

# IMPACT

50 YEARS OF THE COUNCIL OF FASHION DESIGNERS OF AMERICA

# Impact: 50 Years of the CFDA

“American designers have always had impact on how people dress,” observes current CFDA president Diane von Furstenberg. “In honor of that creativity and in celebration of the CFDA’s 50th anniversary, we are proud to present, in partnership with The Museum at FIT, an exhibit that represents the tremendous work of our members for the last five decades. ‘Impact’ was the one word that came to mind immediately it is so strong and defining of our individual and collective influence that we knew right away that our exhibit would be called *Impact: 50 Years of the CFDA*.”

Founded in 1962 by publicist Eleanor Lambert and 20 of America’s leading fashion designers, the CFDA had as its primary mandate the recognition and promotion of fashion design talent based in the United States. During the 50 years that followed, the CFDA’s membership swelled to include more than 400 of America’s foremost womenswear, menswear, jewelry, and accessories designers. Meanwhile, its professional and philanthropic activities, its outreach, and its influence also expanded exponentially. Today, in an era dominated by the designer label, it is perhaps difficult to comprehend how significant a role the CFDA played in creating a platform for the recognition of individual creative talent in New York City, the nexus of global fashion.

*Impact: 50 Years of the CFDA* is an ode to the most illustrious efforts of the organization’s many members. The exhibition is a collaborative partnership between The Museum at FIT and the CFDA. All of the CFDA members are honored in graphic and media displays, and many of them are represented by the actual objects that constitute the exhibition objects chosen as being among the most “impactful” creations of the CFDA’s first half century. Designers who actively participated in the project each chose a single object or ensemble that they feel best represents their individual impact on the fashion world, and the curators of *Impact* have chosen work by other CFDA members included in the exhibition, drawing from the permanent collection of The Museum at FIT to find pieces of exceptional vitality.

The exhibition is organized thematically in order to illuminate the broad spectrum of American creativity. Its categories range from functional sportswear to couture quality eveningwear. Examples include:

**Cheeky menswear**, from John Weitz’s denim-and bandana leisure suit to Thom Browne’s feather and flannel fantasy

**Simply elegant eveningwear** that combines woolens or jersey with sequins, by masters Norman Norell and Bill Blass, as well as contemporary designs by Michael Kors

Garments inspired by **exoticism**, created by Giorgio di Sant’Angelo, James Galanos, and Ralph Lauren

**Cutting-edge ensembles**, including Marc Jacobs grunge for Perry Ellis, a glamour/gothic leather and jersey combination by Rick Owens, and sculptural pieces by Maria Cornejo, Yeohlee, and Isabel Toledo

**Simple dresses** with vibrant and sophisticated surface designs by Donald Brooks, Rudi Gernreich, Anna Sui, and Diane von Furstenberg

**Resplendent gowns**, by Oscar de la Renta, Vera Wang, and Carolina Herrera, as well as sexy evening gowns by Tom Ford and Stephen Burrows

A visually rich publication also entitled *Impact* is the companion book to the exhibition. Produced by the CFDA and published by Harry N. Abrams, *Impact* documents the evolution of the CFDA with more than 500 photographs chosen by participating members. The book begins with the birth of the CFDA in 1962, delineating its early promotional efforts and emphasizing its strong ties to the arts. A concise history of the organization, *Impact* traces the growth of the CFDA’s educational programs, its support of worthy causes, the debut of its own awards ceremony, and its stewardship of fashion week all while celebrating the CFDA’s unwavering support of America’s best fashion designers.

Patricia Mears,  
Deputy Director, MFIT

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**Kors**  
Michael Kors,  
cashmere sweatshirt,  
hemp crystal beaded  
pajama pant, leather  
belt, and platform  
sandal, spring 2011,  
USA, lent by Michael  
Kors. Photograph  
MFIT.

**top**  
**Traina-Norell**  
Traina-Norell,  
evening set:  
sequined camel silk  
jersey sheath dress  
and cashmere coat  
with sequined lining,  
c. 1958, USA, gift  
of Lauren Bacall.  
Photograph MFIT.

**bottom**  
**Trigère**  
Pauline Trigère,  
black and white  
cotton cloqué, dress,  
and coat, c. 1964,  
USA, collection of  
Beverley Birks.  
Photograph William  
Palmer.

**top**  
**Beene**  
Geoffrey Beene,  
rayon and silk gown  
with metallic trim,  
spring 1990, USA,  
lent by The Geoffrey  
Beene Foundation.  
Photograph MFIT.

**bottom**  
**Toledo**  
Isabel Toledo, red  
and black linen  
and knit *Packing  
Dress*, spring/  
summer 1988, USA,  
museum purchase.  
Photograph MFIT.

**top**  
**Browne**  
Thom Browne,  
pheasant feather/  
wool suit and grey  
felted fur bowler hat,  
fall/winter 2008–  
2009, USA, lent  
by Thom Browne.  
Photograph MFIT.

**bottom**  
**Kamali**  
Norma Kamali,  
black parachute cloth  
and feather jacket,  
skirt, and turban,  
2011, USA, lent  
by Norma Kamali.  
Photograph MFIT.

## SUPPORT THE MUSEUM

### COUTURE COUNCIL

An elite membership group, the Couture Council helps to support the exhibitions and programs of The Museum at FIT. Members receive invitations to exclusive events and private viewings. Annual membership is \$1,000 for an individual or couple and \$350 for a young associate (under the age of 35). For more information, write to [couturecouncil@fitnyc.edu](mailto:couturecouncil@fitnyc.edu) or call 212 217.4532.

### DESIGN MEMBERSHIP

Through the Design Membership program, designers and other industry professionals gain unique access to the Museum's holdings for the purposes of research and inspiration. Current members include fashion and home furnishing designers, manufacturers, merchandisers, and forecasters. The benefits of Design Membership include: assisted appointments to view objects from the costume, textile, and accessory collections; access to view and photograph approximately 100,000 textile swatches; and access to the Françoise de la Renta Color Room. Individual and corporate memberships are available at \$425 and \$1,250, respectively. For more information, call 212 217.4578.

### TOURS AND DONATIONS

Every six months, a changing selection of garments, accessories, and textiles from the Museum's permanent collection is put on display in the Fashion and Textile History Gallery, located on the Museum's ground floor. Tours of the Fashion and Textile History Gallery and of the Special Exhibitions Gallery may be arranged for a sliding fee of approximately \$350. Donations of museum-quality fashions, accessories, and textiles are welcomed. For more information about tours, call 212 217.4550; about donations, call 212 217.4570.

### Impact: 50 Years of the CFDA

February 10–April 17, 2012

CFDA

COUNCIL OF FASHION DESIGNERS  
OF AMERICA [CFDA.COM](http://CFDA.COM)

### HOURS:

Tuesday–Friday, noon–8 pm,

Saturday, 10 am–5 pm

Closed Sunday, Monday,  
and legal holidays.

The Museum at **FIT**

Seventh Avenue at 27th Street  
New York City

Museum information line: 212 217.4558

For more information, visit [fitnyc.edu/museum](http://fitnyc.edu/museum) or [cfda.com](http://cfda.com).

### Impact: 50 Years of the CFDA

has been made possible in part through the generosity of

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Additional support was provided by the Couture Council of The Museum at FIT.