

WORN TO DANCE

1920s FASHION AND BEADING

NOVEMBER 16, 2019 TO OCTOBER 3, 2020



← EXHIBIT MURAL BY KD

TOURS

MON THRU SAT: 1:00, 3:00 & 4:30 PM-

\$3.00 ADMISSION, ADVANCE TICKETS REQUIRED



EXHIBIT CATALOG

LACISMUSEUM.ORG

LACIS MUSEUM of LACE AND TEXTILES
2982 ADELINE STREET BERKELEY, CA 94703

THE LACIS MUSEUM OF LACE AND TEXTILES

LMLT was established in October of 2004, as the legacy of Kaethe Kliot, who was the spirit of the Lacis Textile Center and Retail Store, a haven for the textile community and all involved in virtually every aspect of the textile arts...a place where she provided support, encouragement and knowledge to all. This spirit remains, after her untimely passing in 2002, in the Museum which encompasses all that she loved.

This spirit is best exemplified by comments received from those she touched:

...whenever I needed to recharge my spirit, I knew that a visit to Lacis would do the trick...

...her sense of the appropriate, that just-rightness which made Laces the alluring treasure trove that draws us in...

...her enthusiasm was contagious and she always wanted to share it. She was the consummate teacher...

...she had a mission to share everything she knew...

...she did what she loved and her passion and enthusiasm was always evident...

...Kaethe was the sort of person one takes with them – part of who I am is because of her...

...She will be remembered for many things; for me it will be a sense that all is possible...

The core of LMLT is the lace and textile collection of Jules & Kaethe Kliot, representing 40 years of dedication to the preservation of the finest of human handiwork. The collection includes thousands of specimens, from pre-Columbian Peru finest laces from the 17th c. European courts, and examples of the machine laces exemplifying the 19th c. industrial revolution. An extensive library, focusing on lace, textiles and costume with over 10,000 items of books, patterns, articles and other ephemera, and a respectable collection of the related tools of the textile crafts are included in the resources of the Museum.

LMLT is dedicated

- to preserving the spirit of Lacis as created by Kaethe Kliot as a place of support, knowledge and encouragement for all involved in any aspect of the textile arts.
- to preserve lace and textiles of all cultures from all periods including the patterns and tools of creation, the objects of their purpose and the literature associated with these objects.
- to provide a resource center for research and documentation of these objects.

A new venture for LMLT is this current exhibit, designed and curated entirely by the very talented museum staff. Assembled from the LMLT collections, under the guidance of store manager Kij, an enthusiastic member of the reenactment and costume community. The subject celebrating the 100th anniversary of one of the most dramatic social changes in our culture is further timely with the dramatic social changes of today. Recent donations by Karen and Roxanne Nelsen, generous supporters of LMLT, of several of these fragile garments was the impetus of this undertaking. 2

Jules Kliot, Director

WORN TO DANCE

1920s FASHION AND BEADING



One hundred years ago precisely, the Jazz Age saw dramatic social change in America. A new generation of women were, for the first time ever, voting, driving, spending their own money, smoking and drinking in public, bobbing their long hair, showing off their calves, even dispensing with their corsets. And - perhaps most thrilling of all these new liberties - they could sample the nightlife, and go out dancing.

As an unintended result of the Prohibition, modern women were exploring whole new social territory: the intimate, smoky world of nightclubs and speakeasies. No wonder the primary pastime of the 20s is remembered as



dancing to the rhythms of Hot Jazz. That novel and exhilarating music will forever evoke the image of a woman in her fashionably shortened dress, with its radically simple, shift-shaped silhouette sparkling with so many hours' worth of intricate beadwork.

A wide variety of beads were used to interpret and reconstruct these styles. Precious



stones, metals and other natural elements were being imitated by new materials. Czech glass beads were able to capture a sparkle close to that of precious gems and were produced in colors that mimicked them - particularly ruby, carnelian and



turquoise. Japanese



markets sold pearls cultivated using new methods.



Bakelite was used in many contexts, from industrial applications to domestic settings, which included jewelry and beads. These plastic beads often imitated other precious materials, like ivory, jet or amber, making opulence available to the everywoman.

The discovery of Tutankhamen's tomb in 1922 sparked the imagination and ignited a craze for all the things of "Oriental" (Asian and Near East) origin.



The fad manifested itself everywhere across the applied arts, and a large proportion of beaded motifs on dresses and jewelry were meant to evoke an Ancient Egyptian and Grecian style.

