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WEAPONS OF SEDUCTION

Armor + Lingerie = Fierce Fashion at The Museum at FIT

Joan of Arc is an unlikely fashion icon, but designers today are increasingly channeling the spirit of warrior women. ***Love and War: The Weaponized Woman***, a visually stunning and intellectually daring exhibition on view at The Museum at FIT from September 9 through December 16, 2006, takes an unprecedented look at the influence of armor and other military styles on fashion. But it's not all chain mail and camouflage. As designers seek to express sensuality, as well as power, they also reference lingerie.

"If lingerie is like soft skin, armor is a hard exoskeleton," said Dr. Valerie Steele, director and chief curator of The Museum at FIT. "Lingerie symbolizes nakedness, intimacy and seduction, while armor is associated with authority, protection and discipline. Of course, different designers take different approaches to this dialogue between silk and steel. The British design team Boudicca create styles that evoke transgressive warrior women, while Jean Paul Gaultier does camouflage couture, Issey Miyake makes references to samurai armor, and Narciso Rodriguez blends silk with chain mail."

Featuring approximately eighty contemporary garments by leading designers, ***Love and War: The Weaponized Woman*** will be divided into four sections:

- ***The Weaponized Woman*** will feature warrior-like fashions by designers, such as Boudicca, Jean Paul Gaultier, Helmut Lang, Versace, and Yohji Yamamoto, as well as an example of theatrical armor worn by an actress playing Joan of Arc.
- ***The Hard Body*** will pair an armored breastplate from the Renaissance with high fashion equivalents such as Issey Miyake's red fiberglass bodice shaped like a naked female torso and Hussein Chalayan's fiberglass dress. Thierry Mugler's extraordinary metal fashions will also be featured.

-please turn over-

- ***Officers, Not Gentlemen*** will show how military uniforms are used in contemporary fashion. Examples will include Burberry's silk taffeta trench coat, a bias-cut camouflage evening dress by John Galliano for Christian Dior, and Junya Wantanabe's WWI-inspired skirt and jacket.
- ***Skin2: Weapons of Seduction*** will explore the allure of lingerie with a snakeskin brassiere ensemble by Azzedine Alaia, a "nude" corset by Peter Soronen, and a white tulle corseted ballgown by Olivier Theyskens for Marcel Rochas.

Among the designers represented are Azzedine Alaia, Boudicca, Burberry, Comme des Garçons, John Galliano for Christian Dior, Jean Paul Gaultier, Helmut Lang, Sheane Leane, Lost Art, Alexander McQueen, Issey Miyake, Thierry Mugler, Josie Natori, Olivier Theyskens for Marcel Rochas, Maggie Norris, Zac Posen, Paco Rabanne, Narciso Rodriguez, Elsa Schiaparelli, A.F. Vandervorst, Versace, Yohji Yamamoto, Yeohlee, and Jean Yu.

Love and War: The Weaponized Woman will also include artwork by Cat Chow and photographs by Tanya Marcuse, as well as historic armor from the Higgins Armory Museum, military uniforms, and lingerie, both historic and contemporary. The exhibition is organized by Dr. Steele; Patricia Mears, research curator; and Fred Dennis, associate curator of costume.

The Museum at FIT is located on the southwest corner of Seventh Avenue at 27th Street. Exhibition hours are Tuesday through Friday, noon to 8 pm; Saturday 10 am to 5pm; closed Sundays, Mondays, and legal holidays. Admission is free. For museum information call (212) 217-5800 or go to: www.fitnyc.edu/museum.

For further press information contact the Office of College Relations at (212) 217-7642 or press@fitnyc.edu. Visuals are available upon request via mail or email.