



Phoenix Art Museum exhibits the “Emphatics” Fashion Archive with rare designs by Thierry Mugler, Alaïa, Jean Paul Gaultier & Issey Miyake

ITS RECENT ACQUISITION OF MORE THAN 400 AVANT-GARDE PIECES OF CLOTHING AND ACCESSORIES DATING FROM 1963-2013 PREMIERES FALL 2016



PHOENIX (September 20, 2016) – Earlier this year, Phoenix Art Museum announced that its fashion design department had acquired the entire, intact archive of visionary U.S. retailers James and Karin Legato. Selected works from more than 400 pieces of clothing and accessories by Alexander McQueen, Issey Miyake, Thierry Mugler, John Galiano, Romeo Gigli, Christian Lacroix, Alaïa, Claude Montana and Jean Paul Gaultier, among others, will be exhibited for the first time in the Steele Gallery from November 6, 2016 to January 16, 2017.

The story of *Emphatics* began in 1963 when James Legato founded an upscale hair salon in Pittsburgh. Six years later, he expanded into designer women’s wear to service his clients with head-to-toe looks. With wife and business partner Karin on board, the couple’s chic oasis in the Steel City relocated to One Oxford Centre downtown in the early Eighties. The white plaster and Italian marble setting crowned with a 15-foot, vaulted dome ceiling resembled a theater of fashion. The exhibit, *Emphatics: Avant-Garde Fashion 1963-2013*, picks up at this point to celebrate their long-term, joint commitment to runway style and ends with the store’s closure in 2013.

“We’ve always considered and appreciated fashion as art and seeing this exhibition materialize at Phoenix Art Museum has proven to be the most authentic expression of our commitment to the art of fashion,” said Karin Legato, in finding the right fit for the archive after her husband passed away in 2015.

Though located far from Paris, London and Milan, *Emphatics* was at the forefront of European fashion. The store was the first point of sale in the U.S. for Jean Paul Gaultier and Maud Frizon. Jean Paul Gaultier acknowledges *Emphatics* as a stateside pioneer for a new movement in fashion design saying, “The Legatos have supported me since the very beginning. *Emphatics* was just one of

MEDIA CONTACT:

Casey Christiansen, Communications Manager, Fashion
602.257.2151 | Casey.Christiansen@phxart.org

a handful of retailers in the United States to embrace and support emerging avant-garde designers in the 1970s and 1980s. Their taste was exceptional, and their loyalty was unwavering. Working with the Legatos was a rare and treasured experience in my career, and I am delighted to learn that Phoenix Art Museum is celebrating the legacy of *Emphatics* and the visionaries behind it.”

Of the approximately 100 ensembles in the exhibit, there are a flaming bustier from Mugler’s Fall/Winter 1987 collection; velvet and lace ensembles from Gigli’s Fall 1989 collection inspired by Byzantine mosaics, and Miyake’s “A Piece of Cloth” (A-POC), an innovative technical process that eliminated pattern makers and decreased fabric waste from Fall/Winter 1998.

“Since it didn’t require sewing and assembly, A-POC broke conventions in the way garments were considered,” said Dennita Sewell, The Jacquie Dorrance Curator of Fashion Design for Phoenix Art Museum, who plans to show two uncut rolls and one cut garment along with their original cutting diagrams and tubes from this series. “The *Emphatics* archive also includes rare, limited-edition accessories such as Alaïa belts, Gaultier corset collar neck pieces and Mugler satellite-shaped brooches and earrings.”

Designed like a reverse runway, the exhibit’s mannequins flank related, multimedia ephemera including personal photographs often taken in showrooms and at fashion shows by the Legatos, as well as designers’ original videos and invitations from three decades of attending fashion weeks worldwide.

“The designs are exciting but also acquiring the invitations and video material places their work in a larger, creative context and makes it an ideal archive for an educational institution like Phoenix Art Museum. The *Emphatics* archive also represents the most forward thinking designers working in the Eighties and Nineties, which was an exceptionally creative period in fashion,” said Sewell. Leading up to the exhibit’s debut, the Museum is organizing summer salons that trace the history of the archive’s Parisian collections. A symposium with Karin Legato and design industry professionals is slated for November 5, 2016.

About the Fashion Design Collection

Founded in 1966, Phoenix Art Museum’s Fashion Design collection is notable for its quality and comprehensiveness and is comprised of more than 7,000 objects of American and European men’s, women’s and children’s dress and accessories dating from the 18th century to the present.

Phoenix Art Museum is continuing to commence a yearlong celebration honoring the collection’s 50 year history. A wide array of events including a Lunch and Lecture series, History of Fashion Summer Salons and an exhibition drawn from the collection will highlight the Museum’s exceptional fashion design offerings. In addition, a significant new acquisition for the collection will be purchased by the Arizona Costume Institute.

About Phoenix Art Museum

Phoenix Art Museum has provided access to visual arts and educational programs in Arizona for more than 50 years and is the largest art museum in the Southwestern United States. In addition to an annual calendar of special exhibitions, Phoenix Art Museum’s permanent collection galleries are drawn from more than 18,000 objects of modern and contemporary art, fashion design, and photography, as well as American, Asian, Latin American, and European art. Each month, the Museum hosts a wide variety of public programs, including lectures, performances, tours, workshops, and film screenings designed for audiences of all ages to enjoy.

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IMAGE CREDITS: 1. Thierry Mugler, French, born 1948 Strasbourg, France. *Dress and belt*, 1985. Silk taffeta. Museum purchase of Emphatics Archive with funds provided by: Barbara Anderson, Arizona Costume Institute, Milena and Tony Astorga, Jacquie Dorrance, Kelly Ellman, Michael and Heather Greenbaum, Diane and Bruce Halle, Nancy R. Hanley, Ellen Katz, Miriam Sukhman. Photo by Ken Howie. 2. Thierry Mugler, French, born 1948 Strasbourg, France. *Bustier*, FW 1987. Silk Satin. Museum purchase of Emphatics Archive with funds provided by: Barbara Anderson, Arizona Costume Institute, Milena and Tony Astorga, Jacquie Dorrance, Kelly Ellman, Michael and Heather Greenbaum, Diane and Bruce Halle, Nancy R. Hanley, Ellen Katz, Miriam Sukhman. Photo by Ken Howie. 3. Jean Paul Gaultier, French, born 1952 Arcueil, Val-de-Marne, France. *Kimono Jacket*, SS 2007. Embroidered silk / Jean Paul Gaultier, French, born 1952 Arcueil, Val-de-Marne, France. *Vest*, 1990. Wool / Jean Paul Gaultier, French, born 1952 Arcueil, Val-de-Marne, France. *Leggings*, FW 2012. Printed nylon and elastic / Jean Paul Gaultier, French, born 1952 Arcueil, Val-de-Marne, France. *Shoes*, SS 2008. Leather / Jean Paul Gaultier, French, born 1952 Arcueil, Val-de-Marne, France. *Earrings*, SS 1989. Metal. Museum purchase of Emphatics Archive with funds provided by: Barbara Anderson, Arizona Costume Institute, Milena and Tony Astorga, Jacquie Dorrance, Kelly Ellman, Michael and Heather Greenbaum, Diane and Bruce Halle, Nancy R. Hanley, Ellen Katz, Miriam Sukhman. Photo by Ken Howie.

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