Richard Martin Exhibition Award Entry Form

Institution’s name
University of Alberta

Institution’s address
325 Human Ecology Building, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, T6G 2N1

Contact’s name
Anne Bissonnette

Title
Curator, Clothing and Textiles Collection, and
Associate Professor, Material Culture and Curatorship

Telephone
780-492-3604

E-mail
anne.bissonnette@ualberta.ca

Name and title of CSA Member on the exhibition team
Anne Bissonnette

Exhibition title
Eyewear: Fashion with Vision

Exhibition dates
November 23, 2016, to February 5, 2017

Exhibition location
Human Ecology Gallery, University of Alberta, Edmonton

Include the following:

1) Briefly state the concept for the exhibition, including goals and expectations.
2) Briefly describe the institution that presented the costume exhibition. Include the annual budget for the institution, or if the institution is a museum, college, or university with many departments, the annual budget for the department that generated the exhibition.
3) Briefly outline the exhibition budget.
4) Briefly describe the physical exhibition space, and include a floor plan to scale.
5) Briefly detail the conservation methods used in the exhibition.
6) Provide a walk-through of the exhibition, including no more than 20 images or photographs that give a sense of the exhibition as a whole.
7) Provide label text, including all text if possible, but at least the major concept labels, subordinate labels, and several examples of object labels.
8) Include other material as desired, such as examples of catalogues, gallery guides, brochures, videos, or handouts, or information about related public programs and online content.

Submit the material electronically or submit six (6) copies, either as DVDs or in clearly labeled 3-ring binders or folders. If you want the binders returned, include six (6) self-addressed, pre-paid return envelopes, or for submissions from outside of the United States, UPS or Fed-Ex prepaid return envelopes.

Send DVDs or hard copies to:
Petra Slinkard, Richard Martin Exhibition Awards Committee Chair
Chicago History Museum, 1601 N. Clark Street Chicago, IL 60614
petra.slinkard@gmail.com
Co-curated by
Anne Bissonnette, Cybil Cameron, Katelin Karbonik, Naomi Milne, Danielle Peel and Donnalee Riley
1. Exhibition Concept

The exhibition “Eyewear: Fashion with Vision” focuses on eyeglasses in the University of Alberta’s Clothing and Textiles Collection and explores the topic holistically from a human ecological perspective. We address eyewear as objects that serve a medical purpose and help to improve one’s health and well-being; we study frames through the lens of science and design to investigate materials and sculptural shapes; and we reintegrate glasses within the fashion system as a mean to convey identity and status.

A collaborative project created by University of Alberta students in the undergraduate course “Nineteenth, Twentieth and Twenty-first Century Dress in the Western World” and their instructor, Dr. Anne Bissonnette, the work occurred between September 2 and November 23, 2016, during the lab portion of the course (3 hrs./week). The exhibition aimed to research eyewear following different perspectives that spoke to the co-curators’ interests in a way that was novel and appropriate to the Collection’s mission to “support discovery, dissemination and application of new knowledge through teaching and learning, research and creative activity, community outreach and partnerships.” The project allowed students to apply knowledge gained on dress history, use a material culture methodology in their research, think critically about their sources, apply ideas that pertained to dress and identity, and reach out to community stakeholders to learn more about an element of dress seldom tackled in the literature on fashion.

From raising money through a crowd funding initiative to designing an exhibition around very small artifacts, the project was conceived as an experiential learning assignment in line with the University’s new Strategic Plan. Co-curators worked in teams and each took part in the research, writing, group editing, mounting, and production process. The research had to draw from reliable scholarship in the field, be original in its approach and address the mission of the Human Ecology Department geared towards the application of multidisciplinary knowledge about the dynamic interrelations between people and their near environments. A single type of object allowed us to discuss the stigma of disabilities and the possibilities and meanings embedded in eyewear. The exhibition provided an excellent opportunity for fourth-year students to apply knowledge they gained throughout their program on textile science, apparel construction and design. This experiential learning avenue was both “hands-on” and reflective: it imparted curatorial skills ranging from pragmatic thinking to reflection, analysis, problem-solving and synthesizing that can transfer to other fields and applications.

