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## Style Shows Come Into Fashion at Museums

To attract crowds, art institutions roll out frocks and other fabulousness, from Lady Gaga's bodysuit to Johnny Depp's 'Pirates of the Caribbean' costume

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By ELLEN GAMERMAN

**Women's underwear** is on display at the Museum of Decorative Arts in Paris. Christian Louboutin high heels are in the spotlight at Toronto's Design Exchange museum. London's Victoria & Albert Museum is showcasing looks from the city's '80s club scene. No fashion is off limits in today's museum world.



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Christian Louboutin Opening Night

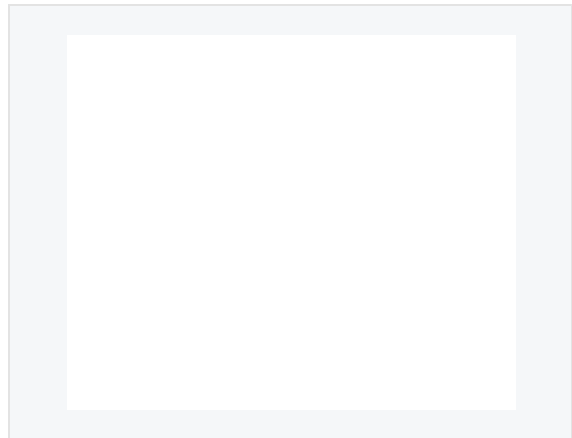
While New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art's current punk show revels in safety pins and zippers, institutions in other U.S. cities are offering their own exhibits that aim for big crowds. A display of 30 years of Japanese fashion recently opened at the Seattle Art Museum and hippie looks went up this week at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. There is even a fashion display amid the dinosaurs and natural-history

wonders at the Field Museum in Chicago—the styles include Inuit fur shorts and a raincoat made of seal intestines.

The argument that style shows please audiences but lack artistic merit is losing strength. The critically acclaimed Alexander McQueen show at the Met in 2011—one of the museum's 10 most popular exhibitions of all time—helped change that dynamic. "That made a huge impact," says Kimerly Rorschach, director of the Seattle Art Museum. "Audiences' consciousness was heightened and now they're more open to how incredible a fashion exhibition can be."

At least four jewelry shows are heading for museums this fall and winter, including "Jewels by JAR" at the Met, the first U.S. retrospective of work by the contemporary jewelry designer Joel A. Rosenthal (opening in November), as well as jewelry-focused shows at the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, the de Young museum in San Francisco and the Norton Museum of Art in West Palm Beach, Fla.

Unlikely institutions are going after fashion, too. The Jewish Museum in New York invited the New York-based



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Enlarge Image © Jean Paul Gaultier/Brooklyn Museum Ad campaign for Gaultier's spring-summer 1992 collections.

fashion label threeASFOUR to create an exhibit mixing architecture, video and avant-garde couture (including pieces from the label's spring-summer 2014 line). To mark the September opening, around the time of New York fashion week, the Jewish Museum is staging its first major runway show.

This fall, the World Chess Hall of Fame in St. Louis opens "A Queen Within: Adorned Archetypes, Fashion and Chess," an exhibit about fashions by designers like Alexander McQueen and Gucci suggesting the power and unpredictability of the chess piece. Susan Barrett, the hall of fame's director, wants people to reconsider the game: "We want to make it cool."

A look at some coming fashion exhibits:

SEATTLE ART MUSEUM, Seattle

The show: "Future Beauty: 30 Years of Japanese Fashion" features nearly 100 garments by established names like Issey Miyake and Rei Kawakubo. The exhibition, co-organized by the Kyoto Costume Institute, first traveled to London's Barbican Art Gallery in late 2010.

When: June 27 to Sept. 8

Big business: Since the show opened, crowds have been 1.5 times bigger than projected. This is the museum's first exhibition dedicated solely to fashion, says Ms. Rorschach, the director.

Attention grabber: A Junya Watanabe Comme des Garçons red polyester organdy jacket over a bumblebee yellow honeycomb skirt (right) that makes its wearer look as if she is trapped inside a Technicolor beehive.

Fashion challenge: It's actually pretty hard to dress a mannequin, says Ms. Rorschach, who was grateful that the Kyoto Costume Institute sent over experts to help with the job.

Gift shop item: Ombré dyed tights by designer Tiffany Ju (\$42).

Factoid: Lady Gaga wore the show's synthetic fiber bodysuit designed by Tamae Hirokawa.

BROOKLYN MUSEUM, Brooklyn, N.Y.

The show: "The Fashion World of Jean Paul Gaultier: From the Sidewalk to the Catwalk," the first-ever retrospective of the French courtier—a fashion-world enfant terrible known for pieces like the cone-bra bustier worn by Madonna. The show was produced by the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and has toured such cities as Dallas, Madrid and Rotterdam.

When: Oct. 25 to Feb. 23

Big business: "We consider fashion to be an art form," says museum director Arnold Lehman, adding that the institution is planning a show about high-heeled shoes for fall 2014.

Attention grabber: The mannequins feature animated faces. Videos of actors are projected onto the forms' heads.

Gift shop item: Gaultier-designed blue-and-white-striped long-sleeve tees (\$250).

Factoid: In the late 1950s, Mr. Gaultier created his first cone bra for his teddy bear, "Nana."

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DE YOUNG, San Francisco

**The show:** "The Art of Bulgari: La Dolce Vita & Beyond, 1950-1990," includes some 150 pieces inspired by Greek and Roman classicism as well as the Italian Renaissance. The fat gemstones have dripped down the necks of celebrities from Gina Lollobrigida to Jessica Chastain.

**When:** Sept. 21 to Feb. 17

**Big business:** The de Young calls this the first solo Bulgari exhibit in an American museum. Director Colin B. Bailey says the museum is looking at a 2015 exhibition showcasing couture dresses and modernist designs from the late 1880s to the 1950s.



From women's underwear and Christian Louboutin high heels to a raincoat crafted from seal intestines, fashion is sweeping the museum world. Ellen Gamerman has the inside look on Lunch Break. Photo: AP.

**Attention grabber:** The "Seven Wonders" necklace with seven Colombian emeralds totaling 118.46 carats.

**Fashion challenge:** The city already had a big jewelry show, a 2009 Cartier exhibit organized by the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. Then again, the popular show got extended by two weeks.

**Gift shop item:** A selection of Bulgari jewels (prices not yet available) and coloring books (\$9.50).

**Factoid:** The show features nine pieces from Elizabeth Taylor's collection, including a long necklace with sapphires that Richard Burton gave her on her 40th birthday.

McNAY ART MUSEUM, San Antonio

**The show:** "CUT! Costume and the Cinema" is a traveling exhibition featuring more than 40 garments worn by actors in period films.

**When:** Oct. 2 to Jan. 19

**Big business:** The show, organized by Exhibits Development Group, will have toured seven U.S. cities by next year.

**Attention grabber:** Johnny Depp's "Pirates of the Caribbean" outfit.

**Fashion challenge:** The McNay usually books less expensive touring shows. Including in-house production costs, they paid \$200,000 to present this one.

**Gift shop item:** Set of plates bearing fashion sketches (around \$40).

**Factoid:** The McNay created its own show, "Onstage! Costume Design for Theatre," to open before "CUT!" That exhibit, highlighting stage costumes, runs from Sept. 4, to Jan. 5.

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