

---

# The Irene Lewisohn Costume Reference Library Special Collections

---

**The Irene Lewisohn  
Costume Reference  
Library**

The Met Fifth Avenue  
1000 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10028

212-650-2225

For current Library

hours visit us at

[metmuseum.org/watson](http://metmuseum.org/watson)

## **Designers' records**

- Bernice Shaftan papers, 1950s-2009 (bulk 1960s-1980s): Bernice Shaftan is a factory-trained American shoe designer and consultant to shoe and leather manufacturers in the United States and Europe. The collection includes sketches and other designs by Shaftan for a variety of shoe manufacturers, as well as promotional and publicity materials in the form of press releases, brochures, forecasts, photographs, and clippings that document Shaftan and the companies for which she designed.

Extent: 7.7 Linear feet (14 document cases, 2 oversize boxes)

Finding aid: <http://bit.ly/2GTNX2z>

- Bonnie Cashin collection, 1943-2000 (bulk 1950-1976): Among the best-known post-war American designers, Bonnie Cashin specialized in interchangeable ready-to-wear wardrobes that incorporated leather, suede, cashmere, and tweed. She also designed distinctive accessories for the Coach Leatherware Company and other manufacturers. The collection includes correspondence, original designs for gloves, together with photo reproductions of Hollywood costume designs, clippings, ephemera, publicity photographs, and press releases.

Extent: 1.04 Linear feet: 2 full-size document cases, one half-size document case

Finding aid: <http://bit.ly/2VC7Gxq>

- Carolyn Schnurer collection, 1950-1955: During her 20 year career in fashion from 1944 to her retirement in 1964, Carolyn Schnurer was a pioneer in the mid-twentieth century's newly emerging American sportswear industry. The collection includes correspondence; cost sheets, sketches, and swatches; as well as promotional photographs of models wearing Schnurer's designs, fashion shows, and store window displays.

Extent: 0.83 Linear feet: 2 document cases

Finding aid: <http://bit.ly/2vwEokS>

- Charles James Papers, 1704-1978 (bulk 1960-1978): The Charles James papers consist predominantly of his business and personal records from the late 1950s to his death in 1978, and focus on James's endeavors to document and promote the impact he had during his design heyday of the 1930s-1950s.

Extent: 178.0 Linear feet: 130 full-size document cases, 1 half-size document case, 232 oversize boxes

Finding aid: <http://bit.ly/2vxclfP>

- Kenneth Jay Lane collection of Roger Vivier designs, 1956-1961: Press photographs of Roger Vivier shoes designed for Christian Dior in the late 1950s and early 1960s, as well as original shoe design sketches by Kenneth Jay Lane, and ephemera including a brochure and a paper pattern for a shoe upper.



---

Extent: 0.5 Linear feet: 1 document box  
Finding aid: <http://bit.ly/2GPKkeh>

- Mainbocher papers, 1880s-1977: Genealogical information and family photographs; publicity photographs and clippings; images of and correspondence from notable clients; biographical writings; as well as documentation of the Paris-based American designer Mainbocher's uniforms designed for the United States Armed Services during World War II.

Extent: 0.4 Linear feet: 1 document case  
Finding aid: <http://bit.ly/2DJNm2P>

- Norman Norell collection, 1927-1973: Norell's consistent, decades-long career of producing garments that were both practical and luxurious, incorporating materials from wool to chiffon, designed for both evening and daywear, and available only through high-end retail outlets earned him the moniker "the Dean of American Fashion". The collection consists of pages removed from a scrapbook that document Norman Norell's career mainly through original and photocopied tearsheets and clippings from fashion magazines that include *Vogue*, *Harper's Bazaar*, and *Town and Country*; as well as a set of photocopied sketches, to some of which are attached fabric swatches.

Extent: 3.25 Linear feet: 3 document cases, 1 oversized box  
Finding aid: <http://bit.ly/2WjASX5>

- Robert Barger and Jacques Fath collection, 1949-1952: Photographs, newspaper and magazine clippings, and tear sheets documenting Parisian fashion designer Jacques Fath and American model Robert Barger. The photographs include studio shots of Barger modeling, candid photographs of each man alone, with each other, and with their respective families in social settings on board ship, in restaurants, and at private homes.

Extent: 1.5 Linear feet: two boxes  
Finding aid: <http://bit.ly/2DEeqk7>

- Steven Arpad shoe sketch collection, 1939: More than 400 sketches of Steven Arpad's shoe designs that relate to 75 prototypes in the Costume Institute's collection and allow for the identification of some uncredited shoe designs for Balenciaga and Delman as being by Arpad.

