



## Friends of Textiles & Costume Newsletter

Vol. 17, No. 1, Winter 2023

### Message from the Chair

Dear Friends of Textiles & Costume,

As we move into a new year 2023, we feel the freedom of unmasking with caution and meeting face to face with friends, visiting the ROM freely and attending much awaited programs.

We at FTC, are keen to engage our members through the newsletter, visits to the ROM to discover textiles and costumes that are in various galleries, and provide access to expert knowledge on the collection, conservation and research.

Today, we are giving you a taste of what you will see when you visit the Canadian Modern exhibition.

In the meantime, let's have a colorful spring and celebrate the cloth that wraps us be it winter or summer.

Jayshree Khimasia

Chair of Friends of Textiles & Costume



Figure 1: "Night on the Town" sweater by Barbara Klunder, 1984.  
Wool from Romni Wool. Handknit by Claude Dessureault.  
Gift of the artist Barbara Klunder, 2022.35.8.

## Canadian Modern

The Canadian Modern exhibition “showcases examples of culturally significant, limited-edition and mass-produced objects designed and crafted in Canada’. Situated in the Patricia Harris Gallery of Textiles & Costumes on Level 4, it is no wonder that it highlights a number of fashions, textiles and accessories from the ROM’s permanent collection. Most were acquired over the last 20 years by Dr. Alexandra Palmer, Senior Curator, Nora E. Vaughan Fashion Costume Curator. The exhibit offered her the opportunity to build the collection and fill some gaps, resulting in several new donations such as the generous one by the prolific artist-designer Barbara Klunder (see above picture). All of the items in the exhibit, from post World War II to now, clearly demonstrate “Canada’s unique place in the modern design and craft movement.”

With respect to fashion, designers such as Marilyn Brooks ([Order of Canada](#)), Izzy Camilleri ([ROM Exhibition](#)) and Maggy Reeves ([Couturier](#)) are featured.



Figure: 2 Mini dress by Marilyn Brooks for Unicorn boutique, c. 1969. Acrylic crepe. Gift of Millie Jonsson, 2017.57.1.



Figure 3: Woman’s boomerang jewelry by Lily Yung, 2006. Die-cut wool felt. Gift of the Design Exchange 2020.24.98.

On the textile front, weavings of Harold Burnham (former Head of ROM's Textiles Department), textile patterns based on indigenous culture ([Coastal Salish Art](#)), and weavings with uncommon materials are presented.



Figure 4: "Earth Series, Terra 2" by Helen Frances Gregor 1974. Wool warp and weft with acrylic (acrylan) insertions, wool with inserted Lincoln fleece (natural dyes), anodized aluminum rods and tapestry weave. Gift of Helen Frances Gregor, 977.168.



Figure 5: Ptarmigan scarf by Agnes Nanogak Goose, 1970-71. Holman (Ulukhaktok), Northwest Territories, Canada (co-operative artist print studio). Artwork licensed by Canadian Arctic Producers. Silk screen printed twill by Bianchi Giovanni, Como, Italy. Sold in Eaton's department stores and other retailers. Gift of Jean Duce Palmer, 2020.69.1



Figure 6: "Sunridge" or "Geese in Flight", curtain by Thor Hansen, 1954. Designed for A.B. Caya Ltd. Kitchener, silk screen printed on rayon tabby by Montreal Fast Print Ltd., Montreal, QC. Thanks to Textile Endowment Fund, 2017.77.1.

Jewelry by Canadian designers Guy Vidal ( [Modernist jeweller](#)), Sherman ( [vintage jeweller](#)) and Rafael ( [Waddingtons](#)) are also displayed.



Figure 7: Pendant on pedestal by Guy Vidal, 1971. Pewter, silver plated. This acquisition was made possible by the Textile Endowment Fund, 2021.86.1.1.



Figure 8: Cape by Colette Harmon, 2018 Antiqued brass with zinc and nickel chain, silver, glass beads, crochet. Gift of Carole Tanenbaum, 2022.24.106.



Figure 9: Cuff by Gustave Sherman for Sherman & Company Ltd, 1959-60. Aurora Borealis Swarovski class crystals, rhodium setting. Gift of Carole Tanenbaum, 2019.104.110.

Access the ROM's [online electronic library](#) here for all information on the exhibit's textile, fashion and jewelry pieces.



A publication, 'Canadian Modern', accompanies the exhibition. It is written by Dr. Rachel Gotlieb with contributions from ROM curators Dr. Arlene Gehmacher and Dr. Alexandra Palmer. It is available in the ROM Boutique and other select retailers.

## Jayshree's Khimasia's Visit to Kenya

After attending Canadian Modern, and listening to a Docent, one becomes more aware how a particular garment is made, how metal is woven into beautiful fabric and the effort that goes into a design. I thought about this information and used it to examine my experiences during my November 2022 trip to Kenya. (I had been away for 18 years.)

Growing up there, we did not notice and appreciate textiles in those days as we were mostly surrounded by what my mother wore. These textiles were imported for purchase locally.

The only memory I have is of a cloth which local women wore to wrap around their waist, carrying a baby with this wrap, sitting on it or in hot weather using it as a body cover. This cloth is called KHANGA.



Figure 10: Kenyan cloth made in Khanga, silk screened. © Jayshree Khimisia 2022.



Figure 11: Kenyan dress made with Kitege machine printed fabric. © Jayshree Khimisia 2022.

Khangas are a specific size and pattern with a meaningful saying in Swahili (local language). They are screen printed and can be varied to celebrate different cultures. Screen printing is time consuming, and a dying art, so Khangas are not in demand much.

Well, Modern has taken over. Khangas have been replaced with machine printed cloth called KITENGE which have vibrant colors and patterns. Amazing modern designers have emerged and local women wear kitenges fashions proudly.

I was very fortunate to visit a cotton mill in Nairobi that produces this material and witnessed the whole process. I look forward to sharing more of this amazing textile and the story in the future.

Jayshree Khimasia

## About this publication

The Friends of Textiles & Costume newsletter is published to support and inform our members of department activities, general information and upcoming events. All images © ROM 2022, unless indicated.

### Executive

Chair: Jayshree Khimasia

Newsletter Editor: Pat Sparrer

### Join us or donate!

Interested in the ROM's collection of textile, fashion and costume? The Friends of Textiles & Costume (FTC) is a group within ROM's Department of Museum Volunteers and is open for anyone to join. [Please contact us.](#)

Your [generous support of FTC](#) assists curatorial research.

**Friends of Textiles & Costume**  
100 Queen's Park, Toronto ON M5S 2C6

Contact: [ftc@rom.on.ca](mailto:ftc@rom.on.ca)  
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**Friends of Textiles & Costume** is organized by the ROM's Department of Museum Volunteers to provide support for the Museum. ROM is an agency of the Government of Ontario.

The logo for the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM), consisting of the letters 'ROM' in a bold, black, sans-serif font.