The topic had to be selected in August before the semester began to get the project registered with the University’s USEED crowd funding agency. The functioning of this social-media based approach had to be tweaked as this was the first time this activity was imbedded in a course curriculum at the University of Alberta (co-curricular funding was the norm). Results from this funding initiative informed the design of the exhibition and our ability to borrow artifacts not present in the Collection. Local opticians provided additional knowledge, loans and passionate support and became new community allies for the students, the Collection and the Department.
2. Description of the Institution

The University of Alberta’s main campus is located in Edmonton, the capital of the province of Alberta. The institution is one of Canada’s top five research universities and currently serves over 37,000 students. The University is home to eighteen faculties, including the Faculty of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences of which the Department of Human Ecology is a part. An interdisciplinary applied field, Human Ecology focuses on the dynamic relationships people have with their near environments: clothing, family, home and community. The Department houses the Clothing and Textiles Collection while the University maintains the Collection’s facilities (storage and gallery).

The Collection houses more than 23,000 clothing and textile-related artifacts with local, national and international significance. Founded in 1972, the Collection includes every day wear and designer clothes for men, women and children from around the globe and spanning over 350 years of history. In addition to examples of textiles from different continents, artifacts that depict clothing and relate to the production and embellishment of cloth are also part of our holdings. These include looms, spindles, needlework tools, patterns, historical fashion magazines and photographs. The Collection is one of twenty-nine that are part of the University of Alberta Museums consortium that, altogether, total over 17 million objects and specimens. From art and archaeology to paleontology and zoology, collections are used to fuel discovery and advance knowledge through teaching and research. An integral part of the Department of Human Ecology, the Collection and its Human Ecology Gallery also serve the University and community. The artifacts in our care are unique reference tools for gaining insights into areas such as apparel and surface design and technology, historical and material culture inquiry, textile science and technology and museum practice, including preventive conservation and exhibition curatorship. In-house exhibitions are continually changing and are curated by professional staff members and by students in undergraduate and graduate courses.

The Department’s 2016-17 operating budget is $2,326,852 CDN, 98% of which defrays salaries and benefits. Two academic staff positions include a portion of the individual’s duties as service to the Collection and are funded by the Department. Dr. Bissonnette is an Associate Professor in Material Culture and Curatorship and the Curator of the Collection. Vlada Blinova is a Faculty Service Officer, Lecturer and Collections Manager who is also attached to the Collection. 0.3% of Dr. Bissonnette’s salary and 0.5% of Ms. Blinova’s are the Department’s main contribution to the Collection. Monies are also collected externally for the Collection Endowment Fund (maintenance of artifacts, purchase of basic supplies), which generates on average $4,000 annually, and for the Operation and Acquisition Fund (OAF) (service contracts, equipment purchase, acquisition of artifacts), which had $26,700 CDN in holding in December 2016. These funds are for the running of the Collection and not for one-time exhibition purposes. Items that can be reused may be deemed acceptable to a degree. For the exhibition, the OAF covered none of the budget but the Department of Human Ecology contributed $300 in addition to the $1,365 raised through crowd funding.
### 3. Exhibition Budget

