

PRESS KIT

CONTENTS:

- A. Contact Information
- B. Product Information
- C. Promotional Material
- D. Press Release
- E. Book Excerpt
- F. Interview Resources
- G. Final Notes

A. Contact Information

Authors: Coleen Scott and Larry McQueen

Email (use both): costumesofhollywood@gmail.com and filmcostumecollection@gmail.com

Phone: 617-767-7215 or 323-842-1617 (please email first)

Website: costumesofhollywood.com

Social Media:

Instagram: @costumesofhollywood

YouTube: @costumesofhollywood

Podcast:

The Costumes of Hollywood Podcast launched Summer 2025 via Spotify and wherever you listen to podcasts.

AUTHOR BIOS:

Coleen Scott is a costume designer and historian with an MFA in Costume Design from Boston University, where she received the Kahn award upon graduation. She has worked for over 25 years in theater, opera, film, and television. She has worked with Academy Award-winning costume designer Ann Roth as well as designers Stephanie Maslansky and Tina Nigro. She frequently works with her creative partner and photographer, Ben Trivett, doing styling, set decoration, and photo tech for celebrity and editorial portrait photography. Coleen taught Costume Production and Makeup for Stage and Studio at Saint Ann's School in Brooklyn, NY for thirteen years. Her book *The Costumes of Burlesque* was published by Routledge in 2019. She is a proud member of IATSE, USA 829, USITT, and is Chair of The Costume Society of America's Western Region. Coleen is tenured faculty in the Theatre Arts and Fashion Department at Santa Rosa Junior College in

California heading the Costume Design, Technology and Makeup programs.
Website: www.coleenscotttdesign.com.

Larry McQueen is a leading Hollywood costume historian and archivist. He has held the position of consultant for Camden House Auctioneers, Inc. in Los Angeles; Christie's East, New York; Christie's London; Butterfield and Butterfield Los Angeles/San Francisco; Entertainment Rarities; and Julien Entertainment. As consultant, he has been responsible for the authentication of film costumes and the estimation of their value. From 1999–2012, Mr. McQueen worked as an archivist with MGM/UA in creating and maintaining a prop and costume collection of MGM films. In addition, his collection has worked with private estates and costume houses such as Lucille Ball, Jane Withers, Edith Head, Wayne Finkleman, Julie Newmar, Debbie Reynolds, Western Costume Company, Eastern Costume Company, CRC, American Costume Co., and others in researching items and their valuation. Mr. McQueen's private collection of film costumes is one the finest, and consists of over 600 costumes worn in films and television from 1920 to present. Portions of his collection have been exhibited in museums across the globe including the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, The Fashion Foundation in Tokyo, and The Victoria and Albert Museum in London.
Website: www.filmcostumecollection.com.

Headshots: (following pages)



Larry McQueen and Coleen Scott, 2024. Photo by Ben Trivett (please credit if used)