Extent: 0.63 Linear feet: 1 full-size and 1 half-size document case  
Finding aid: <http://bit.ly/2LdZJKG>

- Todd Oldham: The collection consists of photographic prints and slides, Polaroid images, line lists, sketches, samples, correspondence and worknotes, and videos documenting Oldham's designs for clothing, accessories, fabric, furniture and household items, and music videos from 1982 to 2004; promotional material for Oldham's design work such as videos of award shows and television interviews, loose clippings, brochures, and other ephemera; videotapes documenting Oldham's work on programming for the MTV network, such as *House of Style* and *Crib Crashers: Celebrity Edition*, and other networks; and videotapes that were sent to and collected by Oldham. The collection does not contain materials reflective of Oldham's current ventures.

Extent: 37.75 linear feet: 39 boxes  
Finding aid: <https://bit.ly/33KCM8K>

- Tom Brigance collection, 1930s-1960s (bulk, 1940s-1950s): The collection includes predominantly sketches by Tom Brigance for women's casual clothing designed for Lord and Taylor in the 1930s-1950s, as well as fabric swatches and print designs, promotional photographs, clippings, and written documentation.

Extent: 10.0 Linear feet: 15 document cases, 3 oversize boxes, 1 oversize portfolio

---

Finding aid: <http://bit.ly/2GXvsua>

- Valentina collection, 1920s-1980s, [2002-2009]: Russian-born American designer Valentina Sanina von Schlee (1904–1989), known professionally as Valentina, designed for prominent society women and for notable actresses both on and off stage. From 1928 to 1956 Valentina Gowns was the most exclusive and most expensive American house of couture, providing a lavish lifestyle for Valentina and her husband/business manager George Schlee that was widely reported on in the popular press. The collection includes photographs, drawings, original muslin patterns, correspondence, press clippings, and ephemera created and collected by Valentina. Also included are materials from the personal collection of Kohle Yohannan, curator of the 2009 Museum of the City of New York exhibition “Valentina: American Couture and the Cult of Celebrity” and materials specifically created to support research for the exhibition and an accompanying publication of the same title.

Extent: 31.0 Linear feet: (9 document cases, 6 card boxes, 13 oversize boxes)

Finding aid: <http://bit.ly/2VDjIGJ>

- Vera Host collection, 1931-1970: Pencil and watercolor sketches of day and eveningwear, swimwear, and outerwear signed by American designer Vera Host, as well as newspaper and magazine clippings documenting her work and career, photocopied correspondence, her resume, and an unidentified photograph.

Extent: 1.5 Linear feet: 1 document case, 1 oversize box

Finding aid: <http://bit.ly/2V8AC0A>

- Vera Maxwell collection, 1919-1958: Original watercolor sketches of designs for women’s suits, dresses, and separates; black and white photographs, and some copy negatives; promotional and publicity materials; and drafts of the unpublished memoirs of the designer considered one of the trailblazing first generation of mid-20th century women who pioneered sportswear for active and working women.

Extent: 3.38 Linear feet: 4 full-size document cases, 1 half-size document case, 1 oversized box

Finding aid: <http://bit.ly/2Vcemms>

### Photograph collections

- Fashion photographs collection, 1895-1980s: An artificial collection of photographic prints and a few transparencies, predominantly in black and white, collected by the Costume Institute to document 19th and 20th century vernacular and high fashion. These include 1930s-1940s press prints from Harper’s Bazaar; representative images of regional clothing from the early 20th century; vernacular American and French clothing; and press images of celebrities, royalty, and performers.

Extent: 11.4 Linear feet (19 document cases, 2 oversize boxes)

Finding aid: <http://bit.ly/2VEjSh4>

- Historical photographs collection, 1860s-1930s: Predominantly studio and some candid black and white photographic prints of individuals, couples, and families from the 1860s to the 1930s that appear to have been collected as documentation of everyday dress.

Extent: 0.5 Linear feet : 1 document case

Finding aid: <http://bit.ly/2J9YWb6>

- Paul Poiret garment photographs, 1925-1927: Five wood-mounted black and white images of models wearing dresses by Paul Poiret in fabrics designed by Raoul Dufy, and most likely all taken by Parisian photographer Boris Lipnitski.

