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# CLUB FERMOY

## The David Roche Foundation House Museum newsletter

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Detail: Roy Halston Frowick (USA 1932-1990), *Fireworks Evening Dress*, 1981, chiffon, satin, beads. On loan from Morphew Vintage, New York USA

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## Club Fermoy #26

Dear friends and supporters,

February is already here and we are excited to have officially opened *Silhouettes: Fashion in the shadow of HIV/AIDS*! Thank you to the Minister of Health and Wellbeing, the Honourable Stephen Wade MLC, for doing the honours and to our guest curator Skye Bartlett, from SAME SH, for bringing together such an impressive collection of fashion from around the globe. With over 120 items covering evening and day wear, shoes, hats, scarves, bags, jewellery, activism t-shirts and badges, and an

Australian AIDS Memorial Quilt, this exhibition expresses the tremendous creative energy of a generation lost too soon and those who stood-up and demanded change from governments and society.

In this issue of *Club Fermoy* you can also find out about David Roche's own deep appreciation for fashion and of course his life commitment to exhibiting at Australian canine events. Our volunteers continue to unearth fascinating stories about items in the collection and this month's article on a Paris Porcelain *Coffee can and saucer* is no exception, allowing us a new, and historically accurate, understanding of the iconography.

We have a wide range of events and talks coming up over the next few months which we hope will further tempt you to visit and enjoy the museum. Also reserve your copy now of our brand new publication *Silhouettes: Fashion in the shadow of HIV/AIDS* available later this month!

Best wishes,

Robert Reason  
Museum Director

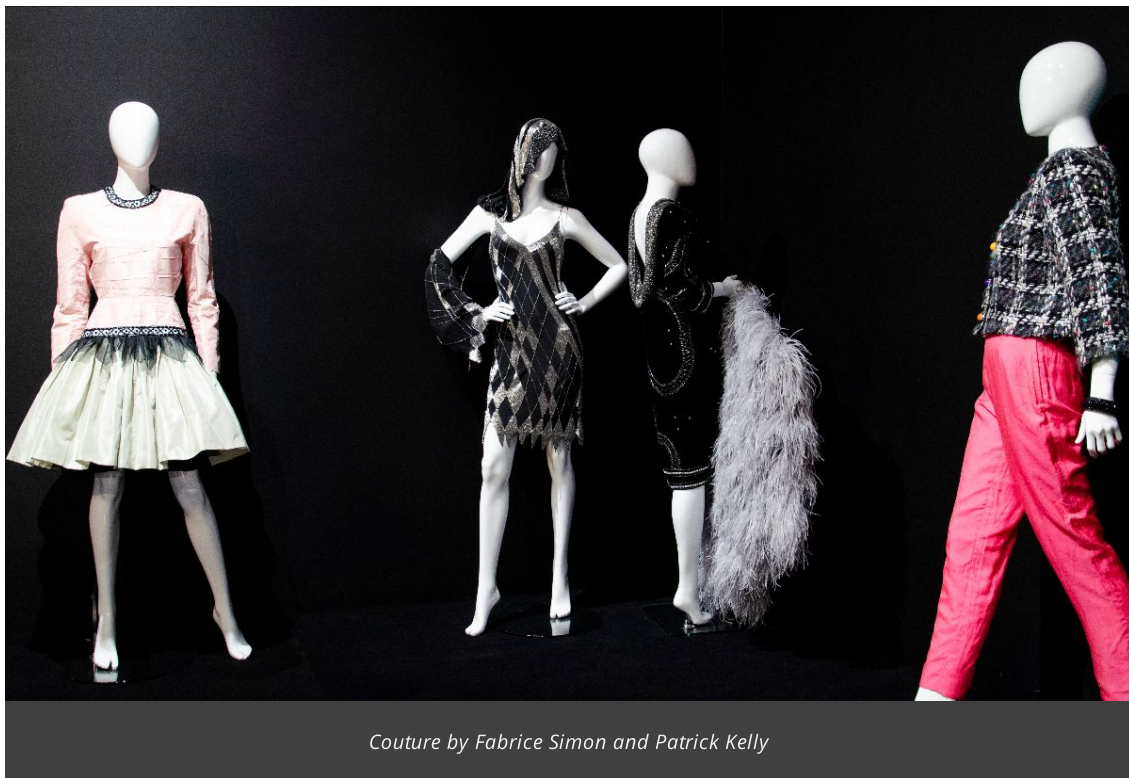
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## NEW EXHIBITION

# SILHOUETTES

Fashion in the Shadow of HIV/AIDS

NOW OPEN



*Silhouettes: Fashion in the Shadow of HIV/AIDS* explores the lives and works of some of fashion's brightest stars from the late 20th century. Featured in this ground-breaking exhibition are works by designers, artists and activists who have passed of AIDS-related illness to raise awareness of their contribution to fashion during a pivotal moment in history.

