

Showing Out: Fashion in Harlem

Featured Designers:

Carolyn Adams, Queen Bilquis a.k.a. Cynthia Harmon, Moshood, Beau McCall

Featured Artist:

Dianne Smith

Curated by Souleo

EXHIBITION DESCRIPTION

In its most positive interpretation, to "show out" is to display one's talent and command attention. Fifty-five years ago, when Lois K. Alexander-Lane founded the Harlem Institute of Fashion (HIF) in 1966, there weren't many opportunities for Black talent in the fashion industry to "show out" and gain greater visibility and opportunities. The institution was established during a critical turning point that saw the Civil Rights movement reaching its waning days with its calls for nonviolent protest, integration, and equality. Meanwhile, the Black Power movement was gaining popularity advocating for Black people to create and sustain their own economic, social, and political power "by any means necessary," as famously proclaimed by Malcolm X. Through HIF, Lois was able to merge the best of both movements.

Lois advocated for equality and integration across fashion fields, while simultaneously creating her own platform to advance the careers of Black people, and to educate the world about the contributions Blacks have made in the garment industry. To that end, as the umbrella organization, HIF branched off to include the National Association of Milliners, Dressmakers and Tailors (NAMDT) also founded in 1966 and the Black Fashion Museum (BFM) founded in 1979. Through these three organizations the HIF team provided courses, seminars, and workshops; workforce development; and the collection, documentation, display, and preservation of the work by Black creatives in fashion.

EXHIBITION DESCRIPTION

One of the most impactful offerings by HIF were its legendary fashion shows--produced by Lois from 1979 to 1996--for the annual festival, HARLEM WEEK. With their eye-catching costumes, dramatic runway presentations, and embrace of the local community the shows became one of the most popular programs during the event. They provided an opportunity for emerging and mid-career Black designers, models, and administrators to "show out" and obtain recognition, economic empowerment, and professional development. Simultaneously, the shows allowed people to find pride and joy in the role Blacks have played throughout fashion history.

Showing Out: Fashion in Harlem spotlights HIF's fashion shows through archival images, papers, and video; costumes; and a specially commissioned new media work. Thereby, celebrating the organization's efforts to amplify the contributions of Black people in fashion and to democratize the industry. The exhibition arrives when the topic of equity for Black people in fashion has received increased attention during the Black Lives Matter movement. Presenty, there are numerous calls-to-action to foster a more inclusive industry and support Black creatives in the fashion world. While some progress is being made, there is still a long catwalk ahead of us. By foregrounding the legacy of HIF, the exhibition honors the underrepresented trailblazers who were "showing out" decades ago--both on and off the runway--in the ongoing fight to advance social justice in fashion.



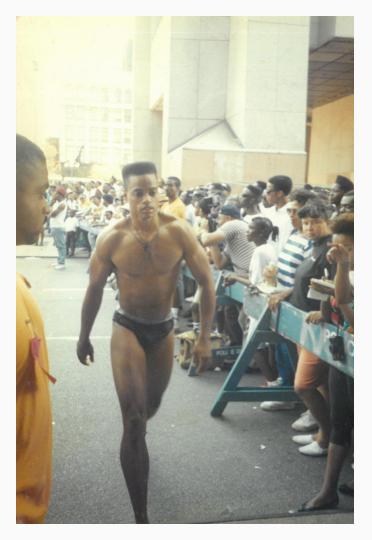
Photograph of models (left to right) Tuesday P. Brooks, Etta, an unidentified model, and Morgan wearing an unidentified designer, at a fashion show at the Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. State Office Building, 1991. Photo by and in the private collection of Beau McCall.



Photograph of models (left to right) Tonya Jackson, Will Young, Angela, and Terence Taitt (R.I.P.) wearing designer Beau McCall, in the foyer of the Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. State Office Building during the "Uptown Saturday Nite" fashion show, circa early 1990s. Photo by and in the private collection of Beau McCall.



Photograph of an unidentified model wearing an unidentified designer, during a fashion show rehearsal at the Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. State Office Building, circa 1992. Photo by and in the private collection of Beau McCall.



Photograph of model John W. Moyler (a.k.a. Jhonathon) wearing an unidentified designer, at a fashion show in front of the Harlem Institute of Fashion, circa 1991. Photo by and in the private collection of Beau McCall.



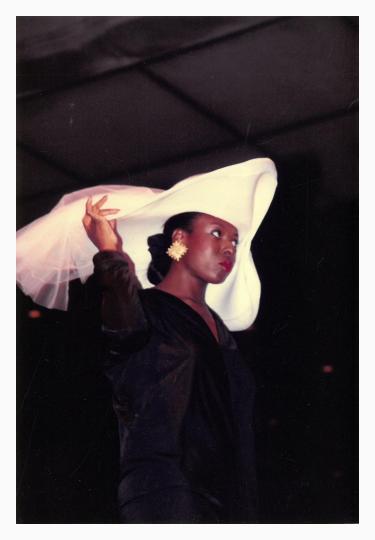
Photograph of model Krystal Spriggs wearing designer Isaia Rankin, at a fashion show in front of the Harlem Institute of Fashion, circa 1991. Photo by and in the private collection of Beau McCall.