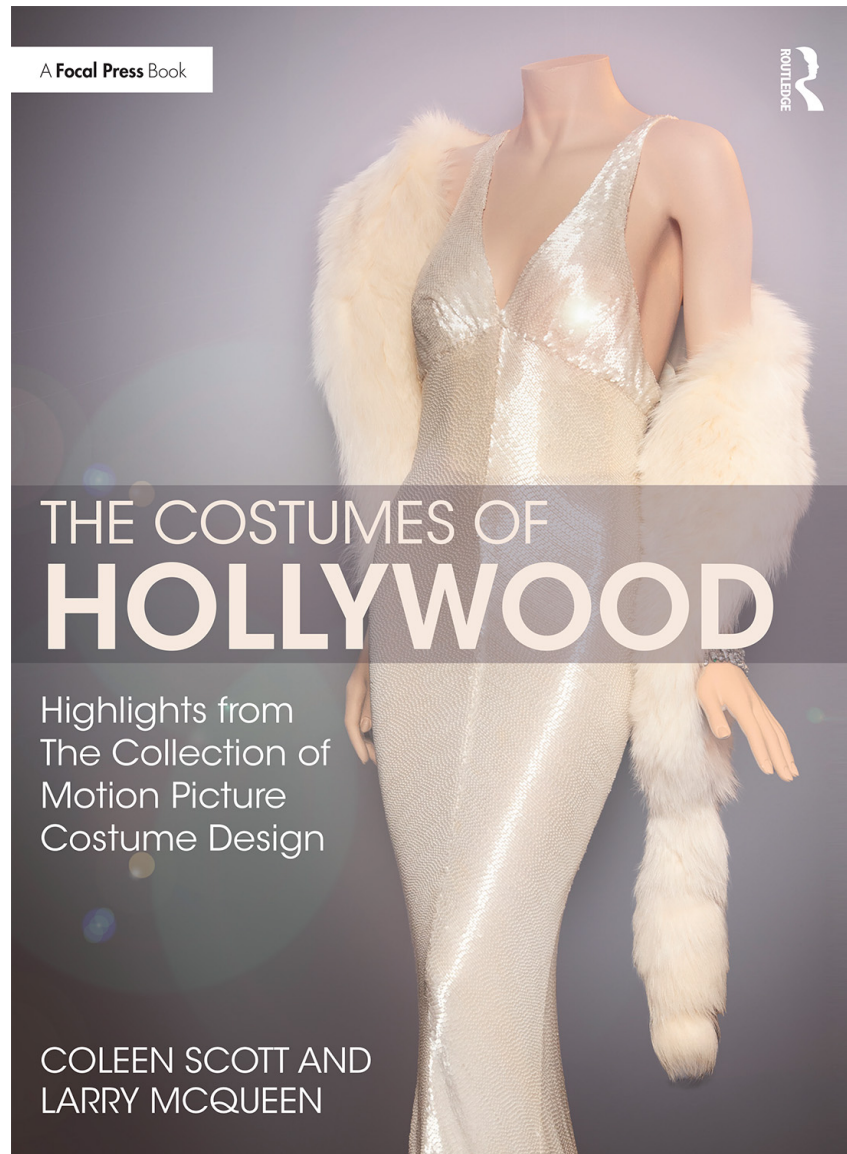


Larry McQueen. Photo by Ben Trivett. (please credit if used)



Coleen Scott. Photo by Ben Trivett. (please credit if used)

B. Product Information



Title: The Costumes of Hollywood

Author: Coleen Scott, Larry McQueen

Publication Date: June 6, 2025

ISBN: 9781032558011

Genre: History/Costume History/Hollywood

Details: 240 Pages 331 Color Illustrations

Retail Price: \$58.99

Available via Routledge: <https://tinyurl.com/52xna8uy>

C. Promotional Material

From the Foreword:

"I have always looked to the costume designers of yesteryear for guidance and inspiration. I salute Larry McQueen for his tireless enthusiasm and mission to ensure their work is remembered, respected, and as accessible as any other artist whose work is preserved in museums worldwide."

Sandy Powell, Oscar and BAFTA Winning Costume Designer

"Larry McQueen has acquired and built one of the most important private collections in the world. His passion and dedication for the art and craft of film costume design has ensured that the work of costume designers has endured and is celebrated. Larry's care for his collection is of museum standard and he is committed to sharing his collection through his website, exhibitions and this glorious publication."

Keith Lodwick, Theatre and Film Historian, Former Curator of Theatre and Screen Arts, Victoria and Albert Museum, London

"Many thanks to Larry McQueen and Coleen Scott for sharing the story of passion and heart that created The Collection of Motion Picture Costume Design. Larry McQueen and Bill Thomas are the true heroes of film costume collecting, and are my nominees for National Treasure!"

Bobi Garland, Former Director of Western Costume Company Library and Archive

"The Costumes of Hollywood highlights the importance and captivatingly reveals many little hidden secrets of costume design in film. Larry McQueen is to be commended for his dedicated collecting and tireless preservation of many iconic Costumes. His lifetime passion brings a delightful insight to this lovely book."

Gillian Armstrong, Celebrated Filmmaker and Director of Women He's Undressed

D.Press Release

(High Resolution photos available from costumesofhollywood@gmail.com)

THE COSTUMES OF HOLLYWOOD BOOK

Highlighting The Collection of Motion Picture Costume Design

For Immediate Release: March 2025, Hollywood, California

The Costumes of Hollywood details the design, creation, and influence of over 100 ensembles from some of the most iconic designers, films, and roles in Hollywood history, spanning the 1920s through the early 21st century.

All costumes featured are from The Collection of Motion Picture Costume Design, one of the world's largest private collections, curated over thirty-five years by leading Hollywood costume historian and archivist, Larry McQueen. The book presents full costumes on display in addition to close-ups, and rarely seen interior details of some garments. Iconic costumes, including many with Academy Award nominations, from *Some Like It Hot*, *Hello Dolly*, *Cabaret*, *Rear Window*, *Ben Hur*, *Mildred Pierce*, *Angel*, *Masters of the Universe*, *The Piano*, *The Hunger Games*, and so many others are featured. This book gives the audience a rare and heretofore unpublished insight into what collecting, restoring, and reproducing entails, and highlights differences between private collecting and museum-backed collections. *The Costumes of Hollywood* details the significance of the designer, costume, and wearer via thorough research, interviews, and Larry McQueen's behind-the-scenes knowledge of collecting and working as an archivist in Hollywood.

Within the entertainment field, this book will be of interest to professional costume designers and technicians in film, theatre, and performance, as well as students of film production, history, and costume design and construction. *The Costumes of Hollywood* will also enrich and entertain anyone with an interest in costume design in film and collecting.

