



A FASHION MUSEUM

The Museum at FIT is the only museum in New York City dedicated solely to the art of fashion. Best known for its innovative and award-winning exhibitions, which have been described by Roberta Smith in *The New York Times* as "ravishing," the museum has a collection of more than 50,000 garments and accessories dating from the eighteenth 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. Its mission is to advance knowledge of fashion through exhibitions, publications, and public programs. For more information, visit www.fitnyc.edu/museum.

SUPPORT THE MUSEUM

COUTURE COUNCIL

An elite membership group, the Couture Council helps to support the exhibitions and programs of The Museum at FIT. Members receive invitations to exclusive events and private viewings. Annual membership is \$1,000 for an individual or couple and \$350 for a young associate (under the age of 35). For more information, write to couturecouncil@fitnyc.edu or call 212 217.4532.

TOURS AND DONATIONS

Every six months, a changing selection of garments, accessories, and textiles from the museum's permanent collection is put on display in the Fashion and Textile History Gallery, located on the museum's ground floor. Tours of the Fashion and Textile History Gallery, as well as the Special Exhibitions Gallery, may be arranged for a sliding fee of approximately \$350. Donations of museum-quality fashions, accessories, and textiles are welcome. For more information about tours or donations, call 212 217.4550.

The Museum at FIT

Fashion Institute of Technology
Seventh Avenue at 27 Street
New York City 10001-5992
www.fitnyc.edu/museum
Museum information line:
212 217.4558

Hours

Tuesday-Friday, noon-8 pm
Saturday, 10 am-5 pm
Closed Sunday, Monday,
and legal holidays
Admission is free

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Sketch by Ruben Toledo

Cover: Poncho-Skirt, silk, 1991.
Photograph by Ruven Afanador.

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Isabel Toledo

Fashion from the Inside Out



June 17 through September 26, 2009

The Museum at FIT

Isabel Toledo

was born in Cuba in 1961 and learned to sew as a child. She met her future husband, artist and illustrator Ruben Toledo, when they were in high school in New Jersey. Isabel held her first fashion show in 1985 and was immediately heralded by *Vogue* as a great new talent. But she remained unknown to the general public until Michelle Obama chose to wear an Isabel Toledo ensemble to her husband's inauguration.

"I never thought of myself as a designer," says Isabel. "I'm a seamstress. I really love the technique of sewing more than anything else. The seamstress is the one who views fashion from the inside! That's the art form, really—the technique of how it's done." Unlike most designers, Isabel does not sketch or look at fashion magazines. She begins with "a feeling." Then she "sees" a garment in three dimensions in her mind's eye. Her ideas evolve as she manipulates fabric and cuts patterns. Isabel also works closely with her husband to realize her visions. "I think of it as fashion from the inside out," she says. "I can describe an idea or even a feeling to Ruben, and he'll sketch it."

Isabel Toledo: Fashion from the Inside Out is organized around several themes that characterize the designer's body of work. The section entitled *Origami* includes garments that began as simple shapes and were then folded to form three-dimensional "sculptural" garments. *Suspension* refers to jersey and taffeta dresses that hang effortlessly from thin cords of fabric. *Liquid Architecture* features jersey dresses that fall in sensual folds. *Shadow* examines the interplay of the transparent and the opaque. *Shape* highlights the soft sculptural quality so prevalent in Toledo's work. *Manipulated Surfaces* examines how Toledo treats fabric to enhance structure or solve a technical construction challenge. Finally, *Organic Geometry* refers to Toledo's combination of the intuitive and geometric forms.

Isabel Toledo has been described as "a designer's designer" and "a cult figure in fashion." Francisco Costa of Calvin Klein calls her "an incredible talent," while Narciso Rodríguez praises the "unique beauty" of her creations, adding that "she is, by far, the designer I admire most today." Toledo has been the recipient of numerous honors, including the 2008 Couture Council Award for Artistry of Fashion.

Valerie Steele
Patricia Mears



Pie Coat, striped cotton denim, spring/summer 1995.



Blossom Sleeve bolero and Balloon dress, garnet silk paper taffeta and chiffon, spring/summer 2005.



Diamond Draped bodice dresses, finished and unfinished, white rayon jersey, fall/winter 2005.



Broomstick Librarian shirtwaist dresses, undyed silk pongee, spring/summer 2008, designed for Anne Klein and hand-painted by Ruben Toledo.

Isabel Toledo

nació en Cuba en 1961. De niña aprendió a coser. Cuando asistía a la escuela secundaria en Nueva Jersey, conoció a su futuro marido, el artista e ilustrador Rubén Toledo. Isabel montó su primera pasarela en 1985 y, enseguida, fue promocionada por *Vogue* como un maravilloso talento nuevo. Se mantuvo desconocida por el público general hasta que Michele Obama seleccionó un conjunto suyo para la inauguración presidencial.

"Nunca me he considerado diseñadora —dice Isabel—. Soy una costurera. Me encanta la técnica de coser más que cualquier otra cosa. La costurera es la que ve la moda desde adentro. En realidad, ese es el arte—la técnica del cómo se hace". Diferente a otros diseñadores, Isabel no dibuja ni mira revistas de moda. Todo comienza a partir de "una sensación", luego ve un vestido de forma tridimensional en su mente. Sus ideas evolucionan mientras maneja la tela y corta los patrones. Isabel también trabaja muy de cerca con su esposo para materializar sus visiones. "Lo imagino más como la moda vista de adentro hacia fuera", dice ella. "Le puedo describir una idea o una sensación a Rubén y él lo dibuja".

Isabel Toledo: La moda de adentro hacia fuera ha sido organizada alrededor de algunos temas que caracterizan la obra de la diseñadora. La sección titulada *Origami* incluye prendas que comenzaron como formas sencillas y luego fueron dobladas para hacerse formas esculturales de tres dimensiones. *Suspensión (Suspension)* se refiere a los vestidos de punto y tafetán que cuelgan cómodamente de finos hilos de tela. *Arquitectura Líquida (Liquid Architecture)* ofrece vestidos de punto que caen en pliegues sensuales. *Sombra (Shadow)* examina el juego entre lo transparente y lo opaco. *Forma (Shape)* hace destacar la suave calidad escultural que domina la obra de Toledo. *Superficies Manipuladas (Manipulated Surfaces)* hace un estudio de la forma en que Toledo trata la tela para estructurar o solucionar un desafío técnico de construcción. Finalmente, *Geometría Orgánica (Organic Geometry)* se refiere a la combinación de las formas intuitivas y geométricas de Toledo.

Isabel Toledo ha sido descrita como "una diseñadora de diseñadores" y "un icono de la moda". Francisco Costa de Calvin Klein la llama "un talento increíble", mientras Narciso Rodríguez elogia "la belleza única" de sus creaciones, añadiendo que "ella es, con certeza, la diseñadora que más admiro hoy en día". Toledo ha sido galardonada con muchos honores, incluyendo, en 2008, el Premio por Habilidad Artística de la Moda del Couture Council.

Valerie Steele
Patricia Mears
Traducido por Pilar Blanco Ruiz