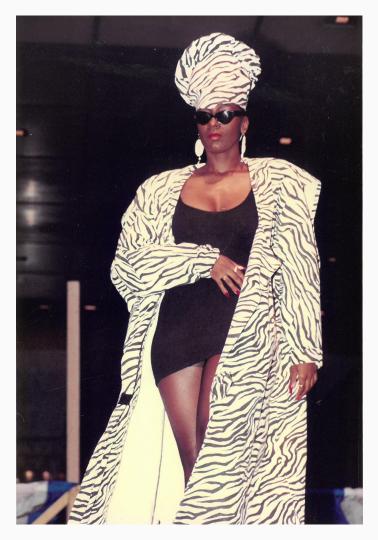
Photograph of model Tonya Jackson wearing an unidentified designer, during a fashion show in front of the Harlem Institute of Fashion, 1991. Photo by and in the private collection of Beau McCall.



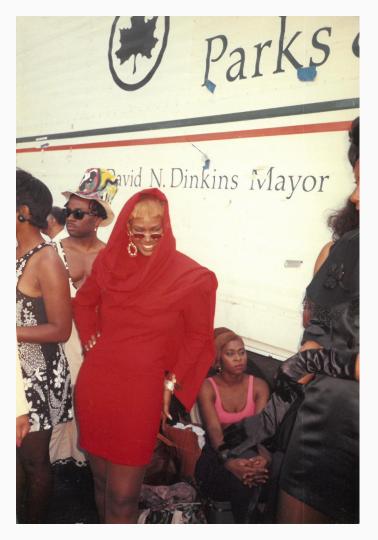
Photograph of model Inez Robinson wearing an unidentified designer, at a fashion show along the 135th Street corridor, circa 1993. Photo by and in the private collection of Beau McCall.



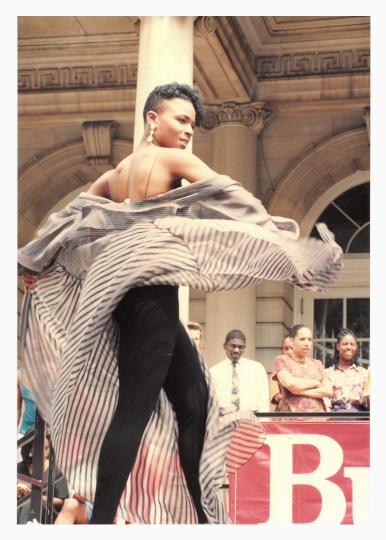
Photograph of model Lisa Danielle Jenkins wearing an unidentified designer, at the Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. State Office Building during the "Uptown Saturday Nite" fashion show, captured by an unidentified photographer, circa 1992. Private collection of Tuesday P. Brooks.



Photograph of model Lisa Danielle Jenkins wearing designer Queen Bilquis a.k.a. Cynthia Harmon, at the Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. State Office Building during the "Uptown Saturday Nite" fashion show, photo by Robert J. Hill, circa 1992. Private collection of Tuesday P. Brooks.



Photograph of model Tonya Jackson wearing an unidentified designer, at a fashion show along the 135th Street corridor, circa 1993. Photo by and in the private collection of Beau McCall.



Photograph of model Tuesday P. Brooks wearing an unidentified designer, at a fashion show on the steps of City Hall (usually referred to as the "Uptown Goes Downtown" show), photo by Robert J. Hill, circa 1991. Private collection of Tuesday P. Brooks.



Models (I to r) Cosby Smiley, unidentified, Tanaka, Learie Bowen, Clarence Treadwell, and Raymond Armanie wearing button embellished caps, chains, and shorts (the latter worn by Tanaka) by designer Beau McCall, at the Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. State Office Building, 1992. Photo by and in the private collection of Beau McCall.



Photograph of (I to r) model Lisa Danielle Jenkins, commentator Tri Smith (a.k.a. Tri Hinds), designer Queen Bilquis a.k.a. Cynthia Harmon and model Inez Robinson, at the Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. State Office Building, 1992. Models are wearing designs by Queen Bilquis. Photo by and in the private collection of Beau McCall.



Photograph of model Will Young wearing an unidentified designer, at the Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. State Office Building during the "Uptown Saturday Nite" fashion show, captured by an unidentified photographer, circa 1992. Private collection of Tuesday P. Brooks.



Photograph of unidentified models wearing hats by Carolyn Adams for CHAPEAUX CHATEAUX, backstage during a fashion show at the Harlem Institute of Fashion, circa 1992. Photo by and in the private collection of Beau McCall.



Photograph of models (left to right) Bobbi and Tanaka wearing unidentified designer(s), backstage at a fashion show at the General Grant National Memorial (a.k.a. Grant's Tomb), 1993. Photo by and in the private collection of Beau McCall.



