



## NEWS

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### **THE MUSEUM AT FIT RECEIVES HIGHEST NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION**

#### **Awarded Accreditation by American Alliance of Museums (AAM)**

The Museum at FIT (MFIT) has received the highest national recognition for a museum – accreditation from the American Alliance of Museums (AAM). Accreditation, which is awarded to only 4.5 percent of America’s estimated 17,500 museums and less than 1% of college and university museums, signifies the highest level of excellence. The AAM accrediting commission found MFIT not only to have “one of the most important collections of its type” but also to meet “national standards and best practices for a U.S. museum” and “to be a good steward of its resources held in the public trust and committed to a philosophy of continual institutional growth.”

Established in 1967, MFIT is the only museum in New York City, and one of a handful around the world, dedicated solely to the art of fashion. Located at Seventh Avenue at 27<sup>th</sup> Street, it is free and open to the public. Best known for its innovative and award-winning exhibitions, MFIT has a collection of more than 50,000 garments and accessories dating from the 18th century to the present. The museum’s mission is to advance knowledge of fashion through exhibitions, publications, and public programs.

MFIT joins an elite group that includes the Smithsonian in Washington, DC, the Field Museum in Chicago, and The Getty Museum in Los Angeles, along with 20 prestigious accredited institutions in New York City. These include the American Museum of Natural History, Brooklyn Children’s Museum, Brooklyn Museum, Ellis Island Immigration Museum, Frick Collection, International Center of Photography, The Jewish Museum, Lower East Side Tenement Museum, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Morgan Library & Museum, Morris-Jumel Mansion, Mount Vernon Hotel Museum & Garden, Museum of Arts and Design, The Museum of Modern Art, Museum of the Moving Image, New York Botanical Garden, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, The Studio Museum in Harlem, and the Whitney Museum of Art.

“While The Museum at FIT has proven to be exemplary in all that it does – a prerequisite for receiving accreditation – it has placed forging community ties among its top priorities,” said AAM president, Ford W. Bell. “The museum has established strong bonds with local students, its residential neighbors, and with the college as a whole, always a critical issue for college and university museums. The Museum at the Fashion Institute of Technology is certainly one of New York’s – and the country’s – finest museums.”

“The Museum at FIT is an integral component of an FIT education and campus life,” said Dr. Joyce F. Brown, president of FIT. “However, it also is an important part of the Chelsea community, as well as a vital component of New York City’s cultural offerings and resources. The college is extremely pleased by the AAM’s recognition of the museum’s quality and commitment to excellence. By achieving accreditation, The Museum at FIT has confirmed something many visitors likely already know: it is one of the truly outstanding museums in America.”

“The Museum at FIT is very proud to receive this distinction,” noted Dr. Valerie Steele, director of The Museum at FIT. “We sought accreditation through the AAM to emphasize the museum’s commitment to the core values and principles of collections stewardship. However, this recognition validates the dedication of our staff to the highest standards in all aspects of the museum’s operations, from governance and planning to exhibitions and public programming. We will continue to serve the FIT community, the Chelsea neighborhood, New York City, and the global fashion community by advancing knowledge of fashion, preserving this important collection, and mounting r innovative and exciting exhibitions.”

MFIT underwent a rigorous year of self-study, followed by a two-day site visit by a team of external museum professionals. The site visitors found “the museum to meet the characteristics of an accreditable museum, and in some ways to have exceeded them.” In particular, they praised MFIT’s small staff as “well trained, professional and dedicated”; they identified the collections to be “well organized and carefully preserved”; and they concluded that MFIT is “truly a teaching museum in all senses of the word. Its professional staff is deeply committed to the highest standards of original scholarship at the same time that they work very hard to make all the collections accessible to a broadly diverse audience.” The commission particularly applauded the museum’s Presidential Scholars’ Museum Facilitators Program and the “recent reorganization that resulted in the Department of Education and Public Programs that welcomes and responds well to the community.”

MFIT’s priority is to use collections and exhibitions to advance knowledge of fashion More than 7,000 students from FIT and other schools and colleges took part in classes held in the museum in 2011. In addition, the Museum hosts many free public programs and exhibition tours; the museum participates in the Chelsea Cultural Partnership; a Design Membership, available to industry professionals, affords access to the collections; the museum has over 600 objects online for study and dissemination; and a forthcoming book, to be published by TASCHEN, will feature photographs of more than 500 fashions from the museum’s collection, as well as photographs from many past exhibitions.

### **On View at The Museum at FIT:**

*Fashion, A-Z: Highlights from the Collection of the Museum at FIT, Part Two*, the second of two exhibitions that highlight modern and contemporary pieces from the museum’s permanent collection, is on view through November 10, 2012. Featured are more than sixty garments and accessories by designers from Adrian to Zoran, including work by Charles James, Ralph Lauren, and Diane von Furstenberg. Full portraits of all exhibition objects from the two exhibitions will be included in a companion publication by TASCHEN, forthcoming later this fall.

*Ivy Style*, on view from September 14, 2012 to January 5, 2013, celebrates one of the most enduring clothing styles of the 20th century. While viewed today as a classic form of dressing, in its heyday, Ivy style – or the “Ivy League look” – was actually so cutting-edge that it went on to

inform the evolution of menswear for decades. The exhibition examines the genesis of Ivy style on the prestigious college campuses of the United States during the early years of the twentieth century, looks at the ways in which the style became codified by mid-century, and reveals how now, nearly one hundred years after its inception, Ivy style is still a thriving global influence.

For more about The Museum at FIT, visit [www.fitnyc.edu/museum](http://www.fitnyc.edu/museum).

**About FIT:**

The Fashion Institute of Technology, a college of the State University of New York, has been a leader in career education in art, design, business, and technology for nearly 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 more than 45 majors and grants AAS, BFA, BS, MA, MFA, and MPS degrees, preparing students for professional success and leadership in the global marketplace. Visit [www.fitnyc.edu](http://www.fitnyc.edu).

**About AAM:**

The American Alliance of Museums has been bringing museums together since 1906, helping to develop standards and best practices, gathering and sharing knowledge, and providing advocacy on issues of concern to the entire museum community. With more than 17,000 individual, 3,000 institutional, and 300 corporate members, AAM is dedicated to ensuring that museums remain a vital part of the American landscape, connecting people with the greatest achievements of the human experience, past, present and future. For more information, visit [www.aam-us.org](http://www.aam-us.org).