Coleen Scott is a costume designer, educator and historian who has worked for over 25 years in theater, opera, film, and television. Her book *The Costumes of Burlesque* was published by Routledge in 2019. She is a proud member of IATSE, USA 829. Coleen is tenured faculty in the Theatre Arts and Fashion Department at Santa Rosa Junior College in California heading the Costume Design, Technology and Makeup programs.

Larry McQueen is a leading Hollywood costume historian, archivist, and consultant responsible for the authentication of film costumes and the estimation of their value. Mr. McQueen's private collection of film costumes is one the finest, and consists of over 600 costumes worn in films and television from 1920 to present. Portions of his collection have been exhibited in museums across the globe.

More Info:

Costumesofhollywood.com, Instagram: @costumesofhollywood

Email: costumesofhollywood@gmail.com

END COPY

E. Book Excerpt

From Chapter I: Outstanding Motion Pictures

"The eighteen Best Picture nominees and winners featured in this chapter have a collective fifty-two Oscars including those in screenwriting, acting, directing, technical awards, and of course, costume design. There was film before 1929 of course, and there were annual top ten lists from national critics not so different from an Academy nominees list. *Blood and Sand* (1922), starring Rudolph Valentino as a young matador was one of these early acclaimed films. One of the earliest artifacts in the collection, a distressed matador jacket repurposed by designer (and Valentino's wife) Natacha Rambova, initiates this chapter. Costumes from 2002 Best Picture winner *Chicago* and 2013 Best Picture nominee *American Hustle* conclude this imaginary exhibition.

In this selection of film costumes encompassing a span of nearly 100 years, a breadth of time periods, styles and design methods are represented. We consider period pieces set in both Eastern and Western cultures, representations of peak fashion from the mid-century to a 2013 interpretation of the 1970s, and interpretations of stage productions from Shakespeare to Broadway musicals. The stories told in these films range from comedy to drama and everything in between, styled by some of the most prolific costume designers, and a few who were known best for their work on these films. Consider as you read on: the films that were black and white only, and those that were screened in color. Designing for either film medium requires a knowledge of color theory, light and understanding of the particular film's color sensitivity or correction that might occur post-production. Designers can never completely know what the finished product will look like on the big screen, but they make educated decisions in hopes that they will enhance the captured images.

DESIGNERS FEATURED

In the Golden Age of Hollywood there was a short list of known costume designers, and most were heading design for entire production studios. If they weren't a studio designer like the legendary Edith Head (Paramount & Universal), Walter Plunkett (RKO), Adrian, or Helen Rose (MGM), then they might have been one of Broadway's biggest design celebrities brought in for their special skills, such as musical theatre maven Irene Sharaff. Even with the late advent of the Oscar for Costume Design, Edith Head had thirty-five nominations and eight wins before she retired. Irene Sharaff had an impressive record with fifteen nominations and five wins. When it came to costumes, actors had their say in some instances, bringing in their chosen designer for star wardrobe, exemplified by Travis Banton's gowns for Claudette Colbert's *Cleopatra* or Rosalind Russel's shining Orry-Kelly creations in *Auntie Mame*. In modern filmmaking, directors (and producers) drive the design team, often working with the same crews (and actors) from project to project, represented in this chapter by recent Oscar winner and frequent Tim Burton collaborator Colleen Atwood. Ann Roth, a protégé of Edith Head represented later in the book, is best known for her multiple collaborations with both actors (Meryl Streep) and directors (Mike Nichols). Roth has two Oscar wins and five nominations.

COSTUME TRENDS AND CHANGES WITH AWARDS

The name of the award for Best Picture is not the only thing that changed about the Oscars over the nearly 100 years this selection covers. As mentioned, there were awards for best black and white or color films, but in 1944 the Best Picture category shrunk to only five films of any genre, and it remained that way until 2009. This not only made the award more exclusive, but from 1953ⁱ onward it also saved time for the costly network broadcast; another reason for the separation of scientific and technical awards ceremonies, and even the elimination of the hair and makeup award presentation on the live broadcast in 2022ⁱⁱ, which is so closely tied to costume design.

The major competitor in the costume design category remains static in the history of the award with period costume, but musicals are a close second, followed by fantasy or a mix of period and the latter. Since the Academy permanently eliminated the split black and white and color costume design awards in 1967, only three contemporary films have won for costume designⁱⁱⁱ.

When it comes to nominations, members of the academy vote within their category, i.e. actors for actors, or costume designers for other costume designers, but everyone votes for best picture. The expansion of the category to more nominees in the 2000s (up to ten) not only allows more films to get attention from paying audiences, but also offers a chance for films from genres that previously might not have been considered in the category. Examples of this are animated films, action, or superhero films, like more recent nominees *Avatar* (2009 & 2022), *Toy Story 3* (2010), *Mad Max Fury Road* (2015), *Black Panther* (2018), *Joker* (2019), *Pinocchio* (2020), and *Dune* (2021). This relates to trends in costume design nominees as well, with most of the live-action movies above garnering costume and makeup nominations and several wins. The awards honor innovation in design exemplified by the combination of imagination, research and technology required to pull off some of the inventive looks supporting these stories. Best Picture and Best Costume Design don't always go hand in hand, but the more believably the story is visualized on the screen, the more likely it is we will see this trend continue.