Photograph of models Lisa Danielle Jenkins (left) and Tonya Jackson (right) wearing designer, Queen Bilquis a.k.a. Cynthia Harmon (middle), backstage at a fashion show at the Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. State Office Building, 1991. Photo by and in the private collection of Beau McCall.



Photograph of an unidentified model wearing an unidentified designer, at a fashion show at the General Grant National Memorial (a.k.a. Grant's Tomb), 1993. Photo by and in the private collection of Beau McCall.



Photograph of an unidentified model wearing an unidentified designer, in the foyer of the Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. State Office Building during the "Uptown Saturday Nite" fashion show, circa 1992. Photo by and in the private collection of Beau McCall.



Photograph of child model, Latoya Demps wearing an unidentified designer, at a fashion show on the steps of City Hall (usually referred to as the "Uptown Goes Downtown" show), photo by Robert J. Hill, circa 1991. Private collection of Tuesday P. Brooks.



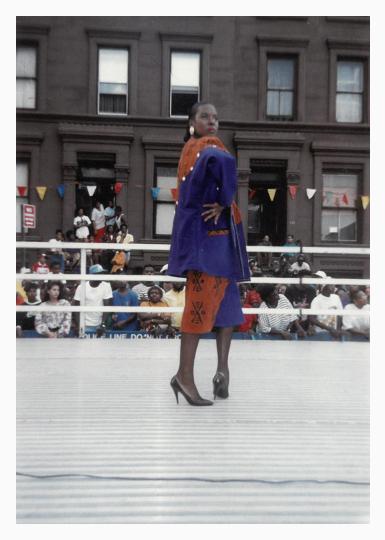
Photograph of fashion show commentator Tri Smith (a.k.a. Tri Hinds), at the Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. State Office Building during the "Uptown Saturday Nite" fashion show, photo by Robert J. Hill, circa 1991. Private collection of Tuesday P. Brooks.



Photograph of model Inez Robinson wearing an unidentified designer, at a fashion show on the steps of City Hall (usually referred to as the "Uptown Goes Downtown" show), photo by Robert J. Hill, circa 1991. Private collection of Tuesday P. Brooks.



Photograph of model LaTreva "Tee" Mumford wearing an unidentified designer, during a fashion show along the 135th Street corridor, circa 1993. Photo by and in the private collection of Beau McCall.



Photograph of model Lisa Danielle Jenkins wearing an unidentified designer, at a fashion show in front of the Harlem Institute of Fashion, circa 1992. Photo by and in the private collection of Beau McCall.



Photograph of model Montana Evans (foreground) wearing an unidentified designer, backstage at a fashion show, 1995. Photo by and in the private collection of Beau McCall.



Photograph of models (front to back) Montana Evans and Jolene Brown wearing designer Omar Sama'ey, and model LaTreva "Tee" Mumford wearing an unidentified designer, backstage at a fashion show, 1995. Photo by and in the private collection of Beau McCall.



Black Fashion Museum Button, undated. Private collection of Cedric Jose Washington.

According to Cedric, this button was sold in the gift shop of The Black Fashion Museum (an affiliate of the Harlem Institute of Fashion). As noted on the button the Museum had locations in both New York City and Washington, D.C.

The logo--a silhouette of a well-dressed woman--represents elegance and sophistication, two values that were important to the life and work of Lois K. Alexander-Lane.



Black Fashion Museum T-shirt, circa 1981. Private collection of Cedric Jose Washington.

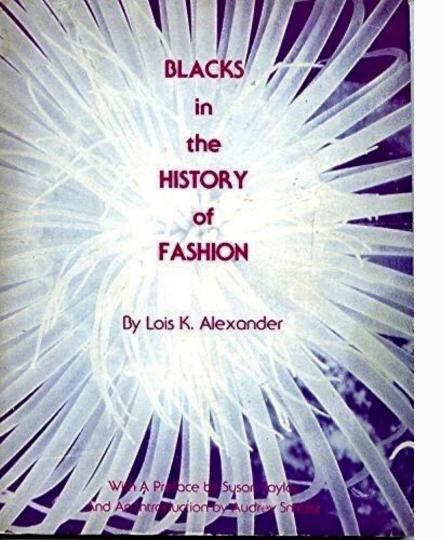
The Harlem Institute of Fashion provided silkscreening and art classes. According to Cedric, this t-shirt is one of the products created in those classes (by an unidentified designer) and it was sold in HIF's Black Fashion Museum gift shop.





Black Fashion Museum Bag, circa 1984. Private collection of Cedric Jose Washington.

According to Cedric, The Black Fashion Museum (an affiliate of the Harlem Institute of Fashion) sold this bag in the Museum's gift shop. The designer of the bag is unidentified.



Blacks in the History of Fashion book by Lois K. Alexander-Lane, 1982. Private collection of Tuesday P. Brooks.

