



museum of arts and design

**MUSEUM OF ARTS AND DESIGN PRESENTS MAJOR
RETROSPECTIVE OF AMERICAN FASHION DESIGNER ANNA SUI**

The World of Anna Sui
September 12, 2019 – February 23, 2020



Anna Sui Fashion Show Spring 2012. Photo: Thomas Lau.

NEW YORK, NY (July 10, 2019) – From September 12, 2019, through February 23, 2020, the Museum of Arts and Design (MAD) will present a major retrospective of the iconic American fashion designer **Anna Sui**. Opening during New York Fashion Week, the exhibition features seventy-five looks from the designer’s archive—from the groundbreaking inaugural fashion show of 1991 to her Spring 2019 collection—and illuminates Sui’s creative process and influences that contribute to her signature aesthetic sensibility.

“Born and bred in Detroit, Anna Sui is a fascinating American design success story,” said **Chris Scoates**, MAD’s Nanette L. Laitman Director. “Season after season, Sui translates popular culture and artisanal making into collections that pulse with excitement, reflect and expand on the

creative spirit of the times, and move the needle for what fashion can and should be for a diverse, global market. We are extremely excited to welcome our visitors for an unforgettable immersive experience of Anna's design universe."

Sui is one of New York City's most beloved and accomplished fashion designers, known for creating contemporary original clothing inspired by in-depth research into vintage styles, cultural arcana, art history, graphic design, European and Asian decorative arts, film, and more. Sui joined New York's creative cultural underground at a rich time in the 1970s, forging important, lasting relationships in the worlds of fashion, photography, art, music, and design. Additionally, she is one of the original voices of the Save the Garment Center movement.

Arranged thematically, *The World of Anna Sui* is driven by Sui's thirteen design archetypes—Rock Star, Schoolgirl, Punk, Nomad, and Surfer, to name a few—that are infused with seemingly incongruent influences, including French interior designer and antiques dealer **Madeleine Castaing**, the London boutique **Biba**, pirates, pre-Raphaelite maidens, **Yves Saint Laurent**, and **Minnie Mouse**. The garments, sketches, mood boards, videos of runway presentations, and cultural ephemera on view trace Sui's eclectic career and illuminate her creative process.

"Since 1991, Anna has been a major influence in fashion, bringing the boutique look to a wider audience, and expanding it to accessories, perfumes, and cosmetics," said **Barbara Paris Gifford**, Assistant Curator at MAD. "A prolific storyteller, Anna weaves together popular and little-known visual references every season creating singular looks that are unmistakably Anna. Throughout the exhibition, you see evidence of her vast knowledge of music, movies, interior design, books, time periods, graphic design, art movements, fashion, and photography."

Starting in the Museum's lobby, a to-scale installation of **Dean "Chooch" Landry's** illustration of the original Anna Sui flagship store in New York's SoHo neighborhood invites visitors into the world of Anna Sui. In the galleries, visitors will encounter the milieu of Sui's archetypes, experience runway fashion shows, and learn about the behind-the-scenes development of the accessories and accoutrement that complete Anna Sui fashion shows.

The first section of the exhibition focuses on Sui's inspirations, presenting biographical information of the designer along with ephemera supporting her passion and enthusiasm early in life for clothing, music, history, and design. On view will be fashions worn by Sui's personal style icons **Anita Pallenberg** and **Jane Holzer**, as well as favorite inspirational clothing designed by **Zandra Rhodes**, **Norma Kamali**, and **Betsey Johnson**. The famous **Diana Vreeland** sculpture by **Greer Lankton** from Sui's apartment in the 1990s, now part of the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, also will be on view.

Mood boards from Anna Sui's Fall 2019 "Poptimistic" collection, direct from the designer's studio, will illustrate Sui's creative process. More than 500 pieces, including inspiration images of Detroit's Grande Ballroom designed by **Gary Grimshaw** and **Carl Lundgren**, **Antonio Lopez** illustrations for *The New York Times*' "Fashion of the Times," "The Sun" from **David Palladini's** Aquarian Tarot Deck, **David Weidman's** Fractured Fairytale silkscreens of sunflowers and butterflies, and textile swatches, will give visitors an insider's view of how each of Sui's collections is developed.

Hallmark outfits from Anna Sui collections also will be represented in the exhibition, from the "Backless Chaps" worn by **Naomi Campbell** in the Fall 1992 runway show to the "Silver Peruvian Ensemble" from Spring 1994 to one of the iconic "Babydoll Dresses" worn by **Linda Evangelista**, **Naomi Campbell**, and **Christy Turlington**. All looks featured will be shown in context with the original backdrops from **Oliphant Studio** used in Sui's arresting fashion shows.

The creation and decoration of spaces and environments are integral to Sui's signature style. Similar to her runway shows, these multi-layered and associative spaces—boutique, home, and studio—are indicative of Sui's holistic view of design. Visitors will experience environments with furnishings and décor from the designer's personal collection throughout the exhibition.

