circa 1860 - 1890

Human hair, rose gold

- * It was quite common in the Victorian era to have multiple pieces of jewelry made from the hair of loved ones, alive or deceased.
- * During the mid-nineteenth century, weaving hair pieces became as common as knitting or crocheting, and women could find new patterns in magazines.
- * Hair jewelry was not about death; it was about sentiment and being close with those whom you loved.
- * As the century progressed, practices in hygiene improved and people began viewing hair jewelry as unsanitary.

Blue Feather Purse, 1890 - 1920

Silk, metal

Embellishment:

- * Fine blue feathers
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- * Purses carried during the Victorian era were small and painstakingly handmade; they were to be carried only on special occasions.
- * Purses had only enough room to carry the “essentials,” such as calling cards, a pencil, a handkerchief or a fan.
- * This purse has a hidden mirror on the bottom. While some purses would have a glass mirror inside the bag, this one has a highly polished piece of metal for the bottom—no breakable glass but the perfect reflective surface to check one’s lipstick.
- * In the 1920s, newly liberated flappers would apply makeup right at the dinner table rather than excuse themselves to the ladies room!

Beaded Purse with Butterfly, circa 1900

Steel frame, leather lined interior, silk
outer lining

Embellishments:

- * Glass beads
 - * Paste gemstones
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- * This purse was made around 1900 at the Atlanta Penitentiary.
- * Purses like this were considered a work of art with sometimes 1000 beads per square inch.
- * This purse was likely made with a bead loom.
- * This type of closure is called a kissing lock, which became popular in the early twentieth century.
- * Paste gems are simulated gemstones made out of glass paste with varying chemical compositions. They could be clear or colored. The most inexpensive pastes were pressed or molded, but they could also be cut and faceted.

Embroidered Cap, circa 1920

Net, silk, satin weave

Embellishment:

- * Couching embroidery on net,
handstitched
-

- * Hats fit very close to the head in the 1920s.
- * This cap is handmade and not of a purely defined style. It resembles a turban but does not have enough wrapping to actually be considered one. The heavy embroidery on the net also has a middle eastern style popular on full turbans during this decade.
- * Couching embroidery is a process similar to appliqué. Yarn or other materials are laid across the surface of the fabric and fastened in place with small stitches of the same or a different material such as embroidery floss.

Blue Beaded Purse, circa 1920s

Embellishment:

- * Glass beads
-

- * The peacock and gunmetal colored beads are loosely strung—not woven or individually sewn—in a circular pattern.
- * Highly decorative purses often matched the flapper dresses of the era.
- * Evening purses in the 1920s were still small. A woman could carry only her necessities—makeup, money, and now cigarettes.
- * Women were able to make their own beaded bags, using a variety of techniques, with mail order kits.
- * Purses typically complimented the wearer's dress, for example beading on both.

White Leather Glove, 1930 - 1940

Kid leather

Embellishment:

- * Embroidered "lily of the valley" flowers
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- * Gloves usually coordinated with the wearer's dress and other accessories, such as the hat, purse, and shoes.
- * White was a common color for gloves, at least for those who could keep them clean!
- * White kid leather gloves were very popular.
- * Kid leather is a softer leather used mostly for clothing and footwear.
- * In the 1940s, gloves were rationed and became more of a frivolous accessory.
- * With the changing work environments for women, gloves became impractical for everyday wear.
- * Shorter gloves with few embellishments were more affordable.

Ivory Beaded Purse, 1925 - 1940

Synthetic satin lining

Embellishment:

- * Glass beads
 - * Faux pearls
-

- * This purse was handmade in Belgium.
- * Evening bags were designed to be functional, practical, and small but with enough room to carry the essentials.
- * White was a very popular color for purses in the 1930s.
- * Purses during this period were made to be held close to the body, carried either in hand or beneath the arm with a short strap.
- * Embellishments could be added to a utilitarian bag to transform it into an evening bag.

White Satin Hat, circa 1950s

White satin

Embellishments:

- * Glass beads
 - * Faux pearls
 - * Rhinestones
-

- * Most women in the early 1950s wore hats nearly daily.
- * However, women under the age of 20 were discouraged from wearing hats.
- * Hats of this time period were small and dainty and were made to compliment freshly styled hair and a face full of fresh makeup.
- * This hat is shaped with wire, stiff and starched, and is meant to mold to the back of the head like a helmet.
- * It is labeled "Cyreld, Brookline." Mrs. Cyreld Spiller operated a high-end boutique in Brookline, Massachusetts from 1942 until 1995 and supplied gowns and accessories for celebrities through those decades.

Colorful Beaded Purse, circa 1960s

Cotton, plastic

Embellishments:

- * Plastic beads



- * This purse is reversible. The interior and exterior are covered with plastic beads with two different color schemes.
- * Beads appear to be glued and melted on.
- * The “color explosion” of this purse shows the new influence from 1960s pop art and the gradual move into uninhibited self-expression for many people.
- * The plastic beading seen on this bag was a common embellishment for fabrics and bags in the 1960s.