#### SOURCES OF FUNDING (in Canadian dollar)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USEED Crowdfunding</td>
<td>1365.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Human Ecology</td>
<td>300.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL FUNDING</strong></td>
<td><strong>1665.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### EXPENSES (in Canadian dollar)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>SUPPLIER &amp; DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>AMOUNT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10/18/2016</td>
<td>2 cans of paint and painting supplies (HOME DEPOT)</td>
<td>116.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/20/2016</td>
<td>nylons for buffer on mannequins (DOLLARAMA)</td>
<td>28.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/21/2016</td>
<td>2 rolls of double-stick tape for hair (COLOURS ART &amp; FRAMING)</td>
<td>11.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/21/2016</td>
<td>supplies (tape measure, scissors, safety pins) (DOLLARAMA)</td>
<td>16.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/14/2016</td>
<td>3 male mannequins (Eddie’s Display Hang-ups)</td>
<td>648.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/14/2016</td>
<td>8 wood boxes to display glasses (DOLLARAMA)</td>
<td>16.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/15/2016</td>
<td>4 white spray paint can for mannequin touch-ups (HOME DEPOT)</td>
<td>29.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/18/2016</td>
<td>black pants for installation, rubber gloves, shoes laces (WAL-MART)</td>
<td>33.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/19/2016</td>
<td>1 pair of Ray-Ban “Wayfarer” sunglasses (Bijan Optical)</td>
<td>169.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/22/2016</td>
<td>4 black and white banners + 1 color banner (STAPLES)</td>
<td>74.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/23/2016</td>
<td>4 rods and eyelets for text banners (HOME DEPOT)</td>
<td>23.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/23/2016</td>
<td>2 clear acrylic risers (PLASTIC PLUS LTD.)</td>
<td>226.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/23/2016</td>
<td>foam core + food for opening reception PART 1 (WAL-MART)</td>
<td>37.42</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/23/2016</td>
<td>food for opening reception PART 2 (SAFEWAY)</td>
<td>39.73</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/24/2016</td>
<td>clear acrylic shelf (PLASTIC PLUS LTD.)</td>
<td>44.10</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/25/2016</td>
<td>cardstock for labels (SUB PRINT)</td>
<td>6.30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept.-Nov.</td>
<td>mileage reimbursement to get supplies</td>
<td>115.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After Feb. 5, 2017</td>
<td>shipping cost to return eye jewelry to Jackie Robinson in Calgary ($20.35 Calgary to Edmonton incoming loan was covered by the lender)</td>
<td>20.35</td>
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**TOTAL** | **1656.46**

GRAND TOTAL: $1,656.46 CDN (or **$1,262.55 USD** using Dec. 13, 2016, Bank of Canada Exchange rate)
4. Exhibition Space

The exhibition was held in the Human Ecology Gallery located on the main campus of the University of Alberta in Edmonton. The space occupies 66 m² (712 square feet). Artifacts are displayed behind glass in a secured L-shaped gallery (shaded in darker grey on bottom visual). Visitors can come and go in this public space. No entrance fees are charged or attendance recorded. The gallery is handicapped-accessible, is situated beside the main foyer of the building and is accessible to the public five days a week. Lighting is set on a timer and activated Monday to Friday 8:30 am-6:00 pm.
5. Conservation Methods

The Human Ecology Gallery is part of a building that is temperature and humidity controlled by the University. Standards used are not those of museums and the temperature fluctuations and dry climate of Northern Alberta do interfere with proper conservation criteria. Structural issues also affect environmental controls: the two walls in the L-shaped glassed area are exterior walls that, although buffered by an internal wall, can transfer heat or cold to the space where artifacts are placed. Nonetheless, the Gallery was renovated a few years ago to address issues that were within the Department’s control. Updates were made to the track light system, new low-emission lighting instruments were purchased and a customized ceiling grid was installed. These new lighting instruments help minimize rises in temperature and enable adherence to the five foot candle standards of clothing and textile display.

The artifacts selected for the exhibition were, for the most part, in excellent condition. Each student had to conduct a thorough condition report to assess the state of the artifacts they were going to mount. Knowing the issues they were faced with helped them prevent damage during the mounting process. Before students were authorized to proceed, all condition reports were reviewed by the instructor while inspecting the artifact. Dr. Bissonnette conducted minimal stabilization tasks. Treatments were reversible and documented.