In 1982, the Harlem Institute of Fashion (HIF) published this groundbreaking book by Lois. In it, she documents the history of HIF's Black Fashion Museum, its six exhibitions (up until the date of publication), and the history of Blacks in the fashion industry. The book (now a rare collector's item) is considered a must-read for students of fashion history. A copy of the book is available in the Schomburg Center's collection.

<u>Click here</u> to view additional content related to select archival materials on display.



Photograph of Lois K. Alexander-Lane posing next to Peter Davy's costumes on display at the Harlem Institute of Fashion's Black Fashion Museum, circa 1994. Photo by and in the private collection of Cedric Jose Washington.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



Preserving Black Culture Through Black Fashions



Lois Alexander has spent many years bringing the contributions of blacks to the forefront of the fashion world. Ms. Alexander, 71, the founder and director of the Black Fashion Museum in Harlem, New York, is a fashion instructor, seamstress and former boutique owner who is preserving fashion creations that were worn during the time of slavery. These fashions are shown in the museum next door to the Harlem Institute of Fashion, a school also founded by Ms. Alexander. She enjoys collecting items and has spent more than 10 years combing the country seeking to acquire what she considers

valuables but what may be considered junk to others.

Ms. Alexander comments that in her studies of blacks in fashion, she found very little about the seamstress during slavery even though many began to sew early in life. Blacks have not been credited for their sewing talents; they worked as tailors, tanners and weavers when there were no designers.

One of the earliest successes is a dressmaker, Elizabeth Keckley, a freed slave who sewed for the wife of President Abraham Lincoln in the middle 1800's. Another pioneer in contemporary fashion was Anne Lowe who created Jacqueline Onassis' wedding gown when she married John F. Kennedy in 1953. Ms. Alexander displays fashions from more recent designers such as Stephen Burrows, Jeffrey Banks and Scott Barrie.

Growing up in Little Rock, Arkansas, Ms. Alexander remembers her mother making clothes for her and her sisters. She soon learned sewing techniques while making doll clothes. Developing her sewing skills, she began to sew for herself and her sisters. Ms. Alexander did not stop there. She became so skilled that she could copy designs of others. With all this talent, however, Ms. Alexander decided to teach English and social studies, instead of designing fashions.

Upon her graduation from Hampton University in 1938, Ms. Alexander moved to Washington, D.C., where she opened a specialty shop for women. She earned a master's degree in retailing at New York University. The idea for a museum was the result of research that she did for her thesis on Black New Yorkers in Retailing. Ms. Alexander received grants totalling \$50,000 from the National Endowment for the Arts for the museum, her long time dream. She is the founder and president emeritus of the National Association of Milliners, Dressmakers and Tailors, and former president of the National Association of Fashion and Accessory Designers. Ms. Alexander is the author of a book called Blacks in the History of Fashion. She has published more than 40 articles and is a member of numerous organizations including membership in the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Smithsonian Justification, and the Nigerian-American Society, Ms. Alexander is the recipient of many awards and honors.

With her husband's support, Ms. Alexander is planning to open a museum in Washington, D.C., where she will make room for all the treasures yet to be found in the world of black fashions.

Flampton Mumni Magazine Winter 1969

ARCHIVAL MATERIAL

Black Fashion Museum Press Clipping, 1989.

Sc VF: Part 3 Part 1 | Folder 1

Jean Blackwell Hutson Research and Reference Division. Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundation.



THE HARLEM INSTITUTE OF FASHION

Salute to Black Designers

Sunday, October 15, 1989

PROGRAM

GREETINGS	Lt. Col. (Ret.) Julius F. Lane Administrator, Harlem Institute of Fashion
WELCOME	
	Black Fashion Museum of Washington
	(Opening Spring 1990)
FASHION SHOW - Part IDesigners: Carolyn Simpson	
	Iesha Sekou - Jon Haggins
	Denise Proctor-Muller - Barron Wise
	Coreen Simpson - Mr. Alzie - Adrienne Howard
	Carlos Lewis - Genet - Vonnie Porter
ENTERTAINMENTJOHN THREE: Sixteen	
PHIEKIMIMISMI	Ray Gordon - Director
	Kelvin Jones - Leon King
AWARD PRESENTATION	SMrs. Nailah Sweatt
	Mrs. Tina King
	Mrs. Esther Walker
	Rev. Dr. Charles Kenyatta Brother Preston Wilcox
	Brotner Preston Wilcox
PASHION SHOW - Part IIScott Venezuelo - Tina King - Kevin Dickens	
	Lubna Muhammad - Raymond Pizarro -Etta Arnold
	Ahneva Ahneva - Maria Theresa - Ellouise
	Griffin - Salena Boston
TNI MEMORTAM	Willi Smith Issish Jay Smith
IN MEMORIAMWilli Smith, Isaiah, Jay Smith	
	ashion Show Coordinator - Jorge Saunders
Co	ommentatorsAhneva Ahneva, Cedric Washington
	odels
Tr	ne CommitteeLois K. Alexander, Founder-Director, HIF/BFM