"They were smart and sophisticated, with an air of independence about them, and so casual about their looks and clothes and manners as to be almost slapdash. I don't know if I realized as soon as I began seeing them that they represented the wave of the future, but I do know I was drawn to them. I shared their restlessness, understood their determination to free themselves of the Victorian shackles of the pre World War I era and find out for themselves what life was all about."



-Colleen Moore



1900S VS 1920S

While Victorian clothing was renowned for its ornate beaded embellishment - especially jet beads - the flapper style evening dress was far less restrictive, built, in fact to facilitate the riotous and revolutionary movement of animated dancing. These dresses were designed to make a statement,





capitalizing on all the glitter, weight, and movement that beadwork, as a medium, has to lend.

The period from 1900 to 1920 formed a bridge between the extreme hourglass silhouette of the 19th century and the simplified verticality of the Jazz

Age. The Edwardian period, from the early 1900s to the end of World



War I still cinched and contoured women into shape by corsetry. The silhouette of the time emphasized a full breast and only slightly diminished the hourglass of the hips. The desired silhouette had been whittled down to the refreshingly simplified and plain, columnar shape showcasing boyish athleticism and youth over mature proportions.

"Where's the man could ease a heart like a satin gown"

Dorothy Parker

TRAVELERS

A powerful measure of independence comes from being able to determine one's own means of transportation.

At the turn of the 20th century, women had battled discrimination and prejudice. As women persisted in asserting their rights, appropriate costumes to facilitate them evolved and became more mainstream. By this time, a modern woman had proved herself perfectly capable of driving cars. With



the Ford Model T flooding the market, women



were successfully and independently navigating American roadways in record numbers.

In the company of other women especially, taking railroads, steamships and ocean liners together, they could safely explore even farther afield from home than ever before - and they were doing so in grand style, with fabulous aplomb.



Stylish, well-made traveling garments and daywear, consisted of tasteful, carefully coordinated ensembles, featured a cheerfully bright, solid or restricted color scheme throughout, thereby exuding a degree



of sober decorum very much in contrast with their exuberant, sexy nighttime



“ We had individuality. We did as we pleased. We stayed up late. We dressed the way we wanted. I used to whiz down Sunset Boulevard in my open Kissel, with several red chow dogs to match my hair. Today, up with better

they're sensible and end health. But we had more fun.”

Clara Bow



ON PRESERVATION

That show-stopping beaded evening dress of the 1920s,



like the Jazz Age itself, was ultimately not destined to last. The weight of the beads continually dragging on the fragile silk holding

them together made the eventual collapse of the garment inevitable - they were, consequently, a symbol of opulence, a luxury of the moment. This is why, in spite of these dresses practically defining their era, so few of them

remain today.

"I like to come," Lucille said, "I never care what I do, so I always have



a good time. When I was here last

I tore my gown on a chair, and he asked me my name and address - inside of a week I got a package from Croirier's with a new evening gown in it."

"Did you keep it?" asked Jor-



dan.
 "Sure
 I did.
 I was
 g o -
 ing to
 wear
 it to-
 night,
 but it
 was
 too big
 in the
 b u s t

and had to be altered. It was gas
 blue with lavender
 beads. Two
 hundred and
 sixty-five dol-

lars (valued today as
 \$4,046.90)."

F . Scott Fitzgerald, "The Great
 Gatsby"

STEPPING OUT

In an era of decadence, coats though simple in design did not go unnoticed. Those who were most fashionable would have been seen wearing coats adorned with furs and beads aplenty. The early designs of Paul Poiret's cocoon coat were brought to life by one panel of lined fabric. It carried a free flow-



ing form with batwing sleeves and a narrow hem or hobble skirt.



Later this silhouette would be adapted to allow the legs full motion and would continue to evolve. Capes of velvet

and satin were also popular at this time, maintaining the trend of a loose fluid garment. Outerwear served as both a canvas and a frame for beautiful intricate beadwork.



“When I went to Hollywood in 1927, the girls were wearing lumpy sweat-



ers and skirts. I was wearing sleek suits and half naked beaded gowns and piles and piles of furs.”

-Louis Brooks



JAZZ

In the post-WWI era of the 1920s, there was one sound that stole the



show in America's nightlife - Jazz.

Jazz was first born in the African American communities of the New Orleans area during the late 19th and early 20th century, growing from older genres like blues and rag-time.

In the post-war era, many jazz musicians moved large urban areas like New York and Chicago, and cities began to develop their own unique sounds and scenes.

