The Dress Detective: A Practical Guide to Object-Based Research in Fashion

By Ingrid Mida, Alexandra Kim

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The Dress Detective is the first practical guide to analysing fashion objects, clearly demonstrating how their close analysis can enhance and enrich interdisciplinary research. This accessible book provides readers with the tools to uncover the hidden stories in garments, setting out a carefully developed research methodology specific to dress, and providing easy to use checklists that guide the reader through the process.

Beautifully illustrated, the book contains seven case studies of fashionable Western garments – ranging from an 1820s coat to a 2004 Kenzo jacket – that articulate the methodological framework for the process, illustrate the use of the checklists, and show how evidence from the garment itself can be used to corroborate theories of dress or fashion.

This book outlines a skillset that has, until now, typically been passed on informally. Written in plain language, this book will give any budding fashion historian, curator or researcher the knowledge and confidence to analyse the material in front of them effectively.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Detective work is integral to fashion history research, yet very little has been written on how to go about it. Ingrid Mida and Alexandra Kim fill that gap in the bookshelf with *The Dress Detective* … A concise, well organized, and extremely accessible book that deserves a place on the bookshelf of anyone interested in fashion research." ?Katy Werlin, *The Fashion Historian*

"*The Dress Detective* is a smart, accessible text that provides a long-overdue methodology for examining clothing and accessories. This book is essential for new students, but its concise framework will also be useful to seasoned researchers. Diverse, thorough case studies demonstrate the combination of visual analysis, history, and theory that is crucial to fashion studies today." ?*Colleen Hill, Associate Curator, The Museum at FIT, New York, USA*

"For the first time, *The Dress Detective* offers a clear and systematic framework for the object-based study of dress. Advocating a 'Slow Approach to Seeing', it arms readers with the tools to learn this important research skill while encouraging them through well-chosen case studies to measure their findings against inter-disciplinary and theoretical writing on fashion." ?*Edwina Ehrman, Fashion Curator and Historian, UK*

"This is the book we have been waiting for without realizing it! *The Dress Detective* offers a rigorous and entirely accessible guide to examining and thinking about dress using objects as evidence. Case studies and checklists guide the reader – specialist and non-specialist alike – to explore and articulate garment construction, materials, design, alterations and the nuances of wear. I have no doubt it will become a seminal text." ?*Amy de la Haye, Joint Director of the Centre for Fashion Curation, London College of Fashion, UK*

About the Author

Ingrid Mida is a dress historian and curator. Responsible for the revival of the Ryerson Fashion Research Collection in Canada, Mida has written for various publications including *Dress, Clothing Cultures, Costume Journal, Fashion Projects, Modeconnect, Worn*, and *Worn Through*.

Alexandra Kim is a dress historian and museum professional. Kim has worked at the Ashmolean, Chertsey Museum, and Buckinghamshire County Museum and was most recently a curator at Kensington Palace, UK. She now combines research and writing with her work as an editor of *Costume*, the journal of the UK Costume Society.

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