Over 120 pieces of fashion, art and ephemera – sourced from esteemed private and public collections from the UK, Europe, USA and Australia – tell a story of changing hemlines, changing worlds and changing attitudes. Showcasing household names like Halston and Moschino, *Silhouettes* also features work from revolutionary black designers Patrick Kelly, Fabrice Simon and Willi Smith, and forgotten talents like Clovis Ruffin and Chester Weinberg.

HIV/AIDS in fashion became an important activism tool to force social and political advancement, and in many cases intersected couture designers and activist artists as they collaborated to affect change through fashion, design, and art. Australians Peter Tully, David McDiarmid and Brenton Heath-Kerr brought this struggle to our streets with passion and panache.

The fashion designers, artists, and activists selected for *Silhouettes* exercised an outsized influence on fashion and almost all are unduly overlooked in recent years. *Silhouettes: Fashion in the Shadow of HIV/AIDS* is a powerful reminder of an entire generation of international designers lost to the virus but deserving of contemporary recognition.

Curated by Skye Bartlett

Details:

*Silhouettes: Fashion in the Shadow of HIV/AIDS*

Until 18 June 2022

Tuesday to Saturday 10AM – 4PM

No booking required.

Exhibition entry: \$12 adult. \$10 concession.  
Children under 12 free.

Guided house tour & exhibition entry: \$20 adult. \$17 concession.  
Children under 12 free.

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## FROM THE ARCHIVES



*David Roche, London, 1963.*

Throughout his life, David Roche had a passion for fine clothing. As a young man, he was a regular visitor to the best high-end fashion retailers, clothes, shoe and leather manufacturers in Britain and Europe, bringing home a variety of exceptional suits and accessories that made him one of Adelaide's best dressed. Such was his love of fashion that on one trip to England, David even modelled a range of handsome coats from Savile Row tailors of London. The photos still survive and can be seen on display in David's Fermoy House.

David would later open his own menswear shop in Gawler Chambers, *The Cock's Feathers*, where he sold fine men's fashion: stylish shirts, shorts and ties manufactured locally, and imported luxury clothing by DAKS, Aquascutum of London and Burberry, with shoes from Italy. This operated in the late 1960s.

David continued to import and wear British and European fashion, but became increasingly fond of Australian designers, his wardrobe being fully stocked with local designs by the end of his life. From start to finish, David Roche always took great care to dress well, cutting a sharp figure wherever he was, be it an international dog show in England or a dinner with friends in North Adelaide.

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## TODAY'S TREASURE

Showcasing the favourite pieces of our fantastic guides and volunteers in The David Roche Collection. In this edition, Leslie S. discusses his fascination with a charming Paris Porcelain coffee can and saucer with neoclassical Bacchanalian-themed decorations.





attributed to Paris Porcelain, *Coffee can and saucer*, 1800-1820, porcelain, polychrome enamel, gilt. TDRF 2117

A charming and whimsical porcelain coffee can and saucer that has often intrigued me is one that resides in the 'Juno and Neptune' vitrine in the Drawing room of Fermoy house.

The front of the footed cup depicts a winged naked cherub asleep in a wide-brimmed glass goblet that rests on a marblised slab. Around the goblet are some acanthus leaves and twigs, and just visible to the side are a small bunch of purple grapes. The cup has a gilt band along each of the base and the rim and sits on three gilded paw feet. The saucer with pink ground is decorated with stylised neoclassical motifs. Both are unmarked, but have been attributed a Paris Porcelain origin.

I use the word intrigued as I sought to understand the meaning of the iconography, clearly the unusual theme of the painting was an allegory, but of what? Undoubtedly the goblet was likely a wine glass. Had the cherub over-imbibed and was this an allegory of intoxication? Was it an allegory of sleep or perhaps one of the five senses – taste?

My research lead me to a set of four compositions by the French artist Jean Antoine Laurent (1763 -1832), a painter specialising in miniatures, who had painted Napoleon and both of his wives, amongst many other personages. The picture on the TDRF cup is definitely from the Laurent set, though in reverse. It was

originally titled *À la Volupté* meaning voluptuousness, and was accompanied by *Aux Graces* (grace), *À la Mystère* (mystery) and *À la Beauté* (beauty). The four were also engraved: *À la Beauté* by Barthélémy Roger (1767–1841), the other three by André Joseph Mécou (1771–1837) – see below. The original paintings were sold in Paris from the estate of the painter in 1823.