PERSONAL AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF ACADEMY RECOGNITION

Best Picture winners are some of the most memorable films ever made, and sometimes nominees become even more of a cultural phenomenon. For example, *Auntie Mame* was nominated the same year that *Gigi* won the Oscar in 1959. To look at the history of this Oscar category is to take a trip through iconic moments in film that demonstrate those magical times the director's vision, performances, design and technical execution come together to make a work of art. Larry McQueen is the guardian of a costume from at least twenty of these movies, and each is carefully preserved so that their legacies can live on in exhibition, possibly reuniting with other artifacts to enhance the fan or scholar's experience."

*See next page for sample spreads from *The Costumes of Hollywood*

ⁱ "Historic Academy Awards Venues", [discoverlosangeles.com](https://www.discoverlosangeles.com/things-to-do/historic-academy-awards-venues), Discover Los Angeles, May 16, 2023, <https://www.discoverlosangeles.com/things-to-do/historic-academy-awards-venues>.

ⁱⁱ Clayton Davis, "Academy Won't Air All Categories Live for 94th Oscars Telecast", [variety.com](https://variety.com/2022/awards/awards/oscars-2022-telecast-categories-cut-1235187841/), Variety, February 22, 2022, <https://variety.com/2022/awards/awards/oscars-2022-telecast-categories-cut-1235187841/>.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ryan Porter, "Oscars 2013: Best Costume Design Category stuck in the past", [thestar.com](https://www.thestar.com/life/beauty-and-fashion/oscars-2013-best-costume-design-category-stuck-in-the-past/article_c2da5e97-4bec-59aa-9f61-eaba59415e78.html), Toronto Star, February 15, 2013, https://www.thestar.com/life/beauty-and-fashion/oscars-2013-best-costume-design-category-stuck-in-the-past/article_c2da5e97-4bec-59aa-9f61-eaba59415e78.html.

SAMPLE SPREADS:

Chapter 1:

4 Outstanding Motion Pictures



Figure 1.6 Front view of green pleated bias silk chausse gown for Claudette Colbert in *Cleopatra*.

Figure 1.7 Production still featuring Claudette Colbert in the green gown. Image: CHPCD/Paramount Studios

CLEOPATRA (PARAMOUNT, 1934)

CLAUDETTE COLBERT AS CLEOPATRA
COSTUMES DESIGNED BY TRAVIS BANTON

About the Film and Costumes

Claudette Colbert had worked with Cecil B. DeMille on another historical epic, *Sign of the Cross* (1932), before he directed her in *Cleopatra* (1934). During the preproduction, it was reported that she was extremely unhappy with the costumes DeMille's team had created for her and she refused to wear them. She brought in Travis Banton, the chief costume designer at Paramount, to design an entirely new wardrobe for her character.¹¹ Ms. Colbert was well known for her attractive physique, but she was sensitive about her self-perceived physical flaws. It's reported that she dramatically rejected some of Banton's designs by pricking her finger and making the letter "X" on the sketches after he told her "she'd better like these or sit her wrists!"¹² Ultimately, Travis Banton did design a collection of costumes to her liking, though some were likely created the night before a scene was shot the next day.

Banton's designs for Colbert were strongly influenced by the Art Deco period of the film's production, therefore it's very unlikely the real *Cleopatra* wore anything like the gowns for Ms. Colbert. Additionally, the Hays Code (1934), which regulated how much of the body could be shown in a film, had just been instituted at the time of the film's release, so his more risqué pieces for Ms. Colbert, which probably would have been cut under the regulations, appeared in the film. The striking green costume is obviously a 1930s interpretation of Egyptian fashion with its bias-cut glamour and pleated detailing at the bodice. The scarab jewelry on the gold gown was originally made by Josef of Hollywood. There is no question that these costumes added to the allure of Colbert's character and the overall look of the film, which took home the Oscar for Outstanding Production.

Acquiring the Costumes

These costumes were purchased in 1990 at Christie's New York for the Paramount Star Collection auction. We had been hired to inventory, research, and set up the auction display. The green costume was confusing because it looked nothing like the photos. The long panels that create the bodice front and voluminous wrapped sleeves had been sewn to the bodice. When we went back to New York later to set up the exhibition, we realized that no fabric had been cut from the garment and a simple snipping of threads would bring it back to the original

configuration. There was a period when studio seamstresses went to great lengths to preserve the previous designer's work on a costume by altering but not removing fabric so it could, if necessary, be reversed.