The World of Anna Sui also spotlights the constellation of collaborators Sui has worked with throughout her career. Illustrators such as **Dean “Chooch” Landry, Michael Economy, Jeffrey Fulvimari, Hiroshi Tanabe, Nolan Pelletier,** and **Tim Sheaffer** have contributed to the fashion label's distinctive graphic identity. Anna Sui's trademark textile designs will be shown alongside those created with high-profile partners such as **Ascher Studio, Zandra Rhodes,** and **Barbara Hulanicki.** Long-term creative partnerships forged with photographer **Steven Meisel;** models **Linda Evangelista, Christy Turlington, Naomi Campbell,** and **Karen Elson;** make-up artists **Pat McGrath** and **François Nars;** hairstylist **Garren;** jeweler **Karen Erickson;** eyewear manufacturer **Mondottica;** luxury shoemaker **Ballin;** footwear manufacturer **Teva;** backdrop artist **Sarah Oliphant;** set designer **Jerry Schwartz;** music producer **Frédéric Sanchez;** and knitwear designer and milliner **James Coviello** also are documented.

The World of Anna Sui follows other important MAD fashion design exhibitions of recent years, including *fashion after Fashion* (2017), *Counter-Couture: Handmade Fashion in an American Counterculture* (2017), and *Ralph Pucci: The Art of the Mannequin* (2015). Notably, Sui's visit to the Museum to view *Counter-Couture*, which celebrated the handmade fashion and style of the 1960s and 1970s, provided inspiration for Anna Sui's Spring 2018 collection.

Accompanying the exhibition is fashion journalist **Tim Blanks's** 296-page book, *The World of Anna Sui*, which includes interviews with the designer and photographs of sketches, runway shows, and mood boards. Additionally, a series of public programs at the Museum—from family-friendly Sui-bies stroller tours to Sui Saturdays with the designer and her collaborators—will extend the exhibition experience to visitors of all ages. During Sui Saturday events, taking place monthly throughout the exhibition's run, the designer will be in conversation with Senior Editor of *Elle Decor* **Vanessa Lawrence;** hairstylist **Garren;** make-up artist **Pat McGrath;** model and musician **Karen Elson;** and an expert from **Inter Parfums,** manufacturer and distributor of Anna Sui's perfumes, among others.

Along with Sui's niece, filmmaker and fashion photographer **Jeannie Sui Wonders,** the Museum is organizing a cinema series, featuring films that have served as key sources of inspiration for the Anna Sui collections represented in the galleries. For example, **Murray Lerner's** *Festival* (1967), which documents the thriving musical scene of the Newport Folk Festival, influenced the folk-inspired Fall 1999 collection.

EXHIBITON CREDITS

The World of Anna Sui was curated by Dennis Nothdruff for the Fashion and Textile Museum, London. It was secured for the Museum of Arts and Design by former William and Mildred Lasdon Chief Curator Shannon R. Stratton and adapted for the New York audience by Assistant Curator Barbara Paris Gifford.

Support for *The World of Anna Sui* is provided by Russell and Marian Burke, Inter Parfums USA, UOVO, Albion, Mondottica, Teva, Jeanne Masel, Thomas W. Roush, and The Douglas A. Hirsch and Holly S. Andersen Family Foundation in honor of Jane Holzer.

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ABOUT ANNA SUI

Anna Sui's collections take people on a creative journey that is unparalleled in the world of fashion. Mixing vintage inspiration with current cultural obsessions, she effortlessly designs hip and exuberant original clothing. Anna Sui's first fashion show in 1991 earned her international acclaim. The Council of Fashion Designers of America (CFDA) recognized Anna Sui with its Perry Ellis Award for New Fashion Talent in 1993, and honored her again in 2009 with the prestigious Geoffrey Beene Lifetime Achievement Award. Anna Sui's products are sold in over 300 stores in 30 countries. The Anna Sui line also includes her very popular fragrance and cosmetic collections, as well as successful footwear, eyewear, and jewelry licensees. Anna Sui designs and manufactures directly from her New York City studio. Her runway shows continue to inspire and set trends through her signature lens. The Anna Sui brand has been independently owned since its inception in 1981.

ABOUT THE MUSEUM OF ARTS AND DESIGN

The Museum of Arts and Design (MAD) champions contemporary makers across creative fields and presents the work of artists, designers, and artisans who apply the highest level of ingenuity and skill. Since the Museum's founding in 1956 by philanthropist and visionary Aileen Osborn Webb, MAD has celebrated all facets of making and the creative processes by which materials are transformed, from traditional techniques to cutting-edge technologies. Today, the Museum's curatorial program builds upon a rich history of exhibitions that emphasize a cross-disciplinary approach to art and design, and reveals the workmanship behind the objects and environments that shape our everyday lives. MAD provides an international platform for practitioners who are influencing the direction of cultural production and driving twenty-first-century innovation, and fosters a participatory setting for visitors to have direct encounters with skilled making and compelling works of art and design. For more information, visit madmuseum.org.

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