National President Emeritus, NAMDT

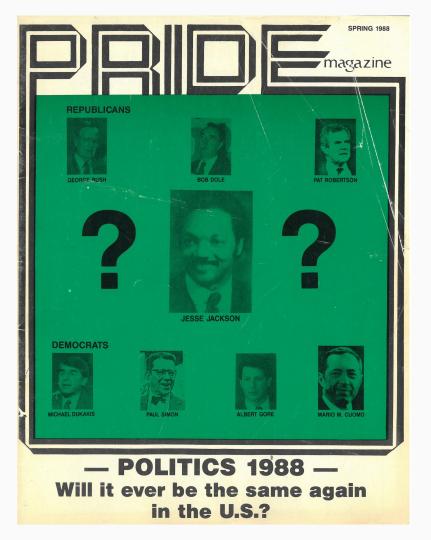
The programs of the Harlem Institute of Fashion and the Black Fashion Museum are supported, in part, by grants, contributions, donations of goods and services and technical assistance from the New York State Legislature, New York State Council on the Arts, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, Kobrand Corporation, Citibank, N.A., Chemical and Chase Manhattan Eanks, Honorable Percy Sutton and Innercity Broadcasting Corporation, Paragon Cable, New York Urban Coalition, Columbia University, Daily News, Harlem Urban Development Corporation, Fairchild Publications, Uptown Chamber of Commerce, Lee Dunham of Harlem McDonald Corporation,

ARCHIVAL MATERIAL

Harlem Institute of Fashion (HIF) Salute to Black Designers Program, 1989. Private collection of Tuesday P. Brooks.

In addition to the HARLEM WEEK fashion shows, HIF hosted other runway presentations throughout the year including during their spring gala, fall benefit, and at this annual tribute to Black designers.

<u>Click here</u> to view additional content related to select archival materials on display.



ARCHIVAL MATERIAL

PRIDE Magazine, 1988. Private collection of Cedric Jose Washington.

The Harlem Institute of Fashion (HIF) published PRIDE Magazine and Lois K. Alexander-Lane served as the editor. The magazine showcased the work of HIF while also covering politics, arts and culture, and providing commentary on social issues.

Bear! Please living one show stopper The Lois

HARLEM INSTITUTE OF FASHION

in cooperation with

The

National Association of Milliners, Dressmakers and Taliors, Inc.

will ælebrate their

27th Anniversary

Saturday, October 30, 1993

with a premiere showing of a 53 piece collection of the late great designer

Peter Davy

Black Fashion Museum
155 West 126th Street

6:00 PM to 9:00 PM

Reservations

V.I.P. (Includes reception): \$50
Raffle tickets on original oil painting by Julius F. Lane

General Admission: \$25

ARCHIVAL MATERIAL

The Harlem Institute of Fashion (HIF) 27th Anniversary Program, 1993. Private Collection of Beau McCall.

During their 27th anniversary HIF spotlighted designer Peter Davy. He was one of HIF's most popular designers and his garments are now held in the National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) collection.

Also, notice the handwritten text at the top by Lois K. Alexander-Lane where she requests that another popular HIF designer, Beau McCall, bring one of his "showstopper" button-embellished designs for the runway show.

<u>Click here</u> to view additional content related to select archival materials on display.

The New York Beacon

August 13 - August 19, 1994

The Scene

'Harlem Week '94'

Block Party & Fashion how Was A Hit!









Lois Alexander-Lane, founder of the Black Fashion Museum in Harlem (standing in doorway), hosted the annual "Harle Week" fashion show and block party on Saturday, August 6, and as in past years hundreds of community residents and visite and tourists attended the grand event. Aside from the show on West 126th Street, Alexander's models also strutted their stuff the Plaza of the Adam Clayton Powell State Office Building. (Photos: Louis Boone)

ARCHIVAL MATERIAL

The New York Beacon Press Clipping (photocopy), 1994. Private collection of Cedric Jose Washington.

The Harlem Institute of Fashion received regular local press coverage for their HARLEM WEEK fashion shows which helped to provide additional exposure for many of the featured designers and models.





Beau McCall, Stacked Sleeves, circa early 1990s. Upcycled Levi's denim jacket, buttons, and embroidery thread. Large.

Beau McCall made his wearable art debut circa 1988 at a Harlem Institute of Fashion show and continued to present at their shows consecutively until 1994.

For this piece, Beau embellished a denim jacket by hand-sewing clothing buttons onto the material. Look closely. Are you able to recognize the various button materials used?

An outstanding feature of this jacket are the sleeves which include rows of stacked buttons creating a spike effect. HIF founder, Lois K. Alexander-Lane once referred to Beau's designs as "showstoppers," and they certainly made an impression on the runway.



Carolyn Adams for CHAPEAUX CHATEAUX, The Spider Veil, circa mid-late 1980s. Straw pillbox hat, horsehair, black sequins, snakeskin leaves.