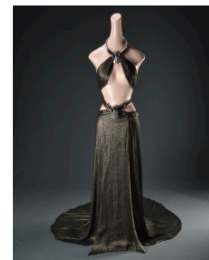


Figure 1.8 Front view of tarnished silver and gold lamé gown for Claudette Colbert in *Cleopatra*. Silver scarab ornamentations are jump recreations by Maggie Schipak at Metal Arts, Los Angeles. Photos: Larry McQueen



Figure 1.9 Production still featuring Claudette Colbert in the lamé gown. Image: CHPCD/Paramount Studios

Chapter 2:

42 Gotta Sing, Gotta Dance: The American Musical



Figure 2.19 Left: Front view of fine silk bolero, silk lined Givenchy suit with circular buttons for Audrey Hepburn in *Funny Face*. Prep hat. Photo: Larry McQueen

Figure 2.20 Right: Back view of Givenchy suit for Audrey Hepburn in *Funny Face*. Prep hat. Photo: Larry McQueen

FUNNY FACE (PARAMOUNT, 1956)

AUDREY HEPBURN AS JO STOCKTON
COSTUMES DESIGNED BY GIVENCHY
AND EDITH HEAD

About the Film and Costumes

Audrey Hepburn's aesthetic and demeanor was a counterpoint to the sex goddesses of the 1950s like Marilyn Monroe and Elizabeth Taylor. She represented an elegant, graceful style and it is little wonder that her image still represents a timeless beauty that is as contemporary today as it was in the 1950s.¹³ She left her acting career while she was still on the top and continued to perform charitable acts with children around the world.¹⁴ Hepburn was the perfect fit for the *Funny Face* story of a simple girl working at a bookstore who is propelled into the modeling world. The title and several songs in the film are from a 1927 George and Ira Gershwin Broadway musical, but the story is very different, despite the fact that Fred Astaire starred in both productions.

There was some controversy between Hubert de Givenchy and Edith Head as to who designed the costumes for Audrey Hepburn. Hepburn developed a strong working relationship with the Paris designer and insisted that he design her costumes for *Soluna*, which he most certainly contributed. Head insisted that on some occasions only the designs were sent to Hollywood and were constructed under her supervision. Edith Head accepted the Oscar for Best Costume Design in 1955 with no recognition given to Givenchy's contribution. After that experience, Head admitted she only designed the early dowdy clothing for Hepburn in *Funny Face* and shared this Oscar with Givenchy.¹⁵ This suit is a linen 1950s Givenchy couture creation containing the small metal custom seals reading "Dovaine Paris" showing it was imported into the country.

Acquiring the Costume

The garment was acquired in the Paramount star auction in 1989 at a time when Hepburn was still alive, but was concentrating on her children's foundations, not making films. There appeared to be a lack of interest in her costumes because many went unsold and were offered again at a Celebrity Outreach Foundation Charity in 1992. Feeling bad about the pieces not selling, we purchased this suit. In hindsight, we should have purchased every remaining piece because it is impossible to acquire her pieces today; Live and learn.

Gotta Sing, Gotta Dance: The American Musical 43



Figure 2.21 Publicity for *Funny Face*. Image: Photo Mary Evans/NEA/Event Collection



Figure 2.22 Closeup of the Dovaine Paris metal custom seals on the jacket. Photo: Larry McQueen

Chapter 3:

122 Period Piece



Figure 3.37 Left: Blue velvet coat with gold embroidery and breeches. Right: Blue silk bustle gown with black trim and jet beeding for Kirsten Dunst in *Interview with the Vampire*. Prep shots. Photos: Larry McQueen

Figure 3.38 Right: Blue silk bustle gown and train with black trim and jet beeding for Kirsten Dunst in *Interview with the Vampire*.

INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE: THE VAMPIRE CHRONICLES

(WARNER BROTHERS, 1994)

TOM CRUISE AS LESTAT,
KIRSTEN DUNST AS CLAUDIA
COSTUMES DESIGNED BY SANDY POWELL

About the Film and Costumes

Interview with the Vampire: The Vampire Chronicles is based on the 1976 novel by Anne Rice. Tom Cruise was chosen to play his first-time villain, Lestat, and author Anne Rice had intense reservations about this casting choice. Eventually she praised his performance.³⁷ Kirsten Dunst was ten when she played the adoptive daughter of Tom Cruise and Brad Pitt. Both actors treated her like a little sister, which made the young actress ever more uncomfortable when she had her first kissing scene with thirty-one-year-old Pitt.³⁸ Her spoiled vampire character was the most dangerous of all and the role earned her a Golden Globe nomination. The role of Louis was initially envisioned as a male-presenting transsexual because women could not own property and it made the ambiguous sexual relationship between Louis and Lestat more heteronormative.³⁹ The brooding character of Louis was depressing and conflicted, and the role took an emotional toll on Pitt leading to an unsuccessful attempt to pull out of the production.⁴⁰

British costume designer Sandy Powell had already established a reputation for her ability to execute costumes for multiple periods as exemplified in this chapter. For *Interview*, she had the opportunity to design costumes ranging from 1791 to contemporary times. The costumes are constructed in opulent materials befitting the characters, in a rich jewel-toned palette. Makeup artist Michelle Burke made actors hang upside down before application so that they could trace the bulging veins which helped create the authentically translucent skin texture.⁴¹ The film received mixed reviews but was a huge box office success.⁴² It was nominated for two Oscars and four BAFTAs, mostly focused on the film's design and cinematography.

