



NEWS

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Adrian: Hollywood and Beyond **March 7 – April 1, 2017** **The Museum at FIT**

The Fashion Institute of Technology's School of Graduate Studies and The Museum at FIT present ***Adrian: Hollywood and Beyond***. Organized by graduate students in the Fashion and Textile Studies program, the exhibition highlights Gilbert Adrian's masterful techniques and his work both as a famous Hollywood costume designer and a successful fashion designer. It is also the first exhibition to focus on the importance of textiles within his work. Presenting a selection of garments, textiles, advertisements, and film clips, the exhibition showcases Adrian's innovative use of print as well as his skilled construction techniques, within an environment that evokes his Beverly Hills salon.



*Adrian two-piece evening ensemble,
1944, USA, rayon crêpe.*

Adrian (1903–1959) began his career in fashion illustration before moving into costume design, eventually designing for more than 250 films at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM) from the late 1920s to the early 1950s. He was able to parlay his success as a Hollywood costume designer into ready-to-wear fashion through studio partnerships with national department stores, such as Macy's. Within the exhibition, an excerpt from a 1940 MGM promotional film, *Hollywood: Style Center of the World*, will explain the concept of department store cinema shops, where women purchased ready-to-wear versions of ensembles worn by Hollywood movie stars. Encouraged by the success of these shops, Adrian established his own label and opened a Beverly Hills salon in 1942.

A 1944 evening ensemble demonstrates Adrian's understanding of pattern scale. The painterly print encircles the body, allowing the wearer to become a walking mural. Its aquatic theme is evocative of the California coast, where Adrian primarily resided.



*Adrian day dress, 1943,
USA, printed rayon.*

A day dress from 1943 that features a print evoking rivers and fields of grain is an example of Adrian's unique interpretation of print. His manipulation and careful placement of the fabric adds a new dimension. The result is a series of repeated chevrons that accentuate the wearer's figure.

The exhibition also showcases Adrian's expertise handling fabric and construction. The sharply tailored silhouette for which he is best known is most clearly expressed in his celebrated suits. The suit jackets, often paired with slim skirts, were triangular in shape. The shoulders were emphasized with pads, allowing the waist to appear narrow. This style of suit dominated the American fashion scene during the Second World War.



*Adrian suit, 1945, USA,
woolen textile by Pola Stout.*

Adrian produced a number of geometrically striking garments in collaboration with textile artist Pola Stout. She would send fabric samples to Adrian, who in turn would sketch garments inspired by her work;

Adrian then asked Stout to reweave the selections to meet his specifications. On display is a woolen suit from 1945 that features a Pola Stout textile. Their collaborative process resulted in a captivating garment that was executed with mitering and piecing techniques. Through this creative construction, the suit's pattern visually draws attention to Adrian's ideal form.



*Adrian suit jacket, circa 1950,
USA, British Samek wool.*

A gray suit jacket, circa 1950, is a nuanced example of Adrian's mastery of construction. The criss-crossing insets on the hips and lapels illustrate his ability to elevate an otherwise restrained suiting fabric into a bold and unique garment. The insets are cut diagonally and are placed to subtly reference the pattern of the fabric.

The exhibition also explores the ways Adrian incorporated printed and patterned textiles in his designs. Examples by textile artist Wesley Simpson and manufacturer Bianchini-Férier are paired with corresponding advertisements that prominently feature Adrian's finished garments.



*Adrian evening dress, 1947,
USA, printed rayon textile by
Wesley Simpson/Salvador Dali.*

A 1947 Adrian evening dress demonstrates the perfect union of print and construction. This dress was created using an illustration by Salvador Dalí that was turned into fabric by textile converter Wesley Simpson. Adrian expanded the Surrealist boulder print by extending its repeated shadow effect over the wearer's shoulder, using drapery and appliqué. This inventive design allows the extraordinary print to be the focal point of the dress



*Adrian evening ensemble,
1945, USA, rayon crêpe.*

An evening ensemble from 1945 showcases Adrian's creativity with surface design. To create the illusion of a printed textile, he pieced together contrasting solid-colored fabrics. A 1946 advertisement from *Town & Country* described the garment as "intricate as a puzzle and [as] modern as a Picasso."



*Adrian costume, 1952,
USA, silk jersey, from the film
Lovely to Look At.*



*Adrian costume, 1952,
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Lovely to Look At.*

Adrian: Hollywood and Beyond concludes with an extravagant silk jersey gown from *Lovely to Look At* (1952), the last film to feature Adrian's work. This cinematic costume with an embellished bodice and elaborate hood is displayed alongside a 1942 black silk jersey dress from one of his earliest ready-to-wear collections. The pairing highlights the unconventional drapery methods that Adrian used throughout his career.

Museum hours: Tuesday–Friday, noon–8 pm; Saturday, 10 am–5 pm. Closed Sunday, Monday, and legal holidays.

Admission is free.

Fashion Institute of Technology

Students in the Fashion and Textile Studies: History, Theory, Museum Practice MA program in FIT's School of Graduate Studies have collaborated with The Museum at FIT to present *Adrian: Hollywood and Beyond*. The School of Graduate Studies provides advanced professional education in seven distinctive areas, promoting excellence in the post-baccalaureate study of fashion, business, art, and design. The school offers programs leading to the MA, MFA, and MPS degrees, and is dedicated to advancing research in the creative industries and fostering innovative collaborations that link students and faculty with industry and professional partners worldwide.

The Museum at FIT, which is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, is part of the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT). It 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.

The Fashion Institute of Technology, a part of the State University of New York, has been a leader in career education in art, design, business, and technology for more than 70 years. With a curriculum that provides a singular blend of hands-on, practical experience, classroom study, and a firm grounding in the liberal arts, FIT offers a wide range of outstanding programs that are affordable and relevant to today's rapidly changing industries. Internationally renowned, FIT draws on its New York City location to provide a vibrant, creative community in which to learn. The college offers nearly 50 majors and grants AAS, BFA, BS, MA, MFA, and MPS degrees, preparing students for professional success and leadership in the global marketplace. Among notable alumni in fashion are Calvin Klein, Michael Kors, Amsale Aberra, Reem Acra, Brian Atwood, Dennis Basso, Francisco Costa, Norma Kamali, Nanette Lepore, Bibhu Mohapatra, Ralph Rucci, John Bartlett, and Michelle Smith. Other prominent graduates include Leslie Blodgett, creator of bareMinerals; international restaurant designer Tony Chi; Nina Garcia, creative director, *Marie Claire*; and Joe Zee, executive creative officer, Yahoo Style. Visit fitnyc.edu.