

## News Release

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### ***Reinvention and Restlessness: Fashion in the Nineties*** **January 19–April 17, 2022** **Free and open to the public**

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The Museum at FIT presents *Reinvention and Restlessness: Fashion in the Nineties*, an exhibition centered on a decade that not only heralded the end of a century but the end of a millennium. With concepts ranging from minimalism to the revitalization of luxury design houses, the 1990s overflowed with styles that intrigued critics and consumers alike. “The curator of acclaimed exhibitions like *Fairy Tale Fashion*, Colleen Hill has outdone herself with this brilliant and timely exhibition on the fashions of the 1990s, which have come back into vogue for a new generation,” says MFIT Director and Chief Curator Valerie Steele.



Azzedine Alaïa, ensemble, snakeskin, spring 1991, France, gift of Veronica Webb.

This ensemble was worn and donated by supermodel Veronica Webb, who was one of Alaïa’s muses.



Prada, backpack, nylon, early 1990s, Italy.

Prada’s unassuming nylon backpack has become an icon of minimalist style.



Anna Sui, ensemble, silk, acrylic knit, cotton, leather, and rubber, spring 1993, USA, gift of Anna Sui.

Sui’s grunge-inspired collection combined military styling with references to the colorful hippie fashions of the late 1960s.

*Reinvention and Restlessness: Fashion in the Nineties* features more than 85 garments and accessories, the majority of which were selected from MFIT’s permanent collection of 50,000 objects. The introductory gallery highlights the connections between fashion and popular culture,

from fashion's increasing presence on television to the growing fame of supermodels. Videos of runway presentations and clips from films and television shows such as *Clueless* and *Sex and the City* help illustrate the theme.

The main gallery features eight important trends that helped define the 1990s.

Minimalism—characterized by its pared-down silhouettes and neutral palette—became a leading style in the first half of the decade. Both minimalism and grunge styles were perceived as reactions to the excesses of 1980s fashion, though they looked entirely different. Grunge ensembles—based on a style of clothing worn by musicians in the Pacific Northwest—tended to be layered and mismatched.



Vivienne Westwood, corset bodice, printed stretch blend and gold Lycra, fall 1990, England.

Westwood's work is frequently inspired by her studies of 18th-century fashion and art.



Jean Paul Gaultier, jumpsuit, printed nylon stretch fabric, fall 1995, France.

This computer-generated pattern of dots is shaded and sized to follow the shape of the body.



XULY.Bêt (Lamine Kouyaté), ensemble, recycled sweaters, printed wool, and nylon, fall 1994, France, gift of XULY.Bêt.

Lamine Kouyaté frequently repurposed worn and undesirable goods into new, high-fashion garments

Many designers renounced overtly lavish styles during the first half of the 1990s, but luxury soon marked its return. Established labels helped to revamp their images by hiring fresh young talent, exemplified by Tom Ford at Gucci and Alexander McQueen at Givenchy. On the other end of the spectrum, “deconstruction” caught on in the 1990s as a descriptor for clothing with an unfinished and unconventional appearance.

While some designers were pushing the envelope to create ingenious new styles, others were engaging with an array of influences from fashion's past. Yet contemplations of the future of fashion proved to be as compelling as a dive into fashion history. Swift advancements in computer technology and the expansion of the internet changed the ways that clothing was made, worn, and consumed.

Developments in technology, coupled with economic and political changes, also strengthened interconnectivity between people and places. In fashion, this translated into the “global wardrobe,” a *mélange* of styles with myriad influences. Moreover, the environmental impact of fashion production was also making its way into public consciousness during the 1990s, and a

handful of forward-thinking designers and labels introduced lines that centered on earth-friendly materials and manufacturing.

In addition to the array of clothing on display, visitors will enjoy illustrations of 10 key styles from the exhibition by the renowned artist Ruben Toledo, made especially for *Reinvention and Restlessness: Fashion in the Nineties*. The exhibition design is by architect Kimberly Ackert, who took inspiration from both deconstruction and minimalism.

*Reinvention and Restlessness: Fashion in the Nineties* is accompanied by a book of the same title, published by Rizzoli Electa and available at major booksellers. Written by exhibition curator Colleen Hill, the publication also includes essays by curator and writer Shonagh Marshall, MFIT Deputy Director Patricia Mears, and MFIT Director and Chief Curator Valerie Steele. It features more than 100 stunning images by photographers such as Corrine Day, Patrick Demarchelier, Nick Knight, Rankin, David Sims, and Ellen von Unwerth.

The exhibition is accompanied by MFIT's 26th annual fashion symposium. This virtual event will air on YouTube Premiere on Friday, February 11, 2022, from 11 am to 1:30 pm ET. In addition to MFIT's Colleen Hill, Patricia Mears, and Valerie Steele, the dynamic lineup of speakers includes Paul Boudens, graphic designer; Lamine Badian Kouyaté, fashion designer and founder of the fashion label Xuly.Bët; Marco Pecorari, director of MA in Fashion Studies program at Parsons Paris; and Alexandre Samson, curator of haute couture (from 1947) and contemporary creation at the Palais Galliera.

The museum will be open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays from noon to 8 pm, and Saturdays and Sundays from 10 am to 5 pm. Admission is free. It is mandatory that all visitors, regardless of their vaccination status, wear a face mask while in the museum. All visitors are requested to review the latest safety guidelines and protocols, [available here](#).

For more information and the latest MFIT updates, click [here](#); register for the newsletter [here](#); and follow us on [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), and [Facebook](#).

### **About The Museum at FIT (MFIT)**

The Museum at FIT, which is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, is the only museum in New York City dedicated solely to the art of fashion. Best known for its innovative and award-winning exhibitions, the museum has a collection of more than 50,000 garments and accessories dating from the 18th century to the present. Like other fashion museums, such as the Musée de la Mode, the Mode Museum, and the Museo de la Moda, The Museum at FIT collects, conserves, documents, exhibits, and interprets fashion. The museum's mission is to advance knowledge of fashion through exhibitions, publications, and public programs. Visit [fitnyc.edu/museum](http://fitnyc.edu/museum).

The museum is part of the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT), a State University of New York college that has been an internationally recognized leader in career education in design, fashion, business, and technology for 75 years. Providing an uncommon blend of practical experience and theory on a foundation of arts and sciences, FIT offers a wide range of affordable programs that foster innovation, collaboration, and a global perspective. FIT draws on its New York City location

to provide a vibrant, creative environment for learning, exploration, and research. The college offers nearly 50 degree programs and grants AAS, BFA, BS, MA, MFA, and MPS degrees, preparing students for professional success and leadership in the creative economy. Visit [fitnyc.edu](http://fitnyc.edu).

**Couture Council**

The Couture Council is a membership group that helps support the exhibitions and programs of The Museum at FIT. The Couture Council Award for Artistry of Fashion is given to a selected designer at a benefit luncheon held every September. For information on the Couture Council, call (212) 217-4532 or email [couturecouncil@fitnyc.edu](mailto:couturecouncil@fitnyc.edu).

*Reinvention and Restlessness: Fashion in the Nineties* has been made possible thanks to the generosity of the Couture Council of The Museum at FIT, The Coby Foundation, and the New York State Council on the Arts.

*couture council*



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