I wondered whether these labelled attributes may refer to the 18<sup>th</sup> century artist's idea of the desirable characteristics in a female lover or spouse; or alternatively perhaps that the four pictures represent the four seasons (see below).



*Feminine virtues*

*Top (l to r): Beauty, Grace*

*Bottom (l to r): Voluptuousness, Mystery*

*Seasons*

*Top (l to r): Spring, Summer*

*Bottom (l to r): Autumn, Winter*

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## CANINE TIDBITS



Preparation for a dog show at Fermoy Kennels was quite a ritual. In the afternoon preceding the event, the car was packed with military precision, including crates, bedding, grooming tables, chairs and a stool.

However, there were two items David never went without. One was a suitcase previously owned by David's father, which was engraved with his father's initials 'J.D.R' to the top and packed with anything that might possibly be needed: towels, potato flour, spare blankets, water sprays and pair of shoes in case of inclement weather.

The other was David's grooming case (illustrated above), holding the important tools of his trade. Apart from the dogs, the grooming case was one of the last things to go into the car. Not a leather valise, as one might expect, but a tack box, it always travelled with him throughout Australia wherever he was exhibiting.

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## EVENTS

SILHOUETTES TWILIGHT EVENING





Our popular twilight evenings are back for 2022!

As part of the season of *Silhouettes: Fashion in the Shadow of HIV/AIDS*, TDRF will be staying open late on the evening of Thursday 24 February from 5 to 7:30PM to give you an extra opportunity to experience this powerful and moving new show.

Skye Bartlett, guest curator, will be joining us for the evening to talk about the histories of some of the key pieces and designers in the exhibition, as well as the effects of the HIV/AIDS epidemic on the fashion community as a whole.

Cost: \$20 (including complimentary glass of wine on arrival). Children under 12 free.

Numbers limited. Book early to avoid disappointment.

Book now

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ONLINE SHOP



Available as part of our new exhibition, *Silhouettes: Fashion in the Shadow of HIV/AIDS*, is the official exhibition catalogue, a 164 page record of this world first exhibition for \$35 (plus postage & handling). The catalogue is a perfect compliment to the exhibition and includes entries and beautiful photographs for each of the 120 works on display, as well as essays on a variety of topics by guest curator, Skye Bartlett, fashion historian and collector, Tim Roberts, acclaimed curator and fashion historian, Daniel Milford-Cottam and much more.

*To reserve your copy of the book, email  
[info@rochefoundation.org.au](mailto:info@rochefoundation.org.au)  
or call  
08 8267 3677,  
and we will contact you to arrange shipping (or pick up)  
as soon as the catalogue is available.*

Alternatively, support TDRF by purchasing one of our unique pieces of

merchandise through our online shop (link below), now offering **CLICK AND COLLECT!**

Visit the shop

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## COLLECTION



Did you know that many of the items in  
The David Roche Collection are available online?

*Search by title, artist, type, materials, and place made to find  
out more about your favourite piece or discover something new.*

*Click the Search button below.*

We have added new items to the database!

See more items from David's Kitchen, including a variety of children's plates  
and colourful mugs, including the ever enjoyable Cambrian Puzzle Mug,  
entitled *The Mill, The House, The Miller, But Where Is His Donkey?*

Can you spot it?

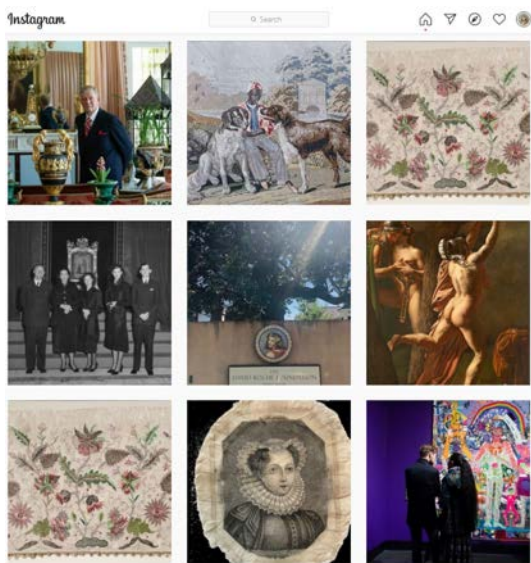


Search the Collection

View the new additions

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## SOCIAL MEDIA



We are on Facebook and Instagram!

We provide regular content through our social media channels. Follow us now to keep in the loop!



Facebook



Instagram



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House Museum

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TDRF acknowledges the Kaurna people as the traditional owners of the Adelaide region. We recognise and respect Kaurna heritage, beliefs and spiritual relationship



with Country, and we pay our respect to  
Elders past, present and emerging.



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