

# Phoenix Art Museum

New fashion exhibition at Phoenix Art Museum explores the history of India's enduring influence on Western fashion

*India: Fashion's Muse illuminates the region's significance as a source of inspiration for Western designers across centuries*

**PHOENIX (December 17, 2019)** – From February 29 through June 21, 2020, Phoenix Art Museum will present *India: Fashion's Muse*, an exhibition examining the ways in which Indian dress, aesthetic, and artwork have inspired Western fashion designs from streetwear to couture. Spanning the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, the exhibition showcases nearly 40 garments and more than 20 accessories drawn from the collection of Phoenix Art Museum and on loan from private collectors and museums. Featured designs include the paisley shawl, the sari, and the Nehru jacket, with traditional Indian garments exhibited alongside modern works by Indian fashion designer Anamika Khanna and Western designers such as McQueen, Givenchy, and Versace. Curated by Helen Jean, the interim curator of fashion design of Phoenix Art Museum, the exhibition will also present complementary artworks from the Museum's Asian art collection and a four-minute film on Yves Saint Laurent's 1982 collection, which was inspired by Indian design.

"Phoenix Art Museum is excited to present *India: Fashion's Muse* to our audiences in Arizona," said Gilbert Vicario, the Museum's Deputy Director for Curatorial Affairs and the Selig Family Chief Curator. "This exhibition explores how international designers have been inspired by and adapted Indian silhouettes, trends, and more into their creations over the past century. *India: Fashion's Muse* will also open a window onto the current Indian fashion scene that is redefining the future of style and innovation for a global audience."

*India: Fashion's Muse* features ensembles and accessories from the 19<sup>th</sup> through the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. Drawing primarily from the Museum's renowned fashion collection, Jean selected garments that illustrate how fashion designers have referenced imagery, color palettes, and silhouettes from India for their Western clientele. Featured designs include vintage and contemporary interpretations of the sari; menswear, including the Nehru collar and the Sikh turban; and accessory cases showcasing a collection of gold jewelry from local collectors and Judith Leiber purses, on loan from the private collection of Kelly Ellman, who in 2006 endowed the Kelly Ellman Fashion Design Gallery in which the exhibition will be presented.

Visitors will also be able to view the U.S. premiere of *I Thought I Was Dreaming*, a four-minute film by award-winning artist Sarah Singh featuring Kirat Young, widely-known as India's first supermodel, and based on the 1982 collection by Yves Saint Laurent that was inspired by India. Presently Singh showcases her work in museums, galleries, think tanks, and universities around the world and, in 2018, launched a new international arts salon in India for concept-driven experiences. The film, which presents a kaleidoscopic world of reflected images as an interpretation of culture, will be shown as a continuous screening within the exhibition.

“India has inspired Western fashion designers for hundreds of years, and this exhibition tells a small but integral part of that very complex story,” said Jean. “With today’s growing awareness about the impact of cultural appropriation by the West, there is greater opportunity to examine how we can better respect those cultural elements in an increasingly globalized world. My hope is that after viewers experience the exhibition, they will be encouraged to look in their own closets, wonder about the origins of their clothes, and research the history of designs and silhouettes they are drawn to in an effort to become more informed about their choices.”

### **About the Exhibition**

*India: Fashion’s Muse* will be on view from February 29 through June 21, 2020 in the Kelly Ellman Fashion Design Gallery. It is organized by Phoenix Art Museum and made possible through the generosity of Arizona Costume Institute, with additional support from the Museum’s Circles of Support and Museum Members. For more details about the exhibition, please visit [phxart.org/indiafashionsmuse](http://phxart.org/indiafashionsmuse).

### **About Phoenix Art Museum**

Since 1959, Phoenix Art Museum has provided millions of guests with access to world-class art and experiences in an effort to ignite imaginations, create meaningful connections, and serve as a brave space for all people who wish to experience the transformative power of art. Located in Phoenix’s Central Corridor, the Museum is a vibrant destination for the visual arts and the largest art museum in the southwestern United States. Each year, more than 300,000 guests engage with critically acclaimed national and international exhibitions and the Museum’s collection of more than 20,000 works of American and Western American, Asian, European, Latin American, modern and contemporary art, and fashion design. The Museum also presents a comprehensive film program, live performances, and educational programs designed for visitors of all ages, along with vibrant photography exhibitions made possible through the Museum’s landmark partnership with the Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona. To learn more about Phoenix Art Museum, visit [phxart.org](http://phxart.org), or call 602.257.1880.