Extent: 5.0 Item(s)

Finding aid: <http://bit.ly/2GXCPTF>

- 
- Richard Fredette photograph collection, 1980s-1990s: The collection consists of approximately 500 Polaroid photographic prints taken by Richard Fredette in the 1980s and 1990s. The majority document New York nightclub participants and activities including drag shows and other performances. Many focus on participants' elaborate makeup, costumes, and hair, including images of Fredette himself.

Extent: 2 document cases

Finding aid: <https://bit.ly/3qyhdly>

- Peter Lindbergh exhibitions collection, 1997-2008: Documentation from photographer Peter Lindbergh's exhibitions "Milla Jovovich", "Invasion 2000", and "Images of Women". For each exhibition there is a checklist with detailed information about individual prints, including dimensions, captions, and gallery case numbers; as well as a set of wire-bound laminated reproductions of the images included in each exhibition.

Extent: 1.0 Linear feet: 1 box

Finding aid: <http://bit.ly/2vvWe7K>

- Sidewalk to Showroom album, 1968-1970: Album of deckle-edged pages onto which are pasted black and white photographs by Ellen Breslow of street fashion taken in the period from 1968 to 1970, together with typed introductory paragraphs and captions as well as the typescript of a complete manuscript on the topic of street fashion.

Extent: 1.0 Item(s): postbound album

Finding aid: <http://bit.ly/2PJCqXD>

### **Scrapbooks and ephemera collections**

- Bal Oriental scrapbook, 1969: Original and reproduced sketches of costumes, hair ornaments, and coiffures designed for specific invitees to the spectacular 1969 Bal Oriental, given by Baron Alexis de Redé in his apartments at Paris's Hotel Lambert and attended by denizens of European and American high society. Attached to some of the sketches are swatches of fabrics and trims used in the designs.

Extent: 2.0 Item(s): One scrapbook, one set of oversized sketches

Finding aid: <http://bit.ly/2LhtBpB>

- June Rhodes Hamilton papers: Social correspondence, ephemera, and press photographs related to fashion publicist June Rhodes Hamilton's summer 1931 attendance at the Paris openings for the autumn/winter 1931 collections.

Extent: 0.2 Cubic feet: 1 half-size document box

Finding aid: <http://bit.ly/2GYAqZ5>

### **Sketch collections**

- Jay Thorpe sketch collection, 1913-1936: Thirty-eight albums of sketches documenting Paris fashions from 1913 to 1936 that were originally created for the retail store Jay Thorpe, which flourished in New York City from 1920 to the late 1950s. Color digital images are available for fourteen of the albums, and are linked to the collection's finding aid.

Extent: 38.0 Item(s)

Finding aid: <http://bit.ly/2UVmqTu>

- Worth sketch collections 1918: Two sets of hand-colored lithographs of dress and blouse designs by House of Worth, including those mailed to an American potential customer in 1918, exemplifying the firm's aggressive marketing of garments at the time of reduced purchasing of luxury items in Europe.

Extent: 0.5 Linear feet: 1 document case

---

Finding aid: <http://bit.ly/2IUFCPI>

### **Textile samples**

- Miss Anea swatch collection, [1960s]: Embroidered bead, sequin, and spangle samples on silk, velvet, wool, and taffeta fabric swatches produced by the embroidery studio Miss Anea in the 1960s for designers including Norman Norell and Pauline Trigere.

Extent: 1.17 Linear feet: 1 oversize box

Finding aid: <http://bit.ly/2PJD5bz>

- Rodier sample book, Spring/Summer 1938: Textile swatches produced by French textile design and manufacturing firm Rodier for the 1938 spring/summer season. For each named design, swatches are provided in a variety of colorways, accompanied by a sketch of a representative women's clothing design showing the fabric represented by the largest sample swatch.

Extent: 1.0 Item(s): Post-bound album of fabric swatches, with sketches of sample garments

Finding aid: <http://bit.ly/2IUFMGO>

- Washer Textile collection, 1930s-1960s, 1994: The collection includes mounted samples of corduroy, velvet, velveteen, and silks from a variety of mostly European mills, as well as samples, hang tags, and labels from corduroy, velvet, and velveteen produced by Vanetta Mills and other commercial manufacturers, as well as printed research materials, publicity photographs, clippings, and publications. It was amassed by Vanetta Mills' president Ross Washer, who was sent by the United States government after World War II to survey conditions in the European textile industry.

Extent: 17.0 Linear feet: 11 full-size document cases, 1 half-size document case, 9 oversize boxes

Finding aid: <http://bit.ly/2IUPpW4>

*Last updated 09/2021*