Acquiring the Costume

The costumes were acquired from Warner Brothers as payment for my loan of a costume for an exhibition at the Warner Brothers Museum. It was an amazing experience seeing the wardrobe from the film and it was hard to choose the pieces we wanted, but I was honored that they were made available to the collection. We chose a day look for Louis, the velvet Lestat suit, and the Kirsten Dunst bustle gown.



Figure 3.39 Production still from *Interview with the Vampire* featuring Tom Cruise and Brad Pitt, 1994. Image: ©Warner Brothers/Courtesy of Everett Collection



Figure 3.40 Production still from *Interview with the Vampire* featuring Kirsten Dunst, 1994. Image: ©Warner Brothers/Courtesy of Everett Collection

Chapter 4:

146 All That Glitters



Figure 4.11 Left: Front view of Travis Banton's "Fabergé gown" for Marlene Dietrich in *Angel*. Restored bodice, skirt, and train are covered in a decorative pattern of gold glass and beads, pearls, and four enamel and ruby beads on silk beading. Skirt is bordered with sable and has also been restored with pre-existing fur. Photos: Larry McQueen

Figure 4.12 Right: Close-up of the heavy beading pattern on the Dietrich "Fabergé" gown. Photos: Don Trivett

ANGEL

(PARAMOUNT, 1937)

MARLENE DIETRICH AS MARIA BARKER
COSTUMES DESIGNED BY TRAVIS BANTON

About the Film and Costume

In 1936, Marlene Dietrich had one final film to complete her contract at Paramount and was cast in *Angel*, a sophisticated Lubitch melodrama, playing the role of an ignored wife of means who has an affair. Travis Banton, head designer at Paramount Studios, began work on the last film he would design for his favorite clotheshorse, Marlene Dietrich. Together, the duo had created the "Dietrich style": a look of lavish, smoldering, hard-edged sophistication that was instrumental in making her a legend. Banton designed the most opulent costume he had ever created which became known as the "Fabergé gown." The costume was cost-listed on the wardrobe records at \$40,000.00, an exorbitant price in the post-depression era, and a price that would be over \$1,000,000.00 by today's standards.⁴³ Dietrich loved the gown and asked the studio if she could keep it which "caused no little trauma on the set when producers refused to give it to her."⁴⁴ Paramount retained the piece and put it to use. It is unknown exactly how many films the Dietrich gown was used in, but from records found it went through many transformations in the process until at least 1965. Diana Vreeland, former curator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art said of the costume: "When I think of detail, I think of Travis Banton's marvelous, beaded dress for Marlene Dietrich in *Angel*—like a million grains of golden caviar."⁴⁵

Acquiring and Restoring the Costume

Paramount put the gown up for auction at Christie's New York as part of a larger collection of "Star Wardrobes" in 1990. We were successful in purchasing it for just over \$20,000.00, one of the highest prices at the auction. After the excitement, the reality of the gown's poor condition set in. In 1999, after consulting many experts, I ultimately decided that the ensemble should be restored. I approached Gelson Eastern Embroidery, then owned by Annie Denderian, which had beaded the costume in 1936. Luckily they still had many of the beads, sequins, and stones used in the original construction. After one year only the bodice was approaching completion, but expenses mounted. I decided that if the costume was to be completed, I would have to take over the restoration. I was mentored by Ms. Denderian, learning and perfecting the beading techniques, and after working faithfully every day for nearly a year, the

skirt and the stole were completed. To add strength, bias tape reinforcement and a new silk chiffon lining was added by the costume house of John David Ridge and the stole was re-bordered by using existing sable by Judith Moss at LA Fur Center. I am confident the care, attention, and over 3000 hours spent on the restoration would make its original creators proud. I hope that if I leave any legacy to the field of film costumes, one of my main accomplishments will be that the "Fabergé gown" survives in the form it was originally created, to be shown and appreciated for generations to come.

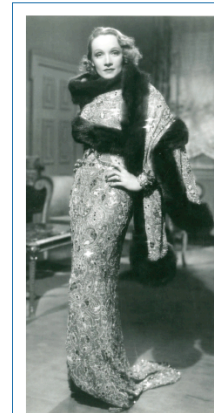


Figure 4.13 Production still of Marlene Dietrich in *Angel*. Image: CNP/CD

Chapter 5:

212 Villains, Heroes, and Heroines



Figure 5.36 Left: Pink bilate print silk, damask jacket with pink silk lining, matching silk damask jacket die blouse, white vest, pleated skirt, and double round pearl necklaces for Nathan Lane in *The Birdcage*. Photos: Larry McQueen

Figure 5.37 Right: Longtail spandex and fur for matching overall Caliban Island hat with huge die and *Hinterland* veil, muff with tail, and gloves; black velvet patterned duster with flecked chiffer and trim with rhinestone additions; black stretch velvet bodysuit with finger and foot tape, and leopard ankle boots for Nathan Lane in *The Birdcage*.

