

## Opulent & Elegant, The Bruce Hosts 'The Dressmaker's Art'

GREENWICH, CONN. — The respectful installation and dim lighting of the main exhibition at the Bruce Museum invite the kind of stillness and awed contemplation usually reserved for works of art. But the icons on view are not important paintings and sculpture or rare artifacts unearthed from faraway civilizations — they are dresses, 24 of them, most acquired from donors in Connecticut and New York. And their variety of form, opulence of drape and richness of ornament argue forcefully for the justice of such treatment.

"The Dressmaker's Art: Highlights From the Bruce Museum's Costume Collection," will be on view at the Bruce Museum, 1 Museum Drive, through September 5.

From a breezy American summer frock of purple-striped cotton, made in the 1890s, to a lustrous 1908 Parisian dinner gown encrusted with lace, sequins, velvet, beading and chunky embroidery, the garments in "The Dressmaker's Art" reward the same intense scrutiny given other masterpieces.

The exquisitely cut, shaped

and embellished items reflect the high imagination and deep skill of their makers, and, like other kinds of art, the dresses also tell stories and raise questions. What fanciful designer came up with the asymmetrical fluting, flowing train and pleated hem on the cream-colored wedding dress of silk satin from around 1880? Whose delicate fingers stitched the dotted netting, lace ruffles and velvet ribbons that transformed an all-black afternoon dress from 1898 into a symphony of texture? Whose ample purse paid for the fantastically inflated sleeves and extravagant trim of the 1895 silk satin ball gown from the House of Worth in Paris?

There are no answers as most of the people who made or wore these elegant gowns are lost to history. Only a handmade bridal veil of intricate Belgian lace and an elegant satin wedding gown can be matched to the women who got married in them.

Covering about a century, from the 1820s to the 1920s, "The Dressmaker's Art" tracks the gradual release of the female form from the bondage of corsets and crinolines,

which are also on display, along with accessories like parasols, fans and handbags. There is a lace-trimmed straw hat from a store in Bridgeport, Conn., a pair of sky-blue ankle-high boots fastened with pearl buttons and a fire-engine red corset.

A paper pattern from an 1871 issue of *Harper's Bazaar* will astound (and intimidate) contemporary home sewers with its maze of dotted, dashed and squiggly lines to guide the cutting of the fabric. Another surprising display is devoted to silk stockings in a riotous array of hues and lush with embroidered monograms and butterflies and flowers.

Hemlines began creeping up in the early Twentieth Century, and less constricted, more natural silhouettes came into fashion. But the show's handful of dresses from the flapper era also glitter with beadwork and embroidery — no less luxurious for being more modern.

For additional information, [www.brucemuseum.org](http://www.brucemuseum.org) or 203-869-0376.



House of Worth ball gown, circa 1895, Paris. Gift of Mrs William Bender, 1960.

## J.J. Keating Auctioneers Will Offer Estate Of John B. Robinson July 31



KENNEBUNK, MAINE — J.J. Keating Auctioneers will conduct an antiques auction at the firm's gallery Saturday, July 31, featuring the estate of John B. Robinson of Oxford, Maine.

The Robinson Manufacturing Company is a Maine company that was founded in 1849 and initially produced the material for Union soldier uniforms during the Civil War. Through the years, the woolen mill factory invested more than \$25 million in manufacturing technology to compete against overseas companies. Until 2003 when the company closed due to the intense overseas competition, Robinson Manufacturing was an exemplar of a Maine company that cared for and gave back to its community.

The Robinson home has a blend of period and custom mahogany furniture. The sale also includes signed Steuben, Baccarat, Waterford, etc crystal, bronzes, Oriental rugs, silver, an unsigned L&JG Stickley bookcase, early Staffordshire, paintings and prints, Native American pottery, a tall clock attributed to Paul Rogers, Maine histories — even the Robinson carriage and sleigh.

There will be a preview on Friday from noon to 4 pm and Saturday from 8 to 10 am.

J.J. Keating Auctioneers is on Route 1 North. For information, 207-985-2097 or [www.jjkeating.com](http://www.jjkeating.com).

To Place An Ad  
Call 203-426-8036

## Elizabeth Jackson Estate Sale

Moving Sale in Rye, NY

Saturday & Sunday, July 24 & 25

10 am - 5pm



Charming 100 year old center hall colonial in Rye with lovely English antique furniture and accessories is the location for a quick, 2-day moving sale. Antiques include: English Regency 3-part mahogany dining table w/ "D" ends c. 1820, rare Scottish mahogany sideboard c. 1800 w/step-back top, English slant front desk c. 1790 w/fitted interior, English mahogany bachelor's chest c. 1770, unusual Regency marble top console cabinet, English console card table w/curved top c. 1800, provincial oak corner cabinet, 4 large 19th c Chinese famille rose vases, early barometer, pr 19th c bronze figures, pair of old Lalique eagle bookends, 19th c wool paisley. Also: 12 hoop-back Hepplewhite George III style dining chairs, beautiful blue custom sofa, pr chintz club chairs, pr Edwardian style kilim armchairs, pr

Chinese garden seats, pr neoclassical plant stands w/swans, painted console table, Georgian style dressing stand w/brass swing-arm candlesticks, antique Chinese porcelain lamps, set of 12 Waterford goblets, terrific painted iron & brass beds - king & twin, many antique country pine pieces - bed, desk, armoire, dressers, custom club chairs & ottomans, set of 4 handmade counter stools w/snowshoe leather seats, charming pairs of children's chairs, charcoal denim sofa & loveseat, pr brass etageres, Le Corbusier leather loveseat, tuxedo style black sofa w/new white slipcover, glass top bistro table PLUS great vintage light fixtures, loads of mirrors, prints & paintings, linens, books, sisal rugs, custom window treatments AND a garage full of bargains. Don't miss our last summer sale!

For early number, call 203-838-7636 on Friday, July 23 between 4:00 and 5:00 pm.

Directions: From North - take I-95 to I-287W; take immediate exit on right for Midland Ave, Rye/Portchester. At bottom of ramp, take a left onto Midland Ave. Turn left onto Grace Church Road and follow signs to sale on Grace Church.

Elizabeth Jackson Estate Sales  
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