Carolyn Adams took fashion courses at the Harlem Institute of Fashion (HIF). Following her training she was a regularly featured designer at HIF's runway shows from the mid-1980s to 1996.

This hat is from Carolyn's "Timeless Elegance" collection which took inspiration from a range of sources including nature (e.g. spiders and sunflowers), the Old Hollywood glamour of stars like Dorothy Dandridge, and the flamboyant hats of Black churchgoers.



Moshood, Long-sleeved dress, 2021. Rayon. Large.

Moshood, originally from Lagos, Nigeria presented his fashion designs on the runways for the Harlem Institute of Fashion shows from circa 1982 to the early 1990s. His participation in the shows provided an important nod to traditional African tailoring with a modern approach informed by a western flavor. Fashion show audiences appreciated his designs for their celebration of African diaspora culture.

The Moshood logo featured prominently on this dress is defined by the designer as "Afrikan spirit," and it references African masks. In the top center are human bones and the rest of the composition includes eyes, a nose, and lips. On each side are three slashes depicting tribal marks (a.k.a. scarification). In Nigeria and elsewhere, the facial marks are associated with tribal identification, spirituality, and beautification. However, most tribes no longer utilize this practice due to the presence of western religions, changing social norms, and health and safety concerns.



Queen Bilquis a.k.a. Cynthia Harmon, SpiritualWear, 2021. Taffeta. Size 8-10.

At 15 years old, Bilquis embraced Islam and began to create designs called, SpiritualWear. As a Black Muslim woman she wanted similar women to have clothing options that complemented their faith and heritage, while still remaining stylish. You can see this approach reflected in today's "modest fashion," generally described as garments that are less skin-revealing and in line with one's faith or personal preference.

Bilquis presented her modest fashions on the Harlem Institute of Fashion runways from circa 1987 to 1991. The garments--similar to this one on display--became a popular staple for their embrace of Black culture and faith.

In this photo, model Tina Bailey is wearing the original dress (created in 1996) during a photoshoot at Crutchfield Studio, 1997. Photo by Karl Crutchfield.

For this exhibition the designer re-created a similar version of the garment.

COMMISSIONED VIDEO



COMMISSIONED VIDEO

Dianne Smith, The House of Lois K. Alexander-Lane, 2021. Video, 3 minutes and 34 seconds.

Click video or <a href="https://www.neck.org/nec

TIMELINE

FOUNDER OF THE HARLEM INSTITUTE OF FASHION

LOIS K. ALEXANDER-LANE



On July 11, Lois was born in Little Rock, Arkansas. From an early age she was enamored with fashion. She would regularly view garments in the windows of local department stores and re-create her favorite pieces.

In 1966, Lois founded the Harlem Institute of Fashion

(HIF) located at 157 W. 126th Street, As the

umbrella organization. HIF branched off to include

the National Association of Milliners, Dressmakers

and Tailors (NAMDT) also founded in 1966 and

located at the aforementioned address; and the

Black Fashion Museum (BFM) founded in 1979 and



1938-1964

In 1938, Lois received her B.S. degree in English and Social Studies from Hampton University. Soon thereafter she moved to Washington, D.C. While in D.C. she became employed with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and remained with HUD for 36 years.

She also became an owner (1950-1955) of The Needle Nook Boutique, located in Washington, D.C. 1966-1979 The boutique specialized in bespoke clothing made by Lois. In 1963, (soon after HUD transferred Lois to NYC) she earned a master's degree in retailing from New York University and produced an awardwinning thesis titled, "The Role of the Negro in Retailing in New York City from 1863 to the Present." In 1964, Lois opened a boutique in Harlem, Lois Alexander and Company, It was located at 214 W.

125th Street.



located at 155 W. 126th Street.

Lois became the fashion show producer for the annual festival, HARLEM WEEK. Lois and her HIF committee produced multiple fashion presentations during HARLEM WEEK including a pop-up exhibition at Gracie Mansion and runway shows at City Hall, the Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. State Office Building, the General Grant National Memorial (a.k.a. Grant's Tomb), along the 135th Street corridor, and in front of the HIF and BFM locations.

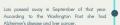


2007

result, HIF produced its final fashion show for HARLEM WEEK and BFM permanently closed in Harlem. BFM's Washington, D.C. location (in existence since circa late 1980s/early 1990s) became the new headquarters.

HIF began to cease operations in Harlem, As a

Lois and her daughter, Joyce Bailey, closed BFM in D.C. by donating the collection to the National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC). The collection includes garments created by enslaved people, designers such as Ann Lowe, Peter Davy, Geoffrey Holder, and seamstress and civil rights activist Rosa Parks.





PRESENT

HARLEM WEEK continues to spotlight Black talent in its programming with its current fashion director, Deborah Williams, Although the current shows are no longer produced by HIF, the fashion legacy of Lois lives on. You can also find her impact in the current calls for social justice in fashion and in organizations dedicated to uplifting Black fashion creatives such as HarlemsFashionRow.com, HarlemFW.com, HarlemParade.org, SoHarlem.org, and RaiseFashionNow.org.