THE BIRDCAGE (MGM/UA, 1996)

NATHAN LANE AS ALBERT GOLDMAN AND STARINA
COSTUMES DESIGNED BY ANN ROTH

About the Film and Costumes

The Birdcage is an American remake of the Franco-Italian film *La Cage aux Folles*. The Mike Nichols film stars Robin Williams as Armand, a drag club owner, and his partner Albert, aka drag performer Starina, played by Nathan Lane. Although he was not a drag queen or trans woman, he was a gay man and had authenticity to bring to the flamboyant character (even though he was not publicly out until 1998).⁷⁰¹ Albert and houseboy Agador (Hank Azaria) play into gay stereotypes for humor, but Albert is the heroine of the film and Lane had the emotional range to portray a legitimate motherly figure to her son. The major studio film's portrayal of a nuclear family centering a gay couple made it groundbreaking for mainstream America at the time, but it was not without its flaws. A 1996 review in *The New York Times* by Bruce Bawer is titled "Why Can't Hollywood Get Gay 'Life Right'?" and is a thorough commentary on how Nichols' version of the story is progressive yet problematic.⁷¹

Revered costume designer and frequent Mike Nichols collaborator Ann Roth created upscale Floridian beach wear, drag show costumes, and ultra-conservative political family apparel for the film, brilliantly straddling character archetypes and gay Miami chic. Some feel it should have been *The Birdcage* she won an Oscar for instead of *The English Patient* in 1996.⁷²

Acquiring the Costumes

Several costumes from this film were donated to the collection by the museum director at ASLRDH, Maggie Murry. The costumes had been shown two years earlier in an exhibition and the studio would not pick them up. When I started my job as an archivist for MGM/UA, I donated them back to the archives with the stipulation that if the studio ever closed the archives, intending to sell the pieces, they would be returned to me, which is exactly what happened in 2011.



Figure 5.38 Production still of Nathan Lane as Albert in *The Birdcage*, 1996. Image © United Artists/Journeys of Everett Collection



Figure 5.39 Film still of Nathan Lane as Starina in *The Birdcage*, 1996. Image: Larry McQueen © United Artists/Journeys of Everett Collection

Chapter 6:

252 Inside Out



Figure 6.59 Left: Matte spandex superhero suit for Robert Townsend in *Meteor Man*. Image: Larry McQueen

Figure 6.60 Top: Right: Leather and faux belt with molded plastic gems in buckle. Center: Three versions of the *Meteor Man* emblem for the suit. Bottom: Close-up of a *Meteor Man* leather boot with foam and leather boot top. Detail photos by Ben Trivett

METEOR MAN (MGM/TINGEL TOWNSEND STUDIOS, 1993)

ROBERT TOWNSEND AS METEOR MAN
COSTUMES DESIGNED BY RUTH E. CARTER

The inspiration for the movie *Meteor Man* came to Robert Townsend when he spoke with his nephew at Halloween and discovered the child was nervous to dress as Superman or Batman because they were White.⁷³ Townsend decided to write a movie that would include the first Black superhero. This unlikely superhero candidate of a mid-mannered teacher would fight against the violent gangs and drug traffickers in Washington D.C. He would, however, be hampered by flaws: he is afraid of heights, he flies only four feet above the ground, and, with powers that come and go, he is forced to fake it much of the time. The result is a hilarious film rooted in real life problems⁷⁴ and centered on the theme of empowering our communities by working together. The revolutionary film did not get the response that was hoped for or deserved, but it did open the door for future Black superheroes, including Black Panther, Storm, Luke Cage, The Falcon, Black Adam, and Black Lightning.⁷⁵

Costume designer Ruth E. Carter, who would later receive two Oscars for designing *Black Panther* (2018) and *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever* (2022), created a much different superhero costume for *Meteor Man*. As the plot suggests, it had to appear to be made by his mother. The body padding in the suit is a step up from the previous unstructured superhero uniforms of Superman or Spiderman. This grey spandex body suit with cartoonish muscles is ornamented at the front with the Meteor Man logo and a piece of the meteor that empowers him is on the belt buckle.

Acquiring the Costume

We processed the *Meteor Man* production wardrobe at MGM/UA. There were several configurations of the Meteor Man costume in varying conditions and degrees of completeness. I purchased one of the costumes because it represented a Black superhero and had interesting construction with a sense of humor in its design. Little did I know that Ruth E. Carter would become the costume queen of blockbuster Black superhero films.