A focus on preventive conservation guided the work. For example, when mandated to find for exhibition examples of tortoiseshell patterns, a cellulose nitrate frame was located in our collection that was very fragile. It was decided that it would not be used and was substituted by a more recent plastic frame, which was somewhat redundant in the exhibition. While it lessened the potential diversity of materials presented in the exhibition, it was best for the objects entrusted to our care. Mannequins were shaped to correspond to the size of the garments that each co-curator selected according to their interest. All artifacts were mounted under the guidance and supervision of Dr. Bissonnette who follows and teaches current preventive conservation practices in handling and mounting (use of specialized mannequins, nylon buffering and padding to shape for proper support and historical accuracy).
6. Walk-through of the Exhibition
See the Web site under “Gallery Views” at
http://www.hecol.museums.ualberta.ca/ClothingAndTextiles/1-Eyewear/Eyewear%20GALLERY%20VIEWS.aspx

7. Texts and Object Labels
RESEARCH
For their midterm project each student selected a garment they were interested in to conduct research using a material culture methodology. The use of their chosen artifact did not factor-in the exhibition plan at this stage. The instructor thought it preferable to let students select a piece they were passionate about. After this project was conducted all objects selected for the mid-term paper were included in the exhibition design. This impacted the overall design of the exhibition. More garments were then selected to be mounted on mannequins and individual frames were also identified to be displayed independently. Each student mounted the garment they had selected for their midterm project, selected accessories and created a paper hairstyle and felt proprietary about that mount. An example for a midterm paper is included with this application (see “2016_Midterm_Karbonik.pdf”).

TEXTS
#1 – Introductory panel: see the Web site at
http://www.hecol.museums.ualberta.ca/ClothingAndTextiles/1-Eyewear/Eyewear%20INTRODUCTION.aspx

#2 – Rx: see the Web site at
http://www.hecol.museums.ualberta.ca/ClothingAndTextiles/1-Eyewear/Eyewear%20RX.aspx

#3 – Dose of Design: see the Web site at
http://www.hecol.museums.ualberta.ca/ClothingAndTextiles/1-Eyewear/Eyewear%20DOSE%20OF%20DESIGN.aspx

#4 – Fashion Aid: see the Web site at
http://www.hecol.museums.ualberta.ca/ClothingAndTextiles/1-Eyewear/Eyewear%20FASHION%20AID.aspx

LABELS
See the Web site under “Artifacts in the Exhibition”:
http://www.hecol.museums.ualberta.ca/ClothingAndTextiles/1-Eyewear/Eyewear%20ARTIFACTS.aspx
☞ Click on the visual of each object to access the full labels as well as visuals of the artifacts.

8. Ancillary Materials
ELECTRONIC POSTER AND INVITATION (see p.2 of this document):
See the Web site at

- Graphic design by Anne Bissonnette
- Permission to use the visual from The Cleveland Museum of Art was obtained and credit line information followed.

WEB SITE:
See http://www.hecot.museums.ualberta.ca/ClothingAndTextiles/1-Eyewear.aspx

- Web site created by Anne Bissonnette with the help of her student co-curators
- Specific sub-links to access in the Web site:
  - The exhibition main page, which has links to all text panels
  - A link to access frames only to get a clearer picture of the exhibition’s main topic
  - A link to all artifacts in the exhibition that provides quick access to visuals and labels:
    - Each visual gives access to an individual page for the artifact and several of these pages provide multiple views of the artifact from different angles.
  - Views of the exhibition in the Human Ecology Gallery
  - Press Release

MEDIA COVERAGE

- City TV, November 25, 2016, 5:10 pm on air segment.
- Global TV, December 8, 2016, 7:20 am on air segment.
- Radio-Canada: Anne Bissonnette and Kathleen Karbonik were interviewed (in French) by Michel Charron and the piece was broadcasted on December 19, 2016.
- Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC): Anne Bissonnette was interviewed by Portia Clark and the piece was broadcasted on December 24, 2016.

9. Acknowledgements

Lighting: Vladislava Blinova, Faculty Service Officer, Lecturer and Collections Manager of the Clothing and Textiles Collection, Department of Human Ecology.

Editors: Lori Moran, Administrative Professional Officer & Lecturer, Department of Human Ecology.
Rebecca Blakey, Academic Coordinator, Department of Human Ecology, University of Alberta.

Help with installation: Josée Chartrand, Graduate Research Assistant, Department of Human Ecology.

All photographs by Anne Bissonnette©

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