TIMELINE

Click image to read.

MINI-ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS

ORAL HISTORY

SCAN & LISTEN

Former Harlem Institute of Fashion (HIF) designer, **Beau McCall** talks with curator, Souleo about his experience at HIF. This mini-interview was conducted as part of the exhibition, "Showing Out: Fashion in Harlem," which celebrates the 55th anniversary of HIF, founded by Lois K. Alexander-Lane.

Recorded September 3, 2021 https://archive.storycorps.org/interviews/beau-mccall-and-souleo/







MINI-ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS

Click image to listen to mini-oral history interviews featuring some of the designers, models, and administrators who contributed to the Harlem Institute of Fashion's HARLEM WFFK fashion shows.



















PUBLIC TALK



PUBLIC TALK

Click video or <u>here</u> to watch our talk and mini-runway presentation featuring some of the designers, models, and administrators who contributed to the Harlem Institute of Fashion's HARLEM WEEK fashion shows.

PRESS HIGHLIGHTS

Click the logo to view media coverage.



HYPERALLERGIC









Carolyn Adams, born and raised in Harlem, NY is an award-winning costume designer and stylist, a noted millinery designer, and a theater and TV producer. Instrumental to her career development were the initial lessons she learned from her mother Ms. Jeanette Adams; her big sisters, Rita Frazier (R.I.P.), Mary Seymour and Gloria Fordham; Harlem milliners, Mrs. Pierces (R.I.P.) and "Mother" Rowena Mays, (R.I.P.); Ms. Alma Goss and Mrs. Lois K. Alexander-Lane, (R.I.P.); along with the fashion courses she took at The Harlem Institute of Fashion (HIF), The Black Fashion Museum (BFM), The Fashion Institute of Technology and Forty Acres and a Mule Filmworks. Following her training she was a regularly featured designer at HIF's runway shows from the mid-1980s to 1996. Her millinery work has graced the heads of legendary supermodel, Shailah Edmonds, actor extraordinaire, Erika Alexander from the hit TV show "Living Single," and in countless theatrical productions, museums, films, music videos, TV shows, and national publications including: Essence, Hype Hair, Sister 2 Sister, Elle Girl, and American Photo. Carolyn is a three-time AUDELCO Award-nominee and the recipient of two AUDELCO "VIV" Awards as well as the Elle Girl magazine Fashion, Costume and Wardrobe Stylist of the Year Award. She is currently the executive producer for the hit off-Broadway show, "NAT" (inspired by the life and times of Nat King Cole) and the TV show, "Uptown Fashion Avenue." For more information: CarolynAdams.webs.com

Cedric Jose Washington (CJW) is a Harlem-reared, self-styled stage and fashion show designer, performer, and choreographer. In 1964, he began dressing and styling artists, stage show groups, and models in Harlem. In 1980, CJW met Lois K. Alexander-Lane, founder of The Harlem Institute of Fashion (HIF) and Black Fashion Museum (BFM), after his successful City's Dream Production of the theatrical fashion and dance musical, "Th' Wizzie," at Aaron Davis Hall, City College. Later that summer, he joined The Harlem Institute of Fashion's board of directors and was assigned to the fashion show committee as coordinator, choreographer, and commentator. Later on he was appointed the model's grooming and charm instructor. At BFM he served as a tour guide/director and then as an assistant to the curator. In the latter role, he assisted in archiving, assessing, collecting, mounting, planning exhibitions, and learning the art of fashion museology. From 1994 to 1996, CJW served as executive director and curator at BFM. CJW is presently the creator and host of the Manhattan Neighborhood Network (MNN) show, "Fashion Museum TV Theater," inspired by his time working at BFM. Washington also serves as a consultant for the exhibition, *Showing Out: Fashion in Harlem*.

Tuesday P. Brooks was one of the staple models for the Harlem Institute of Fashion (HIF) runway shows. Later she also joined the committee and helped plan the fashion presentations. She participated in the fashion shows from the mid-1980s to 1996. Since 2009, she has been operating her successful financial management firm, <u>AJOY</u>. For more information: <u>TuesdayBrooks.com</u> or IG: @with.tuesday

Beau McCall made his wearable art debut circa 1988 at The Harlem Institute of Fashion (HIF) show for HARLEM WEEK. McCall went on to become an established force within HIF's Black Fashion Museum collective, presenting at their shows consecutively until 1994, as well being featured in their museum exhibitions and prestigious events. His wearable and visual artwork--created using clothing buttons--is now held in numerous public collections such as Philadelphia Museum of Art, Victoria and Albert Museum, The Museum at FIT, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Amistad Research Center, The Museum of Modern Art Library, Leslie-Lohman Museum of Art, Stonewall National Museum & Archives, and The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art Library. McCall serves as a consultant for the exhibition *Showing Out: Fashion in Harlem.* For more information: BeauMcCall.com or IG: @beau_mccall