Figure 6.61 Interior construction of the *Meteor Man* suit body. Photos: Ben Trivett



Figure 6.62 Robert Townsend as *Meteor Man* in a promotional photo, 1993. © MGM Image: CNPCD

Villains, Heroes, and Heroines 213

F. Interview Resources

- HOW DID THIS PROJECT COME ABOUT?

Coleen first learned about Larry and his collection through a Costume Society of America Zoom event in late 2020 while the country was on Covid lockdown.

Inspired by his presentation, she contacted him, and they started chatting about his collection. Over time, they built a friendship and discovered their shared interests. In late 2022 Coleen proposed helping Larry make a book about his life's work to spread the word about the Collection of Motion Picture Costume Design, and the rest is history.

- WHEN AND WHERE CAN WE GET THIS BOOK?

The book will be available for pre-order in April through Routledge, Taylor and Francis, and the publication date is July 4, 2025. It will also be available from other online book retailers, museums, and independent book shops globally. Preordering is a great way to support the project.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS WITH COLEEN AND LARRY

- WHAT IS A FAVORITE EXPERIENCE WHILE WRITING THIS BOOK?

Coleen: Favorite times have been the two summers in residence at the collection with Larry, where we spent time taking photos, sharing meals and planning our ultimate vision for this project. The collaboration has been exceptional, and it's such a joy to have become friends and colleagues.

Larry: Even though I love and believe in what I do, it can be a solitary existence. After the passing of Bill Thomas, the acquisition and maintenance of the collection was- pretty much- just me. It was fate meeting Coleen Scott, who understood my passion and was adamant I had a tale to tell. It has resulted in a joyful and amazing collaboration- two theater geeks doing what they love to do.

- WHO HAS BEEN MOST INFLUENTIAL IN YOUR RESEARCH AND WORK?

Larry: For six years prior to the creation of The Collection of Motion Picture Costume Design, I worked with Bill Thomas on research and inventory projects of Hollywood costumes, where I fell in love with the ins and outs of authenticating costumes and their importance. When we created the CMPCD in 1989, I certainly

had my own ideas and contributions to make, but he was the obvious spokesperson. When he passed away in 1995, my life partner, Michael Bronstein, convinced me to continue with the business by not trying to be Bill, but finding my own voice and direction. I obviously had multiple friends and colleagues that instilled in me the best ways to care for and represent the field. Thirty years later, Coleen Scott was instrumental in shaping my experiences into a story. This book is the beginning of that story.

Coleen: Larry has been the most influential to me overall in this project because of his wells of expertise and experience with all aspects of collecting. This book is half Hollywood history and half Larry's personal accounts of collecting and working with auction houses, studios and other collections.

I always find libraries to be the best place to do the deepest research, and The Academy's Margaret Herrick library and The Western Costume Research Library have been especially essential resources. We have had numerous supportive colleagues aid us as well, including the amazing Sandy Powell, Bobi Garland, Kevin Jones, Kathleen Lynaugh, Cara Varnell, and Deborah Nadoolman Landis.

- WHAT WERE THE MOST CHALLENGING ASPECTS OF MAKING THE COSTUMES OF HOLLYWOOD?

Coleen: Getting the images you want and editing everything to fit your vision is definitely the most difficult. If a book is visual like this one, you must see it in your mind and then make it come to life. Then the words come more easily. Our teamwork has been a huge factor in the project being possible, and it was a gamble because we were relatively new acquaintances when the project started. That scenario certainly could have been challenging, but gratefully we mesh like peas in a pod. I'm sure it has something to do with our collective theatre backgrounds.

Larry: Deciding what pieces to include and how to fit as many stories as possible into the space allocated was certainly the greatest challenge.

- WHAT ARE YOUR HOPES AND DREAMS FOR THIS PROJECT?

Larry: This book is meant to be entertainingly informative by representing a small example of the collection. I also hope that it brings a certain amount of respectability to the field of collecting, and truly honors the talented artists that created these second skins for the immortal characters (people) we see on the screen.

Coleen: My hope is that The Collection of Motion Picture Costume Design is preserved in the pages of the book, and that the attention or recognition that this publication receives leads to longevity of the collection. The goal is keeping it together as one curated set that is meant to be seen, researched and celebrated the way Larry and Bill intended it.

G. Final Notes

DIRECT CONTACTS FOR CORPORATE AND
INSTITUTIONAL SALES (Our CIS Team):

UK, Europe and Rest of World
cis@tandf.co.uk

North and South Americas:
specialsales@taylorandfrancis.com

Australia and New Zealand:
books@tandf.com.au

Regular orders and preorders: <https://tinyurl.com/52xna8uy>

- FOLLOW US ON INSTAGRAM @COSTUMESOFHOLLYWOOD
- LOOKOUT FOR THE COSTUMES OF HOLLYWOOD
PODCAST LAUNCHED SUMMER 2025!