

TEEN TALKS Hill Art Foundation

Teen Talk on Art In Pursuit of Fashion - The Sandy Schreier Collection by Lesley Ware

So as you know I'm Leslie Ware and I'm an author and educator and just like a fashionista, like I love all things fashion, so that's like a bit more about me. This is one of my books it is called My Fab Fashion Style File. And in the book there's a section where are obvious silhouettes, I don't know if you can see them and the silhouettes are kind of broken down by each decade in fashion and and it kind of explains some of the key themes that are happening in fashion in that era and who like the popular designers were and this is like where my interest in fashion history kind of started when I was working on this book almost five years ago. So I'm not a historian but I love, love, love, fashion history and going to exhibits at different museums about fashion. So i'm super, super excited to talk to you about Sandy's collection and like how she started collecting. So why don't we jump into learning more about Sandy and her life, I wanted to just mention Richard Martin who was like a curator at the costume institute and in the 90's, Richard said that collecting fashion was kind of like an alien endeavor and it was something that a lot of institutions were not doing, like they were not in the practice of collecting garments because there are so many challenges associated with it. So like how do you store them, how do you preserve them, there is just a lot of like issues, how do you keep them secure and so it was primarily something that in the 90's that was a thing that private collectors, like Sandy did, but now like now we see more and more museums having these archives and these collections, which is really, really exciting. For all the costume institute nerds out there Richard Martin was kind of in between Diana Vreeland and Andrew Boten. So just in the timeline of curators at the costume institute he was kind of in between them, I think there may have been someone before him and after Diana Vreeland but that's kind of where he falls in that lineage. So are you guys ready to learn about Sandy Schreier. So funny enough I have never met Sandy in person, I did a teen workshop in January about this collection at the MET, we had a chance to kind of walk through and explore it. I don't know how many of you have actually seen the show, it opened in November and it will be open now through August. It was actually supposed to close in May but it has been extended. So hopefully the museum will open and those of you that haven't had a chance to see it will get a chance to. But Sandy was actually at the museum the day that I was there but I didn't get a chance to meet her, but I was following her on instagram so I've been able to get a hold of her and have a conversation with her which was amazing, so I'm going to share some of those stories with you today, which is super, super exciting. But as you know, Sandy is an American fashion historian and a collector of couture clothing, she's been called the world's largest private collector of couture clothing and her interest in fashion began as a child. So I would like to start off with one of the stories Sandy told me today about how she got into collecting. So Sandy was originally born in New York, and her father, his name was

Edward Miller was the youngest of eight children, and when Sandy was a young girl someone came to her father and said hey we are opening this department store in Michigan, in Detroit Michigan, you should come and run the fur counter or the fur shop in this department store. So he really didn't want to leave New York and move his family but they convinced him, they said you're young, you're handsome, you probably would sell lots of furs, and at the time Detroit was booming because the automotive industry, this was like in the 1930's, the 30's or the 40's, the automotive industry was like booming, I think it was the late 30's, yeah the late 30's, the automotive industry was booming, so there were lots of people who were moving to Detroit for work and so this department store was very very busy. So he moved his family from New York to Detroit and at the time Sandy was very young, she was about three or four, and Sandy told me that her mom had just had her younger sister, and her dad was taking Sandy to this department store, which was called Rusk's every day and she was just like at the department store while he was selling furs and she said in the dressing room there were copies of Harper's Bazaar and vogue and she would just sit and like flip through those magazines and so when the ladies came in to buy furs or when their husbands come in to buy you know, gifts for their wives, like this cute little girl would just be sitting there flipping the vogue magazine. She didn't even know how to read yet but she was just so in love with the pictures and like the fantasy of fashion and so they thought she was adorable. She said she looked like Shirley Temple, I don't know how many people know who Shirley Temple is, but she said she looked exactly like Shirley Temple and so what happened was people started giving her their dresses, like the clients of her father would bring in these beautiful dresses that they had worn once to like an inauguration or some type of fancy dinner party a ball and they were like here Sandy can have this dress and they would bring it in in a box and they'd only worn it once and her dad didn't want her to keep them because this was before thrift stores and before salvation army and before it was like sheik to thrift, and he was like you can't take that home those clothes have germs on them and she like cried and cried and cried and so then they finally figured out a system where they could clean these clothes for her so she could keep these dresses and that's how she started collecting from just being at Rusk's department store with her dad and like people coming in and giving her stuff because she was just this adorable child. So I think that is pretty much the story about how she got into it and then from there she just couldn't be stopped. So let's jump into talking about the exhibit I know there was one person here earlier who said they got a chance to see it. I was lucky enough to go a few times before the museum closed. It's such a treat like again if you haven't seen it hopefully you can go by August 16th.