Moshood, originally from Lagos, Nigeria arrived to make his mark in New York in the early 1980's. From circa 1982 to the early 1990s he presented his fashion designs on the runways for The Harlem Institute of Fashion shows. In 1994, he opened his boutique in Brooklyn, NY. Moshood's timeless pieces bring together the traditional beauty of African tailoring and a taste of western flavor. Moshood's list of celebrity supporters includes Stevie Wonder, Isaac Hayes, Lorraine Toussaint, Wesley Snipes and Debbie Morgan, to name a few. His fashions have appeared on television shows such as "Teen Summit," "Living Single" and "Moesha." Method has been featured in outlets including Essence, JET, and the NY Times. For more information: www.AfrikanSpirit.com or IG: @MoshoodOfficial

Inez Robinson began modeling in her early twenties. Her earliest experience was modeling each Wednesday as an Apollo Model at the Harlem landmark Apollo Theater. Her modeling remained rooted in Harlem from 1989 to 1995, as a regularly selected model for HARLEM WEEK under the direction of The Harlem Institute of Fashion founder, Lois K. Alexander-Lane. She landed her first published feature in Essence Magazine in 1990. Inez never lost her passion for fashion and modeling. She returned to modeling before her 50th birthday.

However, Inez continues to knock down doors since her return to walking runways including features online on Vogue Italia, Paper Magazine, Fashion Week Online websites, and New York Fashion Week.

Her commitment to creating a platform and fashion to celebrate vibrant women like herself motivated her to start her own business, I Am Forever Fabulous LLC. I Am Forever Fabulous represents women who are 50 years of age and older. Her message is simple. "Remember that your potential is limitless and your success is not attached to an age or expiration date." For more information: LAMForeverFabulous.com or IG: LAMFOREVER: LAMFOREVER: LAMforever

Dianne Smith was a model for The Harlem Institute of Fashion between the years 1985 to 1989. Her career as an interdisciplinary artist and cultural worker spans over two decades. Her collectors include National Museum of Women in the Arts, Petrucci Family Foundation Collection of African American Art, The Brodsky Organization, Danny Simmons, the late Cicely Tyson, Arthur Mitchell, and Maya Angelou, George Faison, Tasha Smith, and Terry McMillian. Most recently, she has been commissioned by the Park Avenue Armory for its 100 Years | 100 Women project to commemorate the 19th amendment (granting women the right to vote) 100 years after its ratification. In addition, Smith's papers--capturing her nearly 30-year career--are now permanently archived at Barnard College. For more information: <u>diannesmithart.com</u> or IG: @diannesmithart

Phyllis Spencer's love of modeling and fitness has taken her on an incredible journey over the past 30 + years. Phyllis loves the runway and has modeled for The Harlem Institute of Fashion (from the mid-1980s to 1996), Harlem Fashion Week, NBC's "TODAY," and ABC's "Good Morning America." She has also worked for several NYC fitness studios such as Lucille Roberts, NYC Fitness Club, and the Harlem YMCA. Phyllis recently retired as a police officer from the NYPD. She now dedicates herself full-time to modeling and fitness. For more information: PhyllisSpencer.com or IG: SophisticatedModelPhyllis

Queen Bilquis a.k.a. Cynthia Harmon was born and raised in Harlem's Sugar Hill neighborhood. As the youngest of six children she started sewing at the age of five. She was taught to base stitch by her mother, Mrs. Rosalie Harmon. At 15 years old, Bilquis embraced Islam and began to create conscious clothing designs called SpiritualWear. As an African-American Muslim woman she wanted similar women to have clothing options that complemented their faith and heritage, while still remaining stylish. By the age of 16 she had her first fashion show at Masjid Malcom Shabazz (located in Harlem) and from circa 1987-1991 she presented at the Harlem Institute of Fashion runway shows. Since then she had a shop at Mart 125 located in Harlem, presented her designs at the Apollo Theater, and is working on opening a boutique in the near future. For more information visit IG: @SpiritualWear

Hopeton G. Fisher, Jr. was born and raised in Brooklyn, NY. He has been modeling for a little over a year for numerous artistic opportunities. He is also a U.S. Marine Corps veteran and was honorably discharged. For more information visit IG: @iam_hopeton

CURATOR BIO

Bio

Souleo curates entertaining and informative events, exhibitions, and cultural programs. Souleo has collaborated with noteworthy institutions and brands, including the New York Public Library, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, the Museum of Arts and Design, Columbia University, Barnard College, Newark Museum of Art, Stax Museum of American Soul Music, Leslie-Lohman Museum of Art, and AARP. Souleo's work has been widely covered in outlets including the *Associated Press, NY Times, The New Yorker*, NBC, and more.

For more information: <u>SouleoUniverse.com</u> or IG: @souleouniverse



Showing Out: Fashion in Harlem

Featured Designers: Carolyn Adams, Queen Bilguis a.k.a. Cynthia Harmon, Moshood, Beau McCall

> Featured Artist: Dianne Smith

Curated by Souleo